The United States Mission in Algeria

A Historical Sketch

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Introduction

The United States has been represented in Algeria since the earliest days of the Republic. Beginning in 1785 – only two years after independence – special envoys were designated to negotiate a treaty of friendship and amity. In 1797, our first resident Consul General arrived.

The history of American involvement in Algeria since those early days is rich in events. This sketch is an attempt to give Americans visiting and working in Algeria a sense of these events, to encourage further reading, and to stimulate future weekend historians to add to the record. It is based on a review of published materials and unpublished Embassy files and emphasizes interesting snapshots over comprehensive analysis.

Those interested in the flavor of earlier times may wish to review the first sections. For today’s practitioner, the last sections will prove most informative. Three appendices, with additional details for the history-minded, are attached.

Special thanks are due to two Algiers alumni, Richard Parker (Principal Officer/Ambassador 1974-77) and Robert Pelletreau (Political Officer 1973-75), for having encouraged my taste for diplomatic history and for supplying me with many relevant materials.

Montfeld, April 1, 1991
1785-1797: Treaty Negotiations and Implementation

One of the first foreign policy issues that confronted our new Republic after 1783 was politico-military: the achievement of independence meant that American shipping in and near the Mediterranean could no longer count on the British navy for protection against the Barbary corsairs of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and Salé (Rabat).

**Algiers**

The Regency of Algiers was governed at this time by a Turkish janissary garrison that selected its own ruler, the Day (“Uncle”). The prosperity of this garrison and its population of Kouloughlis (Turco-Algerians), Moors, and tribal migrants depended in large part on the tribute that trading states paid to protect their shipping from corsair attacks and on the seizure of ships, crews, and cargoes belonging to states that failed to pay. For the Regency, these seizures were a lawful economic activity; for the U.S., they constituted piracy.

**American Shipping**

American trade with southern European and North African ports was growing, with products such as dried codfish, naval stores, pickled beef and pork, grain, and rum much in demand. The U.S. was in competition with European interests, and it is likely that the British among other were encouraging the corsairs to attack defenseless American ships. Ben Franklin, the Minister to Great Britain, wrote in 1783 that London merchants had a maxim: “If there were no Algiers, it would be worth England’s while to build one.”

**The Threat**

Mohamed Ben Othman (Dey from 1766 to 1791) let it be known that he “declared war on all states that did not want to pay the customary fees for freedom of navigation.” Starting in 1785, numerous American ships, crews, and cargoes fell into the hands of the Algerines (as the inhabitants of Algiers were known) and other Barbary corsairs. Algiers alone captured at least 15 American ships in the period from 1785 to 1793).

**A Policy Debate**

American efforts to deal with this situation were hampered by an internal debate on how best to deal with the Barbary corsairs. Many European countries paid tribute on the assumption that doing so was cheaper in the long run than the cost of deploying large navies, the losses suffered to corsairs, and the ransoms required to release captured crews. In 1785, John Adams, Minister to Great Britain at the time, espoused this view, while Thomas Jefferson, then Minister to France, argued against tribute and for a resort to naval power. The debate was settled by budgetary considerations – the fledgling republic did not have enough tax revenues to build and deploy a large navy.
Captain John Lamb

Congress, felling the pressure of commercial interests, became increasingly concerned and decided to try the path of negotiation. In 1785, Jefferson, acting at the recommendation of the Continental Congress, dispatched Captain John Lamb of Connecticut to Algiers to negotiate a treaty of friendship with the Regency. Lamb, a ship captain who had been active in the North African trade and had nominated himself for this role, arrived in Algiers in 1786, but Dey Mohamed refused to discuss a treaty with “rebels against the King of England.” The British Consul, who reported this news gleefully to London, may have had a hand in this turn of events. The corporation of corsairs, too, opposed any treaty that would prevent them from capturing American prizes.

The Treaty of 1795

In the end, it took over ten years and four successive negotiators to reach agreement and obtain the release of all American captives. The Treaty of Peace and Amity signed in 1795 committed the Dey to ensuring the safe passage of American ships, but only in exchange for an annual payment of naval stores, i.e., tribute, with the value of $21,600 ($112,295 in 1991 dollars on the basis of comparative silver prices). A lump sum of $642,500 ($3,340,000 in 1991 dollars) had to be paid to obtain the release of the accumulated captives. These provisions stuck in the craw of the Congress, but there was no feasible alternative.

John Paul Jones

The revolutionary naval hero John Paul Jones was to have been among the early negotiators. President Washington commissioned him in 1792, but he was living in Paris at the time and died before his commission arrived.

Salary and Cost of Living Surveys

The last treaty negotiator to be commissioned was Joel Barlow, a rough-hewn poet from Connecticut and a graduate of Yale, who arrived in 1796. Barlow was instrumental in making the financial arrangements required by the Treaty of 1795 for the release of the captives, and he left Algiers in 1797.

Addressing the issue of remuneration for himself and his successors, Barlow wrote Secretary of State Pickering in 1796: “I am an enemy to high salaries… but the English Consul here has £1,000 a year… The Spaniard has 1,000 Dollars and all his expenses… (both without leave of trade). The Sweed has 4,600 Dollars for himself and Secretary with leave of trade, the Venetians and the Dutch about 3,000 each with leave to trade… Most of the substantial articles of meat and drink are cheaper here than they are in … Europe. But… a Consul is obliged to keep a greater number of Servants, and it is really necessary for him to have two Houses, one in town and one in the Country, the first for Business and residence in time of health, and the other as a retreat in times of the Plague,
and a place where he can keep his cows and other cattle and make his wine and garden stuff…”

The right to trade was important, since, from 1792 to 1856, American consular officials were paid no fixed salaries, but were expected to live off the fees collected for their services.
1797-1830: Dealings with the Dey

From 1797 to 1830, a series of Consuls General, who also had supervisory responsibilities over Consuls in the other Barbary states, worked to protect American shipping from the Algerian corsairs by maintaining friendly relations with the Dey and watching for hostile European maneuvers. This became particularly difficult during the Napoleonic wars and the War of 1812, in the shadow of which the Algerians resumed the capture of American ships in violation of the Treaty of 1795. The day-to-day tasks of these Consuls General included issuing “passports” for American ships, arranging tribute payments to the Dey, and conducting negotiations for the release of Americans captured in violation of the Treaty of 1795.

Richard O’Brien

The first American representative commissioned to live in Algiers was Richard O’Brien, a ship’s master of salty idiom captured by the Algerians in 1785 and released in 1796. A naturalized Irishman from Pennsylvania, O’Brien was appointed by President Adams on July 10, 1797.

Joel Barlow may have had a hand in this appointment, since, in 1796, he had written Pickering: “I beg you to remark the superior sagacity and talents displayed by Captain O’Brien… (I am) convinced that a more suitable person than he cannot probably be found to be placed here as Consul for the United States… He has a singular talent in which is called Algerian management. The blemishes that arise from a defect in the rudimental parts of his education will appear only in his correspondence. The jargon of this country called ‘lingua franca,’ in which all business is done by work of mouth, puts the scholar and the sailor on a level, and the University of Algiers is better for certain purposes than New Haven.”

Algiers Bicentennial

With O’Brien’s appointment, the Regency of Algiers appears to have become the sixth state – after France, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Portugal – to receive a resident American envoy. This was a clear sign of the importance to U.S. attached to the protection of its Mediterranean shipping. Since the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul was formally the suzerain of the Dey of Algiers, our resident envoys were commissioned as Consuls General, even though they had diplomatic functions.

Resident envoys have been assigned to Algiers without interruption from 1797 to the present with the exception of the period from 1876 to 1881, when Congress failed to appropriate funds to keep the post open! The bicentennial of resident American representation in Algeria will thus fall in July 1997.
Algiers and the Roots of FSI

Preeminent among these early representatives was William Shaler, who served from 1815 to 1828 and who published one of the first comprehensive studies of Algeria in English, “Sketches of Algiers, Political, Historical, and Civil” (Boston, 1826). A tablet in his memory may be seen in the narthex of the Anglican Church. It notes that “during his residence at Algiers he displayed great ability under trying circumstances and in the troublous times preceding and subsequent to Lord Exmouth’s operations. He rendered signal services to the British Consul and nation. His valuable work, “Sketches of Algiers,” served materially to ensure the success of the French expeditionary force which captured Algiers. A tribute of respect to his memory from R.L.P.”

In 1826, the Department of State sent its first overseas language student – William Hodgson – to Algiers as “pupil- interpreter” and secretary to Shaler, with the task of mastering Turkish, Arabic, and other tongues. By the time Hodgson left Algiers in 1829, he had laid the groundwork for the first scholarly study of the Berber languages.

The Corsairs and the Birth of the Navy

From the very beginning, the American public and Congress chafed at the notion that safety for shipping had to be bought with tribute, and the slogan of “millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute,” gained increasing force. Using the new tax powers granted under the Constitution of 1789, Congress authorized the construction of six frigates in 1794. Then, beginning in 1801, it began to appropriate funds for the deployment of naval squadrons whenever needed. These were the beginnings of the U.S. Navy and its Mediterranean vocation.

The Dev’s Exactions

The naval buildup took time, although it was accelerated by the First Barbary War against Tripoli (1801-05) and the Tripolitanians’ humiliating capture of the USS Philadelphia in 1804.

Meanwhile, the U.S. had to avoid offending the Dey. Thus, in 1800, when the USS George Washington delivered that year’s tribute, Captain William Bainbridge had to accept Dey Mustapha Pacha’s demand that he transport a delegation and presents to the Ottoman Sultan. The ship embarked the Algerian Ambassador, his suite of 100 persons, 100 slave women and children, four horses, 150 sheep, 25 heads of cattle, four lions, four tigers, four antelopes, 12 parrots, and several ostriches, together with funds and regalia. American prestige plummeted, and Brainbridge later complained to the Secretary of the Navy that “I hope I may never again be sent to Algiers with tribute, unless I am authorized to deliver it from the mouth of our cannon!”
Naval Confrontation

Algerian exactions reached a climax in 1812, when the corsairs of Algiers demanded that Dey Hadj Ali Pacha declare war and renew the seizure of American prizes. The tribute of naval stores sent that year was rejected as unsuitable, the Consul was told to depart, and at least one ship was seized. The end of the War of 1812 in 1814 gave the U.S. a new opportunity to deal with the Algerians. In the face of treaty violations and an 1813 report that this same Dey had declared that his “policy and views are to increase, not diminish, the number of American slaves,” Congress acted in 1815 to reject the payment of further tribute, declare war on the Regency, and send Commodores Bainbridge and Stephen Decatur to the Mediterranean with a naval force of sufficient size to compel conclusion of a favorable treaty.

In June 1815, in the opening battle of the second Barbary War, Decatur defeated the corsair commander Raïs Hamidou in the Straits of Gibraltar, appeared before Algiers, and sent the Dey, now Omar Pacha, an ultimatum. Henry Filed, writing in “The Barbary Coast” (New York, 1893), captured the moment well: “The Dey, seeing that the American captain was in earnest, and fearing the effect of such an example, tried to compromise, and modestly suggested that he would accept even a little powder, just to keep up appearances, to which the gallant Commodore replied that ‘if he took the powder, he must take the balls too!’, a suggestion that was not at all agreeable; and the Dey soon make the best of a bad case by yielding the point, virtually admitting that, rather than receive that kind of tribute, he would receive none at all.”

Treaties of 1815 and 1816

The resulting Treaty of Peace of 1815 obtained the release of all American captives and established relations of peace without further payment of tribute. Dey Omar’s attempts to evade it required a new show of naval force under Commodore Isaac Chauncey and conclusion of a confirmatory Treaty of Peace and Amity in 1816. On this occasion, Omar was so afraid that his entourage, whose livelihood depended on corsair prizes, would kill him for signing that he demanded and obtained a certificate stating that he had been forced to sign at the muzzle of a cannon. Nine months later, he was assassinated anyway.

The American Example

The U.S. was thus the first state to compel the Regency of Algiers to give its ships safe passage without payment of tribute. The British followed suit in 1816, when Lord Exmouth subjected Algiers to a naval bombardment. A tablet honoring Decatur, Bainbridge, and Shaler for their action against the “intolerable bondage” of the Barbary states may be seen in the narthex of the Anglican Church.
The Lees of Virginia Fly the Flag

The Turkish period ended with the French occupation of Algiers in 1830. Major Henry Lee of Virginia, son of Light Horse Harry Lee and half-brother of Robert E. Lee and a political pamphleteer during President Jackson’s 1828 campaign, was Consul General at the time under a recess appointment later rejected by the Senate. It was under his flag, flying over a garden especially rented from the Ben Taleb family and now the site of the Bouzareah Observatory, that the consular corps (with the exception of the French and British) sought refuge from the fighting (see appendix: The U.S. and The French Occupation of 1830).

An Account of the Fighting

George F. Brown of Virginia, who was Lee’s deputy, told Thomas Campbell, an 1834 visitor and author of “The Journal of a Residence in Algiers” (London, 1842), that “he had been near enough to the scene of one of the battles to see a close conflict between bayonets and yatagans (Turkish knives), and could descry a Kabyle, who had mastered a French soldier, cut off his head and bring it away with him under his arm. At first, the regular price of one hundred dollars was given for every such trophy brought into the Moorish Government; but a Kabyle warrior having been detected in bringing in a native instead of a French head, he lost his own for the attempted imposition, and the capitation prize money was discontinued.”

An American Loses His Own Head

The French occupation caused at least one American fatality. The British Consular Diary records that, on June 24, 1830, “an American, serving as interpreter with the French army, was taken prisoner to-day and carried to the Dey, who questioned him on the different forces which the French had brought here; and when he told the Dey that they had brought 200 cannons with them, His Highness got into a violent passion with him, saying that he had told him a falsehood, and had his head cut off for it immediately.” Such was the temper of Hussein Dey.
1830-1941: Visitors and Victrolas

The French occupation led to the expulsion of the Turkish garrison and the installation of a French administration, which in turn led the Department of State to downgrade Algiers to a Consulate. From 1830 to 1924, a series of Consuls, usually assisted by one secretary or Vice Consul, performed consular, commercial, and political functions in the shadow of the French administration. Political reporting seems to have focused mostly on the Algerian echoes of events in Europe, although some attention was also paid to political forces within the Muslim population. The pace of life was leisurely; office hours in 1899 where 9 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m.

In 1924, evidently in recognition of a growing workload, the Department of State began assigning principal officers of the rank of Consul General. Informally, at least, the post became a Consulate General, and staffing grew modestly. With the advent of fascism in Europe, increasing attention was paid to its effect among the Europeans of Algeria, as well as to the growth of political activity among the Muslim inhabitants. By 1927, office hours had become 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Early Political Flair

Edward L. Kingsbury of Maine, Consul from 1863 to 1870, impressed one British visitor, Mrs. G. Albert Rogers, enough to appear in her travelogue, “A Winter in Algeria 1863-4” (London, 1865): “G. called on the American Consul, and found him an agreeable and well-informed young man. Indeed, his sole work here is to glean information and transmit it to his Government. There is not one single American resident in the place, nor as yet a visitor from across the Atlantic. He did not seem to think that much love was lost between the Arabs and their present masters. The French are not felicitous in their endeavor to win the affections of their nomadic subjects… Certain it is that the French, with all their diversified talents, do not seem gifted in forming a prosperous and happy colony.”

A First Codel

Samuel S. Cox, a visiting congressman from New York City, complained in 1869 that “commerce increases, despite restrictions, but the United States have no part in this commerce. I find no record of any American vessels at the ports. Our consular duties are restricted to rescuing naturalized citizens from the French army.” It seems the Hill had less fear of charges of junkets in those days, since the work in which this complaint appeared was called “Search for Winter Sunbeams in the Riviera, Corsica, Algiers, and Spain” (New York, 1870). Cox even went so far as to inscribe his book to “my constituents… To you, I have the honor and pleasure of dedicating these ‘sunbeams’ of travel. They were made bright by your confidence, and cheerful by your indulgence.”
Tourism Begins

The growing fame of Algiers as a winter resort and as a jumping-off point for exotic oases such as Biskra led well-to-do British and Americans to begin visiting Algeria in the mid-1860’s. Some of the wealthier bought winter homes on the heights of Algiers; the Snedens of New York, who owned the DCM Residence at Oued El Kilaï from 1892 to 1929, were one such family. In 1893, Henry Field noted that “the American element is small. But there are always some of our countrymen coming and going, whose faces it is pleasant to see. As the readiest way of being brought in contact with these birds of passage, no one should forget to call on our Consul, Mr. C. Grellet, a gentleman who, as his name implies, is of French descent, though born in California, where his father was among the ‘forty-niners,’ though he soon removed to Algeria. To Mr. Grellet I owe my first introduction to Algiers. He went with me everywhere.” Business must have been slow in those years.

American Orientalists

One group that left a lasting record was that of the American Orientalist painters. Inspired by a much larger Orentalist movement in Europe, and often students of the French master Gérôme, they came to Algiers in the 1870’s and 80’s to take advantage of the light and the exotica. Foremost among this group was Frederick Arthur Bridgman of Tuskegee, Alabama (1847-1928), who has left us his impressions, illustrated with his drawings, in “Winters in Algeria” (New York/London, 1889/1890). Married into wealth, he painted for pleasure but developed into one of the greatest of the Orientalist painters. A sportsman and amateur musician as well, he led a “brilliant social life,” for which he loved to dress in Oriental costume. Other American Orientalist painters who visited and painted in Algiers were Louis Tiffany of New York City (1848-1933), Edwin Lord Weeks of Boston (1849-1903), and Addison Thomas Millar, of Warren, Ohio (1850-1913). The works of these painters are held by several American museums.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The turn of the century saw the emergence of a new genre in popular literature – the desert romance. Robert Hichens’ “The Garden of Allah” (New York, 1904) and E.M. Hull’s “The Sheik” (New York, 1919) and its sequel, “The Sons of the Sheik” (New York, 1925), put the Algerian desert and Biskra in particular on the map. By the 1920’s and 30’s, Cook’s and other travel agencies, vaunting Algeria’s climate and local color and taking advantage of the opening of new rail lines into the desert, were offering package tours. In February 1930, F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, then living in Paris, signed up with the Compagnie Transatlantique for a tour of Bou Saada, Biskra, Batna, Timgad, Constantine, and Algiers to give Zelda a rest from ballet lessons and writing. The biographers report that the trip did not accomplish its purpose.
Commercial Promotion

By the 1920’s, the Consuls’ efforts to promote trade with the U.S. – mandated by Secretary of State Evarts in the 1880’s – seem to have been bearing fruit. George W. Wickersham, writing in “Spring in Morocco and Algiers” (New York, 1923), affirmed that “there is a growing commerce between the U.S. and … Algeria… American victrolas warble the latest jazz music or topical song to Moorish and Arab ears in cloistered harems and nomadic tents… American safety razors and typewriters are found everywhere, and American agricultural implements of various kinds increasingly are employed throughout North Africa, while the pensive Arab solemnly munches American chewing gum.”

Foreign Service Memorial

During these years, at least three principal officers died at post: Madison A. Lybrook of Ohio, who died in 1886 at the age of 28 (a tablet in his memory may be seen in the narthex of the Anglican Church); Dean Birchard Mason of Ohio, who died in 1917; and Henry P. Starrett of Florida, who died in 1933. Mason is buried here. The diary of the Consulate General for May 30, 1935 records:

Among the serried ranks of graves in the Carré Anglais of Cemetery, overlooking the Bay of Algiers, there is a stone marked:

Dean Birchard Mason
Consul of the United States of America
Died at Algiers in the service of his country
January 16, 1917

I trust the breeze that wafts the scent of geraniums over his final resting place will recall the lake breeze that tempered the summer days in Cleveland, his birthplace, and that along with his companions who wore the vestments of Army, Navy, Church, and Civil life of different lands, he has in spirit gone “where their tears shall be taken away and there shall be no death.”

The circumstances of Mason’s death are not know, but they may have been violent. A Consul was detailed from Paris to Algiers on January 18, 1917 “to assume charge, render assistance (to) Mrs. Mason, investigate stolen property, etc.” Mason may also have had a lady friend in Algiers, since, according to Consulate General diary of 1935, “an unknown woman is reputed to regularly decorate Consul Mason’s grave with flowers and to pay a small sum to the caretaker for the upkeep of the grave.”

A Consular Diary

In 1935, Consul General Ernest L. Ives and his staff began keeping an unofficial diary of events, a copy of which still exists at post. A record of events large and small from May 15, 1935 to September 1, 1936, it provides a fascinating glimpse into the life of the post
at the time. Political, economic, commercial, cultural, and administrative events were briefly described, along with pithy comments:

On travel to the U.S.
“Requested Atwater to make tentative reservation for me on the dirigible leaving Germany for the United States during September. As the Department only granted me fifty-five days leave, to include travel time, I may be able to snatch a few days more in the United States.”

On Clearing Shipments
“Our skilled negotiator… snaked out a ‘colis’ from its lair on the quays for me the other day with diplomacy and dispatch. However, he was promised that upon his next visit the task would prove more difficult.”

On driving
“Another accident on the Route Moutonnière, a truck and an automobile… It is crowded thoroughfare, with sheep, cows, trucks, automobiles, natives and whatnot, with no traffic control, and the drivers observe no speed regulations or rules for driving. Motoring in Algeria is at best more work than pleasure.”

A Riddle
“It is reported by an unimpeachable authority that Johnnie Fry, son of the lamented late pastor of the English Church, makes the finest marmalade in Algeria. Cogitating upon this fact I found in the archives Consul Dow’s report in 1922 on the opportunities for young men in Algeria, which gave further food for reflection.”

On Visa Regulations
“Our strict observance of regulations has the particular effect of astonishing our Algerian friends, to whom all seems possible, provided ‘bachsheesh’ or a ‘connaissance’ may be brought into play.”

On immigration:
“America must still be the promised land. A French citizen called at the Consulate General today and desired to immigrate there, inasmuch as being an immigrant, the United States would bear the expenses of his transplanting. Perhaps he has been listening to Huey Long over the radio and thinks in addition to his expenses he should be given a $5,000.00 a year job, a nice home, and a new motor conveyance.”

A Prediction
“The French, notwithstanding the fact that they have not sufficient people to colonize even Algeria, Morocco or Tunis, and are able to hold them only by military force, will continue to hold what they have got, until such time as the natives make it too expensive and too hot for them.”
On the Political Situation
According to one pessimistic Frenchman: “The French people must realize that they could no longer treat the natives a little children, that now many of the natives were educated and were beginning to demand their just rights… Conditions from every angle were very bad.”

According to a more optimistic Frenchman: “The natives generally speaking were a peace-loving people, but empty stomachs, (and) propaganda fostered by an organization – Ulemsa – at Geneva through branches in… Constantine and Algiers… (were) not conducive to a quiet future, and that the government must do something for the natives and at the same time be firm… The natives in general wanted citizenship and the vote and at the same time to adhere to their religion. This France would not countenance.”

On Economic Conditions
“On the road towards Constantine on Sunday I noticed many Arabs who seemed to be trekking in search of work. They were mostly in rags and looked underfed. For any work they can get starvation wages are being paid.”

On Oil
According to an American geologist: “The huge desert area to the south is underlaid… by a substratum of highly metamorphosed rock in which it is practically impossible that oil deposits would exist.” (sic!)
From 1941 to 1945, Algiers hosted both diplomatic and military personnel active in the war effort against the Axis. In recognition of the city’s growing importance, the Consulate was formally elevated to a Consulate General on September 6, 1944.

**Murphy-Weygand Agreement**

The U.S. quickly moved to establish a position in Vichy French North Africa, which the Germans left unoccupied. Beginning in December 1940, Robert Murphy, Counselor of Embassy at the American Embassy in Vichy (who later became the first Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs), made several trips to Algiers for preliminary contacts. In February 1941, he and General Maxime Weygand, Delegate General of Vichy France in North Africa, signed an agreement providing for the use of French funds frozen in the U.S. to buy limited quantities of non-strategic American goods needed in North Africa. At British insistence, “Vice Consuls” were assigned to North African posts in the course of 1941 to prevent the diversion of goods to the Axis. These in fact were military personnel operating as intelligence agents.

**FDR’s Representative**

Later in 1941, Murphy was assigned to Algiers as the Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to the Vichy French authorities of North Africa, and he, the staff of the post, and the “Vice Consuls” made secret preparations for Operation Torch, the Allied landings in North Africa that opened the way for Operation Husky (the landings in Sicily) and the subsequent invasion of Italy. A key requirement was to coordinate the landings with the French officers sympathetic to the Allies so as to minimize the possibility of resistance on the part of Vichy French unites in Algeria.

**Submarine Cloak and Dagger**

The central French figure in this coordination was General Charles Mast. Murphy, Vice Consul Ridgway Knight (who later became Ambassador to Syria, Belgium, and Portugal), and Mast met with Generals Mark Clark and Lyman Lemnitzer on October 21-23, 1942 to put the finishing touches on the invasion plans. Clark and Lemnitzer were landed by submarine for this meeting at the Teissier (or Sitgès) farm near the Messelmoun River 19 kilometers west of Cherchell. Vichy police, alerted by suspicious servants to possible smuggling, almost caught the plotters in the act, but Murphy, playing on French sensibilities, convinced them he was receiving lady friends.

**Operation Torch**

On November 8, 1942, beginning at 0100, Allied forces landed in Morocco and Algeria. 33,000 American and British troops landed east and west of Algiers, while 31,000 landed east and west of Oran (see appendix: The Allied Landings of 1942).
The Algiers task force included more than 40 ships. Troops landed in four beach sectors to the east between the Reghaia River and Jean-Bart (now El Marsa) and in five sectors to the west – one along rocky shores around Pointe Pescade (now Raïs Hamidou), two on beaches between La Madrague (now El Djemila) and Sidi Ferruch (now Sidi Fredj), and two on beaches between the Mazafran River and Castigliano (now Bou Ismaïl). Two British ships meanwhile tried to force the harbor to land U.S. infantry to secure the port. One was hit by coastal batteries and retired; the other was damaged but made it to the quay.

The first missions of the eastern forces were to secure Maison Blanche Airport (now Houari Boumediene Airport) and join the western forces in a pincer movement on Algiers itself; the first missions of the western forces were to secure the Blida Airfield (now an Algerian air force base), cut Algiers’ road communications with the south, and join in the pincer movement on the city. These forces were quickly successful, unlike those landed at the port, which were immediately taken prisoner by Vichy French forces. All in all, though resistance and casualties were light.

**Allied Headquarters**

The day after the landings, General Clark arrived to set up Allied headquarters at the Hotel St. George (now the Hotel El Djazaïr), which Murphy had reserved for that purpose. General Dwight Eisenhower himself moved to Algiers on November 23, setting up his offices in a second floor suite of the hotel and his residence at Dar El Ouard, not the residence of the Spanish Ambassador. In the 13 months that Eisenhower spent in the city, Allied prosecution of the North African campaign and planning for the invasions of Sicily and Italy were centered in Algiers, where a staff of 6,000 labored night and day for over 20 months. British Prime Minister Churchill visited Eisenhower for planning conferences at Dar El Ouard twice, in February and May 1943.

**VIP Visitors**

Murphy, in his “Diplomat Among Warriors” (Garden City, New York, 1964), voiced a classic Foreign Service complaint: “I thought that after the arrival of our expeditionary force, I still would be concerned chiefly with Frenchmen… It seemed obvious that we must depend almost entirely upon French military and civilian officials… I could not have been more wrong… My chief preoccupations concerned Americans (who) expected top priority over all other responsibilities. It never occurred to me that we would be called upon in Algiers to deal with a continuous parade of Very Important Persons – or those who thought they were.”

**Early Contacts with Algerian Nationalists**

In Algeria as in Morocco, American officials met with nationalist leaders. In November 1942, Murphy received Ferhat Abbas, later President of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, in Algiers. Abbas wanted to know how the U.S. would view an autonomous Algeria, and Murphy – ever the diplomat – quoted himself in “Diplomat
Among Warriors” as having replied that “Americans were generally sympathetic to all desires for independence, but present purposes in North Africa, as elsewhere, were concentrated on defeating the Nazis. We hoped our friends would join us in winning the war.” In June 1943, OSS officer Archie Roosevelt met Abbas in Constantine. Older Algerians remember these years fondly as a demonstration that the French were not all-powerful and that Algeria had friends.

A Diplomatic Mission

Beginning in June 1943, diplomatic officers assigned to Algiers dealt with the French Committee of National Liberation. Murphy was promoted to Minister Resident, and Harold Macmillan arrived as his British counterpart. Diplomatic activities moved to Paris after the U.S. recognized General de Gaulle’s Provisional Government in October 1944.

Consulates in Bône and Oran

As part of the wartime buildup, American Consulates were opened in Bône (now Annaba) and Oran in 1943. As the war came to an end, they were quickly closed, Bône in 1944 and Oran in 1946.

Expectations for the Future

A 1944 Algiers post report explained that “the importance of Algiers has been greatly magnified since the landing of the Allied forces... and the formation of the French Committee of National Liberation in June 1943. Algiers became overnight the seat of government of the French Committee and the capital of all French overseas possessions except Indo-China. Diplomatic representatives, with the personal rank of Ambassador, were accredited... by the British, Russian and American governments and these were soon followed by diplomatic delegates from many of the neutral and Untied Nations. In addition, Algiers remains the seat of Allied Force Headquarters for the Mediterranean Area... Upon the establishment of the American Mission to the French Committee of National Liberation on November 22, 1943, the Consulate General was consolidated with the Diplomatic Mission... When the diplomatic mission moves to France, it is assumed that the Consulate General in Algiers will again become an independent Foreign Service establishment and that it will assume a position of importance even greater than before the war. Politically, the people of Algeria will be more conscious of the importance of their participation and responsibility in the direction of the affairs of Metropolitan France. Commercially, Algeria will assume an even more important position in the world trade since production has increased in this French possession following the Allied occupation in 1942 and new markets for its exports have been developed abroad.”
Repatriation of War Dead

One sequel of the war was the repatriation of the remains of some 1,000 American soldiers killed in the course of Allied operations in Algeria. This was accomplished in 1948. As a consequence, no American war dead are buried in Allied cemeteries in Algeria.
From 1945 to 1962, the Consulate General, now a relatively large establishment, indeed did become more important, but not, as the 1944 post report predicted, because Algeria strengthened its ties with France. On the contrary, beginning with the Sétif uprising of 1945, the Algerian people began a long struggle that erupted into armed conflict in 1954 and resulted in independence in 1962. Throughout this period, the Consulate General was an important listening post and channel of communication with both French and Algerian leaders.

**Acquisition of Montfeld**

Fortunately, before the atmosphere soured, the U.S. Government acted to acquire two properties, greatly facilitating future operations. In 1947, Consul General Harold Finely needed a new residence. Montfeld, then owned by a French family under a cloud for its politics before and during the war, was up for sale. The French Government agreed to buy it for the U.S. Government in exchange for an equivalent amount of surplus military equipment. Finley took up residence in 1948.

**Acquisition of Mustapha Raïs**

In 1948, the U.S. Government bought the historic Mustapha Raïs property across the street from the Hotel St. George (now the Hotel El Djazaïr), which it intended to use eventually as the site of new and larger offices. This was put off and, in 1964, the government of newly independent Algeria seized the property, creating a dispute that was not settled until 1983.

**French Complaints**

As early as 1949, the Consulate General found itself caught between the Algerian nationalists and the French administration. French Governor General Naegelen wrote in his memoirs, “Mission en Algérie” (Paris, 1962), that “my difficulties with the representatives of the United States of America were serious. It was a question of getting the official agents of a great allied power to stop giving Algerian nationalists a kind of guaranty and moral support. We had seen for months that the U.S. Consulate in Algiers was growing continuously. Cultural counselors, economic counselors, etc. came to swell its ranks. It was taking on the significance of a true Embassy. The Consul General (George Tait) corresponded directly to Washington, no through the Ambassador in Paris. We learned that the Vice Consul, a young man full of self-assurance and mettle, was having frequent meetings with the most active nationalist militants… These latter went so far as to claim that they could henceforth count on the moral and material support of the United States.”

When Naeglen complained, the Consul General told him that it was his duty to keep Washington informed. Eventually, by seeking the intervention of his good friend,
Ambassador Bruce in Paris, Naegelen got both the Vice Consul and the Consul General removed. In his memoirs, Naegelen recounted with some satisfaction that, in his farewell call, Tait told him “we’re being sent into the fog, the Rotterdam,” and that, in his introductory call, the new Consul General (Thomas H. Lockett) had assured him “he would obtain all his information from me” and discipline his subordinates accordingly.

**JFK Speaks Out**

In 1957, for the first time, the Algerian questions entered American politics. On June 11, Secretary of State Dulles stated that the U.S. would not put pressure on France regarding Algeria and that arms shipments would continue in the framework of existing agreements. On July 2, Senator John F. Kennedy gave a speech in the Senate on “Imperialism – the Enemy of Freedom” and introduced a resolution of support for Algerian independence. On July 8, in a second speech, he defended himself against French and American criticism of his stance, noting that “the Algerian situation is a deadly time bomb.” Because of these statements, President Kennedy has always been warmly remembered in Algeria, and the main square of El Biar is named in his honor.

**French Settlers Attack Facilities**

Rising tensions over Algeria made the U.S. a focus for the frustrations of French settlers. On May 13, 1958, the USIS Cultural Center at 36, rue Michelet (now rue Didouche Mourad) was invaded by demonstrators who caused severe damage to the premises, furniture, and publications. The French Government eventually paid $900 in damages. Yves Courrière, writing in “L’heure des colonels” (Paris, 1970) described the scene thus: “The march started off from the University toward the Monument to the War Dead, a distance of 500 meters. This did not prevent a small commando force from going back up rue Michelet to sack the American Cultural Center. All revolutions since 1945 have started this way, most of the time because the insurgents find the Americans to be reactionary. Here, it is the opposite. In Algiers, Americans are the enemy ‘on the left’… If they want communists at home, that’s their business. Here, we defend French Algeria, and we stone the Cultural Center.”

Such sentiments were reinforced by the suspicions of many in the French military that the U.S. had sought to humiliate France during the 1956 Suez War so as to take its place in the Middle East and North Africa and seize the oil of the Sahara.

In January-February 1960, extremist settlers staged an uprising. Insurgents held the university sector between rue Michelet and Government headquarters. The Consulate General received a group Meritorious Service Award from Secretary of State Herter for its performance during this period; it is now on display in the Chancery gallery.

On November 11, 1960, street fighting and rioting provoked by extremist settlers led to the sacking of the USIS Cultural Center for the second time in two and a half years. This time, the French Government paid $12,000 in damages.
On January 20, 1961 – Inauguration Day in the U.S., a high explosive charge was placed at the entrance to the building housing the Consulate General at 119 ter, rue Michelet. Fortunately, the fuse burned out before it detonated the charge. On April 6, however, a heavy charge of high explosives did explode at the entrance shortly after the close of business. From April 22 to 26, mutinous elements of the French Army seized control of Algiers, and the Consulate General was unable to communicate with the outside world.

**Consulate General Moves**

As a result of this pattern of continuing disturbances downtown, the Consulate General decided to seek office in a quieter neighborhood on the heights of the city. In the second week of September 1961, it moved to Villas Mektoub and Inchallah, which the Embassy occupies to this day. On November 1, 1962, it leased the nearby Oued El Kilaï property as well.

**Algerian-American Contacts**

President Kennedy adopted a clear policy of support for Algerian independence after his inauguration in 1961, and high-level meetings between American and Algerian officials intensified as Algeria moved toward independence. In October 1961, Assistant Secretary of State G. Mennen Williams met in Tunis with Saad Dahlab and M’Hammed Yazid, ministers of foreign affairs and information of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic.

**Constantine and Oran Consulates Open**

In anticipation of independence, the U.S. opened Consulates in Constantine on June 7, 1962 and in Oran on Jun 11, 1962. USIS Cultural Centers were also opened in the two cities in the course of 1963.

**Algerian Independence**

On July 3, 1962, as Algerian independence was proclaimed, President Kennedy declared that “this moment of national independence for the Algerian people is both a solemn occasion and one of great joy… It is with special pride that I extend the good wishes of the American people to the people of Algeria. In the coming days, we wish to strengthen and multiply the American bonds of friendship with the Government and people of Algeria. We look forward to working together with you in the cause of freedom, peace and human welfare.”
**1962-1973: A difficult Beginning**

On September 29, 1962, the U.S. formally recognized Algeria, and the Consulate General was elevated to the rank of Embassy. From 1962 to the present – with an interlude as the American Interests Section of the Embassy of Switzerland from 1967 to 1974 – this Embassy has been responsible for the conduct of relations with independent Algeria.

**From the White House to Havana**

The first few years of independence saw correct, but not particularly cordial, relations. In October 1962, President Kennedy received President Ben Bella at the White House; he was the first foreign chief of state to be given an official welcome at a ceremony on the South Lawn. Ben Bella chose, however to go on to Cuba, where he joined Fidel Castro in a call for the evacuation of the Guantanamo naval base just as the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba was being confirmed.

In 1963, the Algerian Government nationalized agricultural lands abandoned by French settlers and other foreigners. This led a number of American citizens to file claims for compensation. In 1964, the Algerian Government seized and sealed the Mustapha Rais property, which the U.S. Government owned, possibly because it feared the U.S. intended to demolish the historic villa to build a new chancery. This created an official property dispute that went unresolved until 1983, when the U.S. Government obtained title to the Oued El Kilaï property in exchange.

**Early Assistance to Algeria**

Algeria very quickly came to need food assistance, and the U.S. began making it available, even though Ben Bella’s trip to Cuba had put a pall on political relations. After the Algerian Government’s property seizures of 1963 and 1964, discussions of agricultural assistance programs were complicated by the 1965 “Hickenlooper Amendment” that called for suspension of aid to countries that failed to settle property claims. The Algerian Government refused to act because of its fear that this would set a precedent for much larger numbers of French claims.

As a result, official agricultural assistance was set aside in favor of humanitarian aid such as medical programs (MEDICO eye clinic at Beni Messous Hospital), Food for Peace grants to help relieve the food deficit and create jobs through CARE, World Church Service, and Catholic Relief Services, and scholarships. An agricultural commodities agreement was signed in February 1966, but in May 1967 the Algerian Government announced that it was breaking off discussions on a loan to buy 200,000 tons of wheat from the U.S. because of “political pressures” from Washington. In fact, the issue of property claims had arisen again. Nonetheless, overall assistance in this period was significant; Food for Peace grants alone totaled $180 million from 1962 to 1967.
Political Chill Sets In

After the June 1965 “Corrective Movement” toppled President Ben Bella and brought President Boumediene to power, the U.S. and Algeria found themselves increasingly at loggerheads on a variety of political issues. In 1965 and 1966, several demonstrations protesting American policy in Vietnam were held outside the Embassy.

Constantine Center Closed

In August 1966, the prickly side of newly independent Algeria came to the fore again when it ordered the USIS Cultural Center in Constantine closed for “spreading anti-government propaganda.” The truth of the matter was that a Quaker volunteer had accidentally borrowed an out-of-circulation documentary with footage of former President Ben Bella and showed it in a mountain village near Skikda. News of the incident reached President Boumediene within 24 hours, and he ordered the Center closed.

Diplomatic Relations Broken

Egyptian President Nasser’s allegations that the U.S. had provided direct support for the Israeli attack in the June War of 1967 led to a rupture of diplomatic relations. On June 5, demonstrators protested outside the Embassy, and a crowd of several thousand sacked the downtown USIS Cultural Center at 5b, rue Eugène Deshayes (now rue Sid Ali Bouziri); it closed, never to reopen again at that location. On June 6, Algeria broke relations with the U.S. On June 9, the Algerian Government agreed that the Embassy of Switzerland could represent U.S. interests. On June 10, evacuation of all but minimum essential personnel was accelerated. On December 11, the Algerian Government agreed that the American Interests Section could retain five diplomatic and eight non-diplomatic American employees to perform consular, commercial, and cultural functions from offices in the former Chancery. State and USIA remained the only agencies represented at post; the Defense Attaché Office and the Marine Security Guard Detachment ceased operations. The Consulate in Oran remained open, but the USIS Cultural Center in that city was closed and remains so to this day.

Algerian Diplomacy Ascendant

The years from 1967 to 1975 were the epic period of Algeria’s activist radical diplomacy. Algiers hosted a series of third world events: a conference of the G-77 group of developing states (1967); an OAU summit (1968); the first Pan-African Cultural Festival (1973); the sixth Arab summit (1973); and an OPEC summit (1975). Concurrently, the Algerian Government promoted the “New International Economic Order,” opened relations with a wide range of radical states, and authorized liberation movements from the four corners of the earth to open offices in Algiers. In 1970, President Boumediene allowed a Black Panther information office to open in Algeria and gave Eldridge Cleaver and Angela Davis permission to live in Algiers despite the fact that the movement had
hijacked an aircraft from the U.S. to Algeria. This office remained in operation until late 1972.

**Presence Further Reduced**

This climate exacerba
ted differences on numerous political issues, and further symbolic steps to restrict relations were taken. Christian welfare workers of the North Africa Mission and the Methodist Church were asked to leave. In 1970, MEDICO and CARE operations in Algeria were closed and their American personnel expelled on undocumented charges of interference in internal Algerian affairs.

**Constantine Consulate Closed**

On February 19, 1972, the Consulate in Constantine was closed, following a request from the regional military commander, who lived next door, that the premises be vacated, since they were in a “military security area.” The officer in question, Colonel Mohamed Benahmed Abdelghani, rose to become Prime Minister from 1979 to 1984.

**Commercial Relations Blossom**

In the heat of the June War, the Algerian Government suspended the sale of oil to the U.S. and placed American oil companies under state control. At the 1967 Khartoum Summit, it also announced the nationalization of the five American companies distributing oil products in Algeria.

Having established the principle of state control over the energy sector, however, Algeria moved to implement a conscious two-track policy, maintaining chilly political relations while seeking to benefit from American economic and technical expertise. As early as 1966, the Algerian Government had permitted SONATRACH to contract with U.S. engineering, management, and consulting firms – including Bechtel; Booz, Allen, and Hamilton; Arthur D. Little; Sherman, Sterling and Wright; and others – in a deliberate effort to break the French stranglehold on Algerian hydrocarbons development and marketing. Outstanding disputes with American oil companies were settled in 1971. In 1973, for the first time, the U.S. participated in the Algiers International Fair; SONATRACH had many students in American universities; the Ford Foundation was providing technical assistance in agriculture; and IVS had 26 volunteers in the country.

**Gas Cooperation**

A high point in commercial relations was reached in 1969, when, as a further step in diversifying Algeria’s energy relations away from France, SONATRACH and El Paso signed the El Paso I contract for major sales of Algerian liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the U.S. upon completion of ambitious new LNG plants in Arzew, near Oran. In 1973, the construction of the first such plant, LNG-1, was entrusted to the American company Chemico.
An Astronaut Visits

Consistent with its policy of “friendship for the American people” despite political differences with the U.S. Government, the Algerian Government received Frank Borman at a high level in August 1970. A tablet at Our Lady of Africa, a church dedicated to wayfarers, commemorates his visit.
1973-1991: A period of Pragmatism

Relations Restored

The October War of 1973 initially led Algeria to observe a five-month embargo on oil exports to the U.S., but Secretary of State Kissinger’s lightning visit to Algiers in December 1973 to explain his plans for Arab-Israeli disengagement talks resulted in agreement in principle to resume relations at a later date. President Boumediene visited President Nixon on the margins of a U.N. meeting in April 1974, and Kissinger returned to Algiers in April and October 1974 to seek Boumediene’s support for his Middle East shuttle diplomacy. On November 11, 1974, after over seven years of rupture, Algeria reestablished relations with the U.S. and the American Interests Section gave way to the Embassy.

Political Relations Initially Cool

In the immediate aftermath of the resumption of relations, political relations did not move beyond a cool correctness. This was due in part to the occurrence of the Green March by which Morocco, seen as an ally of the U.S., took over the Western Sahara in 1975. The diplomatic community lived in a cold war ambiance. Public Affairs Officer Howard Simpson described on amusing 1976 incident in a March 1991 article in the Foreign Service Journal:

Algeria, in all its revolutionary glory, was a playground for Eastern Bloc diplomats who eyed our small operation with disfavor and suspicion.

One hot morning I drove through the White City to visit the director of the Soviet Cultural Center at his office. He was a bearded, affable giant with a slight knowledge of English… It soon became obvious that I was to endure the standard “trial by vodka,” a typical Soviet ploy. Although it was only 11:30 a.m., a secretary appeared bearing a large tray of open-face sandwiches of fish paté and three kinds of vodka.

I’m not sure what my Soviet host wanted to know, but he appeared fascinated by the miniscule size of our staff. Such information was readily available from the diplomatic list, but he returned to the subject time and time again… Throughout our conversations, the glasses were refilled. I first became aware that the Algerian heat and the vodka were affecting the director was by the strange angle of his spectacles. He then began to complain about his past assignments and grumble about life in Algiers. By 1:30 p.m. his glasses were dangerously askew, and he had a sprinkling of breadcrumbs on his beard. It was time to go.

This proved difficult. His staff and left for lunch as we knocked back the vodka and munched the salty sandwiches. They had also locked us in, and the director could not fine his own set of keys… My host was particularly grim-faced when he...
was forced to call the security office at his embassy for assistance… The young, crop-haired security man who unlocked the doors for us saw no humor in the situation, nor did the perspiring director. From that moment on, he made a special effort to avoid me at all official functions.

**Commercial Relations Bear Fruit**

American companies won major contracts in the period after 1974. Bechtel replaced Chemico as prime contractor for LNG-1; Pullman-Kellogg was awarded the contract for LNG-2; GTE was hired to build an electronics plant in Sidi Bel Abbès; the Educational Development Center of Boston and the Institute of Gas Technology of Chicago staffed electronics and gas institutes. Boeing began selling aircraft to Air Algérie in 1977; these form the bulk of its fleet today. SONATRACH sent thousands of students to the U.S., and the Ministry of Higher Education followed suit in a more modest way.

**Bedjedid Succeeds Boumediene**

President Boumediene died in December 1978 following a long illness in whose treatment extensive American medical resources, including a portable CAT scanner, were mobilized to no avail. Secretary of the Treasury Blumenthal, Chip Carter, and Mohammed Ali were among the large delegation that President Carter sent to his funeral. The election of President Bendjedid in early 1979 led to the consolidation of a new phase of pragmatic relations that had begun under his predecessor.

**Military Sales Begin**

As part of the normalization of relations, the Defense Attaché Office, closed in 1967, was reopened in August 1979. In the course of 1980 and 1981, sales of Lockheed L-100 transport aircraft to Air Algérie were followed by commercial sales of their C-130 military equivalents to the Algerian Air Force. These were the first sales of military equipment to Algeria made since independence.

**Disaster Assistance**

In late 1980, the U.S. provided $4 million in disaster relief assistance in the wake of the October 10 earthquake at El Asnam (now Chliff), which registered at 7.2 on the Richter scale. American military units from Europe set up mobile communications in the Montreld garden. The numerous relief flights operated into Houari Boumediene Airport gave the Algerian military an impressive glimpse of American airlift capabilities.

**Tehran Hostage Negotiations**

In November 1979, at the 35th anniversary celebrations of the Algerian Revolution, National Security Adviser Brzezinski met with Prime Minister Bazargan of Iran to discuss the future of Iranian-American relations. Three days later, Embassy Tehran was
occupied, thereby triggering the Tehran hostage crisis. In late 1980 and early 1981, Algeria, in an application of brilliant diplomacy, mediated resolution of this crisis. Signature of the Algiers Accords on January 19, 1981 by Deputy Secretary of State Christopher and Foreign Minister Benyahia led to the release of the hostages and their arrival in Algiers on January 20, 1981, hours after the inauguration of President Reagan. The Embassy received a group Certificate of Appreciation from Secretary of State Haig for its support of these negotiations; it is now on display in the Chancery gallery.

**Visits Exchanged and Agreements Signed**

The process of improving political relations was marked by a series of high level meetings and visits and by signature of a member of agreements. These both provided impetus and served as benchmarks for the process of normalization.

In October 1981, President Bendjedid met President Reagan in Cancun.

In December 1982, Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldridge visited Algiers.

In September 1983, Vice President Bush visited Algiers.

In October 1983, and agreement resolving the longstanding dispute over the Mustapha Raïs property was reached. As a result, the U.S. Government acquired title to the Oued El Kilaï property.

In February 1984, a five year Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Trade in Agriculture was signed.

In April 1985, President Bendjedid made a state visit to the U.S. One major focus was agriculture. During that visit, the two countries signed an agreement establishing the U.S.-Algerian Joint Commission for Economic, Technical and Technological Cooperation and initialed a cultural agreement that was signed in June 1987 and entered into force in October 1988.

In September 1985, to open the way to military assistance, agreements on the General Security of Military Information (GSOMIA) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) were signed.

In April 1986, the Joint Commission met for the first time in Algiers.

In December 1986, a consular convention was initialed. It was signed in January 1989 and submitted to the Algerian assembly for ratification in February 1990. This has yet to occur.

In March 1987, former President Carter visited Algiers to inaugurate the Friendship Forest Park, donated by a group of Americans as a token of appreciation for Algeria’s role in the Tehran hostage negotiations.
In April 1989, the Joint Commission met for the second time in Washington. An OPIC private investment insurance agreement was initialed during that meeting; it was signed in June 1990 and entered into force in October of that year.

**Growth in Programs and Staff**

The improvement in political relations achieved through three visits and agreements had a direct impact on programs and staffing. Mission staffing increased from 26 in 1981 to 46 in 1988.

In August 1980, shortly after its establishment, the Foreign Commercial Services of the Department of Commerce assigned its first officer in Algiers.

In September 1982, the Algerian Government approved the return of a Marine Security Guard Detachment to the Embassy. Around that time, a Regional Security Officer was assigned as well.

In April 1985, President Reagan authorized FMS sales of defense articles and services to Algeria on a cash basis, and, in September 1985, the Department of Defense began providing small annual credit for military education and training (IMET) by the Algerian armed forces. The Defense Security Assistance Agency provided an augmentee to the Defense Attaché Office to help manage these programs beginning in March 1986.

In September 1985, the U.S. Feed Grains Council opened an office in Algiers, and in 1988, Council contractors began building two model farms, one for sheep and poultry meat and eggs in Biskra and one for beef and dairy products near Annaba.

In November 1985, after several years of expanding program opportunities, particularly in the realm of English teaching, USIS leased a building at 8, rue Ali Messaoud (formerly rue de Savoie) in Hydra as its first off-compound center since 1967.

In August 1986, the Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service opened an Agricultural Trade Office in Algiers to manage a program of agricultural credit guarantees and export enhancement programs designed to promote the sale of agricultural commodities to Algiers. This program has, in recent years, grown to be the second largest in the world.

**LNG: The U.S. Market Reestablished**

The eastern U.S. has always been the natural market for Algerian LNG. The first deliveries under the El Paso I contract were made in 1978. U.S. Government regulatory authorities had approved two other contracts with Distrigas of Boston and Panhandle, and two other, El Paso II and Tenneco, were awaiting approval.

In late 1978, because of changes on the international energy scene that made Algerian LNG pricing non-competitive, the U.S. Government regulatory authorities disapproved
the last two contracts, and Algeria moved to renegotiate El Paso I. El Paso suspended purchases in 1981 and eventually went bankrupt. Distrigas and Panhandle suspended their own purchases shortly thereafter, ending Algerian LNG sales to the U.S. until 1988.

In late 1988, Distrigas/Cabot and SONATRACH reached agreement on a new contract for deliveries to Boston. Contracts with Panhandle/Trunkline for Lake Charles, Louisiana and Columbia Gas/Shell for Cove Point, Maryland have followed.

**Focus on Reforms**

Since the 1988 disturbances that rocked the country, the Algerian Government has embarked on a sweeping program of political and economic reforms intended to transform Algeria from a one-party socialist state to a multi-party democracy with a market economy. U.S. support has been both political and economic, with a focus on expanding agricultural credit guarantees, working with USAID to find discrete new areas of technical assistance (housing, population, agriculture), and working with official and commercial lenders and potential private investors.

ANADARKO Corporation has enter into the first new joint venture in oil exploration; Bechtel has been engaged to revamp LNG-1; and Pullman-Kellogg has been hired to revamp LNG-2.

**The Gulf War**

Algeria and the U.S. stayed in close touch during Algeria’s unsuccessful efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis from August 1990 to January 1991. Public opinion was strongly pro-Iraqi, and demonstrations occurred periodically in front of the Chancery. The approach and opening of hostilities triggered a heavy press campaign against the U.S., and numerous rallies were held in Algiers, but the authorities kept them away from the Chancery. In the end, the war does not seem to have done lasting damage to the bilateral relationship.
Appendix

Post Premises Through the Years

Until 1911, American representatives abroad, except for the most senior, were obliged to lease their own offices and homes. In 1911, the Lowden Act permitted the U.S. Government to acquire sites and buildings for offices and living quarters.

Algiers

1785-1830: Town and Country
In Turkish times, the Consuls of Algiers typically rented two properties, one in the city and one in the country suburbs. The first was usually a house rented from the Regency itself or from a wealthy Turk, Kouloughli (Turco-Algerian), or Moor. By custom, it was near the Great Mosque and the Admiralty Gate, usually on the rue des Consuls, the last street of the lower Casbah before the shore. The protocol surrounding these houses was very strict. The Dey did not permit Consuls to fly their flags; on the other hand, he provided them with a janissary guard and a dragoman who served as an interpreter and fixer.

The second property was a country house or garden (djenane) usually rented from a wealthy citizen in the Valley of the Consuls (beyond the present site of Our Lady of Africa) or on the heights of El Biar. Here, a Consul could fly his flag.

1796: New Year’s Ruckus in Town
Treaty negotiator Joseph Donaldson (1795-96) had some trouble at home on New Year’s Eve. American captives invaded his house, proclaiming that it belonged to the public treasury and that they intended to stay rather than return to the bagnios (captives’ quarters). Donaldson called in Moorish taskmasters to beat them back!

1796: Two Houses Justified
The first American envoy who seems to have rented two properties was treaty negotiator Joel Barlow (1796-97), who wrote Secretary of State Pickering that “a Consul is obliged to… have two Houses, one in town and one in the Country, the first for Business and residence in time of health, and the other as a retreat in times of the Plague, and a place where he can keep his cows and other cattle and make his wine and Garden stuff.”

1797: Two Houses Accepted
The first resident American Consul General arrived in 1797, and he and subsequent envoys seem to have settled comfortably into the two-property practice.

1808: Romantic Country Houses
Two sources confirm that the American Consul General had a country house in the Valley of the Consuls in the first decade of the 19th century. Mrs. Broughton, the daughter of the British consul in the 1806-12 period, noted in her “Six Years’ Residence
in Algiers” (London, 1839) that “a road leads up to the country houses of my sister and of the American consul. It was a beautifully romantic pass to ascend, and we did the whole way to both of them.”

The diary of the Consulate General in 1935, noted that “this morning I went with Mr. Fallot to visit what he thought was the American Garden in 1808… It was a fascinating old Moorish villa and quite untouched. On the gatepost is “Le Consulate”. The old lady who lives there, the wife of a French general, said that she had lived there all her life and was positive that the villa was the residence of the British Consul General. Mr. Fallot said that the General had told him that the villa was the residence of the American Consul General in 1808, in which case Colonel Tobias Lear would have resided there. Mr. Fallot, who is eighty years old at least, said that old ladies have a way of getting things mixed.”

1809: Party Time

Meanwhile, the American Consulate General in town was evidently quite the address. Mrs. Blanckley, the British Consul’s wife, wrote in her journal: “A masked ball at the American consul’s. I went as a black woman, in the complete dress of a Moorish slave.”

1825: Fancy Digs in Town

Consul General William Shaler was renting a luxurious Moorish town house from the heirs of Dey Mustapha Pacha in 1825. Its cost was estimated at $100,000 (about $520,000 in 1991 dollars), and its rent was $250 a year (about $1,300 in 1991). In his “Sketches of Algiers” (Boston, 1826), Shaler gave a complete description:

This house is a square of about 64 feet, with a depth, or elevation, of 42 feet, one third of which is occupied by the basement story, consisting of a range of magazines, of cisterns, of stables, and of the solid arches necessary to support the superstructure. The remaining 28 feet of elevation are divided into two habitable stories, surrounding an open court paved with marble 30 feet square, around which is a covered gallery six feet wide, taken from the above 30 feet, and supported upon each floor by 12 very elegant columns of Italian marble, of the Ionic order, which serve on each as abutments to twelve elliptical arches, and thus form round the court a double colonnade of great elegance and beauty. The roof is flat, and terrace, with a parapet of about four and half feet high; and on the side fronting the sea, there is a third covered gallery, where there are several small apartments.

From the width of the court, the apartments of this mansion which front upon its four sides, are narrow and long beyond all proportion: they are well enough calculated for this climate, but would be found very inconvenient in a colder country. Two sides of this house front the sea, where there are external windows, but generally the apartments in the houses of Algiers are lighted only from the court, external windows not being permitted when they overlook other houses. All windows… are guarded by strong iron grates, which give to these dwellings the gloomy air of prisons. In houses where good and capacious cisterns are
constructed, water enough for the ordinary use of a family is obtained by the terraces during the season of rain. This house, like most others of its rank in Algiers, has a second small one, dependent upon it, within its walls, but in other respects completely separate; it may be assigned exclusively to the women, to a dependent family, or a married son: in the general economy here, it affords convenient space for kitchen, offices, baths, etc.

This house is entered by only one external door, which is solid and strong as that of a fortress, so that the family inhabiting it, have everything within themselves, without fear of intrusion. All the floors are paved with marble, or the Dutch painted tiles, and the walls of the apartments are covered, to the height of about four feet, with the same species of tiles of a finer quality.

In all the houses of Algiers, there is contrived a small apartment at the outer door, and without the area of the house, where the host receives visits, and transacts business; as, on account of the women, no stranger is ever received within his domicile, except on extraordinary occasions. This apartment is called the skiffa, and in this house is spacious and elegant. The Exterior of all the houses in Algiers is kept neatly whitewashed, which at a distance, gives a very brilliant appearance to the city.”

Shaler’s location on the sea caused problems during the British bombardment of 1816; when it was over, the upper part of the house was in ruins, and five shells had burst within its walls.

Well before the Vienna Convention, Shaler had to defend the inviolability of his premises. In 1823, after a Kabyle-Turkish clash in Bejaia, the Dey had ordered the consuls to turn over all their Kabyle employees. Several consulates were violated and the Kabyles dragged out. Shaler refused to turn his Kabyle employees over, but, happily, his house was not entered.

1827: Summer Heat
Shaler’s assistant, William Hodgson, rented a country house to escape the summer heat of the city. He was evidently a delicate soul; in April, he wrote that “the withering heat of summer (sic) forbids me to move abroad by day.” He added that the inclement weather made it difficult to carry on his studies or perform his official duties.

Shaler himself had a small garden plot in the Valley of the Consuls. This was described in Edouard Dalles’ “Alger – Bou-Farik – Béjaïa et leurs environs” (Algiers, 1888): “The U.S. Consulate (today the Campagne Santelli) is located bit above the east of Our Lady of Africa. A pretty cactus hedge still surrounds it, just as when Mr. Shaler lived there.”

1830: A Handy Flag
Just before the French occupation, Consul General Henry Lee also had a country house in the Valley of the Consuls. In “A Handbook for Travelers in Algeria and Tunis” (London, 1887), Col. R. Lambert Playfair described it as “opposite to (the old French consulate),
on the south side of the road.” It was from this house that Lee transferred his flag to the Ben Taleb garden at the top of the hill, which the consuls of Algiers had rented as a joint refuge from the fighting. This is now the site of the Bouzareah Observatory.

1991: A footnote
The sites of both the town and country houses of the early Consuls General are now completely altered. The lower Casbah was rebuilt in the 19th century and razed in the 20th, and the site of the rue des Consuls can only be approximated. The Valley of the Consuls for its part seems to have remained rural in character well into the 20th century. In recent decades, however, it has fallen victim to Algeria’s explosion of population and construction, and it is hard for the visitor to imagine the tranquility for which it was once renowned. The old French and British country houses can still be identified; the former is on the grounds of a public school at 26, avenue Ouark Ali, while the latter is on the grounds of another public school further west and above an old French fort. The site of the American country house of 1830, however, is no longer evident, although at least two old buildings from the Turkish period survive in the concrete jungle; one of them may have been the house in question.

1830-1913: Frequent Moves
Until 1911, Consuls had to obtain their own offices and residences. In Algiers, this tended to mean short leases; the average office lease was five years. After 1911, the U.S. Government began to contract for offices and residences, and leases lengthened.

Thus, in the decades after the French occupation, the Consulate moved repeatedly, generally following the city’s expansion to the southeast. Most of the buildings it occupied still stand.

The following locations have been identified:
- 1832 – rue des Consuls
- 1842 – rue de la Porte Neuve (now rue Riah Rabah), in the upper Casbah.
- 1872 – 50, rue de la Lyre (now rue Ahmed Bouzrina), between the St. Philip’s Cathedral (now the Kethcaoua Mosque) and the Opera (now the National Theater).
- 1874 – 4, rue d’Isly (now rue Larbi Ben M’Hidi), at the western end of the street five blocks from the Opera.
- 1881 – 6, rue de Strasbourg (now rue Maître Popie), next to the Palace of Justice.
- 1887 – 3, rue Roland de Bussy (now rue Adjutant Boubzari Mohamed), which intersects at 15, rue Larbi Ben M’Hidi.
- 1888 – 12, rue du Hamma (now rue Said Bakel), in a building shared by the British Consulate three blocks from the Opera.
- 1891 – 14, rue de Mogador (now rue Ali Hariched), which parallels rue Larbi Ben M’Hidi one block above.
- 1902 – 15, rue d’Isly
- 1908 – 64, rue d’Isly, next to the main Post Office.
- 1909 – In 1909, the Consul lived at Villa du Rocher on chemins Shakespeare and des Crêtes (on the site of the Dar El Kef tower near the Bois de Boulogne); the Vice Consul lived in a seafront apartment a 9, boulevard Carnot (now boulevard Zirout
1913-1961: Long Leases
After the Lowden Act of 1911 permitting the U.S. Government to lease or buy properties, the consular premises moved much less frequently, but, again, they followed the expansion of the city to the southwest. The average office lease was 16 years.

1913-25: On the Seafront
For 12 years, the Consulate occupied premises in a seafront building behind the main Post Office at 30, boulevard Carnot.

In 1924, the Consul General lived at Villa Magnan at 159 rue Michelet, somewhere above the Bardo Museum. Rue Michelet above 135 was renamed and renumbered after the Second World War, so it is hard to determine the site.

1925-40: Across from the Police
For 15 years, the Consulate General was on the second floor of a building several blocks east of the main Post Office at 1, rue Jean Rameau (now rue Mustapha Bouhired), at the corner of boulevard Baudin (now boulevard Colonel Amirouche), right across the intersection from the main Police Station. A 1931 inspection report described it as “central, being near the General Post Office and Telephone Office and not far from the harbor, so that it is convenient for visitors and the local public.”

In 1927, the Consul General resided at Villa Stilbrovin on the route de la Colonne Viorol (now presumably boulevard Soudani Boudjemaa); the Vice Consul lived at Villa Sidi Salah (now the Soviet Ambassador’s Residence) on chemin Beaurepaire (now chemin Cheikh El Bachir El Ibrahimi).

In 1936, the Consul General lived at Villa Ali Chérif (now an Algerian Government property occupied by former Foreign Minister Bouteflika) on chemin de la Rochelle near the Spanish and Turkish Ambassadors’ Residences.

1940-61: Near the Sacred Heart
For 21 years, the Consulate General occupied the premises in a building at 119 ter, rue Michelet (now rue Didouche Mourad), near the Sacred Heart Cathedral. This building was owned by the Guiauchain family that also owned the Hotel St. George (now the Hotel El Djazaïr). At various times, space on the 3rd, 4th, and 9th floors was leased, as was space in the adjacent building at 23, boulevard Marcel Duclos (now boulevard Ibn El Khatib).

Robert Murphy, President Roosevelt’s Personal Representative from 1941 to 1943, had his own offices on the top floor of the British Consulate on the seafront opposite the Admiralty at 6, boulevard Carnot.
In 1942, the Consul General’s Residence was “next door to the English Church” and had a Moorish-style living room.

In 1947, Montfeld was purchased for the Consul General; it was occupied in 1948.

1961-Present: On the Heights
In 1961, the Consulate General decided to move. After a first attempt to acquire the Clinique des Orangers, it obtained the adjacent buildings, Villas Metoub and Inchallah, which remain the premises of the Chancery to this day. The reason for the move were spelled out in an old Consulate General Record Book: “In the second week of September, 1961, Consul General Porter transferred the offices of the Consulate General from 119 Rue Michelet (third and ninth floor apartments) to the Villa Mektoub on the Chemin Beaurepaire. This change was deemed necessary for representational and administrative purposes, as well as for reasons connected with the turbulent conditions existing in Algiers, as well as throughout the country. The offices at 119 Rue Michelet had suffered from several bombing attacks carried out by the O.A.S., some of these attacks being directed against the C.G. because of U.S. policies, while others were aimed at other occupants of the building.” In 1962, the Embassy leased Oued El Kilaï as an annex; in 1983, the U.S. Government acquired title to it.

Oran

1943-46: A Wartime Consulate
Vice Consuls Leland Rounds and Ridgway Knight, both among the “Vice Consuls” active as intelligence agents beginning in 1941, rented rooms at the Grand Hotel on place de la Bastille (now place du Moghreb) even before a Consulate was formally opened. From 1943 to 1946, a Consulate was in formal operation, possibly out of these same rooms.

1962-Present: A Peacetime Consulate
A Consulate was opened in Oran just prior to Algerian Independence and continues in operation to this day.

In August 1962, the U.S. Government leased a 28-room house on the seafront at 25, rue Lamartine for use as a consular establishment and principal officer’s residence from Mr. Marc Perrin. The Consulate occupies these premises to this day.

Constantine

1962-72: A Consulate for a Decade
A Consulate was also opened in Constantine just prior to Algerian independence. In 1972, it was closed at the request of the regional military commander, who lived next door and asserted that the premises were in a “military security area.”

The combined offices and principal officer’s residence were on rue Abane Ramdane.
Bône (Annaba)

A Consulate operated for under a year in Bône (Annaba) at the height of Allied operations in North Africa. Nothing is known of its location.
The U.S. and The French Occupation of 1830

The French Forces landed in 1830 at Sidi Ferruch (now Sidi Fredj), as did a portion of the Allied forces in 1942. On June 29, fifteen days into the campaign, French troops arrived on the heights of Bouzareah and El Biar overlooking the Fort of the Emperor, the key to the defense of Turkish Algiers. The French Consul was obviously an interested party; the British Consul played a mediating role; the other Consuls, spurred to neutrality because of renewed corsair activity in the years preceding the French attack, sought to protect themselves from the fighting. Several accounts record the role played by Consul General Henry Lee and the country garden the consular corps had rented from the Ben Taleb family for this purpose.

Camille Rousset, in “La conquête d’Alger” (Paris, 1880), described the scene thus: “From the summit of the Vigie, the commanding general saw the American flag at a distance of about one kilometer to the northeast. In fact, this was the Consulate of the United States (sic), where the representatives of all the European powers, with the exception of the British Consul, had come with their families to fine refuge against the hazards of war. Indeed, in spite of the good will of the commanding general, two consular houses had to be occupied (Naples and Sweden); as for the Consulate of the United States, General Achard sent a company of the 14th of the line as a guard of honor and protection.”

The gathering of the Consuls in this manner had not been without its problems. A. Berbrugger, in his article on “Les consuls d’Alger pendant la conquête de 1830” (Revue Africaine, no. 9, 1865), reproduced a memorandum signed by the various consuls: “We the undersigned, having resolved to gather for the common safety in the Ben Taleb garden, rented by us for this purpose, found that His Highness the Dey had approved this resolution on condition that no flag be flown, since he did not permit the flag of one country to fly in two places at once. This clause appeared to us to be contrary to the purpose of our gathering, i.e., safety, and we resolved to propose to the Dey to remove the flag from one of our country houses to place it at the meeting site. The Consul General of the United States of America, in the interest and for the good of this gathering, agreed to make this sacrifice, which was facilitated by the proximity of his garden to the meeting place, and the Dey approved. This being so, we commit ourselves to gather at the aforementioned garden at our common expense and not to depart unless all agree. (Signed) the Consul General of Spain, the Consul General of Denmark, the Vice Consul of Sweden, the Consul General of Naples, the Consul General of America, the Consul General of the Two Sicilies.

Berbrugger goes on to comment that “the European consuls, gathering in this way at the same spot, were not acting just with the thought of ensuring their personal security. They also wanted to show their entire agreement on the question of the absolute neutrality that they intended to observe in the war between France and the Algerians…” On June 29, before daybreak, our army got under way and advanced toward the Fort of the Emperor. Mr. Bourmont, who was marching with the left wing, arrived at la Vigie, on a
culminating peak of Bouzareah, around 9 a.m. All of a sudden, Algiers showed itself to his gaze. At his feet, next to the marabout of Sidi Bennour, a flag, that of America, floated over the Ben Taleb Garden, while others flew a bit lower, in the Valley of the Consuls, where the consular houses of England, France, Belgium, and the United States were grouped. General Achard was then sent with a detachment of the 14th to reconnoiter the Ben Taleb garden, which was guarded by janissaries. He found the consuls of all the powers gathered there with their families, except... that of England. Then general was well received by these gentlemen, who gave him and his general staff lunch. The consuls also confirmed their desire to remain completely neutral in the struggle under way..."
The Allied Landings of 1942

Operation Torch – The Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria that opened the way to the invasion of Europe from the south – was executed on November 8, 1942.

Algiers was viewed as the most important prize in either Algeria or Morocco. It was a modern city with the best equipped port in North Africa with the exception of Tunis and Alexandria. Port facilities were crucial to the buildup of equipment and men that was necessary to consolidate the Allies’ hold on North Africa and pursue the war into Sicily (Operation Husky) and Italy.

Secret preparations for the landings had continued over many months in London and in Algiers, where Robert Murphy, President Roosevelt’s Personal Representative, worked with the Vichy French officers sympathetic to the Allies to minimize resistance on the part of Vichy French forces.

The central French figure in this coordination was General Charles Mast, who sympathized with the anti-Vichy resistance. Murphy, Vice Consul Ridgway Knight (who later became Ambassador to Syria, Belgium, and Portugal), and Mast met with Generals Mark Clark and Lyman Lemnitzer on October 21-23, 1942 to put the finishing touches on the invasion plans. Clark and Lemnitzer were landed by submarine for this meeting at the Teissier (or Sitgès) farm near the Messelmoun River 19 kilometers west of Cherchell. Vichy police, alerted by suspicious servants to possible smuggling, almost caught the plotters in the act, but Murphy, playing on French sensibilities, convinced them he was receiving lady friends.

On November 4, Murphy told Mast of the precise date of the landings; at 0030 on November 8, he called on General Alphonse Juin, the Vichy French military commander of North Africa at the Villa des Oliviers (now the residence of the French Ambassador), to inform him and, with him, Admiral Jean Darlan (one of Marshal Pétain’s senior deputies at Vichy, who happened to be in Algiers), of Allied plans. It was only by delicate diplomacy that Murphy avoided arrest.

The Algerian portion of the landings was conducted by a mixed force of 49,000 American and 23,000 British soldiers. Of these, 33,000 landed in Algiers and 31,000 in Oran.

The American nature of these forces was stressed wherever possible to avoid exacerbating the feelings of British-French animosity that had been inflamed by the destruction of elements of the Vichy French fleet at Mers El Kebir by British units in 1940. In some situations, British troops even masqueraded as Americans to minimize frictions.

The Algiers operations, under the overall command of Major General Charles Ryder, took place beginning at 0100:
• At Apple, composed of two beach sectors between the Mazafran River and Castiglione (now Bou Ismail), the landings were carried out by a task force of 8 ships that landed 7,000 British from the 11th Brigade of the 78th Infantry Division, keeping the 36th Brigade of this division in reserve. The landings went well, with only sporadic resistance. The first tasks of the British troops were to take and secure the Blida Airfield (now an Algerian air force base) and to occupy Birtouta on the Algiers-Blida road, thus cutting communications from Algiers to the south.

• At Beer, composed of two beach sectors between La Madrague (now El Djemila) and Sidi Ferruch (now Sidi Fredi), as well as a stretch of rocky coast around Pointe Pescade (now Raïs Hamidou), the landings were carried out by a task force of 12 ships that “scramble landed” the British 6th commando battalion on the rocky coast and landed 10,000 Americans from the 168th Regimental Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division (originally an Iowa National Guard unit), as well as elements of the British 1st commando Battalion, on the beaches. No resistance was met initially, but severe problems were encountered in landing troops. The British coxswains of some of the landing craft meant for the Beer sectors caused great confusion by mistakenly coming ashore at the Apple sectors. Military historians also note that 98 of 104 landing craft were lost in the operation. Some resistance eventually developed, causing casualties among some units. Nonetheless, the first task of these troops – to assist the Apple forces in taking and securing Blida Airfield and join the Charlie forces in a pincer movement on Algiers – were satisfactorily accomplished, although limited street fighting took place in El Biar when a Moroccan regiment attempted to stop the Allied forces from advancing into the city.

• At Charlie, composed of four beach sectors between the Reghaia River and Jean-Bart (now El Marsa), the landings were carried out by a task force of 8 ships that landed 7,600 Americans from the 39th Regimental Combat Team of the 9th Infantry Division and elements of the British 1st Commando battalion. No resistance was met. The two sectors closest to Jean-Bart (Green and Blue) were used for troop landings, while the two sectors closest to the Reghaia River (Red 1 and Red 2) were used for landing vehicles. The latter operation began at daybreak and lasted until 1800. Military historians note that operations at the Charlie beaches, as at the Beer beaches, resulted in a high loss of landing craft. This was due to a variety of factors: poor design; high surf; overloading; and in many cases, a failure to close the loading ramps. In addition, the unloading operations themselves were rated as “poor.” Nonetheless, the first task of units of the 39th Regimental Combat Team – to take and secure the Maison Blanche Airport (now Houari Boumediene Airport) – was quickly accomplished; other units joined the Beer forces in the pincer movement on Algiers.

Meanwhile, the British destroyers HMS Broke and HMS Malcolm tried to enter Algiers port carrying Americans of the 135th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Division whose task was to secure the port facilities. Beginning at 0220, the two ships met resistance from shore batteries. HMS Malcolm was hit and retired. HMS Broke was also hit, but made it to the Quai de Falaise on the eastern side of the port under heavy machine gun fire, and at 0520 the troops on board disembarked. Vichy French troops immediately surrounded
them, and they were taken to a military prison. At 0930, HMS Broke steamed out of the harbor, picked up a tow, and then sank.

Similar landings took place under the command of Major General Lloyd Fredenall around Oran at Marsa Bou Zadjar (Sector X), Les Andalouses (Sector Y), and Arzew-Bethiouia (Sector Z).

At 1200, Admiral Darlan issued orders to Vichy French units to cease all resistance. By 1900, all fighting had stopped.

In the late afternoon of November 8 and all day on November 9, German aircraft conducted air raids on Allied ships off Algiers. One ship, the Leedstown, sand in 20 fathoms (120 feet) southwest of Cape Matifou (now Bordj El Bahri) in the Bay of Algiers. Two other ships were damaged.