

The Foreign Policy of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria

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ABSTRACT *This paper examines the ideological and practical aspects of FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) foreign policy. In its perception and practice of foreign policy, the FIS passed through two distinct phases: as an opposition party more concerned with ideological formulations and domestic politics; and, after the crisis precipitated by cancellation of the 1991 elections, as a party that had to reformulate its foreign policy in order to gain recognition and mobilize support at the international level.*

Introduction

Following the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS, Front Islamique du Salut) in the June 1990 municipal elections, the FIS leader Abbasi Madani was asked to explain the main tenets of his party's foreign policy. Madani responded: 'We view our presence modestly. We cannot reach the end without starting from square one. Before entering the world stage we must put our house in order. We should not be vain.'¹ Though Madani's answer is characteristically vague and elusive, the FIS does have foreign policy concerns which reflect those of other contemporary Islamic movements.

The conduct of foreign policy is the domain of the state. As a recognized legal entity and the basic unit in the international system, each nation-state defines its national interests and devises strategies for achieving them. Each state also has the necessary mechanisms to establish institutionalized relations with other nations. Anwar Haddam, the Head of FIS's Parliamentary Delegation in Europe and the United States, admits that, 'it is very dangerous for the opposition, including the FIS, to maintain a separate foreign policy from the central government. The FIS tried in the past to avoid having a different foreign policy as long as the then government of Chadhli Benjedid was engaged in a true electoral process.'² In other words, the FIS links the rightful monopoly of foreign policy to the government's legitimacy.

Like most Islamic movements, the FIS has given more weight to domestic than to foreign policies. Established in March 1989 and banned in 1992, the FIS is by all standards a nascent movement. Throughout these three short years of legal activity, it was most concerned with building its organizational structures, expanding its base of support, reconciling differences between its various factions, and becoming involved in the electoral process in its bid to assume power. The FIS's proposed program of 1989 reflects the discrepancy between its domestic and foreign policy concerns; the section on foreign policy occupies a remarkably small portion in the program, whereas other sections address domestic issues in great detail.

Although the FIS has lacked a focused foreign policy, it has nonetheless formulated general foreign policy objectives and engaged in some foreign policy practices. By demonstrating the difference between its 'Islamic' foreign policy perspective and that of

the secular state, the FIS underscores its status as an opposition party. The movement uses Islam as a frame of reference for its relationships with dominant world cultures (and their relationships with each other), the international system and its power structure, and the vital and sometimes conflicting spheres of interest (domestic, regional, and/or Islamic).

Most political regimes in contemporary Muslim countries are secular. This is reflected in their domestic policies, but particularly in their foreign policies, which are farther away from religion because of the complications of the international system. These regimes emphasize other interrelated factors in policy making such as national interests, balance of power, spheres of influence, and national resources. The Islamic movements, on the other hand, view foreign relations as the concern of the Islamic world in general and address the concerns of their country within this broad frame.

The FIS asserts that its positions are based on a consistent policy and an indigenous, popular frame of reference (Islam) whereas the state's position is often based on a marginal and unprincipled frame of reference (interest). It presses to make these issues central. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Afghanistan, the Gulf War, and Bosnia are good cases for manipulation. This, of course, embarrasses or even delegitimizes a state that is based on secular orientations, driven by national interests, and constrained by the structure of power in the international system.

In spite of its efforts, the FIS is not necessarily successful in presenting a plausible or practical alternative for dealing with the problems of secular international relations. The movement offers general perspectives that often overlook the restrictions in the international system, the conflicting orientations of states, and the limitations in foreign relations. These shortcomings are often reflected in the movements' program, the statements of its leaders, and in its inability to formulate realistic foreign policy stands. In this respect the FIS is no different from other opposition movements, which also lack clarity and detail in their foreign policy formulations.

The FIS's broad approach to foreign policy creates ambiguity and even contradictions between its declared principles and the realities of the contemporary international system. Such contradictions stem from the classic, yet unresolved, dilemmas of how to define the Islamic state in the world community, the political nature of the *umma* (community), and the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.³ In addition, the FIS's orientations and objectives do not always coincide with those of modern structures, such as the United Nations, human rights organizations, and other international institutions that are now an integral part of international politics. Many Muslim activists feel that Muslims have not played a sufficient role in setting the structures or policies of these international organizations. They tend to be critical of such institutions, suspecting them of being instruments in the hands of the colonial powers.

The cancellation of the parliamentary elections in January 1992, the banning of the FIS as a political party, and the exile of several of its leaders abroad, spurred it to give foreign policy greater importance. As will be explained, following the take-over by the military-backed regime in 1992, the FIS became more active in Europe and the United States, adopting a language that was more accommodating of the international system.

To understand the FIS's foreign policy, one must examine the movement's general conception of international relations, as well as its case by case handling of international issues and events. This article examines the FIS's foreign policy concerns on these theoretical and practical levels. The theoretical analysis deals with FIS perceptions and attitudes towards Western culture and values. It draws on the official documents of the party and the writings and statements of its influential leaders, including Abbasi

Madani, 'Ali Belhaj, Muhammad Said, and several FIS representatives abroad.⁴ The practical analysis traces the evolution of the FIS's foreign policy concerns and the party's relations in the Arab, regional, and international arenas.

The FIS, like other Islamic movements, seems to make little distinction between the domestic and international levels of politics. This helps them discredit the regime and mobilize support for their movement. The foreign policy concerns of the FIS cannot, therefore, be studied or understood independently of its domestic environment or relations with the government.⁵ For example, the FIS views Algeria's special official relations with France and the Western-inspired educational system as symptoms of dependency and tools of foreign domination.

FIS and Foreign Policy: perceptions and attitudes

The FIS views the contemporary international system as European in origin, possessing huge potential for instability and destruction because it is based on interests and power rather than values such as justice. It recognizes the state as the basic unit of organization in this European-inspired system. In Muslim countries, the caliphate is the ideal political symbol of the *umma*, though this does not necessarily mean that the state will cease to exist.

The FIS perception of the West takes into account the West's culture and civilization, as well as its legacy of colonialism and domination. The movement does not view the West as singularly evil, but as having both positive and negative aspects. FIS leaders seem to agree that Western culture is currently going through a crisis, and therefore can benefit from Islam in order to restore moral dimensions to the contemporary international system. At the same time, Islam can borrow from the scientific and technological advances of the West in order to invigorate itself. Yet, for the FIS, the Western colonial legacy persists. It manifests itself principally in the attempts of Western countries to sustain a minority secular and authoritarian elite in power in Muslim countries. In so foisting its will on the Muslim peoples, the West compromises its own values of democracy and freedom, corrupts the identity of Muslims, misrepresents and distorts Islam through a powerful media machine, and maintains the dependency of Muslim countries. This dual image of the West makes the FIS at times pragmatic and willing to coexist, and at others, confrontational and anti-Western.

While accepting the contemporary international system, FIS leaders believe this system lacks sound moral standards. For Abbasi Madani, who studied Western cultures and educational systems at length, this problem is a manifestation of a larger crisis in the West.⁶ According to Madani, the replacement of religion by reason, and then at a later stage by science, has been integral to the West's intellectual evolution. This process had clear advantages for Western progress, as it led to the pursuit of freedom of thought and its utilization in a broader cultural frame, as well as the rise of a political consciousness that generated economic, cultural, and educational awareness. Western scientific and technological achievements have energized Western man and expanded his ability to control his environment.⁷ This view is also shared by 'Ali Belhaj, who attributes Western progress to its ability to defeat tyranny, restrict despotic rulers, empower the people, and promote the value of rights and freedom. He considers this the secret behind the West's remarkable progress on material and scientific levels, as well as its stability in the face of violent challenges.⁸

At the same time, Madani believes that modern ideologies are becoming increasingly incapable of resolving the moral and social problems of modern man. Swift and

unprecedented advancement in science and technology has not saved the West from committing mistakes which have come to constitute the source of its weakness. Such mistakes include the marginalization of religion and its substitution by non-comprehensive ideologies that increased the West's sense of pragmatism and relativism. The imbalance in the priority of values, the establishment of economic and cultural paradigms within a colonial experience that impoverished and enslaved others, and the perpetuation of unequal conditions to maintain economic and cultural superiority over other nations are all proof for Madani of Western culture's moral lapse.

Belhaj also views the West as a failure on spiritual and moral levels. Muhammad Said, a preeminent FIS leader who was killed by the GIA (Groupes Islamiques Armées) in 1995, considered the West 'a materialist civilization void of any divine revelation and Shari'a principles'.⁹ He maintained, 'The West has lost the "moral" justification for world leadership, because it exhausted all its ideological pretexts with which it misled people for a long time: democracy, equality, justice, human rights, security.' This judgment, Said confirmed, is based on 'incriminating evidence in Algeria, Vietnam, Cambodia, Soviet Union, Iraq, Somalia, and Palestine. The biggest scar for the West is its policy in Bosnia and the attacks on Iraq.'¹⁰

These Western policies have raised the FIS's fears about the dynamics of relations in the international system and revived negative memories of the legacy of colonialism. In this respect, France, Algeria's former colonial ruler, receives most of the criticism. For Madani, 'French colonialism was one of the worst types. In addition to taking the country's resources, the French tried to suppress the Islamic identity of the Algerian people and to fight the Arab personality of the society. The French attempted to portray the Algerians as a people without a civilization ... They wanted to portray the Algerians as underdeveloped and savage ... The French colonizers, however, understood only the language of violence and confrontation.'¹¹ 'Ali Belhaj has also referred to the continuation of the confrontation with France, accusing it of continued attempts to subdue the Algerian people and distort their identity. He maintains that France has tried to prevent the implementation of the Islamic system through the incumbent elite in Algeria.'¹²

The colonial legacy appears clearly in Muhammad Said's perception of Algeria's foreign relations. Writing during the height of the crisis in Algeria in 1993, Said explained that the objective of the imperialist power was to transform Algeria into a Christian land. In this attempted transformation, the soldier, teacher, priest, doctor, and settler participated. This imperialist project continued after independence, as the incumbent elite enabled the colonial powers to promote their culture under the pretext of modernity, civilization, progress, growth, science, and technology. The hope of building a state within Islamic principles was compromised by the use of an eastern European development model. Algeria had to confront the compounded problem of political suppression, westernization in language and culture, and inefficient economic development.¹³

These circumstances convinced FIS leaders that Islam, as a set of values and a civilization, should constitute the moral basis for today's international system. Madani asserts, 'The need for Islam is greater than at any other time in human history. We are living in an era wherein mankind is steeped in technology and advanced applications of science with an unprecedented ability to practice universal peace or wage global war.'¹⁴ The FIS does not aspire to impose Islam as a religion on other nations, but it looks at the Islamic solution as a means to assure justice, equality, and freedom, as well as to uphold moral political principles at the domestic and

international levels.¹⁵ Madani emphasizes the potential contribution of the FIS to world affairs:

The FIS is making humanity aware of the horizons of justice, freedom, and respect for nations. It holds the view of man as a messenger of civilization ... It wants civilized nations not to get involved in these [destructive] wars with no excuse, except to continue neo-colonial greediness. We have hope, as humanitarians, that the Islamic nation would have the right to existence and to participate in the development of civilization. We have a national hope that our resources are used in a civilized way and are not consumed like animals. We are justice and freedom-seekers, not only for us but also for all humanity.¹⁶

Belhaj goes even further and asserts that 'the West is now more ready to accept Islam than ever before after the Western civilization has become bankrupt in values and spirit, and become overwhelmed by materialism, the spread of corruption, decadence, and moral disintegration ...'.¹⁷

The FIS considers secular regimes in Arab and Muslim countries illegitimate, and therefore temporary. Belhaj wrote, 'There are no rulers in the Muslim countries that could be described as legitimate.'¹⁸ Their lack of legitimacy is evident in the fact that they 'do not abide by revealed laws or by positive ones. I have described them as evil gangs, serving—willingly or unwillingly—the old and new imperialism.'¹⁹ 'They are either kings, who usurped power, bequeathed it, and suspended God's rule ... or military rulers who seized power by force, and conducted fake elections. In brief, it is unlawful to obey these regimes and oppressive rulers.'²⁰

The FIS contends that the political organization of the Muslim nation should be based on religion as its source of values and moral standards, and on the caliphate as the symbol of its political unity. Madani holds the secularized elite responsible for the current state of cultural dependency and intellectual confusion in the Muslim world.

Secularism with all its ideologies was imported and imposed on the Algerian people via foreign-inspired education and the mass media ... Secularism in Algeria has attempted to put a neo-colonialist background of pressure on the Algerian people to make them abandon their Islamic identity and moral values. Algerian secularism, with its accusations that the Islamists are fundamentalist, has waged an ideological war that has faced a strong challenge from an Islamic revival present among successive generations.²¹

Belhaj warns against the drastic and divisive consequences of adopting secularism in Muslim countries:

Those who seek the answer in secularism are wrong ... Secularism destroyed [Muslim] peoples, divided them, and created conflicts between the ruling regimes and the ruled. People should be ruled by principles originating from their values and beliefs. The Jewish Kneset does not legislate on the basis of Islamic laws, nor do Western parliaments produce Jewish legislation. Each of these states legislates according to the beliefs and culture of its people. Why then is the Muslim nation deprived of having laws that are based on its religion?²²

The establishment of an Islamic state and eventually the restoration of the caliphate is therefore necessary for Muslims to reconcile their values with their societies. Madani devised a model of change with regard to the individual and the state of the caliphate, in both religious and political terms. The basic components of this model include the restoration of human dignity through freedom (which is not absolute but restricted by justice); the acceptance of the divine source behind humanity, in order to define loyalty

and the nature of authority; the recognition of the sovereignty of God that prevents conflict of interests; the protection of property; the freedom of opinion, belief, thought, and opposition to tyranny; the right of the people to nominate, elect, and change their political leaders and hold them accountable; and the enjoyment of equal opportunities, education, and welfare.²³ Based on the concept and exercise of *shūrā* (consultation), the political system in Islam is characterized by ‘collective leadership and the collective responsibility of society to guarantee unity that permits pluralism and individual initiative’.²⁴

Ali Belhaj also considers the re-establishment of the caliphate a political goal for the FIS. He states, ‘Our ultimate, long-term strategic objective is to establish the Islamic caliphate. The caliphate is the spiritual symbol for the Muslims throughout the world. This comes through stages; we start in Algeria, by establishing an Islamic state, then we work gradually with our brothers in the Muslim countries till we establish the caliphate.’²⁵ Anwar Haddam prefers to term it ‘the unified entity of the Muslim umma’. This should be achieved as ‘the legitimate and real representatives of the Muslim nation will meet and review the best ways to revive this unified entity. We have the right to be one nation. Why does the world impose this disunity on us?’²⁶ Achieving the unity of the Muslim nation and the restoration of the caliphate, at least as a symbol, is an important, long-term foreign policy objective for the FIS.

The FIS is fully aware, however, that the realization of the caliphate is not an easy task and will certainly face severe resistance. Following the victory of the FIS in the municipal elections of June 1990, Belhaj predicted that the process of transition would not be smooth. For him, the indications came from the campaign launched by the Western media and the French in particular against the Islamists in Algeria.²⁷ He warned that if the FIS came to power, the French would interfere. He suggested that the French could intervene through France’s political and military wings in Algeria—the political parties and the army generals—or perhaps by imposing an economic embargo. ‘On our part, we have not said more than that France should be accountable for our martyrs. This is common with many states.’ He gave the example of the Jewish post-war claims against Germany. ‘We only call for God, this is the simple truth; but they have launched media terrorism against the FIS. This matter is part of a psychological war. France therefore tries her best and with all means to foment world and domestic opinion against the Muslims.’²⁸

Responses from the Americans, the French, and international organizations to the crisis in Algeria confirmed the FIS’s suspicions of Western double standards and unwillingness to accept diversity and coexistence with ‘true’ Islamic states in the international system. In a letter which Belhaj issued from prison in 1993, he states:

Among those who supported the usurpers in Algeria was the West that claims freedom and democracy, despite the fact that the West does not allow coming to power except through the ballot box. But the West supports only the type of democracy that serves its interests ... The West, and the US at the top, believes only in interests, regardless of the type of regime. Therefore, it opposes a military regime in one country, and supports another somewhere else ... The UN did not say a single word about what is happening in Algeria. This does not surprise us as Muslims ‘The Jews and Christians will not be happy with you unless you follow their religion’ [Q. 2: 120]. The loans that are being granted to Algeria are in reality a form of support for those who bankrupted this nation and ripped off its wealth—a support for the military junta, which corrupted the country and people.²⁹

The French position came as no surprise to some FIS leaders, who used it as a

justification for their position in the crisis. Shaykh Said explained that 'France bases its policies on interests. It only supports those who do not oppose its vital interests. The FIS with its Islamic stands and popularity is not easy for imperialism to tame. If France supported us, we would have doubted the correctness of our position. Therefore, France has supported its natural ally with all its means.'³⁰

Despite these strong pronouncements, the FIS has repeatedly expressed willingness to reconcile itself with the reality of the contemporary international system, and has demonstrated pragmatism in dealing with the existing structure. Madani concedes, 'We recognize the status quo in the political arena.'³¹ He even tried to soothe the concerns of Algeria's neighbors in the region about the implications of the FIS's victory. 'The biggest problem that we face on the international level is the Western media, because they look at us through the glasses of fundamentalism. But fundamentalism is the working of the West, and there is no fundamentalism in Islam.'³² He emphatically denied the possibility of a domino effect in the region resulting from an FIS rise to power, or any attempt on the part of the FIS to intervene in the domestic affairs of other countries. Madani asserted, 'We have no ambition further than the development of our country ... It is not part of our ethics to go out to other countries and meddle with what is not our business.' He also denied the presence of any contacts or coordination with other Islamic movements in the region: 'We do not have any contacts. We are a recognized official party and there is no other [Islamic] political party that can invite us or whom we can invite ... We challenge anyone [to prove it] who alleges that we have contacts with fundamentalist movements abroad.'³³

Madani attempted to address French concerns by expressing a desire to maintain better relations with France. Three days after his party's victory in the June 1990 local elections, he stated that he was ready to accept an invitation from Paris, and even to send representatives of his party to French territory.³⁴ At that time, several Algerian parties had offices in France, while the FIS was never allowed any representation on French soil. Madani offered to open a new chapter with France, as long as it was on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of Algerian sovereignty. He justified this by stating:

Independence was achieved at great sacrifices and high cost. We will not give up our right to independence. If there is cooperation while respecting Algeria's sovereignty—the same way France's sovereignty is respected—then we are not against cooperation ... We cooperate with nations for the progress of humanity and civilization ... We have what they lack in a right religion and solid doctrine, whereas they have what we lack in scientific revolution. Science is acquired through education; and religion is acquired by choice.³⁵

Another attempt to indicate the FIS's pragmatism and practicality was made by Abdel Qader Hachani, President of the FIS's Provisional Executive Bureau, following the party's victory in the first round of the 1991 parliamentary elections. Hachani pledged to respect international conventions already signed by Algeria, pointing out that Algeria could not live isolated from the world.³⁶ Though such statements may be interpreted as tactical moves to gain recognition, they are not at odds with Islamic foreign policy ideals. Shaykh Said, a respected Shari'a scholar, delineated the principles of the foreign policy of the Islamic state: achievement of peace in the world; complete justice and cooperation with those at peace with the Islamic state; solidarity with Muslims; commitment to 'correct' agreements; observance of treaties; and support for the oppressed.³⁷ These principles may seem contrary to the common perceptions, or

misperceptions, about the ‘militant’ nature of an Islamic state and its practice of *jihād*. According to Shaykh Said and the majority of Muslim scholars, *jihād* is not *a priori* offensive, but has a defensive role. He defines *jihād* as ‘a legitimate Islamic institution to establish and protect the Islamic state and its principles, and to defend the Islamic society from outside aggression and internal repression’.³⁸

Regarding the United States, the FIS views any future relations as dependent on America’s position toward Islamist Algeria and the Muslim community. This cautious position reflects the possibility that the US, which has never had a colonial history in Algeria, might counter-balance the traditional French cultural and economic influence in the country. It also reflects a common Islamist suspicion about the possibility of an unequal relationship in which the US would dominate. Madani explains the determinants of future relations between Algeria and the United States:

We were among the first nations to recognize the right of the US to existence, freedom, and autonomy. If the US can recognize our right to exist and to be the masters of our own destiny, the relationship will be one of cooperation or interdependence, based on mutual respect for the autonomy of both countries. Our relationship is also dependent on the US position toward the Arab and Muslim world ... The economic programs proposed by the FIS open the doors for cooperation with American investors. They will be given equal opportunity to participate in Algeria as long as their presence is not of a neo-colonial nature.³⁹

Two issues have generated negative perceptions about the American role in the Middle East: its position during the Gulf war, and unrelenting support for Israel. Throughout the Gulf crisis, which will be discussed in detail below, the FIS intensified its rhetoric against the United States. The crisis was given a religious color since the FIS viewed it as a colonial crusade into Muslim land for the purpose of securing narrow economic interests. However, Madani left room for reconciliation:

Before the current events of the Gulf, we were not thinking of putting any limits on American investors, and that is still the case. We have set conditions to secure investment capital within a system of mutual respect and freedom. The American intrusion in the Gulf, however, makes some of us have reservations about dealing with US companies or US-backed development programs. If America withdraws its forces from the Gulf we will remove these reservations and US investors will face no objection to participation in Algerian economic development.⁴⁰

Madani addresses the issue of the relations between Israel and the US in the broad frame of future stability in the region. He believes that the establishment of the state of Israel in the midst of Arab and Muslim land was a ‘satanic’ plot that led the Jews into an ever-burning inferno. It was a colonialist, racist policy that enabled the Europeans to get rid of the Jews gradually, and to redirect their genius from construction to destructive purposes. However, Madani predicts that the Jews will come to the realization that ‘living on our land together in amity and harmony is better than killing one another ... I believe that humanity will have a different development, that it will transcend the notion of land and borders, and will think in terms of one fate, the unity of the world, and the need to exist in a single world.’⁴¹

FIS Foreign Relations and Practices

The FIS has made explicit reference to its foreign policy practices in two official documents: the March 1989 Program, and the Outline of the FIS Program that was produced by the FIS Parliamentary Delegation in Europe and the United States in 1996. In its political program of 1989, the FIS broadly defines its foreign policy, proposing moderation and equity as the two guiding values in addressing international issues and resolving world problems, be these economic, social, historical, or cultural. As for its economic and political policies, the FIS defines these within the principles of the Islamic Shari'a. The FIS, therefore, supports all just causes and all nations in need according to its ability. It is willing to foster peace and coexistence, according to the Islamic understanding of the two terms, and promote world stability so that civilization may overcome its current crises and prosper. The program views Islam, in its doctrines and Shari'a, as the best guardian of human rights. Therefore, the FIS considers the protection of human beings, as ordained by the Qur'an and the *sunna*, as one of its most urgent foreign policy objectives. It pledges to protect humans against racial discrimination, torture, (illegal) detention, and restriction of the freedom of expression.⁴²

The program addresses four main issues in very broad terms: the status of Algeria in the international arena; non-violence and the pursuit of justice as a means to resolve international problems; support for the oppressed; and the protection of human rights. Though it specifies the Shari'a and Islamic doctrines as a guiding frame of reference, the program does not adequately explain any of these objectives in terms of clear foreign policy strategies. It also fails to address issues that seem relevant to the party, such as its perception of the structure of the international system, the nature of the distribution of power within it, relations with the Maghrebi, Arab, and Islamic states, determinants of future relations with these spheres, and relations with international organizations.

Seven years later, the FIS Parliamentary Delegation in Europe and the United States published an outline of the FIS Program in which it introduced changes to accommodate new FIS objectives and strategies following the 1992 crisis. The outline states:

Honoring treaties with regional and international organizations concluded prior to the coup d'état of January 1, 1992 and which respect the strategic and national interests of the Algerian people is seen by the FIS as a necessity, since complex geopolitical and economic ties require involvement on the international scene. The FIS considers 'Islamism' in Algeria as a domestic affair and that every Muslim country has its own specific problems that are to be solved internally. The FIS believes in coexistence between the West and political Islam, and that political Islam does not purport to play the role that communism played for forty-five years.⁴³

The 1996 outline explicitly declares some of FIS's foreign policy obligations and policies at the international level. These include commitment to treaties signed before the take-over of the military-backed regime in January 1992; non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and withholding support for Islamic movements there; and willingness to coexist peacefully with the West. Compared to the 1989 Program, these commitments seem, at least theoretically, to represent an evolution in the FIS foreign policy agenda.

In its early days, the FIS perceived itself as a majority party with good chances of coming to power. As such, it needed to prepare itself for future relations with states and regimes. After it was legalized in 1989, the FIS formed a Foreign Affairs Committee.

The Committee was responsible for introducing the FIS to the world by building representation and achieving recognition for the party abroad, and establishing channels of communication. The Committee was headed by Muhammad Kerrar, who, along with other FIS members, split from the party following the June 1991 general strike.⁴⁴ Ultimately, the Committee achieved very little. This failure was lamented by Haddam:

When we were sent out with this mission [of achieving the above objectives] at the instruction of the National Executive Bureau, we found out that there was nothing abroad—no structures, no contacts, nor any vision of foreign relations. We began in March 1992 almost from zero. Our problems now are a result of this situation. It was the regime that introduced us to the West. Therefore, we now face difficulties to be able to present ourselves by ourselves.⁴⁵

Madani's Foreign Visits

On a more personal level, the FIS's president made efforts to confirm the party's presence in the Arab world. In 1990, Abbasi Madani visited Libya and Morocco. Madani tried to introduce the movement to the leaders of these two countries, explain its objectives, and assure them of the FIS's interest, if it came to power, in maintaining good neighborliness. The visit to Libya was hardly a success, as Madani was unable to secure Qaddafi's moral support for the movement. Qaddafi in general adopts a hard-line policy against Islamic activists in Libya, and views with great suspicion almost all Islamist movements. He describes the followers of these movements as *zanādiqa* (heretics).

The contacts with Morocco, on the other hand, were much more successful. Madani met with King Hassan, who was assured that the FIS harbored no external ambitions in the region, intended to maintain good relations with Morocco, and would avoid any problem that might hinder the 'Islamic' unity of the countries of the regions in the future.⁴⁶ At a press conference in Algiers, Madani addressed Algerian–Moroccan relations, emphasizing the historic role of Morocco in supporting the Algerian revolution in its struggle to gain independence from the French. He excluded the possibility of hostile action from Morocco toward Algeria because the Alawite dynasty had always been faithful to the historic fraternity binding the two countries.⁴⁷ In fact, Madani's positive sentiments towards Morocco were rewarded. When Madani's family had to escape Algeria, the Moroccan authorities allowed them to stop in Morocco on their way to Germany.

Morocco had good reasons for investing in relations with the FIS, as it hoped that an FIS government might be more understanding, if not supportive, of the Moroccan position on the Sahara issue. In early 1993, the king commented on the cancellation of the parliamentary elections in Algeria and expressed his wish that the democratic process had continued, at least to see how the Islamic trend might have resolved its contradictions.

The relations between Morocco and the Algerian regime deteriorated rapidly, especially after the assassination of Mohamed Boudiaf in 1992. Since the 1960s, Boudiaf had lived in Morocco as a political exile. He maintained close relations with the Moroccan political elite. After becoming president, Boudiaf hinted at the possibility of resolving the Algerian–Moroccan dispute over the Sahara issue. Boudiaf's assassination,

however, put an end to a reconciliation between the two countries. Algeria accused Morocco of offering asylum to elements of the Islamist opposition, smuggling weapons into Algeria through Moroccan territory, and otherwise attempting to use the crisis in Algeria to promote Moroccan interests. The Algerian regime took a hard-line position toward the referendum on the Sahara issue and was even implicated in a violent attack on a hotel in Marrakech in 1994. In return, Morocco, which suspected the Algerian regime of attempting to export its state of instability, reinstated visa requirements for Algerians wishing to enter Morocco and closed the borders between the two countries in early 1994.

In 1990, after FIS's victory in the municipal elections, Madani expressed willingness to visit France and meet with officials there to explain his party's objectives and policies. Madani may have reiterated his party's desire to turn a new page with France, developing relations while respecting Algeria's sovereignty. Madani's visits to some of Algeria's neighbors, and possibly France, reveal FIS's ability to be practical. The party was not entirely driven by ideological concerns, whether those of the movement or of the host country, but mainly by realism in order to achieve recognition and establish relations with others.

The Gulf War

During the Gulf war, the FIS seemed close to the practice of a foreign policy. This crisis was important for the FIS in that the party used an international event to enhance its position domestically and conduct political activities beyond its borders. The FIS's position throughout the crisis reflected some degree of pragmatism, if not opportunism.⁴⁸ The FIS initially condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. However, as pressures from the Algerian 'street' mounted against Western intervention, the FIS, perhaps fearing the loss of its constituency, followed the wave of public opinion and supported Saddam Hussein. The FIS adopted a mobilizational tone that was critical of regimes participating in the coalition, both Western and Arab, including its potential natural allies in the Gulf states—Saudi Arabia in particular. In fact, all major political parties in Algeria opposed Western intervention, including Hussein Ait Ahmed's Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) and Said Saadi's Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD).⁴⁹

The FIS, like almost all Algerians, viewed the intervention of foreign forces in the area as a more dangerous situation than the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The party did not believe this intervention was meant to restore international legality, but saw it as a move to ensure Western domination of the area and its oil resources. Madani declared:

What is taking place in the Gulf is a new form of Crusade ... It is a violation of Islamic sovereignty and an aggression against the sanctity of the two holy mosques, given the flagrant US presence and the Saudi regime's hasty permission for it to be there ... As far as what Iraq has done to Kuwait, the problem is a small one. There was no need to allow it to grow to such an extent that it has now become a Crusading war between Islam and its enemies.⁵⁰

In one of its statements of August, 1990, the FIS condemned the Iraqi invasion, but declared the frontiers between the Arab and Islamic countries self-serving impositions of the colonial powers. These artificial frontiers squandered oil wealth, marginalized human resources, and deepened differences between the peoples of the Muslim nation.

According to the statement, Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was a manifestation of this imperialist scheme. The statement called for the liberation of the holy places from the occupation of American and foreign forces; moreover, it attacked the Arab regimes for exploiting the sympathy of the Arab and Muslim peoples, and for calling for *jihād* while pitting one part of the Islamic world against another. The statement declared that oil wealth is a national wealth for the entire *umma* that should not be managed by repressive and opulent monarchical families who deposit the wealth of the nation in foreign banks. It called upon Muslim scholars (*'ulamā'*) to shoulder their responsibilities toward the *umma* in light of these events, and considered those loyal to the rulers to be traitors.⁵¹

The FIS organized demonstrations in major cities such as Algiers, Oran, and Constantine, in which tens of thousands participated, including members of other political parties. Demonstrators carried banners condemning the foreign presence in the area as 'a conspiracy against the Islamic revival', bearing Qur'anic verses calling for unity among Muslims and *jihād*, and rejecting foreign interference in Muslim affairs. Through a thirteen-member delegation of leaders of Islamic movements, Madani and Belhaj tried to mediate between Iraq and its Gulf neighbors. They visited Saudi Arabia three times and Iraq twice.

Some analysts view the FIS's position during the crisis as opportunistic, reflecting doctrinal shallowness that favored domestic popularity at the expense of international links and Islamic ideology.⁵² It is true that during one of the demonstrations, the FIS seized the opportunity to demand that the regime set a date for the National Assembly elections.⁵³ The FIS argued that it was formulating its policies in line with its understanding of Islamic principles. Yet it is difficult to interpret its position as unreserved support for Saddam and his repressive Ba'athist regime, which ruthlessly eliminated prominent leaders of the Islamist movement in Iraq, such as Imām Baqir al-Sadr. The FIS viewed the crisis and its implications from the larger international context of a Western-dominated onslaught against the people of a Muslim and Arab country. The issue became one of choice between the lesser of two evils (or according to a Sharī'a principle, *akhaḥf al-ḍararayn*): Western domination, or the well being of a Muslim country, albeit under a repressive regime.

FIS Abroad: structures and policies

Following the cancellation of the parliamentary elections and the regime's repressive measures against the FIS, several party leaders fled the country and resettled abroad, mainly in Europe and the United States. In 1993, the FIS established a ten-member Executive Bureau Abroad, headed by Rabeḥ Kebir. It also established informal representation in the United States and in European countries such as France, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, and Italy. Some of these leaders were granted political asylum; others, however, were placed under house arrest (such as Kebir), detained, or tried for allegedly establishing 'terrorist' networks and smuggling arms through European territories into Algeria. It has been reported that France, particularly under Interior Minister Charles Pasqua, who adopted a hard-line policy against the Islamists and was considered to have supported those adopting a hard-line military approach to the crisis in Algeria—the 'eradicators'—mounted diplomatic pressure on several European countries and the United States in order to dismantle the FIS's structures and/or silence its representatives. Many FIS leaders and followers abroad were detained in periodic crackdowns that followed violent incidents. The FIS categorically condemned

such violence and denied any involvement. In fact, the FIS had decided as one of its policy objectives not to export violence into foreign territories.

The FIS worked on establishing contacts with foreign decision-making circles. The party hoped to persuade these governments to align themselves more closely with the FIS's views of the crisis and its proposed solution for resolving it. The FIS also gained access to the media and established contacts with international human rights organizations in order to shed light on atrocities and human rights violations committed by the Algerian regime. The FIS published several newsletters abroad such as *Al-munqidh* [The Savior], *Al-sabīl* [The Way], *Al-tabṣīra* [Enlightenment], *Al-ribāṭ* [The Lodge], and *La Cause* [The Cause] to confirm its continued presence and disseminate its views on the crisis.

In 1993, the Executive Bureau Abroad established the Parliamentary Delegation in Europe and the United States. Headed by Anwar Haddam, this included members of the FIS elected in the first round of the 1991 aborted national elections. The main objectives of the Parliamentary Delegation were to articulate FIS views about the Algerian crisis and to prepare for future diplomatic relations between an Islamic state of Algeria and other countries.⁵⁴

The delegation had other objectives as well. It succeeded in establishing contacts with the US administration in an attempt to persuade the American government to adhere to its professed support for and protection of popularly elected governments. Although the US welcomed these contacts in case the FIS came to power, it limited communication with the FIS representative to low-level officials at the State Department. However, these contacts were suspended in 1995, as chances of the FIS coming to power dwindled. Most European countries as well as the United States decided to support the military-backed regime in its attempts to restructure political institutions in the country, even without the participation of the FIS or other major political parties. The Parliamentary Delegation also tried to lobby the US Congress to condition any assistance to the regime in Algeria on improvement of human rights conditions. Through periodic lectures, conferences, position papers, and communiqués, the Parliamentary Delegation tried to reach US think tanks and the media to exhort them to take a more understanding position of the FIS's views regarding the crisis. The FIS also contacted international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Middle East Watch to keep them aware of specific cases of human rights violations committed by the Algerian regime.

Frustrated with the media and by slow progress at policy-making levels, in September 1994 the Parliamentary Delegation formed an Information Bureau in Washington to appeal directly to public opinion in the United States and Europe. The main activities of the Bureau included issuing 'News and Press Releases ... in order to inform the public opinion of the views of the FIS on specific issues as well as correct any misinformation on the FIS or on the events concerning Algeria.'⁵⁵ In May 1996, the Information Bureau published a newsletter, *Algeria Salvation*, to provide information on the situation in Algeria.⁵⁶

The Rome Accord

In January 1995, Algeria's main opposition parties and the FIS met in Rome and reached an accord to set the grounds for a negotiated solution to the country's crisis. The meetings were sponsored by the Sant' Egidio Community, which is close to the Catholic Church. According to Haddam, one of the signatories of the Accord, the

initiative came as a result of the contacts and activities of Ahmed Zaoui—a university professor of Shari‘a, a member of the FIS Consultative Council, and the FIS representative in Belgium—with the Community and Christian organizations in Europe.⁵⁷

The Rome Accord, which was signed by seven political parties that received a total of 82% of the votes in the 1991 elections, as well as the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights, constituted a common ground for the formation of real political pluralism in Algeria. It consisted of six main parts: a framework of values and principles; measures that should precede negotiations; the need for a reinstatement of peace; the demand for a return to constitutional legality; the call for a return to popular sovereignty; and guarantees for the implementation of the agreement. The Rome signatories, including the FIS, have all agreed on the renunciation of violence as a means to achieve or retain power; the rejection of dictatorship regardless of its nature or form; the recognition of the right of the people to defend their elected institutions; respect for political ‘alternation’—or transfer of power—through popular vote and for political, cultural, and ethnic pluralism; and the guarantee of both individual and collective fundamental freedoms. They also called for the non-interference of the army in political affairs and the release of imprisoned FIS leaders.

The Accord demonstrated FIS’s ability to broaden its base of support and forge an alliance with other political forces, liberal and secular, thus eluding the regime’s plans to isolate it. But the Rome platform suffered from one serious problem—it lacked a mechanism to enforce it. The regime also hindered the parties that signed the Accord from mobilizing popular support for it. It waged a harsh smear campaign against the signatories, describing them as traitors and lackeys of the Church and Christian circles. In addition, foreign powers, including the United States and France, lent only verbal support for the platform, when they could have exerted pressure on the military-backed regime to accept a negotiated settlement to the crisis. Instead, France and the United States supported President Liamine Zeroual’s plan to hold presidential elections before the end of 1995, while pursuing military operations against the Islamic militants and speeding the process of restructuring the country’s economy. Zeroual’s plan was accompanied by active public relations and diplomatic campaigns. The regime tried to send the message that the military solution was succeeding, and that all that Algeria needed was additional foreign financial assistance and political support to overcome the crisis. The plan was endorsed by the West, despite the fact that it neither addressed the core causes of the crisis nor enjoyed the support of the major political forces in the country.

After the Accord, the FIS leaders continued to court Western countries for their support of a negotiated settlement to the crisis. Haddam pledged, ‘We will launch a broad information campaign so that all big powers know that all democrats and Islamists form a joint front to demand that the Algerian military return to the democratic process’.⁵⁸ The FIS sent a letter to the newly elected French President Jacques Chirac, urging him to support the Rome Accord and expressing hope for a new French policy toward Algeria. The FIS hoped that such a policy would be positive, and take into consideration the long-term interests of the peoples of the Mediterranean.⁵⁹

‘Ali Belhaj defended the Rome Accord, responding from prison to the regime’s smear campaign against its signatories. He defended FIS leaders who had left the country and resided abroad because of security concerns, political suppression, and the media blackout. Belhaj maintained that those who went to Rome did so not to solicit any intervention in the internal affairs of Algeria, but to air the views of the legitimate opposition. He rejected any internationalization of the crisis, and accused the regime

itself of doing precisely this through diplomatic pressure on foreign countries, receiving supplies of money and weapons from foreign countries, exchanging security information, and holding conferences on security cooperation.⁶⁰

For the FIS, the Rome Accord was an important foreign policy achievement in so far as it established good relations with Christian organizations in Europe, particularly with the Catholic Church through the Sant' Egidio Community. Events were soon to prove again that the FIS was keen on maintaining good relations with the Church.

Letter to the Pope

Following the kidnapping and murder of seven French monks in Algeria in April 1996, Haddam sent a letter to the Pope, in which he expressed profound grief and sorrowful condolences on behalf of the FIS and its leadership, the *mujahideen*, and the Algerian people. He praised the efforts of the monks in assisting their local community and noted the respect they enjoyed among the population. The FIS condemned the assassination as an offense against God and an insult to Algerian spiritual and moral values and traditions of hospitality. Haddam quoted a verse from the Qur'an, which states: 'And nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, We are Christians: because amongst them are men devoted to learning and men who renounced the world, and they are not arrogant.'⁶¹

The FIS took this opportunity to explain to the Pope its position regarding the crisis, emphasizing that its struggle was primarily against military targets and the corrupt regime, which confiscated the choice of the people. The FIS solicited the Pope's support for an independent inquiry team to find those responsible for the crime. The FIS hoped that the tragic and painful event would not be an obstacle to the development of understanding and goodwill between Muslims and Christians.⁶²

Relations with the West and the United States

Four months after the Rome Accord, Anwar Haddam wrote a long letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher in response to a State Department briefing (May 20, 1995), in which it was stated that the US 'has great respect for the Algerian government'. The letter was important because it reiterated FIS's views on the crisis and the relations between the West and Islam. It also articulated FIS's foreign policy *vis-à-vis* the United States. Large portions of this letter were reproduced in FIS communiqués, press conferences, and position papers.

The letter expressed FIS's deep concern about what it read as a sudden shift in the Department's position on Algeria. The FIS underscored the fact that the incumbent regime in Algeria was illegitimate, backed by the power of the military and the support of foreign forces. This regime thwarted the democratic process, acted against the constitution, and violated basic human rights. The letter confirmed the FIS's firm belief in peaceful and constitutional change, its respect for pluralism, the principles of elections, and transfer of power. It denied that the party espoused violence, and recalled the FIS's repeated condemnation of the use of violence against civilians, journalists, women, and foreigners. However, as a lawfully elected party, the FIS maintained that it had the moral, legal, and historical responsibility to stand by the right of the people to defend themselves against the usurpation of their constitutional rights. It advocated a negotiated, peaceful settlement of the crisis on the basis of the Rome Accord, which it viewed as a true point of departure in the search for a concrete solution.

The letter criticized Western foreign policy for lending credibility to authoritarian regimes. It urged the Western world to rethink its selective approach to democratization and review its tendency to define stability and security in Muslim countries in terms of the *status quo*, since this policy often contradicts Western democratic values. The desire of Western governments to see democratic progress in the Muslim world is not compatible with their silence on, or support of, the tyrannical repression dealt to Islamic movements and populations by most of the regimes in the region. This hypocrisy further alienates the West from Muslim populations and fuels the theory of a Western conspiracy against Islam—a theory that has held currency in the Muslim world at least since the dawn of European colonialism.

The FIS reiterated plans it had outlined in its platform to maintain normal and friendly relations with Western countries and to participate fully in the global free economy. It highlighted the diversification of the internal economic structure and of foreign trade as a priority and emphasized the necessity of attracting foreign capital to revitalize the economy.

The letter spoke of the FIS's mandate and its plans for reform. Haddam claimed the party needed peace and stability without foreign interference to move beyond slogans and vague promises, and instead provide the intellectual and social foundations for political and socio-economic changes. Because the FIS was able at the local level of the municipal councils to transform ideological commitment and slogans into concrete policy programs that responded to local concerns, it was elected to the parliament by a majority of the Algerians. The letter emphasized the desire of FIS leaders to demonstrate their ability to be effective problem-solvers rather than *status quo* critics.

The letter continued, it is 'only through dialogue that we could reach a mutual understanding of each other's interests and concerns ...'. The letter concluded by placing hopes on the US to champion just and fair causes around the world, and stand by the will of the Algerian people in difficult moments.⁶³

Ironically, Haddam's call for maintaining dialogue and building understanding between the FIS and the United States went unheeded. In December 1996, he was denied political asylum in the United States, arrested, and placed in a detention center for allegedly making statements that incited the persecution of others.

The New World Order and International Organizations

The FIS is critical of some aspects of the current international system, in particular what is termed as the new world order. For the FIS, this new world order is unfairly dominated by the United States and overlooks the issues of human rights, cultural diversity, and the right of people to choose their political authority. The tragic situation Algeria currently endures 'is a direct result of the machinations of those who are behind this US-backed New International Order ... It is based on a double standard position when it comes to the respect of human rights and the freedom of choice outside the Western borders.'⁶⁴

The FIS notes three foci of the new world order in the Middle East and North Africa region: the peace process in the Middle East and concern for Israeli security; the sources and supply of energy; and the integration of the countries of the region into the world economy. US policy toward countries in the region seems determined by their various contributions to these three concerns.⁶⁵ Regarding the peace process and the security of Israel, the FIS avoids articulating a concrete position by considering the problem in the Middle East as a problem of democracy rather than one of peace. It is

a problem of implementing basic human rights and establishing a representative political authority on the basis of public will. As a legitimate political authority, it can then negotiate with the Israeli leadership. 'Most of the regimes of the region do not represent their people, and hence they are not in a position to negotiate on their behalf with the representatives of the Jewish people.'⁶⁶ The FIS believes lasting peace in the Middle East is contingent upon the establishment of duly elected governments that can discuss and ratify any agreements with Israel within their respective parliaments.

On the supply of oil and the free market economy, the FIS aims to assure foreign countries and investors that their Algerian investments would be secure if it came to power. The party expresses its desire to maintain economic relations with the outside world, given the need for revenue to rebuild the country after years of virtual civil war. The FIS also recognizes the importance of revenue to implement its programs of development:

The economic program of FIS based on which it was elected, foresees the participation of Algeria in the Global Free Economy. At the same time, however, it sees that the relations between countries and institutions are to be built on a partnership basis to avoid over-exploitation, and guarantee proper and sound management of human as well as material resources. The FIS is of course aware that being part of a global free economy has good and bad effects on the domestic economy. For that reason, it proposes a gradual participation in the free market economy: economic liberalization has to be driven by state policies that mean one will have to favor certain sectors of the economy at the expense of others [such as the agricultural and export sectors]. Obviously to implement such policies one needs to have political stability.⁶⁷

The party also recognized that some of its economic programs might not please international financial institutions such as the IMF.

The International Monetary Fund

The FIS believes that IMF economic programs maintain the financial stability of troubled countries in order to reassure creditors, rather than to promote effective overall development. It also suspects that the IMF prescribes the same reform packages for countries with different economic conditions and states of development. The FIS studied several cases where IMF policies had been applied to countries with different economic levels (Russia, Mexico, Zaire, Brazil, Ghana, and Egypt). These studies convinced the FIS that IMF experiments register disappointing results, including the loss of investments in both the public and the private sector; a slowdown in the global growth rate; a decrease in real earnings; the substitution of national capital with foreign capital; and marginalization of the national economy.

The FIS is equally skeptical about relations with the Paris Club. In an FIS internal report that examined 161 accords concluded with the Paris Club, only five countries were deemed to have been capable of resolving the problem of their debt within the prescribed framework. In response to such perceived failure, the party has proposed its own measures to alleviate Algeria's economic problems. These include restructuring the economy, with priority given to the agricultural sector and exports and purchasing debts from international and private banks (they represent 70% of foreign debts) by Algerian businessmen sympathetic to the FIS (according to Haddam, the FIS has made contacts with people inside Algeria and abroad who are willing to do so). The FIS has

also encouraged foreign investment in the oil and agricultural sector which would decrease gradually as domestic development improves, and privatization of state-owned agricultural land currently run by the state to decrease public spending and the budget deficit.

Despite its strong reservations, the FIS has not excluded the possibility of dealing with the IMF and Paris Club in the future. It has, however, expected to contribute to the revision of their policies, so that 'they [would] cease to become instruments for holding an economic grip over our country'.⁶⁸ The FIS has also expressed willingness to cooperate with the foreign partners of Algeria, both countries and organizations, in the normal framework of international relations, and has sought advice on ways to repatriate funds smuggled out of the country (totalling \$35 billion) and deposited in Swiss banks by elements in the military regime.⁶⁹

However, the FIS has undermined potential trade relationships in its attempt to dissuade foreign investors from concluding agreements with the regime in Algeria. FIS's Provisional National Executive Bureau issued a statement on January 16, 1992, in which it warned that 'the future legitimate authority in Algeria will not see itself bound by accords, agreements, or treaties engaged with the dictatorship in power since January 11, 1992. These agreements were not ratified by a duly elected parliament nor signed by a political authority constitutionally elected, and thus will not engage the Algerian state in the future.' The FIS has also considered any foreign aid given to the regime as support for the military rulers against the interests of the Algerian people, and against their inalienable right to choose their political leadership.⁷⁰

The United Nations and Human Rights Organizations

Following the crisis in Algeria, the FIS realized the role that international organizations could play in influencing public opinion and mounting pressure on the Algerian regime. Unsurprisingly, the FIS did not start by trying to contact Arab or regional organizations, such as the Arab League or the Organization of African Unity. It viewed these organizations as representing regimes with no democratic experiences, who would therefore be supportive of maintaining the *status quo* and the military-backed regime in Algeria. Its efforts focused instead on the United Nations and international human rights organizations. During Boutros-Ghali's term as Secretary-General (1992–1996), the FIS did not invest much hope in the UN since Boutros-Ghali had expressed his reluctance for the UN to play a role in resolving the crisis. He stated to Agence France-Presse that religious extremism contradicted the basic principles of the UN, as the UN Charter stipulates equality between men and women. When asked about the possibility of avoiding a complete breakdown of the situation in Algeria, he stated that the issue was not presented within the framework of the UN.⁷¹ In fact, a limited UN delegation had provided technical assistance during the presidential elections in November 1995. Given the security situation and the exclusion or boycott of the major political parties, these elections were viewed by many as a farce and an attempt to legitimize the regime in Algeria.

Mousa Kraoush, the spokesman of the Federation of Algerian Fraternity in France (an association close to the FIS), sent a harsh letter to Boutros-Ghali asking for his resignation. Kraoush was responding to statements Boutros-Ghali had made regarding the situation in Algeria in which he had asserted that the regime in Algeria was in control of the situation. Kraoush considered this an indication that the UN was

publicly taking the side of the military-backed regime. He indicated that Boutros-Ghali's mission should have focused on informing UN member states of the tragic situation of the Algerian people. He urged the UN to take measures, as it had in Haiti, to pressure the ruling junta to respond to the will of the people instead of hiding the crimes of the regime from the outside world.⁷²

The situation changed when Kofi Annan became the new UN Secretary General in 1997. The FIS was quick to respond to his call for Algerians to find reconciliation. Abbasi Madani, who was released from prison in July, sent a letter to the Secretary General on August 30, 1997, in which he expressed readiness to call for an immediate stop to the blood-letting in preparation for a serious dialogue to bring an end to the crisis. After this letter, Madani was placed under house arrest.

In addition, the FIS intensified its activities to out-manuever the diplomatic campaigns of the Algerian regime in the UN. During the 51st Session of the UN Human Rights Commission, Algerian Foreign Minister Saleh Dembri declared that he needed to see proof of human rights violations in his country. The FIS responded to this challenge by sending a statement to the Commission in which it presented a list of human rights abuses allegedly committed by the Algerian regime. However, the FIS questioned the legitimacy of the Commission, given it had appointed an Algerian diplomat as its vice-president, and elected a diplomat from Tunisia—a country with a dismal human rights record—for the presidency of its 49th session. The FIS called upon the UN Human Rights Commission to form an independent inquiry team to probe the cases of human rights violations in Algeria.⁷³

In Geneva, FIS sympathizers rallied in front of UN headquarters to protest human rights violations following the massacres at Sarkaji and Berrouaghia prisons, in which hundreds of political detainees, including FIS members, were summarily executed by prison authorities. In addition, a delegation of FIS parliamentarians met with the president of the UN Human Rights Commission, human rights organizations, and NGOs participating in the 51st session of the UNHRC. After the visit, the delegation held two separate press conferences for foreign and Arab press at UN headquarters to present cases of Algerian human rights abuses.⁷⁴

The FIS has made contacts with human rights organization in Europe and the United States, providing them with concrete cases of human rights violations. These organizations have issued several reports that pointed to the level of violence committed by both the regime and the Islamic armed groups. The FIS has complained that these reports were not completely objective, as they named FIS leaders who allegedly condoned violence, while omitting the names of generals who were behind the murder of civilians. While generally appreciating the overall efforts of these organizations, the FIS has criticized them for blaming both sides, ignoring the root of the crisis and the right of the people to defend their elected institutions.

Thus, the FIS has attempted to involve several international organizations in the crisis by trying to win them over to FIS positions. In these pursuits, the FIS has adopted a practical, yet selective, attitude in dealing with the structures of the international system. The FIS's role has remained limited, however, perhaps because its Islamic political orientation does not necessarily coincide with the orientations of these organizations. Haddam confirmed:

Our view of international organizations does not mean that we will adopt a hostile stand toward them. This is not conceivable. We will try to contribute to adjust these organizations to perform their proper role ... Though we have

our own perspectives, we will deal with all current regimes and all present organizations on their standards.⁷⁵

Foreign Visits

In 1996, the FIS scored an important foreign policy achievement. Despite the intensive diplomatic campaigns of the Algerian regime to circumvent FIS's activities abroad, and French pressure on its allies to silence FIS representatives in their territories, the FIS was able to conclude two visits: one to Sweden, where Anwar Haddam received a semi-official reception; and another to South Africa, where he met with President Nelson Mandela. Although the visits did not produce a tangible change in the situation in Algeria, they did increase FIS's international visibility.

Haddam visited Sweden in February 1996, at the invitation of two parliamentary groups: the League of the Christian Party and the Council for Peace of the Center Party. Similar to the Sant' Egidio Community, the two organizations are interested in fostering resolution in areas of conflict. They organized a press conference in Stockholm for Haddam in which he declared a 'peace initiative'. In this conference, Haddam asserted his continued faith in the Rome Accord as a basis for resolving the crisis in Algeria. He proposed sending an FIS parliamentary delegation of three members (Haddam, Ahmed Zaoui, and Rashid al-Sharif, who had been elected to parliament in the first round of the aborted elections and now lives in Sweden) to Algeria to discuss practical ways for the resolution of the crisis with imprisoned FIS leaders Madani and Belhaj.⁷⁶ He also used this forum to present FIS's views of the crisis, which by then had claimed 60,000 lives. He blamed the regime for the ongoing civil war. He warned against the international community's reluctance to recognize the right of the people to defend their elected institutions, which would further radicalize the extremists at the expense of the moderates. He explained that the FIS suffered from the radical militants who killed FIS leaders Shaykh Muhammad Said and Abdel Razzaq Rajjam. Haddam once again condemned the killing of innocent civilians, especially children and women, journalists, politicians, and intellectuals.⁷⁷

The Algerian regime rejected this initiative and threatened Haddam with arrest should he come to Algeria. It protested to the Swedish authorities for granting entry to Haddam. The Swedish government rejected the Algerian protest, explaining that the 'freedom of expression is part of Swedish democratic traditions. The spokesman of the Swedish foreign ministry defended Haddam's right to come to Sweden and express his views.'⁷⁸

After Sweden, Haddam visited South Africa and met with President Nelson Mandela and Vice-President De Klerk. He sought Mandela's mediation in the crisis. Haddam explained the Algerian situation to Mandela, briefing him on all the peace initiatives that the FIS had made through Madani, Belhaj, and other FIS leaders. He also discussed the Rome Accord.

Haddam wanted Mandela to urge Algerian President Zeroual to express his views clearly on the Rome Accord and persuade him to accept the Stockholm initiative for peace. He also asked Mandela to work on convincing the Organization of African Unity to seek a political solution to the crisis. According to an FIS statement, Mandela promised to exert his best efforts to help the Algerian people.⁷⁹

Haddam's visit with Mandela ignited a diplomatic crisis between the regime in Algeria and South Africa. Algeria protested the South African government's involvement, considering it a 'provocation and an insult to the victims of terrorism' and an

intervention in its internal affairs. The South African government—which has \$430 million of private investments in Algeria—tried to contain the crisis. It assured the Algerian regime that it had no intention of intervening in the internal affairs of the country and condemned terrorism. As a consequence, Algeria canceled its decision to recall its ambassador.⁸⁰

Conclusion

This paper examined the ideological and practical aspects of FIS's foreign policy. In its perception and practice of foreign policy, the FIS passed through two distinct phases: as an opposition party more concerned with ideological formulations and domestic politics; and, after the crisis precipitated by cancellation of the 1991 elections, as a party that had to reformulate its foreign policy in order to gain recognition and mobilize support at the international level. During the first phase, foreign policy issues were marginal and used primarily to pressure the regime and increase the party's popularity. Islam has been presented as a counterweight to a Western-dominated international system. Foreign policy was raised within the larger context of Islamic interests and principles focusing on freedom, justice, and the restoration of moral values to the international system. This process did not require the FIS to be very specific or realistic. The party's program and the statements of its leaders were rather ideological assertions that clearly reflected the FIS's inability to formulate consistent foreign policy stances. The party's inconsistency was manifested during the Gulf war, when it initially condemned the Iraqi invasion, and later, under popular pressure, had to increase its rhetoric against the anti-Iraq coalition forces.

As it has expanded its involvement abroad, the FIS has become more aware of the pressures, intricacies, and realities of international affairs. The party has attempted to build foreign policy structures, define its objectives, and adopt more realistic and pragmatic stands *vis-à-vis* the international system, world organizations, and Western countries. The FIS has clearly articulated its views on the new world order, free-market economy, and the Middle East peace process. While maintaining a particular Islamic approach, the party has also had to come to terms with 'realpolitik', making concessions and, to a certain extent, toning down its rhetoric. It called for a dialogue and for building understanding between Islamists and the West. It also expressed readiness to cooperate with the existing international structures such as the UN, human rights organizations, and the IMF. Perhaps the FIS's evolution indicates that in the end, an Islamic movement has to match foreign policy goals with capabilities and reconcile itself to the fact that in the international environment, it is only one actor in a community still dominated by states and power dynamics.

NOTES

1. *FBIS-NES-90-124*, June 27, 1990, 10.
2. Interview with Anwar Haddam, Annandale VA, July 29, 1996.
3. For an excellent study of various Islamic perspectives on Islam and the contemporary world system, see James Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986).
4. Abbasi Madani has been under house arrest since September 1997, Ali Belhaj is currently imprisoned, and Muhammad Said was killed by the GIA in 1995.
5. See, for example, John Entelis, 'Political Islam in Algeria: the nonviolent dimension', *Current History* 94, No. 588 (January 1995); François Burgat & William Dowell, *The Islamic Movement in*

- North Africa* (Austin TX, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas in Austin, 1993); Robert A. Mortimer, 'Islamists, Soldiers, and Democrats: the Second Algerian War', *The Middle East Journal* 50 (Winter 1996), 18–39; and *ibid.*, 'Islam and Multiparty Politics in Algeria', *The Middle East Journal* 45 (Autumn 1991), 575–93.
6. Abbasi Madani is well acquainted with Western culture, its intellectual development, and philosophical values. He has lived in Britain and studied in the West for several years. As an education specialist, Madani wrote his doctoral dissertation on a comparison of the educational programs in Britain, France, and the Muslim world. Madani produced several books in which he has examined these issues, juxtaposing them with Islamic values in an attempt to devise an indigenous intellectual and educational model.
 7. Abbasi Madani, *Azmat al-fikr al-ḥadīth wa-mubarrirāt al-ḥall al-islāmī* [The Crisis of Modern Thought and the Justifications for an Islamic Solution] (Mecca, Maktabat al-Manār, 1989), 16–18.
 8. Ali Belhaj, *Faṣl al-kalām fī muwājahat zulm al-ḥukkām* [A Decisive Statement on the Confrontation of the Aggression of Rulers] (FIS, 1992), 91.
 9. Muhammad Said, *Al-jabha al-islāmiyya li-al-inqādh: jihād sha'b wa-masīrat tārikh* [FIS: People's Jihād and the March of History] (October 1993), 3.
 10. Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Said, FIS: Algeria, November 1993, 14.
 11. 'Issues for our Time', transcript of an interview with Abbasi Madani, Pontifex Media Center, Summer 1990, 4.
 12. Belhaj, *Faṣl al-kalām*, 14–15.
 13. Said, *Al-jabha al-islāmiyya*, 4, 7, 16.
 14. Madani, 'Issues for our Time', 16.
 15. *Ibid.*, 4.
 16. *Ibid.*, 12–13.
 17. Belhaj, *Faṣl al-kalām*, 180.
 18. *Ibid.*, 214.
 19. *Ibid.*, 51.
 20. *Ibid.*, 218.
 21. Madani, 'Issues for our Time', 14.
 22. Interview by Abdullāh Boufoula with Ali Belhaj in *Al-ālam*, No. 356 (December 12, 1990), 31.
 23. Madani, *Azmat al-fikr al-ḥadīth*, 58–88.
 24. *Ibid.*, 95.
 25. Interview by Tammam al-Barazi with Ali Belhaj in *Al-waṭan al-ʿarabī*, No. 176 (July 27, 1990), 25.
 26. Interview with Haddam, Annandale VA, July 29, 1996.
 27. Interview with Belhaj in *Al-mujtamaʿ* (June 6, 1990), 35.
 28. Interview with 'Ali Belhaj in *Al-waṭan al-ʿarabī*, No. 176 (July 27, 1990), 25. See also *Al-waṭan* (July 27, 1990) for excerpts from a Friday Speech delivered by Belhaj in al-Quba Mosque on July 13, 1990, 2.
 29. Ali Belhaj, 'Letter from Tizi Ouzou Prison to the "Independent" Dialogue Committee', November 11, 1993, 5.
 30. Said, interview, 6.
 31. Interview with Abbasi Madani in *Al-bashīr*, No. 2 (April 1990), 5.
 32. Interview with Abbasi Madani in *Al-ālam*, June 1990, 10.
 33. Interview with Abbasi Madani in *Qadāyā dawliyya*, August 1990, 10.
 34. *FBIS-NES-90-118* (June 19, 1990), 5.
 35. Interview with Madani in *Al-majalla*, No. 514 (December 19, 1989), 44.
 36. Abdel Qader Hachani, quoted in *FBIS-NES-91-250* (December 30, 1991), 7.
 37. Said, interview, 10.
 38. Said, interview, 5.
 39. Madani, 'Issues for our Time', 16.
 40. *Ibid.*, 15–16.
 41. *FBIS-NES-90-124*, June 27, 1990, 10–11.
 42. *The Program of the Islamic Salvation Front* (Algiers, The Islamic Salvation Front, March 1989).
 43. *Outline of the FIS Program, Islamic Front for Algeria* (Washington DC, FIS Information Bureau Publications, 1996).
 44. For more details on this strike, see Emad Eldin Shahin, *Political Ascent: contemporary Islamic movements in North Africa* (Boulder CO, Westview Press, 1997), 140–5.
 45. Interview with Anwar Haddam, Annandale VA, July 29, 1996.

46. Interview with Anwar Haddam, Annandale VA, July 29, 1996.
47. *Al-rāya*, No. 2, August 18, 1990.
48. Hugh Roberts, 'A Trial of Strength: Algerian Islamism', in James Piscatori (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis* (Chicago IL, The Fundamentalism Project, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991), 144.
49. Yahia H. Zoubir, 'Reactions in the Maghreb to the Gulf Crisis and War', *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15:1 (Winter 1993), 88.
50. Quoted in Zoubir, 'Reactions in the Maghreb', 89.
51. Abdullah Boufoulah, '*Jabhat al-inqādh: innahā mu'āmara 'alā al-ṣaḥwa al-islāmiyya*' [It is a Conspiracy Against the Islamic Resurgence], *Al-ālam*, No. 343 (September 7, 1990).
52. See *ibid.*, 144.
53. Roberts, 'A Trial of Strength', 142.
54. Interview with Anwar Haddam, *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1996), 71.
55. News and Press Release, No. 1, FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad, September 1994.
56. *Algeria Salvation*, No. 1 (May 1996), 2.
57. For the text of the Rome accord, see *Muslim Politics Report* [Council on Foreign Relations] No. 1, April/May 1995.
58. Reuters, April 3, 1995.
59. *Al-ḥayāt*, May 5, 1995.
60. Ali Belhaj, '*Al-radd 'alā al-nāṭiq al-rasmī li-al-ḥukūma*' [The Response to the Government's Official Spokesman], *La Cause* 14:2 (February 3, 1995), 5.
61. Q. 5:83.
62. Anwar Haddam, 'Letter to the Pope', Islamic Salvation Front, FIS Parliamentary Delegation, Information Bureau, Washington DC, June 14, 1996. Haddam sent copies of this letter to the families of the seven victims, the Abbey of Tamie, the Abbey of Aiguebelle, Chief of the Order of Trappists in Rome, Chief of the Church in Algiers, Community of Sant' Egidio, Cardinal Lustiger in Paris, and Abbé Pierre in Paris.
63. Anwar Haddam, 'Letter to Warren Christopher', FIS Parliamentary Delegation to Europe and the United States, Washington DC, May 31, 1995. I am grateful to Mr Haddam for allowing me to see a copy of this letter.
64. Anwar Haddam, 'The US-backed new International Order', *Algeria Salvation* 1, May 1996, 4-5.
65. *Ibid.*, 5.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. Interview with Haddam, Annandale VA, July 29, 1996.
69. Communiqué, The Islamic Salvation Front, FIS Parliamentary Delegation, Washington DC, April 11, 1994.
70. Interview with Haddam, Annandale VA, August 7, 1996.
71. *Al-ḥayāt*, September 3, 1994.
72. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1994.
73. 'Call to the Participants of the UN Human Rights Commission 1995 Session', FIS Parliamentary Delegation, Washington DC, March 8, 1995.
74. *La Cause* 17:2 (March 24, 1995), 1-3.
75. Interview with Anwar Haddam, Annandale VA, August 7, 1996.
76. In 1994, Haddam proposed a similar initiative through the Algerian Embassy in Washington, but received no response.
77. *Al-ḥayāt*, February 9, 1996.
78. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1996.
79. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1996.
80. *Al-sharq al-awsat*, February 4, 1996; and *Al-ḥayāt*, February 4, 1996.

