

Research Report
Model United Nations
Development Programme
XXV. Annual Session



HISTORICAL COMMITTEE 1&2
(HISTO 1&2)

FRENCH CONQUEST OF ALGERIA

KAAN ERDEM, UTKU ÖZGÜR, GÜLFEM
EKİZ, ALYA AŞÇI





Basic Overview of the Issue

The French conquest of Algeria was initiated in 1830 and was an event that marked a pivotal moment in North African history and colonial expansion. It was an act considered as a response to a diplomatic dispute between the French consul and the Ottoman-Algerian leader Dey Hussein when it first started; however, the invasion quickly evolved into a much broader issue regarding territorial conquest.

The French forces were well-equipped with modern weaponry and had a highly strategic approach but faced a strong resistance from local populations and leaders such as Emir Abdelkader who mainly led the necessary efforts to defend Algeria and its autonomy. Nevertheless, by 1847, France had established a fairly firm control over a substantially large portion of Algeria via asserting military dominance with certain tactics including the destruction of villages and displacement of certain populations through the use of force. The conquest had significant repercussions since it was crucial in transforming Algeria into a French colony as well as reshaping its social, cultural and economic aspects.

Explanation of Important Terms

Expropriation

the act of taking away money or property, especially for public use without payment to the owner, or for personal use illegally. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Protectorate

a country that is generally controlled and defended by a more powerful country. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Forced Displacement

We refer to forced displacement when the movement from a person's region or country is involuntary or coerced, due to persecution, conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations or the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, or disasters. (European Commission)

Settler Colony

a colony that is established by migrants from a colonizing nation or state and that



functions to extend and maintain the colonizing power's control over the area : a colony resulting from settler colonialism. (Merriam-Webster)

Settler Colonialism

colonialism in which people from a colonizing nation or state migrate to an area and establish a settler colony that functions to extend and maintain the colonizing power's control over the area. (Merriam-Webster)

Pacification

The action of bringing peace to a place or ending war in a place, often using military force. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Colonial Administration

Colonial Administration is a process whereby a country is under the control of another country. This control usually covers all spheres of life, be it economic, religious, cultural and political. (FCT Education Management Information System)

Detailed Background of the Issue

In the 18th century Britain and France were major competitors in the colonial race. However, after taking key positions in the mediterranean such as gibraltar in the 1702-1713 War of the Spanish Succession, becoming the dominant power in the Indian subcontinent, and gaining much of the French possessions in North America through the Treaty of Paris in 1763, which was signed following the Seven Years' War, Britain had acquired the upper-hand in this race². After France's failed attempt at consolidating influence and control over Egypt during the Napoleonic Era France felt an immense pressure to reassert its influence as a colonial power¹. For this Algeria presented a tremendous opportunity as France had a multitude of reasons such as previous positive relations which had started to lean on Britain, high strategic importance and the advantage of being geographically close to France². In 1830, in the wake of increasing Napoleonic romanticism, an opportunity to display power arose. Following an argument between the ruler of the Ottoman Regency in Algiers (before the French conquest Algeria was an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire which even signed treaties with foreign powers) and the French consul there France claimed justified the invasion and blockade of the city, starting the French conquest of Algeria. Following the beginning of the invasion The French navy swiftly took over the coastal towns



of Algeria and implanted a military presence in the country. The widespread random murder and the plundering that began following this would mark the start of a lasting pattern of exploitation of Algeria at the hands of the French. By the start of 1831 the French had occupied Algiers and started the conquest of the rest of the nation¹. The first major event following this in the early colonization of Algeria was the fall of Constantine and the breakdown of the opposition which was led by Ahmed Bey in 1837. The second major event after this point, which was also the formal end of the conquest of Algeria by France and marked the establishment of full French control in Algeria, was the fall of the reign of Abd-el Kader, a leader who commanded the respect of his enemies, in the western parts of Algeria in 1847. Another major event that made the year 1847 significant for the French conquest of Algeria was the Ottoman Empire's formal recognition that the province of Algeria was no longer a part of its territory, marking the end of the French conquest of Algeria².

Major Parties Involved

France

France played the central role in the conquest of Algeria, the country initiated the invasion in 1830 under King Charles X and later continuing under subsequent French governments. The French military sought to expand its colonial empire, secure strategic trade routes, and strengthen its influence in the Mediterranean. The invasion was initially justified as a response to piracy and an insult to French honor involving a diplomatic incident known as the "Fly Whisk Affair." The conquest was marked by intense military campaigns and a prolonged occupation where the French government sought to distract from domestic political issues and assert military prowess leading to significant socio-political changes in Algeria. Over time, the goal shifted towards full colonization, with an emphasis on economic exploitation and spreading French culture and civilization.

Algeria

At the time of the French conquest, Algeria was a collection of semi-autonomous regions under the nominal control of the Ottoman Empire. Local leaders, tribal groups, and resistance fighters such as Emir Abdelkader played critical roles in opposing the French



invasion. Algerian resistance was primarily driven by the desire to preserve sovereignty, cultural identity, and independence. Local leaders, tribes, and the general population opposed the French invasion due to the disruptive nature of foreign rule and the violent tactics employed by the French military. The Algerian population endured significant upheaval, including displacement, violence, and the imposition of French colonial rule.

Ottoman Empire

Although the Ottoman Empire's direct control over Algeria had waned by the early 19th century, it remained a nominal authority until the French invasion. Although the Ottomans' direct governance of Dey Hussein had weakened, they were reluctant to lose another territory to European powers. However, the empire's declining strength meant they were unable to effectively resist the French invasion or support local resistance. The Ottoman stance was primarily defensive, focusing on preserving remnants of their empire against European encroachment. The Ottoman governors struggled to maintain control over the region and were ultimately displaced by the French forces. The fall of Algiers in 1830 marked the end of Ottoman influence in Algeria.

Chronology of Important Events

April 29, 1827	The Fly Whisk Incident, where the Dey of Algiers struck the French consul with a fly whisk, sparking tensions between France and Algeria
June 14, 1830	French Invasion of Algiers Begins
July 5, 1830	Algiers is captured by French forces
November 27, 1832	Start of Emir Abdelkader's Resistance
May 30, 1837	The Treaty of Tafna was signed, granting Abdelkader control over western Algeria
June 1, 1840	France resumed aggressive military campaigns to



	crush Abdelkader's forces
December 23, 1847	Emir Abdelkader surrendered, ending the resistance
December 9, 1848	Algeria was officially integrated into France as a colony.
March 16, 1871	A large-scale uprising against French rule, led by Sheikh El Mokrani.
July 28, 1881	Implementation of Code de l'Indigénat, which imposed discriminatory laws on Algerians.
November 1, 1954	Start of the Algerian War of Independence
July 5, 1962	Algeria officially became an independent nation, ending 132 years of French colonial rule.

Relevant International Documents

- The Treaty of Desmichels, February 26th, 1834
- The Treaty of Tafna, May 30th, 1837

Past Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Had an argument between Hussein Dey, the ruler of the Regency of Algiers, and the French consul not escalated into an invasion by the July Monarchy of France, there might have been a peaceful resolution of the issue at hand. But that's not the case.

Solving the issue is completely left to the delegates since there have been no remotely sufficient attempts at solving the issue.



Solution Alternatives

A possible solution would have been finding a peaceful course of action to resolve the differences between parties, similar to the United Nations' diplomatic approach. But since there is approximately a century for such an international organization to exist, it would be the perfect example of historical anachronism. The war has already commenced, so you should focus on military strategy, tactics, diplomacy, logistics, and internal politics. Both sides should assemble a mobile army resistant enough to withstand the desert, a functional navy powerful enough to dominate the Algerian coastline, collect modern weaponry, and garner public support for their campaigns through the use of religion and coercion if need be.

Please bear in mind that the technological devices available for your use are those present at the time unless you "invent" them. Consider different approaches to formulate your plan, rally the public, and find creative ways to get things done while being realistic. Landscape and demographics can be what makes or breaks your plans, so be sure to have a firm grasp of the terrain and those living there. In addition, you are encouraged to be more knowledgeable about the geo-cultural aspects of the conflict. For example, information on international and national power dynamics could be very practical while trying to find allies.

Be sure to read your character's position and unique background, as this will allow you to more effectively steer your place in the committee. In Historical Committees, creativity is more than welcome; hence, try to find mind-blowing and entertaining ways to be steps ahead of your adversaries. The political support of outside powers and certain influential members in the cabinets would also be of the highest importance. Please equip yourself with enough background knowledge and an eagerness to defeat your opponents and fight to achieve the ultimate glory. Fortune favors the bold! Carpe diem!

Useful Links

[Emir Abdelkader & The French Conquest Of Algeria](#)

[The Brutal French Conquest of Algeria](#)

[Modern France \(Lecture 4\): The Conquest of Algeria](#)



Bibliography

1. Brown, Haley, "French Colonialism in Algeria: War, Legacy, and Memory" (2018). Honors Theses. 456. https://digitalcommons.bucknell.edu/honors_theses/456
2. Halacoglu, Canan. "Occupation and the Colonization of Algeria from 1830 to 1870: A Struggle For Dominance", Sept. 2013, etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12616430/index.pdf