

A Critical Insight into American attitude towards North African Control over the Mediterranean Sea in the 19th C

Une critique de l'attitude Américaine envers le control maritime des états Barbaresques en Méditerranée

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Abstract

This article aims at studying American unstable relations with early 19th c North Africa to elucidate some pertinent elements which question nowadays Western attitude towards the Barbary States in general and the Regency of Algiers in particular. It appears that after the 11th of September events, a more radical political trend started to haunt political writings in the United States. As a result, a number of intellectual contributions described Middle Eastern terrorist groups as a chronological extension of North African corsairs of the early 19th c. Some went to describe them as “terrorists by another name.” Relying on a descriptive and analytical approach, this academic contribution attempts to provide an overall historical picture and the geostrategic situation in the Mediterranean Sea of the period to highlight the chief reasons which interrogate the American view concerning the Barbary corsairs. It investigates prominently written testimonies and available historical analysis in the field to underline major anomalies which promote such view among some American elites.

Keywords: American Policy, Barbary States, Algiers, History, Corsairs.

Resumé

Cet article est une étude des relations Américaine avec les états Barbaresques du début du 19^{ème} siècle. Il a pour objectif d'élucider quelques éléments qui questionnent pertinemment l'attitude politique et péjorative occidentale envers l'Afrique du nord en général et la régence d'Alger en particulier. Concernant cette question, il s'est avéré qu'à partir du regrettable 11/09, une position politique radicale a commencé à envahir l'écriture politique aux Etats Unis. Par conséquent, certaines contributions intellectuelles décrivent les mouvements terroristes au Moyen Orient comme une extension naturelle des corsaires musulmans et des pirates méditerranéens du 19^{ème} siècle. Par ailleurs, les corsaires barbaresques sont déjà appelées « Terrorists by another name » Suivant une approche descriptive et analytique, cette contribution académique tente d'éclairer le contexte historique et la situation géostratégique en méditerranée pour tirer au clair les événements majeurs qui nourrissent cette attitude Américaine pour ensuite interroger ses raisons d'être. Elle investit les témoignages écrits remontant à cette époque ainsi que les analyses historiques disponibles pour souligner certaines anomalies stratégiques qui ont encouragé cette position de certains américains.

Mots clés : Politique américaine, Etats Barbaresques, Régence d'Alger, Histoire, Corsaire.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of the 21st century, there has been a renewed interest in the study of American interventionist policy all over the world. This is due to the major decisions taken by The White House which impacted hugely international opinion towards the American administration, and which revolutionized the way in which scholars

approach Uncle Sam's attitude towards world affairs. The events that followed the attacks on The World Trade Centre were a significant turning point in the history of the United States. The latter, instantaneously with the attacks, issued the 'War on Terror' as a headline of its foreign policy. The declared wars on Afghanistan first and Iraq later resemble, more and more, an everlasting conflict which put the globe in jeopardy.

As a result, some political studies have tried to cover and simplify- as fast as possible- the intermingled aspects of the issue, as they tried to win back the American history in relation to it. By doing so, they dug up the file of Barbary wars with Washington, and few of them went further to compare what happened in 18th c Northern Africa to what is happening in the 21st c Middle East. Accordingly, the chief concern of this article is to check the extent of the truthfulness in the comparison mentioned below and to evaluate the accuracy of the arguments provided by some scholars to defend the view that Islamic Terrorism is nothing but another version of Barbary corsairs. In fact, it attempts to clarify that, whatever the seeming similarities existing between the two conjunctures; they still differ from each other in many ways. At last, this article provides at least five reasons which minimize and question the credibility of the aforementioned American view of Barbary States.

1. Insight into Algerian-American Historical Background

Writing about the relations between the Barbary States and the United States of America in late 18th and the 19th century requires a study of the position of each at that time. It is quite difficult, if not impossible, to study the first contacts between the

two political and cultural entities without having a look at the geostrategic immediate estate they got at that time in order to go further and have a critical eye on what is said nowadays about the Barbary States. This is, in fact, in another context, the “war on terror,” and in another area, the “rogue states” of the Middle East.

On the one hand, the Barbary States, as Turkish autonomous regency, were as old as the discovery of the New World and they had a strategic location all over the southern Mediterranean coasts. This location had made these states a crossroads for other countries to carry out commerce in the Mediterranean basin. Though North Africa of that period was made of four regencies Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, and Tripoli belonging politically to the Ottoman Empire and religiously to the Islamic Nation, Algiers was the most powerful and thus the most threatening region in the sight of the European nations and the United States, for it had a strong navy and proud- courageous warship captains. On many occasions, Algiers had shown its military and naval strength by defeating its rivals and dissuading them from even attempting any offensive on its frontiers as well as on neighbouring states. It was thanks to its maritime know-how and Turkish military support that it succeeded to kick out the Spanish control over many harbours on the Algerian coasts, and it forced Spain to abandon its strategic outposts in 1555. By studying their extending activities in the Mediterranean Sea and beyond, the Canadian researcher and writer qualified The Barbary States as “The lords of the seas.”¹ In a different and more detailed way, Professor Mammeri Fatima has devoted an interesting thesis to elucidate some aspects of North African control over the Mediterranean Sea².

¹ Jamieson, Alan G. *Lords of the Seas: A History of the Barbary Corsairs*. UK: Reaktion Books, 2012.

² Fatima, Mammeri. *Ottoman Algeria in Western Diplomatic History*. Algeria: Mentouri Université, 2008.

On the other hand, the United States -which came out of the 13 British colonies in 1783 after the Treaty of Paris- was a new nascent country looking for economic opportunities and commercial liberty, a thing that was not easy to reach alone without the consent of Algiers. To cross the Gibraltar canal safely to surge into the Mediterranean Sea, even the most powerful entities needed to negotiate with Barbary States. As a result, the first contact between these two policies had raised many issues which put the U.S. in a very complicated situation never experienced before, especially since the Algerian corsairs had seized two American vessels, the *Maria* and the *Dauphin*, in 1785.

Throughout four centuries up to 1830, Algiers under the protection of the Ottoman Empire had been practicing piracy in the Mediterranean Sea and sometimes beyond, or in the Atlantic Ocean after the concluded truce with the Portuguese in 1793. It had got its own way of dealing with the world either militarily or economically. Under the control of the *Dey* and the guidance of the *Rais*, North Africa and Algeria in particular dominated commercial sea roads, which were already vital enough to generate wealth. As a result, every nation which had to cross the Mediterranean Sea for commercial businesses had to deal with the so-called Barbary States in exchange for the safety of their ships, cargos, and crews. In the absence of any rule and international agreements concerning navigation, privateering had been the only maritime law for a long period, almost as long as the North African powers had existed. In fact, "any nation had to negotiate peace treaties" with the Barbary States, pay tribute in exchange for protection and ransom for releasing captives.

2. International attitude towards Regency of Algiers

European nations such as France, England, Netherlands, and Sweden, which were powerful enough in terms of navy, submitted to the Mediterranean maritime law and accepted the deal. They paid huge sums of money as a tribute to conclude treaties. The huge sums paid were just a way to retrograde the Dey of Algiers' question to Joseph Donaldson in 1795, when he said, "Do you want peace for nothing?"³ In the same way, the United States was forced to imitate its European predecessors in its relations with North Africa. Moreover, it needed the help of France and Spain to conclude a treaty securing its trade. For Example, Washington succeeded to conclude a peace treaty with Algiers in 1796 that costs the Americans \$992,463.25 and in which "money was the only subject discussed."⁴ This was briefly as far as the commercial and strategic relations on the sea were concerned.

Accordingly, there was a stream of a religious sentiment in which the Barbary States, regarded as the western military outpost of the Muslim nation, were criminalized for developing hatred and a feeling of revenge towards the Christians. For this reason, piracy in the Mediterranean Sea was interpreted in terms of a religious conflict dating back to the 15th century when Isabella I and Ferdinand V, rulers of the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, expelled almost all the Muslims and the Jews from Spain. In addition, some scholars and mainly politicians described the corsairs as a religious army sponsored by the North African States to bring down the civilized Christian world. One goes on to say, "We saw them as bloodthirsty fanatics, sanctioned by Islamic despots, and we believe their behaviour threatened the future

³ Ross, Franc E. « The Mission of Joseph Donaldson , Jr., to Algiers, 1795-97. » *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 7, No 4. (Dec., 1935), pp 423.

The quote is also reported in *Cathcart's Travels*

⁴ Ross, Franc E. pp 227.

of the modern world.”⁵ This view existed two centuries ago, and it still exists nowadays due to some circumstances said to be likewise.

In the same way, when referring to the war fought on the sea, Frederick Leiners calls the active Algerine and Moroccan sailors “Islamic corsairs,” and the victims (captives) “Christian crews.” He, for instance, considers the conflict between Tripoli and The United States as being religiously motivated, and Barbary States military manoeuvres as an undeclared Holy War. Moreover and from a more religious point of view, Pope Pius VII declared after the American victory over Tripoli in 1805 that “Americans by this action ‘had done more for the cause of Christianity than the most powerful nations of Christendom have done for ages.’”⁶ Unequivocally, the Pope’s attitude to the issue transcends the political and economic interests of the westerners, and it put forward the question of ‘faith’ as a major motive of the conflict. These views actually translate the religious dimension given to the conflict between the Barbary States and the United States in the 19th c.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that in the contemporary world, some political and strategic analyses try to bring what happened three centuries ago between the Regency of Algiers and the US to the War on Terror officially declared by George Walker Bush in 2001. In other words, these analyses try to juxtapose both events to mean one single idea, whatever the differences that their appellations bear. They believe that both the Algerian pirates and the Islamic terrorism “were driven by a fundamentalist religious vision.” In this context, the words of the associate professor

⁵ Leiby, Richard. “Terrorists by another Name: The Barbary Pirates.” *Washington Post*, 15 Oct. 2001.

⁶ London, Joshua E. “America’s Earliest Terrorists: Lessons from America’s First War against Islamic Terror.” 2005.

<http://old.Nationalreview.com/comment/london200512160955.asp>

of International Security Studies at Air War College, Christopher Hemmer are very explicit:

Indeed, the two times that US policy could be said to have been centered on issues in North Africa were also periods of U.S.-North African conflict: the Barbary Wars mentioned above and the brief military confrontation with Libya over its support for terrorism during the 1980s.⁷

In the same way, an expert on the Middle East affairs and American Foreign Service Officer, Richard B. Parker argues: "The U.S. experience with the Barbary corsairs [is] an example to be followed in dealing with... al-Qaida."⁸ The comparison here is related to sponsoring terrorist groups by some countries qualified nowadays by the American administration as 'Rogue States.' For Hemmer as well as Parker, the Barbary States in the same way as many Middle Eastern countries were financing and promoting the practice of piracy in the Mediterranean Sea. This argumentation is in fact based on the idea of continuity in the U.S. foreign affairs which defends the historical view that what happened with the Barbary States is not different from what is happening with Islamic terrorism. Washington then has to learn from its past and proceed in the way in confronting similar issues. In other words, this view in the American foreign policy alludes to a coercive manner in dealing with terrorism; it suggests to the American policymakers to avoid negotiating American interests and safety and to devote instead its military power to bring down all that may represent a danger to the Americans.

⁷ Hemmer, Christopher. "U.S. Policy towards North Africa: Three Overarching Themes." *Middle East Policy*. Vol. XIV, No 4, Winter 2007. pp. 57.

⁸ Parker, Richard B. *Uncle Sam in Barbary States: A Diplomatic History*. University Press of Florida: pp 158

3. *A Critical Insight into Algerian-American Issue*

At this level and as far as the events are concerned, all the previous views carry a conceivable degree of truth. Unequivocally, all the judgments presented by analysts and scholars about commercial corsairs and religious enslavement of the Christian captives cannot be denied as a whole. The exchanged letters between the American president, Thomas Jefferson, and the Dey Hussein of Algiers testify about this information. Besides, some of the letters took the issue of American prisoners as a major theme and highlighted the importance of any possible negotiations with Algiers. However, it is not sufficient enough to write a political essay describing Algerines and other North Africans of the 18th c as “terrorists by another Name”⁹ in their relations with the Westerners in general and the Americans in particular. For this fact, it is very imperative to understand and interpret the events of the early 19th century transparently in their socio-historical context, not as an independent phenomenon. This is the only reliable historical approach that may revive the actual geostrategic parameters to accommodate one’s understanding of both sides, and it is the best way to reconstruct as much as possible political data to make conclusions on what motivated the Barbary States to behave as well.

If we look at some texts written by the westerners and dealing with the Barbary States, we will find that they appeared after the regrettable 11th of September attacks when the hatred towards the Muslim world reached the zenith. Some arguments are premised on this hatred which would have manipulated the authors’ historical objectivity. From a political point of view, they made a solid

⁹ Leiby, Richard. “Terrorists by another Name: The Barbary Pirates.” *Washington Post*, 15 Oct. 2001.

foundation to legitimize a number of coercive decisions undertaken by The White House. As result, the description given of the Muslim world is destined to fit one category of American opinion and jingoism. From a postcolonial and Edwardian view, these texts can be considered as a continuation of the “orientalist” representation of the non-Christian world or the “others” because they are at the same time a subjective and negative reincarnation of the past. They tend to overlook one aspect of the broader cultural picture of the period and highlight another one more skeptical. This is commonly and likely to suit the political agendas of the ruling class and pave the way for more radical international measures.

The questions then to ask: if the North African Regencies of the 18th and 19th c were as bad and savage as they are described today, why did the Americans and the Europeans sign treaties with them and pay tribute in exchange for security services? Why were they looking behind these states for more commercial opportunities? What seems to be obvious is that the answer to these questions cannot be limited to the negative side of the Barbary States. Briefly, there were mutual commercial interests, perhaps not directly with the U.S. but surely with the European countries.

4. Barbary Privateering and Piracy vs. Terrorism

To justify the view of terrorist Barbary States, one of the arguments put forward by many of the scholars and political writers on this ground is the fact that the defense system of these Mediterranean countries was relying on ‘privateering’ to protect their maritime sphere and on ‘corsairs’ to assert their rules hereupon. Actually, the practice of privateering and piracy was a major occupation of Algiers at that period.

“[It] was the foundation of their economic system.”¹⁰ Yet, if there were someone to condemn for this practice, it would not be Algiers alone or North Africa in general because the European countries were also included in such activities. In addition, countries such as England and France were promoting and encouraging Algiers to do so since it had preserved their commercial welfare in the hemisphere and maintained their economic domination in the Mediterranean market. “If there were no Algiers, we would have to build one” was a famous spoken maxim among British, French, and other merchants¹¹. Indeed, the maxim proves masterfully and colourfully the importance of Algiers in the sight of the great powers of the period. This was not only from an economic point of view but also from a strategic one. Regency of Algiers was a prominent balancing power that for a long period maintained peace in the seas and assured safe roads- though expensive- for the westerners. Being a newly born and a distant nation, Americans unlike other Western countries could not understand the role played by the Barbary States.

Moreover, the great obstacle of the U.S. merchants was not Algiers by itself, but it might be England to which the American commerce represented one new competitor in the Mediterranean basin. Knowing that after the independence of the 13 colonies, Great Britain was eager to preserve its traditional markets; whereas, the U.S. claimed the inheritance of those markets for a good reason that they were dealing with the colonies in the near past. This commercial quarrel between the two countries with very old ties had created a feeling of mistrust

¹⁰ Irwin, Ray W. *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers*, 1776- 1816. pp. 8.

¹¹ Allison, Robert J. “The United States and the Specter of Islam: The early Nineteenth Century,” *Council on Middle East Studies*. 3:1, 2005. pp. 2

between the two. Simultaneously, such circumstances pushed England to avoid the new confederation to knit friendly ties with North Africa, and it worked hard to manipulate the birth of Algerian-American relations. This British position was viewed by the Americans as “a British anti-American strategy,” and “a manoeuvre of the English... to injure America.”¹² On the eve of American independence, this view was highly discussed on the national scale. On the political scene, Americans knew very well that England would do its best to keep its ex-colonies subjected to its political and economic system. One way to achieve that purpose was by initiating the American merchants to the Algerian threat and then to estrange them from the Mediterranean Sea.

Contrary to terrorism which chiefly consists of non-governmental and unofficial human groups that terrorize other peaceful human groups, the aforementioned elements insist us to view the Algerian corsairing as part of natural international relations where every country tries to enhance its military and commercial estate. In his article on Hispano-Algerian shattering relations of the 16th c, the Italian author, Francesco Caprioli, claims that “the Western Mediterranean changed its status and passed from a space where regional powers competed among themselves to the setting for a clash of empires.”¹³ On this basis, it is arguable that the policy of Algiers was not self-centered, but it was a fraction of a more complex and interrelated regional (Mediterranean) affairs. Though Algiers appeared to be a dominant actor in that complex system, it was not the only one making profits from it. France, Italy, and mainly England were also winners in the Algerian game.

¹² Peskin, Lawrence A. “The Lessons of Independence: How the Algerian Crisis Shaped Early American Identity.” *Diplomatic History*, (28:3). pp. 311-312.

¹³ Caprioli, F. (2021) “Why Did Everything Go Wrong? Some Notes on Hispano-Algerian Diplomatic Misunderstanding from a Study of a Letter of Beylerbeyi Hasan Pasha (1545-51). *Revue Traduction et Langues* 20(2), 66-75. pp. 66.

What made the United States an exception is mainly the failure of the first negotiations between the Dey of Algiers and the American envoy over the issue of the *Maria* ship. The failure was unlikely related to the newly established American administration which was by granted sceptical to any form of taxation in the thirteen states. This liberal political attitude against taxes was inherited from the pre-independence period when the colonists refused from the British administration to increase the payment of duties. Besides, one of the chief causes of the War of independence and the increase of national endowment for liberty was 'No taxation without representation.' Ironically, the only way to pay the tributes demanded by Algiers and neighbouring states was by raising taxes at the national level. This was not an easy task for the White House. Yet, when it happened, Americans succeeded to negotiate with Algiers the freedom of many captured crews and commercial movement on the Mediterranean Sea.

5. International Maritime Law and White Slavery

In the same context, the cultural condemnation is also due to the hegemonic tendency of Algiers over the seas and its control of the most important commercial passages of the period. In fact, such condemnation of Algiers can be rejected by reference to the international law of the pre-nineteenth century period. It is noteworthy to mention that at that time treaties and conventions were bilateral. Until the conference of Paris (1856), which abolished privateering and letters of marque, there was no international multilateral legal system to dictate maritime laws. Under this circumstance, "state actors increasingly monopolized the use of

coercive force,”¹⁴ and it was for them to dictate maritime laws which suit their commerce. In fact, as a great power, Algiers like the U.S. of nowadays implemented a strategy (corsairing) to keep its hegemony over the Mediterranean sea roads. In this case, writing about what occurred two centuries ago without taking into account the conventions and laws of that period may erode factual elements of the geopolitical environment, annihilate historical truth and open the way for misinterpretations in international relations.

The Americans had also criticized the Algerians for bounding their compatriots to slavery. Hence, although they signed some expensive treaties with Algiers, the majority of them had refused ransoming or any deal of this kind. “Millions for defense but not one cent for tribute” was the slogan that translates the American mind in this context. The overwhelming majority was guided by the idea that “the rulers of Barbary could best be brought to reason by force.”¹⁵ According to Professor Robert C. Davis, in the eighteenth century, “approximately 175 000 white Christians were carried off into slavery.”¹⁶ Most of the American denunciations of the Barbary States came from this site, or slavery. What is amazing in this story is that the Americans could not see the forest because they are inside. In other words, while the founding fathers were criticizing the enslavement of thousands of Americans in North Africa on the basis of morals and human values, millions of Africans were enslaved on the other side of the Atlantic. For Peter Kolchin, Professor of History at Delaware University and author of *American Slavery, 1619-1877*:

¹⁴ Silverstein, Paul A. “The New Barbarians: Piracy and Terrorism on the North African Frontier.” *The New Centennial Review*, 5:1 (Dec. 1935). pp. 188.

¹⁵ Parker, Richard B. pp. 169.

¹⁶ Quoted in Frederick, Leiner. *The End of Barbary Terror: America’s 1815 War against the Pirates of North Africa*. (2006), pp. 2

The transatlantic slave trade produced one of the largest forced migrations in history. From the early 16th to the mid-19th centuries, more than 10 million Africans were taken from their homes, herded onto ships where they were sometimes so tightly packed that they could barely move, and sent to a strange new land. Since others died before boarding the ships, Africa's loss of population was even greater.¹⁷

Kolchin's quotation shows how much the Africans suffered from slavery and cruel treatment from either the slave merchants on the way to slave markets or the plantations. From a humanist point of view, the U.S. is far from teaching the world, particularly Algiers, morals on the ground of slavery. To do that, history should erase more than two centuries and half of the inhuman treatment of African Americans on the American lands. Unfortunately for American founding fathers and the nascent new generations, the story of slavery remains a black spot in the annals of the American nation.

Besides, it was not the Barbary States that invented piracy as maritime thieves for it had existed long ago. The word piracy is found in the writings of the Numidian medieval theologian, Saint Augustine (354- 430), as it is also associated with the history of the Vikings in the 9th and 10th centuries. Books of history prove that European powers had practiced piracy, privateering and corsairing long before Algiers. Correspondingly, they confirm that the latter had been several times a victim of corsairs' attacks. For this sake, the Spanish historian Hontana wrote:

¹⁷ Kolchin, Peter. « Slavery in the United States. » *Microsoft® Encarta® 2009* [DVD]. Redmond, WA : Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

Our history books say, for example, that France took over Algiers to defend it against piracy of petty Muslim kings. But they do not tell us that these North African kingdoms were, in their turn, victims of European piracy that prevented them from developing normal trade and forced them into corsairing.¹⁸

This quotation testifies that Algerian corsairing can be considered self-defence in contemporary international law because it was not purely an independent action but a spontaneous reaction to possible Western aggression. More than that, the relationship between Algiers and the U.S. would not have been as bad as they were if there had been no European threat. From the point that the Americans were descendent of the Europeans and Christians as well, they should be treated as Europeans. In fact, this is what was done by Algiers.

6. Barbary States' Self-defence against Western expansion

For a better understanding of why Algiers was dealing with the U.S. and Europe in such a way (or corsairing), it is important to investigate the period that came after the fall of the Barbary States. That period proves that during centuries of corcairing, Algiers was actually resisting and trying to push back colonizers away from its frontiers. In fact, she was just postponing a colonial era that became obvious with the advance of the Western Industrial Revolution. The latter worked in favour of the Westerners on both sides: it developed their military faculties, and it promoted the search for raw materials.

Contrary to the Western countries, when Algiers was at the peak of the great powers' pyramid, she had not gone beyond its geographical boundaries respecting international frontiers, at least non-maritime frontiers. Yet on the first occasion,

¹⁸ Quoted in: Silverstein, Paul A. pp. 185.

France did not hesitate to colonize Algiers in 1830 after some weaknesses at the Algerian level; the defeat of Rais Hamidou, the Anglo-Holland attack on the Algerian navy and the failure of Tripoli in front of the U.S. in 1805. These weaknesses paved the way for colonization that lasted in North Africa until the post-Second World War era. The struggle over the strategic location of North Africa was quite apparent among the westerners, including the newly born United States. Taking into account this struggle, Kola Folayan wrote that “[It] would in turn have led to a further consequence of great importance in the history of the Maghrib: America would have preceded France as a colonial power in North Africa.”¹⁹ This sentence shows the opportunist intentions of the American leaders who were not much different from the European ones. For this reason, Algiers had always preferred the best way for defense is to attack in order to restrict and limit that opportunism.

7. CONCLUSION

To sum up, American history, side by side with the Barbary States of the 19th c, reflects the general geostrategic atmosphere that ruled over the Mediterranean Sea for centuries. The latter was a crucial passage for economic opportunities, for it was the only and the easiest linking point between the three continents: Africa, Europe, and Asia. Besides, it represented a time-saving crossroad for merchants and sailors. All the great powers of the period were eager to have control over it. Therefore, it was not only the case of Algiers, but even France, England, Spain, and Italy were contesting regional sovereignty overseas, and they were competing to impose their

¹⁹ Folyan, Kola. “Tripoli and the War with the U.S.A., 1801-5.” *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 13, No. 2. (1972). pp. 270.

norms hereupon. So far, it is clear that the context of the 19th c impels us to approach the Barbary States and corsairing system carefully and the American administration's policy towards it circumspectly. This is to avoid all kinds of ambiguities that may damage historical objectivity. For this sake, this article provides some pertinent reasons which question the Western attitude towards the Regency of Algiers. It appears that after the 11th of September regrettable events, a more radical discourse started to haunt political literature in relation with the Barbary States.

By raising the reasons that motivate some western intellectuals and Americans, in particular, to consider the Barbary States as an old form of Islamic Terrorism, one can promote critical thinking in what regards American civilization and the teaching of American history. This deconstructive approach in the study of historical events is primordial to denaturalize the existing political literature and question some aspects that are taken for granted in the Occident society. The aim of it is not to denigrate the American political, economic, and cultural origins, or any other country's past, but to initiate readers to think about the Algerian-American issue of the 19th c from a different perspective.

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