

Ambassador Pearce's Remarks to the Press following Presentation of Credentials

Good morning everyone and Ramadan karim.

I have worked in the Middle East for 32 years as a journalist and as a diplomat. But the greatest honor of my career happened just now, when I had the honor of being received by His Excellency President Bouteflika to present to him my credentials as Ambassador of the United States of America to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. This is a day I will never forget.

Algeria and the United States have a long history of diplomatic relations dating back to the earliest days of our republic, when a friendship treaty was signed between our two countries in 1795. In 1962, under the leadership of President John F. Kennedy, the United States recognized the newly independent state of Algeria and made a commitment to support the Algerian people as they built their new nation and to strive alongside them to realize common goals.

U.S.-Algerian relations have expanded in recent years in the fields of education, cultural exchanges, judicial cooperation, business, and security cooperation, among others.

Algeria is situated in the heart of North Africa and is the third-most populous country in the Arab world. U.S.-Algerian commercial exchanges are worth about \$20 billion per year; Algeria is our second-largest trading partner in the Arab world; and we are Algeria's largest trading partner in the world. We have invested in this relationship through the construction of a new embassy. And an important sign of our growing commercial relations is the recent nomination by the U.S. Department of Commerce of a Commercial Attaché to our Embassy here.

In the field of education, the U.S. and Algerian governments are working closely on a wide range of programs and exchanges, in an effort to improve the opportunities for Algerian youth in the global economy. More Algerian students than ever are going to the U.S. for education, while thousands of others benefit from our English-language programs right here in Algeria. So educational cooperation and assistance will continue to be a top priority in our bilateral relationship

The stability and prosperity of Algeria are fundamental for the stability of the entire region. US-Algeria relations are consequential for both states. We stand together with Algeria in the struggle against terrorism and extremism, and for tolerance and moderation. We hope that ours will be a democratic partnership for peace, prosperity, and stability in this vital region.

So it is a great honor to be here. And I look forward to traveling around this great country, meeting its people, and strengthening the very important US-Algeria connection.

Thank you very much