

May 1, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

President Ford and Tunisian Prime Minister Hedi Nouira met in the Oval Office for an hour today beginning at 10:40 a.m.. Also present at the meeting were Secretary of State Kissinger, U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Talcott Seelye, and Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft on the American side and Habib Chatli, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunisian Ambassador to the U.S. Ali Hedda on the Tunisian side.

The President welcomed the official visit by Prime Minister Nouira and this first opportunity for personal discussions within the long-standing tradition of close relations between the United States and Tunisia. The President expressed his interest in strengthening further the very friendly ties between our countries, and took the occasion to express his high regard for the leadership of President Bourguiba.

The President and Prime Minister discussed the whole range of bilateral issues embodied in the friendly and cooperative relationship between our two countries. The President expressed his admiration for the economic progress in Tunisia which has opened the way for higher levels of trade and commerce between the United States and Tunisia. Both leaders agreed that every effort should be made to sustain this increasing economic cooperation.

The President and Prime Minister affirmed their interest in the U.S. - Tunisian Joint Commission to further the excellent relations between our countries. Prime Minister Nouira and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger will serve as Co-Chairmen of the Joint Commission and an inaugural meeting will be held tomorrow morning at the Department of State.

The President and Prime Minister also exchanged ideas on issues of international concern including continuing efforts to obtain new momentum toward a peaceful settlement of the Middle East dispute. The President reaffirmed his determination to avoid a stalemate in the peace-making process.

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The President is hosting a working dinner at the White House this evening in honor of Prime Minister Nour. In addition to his meeting at the White House and at the Department of State, the Prime Minister is also meeting with other high level officials of the Administration and with Members of Congress. He has visited Williamsburg and will be proceeding on to Atlanta, New York, Chicago and San Francisco where he will meet with state and local officials in addition to businessmen and members of the media. Both Governments agreed that the visit is a welcome occasion for strengthening understanding and mutual appreciation between the peoples of the United States and Tunisia.

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