MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Hedi Nouira, Prime Minister of Tunisia
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, May 1, 1975
10:30 a.m. (60 Minutes)

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

Nouira: I bring you greetings from President Bourguiba as well as a statement
of his esteem for you, Mr. President.

The President: Please express my gratitude to President Bourguiba for his
good wishes, my esteem, my hope for his health and my hope that he may
visit us soon. Please express to him the feeling of the American people --
going back many years -- of friendship and appreciation for the moderate
policies of Tunisia under his leadership.

[Secretary Kissinger comes in.]

I know you are meeting with Secretary Kissinger and will announce the Joint
Commission. We think this can be very useful in promoting our joint efforts
and your further economic development. We are most grateful for the con-
structive role that your country has played in matters relating to the Mediter-
nanean and the Middle East. We hope you can continue to play that role in the
period ahead. I would be grateful for your observations.

First, may I say that our policy is one of forward movement. We will not
tolerate a stalemate and stagnation. We are emphatic in our statements to
all the parties that there can be no military action as we search for ways to
continue progress.
Nouira: I would like first to say that Tunisia has never been a country that favors excesses. We have a long history, and many different civilizations have been in our country, so we have always been open to the outside. We operate not from emotion but from a realistic appraisal of the situation. We are always for dialogue -- even during our struggle for independence, we advocated dialogue with our occupying power. That is even more important in the world today. Force is the most abhorrent way to conduct international relations. Since we are a small country, we feel that legitimacy is the most important way to conduct affairs. It is on that that we have our policies toward the Mediterranean, the world and the societies in the world.

As we look to the situation in the Mediterranean, we see it through Tunisia's eyes, so it may not include all the data -- since all events in the Mediterranean concern us directly. That refers not only to the Middle East proper but also with respect to possible differences with some of our neighbors.

With respect to the Middle East, our government stands fast regarding the legality which must prevail. All territory gains by force must cease. American policy is a positive policy, though it has not achieved great success.

The President: The policy initiated in 1973 we think was successful, and we thought another step would have been useful. But despite that, we feel that movement is essential and we hope the countries of the Middle East share our feeling that progress must continue to be made.

Nouira: It is quite so, Mr. President, and the policy of the United States is one which envisages a global solution involving all issues, and we think the problem can't be solved without including all of the parties -- including the Palestinians. So we do believe in a global solution and that is how we understand the American policy. That also we think is President Sadat's policy and that of the others who may seem very reserved on this matter.

The President: We do believe a settlement must include the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and we think any agreement must take that full into consideration.

Nouira: Wouldn't it be better and more clear to involve the Palestinians immediately in the process of seeking a solution?

The President: I know this is the policy of a number of countries like yourselves, but until we see how those rights fit into the overall structure, I don't think we should commit ourselves at this time.
Secretary Kissinger: As the Prime Minister has undoubtedly noticed, we have an extreme domestic problem when we deal with the Middle East. As you must have noticed, this is the first President at least since 1956 who has publicly taken a position of some dissociation from Israel. If we now get involved with the issue of the PLO at this stage, it would undermine our efforts, because the PLO is still considered here as a terrorist organization. If we deal first with the border and territorial problems, the Palestinian problem will then fall into line. The Israeli strategy is to produce a stalemate and push the issue into our election year. The more confused the situation is, the more it facilitates that. This is why the President has emphasized that we will tolerate no stalemate.

The President: It would be very disruptive to have anything going on during an election in the United States.

Nouira: It seems to be a problem of procedure, not of substance.

The President: I wouldn't put it so simply. I think it is mandatory to keep it moving both as to time and substance. Any delay invites military activity, and we are trying to keep things moving. There are issues of substance but you can't get to them until you get negotiations going.

Nouira: This negotiating process has been started by the disengagement process. The disengagement allowed a direct dialogue with Egypt and a less direct dialogue with Syria . . .

Kissinger: Every dialogue with Syria is direct.

Nouira: This could be considered as a continuing dialogue, and the Palestinians could be brought in somewhere along the line. They can't be ignored forever.

The President: We recognize their rights, but don't believe we can take that on at the outset, but it must evolve as other things are settled first.

Nouira: It seems to me that the Arabs have not voiced reservations about continuing the dialogue with respect to bringing in the Palestinian question.

The President: This is a matter of great significance to Israel and the refusal of the PLO to recognize Israel complicates things considerably. And it is my judgment that the issue can best be brought in in the context of a comprehensive settlement with peace being the objective.
Nouira: I realize that the ultimate goal is peace, but the matter of recognition of Israel by the PLO is more formal than real. The PLO doesn't deny the existence of Israel, but if Israel doesn't recognize the PLO, why should the PLO recognize Israel? Can't we somehow cut this Gordian knot?

The President: I can assure you we will carefully consider your thought. We hope we can complete our assessment soon and be ready to move forward, because we think movement is essential and we must have the parties avoid the resort to force.

Nouira: It is a wise and laudable policy, and I think the U.S. Government has the dimension and weight to solve the problem. I realize you can't solve it by waving a wand, but I know you will continue what you can.

The President: I know you are concerned about your security. I want you to know that despite the Congressional cuts, we will do whatever we can to assist with training and equipment. Congress has cut the grant aid badly, but we will try through sales to help you to the best of our ability.

Nouira: I appreciate your comments. Tunisia has never been fond of arms because we believe the first defense is at home. So we are trying to raise the standard of living, so we are trying to provide jobs so that young men will have something worth defending. But others are arming more than necessary and we wonder why. We would rather use your aid to raise our living standards but we would like to be able to defend ourselves while we are developing. Our army stays in the barracks, but others don't, and that concerns us.

We attach the greatest importance to development and we want to thank you for the American efforts to help us. Since our independence, we have gotten a third of all our assistance from the United States. We have made a great effort, and now we think we are in a pre-takeoff phase. Takeoff is estimated at about 1981. When an aircraft takes off, it needs extra power, and we hope the United States will give us help in reaching cruising speed in our development.

The President: As you know, I must work with the Congress in getting authority, but I will do what I can to assist you in your takeoff. You will be speaking to Congressmen and I think you should emphasize this point to them.

Nouira: I feel encouraged by your words, and they will give me courage when I meet with the Congressmen. Tunisia has been making great efforts. In our
Fourth Plan, outside aid was 40 percent; then in the Fifth it went to 24 percent and now it is at 17 percent. We don't want to break our stride, and I will stress this to the Congress.

President: I hope you will stimulate private investment. It is the best in our country, and I think it will help keep your momentum.

Nouira: That is exactly what we are doing. The contributing of the private sector has doubled over ten years -- from 20 percent to 45 percent.

[The meeting ended]
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I bring your query from B as well as 

My dear...

I am here express my appreciation for his good wishes 

I hope for his health of that he may 

wish us same. I have express to him a felt 

of ourpressed. We are the many years of 

friendship & appreciation. I take the liberty of a 

at the time of this writing. 

(To come in)

I know you are anxious & 

will have 

I fear this can be my 

self in producing some joint effects your 

futureASK It is most grateful for a 

continuation of the your country has played 

the above writing is used. Let me 

now continue to play that role in a joint effort. 

As always, I am grateful for your continued 

role. May your work 

and be forwarded. 

Our statements at the time of the 

were sympathetic in your statements to all parties 

that there can be no valid action as we reach 

for arms to continue progress. 

I should like to say to convey our warmest 

congratulations. We have long been 

a good friend. Sympathies have been in our 

party. We have always been joint to cooperate the great 

not from certain but an unbridled goodwill 

of course. We are always for dialogue while 

sharing our struggle for liberty we advance.
Antigone is an occupying force that can
make things in a world go. Exercise most
abnormal ways and methods. Since
we need, we feel lightning is not
equivalent to instant effects. To understand
that in the end we follow the bad.
- stand in a world. A man looks at it in
hand, we see it. Then iron has a victory,
we must exclude all data. Since it and
continue us chiefly. That is not only a
we paper, but also a respect to for different
facing activities. Regarding ME, one just thinks
not respected - basically each must pursue. All
thinking gains by face must cease. ME policy is
a policy, they do it has not achieved final
sources.

P
The policy involved in 13 we think were enough,
and we that another step could have been useful,
but despite that, we fall movement as essential
and takes a unit of ME. Therefore policy
that progress must continue be made.

N
It quite so, but + a policy of WE - our which
does another global solution reducing all and
think it can't be solved if a global solution
and a separate - a level to need taken in
a global solution + that can we understand
the policy. That also can think a detail policy
of that of others who may then my second
on this matter,
P we believe a statement 23 would include a light
rightful for falsehood; we think every agreement must
take that fully into consideration.

N We hope it be better—some relief of some
immediatly in possession getting a nutritive

P I know this is a feeling, but we have seen
no that might fit with

a small stucture. I don't think we should commit
at this time.

K As I have noticed, we have an extreme desire
towards the death with life. We must (a)
noticed that it is still for the time.

P This string will not understand our efforts come
c 1 20 is still considered here a terrorist again.

K If we had 1st 1/14th of 23rd parts, I Parks
prone will then fall into this. One's strategy is to
produce statement & pasture and then one winter

P The more composed is it be more it

K Frankly that? That only is it has fanged with an

P Sometimes in my experience to have anything
on average reduction in a cease.

N It seems to be the same practice of relations

P I wouldn't put it so simply. I think it unlikely
to be any great force to come & take any
thing apart with a trinity and we are trying
to keep them many. There are some funds
but you can't get it then until you get your

N. The report process has been started by the agent

process. The process agent allowed drift-drift of 5

but not of 14 minutes.

N. Every change of 5. Again is drift

N. These would be considered as an existing dialogue to

paths and be brought in somehow along what

they want to express in

I. We may do this so that, but don't think we can do that

on an objective. But worst would do if

they can set it.

N. Even if one or both have not completed questions.

continuing dialogue in respect to bringing in elected

question.

N. This is a matter of great interest to E. I expressed this

in a way I think it takes considerably less.

my judgment that a straw poll is best for long

but in all case of any further refinement of your

being a subject.

N. Dealing with some good is power but a matter

of doing it by PhD is more formalism. I think it doesn't
drug interest I but if I don't worry

PhD why should I worry I. Just want to make sure,

but this doesn't sound.

P. It is because you are not completely understanding

that. We hope can come complete and consistent

report to move forward because of

their movement is essential and must have...
I appreciate your comments. I know that many people across the country have been reading and discussing your ideas. It is heartening to know that others are interested in this work.

I hope that you will continue to share your thoughts and insights with me. I value your perspective and the insights you bring to this work.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. I remain committed to advancing this field and working towards a better understanding of the issues at hand.

Best regards,

[Signature]
P. I am happy to work with you today. I am getting
an answer, but it will be about 10 days to finish. I
am taking the final step. You will be getting a summary
that you should rephrase the point X times.

N. I feel encouraged by your words and will give me
encouragement. I want us to move forward. Time
has been moving quite swiftly. On our 2nd plan, outside
and was 46%, then in 3rd it went to 47%,
now it is at 73%. We link with back on
which I will show you in a day.

I. Hope you will continue private meetings
at the last in our company. I think it will
help keep your momentum.

N. I agree with your thinking. Contemplating, even
salter has doubled over 78% or 28% & 48%