MEMORANDUM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Habib Bourguiba, Jr., Special Envoy of President
Bourguiba of Tunisia
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Amb. Ali Hedda, Ambassador of Tunisia

DATE AND TIME: Friday, July 2, 1976
10:15 - 10:45 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

Bourguiba: I have a mission with many purposes. First, to present the best wishes of my father, who is the George Washington of his country. Just in May we celebrated our 20th anniversary and you were kind enough to send your number two man, the Vice President.

President: I want to welcome you here and thank you for the lovely bicentennial gift.

Bourguiba: It has a two-fold meaning. First, the apple tree is the symbol of peace. Then it is also the symbol of continuity.

President: It is an exquisite gift.

I was pleased to send the Vice President to your anniversary. Our relations are excellent and, so far as I know, we have no issues between us.

Bourguiba: That is true. It has not always been fashionable to be pro-American but we have been consistent.
President: We greatly appreciate that. I hope your father's health is better.

Bourguiba: It is, but he has bad periods. He is 73 years old -- and has spent much time in prison. [He described President Bourguiba's imprisonment, especially during World War II when Hitler had him released in hopes of helping the effort.]

President: Are there any issues we should discuss?

Bourguiba: This was my main purpose in coming here. My talks with Marshall Mars of OPIC were very reassuring. We are now in a position to absorb technology transfer. We could cap the $750 million the US has given us by becoming the showcase of development. Our birth rate has gone from 3.5 to 1.6. My father has a very clear project in his mind. I was pleased to see the emphasis here on agro-business. If we don't over the next five years produce enough to feed the people, the progress of the last 50 years will be wasted.

President: What is your chief crop?

Bourguiba: Cereals, olives, fruit. We are also reforesting. We have a national tree day.

Many American banks are now interested in coming to Tunisia, I am proud to say.

All this policy of the wisdom of my father is in possible jeopardy because of our neighbors. Libya is ruled by a crackpot. I have met him. He should be in a nut house. This is our short-term danger but very serious. He has acknowledged publicly that he is inciting the people of Tunisia and Egypt to overthrow their leaders.

Over the longer term the danger is Algeria. They have inherited the French sense of "grandeur". They have a concept of a super-Algeria reaching from Senegal to Egypt.

We don't want to endanger our economic development but we have to "keep a stone in our hand." Unfortunately that stone is expensive.

Our overall needs are $1.2 billion over the next five years. I have already been to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. They are inhibited by appearing to help opponents of Libya and Algeria. I would appreciate it if you would put a little friendly pressure on them.
President: We will certainly do that. We will also look at the military and economic program and do what we can.

Bourgiba: We need, as a top priority, missiles against tanks and aircraft.

Qaddafi has developed a base right on our border -- out of an old base.

President: We will do our best.

Bourgiba: We are the only practicing democracy in the Mediterranean.

[Describes from Turkey around the sea what problems are being faced.]
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Smited 12/6/04
MEETING WITH HABIB BOUHGUIBA, JR.
[Mr. Ambassador or Mr. Bourguiba]
Friday, July 2, 1976
10:15 a.m. (15 minutes)
The Oval Office
FROM: Brent Scowcroft

I. PURPOSE

Your meeting presents a useful opportunity to demonstrate US interest in good relations with Tunisia. [President Bourguiba, whose health has been failing for some time, is unable to travel. He dispatched Prime Minister Nouira to meet with you last year. Vice President Rockefeller attended the Tunisian Twentieth Anniversary celebrations in Tunis this March.]

Your purpose in the meeting should be to:

-- Express appreciation for the lovely Bicentennial gifts.
   (A gold olive tree [picture at Tab B] and an exhibit of Roman and Punic mosaics, now on display at the Kennedy Center.)

-- Emphasize the value we place on close relations with Tunisia; and express appreciation for the policies of moderation which President Bourguiba has pursued, and his constructive counsel on the Middle East situation.

-- Express understanding of Tunisia's security concerns (the Libyan, Algerian "threat") and your desire to be helpful within the limits of our resources.

-- Assure Bourguiba Jr. that the US will continue to play a strong role in world affairs and express the hope that Tunisia will work with us on important multilateral issues.

Subject to ODS of E.O. 11652
Automatically Declassified on December 31, 1982
II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: President Bourguiba has delegated his son as his Special Envoy to Washington in honor of our Bicentennial and personally requested you meet with him in the letter at.

Tab C. Habib Bourguiba, Jr. is carrying a special message for you from his father and has also brought with him Tunisia's Bicentennial gift, a gold olive tree. (He will not present this personally to you. Also, in honor of our Bicentennial, the Tunisians sent an exhibit of ancient Roman and Punic mosaics; Vice President Rockefeller attended the opening of this exhibit at the Kennedy Center this week.)

We do not know the contents of the message which Bourguiba Jr. is said to be carrying from his father but, in addition to Bicentennial greetings, it may request continued strong US support to Tunisia and an active US role on matters of concern to Tunisia, especially the Arab-Israeli negotiations. President Bourguiba has a strong emotional attachment to the United States and Bourguiba Jr.'s comments may reflect this.

US-Tunisian relations remain excellent and there are no unsettled bilateral issues. President Bourguiba attaches great importance to a "special relationship" with the US and has also viewed this as the key to his economic development and military security. Over the past twenty years we have given Tunisia more than $700 million in development assistance. Current levels ($10-12 million annually) are significantly reduced from previous years and though Tunisia has accepted these cuts with grace, they nonetheless always hope for more. Grant military aid (MAP) was terminated in 1975 but we have programmed $15 million in FMS for each of FY 76 and 77.

Internally, Tunisia, with meager resources, has made impressive gains under President Bourguiba's leadership and is one of the more moderate Arab governments. But Tunisia is currently experiencing a period of unease about what will follow in the post-Bourguiba period. President
Bourguiba has been the principal figure in Tunisian politics for two decades and has shaped Tunisia's moderate foreign policies against pressures for more radical departures from the younger generation. His chosen constitutional successor is Prime Minister Nouira but there have also been reports that Bourguiba Jr. would be named to this position (although he is also not in especially good health.). Pressures for more radical policies are certain to increase from within and without when Bourguiba passes away.

Tunisia's foreign policy is conditioned heavily by its lack of two main resources and the consequent need to remain on good terms with as many countries as possible and particularly with its more powerful neighbors. Tunisia is officially a non-aligned country and is cautious to preserve its Third World credentials (including ties with the USSR and China). At the same time, he has closely aligned Tunisia with the West, in large part due to Bourguiba's strong personal attachment to the United States. In the Arab context, Tunisia maintains good relations with the Egyptians, Saudis and other moderates to counterbalance pressures from Algeria and Libya. The latter is Tunisia's main concern and the two engage in steady harassment, intensified since an abortive Qaddafi proposal for union in 1974. Qaddafi has openly called for the overthrow of the Bourguiba regime and the Libyans have been implicated in various subversive activities against Tunisia. In this context, US assurances of support assume special importance to the Tunisians.
Tunisia has been helpful in the Middle East peace talks and supports US efforts to bring about a final settlement. President Bourguiba is especially interested in seeing the Palestinians (PLO) brought directly into the negotiations. He has urged a continuation of US efforts and sees our influence in the area as a healthy deterrent to Soviet expansionism. The Tunisians are very concerned over present developments in Lebanon.

Tunisia has also consistently been a voice of moderation in international councils but is also unwilling to isolate itself from the prevailing Third World or Arab majority on issues of importance to us. While we appreciate these constraints, we believe Tunisia could give greater support to the US on those issues where Arab or African sensitivities are not directly involved, such as Korea. Tunisia last year voted for postponement of the Puerto Rican issue in the Committee of 24. Tunisia would like to see US influence increased in Black Africa and actively supported US policy on Angola. It has urged us to press Rhodesia and South Africa to initiate reforms.

B. Participants: Habib Bourguiba, Jr., Tunisian Ambassador Hedda (both speak English). Secretary Kissinger and Brent Scowcroft.

C. Press Arrangements: Meeting to be announced; White House photo only.

III. TALKING POINTS

General and Personal

-- It is a great pleasure to welcome you. I have the greatest respect for His Excellency, President Bourguiba, and greatly appreciated his recent letter to me. Please convey to him my warmest personal regards and my appreciation that he designated you to visit with us.
-- This is a special year for both of our countries. We were proud to send Vice President Rockefeller to the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of Tunisia. Tunisia's magnificent gifts (gold olive tree and mosaics exhibit) will be permanent reminders of the enduring ties between our people.

US-Tunisian Relations

-- The US greatly admires the moderate policies which Tunisia has promoted under President Bourguiba's wise leadership, in the post-colonial period.

-- The US has enjoyed very close relations with Tunisia, and we very much want to strengthen these ties in the future.

-- I am pleased that we have been able to contribute to Tunisia's impressive economic development and to have cooperated with your Government in strengthening its security. We will continue to work with you in these areas. We will do all we can to help within the limits of our own resources.

Middle East, Lebanon

-- I would welcome your views on how Tunisia sees the situation in the Middle East evolving.

-- For our part, we remain determined that there must be further progress in the Arab-Israeli negotiations and we are continuing our efforts to see how this can be achieved. We appreciate Tunisia's support. We feel that the progress achieved thus far must be built upon in order to reach a lasting settlement and one which takes into account the legitimate interests of the Palestinians.

-- We regret the tragedy which has unfolded in Lebanon. The magnitude of human suffering is enormous and we are saddened that such a close friend as Lebanon should be the scene of such destruction. We have made every effort diplomatically to encourage an end to the fighting and a political solution. We have lost our Ambassador in the process but we are determined to continue our efforts. That is why I have dispatched another special emissary to Beirut. All interested parties must continue to urge a negotiated solution.
We appreciate the interest of Tunisia in a satisfactory solution to the Palestinian problem. We agree that any final settlement must include this. At the same time, Israel's right to exist and Resolutions 242 and 338 must be accepted, something which the PLO has been unwilling to do. 

***Multilateral Issues***

-- It is my hope that the US and Tunisia can continue to work closely together on international issues affecting both our countries in multilateral fora. We appreciate your support last year on the Puerto Rican issue and the constructive role which Tunisia has played in international councils. We want to continue to work closely with you as these issues arise in the future.
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Exmpt 12/6/04
Mr. President:

This year the United States of America is celebrating the bicentennial of its independence. This commemoration has deep meaning for Tunisia, because the event marked the beginning of a vast movement of history and the strengthening and application of principles of government to which we are particularly attached.

For these reasons, it is my conviction that all peoples who draw strength from the sources of democracy and freedom join sincerely in this commemoration. For decades I personally waged a strenuous battle for the triumph of these principles and for the establishment among nations of relations based on trust and mutual respect.

This was my dream and it is today a reality for my country. During that long struggle and in the darkest moments of the colonial period, I was especially careful to safeguard the bonds of friendship and esteem which our two States established at the dawning of United States history.

His Excellency
Gerald R. Ford,
President of the
United States of America.
You will understand, Mr. President, why it would have been my greatest pleasure to take part personally with you in the events commemorating the bicentennial. Regrettably, I shall be unable to attend as my state of health no longer permits extensive travel.

Therefore, I am appointing my son to represent me personally and to express, on behalf of Tunisia, our desire to maintain and to strengthen the relations of friendship and cooperation which exist between our two countries.

The gift which my son will deliver to you on my behalf represents for Tunisia not only the ancient symbol of peace, but also the tree whose age-long fruitfulness continues to reward perseverance in the struggle. May it serve to express the homage of the Tunisian people to your nation’s work of enlightenment and of peace.

I avail myself of this occasion to convey to the American people my warm congratulations and sincere wishes of prosperity. To you, Mr. President, I extend the most ardent wishes for success, happiness, and health, and beg you to accept the assurances of my very high and friendly consideration.

[a] Bourguiba

Habib Bourguiba
President of the Tunisian Republic
I have no multi paper answer. Let's put
a lot together, if my father - Washington, of the
country. Just in case we are notified on the
arm, it you are kind enough to send your # 2.
I went to welcome you here & thank you for
the lovely letter. 20% (Letters talking of gold too)

B. Here it shows a # folio meaning first the
opinion in a substantial place. Then it is
also a separate of the continuity of 22
P. It is an appendix gift.
I think you should be included in our planning.

B. I have never been finished to in our arm, but we have been consistent
P. We quietly support that. I hope your father
health is better.
B. It is, but we feel quite. # 23 - we
spent much time in prayer.
(Discussed B. Sr. improvement, pp. during
25 17 when better said) (I believe)
I support)
P. Are there any issues we shall discuss?
B. From my main purpose. My talk w/
U.S. is very interesting.
We are now in part with and knowledge &
to the. We could say a # 23 and we have
given us by thinking, otherwise. I hope
U.S. continues. Has year for S.S. to 1
B. My father has a very deep expert in biochemical
I do hope it for emphasis taken.
an agreement. If we don't have what is yes
produced enough to fill a ship, a transport
we will have
What is your chiefrosage.
Be careful, they're just, we are also operating.
We have a week today,
Might play hands out over interest in coming to
Chicago I can't reply.
All this play of your father is in progress.
I frankly believe you cannot - I - I - I play any
the teeth, I have told him. A week
be is a part time. I think it's the same thing to
longer bill any services. He has asked publicly
that he is mailing people of mines & E.
continue to make dishes.
One longer term danger in Algiers.
They have demanded a Fr. tense of "grandeur!"
They have a request of a longer period of
writing from Sweden to E.
We had four to send a person down, about if
not there is "by a part of my hands." Un-
fortunately that starts next week.
One second week at 12 but were right there.
Some changes came to S.A. We heard. They are
inhibited by my appearance only appear of up to A
& Algiers. Canada open, if you would put
or little from all pressure on time
1 to a week certainly do that. We will also talk
at the end of the day & get about our
1 can make a period move against talk
noting.
A debate begins on next right on more trade.
I am still here.

But we are only waiting for work. Cowords from Timmy's account: see what you can be (and)