

1a

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~

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.

[Photographers took pictures of the gold olive tree.]

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.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, SEC. 1.4
NSC MEMO, 11 AUG 1976, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, State Div. on 3/13/04
BY [signature] NARA DATE 7/29/04

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~

CLASSIFIED BY Henry A Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (B) 1, 3
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp to Det.

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 agrobusiness. 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.

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

[Describes from Turkey around the sea what problems are being faced.]



16

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 018444

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction
TYPE OF MATERIAL Briefing Paper
TITLE Meeting with Habib Bourguiba, Jr.
CREATION DATE 07/02/1976
VOLUME 6 pages
COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031400927
COLLECTION TITLE National Security Adviser. Memoranda of
Conversations
BOX NUMBER 20
FOLDER TITLE July 2, 1976 - Ford, Tunisian Special
Envoy Habib Bourguiba, Jr.
DATE WITHDRAWN 08/02/2004
WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG

Santiza 12/6/04

16

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

3833

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

MEETING WITH HABIB BOURGUIBA, 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 goldolive 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 GDS of E. O. 11652
Automatically Declassified on
December 31, 1982

DECLASSIFIED, with portions exempt
AUTHORITY E.O. 12958-2/6/04; State v. 13/04
BY MA NLF, DATE 4/14/07

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

- 2 -

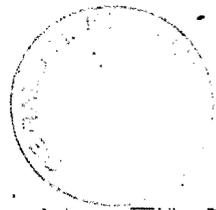
II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

- 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

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

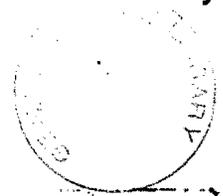
CONFIDENTIAL (GDS)

- 3 -

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 Qadhafi proposal for union in 1974. Qadhafi 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.

CONFIDENTIAL (GDS)

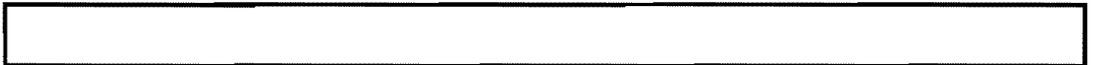


CONFIDENTIAL (GDS)

- 4 -

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.



25X

- 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.

CONFIDENTIAL (GDS)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

- 5 -

-- 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.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

- 6 -

[REDACTED]

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.

25X1

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.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

A



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

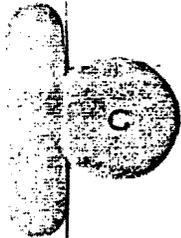
WITHDRAWAL ID 018445

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction
TYPE OF MATERIAL Biography

CREATION DATE 06/24/1976
VOLUME 1 page
COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031400927
COLLECTION TITLE National Security Adviser. Memoranda of
Conversations
BOX NUMBER 20
FOLDER TITLE July 2, 1976 - Ford, Tunisian Special
Envoy Habib Bourguiba, Jr.

DATE WITHDRAWN 08/02/2004
WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG

Exempt 12/6/04



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LANGUAGE SERVICES

(TRANSLATION)

LS NO. 56844
MM/MSS
French

TUNISIAN REPUBLIC
The President

Carthage, June 4, 1976

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.

[s] Bourguiba

Habib Bourguiba
President of the Tunisian Republic



of an old house

A. we will do one last.

B. we are a only practicing business in market.
(Business from Turkey, around the sea what
ports are being paid)

