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**Remarks of Welcome to President Bourguiba of Tunisia at the Washington National Airport.
May 3, 1961**

IT IS a great pleasure for me as President of the United States and also as a citizen of our country to welcome the President of a friendly country and a distinguished world statesman.

Long before I occupied this present responsibility, I had become familiar with the long struggle in the life of President Bourguiba for his country's independence. He spent years in prison. He spent years in struggle. He is given in his own country the name of the Supreme Combatant, because he had one goal always in mind: the independence and freedom of his country.

And now that that independence and freedom has been won, he has put before his people another goal, and that is to build a better life for themselves, to make it possible for all of the people of his country to share in a more fruitful and abundant existence.

I think that it's most proper that the first head of state to pay an official state visit to this country in this administration should be President Bourguiba.

We welcome him. I think he knows that the people of this country admire those who stand for principle, those who fight for freedom. We have among us today a man who has fought for freedom and fought for principle.

It is a great honor to welcome him to the United States.

NOTE: President Bourguiba responded (through an interpreter) as follows:

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen:

I am deeply touched by the kind words which you have just expressed towards Tunisia and towards myself. The warm welcome which has been extended to the members of my party and to myself constitutes the most eloquent possible proof of the traditional long friendship which has never ceased to exist between our two nations.

This is my way of telling you, Mr. President, the profound joy which I experience in being once again in your country, land of liberty and democracy, and the joy I feel in bringing to the noble American nation a message of friendship and consideration on the part of the Tunisian nation. Our common devotion to the great values of civilization, our devotion to the principles of justice and liberty, constitute the most firm basis for friendship which unites our two peoples. And the surest possible pledge of the development and strengthening of such friendship, the understanding and the support of the Government of the United States and of Your Excellency in particular, have never failed us, and authorize the trust that we have in the happy outcome of the meetings that we are to have.

That is why, Mr. President, I should like to express to you my deep gratitude for your kind invitation and to tell you my conviction that it will contribute to strengthening still further the bonds of friendship and cooperation which exist between our two countries.

I should like to conclude by expressing my most sincere good wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the noble people of the United States.