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Joint Statement Following Discussions With President Bourguiba. May 5, 1961

PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA concludes tomorrow the Washington portion of the State visit he is making to the United States at the invitation of President Kennedy. The two Presidents have had very cordial, frank and fruitful talks on a broad range of subjects. Their conversations have been characterized by the same spirit of mutual understanding and respect which has been responsible for the friendly and positive relations which have evolved between the two countries.

President Bourguiba defined his policy of non-alignment and friendship with all countries desiring good relations with Tunisia. President Kennedy expressed the support of the United States for the inviolate right of peoples and countries to exercise freedom of choice in the organization of their societies and in the definition of their political attitudes. They agreed that the retention by all countries of this freedom of choice is essential to the existence of a peaceful and harmonious world of freedom and justice.

The two Presidents found themselves in agreement as to the political, economic and social problems that confront many new countries, particularly in Africa. They share the conviction that the orderly process of decolonization is essential to the promotion of human welfare, the consolidation of peace and the encouragement of the striving African peoples. They are in basic accord that political progress and economic development will be hindered if the continent of Africa becomes an arena for the so-called cold war. They believe that the independent states of Africa should be free to follow their own policies without outside interference and that they should at the same time strive for a closer harmonization of African viewpoints. The two Presidents discussed the problem of Algeria. They believe that negotiation and that peaceful application of the principle of self-determination are the key to peace in Algeria and to stability in North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The two Presidents also examined the problem of the Congo. They feel strongly that all nations should give wholehearted support to the efforts of the United Nations and particularly of the Secretary General in carrying out the pertinent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the Congo, and should refrain from unilateral actions contrary to those resolutions.

In the social and economic fields, President Bourguiba stressed the importance which Tunisia attaches to the full realization of its human and material potential through a well-conceived national program. President Kennedy expressed his full sympathy with these objectives and made clear the desire of the United States to enter into partnership relationships with the developing countries, based on social justice, self-help and long-range planning. The two Presidents agreed that cooperative efforts of their two countries toward these ends should be continued and expanded. They directed their advisers to explore without delay and in greater detail the means whereby these efforts could be rendered more effective in support of accelerated economic and social growth on a long-range basis.

President Bourguiba extended to President and Mrs. Kennedy a cordial invitation to visit Tunisia. President Kennedy expressed their sincere thanks and indicated they look forward to the opportunity.