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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release April 6, 2000

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT CLINTON:

Hillary and I are saddened by the death of former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba. On behalf of the American people, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to President Bourguiba's family and to the Tunisian people.

President Bourguiba was a historic leader, a pioneer in Tunisia's struggle for independence and for social and economic progress. He also played a courageous role in efforts to advance peace in the Middle East. He leaves behind a nation that can be proud of its social achievements, particularly the steps it has taken to advance the status of women, and a nation poised to take on the critical challenges of deepening democracy and respect for human rights -- and building a better future for all Tunisians.