

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Bendjedid of Algeria (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Bendjedid  
Interpreter: Alec Toumayan  
Notetaker: Sandra Charles

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: August 2, 1989, 3:28 p.m. - 3:35 p.m.  
The Oval Office

The President began saying he called to discuss the situation in Lebanon both as regards the hostages and the Arab League initiative which we strongly supported. (Ø)

On the death of LTC Higgins, the President appealed to President Bendjedid on a humanitarian basis, asking if he had any ideas on how the body, which was under the UN banner, could be returned to his family. He stated that this was of real concern to the American people. (U)

On the hostages, the President also said he had appealed to the Iranians through the Swiss but we were not hopeful. He noted the Syrians, who could be difficult, seemed to be cooperating on this matter. He mentioned that it might be possible for the UN Security Council to do something and if that were the case, he would like to feel free to talk to President Bendjedid about it since Algeria was President of the Council this month. (Ø)

Turning to the larger picture in Lebanon, the President saluted what President Bendjedid, Saudi Arabia and Morocco tried to do. He didn't think the U.S. could have any role with respect to resurrecting their mission but wanted him to know of his support. The President told him his phone line would be open and we would like to be helpful if possible on the big picture in Lebanon. (Ø)

Concluding that this was his message and these were difficult times, the President said he would like to keep that wonderful line of communication open that they had had for several years now and that he valued. (U)

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President Bendjedid replied that he shared the same concerns as the President. On the first point, he assured the President that he was trying to do his utmost to secure what the President wished. (U)

The President thanked him. (U)

Concerning Lebanon, President Bendjedid said that the Committee was issuing a statement, since they had been through the painful, unhappy Arab League experience, that concluded they were not receiving any cooperation from Syria. Speaking for Algeria, he said they were trying to go on with their efforts in order to help the people in Lebanon. (Ø)

The President said that if there was any role we could play with the countries involved, or any thoughts President Bendjedid had on ways that we could be cooperative in supporting the initiative, to let him know. (Ø)

President Bendjedid said he was very much aware of the difficulties Lebanon faced and he placed considerable hope upon Algeria's efforts. He stressed that Algeria would try to do the utmost to help the Lebanese people find a solution. (Ø)

The President said that he appreciated this. (U)

President Bendjedid then said he wished to avail himself of the opportunity to tell his good friend that he was very touched by the political and moral support the President was giving to Lebanon, particularly his support to the Arab League committee and the confidence he had in Algeria. On terrorism, they would try to do the utmost within the realm of what was possible. He wished to remain in touch on the situation in Lebanon to exchange views in case there were any changes in Lebanon in the next few weeks. (Ø)

President Bendjedid then mentioned another matter of importance (nfi) he wanted to bring to the President's attention. He said he would submit this to the President through our Ambassador or through the Algerian Embassy in Washington. (Ø)

The President replied that he looked forward to receiving it and suggested it should go through their Ambassador here to the National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, if it is was extraordinarily personal. He also suggested another way would be a sealed communication to our Ambassador asking the Secretary of State to send it "eyes only" to the President -- but either way he would get it. (Ø)

President Bendjedid said he might use a special envoy. (Ø)

The President said he much preferred to communicate like they had the time President Bendjedid invited him to lunch in his private quarters, and he hoped some day they would do that again. (U)

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President Bendjedid seconded that. (U)

The President concluded expressing hope that Bendjedid was in good health and offering his respects to his family. (U)

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