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Appr By CAJ NARA Date 10/27/88

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

(2)

DATE: ~~October 20, 1969~~

Place: Luncheon, New York City

SUBJECT: U.S.-Algerian Relations

10/20/69

PARTICIPANTS: Mohammed Yazid, Head of Algerian Delegation to UNGA
Richard C. Pedersen, Counselor
Charles W. Bray III, Acting Director, North African Affairs

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Messers. Pedersen and Bray met with Ambassador Yazid, at his suggestion on instructions from the Foreign Minister, to continue the discussion opened between the Secretary and Foreign Minister Bouteflika on October 10.

Referring to the previous notification that Bray had been designated the point of contact for the GOA in the Department, Yazid said that the contact in the GOA Foreign Ministry would be designated following the conference of Algerian chiefs of mission now taking place in Algiers. Mr. Pedersen said that in making their decision they should know that, depending on the rank of the Algerian designated, we would be prepared to consider the contact on our side at the Deputy Assistant Secretary level. (Yazid made no comment on this.)

Yazid noted that the GOA intended to raise the level of its representation in Washington. He said the decision as to who might head the Algerian Interests Section was not yet taken. In response to Bray's question, Yazid said that if the person were not Counselor Bouselham, it would be someone of at least his seniority.

Mr. Pedersen said that he had heard that Yazid had made a tough speech critical of the U.S. on Viet Nam during the morning.

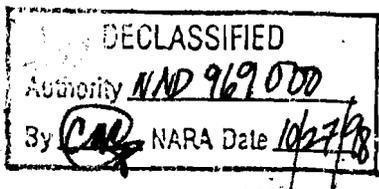
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If so its contents would seem to be at variance with the satisfaction expressed by Foreign Minister Bouteflika that the "problem" of Viet Nam was on its way to resolution and his expression of greater understanding of our objective. Mr. Pedersen pointed out that sharp rhetoric on Algeria's side would not make the resolution of our bilateral problems any easier.

Yazid then said that there appeared to be three impediments in U.S.-GOA relations:

(1) The first, as his Foreign Minister had said, was Viet Nam. Yazid expressed the view that this problem appeared to be "fading away". He hoped that with increased confidence between Algeria and the U.S., public and private positions could be as close as possible.

(2) The second problem, he thought, had been Algeria's role in the Maghreb. From his experience in the U.S. he felt that this would be the most important factor in U.S. public opinion. Yazid went into some detail in describing Algerian efforts to achieve an overall detente in the Maghreb. He indicated that now that Algeria's domestic house was in better order President Boumediene felt freer to play an active and constructive role in the Maghreb. He cited the detente between Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia; the Morocco-Mauritania rapprochement; and the defusing of Spanish Sahara as a political issue in North West Africa. He said he hoped that Algeria could be of assistance to the young Libyan government and cited a long, but rather vague, history of GOA-Libyan cooperation. The point was that Algeria was behaving responsibly in North Africa.

(3) The third problem, Yazid said, related to the Middle East. Algeria was less concerned with the state of relations among the "major powers" than it was about the rights and security of the "little people" in the Middle East. Specifically, and in the light of Algeria's own recent history, the GOA was concerned about the right of Palestinians to live in peace and security. The issue of Palestine, as such, should not be overlooked in an eventual settlement. Would it be impossible for the U.S. to be more "even-handed" in dealing with the issue of Palestine and the Palestinians? Yazid's pitch was not (as Raschid Zeghar's had been in earlier conversations in Washington) for any form of support for Al Fatah or the guerrillas. Pedersen said he thought differences of opinion would undoubtedly continue on this issue, as we felt the main objective had to be establishment of peace in

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two numbered points above. He had also been impressed by Yazid's description of the "options" the U.S. had provided Algeria in its dealings with France and the USSR. Bray pointed out that these "options" all appeared to have benefited Algeria more than the U.S.; he could think of no comparable options that had become available to the U.S. in its dealings with Algeria in the past two years. This was a point the Algerians might keep in mind.

Mr. Pedersen added that insofar as the FPC was concerned, it would be interested in assurances as to the long-range reliability of supplies of natural gas from Algeria. Here again the status of relations between Algeria and the U.S. would be an important factor.

Bray said that in his opinion the GOA faced two problems:

(1) The first was its image in the U.S. At the moment, the image was not good. Mr. Pedersen added that many Americans thought that Algeria was too frequently on the same side of issues as the USSR, for example. Bray said that we were glad that the GOA was upgrading its representation in Washington and hoped that the head of the interests section would be assisted by able officers.

(2) There had been progress on Viet Nam and in the Maghreb. The GOA should weigh in its own mind, whether - in the context of U.S.-GOA mutual interests - the issue of "Palestine for the Palestinians" outweighed other considerations of importance to the GOA, e.g. access to American capital markets, etc. The decision was one for the GOA to make; we hoped that it was clear, however, that our door was open at any time.

Yazid acknowledged the image problem and said that he would be coming to Washington in the near future to consult with Congress and the Executive Branch "as other lobbyists do". He reiterated that our position on Palestine was important to the GOA since the GOA could identify with guerrilla activities in the light of its own history. (He added that the Fedayeen were the only eastern Arabs who need feel no sense of humiliation, since they are still fighting.)

Mr. Pedersen asked whether Yazid had other concrete steps to suggest. Yazid answered that he was expecting a high level economist to come from Algeria in the near future. He would like to bring him to Washington for discussions. Messers. Pedersen and Bray assured him that all useful doors would be open.

Yazid said that he would be in touch to continue the dialogue, most probably in Washington.

[REDACTED]