

# Small files: Tunisia: Small files: Tunisia - 23

*HS L 179:193*



Dag Hammarskiöld's samml.

Tunisia - 1961

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23 July

Notes on conversation between  
D. H. and D. Rusk, U.S. Secy of State.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REFERENCE:

23 July 1961

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

Mr. Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, U.S., telephoned the Secretary-General on Sunday, 23 July, at 6:00 p.m., to report on their position regarding the Secretary-General's request for an urgent airlift to move the Tunisian contingent from the Congo to Tunisia.

Mr. Rusk opened the conversation by saying that the U.S. Government agrees in principle to providing the airlift and then asked the Secretary-General whether he felt that the Tunisians still persisted in their sense of haste in the light of yesterday's cease-fire resolution, or whether the return of the troops could take place over a somewhat protracted period. He asked whether the Tunisians had reflected awareness regarding the importance of their contribution to the current responsibilities of the UN in the Congo, implying that that would condition their sense of timing for the return of the troops. He also indicated that the Secretary-General might face difficulties in filling the gaps at this critical juncture in the Congo, and asked whether it was not rather unprecedented for the UN to carry troops from one UN operation to another.

The Secretary-General replied that the Tunisians, as indicated by Ambassador Slim in a meeting just two hours before at 4:00, had in no way reduced their feeling about the urgency of their return, and that he, the Secretary-General, could in no sense stand in the way of their own evaluation, regarding the urgent return of the troops to their homeland in a crisis. The Secretary-General therefore fully supported their view. As for the Congo, the Secretary-General had taken urgent steps to try to fill gaps as quickly as possible.

Mr. Rusk then asked whether the return of the troops would not run contrary to the resolution passed yesterday by the Security Council regarding the "return of troops to their former positions". If the Tunisian troops return from the Congo, then the French might increase their troops in Tunisia.



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The Secretary-General replied that he could not accept this view since Tunisia was a sovereign country and the Tunisian troops were being recalled to their own country for the defence of their homeland, while French troops would be brought into a foreign country. He could not see the logic of the interpretation that the Security Council resolution had anything to do in this sense with the return of their troops. Mr. Rusk rather weakly conceded the point.

Failing to get the Secretary-General's concurrence to views which would have the effect of delaying, or indeed of avoiding, an airlift, Mr. Rusk then stated that they were confronted with technical problems which might require several days to be worked out.

The Secretary-General repeated that it is a matter of urgency and that Ambassador Bourguiba was returning to Washington tonight and would hope to see Mr. Rusk tomorrow regarding the whole matter. Mr. Rusk concluded this part of the conversation by saying that the Secretary-General will recognize that "we have some problems, too, regarding this matter".

The Secretary-General then stated that in response to a request from President Bourguiba he had agreed to come to Tunisia for personal consultation. He expected that the French would raise objections to such a visit but that it is in line with similar visits to Cairo during the Suez crisis and to Vientiane during the early stages of the Laotian crisis. In neither case did he ask the great Powers concerned for their concurrence. He further stated that as in previous cases his presence in a time of tension served as a stumbling block against aggressive actions. He stated that he would leave for Tunisia tomorrow morning.

A.W.C.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'A.W.C.', written in a cursive style.