

The last desk file - from Dag Hammarskjöld's desk in his office, found afte...

HS L 179:176a



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

The last "desk-file" - 1961

21 - 23 July

Bourguiba, Habib (President of Tunisia)

- 2 cables to D.H.
- Battle of Bizerte, article New York Times.

JUL 21 1961
TO *See [signature]*
FILE NO.
 ACTION COMPLETED
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ETAT PRIORITE HABIB BOURGUIBA PRESIDENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE A
SON EXCELLENCE DAG HAMMARSKJOLD SECRETAIRE GENERAL DES NATIONS UNIES
NEWYORK

DEVAMT LAHGRAVITE DES MENACES QUI PRESENT SUR MON PAYS DU FAIT
DE L AGRESSION DE L ARMEE FRANCAISE QUI A L HEURE OU JE VOUS
ADRESSE CE MESSAGE BOMBARDE ET

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ETATPRIORITY HABIB BOURGUIBA PRESIDENT REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE
A SON EXCELLENCE DAG HAMMARSKJOELD SECRETARIE DES NATIONS UNIES NYK

LA GRAVITE DE LA SITUATION EN TUNISIE RESULTAT DE L
AGRESSION FRANCAISE ET LA NECESSITE D UN EXAMEN URGENT
ET APPROFTNDI DES SUITES DECOULANT DU RECOURS DE LA TUNISIE
DEVANT LE CONSEIL DE

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VUES DIRECT ET PERSONNEL STOP AUSSI SERAIS JE HEREUX
DE VOUS ACCUEILLIR A TUNIS LE PLUS TOT QU IL VOUS SERA
POSSIBLE STOP VEUILLEZ AGREER MONSIEUR LE SECRETAIRE GENERAL
L ASSURANCE DE MES SENTIMENTS AMICAUX ET DE MA TRES

HEUTE CONSIDERATION

HABIB BOURGUIBA PRESIDENT REPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE

26AME EDT

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UNITED NATIONS
1961 JUL 23 PM 9:26
TELEGRAPH UNIT

WUS SVN

Battle of Bizerte: Gunfire and Death

By ROBERT DALEY

Special to The New York Times.

BIZERTE, Tunisia, July 22—

The day was crowded with action, noise and, according to French troops here, death for many Tunisians.

As darkness fell, a tribe of Bedouins, a long line of people, camels and goats, moved leisurely across the plain south of here into the pink haze of the setting sun.

The war had not touched them. But in the city terrible fighting went on.

This city of 46,000 is cut in two by the channel entering the big Lake of Bizerte. On the Zarzouna side, French troops sprawled in the dust eating great chunks of bread smeared with liver paste. They talked of how they had been "cleaning up" Tunisians all day.

On the other side, 250 yards across the water, the firing continued. There were sharp reports of rifles, the staccato bursts of automatic weapons and the heavy noise of exploding mortars.

By late afternoon, the firing was localized. The French appeared to have moved across the width of the city and were sweeping what was left of the Tunisian resistance toward the channel and the sea.

Pockets of Resistance

Most of the heavy firing centered on the Arab quarter, in the southeast corner of that side of the city. But there were pockets of resistance high up in other buildings, and now and then men could be seen scampering across rooftops.

Invariably an explosion would follow. A great cloud of dust would hide the man and the roof. When it cleared nothing more moved across that particular rooftop.

The Zarzouna side of the city already has been "cleaned up." Tonight it seemed that the northern side could not hold out much longer. Between the Tunisians and the sea behind them only a few hundred yards were left.

Bizerte is forty miles north of Tunis. This afternoon the hot, dusty plain along the road from the south looked burned out and terribly poor. There were villages of mud hovels and isolated mud huts in which a dozen or more persons appeared to be living.

Nearing Bizerte, there was a series of French control points. The most distant of them is five full miles south of Bizerte, a line of more than a dozen tanks.

French Troops Ask News

French troops stand about idly with machine guns in their arms. They ask the newcomer—there are dozens of foreign journalists moving back and forth each day—for news from the outside.

What is the world saying about them? they ask. Did anyone bring any newspapers?

There are no Tunisian check points. Obviously the French could march unopposed as far south as they cared. The road is littered with burned-out cars and trucks that were strafed by French planes yesterday and the day before. The planes were not operating today.

Close to the channel, the French troops become more numerous. Guarding the ferry is a company of paratroopers, mostly very young draftees.

Some of them say they were pinned down for three hours earlier today as they tried to take a Tunisian trench on the outskirts of the city.

Then their tanks moved up and they filled the trench with dead Tunisians. They say about twenty Tunisian ambulances arrived later to take away the bodies.

French Morale High

The morale of the French boys is high. One youth explains that they are all together sharing a kind of adventure and besides they have not yet had any losses.

A few bullets whine across the channel, and the young paratroopers leisurely take cover. A jeep drives up and a sack of bread is handed down. Each man gets a quarter of a large, round loaf.

"Those who had money paid," sardines or pâté use it on the bread. The others wolf it down dry.

They have been there two days with half a day's rations. Their commanders have not yet arranged to feed them.

All of the boys are eager for

news of what is happening. They, too, ask for newspapers.

A hundred yards away stands a looted store with its door open and no proprietor in sight. One of the boys explains that they were terribly hungry and had robbed the store.

"Those who had money paid," the boy said. "Those who had no money did not pay. What could we do? We were hungry."

At the near-by ferryboat two or three Tunisians beg the French company commander, a paratroop captain, for permission to take the boat across. They want to get home. The captain accords permission but says it will not be his fault if they get shot over there.

On that side of the channel civilians crouch behind apartment doors and the streets are empty. On this one there are few Tunisians to be seen but many French troops.

Across the channel the firing, the explosions, go on and on.