

is compatible with the complete independence of all of the countries involved but which accepts as a fact the theme which we stressed so much here today, namely, interdependence" (*Ibid.*)

Dulles clarified his statement on March 25. In using the phrase "independence of all of the countries involved," he explained "I was speaking of the then independent countries and that the Mediterranean pact should not in any way impinge upon the existing independence of the countries of the area . . . I did not intend by that statement to carry any implication, one way or another, about the future of Algeria." (*Ibid.*, ellipsis in the source text)

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**271. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Tunisia<sup>1</sup>**

*Washington, March 17, 1958—8 46 p.m.*

735 Good Offices Eyes only Murphy, Houghton and Jones Tunis 1167<sup>2</sup> Following comment bears on numbered paragraphs reftel.

1 Statements first numbered paragraph<sup>3</sup> have been carefully weighed and while Department does not discount information to effect gesture needed, indication FLN will publicly cast its lot with Nasser appears ignore Tunisian and Moroccan attitudes. Latter are major factors in FLN thinking and it no doubt clear to FLN that neither Moroccans nor Tunisians would countenance such move toward Nasser, for time being at least. In any case it entirely unlikely such FLN plans would be unknown to Bourghiba and other top Tunisians and consultation envisaged numbered paragraph 5<sup>4</sup> reftel should suffice in immediate future to keep us closely informed re FLN.

2 Subject any comments Murphy may have, we agree that we should warn FLN in sense recommended paragraph 2(a),<sup>5</sup> but we do not believe contact should be made with Debbaghine in Cairo if this

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<sup>1</sup>Source: Department of State, Central Files, 651 72/3-1758. Secret, Eyes Only, Limit Distribution. Drafted by Foster on March 15, cleared by Landrey, Palmer, and Howe, and approved and signed by Herter. Also sent to Paris.

<sup>2</sup>Telegram 1167, March 14, reported the FLN had set a deadline for receiving an indication of Western support, and advocated establishing closer contact with the group (*Ibid.*, 772 00/3-1458).

<sup>3</sup>The first paragraph warned the FLN might ally with Nasser in absence of Western support.

<sup>4</sup>Paragraph 5 recommended consultations with Bourghiba and the Moroccan Government.

<sup>5</sup>Paragraph 2(a) stated "warn FLN that US reaction would make it incredibly harder for US Government to play positive role in settlement of Algerian war."