

whom were receiving military training. The Tunisian Government would see to it that these young men would not bother the French in Tunisia.

*Bizerta:* Mr. Bourguiba stated that it was folly on the part of the French to hold on to the Bizerta base<sup>4</sup> – a considerable area – even though it was President de Gaulle's aim to decolonize. There were still many French who thought in terms of prestige, glory and hegemony and who hoped to retain the Sahara, Mers-el-Kebir and Bizerta. This was a sort of sickness that took a long time to recover from. France had no title to Bizerta and there was no accord governing its status. Answering Mr. Diefenbaker's query, Mr. Bourguiba explained that there had been no agreement covering Bizerta at the time of Tunisia's independence; this matter had been set aside for subsequent discussions. But the French had been unwilling to talk. If there had been an agreement at the time of independence the French would certainly have arranged for a lease. At the present, the President said, he could not decently pay a visit to the Tunisian city since it was occupied territory. In France the President had found many otherwise well informed Frenchmen astonished to learn that France still held Bizerta. He had told General de Gaulle that no common action between France and Tunisia was possible until the question of Bizerta was settled. And, the President said, Bizerta had no real strategic or logistical necessity for France, a fact which made the situation even more unacceptable to Tunisians. In reply to an enquiry from the *Prime Minister*, the *President* stated that the Tunisians did not regard the presence of the French forces at Bizerta as a source of protection. The week previously (i.e. during the revolt of French forces in Algeria) Tunisia had even been apprehensive about an attack by the French from Bizerta.

The meeting ended with reciprocal assurances of continued consultation and cooperation within the United Nations.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Voir/See D.C. Watt, John Major, Richard Gott, and George Schöpflin, eds., *Documents on International Affairs, 1961* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs/Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 797-807.

<sup>5</sup> Note marginale :/Marginal note:

Mr. Robinson advised me by telephone that Prime Minister had no objections to this account. L.A.D. Stephens.