

RELEASE IN FULL

From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, April 10, 2011 4:06 PM
To: Gray, Gordon
Cc: DiMartino, Kitty; Hensman, Chris D; Brown, Natalie E; Berry, John F; Sullivan, Jacob J; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Cedar, Andrew N
Subject: Visit to Tunisia

Dear Gordon:

I'm very much looking forward to my trip to Tunis this week and I thought it might be helpful if I wrote ahead to give you a better sense of my hopes and objectives for the visit. As you know, we have all been asked by the Secretary to reevaluate and assess our programs and initiatives throughout North Africa and the Middle East to ensure that we are well-positioned to respond to the rapidly evolving political and social landscape. I have discussed this matter with the Secretary, Bill Burns and Jeff Feltman and we all agree that Tunisia provides us with some unique opportunities to pilot new approaches in our outreach to a broad cross section of civil society organizations and representatives and cast our relationship with them as a two-way conversation.

With this in mind we have designed a slightly unorthodox format for the trip, centered around a full-day workshop with a diverse group pulled from Tunisian civil society. The workshop would be an open, brainstorming opportunity for Tunisians to collaborate with us on evaluating whether our public diplomacy and MEPI programs really meet their current needs, explaining to us what would be useful, and brainstorming about potential new approaches or programs to ensure that US engagement is providing something of value to Tunisians. While there is a broad range of important Embassy programs that engage civil society (e.g. USAID, etc.), for the purpose of this meeting we propose to keep our focus only on public diplomacy and MEPI programs.

I would like this workshop to be an occasion to examine our outreach in an open and collaborative way. We have had success with this format in Washington for brainstorming new programs and ways of doing business for PD globally. We recognize that this is a new approach and that we will need to improvise during the day to ensure fruitful discussion. However, I am confident that this experiment is worthwhile. I am pasting a rough schedule for the day below to give you some sense of the flow I am imagining.

This workshop day would be complemented by other meetings and events, where I could get broader perspective on Tunisia and help to focus on any issues that might be useful to advancing your objectives in country.

I would be happy to discuss this with you further, and I'm looking forward to an interesting and productive visit.

Best regards,

Judith McHale

Preliminary schedule for Tunisian Workshop on Public Diplomacy and MEPI Activities

(All times approximate)

8:30-9:00: Coffee etc.

9:00-9:15: Under Secretary McHale introduces charge for the day and rough outline of schedule, expectations

9:15-10:15: Embassy Tunis gives presentation on current range of PD and MEPI activity

10:15-10:30: Break

10:30-12:30: Group feedback on needs of Tunisian participants and appraisal of current range of activities (as presented)

- **Appraisal of current needs of Tunisian population (~10:30-11:00)**
 - What do Tunisians actually need at this moment in history?
 - What role should other countries be playing in helping to support? (education, grants, support for one sector versus another, catalyst or convener?)
- **Participant reaction to the range of USG activities presented (~11:00-11:30)**
 - Which have they heard of? Which have had/could have important impact? Which seem less useful?
 - What is current role the USG is seen to play in supporting Tunisian civil society and helping to provide useful services?
- **What critical gaps or opportunities do we see when comparing current programs and Tunisian participants' appraisal of needs or desires? (~11:30-12:30)**
 - Which areas of current activity are well aligned with these needs? Which less aligned?
 - What are the broad areas of potential programming that USG should focus on strengthening or retooling? (identification of 4 breakout themes for post-lunch)

12:30-1:30: Lunch

1:30-2:15: Breakout sessions focused on major thematic areas which emerged from morning brainstorm

2:15-2:30: Break

2:30-3:00: Presentation of breakout ideas (just presentation, no evaluation)

3:00-4:15 Group evaluation of top breakout ideas, and identification of top priority areas moving forward; coalesce around major pillars of a strategy for PD/MEPI activities

4:15-4:30: Workshop closing