

RELEASE IN PART B6

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**From:** McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 18, 2011 7:10 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Tunisia -- confidential

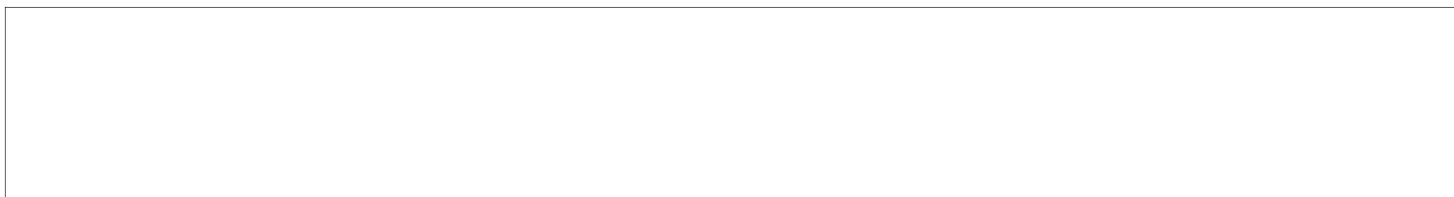
Hope your trip went well. I got back last night from Tunisia and wanted to give you a quick report and also see if we can find some time to meet so I can share with you some concerns I have.

I met with a broad range of activists, students and business leaders while I was there and the meetings were very productive. On Friday we held a 6 hour working group session with representatives from a number of NGOs and with a group of student leaders. We outlined what we are currently doing and discussed additional ways to support the transition. The meetings were largely positive and we came up with some new concepts that we should be able to implement fairly easily using existing resources.

On Saturday we travelled to Sfax where we met with a group of professors and students and had a lunch meeting with business leaders. Again the meetings were quite positive and I think we identified a number of areas where we can work together to move their and our agendas forward rapidly.

My overall assessment of the situation is that, while things are still fragile, we have a unique opportunity to redefine our relationship with people in all sectors but we must move quickly and publically to align our interests with theirs. Clearly of paramount importance will be to do all we can to support their preparation for the July 24 election. The task is daunting and will require a focused and sustained effort but it is doable.

I met with the NDI rep as she expressed similar concerns. There are over 50 political parties and only one, the Islamist party, is in any way organized. The election is 15 weeks away and significant work needs to be done in all areas — process; voter information and education; media training etc.



I do have some ideas and I plan to talk to both Mike Posner and Bill Burns to see if we can creatively and quickly deploy resources to deal with the situation.

I'll try to get on your calendar to give you more details.

jm

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