

MAP ROOM

NAVALAIDE. CASABLANCA  
Box 165

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*Confidential  
Trip file*

CASABLANCA  
January 17, 1943

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILES

At 1200 this date, the President received M. General Chas. A. Nogues, Resident General at Rabat. Also present were Major General G. S. Patton, Jr., Commanding General, 1st Armored Corps; Brigadier General William H. Wilbur, 1st Armored Corps; Mr. Robert D. Murphy, Special Representative of the President on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, North African Forces; Captain John L. McCrea, Naval Aide to the President, and Lieutenant Colonel Elliott Roosevelt, Air Corps Reserve.

The President greeted General Nogues with the remark that "I am very pleased to meet you, General, and I must say that you look exactly like your photograph." The General stated that all of Morocco was very proud to have the President here and that the President's presence in Morocco was a source of much surprise to the General.

The President stated that he did not speak very good French and so therefore thought that the conversation should be carried on with the aid of Brigadier General Wilbur, as interpreter. The conversation started out thus, but before long the President and General Nogues were conversing freely in French.

The President stated that he trusted that North Africa had seen the last of the Germans for some time, to which the General readily agreed. The President inquired as to the attitude of the Germans resident in North Africa during the period of the Armistice. General Nogues stated that at all times they were haughty and overbearing, and that everyone was glad to see them depart. He also stated that they were now being well cared for by the French in various concentration camps.

General Patton remarked that the fine cooperation existing between the French and ourselves was largely due to the splendid cooperation which General Nogues had given us. The President remarked that he felt that the newspapers had been making much out of a situation which did not exist, namely, that there was confusion and misunderstanding between the French, the Americans and the British in North Africa, and that the period for "name calling is now over." General Nogues assured the President that everyone was most anxious to cooperate with the United States forces, looking towards the ultimate defeat of the enemy.

The President requested General Nogues' advice as to whether or not, he, the President, should ask the Sultan of Morocco to call on him. Specifically, the President asked if it would be in order for him to entertain the Sultan at lunch or dinner. To this, both General Nogues and General Patton replied that it would be a most gracious thing for the President to do, and that it would definitely cement relations between the Arabs and ourselves. It was then explained that amongst the Arabs no higher compliment can be paid than to invite one to break bread. General Nogues stated that it was equivalent to becoming one's blood brother or fighting a campaign with him. In other words, it cemented relations between the host and guest. The President stated that he would despatch an invitation to the Sultan which he trusted could be delivered in time for the Sultan to make preparations to come to Casablanca. At this point, General Patton stated that the letter should be delivered by

no one less than a General officer, in company with General Nogues. The President stated that when the letter was ready to go, he would give it to his Naval Aide, as his personal representative, who would go in company with an Army general and General Nogues, and deliver the letter to the Sultan.

Discussion was had about the progress being made in repairing ships that were sunk in Casablanca harbor incident to the occupation. As to this, General Nogues could remark only generally, stating that he was not familiar with the details of such repairs. It was stated, however, by General Patton, that it would be most difficult to make repairs to these ships unless in some way they could be moved to American shipyards; that the conversion of the metric system plans to our units of measurement would be a job that would require at least a year's work. Conversation along this line was further pursued in connection with our field pieces and small arms. It was remarked by General Patton that much of our field piece ammunition was interchangeable with the French, but that the small arms situation was another matter. It would be much the easier, the General stated, to equip the French troops with small arms of our manufacture.

The matter of political prisoners was then discussed. General Nogues stated that for the most part the Jews had now been released from the concentration camps. It was also stated that the Jews, especially those in Algeria, had raised the point that they wish restored to them at once the right of suffrage. The President stated that the answer to that was very simple, namely, that there just weren't going to be any elections, so the Jews need not worry about the privilege of voting. Mr. Murphy remarked that the Jews in North Africa were very much disappointed that "the war for liberation" had not immediately resulted in their being given their complete freedom. The President stated that he felt the whole Jewish problem should be studied very carefully and that progress should be definitely planned. In other words, the number of Jews engaged in the practice of the professions (law, medicine, etc.) should be definitely limited to the percentage that the Jewish population in North Africa bears to the whole of the North African population. Such a plan would therefore permit the Jews to engage in the professions, at the same time would not permit them to overcrowd the professions, and would present an unanswerable argument that they were being given their full rights. To the foregoing, General Nogues agreed generally, stating at the same time that it would be a sad thing for the French to win the war merely to open the way for the Jews to control the professions and the business world of North Africa. The President stated that his plan would further eliminate the specific and understandable complaints which the Germans bore towards the Jews in Germany, namely, that while they represented a small part of the population, over fifty percent of the lawyers, doctors, school teachers, college professors, etc., in Germany, were Jews.

At 12:15 p.m., General Nogues, accompanied by General Patton and Brigadier General Wilbur, withdrew to proceed to the villa occupied by Prime Minister Churchill.

NOTE: Shortly after the above interview started, General Patton whispered to Captain McCrea that General Nogues was scheduled to see the Prime Minister at 12:15 p.m.; that he, General Patton, had been informed by the Secretary to the Chiefs of Staff, to this effect. General Patton asked whether or

not he should make an announcement to the President at 12:15 about the scheduled conference with Mr. Churchill. To this, Captain McCrea replied that under no circumstances should he make such an announcement, and that the President would indicate when his conversation with General Nogues was at an end. About 12:30, General Patton again stated to Captain McCrea that he felt that he should indicate that the hour for the Prime Minister's conference with General Nogues had passed, and that the party should proceed to the Prime Minister's villa. Captain McCrea again told General Patton that under no circumstances should such an announcement be made. Upon the conclusion of General Nogues' conference with the President, Captain McCrea informed the President as to what had taken place between General Patton and him.

John McCrea