

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION 7966

[REDACTED] (GDS)

December 11, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*
SUBJECT: Letter to President Bourguiba of Tunisia

When our new ambassador to Tunisia presented his credentials to President Bourguiba he also transmitted an oral message of greetings from you and a warmly inscribed photograph. He reported that Bourguiba was deeply touched by your personal gestures and expressed warmest thanks. Bourguiba has now sent you a photograph of himself and a long and thoughtful letter of thanks (Tab B).

While this is ostensibly a thank-you letter, Bourguiba injects a substantive point which would appear to require your reply. He expresses hope that "you might find the occasion for a consultation at as high a level as possible in order to re-examine together our bilateral relations...and analyze together in order to jointly undertake the actions necessary for the consolidation of peace and security in this world."

We do not know precisely what Bourguiba has in mind. The consensus is that he may simply be seeking general reassurance that the US remains interested in Tunisia. Should it be more than that, someone can always be sent to talk with him. Also, both you and the Vice President have standing invitations to visit Tunisia, and our Assistant Secretary for African Affairs is often in the area. This last could meet the need for the time being.

For the moment, all that seems required is to reply to Bourguiba with a warm letter of reassurance with general agreement on the desirability of a continued exchange of views.

Recommendation: That you sign the letter to President Bourguiba at Tab A. [Text cleared with Mr. Price's office.]

[REDACTED] (GDS)