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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 13, 1970

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Secretary Rogers' Report on His Visit
to Tunisia

Secretary Rogers had cabled a report to you on his visit to Tunisia. (Tab A) He was warmly received and seems to have had useful meetings with key Tunisian officials. He feels that we have a "sincere friend" in Tunisia that "deserves our help."

Discussion of bilateral relations was "relatively brief." Prime Minister Ladgham and Foreign Minister Bourguiba, Jr., did, however, lay "great stress" on Tunisia's close relations with us. The Prime Minister specifically made the point that this was "not dependent on personalities, but was the conviction of the Government." The Foreign Minister said that Tunisia never confused Arab differences with the U.S. on the Middle East with our basic friendship.

Secretary Rogers found the Tunisians preoccupied about the Middle East situation. In a frank and lively discussion with the Foreign Minister and other members of the Cabinet, the Secretary presented our views on the Middle East. They spoke in public favorably about Secretary Rogers' December 9 speech. In common with Morocco and Algeria, the Tunisians took a position favoring the Palestinians. The Foreign Minister strongly maintained that the Soviets want neither war nor peace in the Middle East and would prevent Nasser from establishing peace.

The Tunisians are also extremely worried about the course of events in Libya. They believe that the Egyptians are fully dominating the Libyan Government. They were not, however, particularly worried about the French sale of jet aircraft to Libya, since the French had assured them that France had "absolute guarantees" that the planes would not be used against Libya's western neighbors, and, in any event, the Tunisians noted that they could not yet be flown anyway.

On Vietnam, Foreign Minister Bourguiba included in his formal toast for public release a plea for peace based almost exactly on our policy.