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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ACTION 21673

October 14, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*

SUBJECT: Letter to President Boumediene

You will recall greeting Frank Borman in San Clemente upon his return from the POW mission to world capitals as your personal emissary. Borman has told us of his extremely cordial and friendly reception in Algiers where he met both with President Boumediene and Foreign Minister Bouteflika. It is our understanding that Borman's stop in Algeria was, in fact, the highlight of his mission. He reports that:

--On the POW issue, Boumediene expressed interest in being helpful but felt that the opposition considers the prisoners their trump card at the Paris negotiations. However, Foreign Minister Bouteflika promised to raise the question during a forthcoming trip to Hanoi.

--On the Mid-East situation, both leaders made these points in a lengthy discussion:

--The Rogers Plan was a good first step but a Palestinian role will have to be taken into consideration.

--A U.S. presence is definitely needed to offset Soviet intrusion into the area.

--There is nothing specific troubling US-Algerian relations except the overall Mid-East context which prevented resumption of formal relations at this time. [Bouteflika went so far as to say that the Algerians would like to find a "political hook" on which to hang resumption.]

--Economic cooperation between our two nations was flourishing and Boumediene hoped that economic,

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technical and commercial ties would expand.

--President Boumediene extended his best wishes to you.

State feels that Borman's reception -- in the absence of diplomatic relations -- was noteworthy and recommends that you send a note of thanks to Boumediene for his hospitality to Borman as a way of keeping the lines open to the Algerian leader.

There is also a related action. Presidential confidant, Rachid Zeghar, who performs liaison functions with our Interests Section in Algeria and who helped arrange Borman's visit, gave Borman some gifts -- for you, a dagger which belonged to Algeria's most famous 19th century figure, Emir Abdelkadar, and for Mrs. Nixon and Julie two intricately woven brocade gowns from Constantine. These gifts should be acknowledged, although it will be difficult for you to send a letter to Zeghar if you do not send one to President Boumediene.

The issue is whether you wish to capitalize on the opportunity that the POW reception for Borman presents to keep an open door to Boumediene. By all accounts, the Algerians went out of their way to make Borman's layover a success and they seized the opportunity to express interest in improving ties with us.

As you know, our relationship with Algeria at the moment is primarily a pragmatic, economic one. Boumediene has categorically stated that his primary interest is in economic development. He is anxious to have greater access to U.S. energy markets, capital resources and technology, and commercial ties with the U.S. have flourished even in the absence of diplomatic relations. It can be assumed that the main interest in resuming relations would be to improve access to the U.S. for commercial reasons, rather than for any shift in political ideology. Most recently, we have reports that the Algerians are sending small arms resupply to the Palestinian fedayeen, and there is little to suggest that they will not continue ideological and practical support for so-called liberation movements of all kinds, including the Black Panthers. It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that they have just recently upgraded their Interests Section here in Washington. However, the Head of our Interests Section who is here on con-

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sultation does not overrate the chances for resumption of relations in the near future.

With reference to Rachid Zeghar's gifts, they were not apparent as part of the official Algerian reception. Two letters -- to Boumediene and Zeghar -- might have the effect of diluting the first. A single letter to Zeghar would be awkward. Lucy Ferguson would have no problem acknowledging the gifts through her channels.

Recommendation: That you sign the letter to President Boumediene at Tab A and, in so doing, authorize Lucy Ferguson to acknowledge the gifts from Rachid Zeghar. Jim Keogh concurs.

No letter to Boumediene; ask Mrs. Ferguson to acknowledge the gifts.

HK for Pres.