Dear Mr. President,

I am deeply concerned by officially and publicly insinuating reactions which are connected with insufficient information during the October War in the Middle East.² 

In the interest of our untroubled and trusting relations as well as for the benefit of cohesion in the Atlantic Alliance, I would like to communicate my thoughts to you without delay, so as to prevent serious misunderstandings arising between us or within the Alliance.

Without knowing in detail any actions or reasoning which your government has carried out to bring things under control in the Middle East, I was and remain of the opinion that only the USA, in cooperation with the Soviet Union, was capable of achieving this. It appears that your efforts were successful.³ Who could not appreciate that! To assure peace in its own way, my government has attempted to take measures which are very modest by comparison.

It would therefore be a serious mistake to assume that my government has not sufficiently appreciated the necessity of a balance of powers in the Middle East and the responsibility which you are saddled with.

At the same time it is necessary to clarify that the October War – as with earlier crises – not a matter of a shared responsibility by the Alliance.

More than once we have demonstrated that we are not indifferent and that we know who our principal ally is. But it is an entirely different matter when, on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany – without the Federal Government having been completely informed, not to mention even asked in advance –, American materials are available for purposes which are simply not part of our responsibility in the Alliance.⁴ In principal the Federal Government cannot react any differently than my predecessor did in 1958.⁵ Then as now, that should not and does not need to lead to tensions, neither bilaterally nor within the
Alliance, simply because our common interests cannot and must not be affected when we
discover deficiencies in communication and coordination.

Should it be necessary, I will gladly explain this in detail. Today I am concerned with
emphatically contradicting any speculation that the Federal Republic of Germany could be
lacking in solidarity with the Alliance.

I am convinced that the misunderstandings and frictions which have occurred will lead
to better deliberations on the complex of problems in the Alliance. The goal, which we all
pursue, is to strengthen and deepen the Alliance at a difficult time.

These incidents have demonstrated how necessary the tasks are which shall prepare
your trip to Europe. In doing so, substance will be even more important than words.

Yours truly,

<Willy Brandt>