MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/SENSITIVE

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RICHARD V. ALLEN

SUBJECT: Political Strategy for Responding to Israeli Attack

Attached at Tab A is a memorandum to you from Walter Stoessel concerning our political strategy for responding to the Israeli attack. The memorandum has been cleared through Secretary Haig in Peking. It is important that you review this memorandum before your press conference tomorrow for it outlines the strategy State proposes to follow with your approval on the Hill and at the UN in the days ahead.

Attached at Tab B are some themes on this subject you may want to draw on as you discuss this issue in public settings. We have incorporated State's questions and answers into the overall package for your press briefing which you have seen separately.

The highlights of the Stoessel memorandum are as follows:

- We are not required to make a legal determination of whether Israel violated U.S. law. We should avoid doing so in order to escape from a "no win" situation.
- If we make a legal finding, we could be required to cut-off the flow of arms to Israel. Alternatively, if we find that no such violation occurred, it would be an endorsement of the Israeli position that the attack was an act of self-defense. This would seriously damage our relations with the moderate Arab regimes.
- For this reason, we should do nothing to indicate we have concluded our legal review.
The issue should be treated as a political rather than a legal question. We should reiterate our political condemnation of the Israeli attack and express concern about Iraq's nuclear program.

We should not label the suspension of F-16 deliveries as a sanction. We will not accept any UN-imposed sanctions against Israel and if necessary we will veto any Security Council resolution that includes sanctions.