MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

From: Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., Acting


Our strategy for the UN Security Council Meeting reflects overall U.S. objectives in the Middle East: (1) to retain our unique relationships with both Israel and friendly Arab states, enabling us to manage the peace process, (2) to promote a consensus of strategic concern on the threat posed by the Soviet Union and its surrogates. It is therefore in our interest to keep this raid in perspective and to limit its impact on our longer-term objectives.

When the Security Council meets on Friday, June 12, the Arabs can be expected to demand a strong condemnation of Israel, economic sanctions, an embargo on military assistance and perhaps Israel's expulsion from the UN. We would veto such a resolution; the British, French and other Western nations on the Security Council might join us in opposition. Our allies can be expected to support condemnatory language, and perhaps even accept references to threats of sanctions in the future. This could open splits among Western members of the Council. Chances are that the negotiating process will produce more moderate formulations than the original proposal.

If the U.S. is the only nation to veto a resolution, particularly one that is seen by others as minimal, the chances increase that the Arab Group will use available UN procedures to call for an immediate session of the entire General Assembly although preliminary reports from the Baghdad Conference suggest a less extreme approach. While sanctions adopted by the General
Assembly could only be recommendatory, there is a real possibility that Israel's credentials could be rejected or that Israel might be expelled from the General Assembly itself. We have made it clear that Israel's expulsion would call into question our own participation.

Our task therefore is to maintain the greatest degree of cohesion between us and our Allies and friends on the Council, and to condemn the Israeli raid but not to stimulate damaging follow-up actions in the UN or elsewhere if we are forced to use our veto.

Secretary Haig believes that the most damaging results of the Security Council meeting can be prevented if the U.S. takes a firm position condemning the attack but that we should draw the line on punishment of Israel by the Security Council or the General Assembly. The Secretary proposes for your approval the following U.S. actions:

--- To support condemnation of the Israeli raid in a Security Council resolution, as long as it parallels our own stated position. If the language goes beyond our position, we will provide you a recommendation as to whether to abstain or to veto, depending on the severity of the language and the positions of our allies and friends on the Security Council.

--- We will make it clear that we cannot accept any sanctions against Israel or calls for Israel's expulsion from the UN and that we will veto such a resolution.

--- By stating our position clearly at the outset, we hope to avoid being forced into a veto or drawn into a lengthy bargaining process.

--- We will emphasize to our allies and friends on the Council the limits of what we can support and the need for a firm, united position. This may prevent the Soviets, their allies and the radical Arabs from exploiting the situation.

--- We will explain our position to the more moderate Arab countries hoping they will restrain the radicals so that they do not dominate the process.
In our statements we will emphasize our commitment and determination to continue our active efforts to build peace in the Middle East and our concern about the ultimate purpose of the Iraqi nuclear program. We will point out that, while we condemn the Israeli action, it is necessary to address the broader issue of conflict, tension and violence in the Middle East if further threats to peace are to be avoided. We will want to make the point that bringing peace and stability to the Middle East is a goal toward which all countries in the area must work and in which all share responsibility.

If necessary, we will also make it clear that if Israel is expelled from the UN General Assembly, or any other UN body, U.S. participation would be jeopardized. We will want as many of our allies as possible to adopt the same position.

Recommendation:

That you approve the strategy outlined above.

Approve [Signature]

Disapprove [Blank]