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CABINET OFFICE D I O

IMMEDIATE

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FROM MOSCOW 190725Z MAY 84

TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 618 OF 19 MAY

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, UKDEL NATO, PARIS, BONN, UKMIS NEWYORK,
BIS TEHRAN, BAGHDAD AND KUWAIT.

GULF WAR : SOVIET VIEWS.

1. DURING THE MEETING OF THE UK-SOVIET ROUND TABLE IN MOSCOW (16-17 MAY), ON WHICH I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY, THERE WAS A SHORT EXCHANGE ON THE GULF WAR. LORD HARLECH AND OTHERS ON THE BRITISH TEAM PRESSED THE RUSSIANS TO AGREE THAT THE PRESERVATION OF FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE GULF SHOULD BE A MAJOR OBJECTIVE TO WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD SUBSCRIBE. WOULD THE SOVIET UNION SUPPORT EFFORTS TO KEEP THE GULF OPEN, IF NECESSARY BY FORCE ?
2. IN REPLY, THE RUSSIANS (MENSHIKOV OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND TROFIMENKO OF THE USA/CANADA INSTITUTE) STRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS AS A UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE. THEY CLAIMED THAT U S SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLE WAS PARTIAL AND MENTIONED IN THIS CONTEXT THE AMERICAN MINING OF HAIPHONG AND NICARAGUAN WATERS. TROFIMENKO DREW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN ACTION TAKEN IN THE GULF WITH WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WAS ASSOCIATED AND THAT INVOLVING THE U S AND ITS ALLIES ONLY - IMPLYING THAT THE LATTER WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MOSCOW. " WE CANNOT GIVE THE AMERICANS CARTE BLANCHE FOR UNILATERAL BOMBING ". MENSHIKOV REFERRED TO A REACTION OF SOVIET "DISPLEASURE" IN THE EVENT OF UNILATERAL ARMED U S ACTION TO KEEP THE GULF OPEN . " WHETHER WE WOULD INTERFERE MILITARILY IS ANOTHER MATTER " .

SUTHERLAND

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