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SECRET
DEDIP
FM FCO
TO DESKBY 020700Z MOSCOW
TELNO 1016
OF 011930Z JUNE 90
INFO DESKBY 020700Z JEDDA

JEDDA FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY

FROM HEAD OF SOVIET DEPARTMENT

DEFECTION OF BOLSHOI STAR

1. BOLSHOI STAR DANCER IREK MUKHAMEDOV AND HIS WIFE APPLIED AT KENSINGTON POLICE STATION TODAY, 1 JUNE FOR "POLITICAL ASYLUM". THE HOME OFFICE WILL INTERVIEW THEM EARLY NEXT WEEK.
2. THE COUPLE CAME FROM SAPIN WHERE THE BOLSHOI HAS BEEN PERFORMING. THEIR OPEN, AND KNOWN, PURPOSE FOR BEING IN LONDON WAS TO NEGOTIATE GUEST APPEARANCES FOR NEXT SEASON. IT IS UNLIKELY THEREFORE THAT THEY WILL BE MISSED OR THAT THE STORY WILL BREAK UNTIL NEXT WEEK. THEY ARE SPENDING THE WEEKEND WITH PERSONAL FRIENDS.
3. WE HAVE NEVER YET SENT A SOVIET CITIZEN BACK AGAINST THEIR WILL. IT SEEMS THAT MUKHAMEDOV'S REASONS ARE ARTISTIC COUPLED WITH CONCERN AT THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BOLSHOI, RATHER THAN POLITICAL. THE CHANCES ARE THAT THE HOME SECRETARY WILL GIVE THE COUPLE PERMISSION TO REMAIN. THE ROYAL BALLET WHO THE COUPLE HAVE TOLD OF THEIR INTENTION, WILL NATURALLY BE READY TO OFFER WORK. IT WILL THEN BE IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP IT QUIET ANY LONGER. IT IS VERY UNFORTUNATE TIMING JUST BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT, BUT IT DOES NOT LOOK AS IF THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE ABOUT IT. THESE THINGS ARE NOWADAYS TAKEN LESS TRAGICALLY BY THE RUSSIANS THAN WHEN SAY NUREYEV LEFT.
4. IF THE RUSSIANS ASK ABOUT THEIR WHEREABOUTS, YOU SHOULD, PENDING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS, DENY KNOWLEDGE AND SAY YOU WILL REFER THE ENQUIRY TO LONDON.

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