



## Security Council

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LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1988 FROM THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, I wish, on behalf of my Government, to report that United States forces have exercised their inherent right of self-defence under international law by taking defensive action in response to an attack by the Islamic Republic of Iran against a United States naval vessel in international waters of the Persian Gulf. The actions taken are necessary and are proportionate to the threat posed by such hostile Iranian actions.

At approximately 1010 Eastern Daylight Time on 14 April the USS Samuel B. Roberts was struck by a mine approximately 60 miles east of Bahrain, in international waters. Ten U.S. sailors were injured, one seriously, and the ship was damaged. The mine which struck the Roberts was one of at least four mines laid in this area. The United States has subsequently identified the mines by type, and we have conclusive evidence that these mines were manufactured recently in Iran. The mines were laid in shipping lanes known by Iran to be used by U.S. vessels, and intended by them to damage or sink such vessels. This is but the latest in a series of offensive attacks and provocations Iranian naval forces have taken against neutral shipping in the international waters of the Persian Gulf.

Through diplomatic channels, the United States has informed the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on four separate occasions, most recently 19 October 1987, that the United States would not accept Iran's minelaying in international waters or in the waters of neutral States. In October, my Government indicated that the United States did not seek a military confrontation with Iran, but that it would take appropriate defensive measures against such hostile actions.

Starting at approximately 0100 Eastern Daylight Time 18 April U.S. forces attacked military targets in the Persian Gulf which have been used for attacks against non-belligerent shipping in international waterways of the Gulf.

The U.S. actions have been against legitimate military targets. All feasible measures have been taken to minimize the risk of civilian damage or casualties.

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It remains the policy of my Government not to seek a military confrontation with Iran or a widening of the conflict in the area.

I ask that you circulate the text of this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Herbert S. OKUN  
Ambassador  
Acting Permanent Representative

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