

1) Secret
2) Agencies - Policy
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SECRET

Iceland: G 109 / 10/4
Note from
18/6/41
22-6-41
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The British Government have consulted the British Minister in Iceland. Both the authorities in London and Mr. Howard Smith see grave dangers in the adoption of the proposal that the Icelandic Prime Minister should be requested to invite the United States Government to occupy Iceland. Both London and Mr. Howard Smith feel that a fait accompli would be greatly preferable to any prior announcement of the arrival of the United States troops. Mr. Howard Smith too is very doubtful whether the Icelandic Government would in fact be prepared to ask the United States Government to send troops to replace the British garrison, since the Icelanders resent occupation of any kind. Mr. Howard Smith feels there is a serious danger of leakage if the matter is mentioned beforehand to the Icelanders since the press and telegrams are not censored there and it is very difficult to keep anything secret. Sufficiently strong restrictive steps to prevent a leakage might create an extremely bad impression on the Icelanders and prejudice them against the arrival of the American forces.

The British authorities feel that the difficulties as they see them should be brought to the notice of the United States Government. If however the latter still prefer that their suggested procedure should be adopted the British Government would of course be prepared to follow this line. But it would seem best to the British authorities that if the idea is to send at once a small American force that force should arrive unheralded and unexplained as was done with great success when

British/



British troops occupied the island.

In this connection the British authorities would be glad to know the answer to the two following questions:

- A. Is it correct that United States forces will move in two or more stages from Bermuda and Newfoundland - first move starting June 22nd? *(primary exchange of messages)*
- B. Do the United States Government agree that during interim period while both United States and British troops will be there - the British troops leaving by stages - the total garrison should not be less than present British garrison?

As regards the suggested statement the British authorities are glad to learn that the President is agreeable to making some such announcement. They are quite prepared that the words "in concert with" in the last sentence of Paragraph 2 should be omitted, and think it would be better to leave out the first two sentences of the statement on account of Portuguese susceptibilities. The British authorities would now prefer not to make any statement themselves unless the President so desires and will be glad to know the President's view on this point. It will be useful to know as far as possible in advance when the United States Government will issue their statement. The most obvious occasion would seem to be on the arrival of the first American contingent.

It will also be necessary for the British Minister to say something to the Icelandic Government on that occasion. The views of the President as to what Mr. Howard Smith might usefully say would be appreciated.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON, D.C.
June 22nd, 1941

Area 101
U.S. forces not
concentrated at Bermuda
1st move starting June 22nd
E-sail at a
moment's notice
after message between
U.S. & B.
holders with check.

holders with check.

*Dear Mr. N.
W. will speak to P.
has seen that
he will contact
by the end
none*

*N. agrees.
but will
confirm.*

*Mr. Howard has
said he will
introduce
see if
military needs*

*holders will
but we will
draft.*