

Iceland. G 109/61/41

SECRET



[N 3602/543/G]

(No. 496.)

Foreign Office,

July 9, 1941.

My Lord,

THE United States Ambassador came to see me this afternoon, when I congratulated him upon the successful arrival of United States troops in Iceland. The Ambassador said he was greatly relieved that the operation had gone off so well, but that he had to speak to me on a minor complication. Certain American pressmen in this country had expressed the wish to fly to Iceland, and some of them had actually already arrived in Glasgow. The State Department would regard it as highly embarrassing if they were to reach Iceland and report on the number of American troops and on other aspects of conditions there, such as the extent of the previous collaboration with us and the attitude of the Icelandic Government. The State Department had therefore decided that the newspaper correspondents must not proceed. At the same time, they did not wish the United States Administration to appear in the matter, and he feared that we should have to take the burden of blame.

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2. I showed some distaste at this and reminded the Ambassador that the American correspondents here were already unhappy as a result of their alleged inability to obtain sufficient news to cable to the United States. Those who had set off to Iceland obviously thought that they would be able to provide their country with valuable "copy." Their resentment at being stopped by us would be great. The Ambassador admitted all this, but said that he did not see what he could do to help us. He feared I would have to bear this burden in addition to others.

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I am, with great truth and respect,  
My Lord,  
Your Excellency's obedient Servant,  
(For the Secretary of State)

E. O. Coote.

X.  
A. J.

His Excellency  
The Right Honourable  
Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I.,  
etc., etc., etc.,  
Washington.