

S.G. 47/2

27 November 1950

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NOTE BY THE SECRETARY

to the
STANDING GROUP
on

SECURITY PROVISIONS AND DEFENCE MEASURES FOR ICELAND

- Reference: a. D.C. 26
- b. Records D.C. 4th Meeting
- c. S.G. 47.

1. At Enclosure is a reply to S.G. 47 from the North Atlantic Ocean Regional Planning Group showing the action necessary should Communist forces obtain initial control of vital areas in Iceland.

2. In forwarding this report the Co-ordinating Committee of the North Atlantic Ocean Regional Planning Group recommended the Standing Group note that:

a. In the Short Term Defence Plan it would not be possible to make any provisions for the recapture of Iceland since sufficient forces would not be available to the North Atlantic Ocean Region for the task covered by this plan.

b. In respect to the Medium Term Defence Plan the Standing Group should give further consideration to taking measures now which would obviate the action contemplated in the Appendix to their paper.

3. Attention is drawn to the remarks made by the Icelandic Representative at the 4th Meeting of the North Atlantic Defence Committee when he reminded the Committee that the question of stationing forces in Iceland prior to D-day (D.C. 26 Enclosure 'B', paragraph 4) was still under consideration (Records D.C. 4th Meeting).

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4. This has been passed to the International Working Team, who should take into account the attached report when preparing a reply for the Icelandic Government.

C.H. DONNELLY
E.B.W. CARDIFF
R.A. VALLET
Secretaries

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NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the

STANDING GROUP

on

PREPARATION OF PLANS FOR THE RECAPTURE OF ICELAND

Appendix: Report by the Coordinating Committee to the Standing Group.

1. In a recent paper on Security Provisions and Defense Measures for Iceland, the Standing Group made the following observation:

"The NATO plans now provide for the deployment of forces necessary for the Defense of Iceland. These forces can be moved quickly by air and sea to Iceland where they will provide adequate defense against internal or external attack. If, however, enemy forces secure vital areas or a coup d'etat be effected, present plans might not be successful, since they do not provide for landing forces in the face of enemy opposition. Although the forces required to overcome an enemy lodgment might well be outside the allied capabilities at such a time, without major diversions from other priority tasks, it is considered that plans, taking this possibility into consideration, will have to be prepared by the North Atlantic Ocean Regional Planning Group."

2. At its Forty-second Meeting the Coordinating Committee directed the Secretary to forward the Appendix to the Standing Group together with the following recommendations.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

3. It is recommended that the Standing Group note:

a. In the Short Term Defense Plan* it will not be possible to make any provisions for the recapture of Iceland since sufficient forces will not be available to the NAOR for the task during the period covered by this Plan.

b. With respect to the Medium Term Defense Plan** and proposals included in Appendix:

(1) Forces required to retake and regain control of the island cannot arrive until at least 20 days after being alerted, and it would be most optimistic to assume full utilization of the base until at least 10 days later. It is probable that at least two months would elapse before the base would be in operation even if the necessary forces were immediately available.

(2) The commitment could only be met at the expense of the many other vital tasks with which the Region and NATO are likely to be faced on the outbreak of hostilities. It is unlikely that the forces used for the recapture of Iceland would be available for other tasks for some three months.

(3) The minimum force required to retake and regain control of Iceland is likely to amount to a landing force of 34,000 personnel plus 50,000 personnel manning the ships furnishing the necessary lift and support. This is out of all proportion to the numbers required to maintain security of the Island and probably prevent its seizure by the Soviets.

4. In view of the above the Coordinating Committee recommends to the Standing Group that further consideration be given to taking measures now which will obviate the action contemplated in the Appendix.

JOHN S. LEWIS
E.A.S. BAILEY
K.C. COOPER
J. RENOUE
Secretaries

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* NAOR/DP 2/50
** NAOR/DP 3/50

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APPENDIX

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NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN REGIONAL PLANNING GROUP

REPORT BY THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE

to the

STANDING GROUP

on

ACTION IN THE EVENT OF COMMUNIST FORCES OBTAINING INITIAL CONTROL OF VITAL AREAS IN ICELAND

1. Due to the strategic importance of Iceland it is imperative that measures should be taken to ensure its uninterrupted use as an allied base. As already stated in Annex (F) to NAOR Revised Medium-term Defence Plan*, the most satisfactory and only certain manner of ensuring this would be to station defense forces in Iceland prior to hostilities. Should this be impossible, and should enemy forces secure vital areas or a coup d'etat be effected, it will be necessary to retake the island.

2. The forces estimated as likely to be required to regain control of the island are based on the appreciation of the internal Communist Party in Iceland and the Soviet forces likely to be deployed against Iceland. It might well be that more powerful enemy forces would be employed, in which case a considerably stronger allied force than that given below would be required to retake the island.

3. In the event of a Communist coup d'etat and/or the seizure of vital areas in Iceland by Soviet forces, the following minimum forces will be required to retake and regain control of Iceland:

- a. Marine Division, Reinforced 1
- b. Marine Air Wing 1
 - (1) Marine Air Groups 2
 - (a) Day Fighter Squadrons 4
 - (b) All Weather Fighter Squadrons 4

* NAOR/DP 3/50

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- (2) Tactical Air Control Squadrons 1
- (3) Ground Control Intercept Squadrons 3
- (4) Observation Squadron 1
- (5) Helicopter (transport) Squadron 1

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c. Amphibious Lift

- (1) Amphibious Force Flagship 1
- (2) Attack Transports 18
- (3) Attack Cargo Ships 10
- (4) Landing Ships Dock 8
- (5) Landing Ships Tank 24
- (6) Landing Ships Medium 16
- (7) Landing Ships Utility 36
- (8) Escort Vessels Control 1
- (9) High Speed Transports 5
- (10) Submarine Chasers Control 4
- (11) Landing Ships Medium Rocket 8
- (12) Escort Vessels 24
- (13) Ocean/Coastal Minesweepers 10
- (14) MSB - Inshore Minesweepers 10

d. Aircraft Transport

- (1) Night Fleet/Escort Carriers 3
- (2) Escort Vessels 8

e. Cover and Support Force

- (1) Fleet Carriers 1-2
- (2) Cruisers 2-3
- (3) Fleet Destroyers 12
- (4) Radar Picket Destroyers 2
- (5) Fast Minesweepers 2

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