

---

**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR  
and the New Deal**

---

**File No. 1374**

**1941 July 7**

**Message to Congress re  
Sending American Troops to Iceland**

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July first and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September third last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere. We have no desire to see any change in the present sovereignty of those regions. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of

our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to forestall any pincers movement undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ such tactics through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it.

The threat against all shipping in the north Atlantic.

The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

As Commander-in-Chief I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts.

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

MESSAGE ~~RECEIVED~~ SENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND  
TO THE PRESIDENT

In a conversation of June 24th, the British Minister explained that British forces in Iceland are required elsewhere. At the same time he stressed the immense importance of adequate defense of Iceland. He also called my attention to the declaration of the President of the United States to the effect that he must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Western Hemisphere -- one of the President's measures is to assist in the defense of Iceland -- and that the President is therefore prepared to send here immediately United States troops to supplement and eventually to replace the British force here. But that he does not consider that he can take this course except at the invitation of the Iceland Government.

After careful consideration of all the circumstances the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admit that this measure is in accordance with the interest of Iceland, and therefore are ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to <sup>the</sup> United States on the following conditions.

1. United States promise to withdraw all their military forces land, air and sea from Iceland immediately on conclusion of present war.

2. United States further promise to recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland and to exercise their best efforts with those powers which will negotiate the peace treaty at the conclusion of the present war in order that such treaty shall likewise recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland.

3. United States promise not to interfere with Government of Iceland neither while their armed forces remain in this country nor afterwards.

4. United States promise to organize the defense of the country in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible safety for the inhabitants themselves and assure that they suffer minimum disturbance from military activities; these activities being carried out in consultation with Iceland authorities as far as possible. Also because of small population of Iceland and consequent danger to nation from presence of a numerous army, great care must

be taken that only picked troops are sent here. Military authorities should be also instructed to keep in mind that Icelanders have been unarmed for centuries and are entirely unaccustomed to military discipline and conduct of troops toward the inhabitants of the country should be ordered accordingly.

5. United States undertake defense of the country without expense to Iceland and promise compensation for all damage occasioned to the inhabitants by their military activities.

6. United States promise to further interests of Iceland in every way in their power, including that of supplying the country with sufficient necessities, of securing necessary shipping to and from the country and of making in other respects favorable commercial and trade agreements with it.

7. Iceland Government expect that declaration made by President in this connection will be in agreement with these premises on the part of Iceland, and Government would much appreciate its being given the opportunity of being cognizant with wording of this declaration before

it is published.

8. On the part of Iceland it is considered obvious that if United States undertake defense of the country it must be strong enough to meet every eventuality and particularly in the beginning it is expected that as far as possible efforts will be made to prevent any special danger in connection with change-over. Iceland Government lays special stress on there being sufficient airplanes for defensive purposes wherever they are required and they can be used as soon as decision is made for United States to undertake the defense of the country.

This decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and it is considered as a matter of course that United States will from the beginning recognize this legal status of the country, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

MESSAGE SENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN  
RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND.

I have received your message in which you have informed me that after careful consideration of all the circumstances, the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admits that the sending to Iceland of United States troops to supplement and eventually to replace the present British forces there would be in accordance with the interests of Iceland and that, therefore, the Iceland Government is ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to the United States on the following considerations:

1. United States promise to withdraw all their military forces land, air and sea from Iceland immediately on conclusion of present war.
2. United States further promise to recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland and to exercise their best efforts with those powers which will negotiate the peace treaty at the conclusion of the present war in order that such treaty shall likewise recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland.

3. United States promise not to interfere with Government of Iceland neither while their armed forces remain in this country nor afterwards.

4. United States promise to organize the defense of the country in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible safety for the inhabitants themselves and assure that they suffer minimum disturbance from military activities; these activities being carried out in consultation with Iceland authorities as far as possible. Also because of small population of Iceland and consequent danger to nation from presence of a numerous army, great care must be taken that only picked troops are sent here. Military authorities should be also instructed to keep in mind that Icelanders have been unarmed for centuries and are entirely unaccustomed to military discipline and conduct of troops towards the inhabitants of the country should be ordered accordingly.

5. United States undertake defense of the country without expense to Iceland and promise compensation for all damage occasioned to the inhabitants by their military activities.

6. United States promise to further interests of Iceland in every way in their power, including that of supplying the country with sufficient necessities, of securing necessary shipping to and from the country and of making in other respects favorable commercial and trade agreements with it.

7. Iceland Government expect that declaration made by President in this connection will be in agreement with these premises on the part of Iceland, and Government would much appreciate its being given the opportunity of being cognizant with wording of this declaration before it is published.

8. On the part of Iceland it is considered obvious that if United States undertake defense of the country it must be strong enough to meet every eventuality and particularly in the beginning it is expected that as far as possible efforts will be made to prevent any special danger in connection with change-over. Iceland Government lays special stress on there being sufficient airplanes for defensive purposes wherever they are required and they

can be used as soon as decision is made for United States to undertake the defense of the country.

You further state that this decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and that it is considered as a matter of course that the United States will from the beginning recognize the legal status of Iceland, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

I take pleasure in confirming to you hereby that the conditions set forth in your communication now under acknowledgment are fully acceptable to the Government of the United States and that these conditions will be observed in the relations between the United States and Iceland. I may further say that it will give me pleasure to request of the Congress its agreement in order that diplomatic representatives may be exchanged between our two countries.

It is the announced policy of the Government of the United States to undertake to join with the other nations of the Western Hemisphere in the defense of the New World

against any attempt at aggression. In the opinion of this Government, it is imperative that the integrity and independence of Iceland should be preserved because of the fact that any occupation of Iceland by a power whose only too clearly apparent plans for world conquest include the domination of the peoples of the New World would at once directly menace the security of the entire Western Hemisphere.

It is for that reason that in response to your message, the Government of the United States will send immediately troops to supplement and eventually to replace the British forces now there.

The steps so taken by the Government of the United States are taken in full recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Iceland and with the clear understanding that American military or naval forces sent to Iceland will in no wise interfere in the slightest degree with the internal and domestic affairs of the Icelandic people; and with the further understanding that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency, all such military and naval

forces will be at once withdrawn leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full sovereign control of their own territory.

The people of Iceland hold a proud position among the democracies of the world, with a historic tradition of freedom and of individual liberty which is more than a thousand years old. It is, therefore, all the more appropriate that in response to your message, the Government of the United States, while undertaking this defensive measure for the preservation of the independence and security of the democracies of the New World should at the same time be afforded the privilege of cooperating in this manner with your Government in the defense of the historic democracy of Iceland.

I am communicating this message, for their information, to the Governments of all of the other nations of the Western Hemisphere.

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

HOLD FOR RELEASE

July 7, 1941

CONFIDENTIAL: To be held in STRICT CONFIDENCE and no portion, synopsis or intimation to be published or given out until the READING of the President's Message has begun in the Senate or the House of Representatives. Extreme care must therefore be exercised to avoid premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY  
Secretary to the President

-----  
TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July first and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September third last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere. We have no desire to see any change in the present sovereignty of those regions. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to forestall any pincer movement undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ such tactics through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it.

The threat against all shipping in the north Atlantic.

The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

As Commander-in-Chief I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts.

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE  
July 7, 1941.

- - - - -  
MESSAGE SENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND  
TO THE PRESIDENT

In a conversation of June 24th, the British Minister explained that British forces in Iceland are required elsewhere. At the same time he stressed the immense importance of adequate defense of Iceland. He also called my attention to the declaration of the President of the United States to the effect that he must take all necessary measures to ensure the safety of the Western Hemisphere -- one of the President's measures is to assist in the defense of Iceland -- and that the President is therefore prepared to send here immediately United States troops to supplement and eventually to replace the British force here. But that he does not consider that he can take this course except at the invitation of the Iceland Government.

After careful consideration of all the circumstances the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admit that this measure is in accordance with the interest of Iceland, and therefore are ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to United States on the following conditions:

1. United States promise to withdraw all their military forces land, air and sea from Iceland immediately on conclusion of present war.
2. United States further promise to recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland and to exercise their best efforts with those powers which will negotiate the peace treaty at the conclusion of the present war in order that such treaty shall likewise recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland.
3. United States promise not to interfere with Government of Iceland neither while their armed forces remain in this country nor afterwards.

4. United States promise to organize the defense of the country in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible safety for the inhabitants themselves and assure that they suffer minimum disturbance from military activities; these activities being carried out in consultation with Iceland authorities as far as possible. Also because of small population of Iceland and consequent danger to nation from presence of a numerous army, great care must be taken that only picked troops are sent here. Military authorities should be also instructed to keep in mind that Icelanders have been unarmed for centuries and are entirely unaccustomed to military discipline and conduct of troops towards the inhabitants of the country should be ordered accordingly.

5. United States undertake defense of the country without expense to Iceland and promise compensation for all damage occasioned to the inhabitants by their military activities.

6. United States promise to further interests of Iceland in every way in their power, including that of supplying the country with sufficient necessities, of securing necessary shipping to and from the country and of making in other respects favorable commercial and trade agreements with it.

7. Iceland Government expects that declaration made by President in this connection will be in agreement with these promises on the part of Iceland, and Government would much appreciate its being given the opportunity of being cognizant with wording of this declaration before it is published.

8. On the part of Iceland it is considered obvious that if United States undertake defense of the country it must be strong enough to meet every eventuality and particularly in the beginning it is expected that as far as possible effort will be made to prevent any special danger in connection with change-over. Iceland Government lays special stress on there being sufficient airplanes for defensive purposes wherever they are required and they can be used as soon as decision is made for United States to undertake the defense of the country.

This decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and it is considered as a matter of course that United States will from the beginning recognize this legal status of the country, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

-----

MESSAGE SENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN  
RESPONSE TO A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF ICELAND.

I have received your message in which you have informed me that after careful consideration of all the circumstances, the Iceland Government, in view of the present state of affairs, admits that the sending to Iceland of United States troops to supplement and eventually to replace the present British forces there would be in accordance with the interests of Iceland and that, therefore, the Iceland Government is ready to entrust the protection of Iceland to the United States on the following considerations:

1. United States promise to withdraw all their military forces land, air and sea from Iceland immediately on conclusion of present war.

2. United States further promise to recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland and to exercise their best efforts with those powers which will negotiate the peace treaty at the conclusion of the present war in order that such treaty shall likewise recognize the absolute independence and sovereignty of Iceland.

3. United States promise not to interfere with Government of Iceland neither while their armed forces remain in this country nor afterwards.

4. United States promise to organize the defense of the country in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible safety for the inhabitants themselves and assure that they suffer minimum disturbance from military activities; these activities being carried out in consultation with Iceland authorities as far as possible. Also because of small population of Iceland and consequent danger to nation from presence of a numerous army, great care must be taken that only picked troops are sent here. Military authorities should be also instructed to keep in mind that Icelanders have been unarmed for centuries and are entirely unaccustomed to military discipline and conduct of troops towards the inhabitants of the country should be ordered accordingly.

5. United States undertake defense of the country without expense to Iceland and promise compensation for all damage occasioned to the inhabitants by their military activities.

6. United States promise to further interests of Iceland in every way in their power, including that of supplying the country with sufficient necessities, of securing necessary shipping to and from the country and of making in other respects favorable commercial and trade agreements with it.

7. Iceland Government expect that declaration made by President in this connection will be in agreement with these promises on the part of Iceland, and Government would much appreciate its being given the opportunity of being cognizant with wording of this declaration before it is published.

8. On the part of Iceland it is considered obvious that if United States undertake defense of the country it must be strong enough to meet every eventuality and particularly in the beginning it is expected that as far as possible efforts will be made to prevent any special danger in connection with change-over. Iceland Government lays special stress on there being sufficient airplanes for defensive purposes wherever they are required and they can be used as soon as decision is made for United States to undertake the defense of the country.

You further state that this decision is made on the part of Iceland as an absolutely free and sovereign state and that it is considered as a matter of course that the United States will from the beginning recognize the legal status of Iceland, both states immediately exchanging diplomatic representatives.

I take pleasure in confirming to you hereby that the conditions set forth in your communication now under acknowledgment are fully acceptable to the Government of the United States and that these conditions will be observed in the relations between the United States and Iceland. I may further say that it will give me pleasure to request of the Congress its agreement in order that diplomatic representatives may be exchanged between our two countries.

It is the announced policy of the Government of the United States to undertake to join with the other nations of the Western Hemisphere in the defense of the New World against any attempt at aggression. In the opinion of this Government, it is imperative that the integrity and independence of Iceland should be preserved because of the fact that any occupation of Iceland by a power whose only too clearly apparent plans for world conquest include the domination of the Peoples of the New World would at once directly menace the security of the entire Western Hemisphere.

It is for that reason that in response to your message, the Government of the United States will send immediately troops to supplement and eventually to replace the British forces now there.

The steps so taken by the Government of the United States are taken in full recognition of the sovereignty and independence of Iceland and with the clear understanding that American military or naval forces sent to Iceland will in no wise interfere in the slightest degree with the internal and domestic affairs of the Icelandic people; and with the further understanding that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency, all such military and naval forces will be at once withdrawn leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full sovereign control of their own territory.

The people of Iceland hold a proud position among the democracies of the world, with a historic tradition of freedom and of individual liberty which is more than a thousand years old. It is, therefore, all the more appropriate that in response to your message, the Government of the United States, while undertaking this defensive measure for the preservation of the independence and security of the democracies of the New World should at the same time be afforded the privilege of cooperating in this manner with your Government in the defense of the historic democracy of Iceland.

I am communicating this message, for their information, to the Governments of all of the other nations of the Western Hemisphere.

-----

1st Draft

TO THE CONGRESS:

It has become increasingly clear during the past fifteen months since the occupation by Germany of large new sea frontages on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean that the control of the seas has become definitely more possible for that nation.

An analysis of the present situation shows:

(1) Germany, aided by Italy and strengthened by [certain] [production] facilities of conquered nations, is in a position greatly to build up her sea strength.

(2) In relation to the Atlantic Ocean, the acquisition of certain additional territory by Germany would constitute an immediate gain of ports and air fields <sup>from</sup> ~~which~~ which to undertake the domination of all commerce <sup>using</sup> ~~across~~ the ocean, including waters wholly within the Western Hemisphere and our continental shores. <sup>upto</sup>

(3) It is well to remember that certain obvious land strategy, popularly called the "pincers" tactics, can be applied ~~with equal logic~~ to sea controls as well. Any

~~German~~ nation occupying ~~the~~ Northern Atlantic <sup>land areas</sup> can threaten all of North America

*the South Atlantic*

(4) In ~~regard to American hemispheric defense~~, the short distance which separates the coast of Africa from the coasts of the Americas, including the West Indies, makes it necessary to give immediate and serious attention to defense against attack in this whole southern area. This includes the defense against German attack not only of the United States and of its possessions and its newly acquired island bases, but also

*assistance to our American neighbors in defending*  
 the continent itself, including Venezuela, British Guiana,

Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic.

*The following course of action has therefore been taken:*  
 Without ~~disclosing~~ *disclosing* military or naval ~~information~~ *information* which could be of service to Germany, I report to

the Congress that American armed forces are being assembled in Trinidad and in British Guiana as a measure of obvious precaution.

(b) The other most immediate threat is at the northern end of the same ocean. It is obvious that the occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

~~the~~ *the* threat against Greenland, ~~and~~ *and* the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it;  
~~the~~ *the* threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic and

~~The threat~~ <sup>against</sup> the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly <sup>approved</sup> ~~passed on~~ by the Congress.

~~Because of this triple threat in the northern portion of the Atlantic, it has been deemed essential to take steps to protect our hemispheric defense from~~ <sup>our ships</sup> ~~any German occupation of Iceland.~~ <sup>against</sup>

~~A protective force has therefore been dispatched to Iceland and I am happy to say has reached its destination. The Congress will, of course, recognize that the safety of our own ships and men has required the utmost secrecy in carrying out this essential defense measure. [It will, of course, be equally obvious that this is strictly a military operation and that as such it could not be submitted to the Congress for prior approval any more than any other tactical operation called for by defense needs.]~~

~~This step has been taken after consultation with the Government of Iceland. This Island constitutes an absolute, free and sovereign state whose integrity and independence goes back a thousand years and whose government is based on the oldest parliamentary body in the world. In our negotiations with this sovereign nation, we have recognized these facts and have agreed with the Government of Iceland, in accordance with certain principles which are summarized in the enclosed appendix to this message.~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
The protection of Iceland against German invasion entails of course the protection of American national ships bound to or from that island. Orders have been issued to the United States Navy to carry this protection into full effect.

~~TOP SECRET~~  
~~It will be recognized that~~ This action based on the necessities of hemispheric defense <sup>follows also the</sup> ~~analysis of necessity,~~ <sup>our</sup> policy of safeguarding of ~~the recognition of~~ historic American rights on the high seas. *Therefore*

~~This is no war -- but at the same time it is no surrender of what has been American policy since 1793.~~ All American ships will ~~therefore~~ be protected against attack or <sup>threat of</sup> ~~the taking up of a position to make an attack.~~

~~TOP SECRET~~  
As Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy, I have therefore directed our armed forces to clear these sea lanes of the marauders on the water, under the water and over the water that endanger our security.

2nd Draft

TO THE CONGRESS:

It has become increasingly clear during the past fifteen months since the occupation by Germany of large new sea frontages on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean that the control of the seas has become definitely more possible for that nation.

An analysis of the present situation shows:

1. Germany, aided by Italy and strengthened by facilities of conquered nations, is in a position greatly to build up her sea strength.

2. In relation to the Atlantic Ocean, the acquisition of certain additional territory by Germany would constitute an immediate gain of ports and air fields from which to undertake the domination of all commerce using the ocean, including waters wholly within the Western Hemisphere and up to our continental shores.

3. It is well to remember that certain obvious land strategy, popularly called the "pincers" tactics, can be applied to sea control as well. Any nation occupying Northern Atlantic land area can threaten all of North America.

4. In the South Atlantic, the short distance which separates the coast of Africa from the coasts of the Americas, including the West Indies, makes it necessary to give immediate and serious attention to defense against attack in this whole southern area. This includes the defense against German attack not only of the United States and of its possessions and its newly acquired island bases, but also assistance to our American neighbors in defending the continent itself, including Venezuela, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic.

The following course of action has, therefore, been taken by me as Commander-in-Chief:

(a) Without disclosing the strength of the military or naval forces involved, which could be of service to Germany, I report to the Congress that American armed forces are being assembled in Trinidad and in British Guiana as a measure of obvious precaution.

(b) The other most immediate threat is at the Northern end of the same ocean. ~~It is obvious that~~

# the occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

A The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it;

the threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic and

the threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

Because of this triple threat in the northern portion of the Atlantic, it has been deemed essential to take steps to protect ourselves against any German occupation of Iceland.

A protective force has, therefore, been dispatched to Iceland, and I am happy to say has reached its destination. The Congress will, of course, recognize that the safety of our own ships and men has required the utmost secrecy in carrying out this essential defense measure.

This step has been taken after consultation with the Government of Iceland. This Island constitutes an absolute free and sovereign state, whose integrity and independence goes back a thousand years and whose government is based on the oldest parliamentary body in the world. In our negotiations with this sovereign nation, we have recognized these facts and have agreed with the Government of Iceland, in accordance with certain principles which are summarized in the enclosed appendix to this message.

The protection of Iceland against German invasion entails, of course, the protection of American national ships bound to or from that Island. Orders have been issued to the United States Navy to carry this protection into full effect.

This action based on the necessities of hemispheric defense follows also our historic policy of safeguarding of American rights on the high seas. Therefore, all American ships will be protected against attack or threat of attack.

TO THE CONGRESS:

It has become increasingly clear during the past fifteen months since the occupation by Germany of large new sea frontages on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean that the control of the seas has become definitely more possible for that nation.

An analysis of the present situation shows:

1. Germany, aided by Italy and strengthened by facilities of conquered nations, is in a position greatly to build up her sea strength.
2. In relation to the Atlantic Ocean, the acquisition of certain additional territory by Germany would constitute an immediate gain of ports and air fields from which to undertake the domination of all commerce using the ocean, including waters wholly within the Western Hemisphere and up to our continental shores.
3. It is well to remember that certain obvious land strategy, popularly called the "pincers" tactics, can be applied to sea control as well. Any nation occupying Northern Atlantic land area can threaten all of North America.

4. In the South Atlantic, the short distance which separates the coast of Africa from the coasts of the Americas, including the West Indies, makes it necessary to give immediate and serious attention to defense against attack in this whole southern area. This includes the defense against German attack not only of the United States and of its possessions and its newly acquired island bases, but also assistance to our American neighbors in defending the continent itself, including Venezuela, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic.

The following course of action has, therefore, been taken by me as Commander-in-Chief:

(a) Without disclosing the strength of the military or naval forces involved, which could be of service to Germany, I report to the Congress that American armed forces are being assembled in Trinidad and in British Guiana as a measure of obvious precaution.

(b) The other most immediate threat is at the Northern end of the same ocean. It is obvious that the occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it;

the threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic and

the threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

Because of this triple threat in the northern portion of the Atlantic, it has been deemed essential to take steps to protect ourselves against any German occupation of Iceland.

A protective force has, therefore, been dispatched to Iceland, and I am happy to say has reached its destination. The Congress will, of course, recognize that the safety of our own ships and men has required the utmost secrecy in carrying out this essential defense measure.

This step has been taken after consultation with the Government of Iceland. This Island constitutes an absolute free and sovereign state, whose integrity and independence goes back a thousand years and whose government is based on the oldest parliamentary body in the world. In our negotiations with this sovereign nation, we have recognized these facts and have agreed with the Government of Iceland, in accordance with certain principles which are summarized in the enclosed appendix to this message.

The protection of Iceland against German invasion entails, of course, the protection of American national ships bound to or from that Island. Orders have been issued to the United States Navy to carry this protection into full effect.

This action based on the necessities of hemispheric defense follows also our historic policy of safeguarding of American rights on the high seas. Therefore, all American ships will be protected against attack or threat of attack.

TO THE CONGRESS:

It has become increasingly clear during the past fifteen months since the occupation by Germany of large new sea frontages on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean that the control of the seas has become definitely more possible for that nation.

An analysis of the present situation shows:

1. Germany, aided by Italy and strengthened by facilities of conquered nations, is in a position greatly to build up her sea strength.

2. In relation to the Atlantic Ocean, the acquisition of certain additional territory by Germany would constitute an immediate gain of ports and air fields from which to undertake the domination of all commerce using the ocean, including waters wholly within the Western Hemisphere and up to our continental shores.

3. It is well to remember that certain obvious land strategy, popularly called the "pincers" tactics, can be applied to sea control as well. Any nation occupying Northern Atlantic land area can threaten all of North America.

4. In the South Atlantic, the short distance which separates the coast of Africa from the coasts of the Americas, including the West Indies, makes it necessary to give immediate and serious attention to defense against attack in this whole southern area. This includes the defense against German attack not only of the United States and of its possessions and its newly acquired island bases, but also assistance to our American neighbors in defending the continent itself, including Venezuela, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic.

The following course of action has, therefore, been taken by me as Commander-in-Chief:

(a) Without disclosing the strength of the military or naval forces involved, which could be of service to Germany, I report to the Congress that American armed forces are being assembled in Trinidad and in British Guiana as a measure of obvious precaution.

(b) The other most immediate threat is at the Northern end of the same ocean. It is obvious that the occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it;

the threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic and

the threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

Because of this triple threat in the northern portion of the Atlantic, it has been deemed essential to take steps to protect ourselves against any German occupation of Iceland.

A protective force has, therefore, been dispatched to Iceland, and I am happy to say has reached its destination. The Congress will, of course, recognize that the safety of our own ships and men has required the utmost secrecy in carrying out this essential defense measure.

This step has been taken after consultation with the Government of Iceland. This Island constitutes an absolute free and sovereign state, whose integrity and independence goes back a thousand years and whose government is based on the oldest parliamentary body in the world. In our negotiations with this sovereign nation, we have recognized these facts and have agreed with the Government of Iceland, in accordance with certain principles which are summarized in the enclosed appendix to this message.

The protection of Iceland against German invasion entails, of course, the protection of American national ships bound to or from that Island. Orders have been issued to the United States Navy to carry this protection into full effect.

This action based on the necessities of hemispheric defense follows also our historic policy of safeguarding of American rights on the high seas. Therefore, all American ships will be protected against attack or threat of attack.

TO THE CONGRESS:

It has become increasingly clear during the past fifteen months since the occupation by Germany of large new sea frontages on the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean that the control of the seas has become definitely more possible for that nation.

An analysis of the present situation shows:

1. Germany, aided by Italy and strengthened by facilities of conquered nations, is in a position greatly to build up her sea strength.

2. In relation to the Atlantic Ocean, the acquisition of certain additional territory by Germany would constitute an immediate gain of ports and air fields from which to undertake the domination of all commerce using the ocean, including waters wholly within the Western Hemisphere and up to our continental shores.

3. It is well to remember that certain obvious land strategy, popularly called the "pincers" tactics, can be applied to sea control as well. Any nation occupying Northern Atlantic land area can threaten all of North America.

4. In the South Atlantic, the short distance which separates the coast of Africa from the coasts of the Americas, including the West Indies, makes it necessary to give immediate and serious attention to defense against attack in this whole southern area. This includes the defense against German attack not only of the United States and of its possessions and its newly acquired island bases, but also assistance to our American neighbors in defending the continent itself, including Venezuela, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine Republic.

The following course of action has, therefore, been taken by me as Commander-in-Chief:

(a) Without disclosing the strength of the military or naval forces involved, which could be of service to Germany, I report to the Congress that American armed forces are being assembled in Trinidad and in British Guiana as a measure of obvious precaution.

(b) The other most immediate threat is at the Northern end of the same ocean. It is obvious that the occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it;

the threat against all shipping in the North Atlantic and

the threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

Because of this triple threat in the northern portion of the Atlantic, it has been deemed essential to take steps to protect ourselves against any German occupation of Iceland.

A protective force has, therefore, been dispatched to Iceland, and I am happy to say has reached its destination. The Congress will, of course, recognize that the safety of our own ships and men has required the utmost secrecy in carrying out this essential defense measure.

This step has been taken after consultation with the Government of Iceland. This Island constitutes an absolute free and sovereign state, whose integrity and independence goes back a thousand years and whose government is based on the oldest parliamentary body in the world. In our negotiations with this sovereign nation, we have recognized these facts and have agreed with the Government of Iceland, in accordance with certain principles which are summarized in the enclosed appendix to this message.

The protection of Iceland against German invasion entails, of course, the protection of American national ships bound to or from that Island. Orders have been issued to the United States Navy to carry this protection into full effect.

This action based on the necessities of hemispheric defense follows also our historic policy of safeguarding of American rights on the high seas. Therefore, all American ships will be protected against attack or threat of attack.

3rd Draft.

DRAFT

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July 1 and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September 3 last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the

Western Hemisphere. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to provide assurance that no pincers movement can be undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ this strategy through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

A > *Therefore* *Approaches*  
It is ~~equally~~ imperative that the ~~sea lanes~~ *Americas* between the ~~United States~~ and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activities *you threat them of*

As Commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the United States I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of American communications in the <sup>approaches</sup> ~~sea-lanes~~ between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts, the defense of which we have undertaken.

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

*H. J. Duff*

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July 1 and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September 3 last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of

*We have no desire to see any change in the present sovereignty of those regions.*

our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to ~~provide assurance that no~~ <sup>forestall</sup> pincers movement ~~can be~~ <sup>may</sup> undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ ~~this strategy~~ <sup>such tactics</sup> through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it.

The threat against all shipping in the north Atlantic.

The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

As Commander-in-Chief ~~of the Navy of the United States,~~ I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of ~~American~~ communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts, ~~the defense of which we have undertaken.~~

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

4th Draft

Pres has the original

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July 1 and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September 3 last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as

air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere.

Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of *It has no desire to see any change in the present strategic of these regions.*

our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to ~~prevent~~ <sup>forestall</sup> ~~any~~ <sup>any</sup> pincers movement ~~which~~ undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ ~~such tactics~~ <sup>such tactics</sup> through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it.

The threat against all shipping in the north Atlantic.

The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

As Commander-in-Chief, ~~of the Navy, of the United States,~~ I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of American communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts, the defense of which we have undertaken.

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am transmitting herewith for the information of the Congress a message I received from the Prime Minister of Iceland on July 1 and the reply I addressed on the same day to the Prime Minister of Iceland in response to this message.

In accordance with the understanding so reached, forces of the United States Navy have today arrived in Iceland in order to supplement, and eventually to replace, the British forces which have until now been stationed in Iceland in order to insure the adequate defense of that country.

As I stated in my message to the Congress of September 3 last regarding the acquisition of certain naval and air bases from Great Britain in exchange for certain over-age destroyers, considerations of safety from overseas attack are fundamental.

The United States cannot permit the occupation by Germany of strategic outposts in the Atlantic to be used as air or naval bases for eventual attack against the Western Hemisphere. Assurance that such outposts in our defense frontier remain in friendly hands is the very foundation of

our national security and of the national security of every one of the independent nations of the New World.

For the same reason substantial forces of the United States have now been sent to the bases acquired last year from Great Britain in Trinidad and in British Guiana in the south in order to provide assurance that no pincer movement can be undertaken by Germany against the Western Hemisphere. It is essential that Germany should not be able successfully to employ this strategy through sudden seizure of strategic points in the south Atlantic and in the north Atlantic.

The occupation of Iceland by Germany would constitute a serious threat in three dimensions:

The threat against Greenland and the northern portion of the North American Continent, including the Islands which lie off it.

The threat against all shipping in the north Atlantic.

The threat against the steady flow of munitions to Britain -- which is a matter of broad policy clearly approved by the Congress.

It is, therefore, imperative that the approaches between the Americas and those strategic outposts, the safety of which this country regards as essential to its national security, and which it must therefore defend, shall remain open and free from all hostile activity or threat thereof.

As Commander-in-Chief of the Navy of the United States, I have consequently issued orders to the Navy that all necessary steps be taken to insure the safety of American communications in the approaches between Iceland and the United States, as well as on the seas between the United States and all other strategic outposts, the defense of which we have undertaken.

This Government will insure the adequate defense of Iceland with full recognition of the independence of Iceland as a sovereign state.

In my message to the Prime Minister of Iceland I have given the people of Iceland the assurance that the American forces sent there would in no way interfere with the internal and domestic affairs of that country, and that immediately upon the termination of the present international emergency all American forces will be at once withdrawn, leaving the people of Iceland and their Government in full and sovereign control of their own territory.