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SCANDINAVIA

Apr. 3, 1956

PRESS COMMENTS ON U.S. BASES IN ICELAND

Stockholm, in English to North America, Apr. 3, 1956, 1330 GMT--E

(Press Review)

(Text)

Last Wednesday the Icelandic Parliament passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of American forces from the island. The parliament gave its view that the international situation had altered since the defense pact between Iceland and the United States was signed in 1951. Iceland is also a charter member of NATO and is of great importance to this organization for strategic purposes. The island airbase of Keflavik, which Parliament now wants the Americans to evacuate, is of twofold importance. First, as a refueling point for aircraft on the Atlantic crossing, and second as a base of operations for American medium-range B-47 bomber.

The Parliamentary resolution enjoyed support from several different parties who are united in their feelings of anti-Americanism. As the Swedish press points out in its editorial comments, many Icelanders blame the United States for their country's economic ills. Inflation has driven up prices, American military personnel compete with Icelanders for available housing, and there are the inevitable irritations between the natives and their long-term guests.

The leading Social Democratic newspaper, MORGON-TIDNINGEN, makes the following comment: "Where once only the Communists rallied against American protection, the Conservative Party (several words unintelligible--Ed.) is now alone in wishing to retain American bases on the island. However, the Communists seem to be the only ones who want to cut all ties with the West. The other parties are reluctant to give up the protection that membership in the Atlantic alliance has helped to give."

The Liberal newspaper HANDELS-TIDNING finds that it will be increasingly difficult to win support for foreign bases as the danger of war is believed to be receding. In many ways, however, Keflavik is a special case, writes HANDELS-TIDNINGEN, which continues: "The parties responsible for the resolution have next term's elections in mind. They have been very careful not to renounce membership in the Atlantic pact, which is understandable. If the Americans leave Iceland, a peculiar situation will arise. The island has an attractive strategic position and Keflavik is a first-class airbase; however, Iceland has no armed forces of its own for protection."

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The Conservative newspaper SVENSKA DAGBLADET points out that very many Icelanders really want the Americans to get out. But at least the moderate sector of this opinion is satisfied that numerous foreign forces are not stationed in Iceland in peacetime.

SVENSKA DAGBLADET continues: From the point of view of the Atlantic pact, this argument is so dubious, however, that we can understand that the Icelandic decision has aroused grave misgivings in Washington. The view in Washington is that the parliamentary decision must abide by the terms of the defense pact before it can become effective. First of all, matters will have to wait until a new Icelandic Government takes over after the June elections. After that, the decision must be reviewed and approved by NATO and the United States, which means it will not become valid for another year.

On this point, the Social Democratic paper MOROEN TIDNINGEN writes: "In short, Iceland will have plenty of time to consider whether it has (assessed) the situation accurately. And, most likely, the negotiations for withdrawal will once again lead to some kind of compromise."

RAOUL WALLENBERG AGAIN REPORTED IN USSR

Stockholm, in English to Eastern North America, Apr. 2, 1956, 1330 GMT--E

(Text)

A new witness in the case of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who disappeared behind the Iron Curtain in 1945, has now been found, according to the Stockholm newspaper AFTONBLADET. It is assumed that the Swedish Government delegation which is now visiting Moscow will take up the Wallenberg affair, in the light of this latest disclosure.

AFTONBLADET reports that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received the new information from a Finn who says he was in the same prison as Wallenberg as late as (1953?). The Finn, (Hansel Mansonen?), is now free and lives in Goteborg. He says he did not actually see Wallenberg in the prison at (Vladimirsk?) in the (Ural Mountains?), but that (several words missing--Ed.) at the prison had told him that the man in a neighboring cell was reported to be Swedish and to be called Wallenberg.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Stockholm has confirmed that it had contact with (Mansonen?) before the Prime Minister left for Moscow.

Raoul Wallenberg disappeared in Budapest in 1945 after the commander of the Soviet forces in the Hungarian capital had stated that the Swedish diplomat was under Russian protection.

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