


ADMINISTRATIVELY
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ACTION
September 25, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: Mr. Clift 

SUBJECT: Icelandic Protest Regarding Leif
Erikson Day Proclamation

The Department of State has advised the NSC (at Tab B) that Iceland's Ambassador Haraldur Kroyer lodged a formal protest on September 23 about the characterization of Leif Erikson as "Norwegian" in this year's Presidential Leif Erikson Proclamation. According to State, Iceland has long claimed Erikson as one of its own and believes that the U. S. recognized the validity of the claim in 1930 when the Congress presented to the people of Iceland a statue of the explorer which identifies him as an Icelander.

Ambassador Kroyer states that the Norwegians and Icelanders have developed a formula which allows both nations to claim Erikson as a forebear by using the term "Norse" or "Viking" rather than ascribing him to either country. The Ambassador pointed out that a similar problem occurred in the 1964 proclamation and had serious repercussions in Iceland. Kroyer acknowledged that it is too late to do anything about the Presidential Proclamation this year but asked that measures be taken immediately to assure that any proclamations being issued by state governments avoid the same error.

The Department's proposed proclamation reviewed by the NSC complied with the Icelandic-Norwegian formula by referring to Erikson as "the daring Norse explorer." While we did take exception to State's characterization of Erikson's trip as being in search of freedom and justice, we did not alter the description of Leif's origins (at Tab C). Thus, it would appear that the offending change was made by the White House editorial staff without checking with us.

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I believe we need take no further action on this protest. State has communicated the Ambassador's request with respect to state proclamations to the concerned states through its office of Liaison with the Governors, and we will try to ensure that this error is not made next year. To this end, the memorandum for Jeanne Davis' signature to Jim Cavanaugh at Tab A would inform him of the unauthorized change in the wording of the proclamation and Iceland's protest, and would ask that such substantive changes in proclamations already reviewed by NSC be cleared with us.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve Jeanne Davis' signature of the memorandum to Cavanaugh at Tab A.

APPROVE



DISAPPROVE

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