



Iceland ds

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

17 February 1982

Visit of the President of Iceland

President Vigdis called on the Prime Minister at noon today.

The Prime Minister and the President spent half an hour in tête-à-tête discussion, accompanied only by the Private Secretary to the President and myself. The conversation was restricted to non-political subjects, given the constitutional role of the President of Iceland. The main subjects covered - all in the most general terms - were the state of the Icelandic economy, the development of energy sources in Iceland, the nature of the education system and scientific exchanges between Britain and Iceland. Few specific points are worth recording. President Vigdis said that she hoped that inflation in Iceland had now reached its peak and that this year it would be no higher than 42%, which was a considerable fall from the earlier figure of 60%. She gave the Prime Minister an account of the plans for developing power supplies, explaining that Iceland had already embarked on a large power station in the south of the country which was designed to serve an aluminium smelter and that there were plans for another power station in the north. At a later point the discussion turned to nuclear power. President Vigdis asked whether we in the United Kingdom were not afraid of the possible consequences of building nuclear power stations. The Prime Minister replied in the negative. There had been no lives lost in the nuclear power field. The dangers of producing power from oil or coal were in fact much higher. Was it the case the Icelanders worried about nuclear power? President Vigdis said that they did so, primarily because they had no direct experience of it. It was the fear of the unknown which caused the problem.

At 1230 the President and the Prime Minister were joined by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Icelandic Foreign Minister, Ambassador Hordur Helgason and Ambassador Bjarnason. The discussion was again of a very general nature. It covered the role of women in politics, the functioning of the Icelandic Parliamentary system and the contribution of Iceland to NATO. Reference to the latter led to an exchange of views about the growing burden imposed by international consultations. Both the

/Prime Minister



Prime Minister and the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary expressed the view that the development of European co-operation in the foreign policy field had played a useful role in preventing problems arising and limiting their scope once they had arisen. The discussion ended at 1300 hours.

A. J. COLES

Francis Richards, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Subject

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T 32/82

ICELANDIC EMBASSY

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LONDON SW1W 8EY

TELEPHONE: 01-730 5131-2

21 February 1982.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 32/82

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Prime Minister

Dear Prime Minister,

A.T.C. 22.

The President of Iceland who left Great Britain to-day, has asked me to convey to You the following message:

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"Leaving Great Britain at the end of a most memorable official visit, I extend to You and Her Majesty's Government my heartfelt gratitude for the warmth and hospitality that made my stay so thoroughly enjoyable.

I am convinced that the bonds of friendship between our two nations have been further strengthened and that the old ties of our common cultural heritage traced back to our ancestors in the Middle Ages have become still closer.

Thank You for Your initiative which led to this excellent visit.

I send You my sincerest wishes for a prosperous future of Your country and the British people.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir,  
President of Iceland "

Yours sincerely,

Sigurður Bjarnason,  
Ambassador

The Rt Hon Mrs Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London.

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1 Eaton Terrace  
London SW1W 8EY  
22 FEB 1982

ICELANDIC EMBASSY



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