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AIR MAIL.

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
LONDON.

27th June, 1952.

THE SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS:

Russian Whaling off Gough Island.

Acting on your minute P.M. 102/2 of the 6th May last, we approached the authorities here about the visit of the Russian Whale factory ship "Slava" to Gough Island.

It appears that when the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha landed on the island last February, he saw a stone at Glen landing place which had on it the name "Ivanov" in Russian characters, and "Semejcov Slava" in Roman letters, and the date "1951". He understood that "Ivanov" was the name of the Slava's Chief Engineer and reported that he believed the visit to have taken place in November 1951.

The Master of the "Slava" was in London earlier this month for the meeting of the International Commission for the Regulation of Whaling, and advantage was taken of an informal conversation to question him discreetly about Gough Island. He said that the ship had lain off the island while refuelling her catchers and that some members of the crew had landed for a few hours.

The dates of the departure of the "Slava" from Cape Town for the whaling ground and of her return to that port at the end of the season show little variation over the past four years, as the following table shows:-

Cape Town	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952.
Arrival		14th April	30th April	12th April	6th April
Departure	30th Nov.	1st Dec.	20th Nov.	18th Nov.	

Although the United Kingdom authorities have no detail of the movements of the "Slava" between leaving Cape Town on the 18th November 1951 and her return on the 6th April 1952, they feel on balance that the explanation given by the Ship's Master is probably correct.

(Sgd.) K.E. Pakendorf.

Political Secretary.

→ THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.
THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT.

For information.

H. H. H. H.
[SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

GOUGH ISLANDPOSITION

1. GOUGH ISLAND is situated about 230 miles SSE of the TRISTAN DA CUNHA Group and lies between the parallels $40^{\circ} 17' S$ and $40^{\circ} 24' S$ and the meridians of $9^{\circ} 53' W$ and $10^{\circ} 03' W$. The island is about 8 miles long by 4 miles wide, and lies approximately 1500 miles from CAPE TOWN.

HISTORY

2. Originally called DIEGO ALVAREZ, it derives its other name from a Captain GOUGH, who visited the island in 1731. It has been claimed as a British possession since the annexation of TRISTAN DA CUNHA (between $37^{\circ} 02' S$ and $37^{\circ} 26' S$ and between $12^{\circ} 12' W$ and $12^{\circ} 42' W$) in 1816, and with the TRISTAN GROUP became a dependency of the colony of ST HELENA in 1938.
3. The island has been visited by several scientific expeditions, and on a few occasions it has harboured the crews of shipwrecked vessels. It has NO permanent population.

TOPOGRAPHY

4. It is of volcanic origin, is rugged and mountainous, the highest peak rising to 2915 feet. Its Northern and Western sides consist of precipitous cliffs which attain near NORTH point, at the NW end of the island, an elevation of about 1000 feet, whence they gradually decrease in height until in the vicinity of SOUTH point they are from 50 to 100 feet high. Above these cliffs the land rises in rugged peaks towards the centre of the island where MOUNT ROWETT, HAGE TOOTH and HIGH PEAK attain the heights of 2915, 2270 and 2800 feet, respectively.
5. Several islets or large rocks lie off the island, but with the exception of PENGUIN ISLET (Lat. $40^{\circ} 19' S$ Long. $9^{\circ} 55' W$) they lie close inshore; the latter is situated about half a mile offshore near the centre of the NE side of GOUGH ISLAND. Close inshore and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles southward of PENGUIN ISLET are DELL ROCKS between which and HAULROUND POINT, situated about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther SE is an indentation known as QUEST BAY.
6. In most places the cliffs of GOUGH ISLAND rise steeply from the sea and numerous waterfalls drop vertically in long cascades. These cliffs are divided by picturesque valleys. The coast is marked with numerous caves and chasms. Close off the centre of the Northern side of the island is a rock in the form of a high rounded column, known as LOT'S WIFE, eastward of which is an indentation in the coast, called LOT'S WIFE'S COVE. CHURCH ROCK is remarkable, and lies close off NE point; it obtains its name from its strong resemblance to a church with a high spire at its western end.

7. At the northern end of QUEST BAY there is a glen which gives access to the interior of the island. The GLEN BEACH is composed of large boulders and the approach to it is complicated by submerged rocks. A slight amount of protection is however given by ARCHWAY ROCK, where a stream runs down to the sea, and it is without doubt the continuous action of this stream that has worn the tunnel through the rock.

ANCHORAGE

8. The depths obtained in the vicinity of GOUGH ISLAND are few, but it is stated that the island may be approached with safety to a distance of about 1 mile, except off WEST and NE points where reefs extend offshore about 8 cables westward and 6 cables northward, respectively, that off WEST point breaks heavily. The island is apparently steep - to on all but its EAST side, where depths of 20 fathoms are found from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile offshore.
9. There are NO sheltered bays, each anchorage being an open roadstead. None of them can be considered safe for sailing vessels, and other ships anchoring should at all times be prepared to get away at very short notice.
10. Temporary anchorage, according to the direction of the wind, can be obtained in LOT'S WIFE'S COVE, in the bay between PENGUIN ISLET and DELL ROCKS, and at the GLEN anchorage in the northern part of QUEST BAY, at which cost there is good holding ground.
11. The surf sometimes makes landing on the GLEN beach difficult, NOT to say dangerous; but there is a place at the foot of ARCHWAY ROCK where experienced boatmen can effect a landing in almost any weather. At the corner of the rock nearest the northern end of the beach there is a chimney up which an active man carrying a coil of rope could clamber, and on top of the rock there are a few island-trees to which it could be secured. In this way landing on, or departure from the island can be effected in any but the worst weather, though in the case of heavy gear, very hard work is entailed.
12. Landing can also be effected in LOT'S WIFE'S COVE (Lat. $40^{\circ} 18'$ S Long. $90^{\circ} 55'$ E) and southward of CHURCH ROCK where there is an islet within which landing is safe and easy, as the place is protected from the swell and northerly winds by the NE point; but the best position for landing will obviously depend on the direction of the wind and swell round the island at the time.

BIRD AND ANIMAL LIFE

13. The Island has unique animals. It is the breeding place

of the giant wandering albatross and it is the most northerly point at which the giant petrel of the ANTARTIC is found. There are vast numbers of penguins and crayfish, as also valuable guano deposits. It is also the home of numerous seals.

VEGETATION

14. Three species of plants are found only on GOUGE ISLAND, one of them is named CALLITRICHES CHRISTENSEN II after its finder, LARS CHRISTENSEN.

Prepared by G II (Ia), Defence Headquarters.
(Based on information correct up to 2 June, 1950).

Robt. Lingwood
Major

Comdt
CHIEF SIGNAL AND INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

24 June, 1952.

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N.F.3/24/1

Defence Headquarters,
PRETORIA.

19th June, 1952.

CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF

GOUGH ISLAND

The following is an extract from the Staff Officer (Intelligence), South Atlantic, report M.3/12/2 dated 8th May on the U.S.S.R. Whaling Expedition 1951/52, a copy of which was forwarded to "Chief of the General Staff (for Chief Signal and Intelligence Officer, Pretoria)."

"Evidence has now come to light that the Russians landed on Gough Island during the previous season. A Russian inscription has been found on a rock in a cave at Glen Anchorage in Quest Bay. It is understood that this was seen by the Administrator of Tristan da Cunha when he visited the Island and enquiries are being made by Staff Officer (Intelligence), South Atlantic for further evidence.

When last visited by S.S. "Tristania", it was observed that the number of seals was far less than expected and it is possible that the Russians carried out a wholesale slaughter of seals when they were there. They certainly had two alive on board the "Slava" when she visited Cape Town in April 1951. From her known movements, it is quite possible that the "Slava" again visited Gough Island during the present season".

2. During the Whaling season the Russian expedition operated generally in the same vicinity as the South African Expedition led by the Whale Factory Ship "Abraham Larsen". At the close of the season the "Abraham Larsen" returned direct to Durban where she arrived on 16th March, whereas the "Slave" berthed at Cape Town on 6th April taking an extra 21 days to cover a shorter distance.

3. This Island is situated about 230 miles South South-Eastward of Tristan da Cunha and lies between the parallels of 40° 17' S and 40° 24' S and the meridians of 9° 53' W and 10° 03' W.

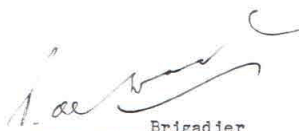
4. Mr. A.F. Spilhaus, a meteorological expert from the United States, in his report on South African Meteorological Services, was of the opinion that this Island would be a valuable adjunct to Tristan da Cunha in providing accurate weather forecasts. He recommended that, at least as a preliminary step, a party of 3 or 4 volunteers from South Africa, 2 at least trained in meteorological observations, be sent to establish and maintain a station for a period of not less than a full year and preferably two years.

5. The S.A. Meteorological Services are most interested in setting up a station on Gough Island. The landing of stores and personnel on the Island does, however, present a far greater problem than that experienced at Marion Island. The operation could, no doubt, be conducted in conjunction with the Tristan

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Development Corporation whose vessel "Tristonia" makes regular passages to and from Tristan da Cunha.

6. As Gough Island is a British Possession it is submitted that discussions he held with the British Authorities on the desirability of establishing a Meteorological station there to provide meteorological information, and at the same time, to prevent the U.S.S.R. from establishing Sovereignty over Gough Island.



Brigadier
NAVAL & MARINE CHIEF OF STAFF

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C.G.S.—H.G.S.	P. 102/2.
10-7-1952	
PRETORIA	
G.H.Q.—G.H.K.	CAPE TOWN.

psc 36A

6th May, 1952.

The High Commissioner for the
Union of South Africa,
LONDON.

I attach a report which appeared in the Cape Times of 2nd May, 1952, regarding a visit to Gough Island by the Russian whale factory ship "Slava" and should be interested to learn whether the competent British authorities have any comments on the matter.

You will recall that on of the motives which prompted South African occupation of the Prince Edward Islands was the desire to forestall possible Soviet occupation.

(Sgd.) D.D. Forsyth.
SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

→ THE CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.
THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT.

For information.

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H.R. 2.
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Franklin
SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

(Sgd.) K.E. Pakendorf.

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