

17 November 1955

**Dear Admiral Byrd:**

In a meeting held in my office on 9 November 1955, Captain L. O. Mathews, U.S. Navy, your Chief of Staff, informed me of your interest in the National Intelligence Survey on Antarctica, and of your desire to be informed on the nature of this Survey and its general progress.

This project stems from a letter of 16 August 1955 addressed to me as Chairman, NIS Committee from Rear Admiral George Dufek, USN (Ret), Chairman, OCB Antarctic Working Group in which he indicated a priority requirement of the OCB Working Group for the preparation of an NIS on Antarctica as a basis for policy decisions relating to negotiations bearing on the existing or potential rights of this Government in Antarctica. He further stated that such a Survey should encompass the history, geography, and economic value of Antarctica as a guide in coming to some decision as to (a) the most valuable areas of the continent and (b) the legal positions of various countries vis-a-vis claims to parts of Antarctica.

This matter was laid before the NIS Committee which held meetings on 23 and 30 August 1955 to consider it. The Committee reached decision to accord priority to this requirement to a degree necessary to complete the NIS on Antarctica by early next year.

The NIS elements which appear to the Committee to have bearing on this matter, and which will be produced under this requirement, are: a) Chapter II (Military Geography, including weather and coastal hydrography) to be produced by Navy; b) Chapter V (Political) and Chapter VI (Economic) to be produced by State; c) Chapter IX (Map and Chart Appraisal) to be produced by CIA; and d) an NIS Gazetteer to be produced by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. There will also be prepared the necessary base maps adapted from new Hydrographic Office charts now in preparation.

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It should be emphasized that the specialized capabilities of the intelligence agencies of the Government are being utilized in the development of this Survey. To this end production responsibilities are allocated to those agencies which are best qualified by reason of their intelligence requirements, production capabilities and dominant interest in accordance with established NIS policy. In addition, other agencies of the Government assist the major contributors to the extent of any unique or specialized capabilities.

It is the intention of the NIS Committee to have all contributions to the NIS on Antarctica completed by 1 February 1956. The participating agencies have indicated they will meet this deadline. Allowing time for final review and printing, it is estimated that the NIS on Antarctica will be published and disseminated in April 1956.

In order that you may be fully informed on this matter I am enclosing copies of correspondence with Admiral Dufek, a list of participating agencies, and a summary of their intended coverage of the NIS on Antarctica. Please let me know if I can be of further service to you.

Sincerely yours,

K. A. KNOWLES  
Chairman, NIS COMMITTEE

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN (Ret)  
Officer in Charge, U.S. Antarctic Program  
331 Old Post Office Building  
Washington 25, D.C.

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K. A. KNOWLES  
Chairman, NIS Committee

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN (Ret)  
Officer in Charge, U.S. Antarctic Programs  
831 Old Post Office Building  
Washington 25, D.C.

Enclosures to 17 November 1955 letter from Chairman, NIS Committee to Officer in Charge, U.S. Antarctic Programs.

Summary of intended coverage and List of Contributors to NIS 69 - Antarctica

Chapter II - Military Geography

ONI Coordinator

Section 20 - Introduction

ONI with the assistance of the Hydrographic Office.

A strategic appreciation of the area as a whole in relation to its surroundings with special consideration to aspects of location, size, shape and boundaries, dominant geographic elements and the area's strategic potential.

Section 22 - Coasts and Landing Places

ONI with the assistance of the Hydrographic Office.

A general description of the coastal area and landing places, including a comprehensive treatment of nearshore oceanography.

Section 23 - Weather and Climate

Hydrographic Office and Naval Aerology.

An overview of the significant aspects of general climate and oceanographic conditions as they affect the area's strategic potential. Also, a detailed coverage of marine climate and oceanography, including the effects of weather and climate on air and surface military operations.

Section 24 - Topography

ONI with assistance of Hydrographic Office, Army Map Service and Military Geology Division of Department of Interior.

A treatment of the topographical elements which are known to have a military significance such as landforms, relief and drainage pattern, water resources, soils, lithology, vegetation and other special physical features. Also, an evaluation of the environmental conditions affecting cross-country movement of military vehicles, equipment and personnel.

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Chapter V - Political

OIR, State, Coordinator

## A. General.

BCR

(Revival of interest in Antarctica re IGY and re political importance of the Antarctic continent in terms of various national interests and motivations: economic, strategic, prestige, etc.; major sectors, geographical description, etc.; succinct history of exploration, scientific investigation, claims; conflict of claims, with respect to general principles of international law, and of interest; attitudes re international cooperation; etc.)

## B. National interests and activity in Antarctica.

## 1. Nations having specific claims.

- |                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| a. Argentina      | DRA |
| b. Chile          | DRA |
| c. United Kingdom | BCR |
| d. New Zealand    | BCR |
| e. Australia      | BCR |
| f. France         | BCR |
| g. Norway         | BCR |
| h. Germany        | BCR |

## 2. Interested nations not having specific claims.

- |                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| a. United States | HD  |
| b. Soviet Union  | DRS |
| c. Japan         | DRF |
| d. Belgium       | BCR |
| e. Sweden        | BCR |
| f. South Africa  | BCR |
- 2.*

Chapter V - Political (continued)

C. Analytical summary of positions of interested countries (including sector character of claims, table showing claims and basis for claims as well as conflicts); comparative evaluation of significance of areas claimed to the various countries; analysis of effects of national interests and claims not in direct conflict; attitudes toward proposals of internationalisation; effect of ICY on claims or national positions.

BCR

Framework for each country-contribution, to be filled in so far as material permits:

(1) General

Statement and delimitation of principal and minor areas of interest and activity, identified by sector-- also, statement re continental interests. (Optional-- here, or as a separate section: (2) ) motivations-- where relevant, differentiate according to sector and include references to geographic features, especially re economic interests:

Political interests of a strategic nature:

- General (importance of Antarctica with respect to subject country's other world-wide interests-- e.g., do these interests suggest the desirability of excluding certain countries from Antarctica as a whole?)
- Control of sea lanes (including Drake Passage)
- Proximity (to other possessions of or to claimant country itself)
- Training and research re Arctic warfare
- Air, submarine, naval and land bases
- Strategic resources

2.

**Chapter V - Political (continued)**

**Political pressures -- domestic and/or foreign (nationalism, including impact on domestic politics; attitudes of military and other leaders and people; international rivalry, etc.)**

**Economic:**

- Whaling and fishing
- Minerals
- Commercial air and sea travel and freighting
- Economic importance of scientific research

**Statement of scope of claims, if any, unofficial or official, and of the form which these claims have taken, and any changes in the scope of said claims; if no claims have been made, why not (position regarding the making of claims); have claims been reserved? national positions -- official and unofficial and, re latter, those of publicists, etc. -- re comparative merits of various criteria of international law relating to territorial claims in Antarctica: include national positions re right of succession and the concepts of continuity and contiguity; and, in case of Australia and Norway: what claims have been relinquished? why? where? basis for previous claims.**

**(2) Historic and current activity (specify whether official or unofficial and, where relevant, differentiate according to sector)**

or

- (3)**
- (a) Discovery**
  - (b) Exploration**
  - (c) Occupation and Administration**

**(3) Conflicts with other nations**

or

**(4) History of conflicts and of efforts to resolve conflicts; attitudes re reaching a settlement and re various alternatives; attitudes re international cooperation: attitudes regarding cooperation with other countries, history of cooperation with others; to what extent have this nation's claims been recognized by other states? (which? why? reciprocal or gratuitous? etc.);**

Chapter V - Political (continued)

attitudes re IGY -- regarded as a means of advancing national claims or as an international endeavor, leading perhaps to further international cooperation? Attitudes with respect to internationalization of Antarctica, re specific proposals (both by own nationals and by those of other countries) -- e. g., by UN, by international conference to "parcel out" territories, etc.; attitudes re exclusion of any country or countries, primarily the Soviet Union, from any such settlements, etc.

(4) Plans for future activity (relate to further strengthening of claims re IGY and pre-IGY plans)

or  
(5)

The following portion of the text will be prepared by the Division responsible for the subject country, but is intended for use in subsection C. Analytical Summary of Positions of Interested Countries.

Effects of other national interests and claims not in direct conflict with those of subject country.

- Impact of U. S. positions on country's claims or interests
- Impact of other countries' interests and claims on subject country
- Impact of (subject) country's position on U. S. interests
- Impact of country's position on other countries' interests and claims.



**Chapter VI - Economic**

**OIR, State, Coordinator**

**A. General**

General survey of economic activity and potential in Antarctica.

DRW

**Assisting Agencies:**

**B. Whaling and Fisheries**

**Fish and Wildlife Service  
Department of Interior**

**1. Whaling.**

Operations and importance of activity of nations engaging in whaling in Antarctic waters.

**2. Fisheries.**

Operations and magnitude of fishing activity in the Antarctic. Economic potential of fisheries and sealing.

**C. Mineral Resources.**

**Bureau of Mines  
Department of Interior**

**1. Known mineral deposits.**

- a. Coal
- b. Copper
- c. Other minerals

**2. Mineral potential.**

(To be treated by geographical regions)

**Bureau of Mines  
Department of Interior**

**D. Miscellaneous economic potentialities.**

DRW

**Chapter IX - Map and Chart Appraisal**

**ORR/CIA, Coordinator**

**Section 90. General**

**Assisting Agencies:  
Army Map Service  
Hydrographic Office  
Air-Weather Service  
Aeronautical Chart and  
Information Center**

- A. Development and extent of mapping, charting, and related activities**
  - 1. Mapping and charting**
  - 2. Surveys**
  - 3. Aerial photography**
  
- B. Major deficiencies in mapping and charting**
  - 1. Published maps and charts**
  - 2. Mapping and charting data**
  
- C. Programs under way or projected**

**Section 91. Selected Maps, Charts, and Plans**

- A. General**
  
- B. Maps of discovery and exploration**
  
- C. Physical maps, navigation charts**
  - 1. General**
  - 2. Topographic maps**
  - 3. Specialized physical maps**
  - 4. Air charts**
  - 5. Sailing, general, and coast charts**
  - 6. Nearshore oceanographic charts**
  - 7. Climatic maps**
  
- D. Political and economic maps**
  - 1. General**
  - 2. Political maps**
  - 3. Economic maps**

**Section 92. Indexes of Mapping Data and Selected Map and Chart Coverage**

Casetteer

U. S. Board on Geographic Names, Coordinator

To comprise approximately 4,000  
geographic names including historical  
summaries and complete listing of  
Antarctic explorations.