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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

URBAN AREA STUDY: BURGAS, BULGARIA



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April 1959

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URBAN AREA STUDY: BURGAS, BULGARIA

I. Introduction

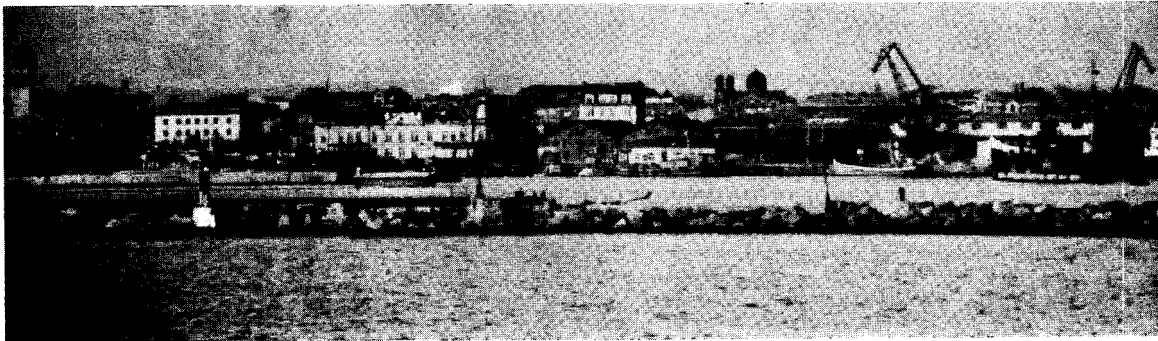
Burgas, located at the head of the largest embayment on the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, is the fifth largest city of Bulgaria, an important regional administrative center, and one of the two leading seaports. Well-situated with respect to major land transportation lines and the main producing centers for export commodities, Burgas handles the bulk of Bulgarian exports by sea. It ranks second to the port of Varna, however, in the amount of import cargo handled, chiefly because that city is nearer to the USSR, the largest single supplier of Bulgarian imports. Burgas is the principal Bulgarian fish market and handles almost all of the Bulgarian Black Sea catch. Although not a major industrial city, several industrial enterprises, including the largest flour mill in Bulgaria, are located in Burgas. An electric-cable plant and a railroad-car construction plant were built in Burgas as part of the first two 5-year plans of Socialist construction in Bulgaria. Currently, considerable attention is being given to the development of Burgas as a Black Sea resort for workers from the various People's Democracies. Contemporary Burgas is a rapidly growing city. Its population of 72,795 (as of December 1956) is double that of 1934 and is nearly twenty-five times greater than that of the fishing village that was old Burgas at the end of the 19th century.

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II. Site

The city is situated at the head of Burgas Bay on a narrow neck of land flanked by two shallow coastal lakes or lagoons -- Lakes Atanasovo and Burgas. Barrier beaches separate the lagoons from the bay and form land bridges connecting the Burgas "neck" with adjacent coastal areas to the north and south. The greater part of the city stands on relatively high ground (50 to 150 feet in elevation) overlooking the bay. On the west, however, industrial sections have developed on the low-lying land adjacent to Lake Burgas and along the sandy barrier beach stretching to the southwest. An artificial harbor and related port facilities have been constructed along the waterfront on the south side of the city (see photo below).



The harbor and waterfront of Burgas as seen across the southern breakwater. The clock tower of the main railroad station is at the extreme left; the port administration building, with four small corner towers, at left center. The buildings between the cranes at the far right are warehouses. In the right center background, the towers of St. Kiril i Metodi Cathedral are clearly visible.

Lining the east shore are bathing beaches backed by low bluffs on which marine gardens and recreational facilities have been laid out. The city is roughly rectangular in shape and spreads over an area of approximately 2 square miles, but its built-up area is expanding northward toward Lake Atanasovo. The land surface is generally level, with no particularly steep gradients except in sections of the city immediately adjacent to Burgas Bay. The surface is underlain by nearly horizontal beds of unconsolidated or weakly consolidated sands and gravels.

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III. Orientation Within the City

Since the livelihood of Burgas is oriented largely around its port activities, the principal government and commercial offices are in the old section of town near the harbor. Most are located along the main north-south street, "1 May" Street (formerly Alexandrovskaya Street), between the main railroad station and Georgi Dimitrov Square. This densely built-up area extends some 4 or 5 blocks to both the east and west of "1 May" Street and constitutes the core of the old city. From this core, the residential sections of the city fan outward with the newer sections lying to the north. About midway between Georgi Dimitrov Square and the railroad station, "1 May" Street is intersected by Stalin Boulevard and "9 September" Street, which together constitute the main east-west artery. Stalin Boulevard (formerly Bogoridi) extends eastward connecting the business section with the Sea Gardens overlooking the bay. This boulevard is described in a recent magazine as the "liveliest street in town, especially in the afternoon and in the evening". 1/* "9 September" Street leads westward to the railroad yards and the Sands Quarter (Kumluk or Pyasutsite Kvartal).

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The Sands Quarter is the southwest industrial section, which spreads out along the shore of Lake Burgas and along the barrier beach between Lake Burgas and the bay. A narrow canal about 1 meter deep cuts through the barrier beach permitting small motorboats to pass between the bay and the state fishery on Lake Burgas. 2/ A stadium, oil storage tanks, and a slaughter house are located in the part of the Sands Quarter east of the canal. West of the canal are the Burgas prison and various factories, including the Georgi Dimitrov Metal Working Plant (formerly Veriga), the Gocho Ivanov Cooperage Factory, and the Stalin Cotton Textile Plant. The railroad yards encircle the town on the west and south from the northwest industrial section to the port area. Railroad spurs branch off from the main yard and serve the plants in the Sands Quarter.

The northwest industrial section is the site of a variety of plants, including the Red Flag Railroad Car Plant, the Vasil Kolarov Electric Cable Enterprise, the Spartak Machine Construction Plant, a large state flour mill, and several components of the Marshal Tolbukhin State Industrial Combine.

Port facilities occupy most of the waterfront area along the south side of town. These facilities include quays, warehouses, administration buildings, railroad spurs, a fish exchange, the Slavyanka Fish Canning Factory, a small ship-repair yard, and a small naval base. Much of the port area is fenced and designated as a restricted zone.

*Numerical citations refer to sources listed in Appendix B.

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Most of the buildings in Burgas are of stuccoed-brick construction with tile roofs. Those in the residential sections are mainly 1- and 2-story structures, whereas the government and commercial buildings are often 3 to 5 stories high. The exteriors of buildings are commonly painted in pastel colors with yellows predominating.

Although information on the street numbering system is unconfirmed, north-south streets are apparently numbered from the waterfront northward. The east-west streets located south of the traffic circle* in the geographic center of Burgas are numbered eastward and westward from "1 May" Street, and those located north of the circle are numbered eastward and westward from P. R. Slaveykov Street. The new section east of Tolbukhin Boulevard is an exception to the general rule. Here east-west streets are numbered from Tolbukhin Boulevard eastward and have an "A" appended to the numerical designation. 3/

*This may be named Vozrazhidane Circle but the name has not been confirmed.

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IV. Transportation, Telecommunications, and Public UtilitiesA. Transportation Facilities

Burgas is an important transportation node for southeastern Bulgaria, being accessible by railroad, road, air, and sea. As an important seaport, Burgas is quite naturally both a terminus and originating point for a considerable amount of railroad freight and passenger traffic. It is linked directly with Sofia and other important centers in southern Bulgaria via the Sofia-Levskigrad-Burgas and Sofia-Plovdiv-Burgas trunk lines. North-south lines leading to the Danubian ports which handle transshipment traffic, and other north Bulgarian centers are accessible through junction points at Polyanovgrad and Dubovo on the Sofia-Levskigrad-Burgas line. Locally, a short railroad line extends northeastward from Burgas to the neighboring coastal town of Pomorie; and a branch toward the north serves the coal mines at Rudnik. The main railroad station is located adjacent to the port area at the intersection of "1 May" Street and Ivan Vazov Boulevard. The Vladimir Pavlov Station (the old railroad station) is located at the western edge of town (map item 57).

Roads converge on Burgas from the north, south, and west. A main east-west highway from Sofia terminates at Burgas, and the north-south coastal highway passes through the city. A network of second- and third-class roads connects Burgas with the surrounding towns and villages in Burgas Okrüg*. The main roads are generally well drained, at least 20 feet wide, and hard surfaced. The surfacing may be asphalt, concrete, cobblestone, or gravel. The second- and third-class roads are usually well drained, narrow (10-13 feet), and surfaced with gravel and sand. Interurban bus lines apparently offer regular service between Burgas and Varna and between Burgas and many of the villages within Burgas Okrüg. No current information on routes, operating schedules, and type of equipment is available.

Burgas does not have an extensive municipal transit system; but a few buses provide service from the center of town to the industrial sections and the suburbs. A bus stand is located on "1 May" Street opposite the main railroad station. Many streets within the city are paved. Although those in the newer sections are mostly wide and macadamized, some in the older or southeastern section are narrow, with irregular cobblestone paving. Most streets accommodate two-way traffic, but automobile traffic within the city is very light.

*The okrüg is the first-order administrative-economic territorial division in Bulgaria.

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Burgas has daily air service, except Sunday, with Sofia, Plovdiv, Gorna Oryakhovitsa, and Varna. 4/ The airfield is located approximately 4-1/2 miles northeast of the city and is used by both civilian and military aircraft. Its facilities, however, are very limited. The runways have a natural surface and the longest measures only 3,600 feet.

Small passenger vessels ply between Burgas harbor and nearby coastal villages. Service to Pomorie, Nesebŭr and Sozopol is daily and to Akhtopol and intermediate coastal points, triweekly. During the summer only (15 June - 30 September) trips are made to Varna on a daily-except-Sunday schedule. A Western observer who recently took the trip from Burgas to Nesebŭr reports that the vessel was grossly overcrowded and the journey most uncomfortable. 5/

B. Telecommunication Facilities

Burgas has telephone and telegraph connections with all major towns in Bulgaria. The services are operated by the PTTR (Ministry of Posts, Telephone, Telegraph, and Radio). The telephone and telegraph centers are housed in the PTTR Building (map item 26) which is located near the main railroad station. Burgas has an automatic telephone exchange and a telegraph center equipped with teleprinter service. 6/ The number of requests for the installation of telephones in individual homes apparently exceeds the capacity of the facilities available in Burgas, as is the case in other Bulgarian cities. Since few, if any, public phone booths are scattered about the city, it is assumed that nonsubscribers place their calls at the telephone center.

Burgas has no domestic radio broadcasting station of its own, but a radio relay line connects Burgas with Sofia. 7/ Relatively few people have their own radio sets, but wired-radio speakers equipped only with "on" and "off" controls are installed in individual homes by the government to provide approved news and music. This is part of the national wired-radio network serviced locally through a program distribution center, which gets its program material from PTTR circuits, local studio sources, or off-the-air pick-up. 8/

The Directorates of Air Transportation, Ports, and Railroads apparently operate their own point-to-point radio facilities in Burgas, whereas the PTTR operates the domestic and coastal radio communication facilities in the area. 9/

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C. Public Utilities

The principal source of electric power for Burgas is the Vasil Kolarov Thermal Electric Power Plant at Rudnik, approximately 8 miles north of the city. The plant operates on brown coal from the Rudnik mines and supplies 3-phase, 50-cycle alternating current at 220/380 volts to Burgas and vicinity. 10/ In addition, Burgas was recently tied in with the national 110-kilovolt system through the construction of a high-tension line between Dimitrovgrad and Burgas. 11/

Burgas receives its water supply from 3 sources: thermal springs about 9 miles northwest of the city, a well approximately 10 miles north of the city, and 2 recently discovered underground rivers located some 3 miles west of the thermal springs. The water from all 3 sources is piped to a reservoir 3 miles north of the city, where it is mixed and cooled and then piped through gravity mains to Burgas. 12, 13/ With the addition of the third source of supply the acute water shortage, which plagued the city for years, has reportedly been removed, and the water supply is now sufficient at all seasons. Burgas is equipped with underground gravity sewers which transport the city's raw sewage to the Black Sea. 14/

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V. Administration and Security

A. Local Administration

The administrative organization of Bulgaria is undergoing a radical revision on the basis of decisions made at the plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party's Central Committee on 17 January 1959. Thirty new administrative-economic territorial divisions or okrügs are being established in place of the old okrügs and okolias (first- and second-order administrative divisions, respectively). The new okrügs will represent a "unification of the entire political, state, economic, and cultural life in a given territory." 15/ The old obshtinas (third-order administrative divisions) are to be retained with certain modifications as the basic local administrative unit. 16/

Since the city of Burgas was the seat of the old obshtina, okoliya, and okrüg of the same name, presumably it will be the seat of the current obshtina and new okrüg. Within the framework of central government directives the Burgas Okrüg People's Council will have broad responsibilities for the governing and the economic management of its territory including responsibility for the management and control of all production-economic units (industrial enterprises, collective farms, state farms, etc.) and the preparation of the economic plan of the okrüg. The Municipal People's Council will handle the local administrative services dealing with the development of education, culture, health protection, state retail trade, and communal services. 17/ It is likely that the Okrüg People's Council will be housed in the building on Tsar Petür Street formerly occupied by the old Okrüg People's Council (map item 13). The Municipal People's Council will probably have its offices in the old Urban People's Council Building (map item 33).

The local committees of the Bulgarian Communist Party will probably continue their close check on the activities of the People's Councils. The headquarters of the various Party committees for Burgas Okrüg are at No. 22, "1 May" Street (map item 30).

B. Security Control Organizations

In Bulgaria the police system is organized into three main branches: (1) the People's Militia or ordinary civil police; (2) the State Security Agency, which includes the civilian-attired secret police and the uniformed interior troops; and (3) the Frontier Troops. All are under the control of the Ministry of Interior although certain elements of the People's Militia, such as the traffic police, are nominally under the control of the local people's councils.

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Units of all three branches of the police system are represented in Burgas. According to reports the State Security units were moved into a single headquarters building in 1957, but the precise location of the headquarters within the city has not been confirmed. 18, 19/ As of 1956 the headquarters for the Burgas Okrug administration of the Ministry of the Interior was located at No. 73 "1 May" Street (map item 42); the Okoliya Administration was located at No. 9 Debelt Street (map item 24); and the City Administration was located at No. 11 Kn. Rayna Street (possibly map item 37). 20/

The headquarters of an unidentified Frontier Troops Unit (probably the 8th Frontier Guard Otryad) is located on the west side of Georgi Dimitrov Square. 21/ Frontier troops and Customs Militia are used in the port area for purposes such as checking documents and inspecting merchant ships and fishing boats for contraband. 22, 23/ The Customs Office (map item 4) is located in the port area at the western end of the north quay.

The Burgas Prison (map item 23) is located in the Sands District.

C. Specially Controlled Areas

Most of the port section of Burgas and all of the military installations in the vicinity are considered restricted areas. The restricted parts of the port are fenced, and only properly documented persons are permitted to enter. It is assumed that the military barracks complexes are also fenced and are guarded.

D. Required Contact With Local Officials

All Bulgarian citizens are required to carry identification booklets. If an individual wants to travel outside his local area, he must obtain permission from the People's Militia. Data regarding his destination, time of departure, mode and route of travel, reason for trip, and date of return are entered in his identity booklet; and the seal of the militia station is affixed. Upon arrival at his destination or at an intermediate overnight stop, the individual must report to and register at the nearest militia station. In addition, the traveler's host or hotel manager is responsible for completing a standard police travel form indicating that the traveler is temporarily residing at his home or hotel. 24/

Foreign visitors in Bulgaria are required to report to a militia station in the specific locality being visited so that they may register and procure a temporary residence permit. All movements outside the confines of the stated locality are restricted unless a special permit is first obtained from the militia. At the end of his temporary

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residence the individual must again report to the militia station;
and, on leaving the country, he must procure an exit visa from
Militia Headquarters in Sofia. 25/

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VI. Military Organization

The following military units are believed to be located in the Burgas area: Headquarters of the 3rd "Chernomorska" Rifle Division and various components, Headquarters of the 2nd Coast Artillery Regiment, an unidentified antiaircraft artillery regiment, and the Administrative Office (Recruiting and Mobilization Center) for the Military District of Burgas (map item 12). 26/ Several barracks areas are located in Burgas and vicinity, but the specific units quartered in each have not been fully identified. The principal barracks complex, on the eastern edge of Burgas immediately north of the Sea Gardens, houses some components of the 3rd Rifle Division. On several occasions, reports have indicated that this complex will be razed to make way for an extension of the Sea Gardens. Other components of the 3rd Division are stationed in the northern outskirts of Burgas along the Burgas-Aytos road. The Coast Artillery Headquarters is located on Chernomorska Street just north of the port area (map item 9). Units of the antiaircraft artillery regiment may be billeted southwest of town on the Burgas-Grudovo road.

Burgas is headquarters for the Burgas Naval District and is the site of one of the four naval bases in Bulgaria. The naval base, however, is small with a complement of ships consisting of only a few landing craft, torpedo boats, small submarine chasers, and minesweepers. 27/ The naval base is located within the restricted zone on the western side of the harbor.

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VII. Sociological Factors

A. Ethnic Composition and Background

Statistical data are not available on the present ethnic composition of the population of Burgas. Ethnic Bulgarians comprise the vast majority of the population; but small Armenian, Turkish, Jewish, and Greek minorities still reside within the city. The 1934 census enumeration indicated that, on the basis of language spoken, these groups constituted approximately 5, 4, 1.5 and 1 percent of the population, respectively. Since sizeable numbers of these minority peoples have emigrated during the post-World War II period, the relative proportion of each has probably declined since 1934 in terms of the total population.

B. Food and Clothing Customs

Western-style attire has been adopted by the majority of the urban Bulgarian population, and distinctive traditional costumes are worn only on festive occasions, if at all. Because of the high cost of clothing in terms of the purchasing power of the average Bulgarian, the garments worn are commonly of cheap manufacture and are likely to be threadbare from long use.

The Bulgarian diet contains a large number of foods of eastern origin, such as kebabs, pilau (rice stewed with mutton or pork), and dolmas (various leaves, such as cabbage, stuffed with ground meat). The national dish is givech, which consists of chopped mutton, eggs, and vegetables. Maize porridge, wheat bread, cabbage soup, potatoes, cheese, and yogurt are other items common to the diet.

Burgas has several restaurants. Balkanturist (State Enterprise for Travel and Tourism) operates two restaurants -- No. 1 located in the Balkanturist Hotel at No. 16 "1 May" Street, and No. 2 located on Stalin Boulevard. Other restaurants include the "Garata" Restaurant at the main railroad station; the "Moskva" Restaurant at the Seaside Casino; the "1 May" Restaurant on "1 May" Street;* the "Varshava" Restaurant at No. 68 "1 May" Street; and the "Svoboda" Restaurant at No. 1 "Svoboda" Square. The "Moskva" Restaurant and the Balkanturist Restaurant No. 1 are apparently the most popular restaurants in Burgas.

*This restaurant is listed twice in the 1956 Burgas Telephone Directory. The address is given as No. 54 "1 May" Street in the first entry and No. 64 "1 May" Street in the second.

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Dining facilities are probably available at the various hotels in Burgas, including the "Balkan" Hotel at No. 3 Georgi Dimitrov Square; the "Bulgaria" Hotel at No. 3 Tsar Krum Street; the "Odessa" Hotel at No. 12 "1 May" Street; the "Czechoslovakia" Hotel at No. 2 "1 May" Street; and the "9 September" Hotel at No. 75 "9 September" Street. In addition, several confectionery shops* and taverns or beer houses are scattered throughout the city. The "Inter Club" located in the "Inflot" Building (Shipping Agency of the State Travel Enterprise) at No. 1 "1 May" Street is operated primarily for the benefit of sailors from foreign ships visiting Burgas.

C. Health and Sanitation

Medical facilities in Burgas include the Okrüg Hospital, City Hospital, Transportation Workers' Hospital, Military Hospital, and several polyclinics or dispensaries. The Burgas Okrüg Hospital, located on General Gurko Street in the eastern part of town, is reportedly a first-class installation with approximately 250 beds (map item 51). A branch of this hospital housing surgical and maternity sections is located nearby on "Kiril i Metodi" Street. The City Hospital consists of several small hospitals and clinics scattered about the city -- a children's section, internal diseases section, and laboratories located at No. 28 Tsar Krum Street (map item 15); a surgical section at No. 7 Tsar Petür Street; a gynecology section at No. 6 Tsar Krum Street; a lying-in hospital at No. 32 Aprilov Street; and a section for ambulatory patients in the Pobeda Quarter. The Transportation Workers' Hospital, which is small and relatively new, is located near the main railroad station. No details are available concerning the Military Hospital located at the northern edge of town (map item 54).

A health resort is located approximately 10 miles northwest of Burgas at Banya, where hot mineral springs are found.

In the past malaria was endemic in and around Burgas; however, antimalarial measures have reduced the danger to the point that malaria is no longer considered a serious problem.

As in other Bulgarian port cities, venereal diseases were prevalent in Burgas prior to World War II. No data are available concerning the present incidence of these diseases.

*Confectionery shops generally serve pastries, ice cream, and nonalcoholic beverages on the premises.

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D. Cultural and Recreational Facilities

The Sea Gardens along the bluffs at the eastern edge of town and the bathing beaches beneath them constitute Burgas' greatest recreational attraction. In 1956-57, a summer theater was reportedly under construction in a new park area immediately to the north of the Sea Gardens. Presumably it has been completed. The main theater in Burgas, People's Theater "Adriana Budevskia," is located on Tsar Asen Street adjoining the Court House (map item 25). Other cultural attractions are a puppet theater, three movie houses, a museum, a library, and an art gallery. Soccer is the principal spectator sport in the area, and there are two soccer fields in Burgas -- one (map item 19) on the western edge of town adjacent to the Sands Quarter and the other on the northern outskirts of town near the cemetery.

The only local newspaper published in Burgas is the Chernomorski Front, a Communist Party organ. Educational facilities available include the general public schools, a teachers' institute, a school of mining, and other technical schools.

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VIII. Climate

Burgas has a modified continental type of climate. Because of the moderating influence of the Black Sea the winter and autumn seasons are warmer, and spring and summer seasons cooler, than at inland points of comparable latitude. The mean daily minimum and maximum temperatures for January, the coldest month, are 29°F and 42°F, respectively. Temperatures seldom remain at or below freezing throughout the day on more than 7 days per year. Mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures for August, the warmest month, are 84°F and 62°F, respectively. Since the relative humidity is high -- averaging 68 to 87 percent -- throughout the year, the winter cold is likely to be more penetrating and the summer heat more oppressive than the temperature readings would lead one to expect. Water bodies in the vicinity of Burgas freeze only during occasional severe winters. Snowfall may be expected during the period from November through March and occurs on an average of 15 days a year, but the snow does not normally remain on the ground for more than 1 day after a storm. The total annual precipitation is low, averaging 22.24 inches, and has a fairly uniform distribution throughout the year. Precipitation is heaviest in June (3.22 inches), with a secondary peak in November-December. In August, the driest month, the mean rainfall amounts to 1.2 inches. Throughout the year, surface winds at Burgas may be characterized as light breezes. Particularly in summer, an alternation of land and sea breezes prevails. A northwesterly land breeze normally rises about midnight and, veering through northeast to southeast, continues until dawn. At dawn a southeasterly sea breeze develops and, veering through southwest to northwest, prevails during the day. Calm sets in about sunset. High winds or gales are infrequent even in winter. Fog may settle in on 3 to 5 days a month during the winter season.

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APPENDIX A

GAPS IN INTELLIGENCE

The lack of precise locational data constitutes a serious gap in intelligence on the city of Burgas. Dozens of street name changes have been made in Burgas during the post-World War II period; but neither comprehensive lists giving the old and new names nor town plans showing the present street names are available. Therefore, even though street addresses for many installations are listed in the 1956 Burgas Telephone Directory, many of these installations cannot be plotted on a map with any assurance of accuracy. Even when streets can be identified, lack of information concerning the street numbering system may preclude determining the actual block in which a given address falls; additional reference data -- such as building descriptions, sketch maps, or location in terms of known landmarks -- are usually necessary for pinpointing specific installations on a map.

Numerous reports have been received concerning the port facilities of Burgas, but few deal with the city proper. Gaps in intelligence are particularly sizable on subjects such as population characteristics, intra-city transportation and communication facilities, the extent and adequacy of public utilities, and the specific identification and location of security and military units in the Burgas area.

Available ground photos are poor in quality and cover little other than the waterfront and bathing beaches.

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APPENDIX B

SOURCE REFERENCES

Sources utilized for this study include (1) various interrogation reports of persons who have visited the city or port area since World War II; (2) articles by Bulgarian and Russian geographers in recent geographic publications that present a general description of the city; (3) the National Intelligence Survey (NIS); (4) the Signal Corps Intelligence Study on Bulgaria for telecommunications data; (5) the 1958 official Bulgarian timetable for railroad, air, and water transportation, and the 1956 Burgas telephone directory; (6) various port and town plans (both pre-World War II and post-World War II), as well as memory sketch maps prepared by persons visiting Burgas in recent years, and (7) aerial photographs that were taken in 1943-44.

The following list of references does not include all the items used as background material. It does, however, include the chief sources of specific information used throughout the report. Evaluations following classification entries are those appearing on the cited documents and have the following significance:

<u>Source of Information</u>	<u>Information</u>
A - Completely reliable	1 - Confirmed by other sources
B - Usually reliable	2 - Probably true
C - Fairly reliable	3 - Possibly true
D - Not usually reliable	4 - Doubtful
E - Not reliable	5 - Probably false
F - Cannot be judged	6 - Cannot be judged

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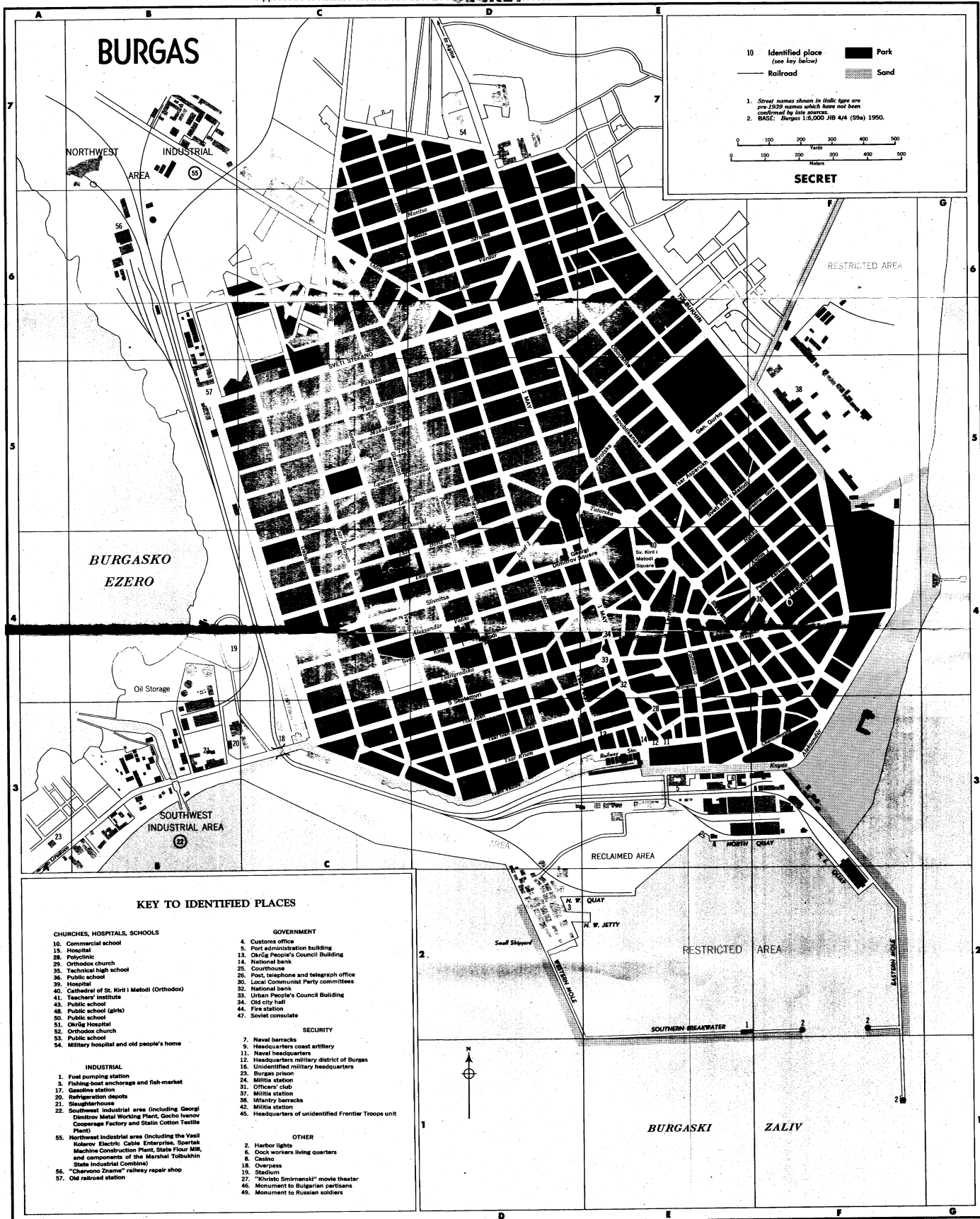
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