



International Boundary Study

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Bulgaria - Turkey Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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BULGARIA - TURKEY BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Bulgaria - Turkey Boundary is 149 miles (239.5 kms.) in length and is demarcated.¹ Beginning at the mouth of the Rezovska (Rezvaya) River on the Black Sea, the boundary follows the river a distance of 41 miles (66 kms.) to the confluence of the Pirogu and Deledzhi (Deliva) Rivers. The boundary then follows the course of the Deliva in a generally northwesterly direction a distance of 9.5 miles (15.25 kms.) where it leaves the river. The line continues in a northwesterly direction along ridges demarcated by boundary pillars a distance of 10.8 miles (15.75 kms.) to the Golema (Veleka) stream. The Golema forms the boundary for 1.2 miles which then follows land markers in a generally southwesterly direction a distance of about 59.3 miles (95.5 kms.) to the Tunca (Tundzha) River. Continuing southward in the Tunca for 7.5 miles (12 kms.), the boundary leaves the Tunca at boundary marker 280 following southwestward, then westward on land for 11.6 miles (18.75 kms.) to a tributary of the Kalamitsa River, thence continues on the Kalamitsa a distance of 5.4 miles (8.75 kms.), and follows a final straight line segment of 3.4 miles (5.5 kms.) southeastward to the Greek tripoint on the Maritsa River.

The boundary and location of the pillars are shown on sheets 1 through 14 of La Commission de Delimitation de la Frontiere Greco - Bulgare (Turkiye - Bulgaristan Hududu) drawn by the official boundary demarcation commission of 1921.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Political Geography

The Bulgaria - Turkey Boundary like that between Turkey and Greece² centers on control of the key landbridge connecting Europe and Asia known as the Straits. The boundary region's strategic importance recognized and fought over since ancient times has not only involved interests of all countries in the vicinity but also the rival interests of the Great Powers.

1. Early History

In the first century A.D. the boundary area was a part of the Roman Empire which controlled the entire Balkan Peninsula. During nearly three centuries of Roman rule the area prospered, until progressively increasing numbers of "barbarians" assaulted the frontier outposts of the Empire.

The defeat of the "barbarians" in the historic battle of Adrianople (Edirne) in 378 A.D. on the Maritsa was a major victory in Rome's struggle to maintain the empire's frontier on

¹ Measured in the Office of the Geographer on the official 1:25,000 maps of the Boundary Commission.

² See International Boundary Study No. 41, Greece - Turkey Boundary, November 23, 1964.

the Danube River. Nevertheless, the entire Balkan region soon was occupied by Gothic and other Teutonic tribes. Great Slavic invasions commenced in the sixth century. Crossing the Danube, they later occupied the entire Balkans in such numbers as to give a Slavic character to the Peninsula.

The Asiatic Bulgars believed to have arrived in the area about the same time as the Slavs gradually merged with the Slavic peoples. By 670 A.D. the Bulgars established themselves south of the Danube around Varna. While conquering, the Bulgars were absorbed by the more numerous Slavs, adopting the culture and language while retaining their own name and political organization.

Until the Turkish conquests of the Balkans in the fourteenth century, the fate of Bulgaria varied according to the relative strengths and weaknesses of its rulers, and that of the Byzantine Empire headquartered at Constantinople.

2. Ottoman Period

The Ottoman Turks crossed the Dardanelles about the middle of the fourteenth century to commence an energetic campaign against the declining Byzantine Empire. Adrianople, a key city on the land bridge, captured in 1361, became the Ottoman capital; Plovdiv (Philippopolis) was taken in 1364, and Sofia in 1384. In 1389, the Turks defeated the Serbs, their Rumanian allies, as well as the Bulgarians. Constantinople itself withstood Turkish onslaughts until 1453.

Bulgaria remained under Turkish domination until the Russo - Turkish Wars of 1877 - 78 when Russian forces advanced to Chatalja near the Bosphorus. She then became an autonomous tributary of the Turkish Sultan. While the Powers at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 limited the expansive proportions that Russia desired ceded to Bulgaria in the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878), the Treaty of Berlin (July 13, 1878) established a compact State of Bulgaria extending from the Balkan Mountains to the Danube River. Bulgaria's subject status under the Ottoman Sultan remained.

Political and territorial change quickened in the years preceding World War 1. Within Turkey, there was increasing demand for governmental reform and elimination of cumbersome Ottoman administrative machinery. In the Balkan provinces, growing forces of nationalism and independence, accelerated by increasing rivalries among the European Powers seeking to eliminate the "sick man" from Europe, all converged toward political collision. In 1908, Bulgarian Prince Ferdinand, taking advantage of the Young Turk revolution which rendered the Turkish Porte temporarily powerless, proclaimed himself Czar of independent Bulgaria.

3. The Balkan Wars

Bulgaria's independence whetted and magnified memories of the Bulgarian Empire in medieval times. A secret treaty with Serbia, followed by similar agreements with Greece and Montenegro committed the Balkan Allies to drive Turkey out of the Balkans. Arrangements were made while Turkey was at war with Italy (1911 - 1912) which ended

with Turkey enfeebled. In October 1912, the First Balkan War began, shortly thereafter the Bulgarian Army took Mustapha Pasha (Svlingrad) and Kirk Kilisse (Kirklareli), and in March 1913 captured Adrianople itself. The Turkish Army retreated to within twenty-five miles of Constantinople to the Chatalja defense line, thus reducing European Turkey to the Chatalja and Gallipoli peninsulas.

However, the success of the Balkan League countries exposed their separate ambitions. In the ensuing Treaty of London (May 30, 1913) between Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, on the one part, and Turkey on the other, all territory west of a line drawn from Enos (Enez) on the Aegean to Midia (Midye) on the Black Sea was relinquished by Turkey.

The fighting against Turkey ended; the Balkan Allies turned against each other. Bulgaria's claims included in the earlier secret agreements were frustrated by Serbia and Greece. As a result Bulgaria attacked the Serbian and Greek Armies along the Macedonian frontier in June. Thereupon began the short but intense Second Balkan War, in which Turkey and Rumania joined Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, against Bulgaria. With Bulgaria fighting on nearly all flanks, Turkey recaptured Adrianople easily. An armistice took place in July and a Treaty of Peace was signed at Bucharest on August 10, 1913 between Bulgaria and her former Allies. A separate treaty with Turkey was signed at Constantinople on September 29, 1913.

Territorial changes as a result of the Second Balkan War moved the Turkish - Bulgarian boundary westward to the Maritsa. Bulgaria lost Adrianople. Her long vaunted claim to an outlet on the Aegean became limited to about a seventy mile strip west of the Maritsa River, which included the port of Dedeagatch.

4. World War I

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Balkan Wars nurtured bitterness and a desire for vengeance among the Balkan States. Bulgaria found its chance to retaliate by siding with Turkey and the Central Powers in October 1915. The decision was made easier by Turkey's cession to Bulgaria of territory around Uskudar (Shtit) and moving the rest of the 1913 boundary to about one mile east of the Maritsa (Treaty of Sofia, September 6, 1915). Confining her military operations to the Serbian and Greek frontiers, Bulgaria became the thoroughfare between the Danube and the Bosphorus for German reinforcements to Turkey. Bulgaria was defeated following the final Balkan drive of the Allied Armies in October 1918.

The Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, November 27, 1919 ended Bulgaria's part in World War I. As a result, Bulgaria was cut off from the Aegean. An economic outlet in the form of transit rights through Thrace to the Aegean was ensured by the Allied and Associated powers. The conditions of the guarantee were to be fixed at a later date. However, when the subject was raised in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Bulgaria rejected the offer of transit rights at the port of Dedeagatch (Alexandroupolis).

B. Physiographic

The Bulgaria - Turkey boundary region is located in the southeastern extremity of the Balkan Peninsula. From the north on the Bulgarian side, the chief physiographic feature is a large mountainous area in the shape of a C which faces the Black Sea. The northern arc of the C which forms the Balkan Range, is also called the Stara Planina. The western arc consists of the massive Rila Mountains whose highest peak of 9,597 feet is the highest point of East Central Europe. The southern arc forms the Rhodope Mountains which fan into several broken dissected ranges. Within the arc is the fertile Rumelian basin drained by the Maritsa River which flows to the Aegean Sea.

On the southern Turkish side of the boundary, the Rhodope form the Istranca Mountains extending in a broken line southeastward toward the Black Sea. However, the Istranca, which are generally low lying mountains, gradually rise to form an almost inaccessible wall parallel to the Black Sea coast as far as the Chatalja Peninsula. On the southwestern side, the Istranca descend gradually and irregularly toward the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean. Most of the 9,000 square miles of European Turkey, about 3 percent of the total area of Turkey, is relatively fertile land.

The historic land route between the European heartland and the Orient passes through intensive agricultural lands of the Maritsa in Bulgaria. Plovdiv (Philippopolis) in the center of the Maritsa valley, and Sofia the Bulgarian capital are important cities along this route. The main lines of communication and transport after crossing the tangled Balkan ranges converge at Edime (Adrianople) which is near the Greek boundary tripoint. From there the lines of communication run southeasterly toward Istanbul and Anatolia.

The chief physical feature of the immediate boundary area is the Istranca mountain system which is covered with forest, except in the valleys and on the few high peaks. The trees are chiefly oak and beech and some pine. The bulk of the hill country is covered only with scrub which is difficult to traverse. On the high slopes, the granite forms a rough broken surface. The valleys afford some cultivation and pasturage. Other than several tracks or trails, only one all weather road crosses the boundary in the northern Istranca. This road which connects Kirklareli, Turkey and Malko Turnovo, Bulgaria, continues to the Black Sea port of Burgas.

Climate

Climate in the boundary area ranges between continental and Mediterranean. The Balkan Mountains in the north, standing as a barrier between the northerly winds of the European continent and the winds from the Mediterranean and the south, affect the nature of the climate. During the summer months the plains area on the south side, under the shadow of the Balkans from which warm and dry air currents descend after depositing much of their moisture on the northern slopes, enjoys a warm sub-tropical climate.

The cold, dry conditions which prevail on the Russian steppes in the winter months frequently extend to the Balkan peninsula, accounting for the moderate rainfall and low temperature then experienced. Average monthly precipitation during the winter rainy season is between 3 and 4 inches while that of the dry summer months does not exceed 2 inches. Temperature ranges between the mean minimum of 36° in January to the mean maximum of 86° in July or August.

C. Ethnography

Much like the topography, ethnography in the boundary area is marked by complexity and change. This can be understood readily when one recalls the number and variety of peoples that have vied with one another. In ancient times the region was inhabited by Thracian - Illyrians who probably were absorbed by the great Slavic immigrations which took place in increasing numbers from the third through the seventh centuries. The Bulgars, although reluctant to concede that Slavs preceded them, are known to have settled south of the Danube in the seventh century. Like the Huns and the Avars who preceded them (Goths and other Teutons also preceded them) and like the Magyars and the Turks who followed them, the Bulgars, classified as Turanian, Mongol, or Tatar, are of Ural - Altaic origin.

The Ottoman Period

Following the Ottoman Turkish crossing of the Straits in the fourteenth century and the conquest of the Balkans, the Ottoman social and political pattern was imprinted on the ethnographic map. During five centuries of Ottoman rule, the map included Bulgar, Turk, Serb, Macedonian, Greeks, Gypsies, Vlachs, Armenians, Russians, Jews, Albanians, Circasians and others. The term "Balkanization" is an apt description of this ethnographic puzzle. Despite its complexity, however, society and politics, inseparable in Ottoman times, fitted an over-all pattern that could be described as an ethnic mosaic.

While the Empire was in ascendancy, a steady migration of varied peoples from Asian lands moved into the Balkans and to the outer European boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. As the Empire declined the migrations reversed direction.

Population figures in Ottoman times vary considerably in validity. However, the 1910 Census estimate for Bulgaria is as follows:

Total Population: 4,337,516			
Bulgars	3,203,810	Jews	37,663
Turks	488,010	Armenians	12,270
Rumanian	75,773	Germans	3,863
Gypsies	98,004	Russians	3,275
Greeks	63,487	Others	61,690
Pomaks	26,000		

At this time the number of Turks in the Maritsa and Tunca valleys and in eastern Rumelia was probably about half the total population. The Balkan Wars, however,

brought about sharp changes in the human landscape in the Bulgaria - Turkey, as well as the Greek frontier.

Before the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912, the relative proportion of ethnic grouping in European Turkey, that is, east of the Maritsa and south of the Rezvaya, is estimated as 65% Turkish, 24% Greek, and about 10% Bulgar. Armenians lived principally in the larger cities -- perhaps 200,000 in Istanbul (Constantinople), 9,000 at Adrianople and perhaps 1,000 to 2,000 in a few other cities. In the towns, however, Turks formed only about one-third of the population, Greeks made up about one-half of the maritime towns on the Aegean and the Straits. The Bulgars occupied Adrianople, perhaps 100,000, and extended eastward adjoining the mass of Turkish population.

At the outbreak of the First Balkan War (1912 - 13) most of the Bulgarian population was driven out of Eastern Thrace, although a few were allowed to remain in Adrianople and Kırklareli. In addition, about 60,000 of the Greek population, which may have numbered 200,000 in 1912 emigrated west of the Maritsa by August 1914.

The void caused by emigration became partially filled by immigration of Turks, Pomaks, and other Muslims from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and Greece, all territories formerly part of Ottoman Turkey. In Bulgaria, population increased about 400,000 to 4,753,000 between 1910 and 1914. This two-way movement of population across the boundary was well under way before World War I, and before the new Turkish Republic avowed a vigorous policy of Turkification including an aggressive effort to erase all Ottoman patterns.

More recently, in 1950, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, reflecting the political tensions existing between the Soviet Bloc and the Free World, expelled 250,000, nearly one-third of the Turkish population.

The Present Scene

Today, most traces of the ethnographic mosaic of Ottoman times are erased. On the Turkish side of the boundary, the population based on the census estimate of 1960, is 2,284,621. The area is essentially homogeneous, consisting of Turks, but including the Turkified Muslims of Bulgarian extraction called Pomaks. The Greek population has been reduced to about 60,000 Turkish citizens and about 4,000 Greek citizens living in Istanbul.

In Bulgaria, the population as of the 1956 census estimate was as follows:

Total Population:	7,613,709
Bulgars	6,506,541
Turks	662,018
Gypsies	197,865
Macedonians	187,789
Armenians	22,000
Russians	10,551
Greeks	7,500
Jews	6,029
Others	13,406

Within proximity of the boundary area itself, the combined population of the three first order divisions or districts (Okrug) of Burgas, Starazagora, and Khaskovo, all of which border the Turkish frontier, was 1,666,797. This figure included 1,355,470 Bulgars and 251,831 Turks or a ratio of 5 Bulgars to one Turk.

The Bulgarian Yearbook for 1963 gives the total population for Bulgaria as 8,111,100 and that of the three frontier districts as 1,013,900. A breakdown of population according to minorities is unavailable.

III. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The Bulgaria - Turkey boundary was last defined in the Treaty of Lausanne of July 24, 1923. With the exception of the fixing of the Greek tripoint, it is as demarcated in 1921 by La Commission de Delimitation de la Frontiere Greco - Bulgare as stipulated in the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine of November 27, 1919. The entire boundary is essentially that formed by the Treaty of Constantinople of September 29, 1913, between Bulgaria and Turkey including the revision according to the Treaty of Sofia of September 6, 1915. The Treaty of Lausanne confirmed the entire boundary and prescribed the tripoint which finally was fixed on the Maritsa River by a demarcation commission in 1926.³

The Treaty of Peace between Bulgaria and Turkey (Treaty of Constantinople) of September 29, 1913 described the boundary as follows:

ARTICLE I. The Frontier

The frontier between the two countries commences at the mouth of the river Rezvaja, south of the Monastery of San Ivan, which is located on the Black Sea; it follows the course of this river as far as the confluence of the rivers Pirogu and Deliva, to the west of Kamila-Koj. Between the mouth and the point of confluence above-mentioned the river Rezvaja, starting from its mouth, follows first a southwesterly direction and, leaving Placa to Turkey, forms a bend and goes towards the northwest and then towards

³ Ibid.

the southwest; the villages of Madzura and Pirgoplo remain in Ottoman territory. The river Rezvaja, after having followed a southerly direction beginning at Pirogoplo and for a distance of approximately five and a half kilometers, turns towards the west and the north and then goes along, slightly curved towards the north, in a generally western direction. In this portion, the villages of Likudi and Kladara remain in Bulgarian territory, and the villages of Ciknigori, Mavrodio and Lafva return to Turkey; then the frontier, always following the Rezvaja river, leaves Torfu - Ciflik to Bulgaria, goes towards the southeast and, leaving the village of Kamila-Kojin Ottoman territory, arrives at a point about four hundred meters to the west of this village, at the point of confluence of the rivers Pirogu and Deliva.

Starting from the junction point of the rivers Pirogu and Deliva, the frontier line follows the course of the Deliva, and extending along this river in a general northwesterly direction, leaves the villages of Paspala, Kandildzik and Deli to Turkey and ends east of Souk - Sou; this last-named village remains to Turkey, while Seveligu goes to Bulgaria. After having passed between Souk - Sou and Seveligu, the frontier line continues in a northwesterly direction, following the ridge which passes over hills 687, 619, and 563; beyond hill 563 it leaves the village of Caglaik (Cajirlik) in Ottoman territory, and passing around this last village three kilometers to its east and north, it reaches the Golema stream. The frontier follows the course of the Golema for a distance of about two kilometers and reaches the junction point of this stream and the other branch of the same river, which comes from the south from Karabanlar); beginning at this confluence the frontier line passes along the ridge to the north of the stream coming from Turk-Alatli and arrives at the old Turco - Bulgarian frontier.

The junction point of the new line and the old frontier is four kilometers east of Turk-Alatli, at the point where the ancient Turco - Bulgarian frontier forms an angle towards the north in the direction of Aykiri-yol.

Starting at this point it exactly follows the former Turco - Bulgarian frontier as far as Balaban - Basi west of the Toundja and north of the village of Derviska - Mog.

At the point where the 1913 boundary crossed the Tunca River, south of the Bulgarian town of Radovets (Konstantinovo, Tatar-keuy), the line was revised by the Treaty of Sofia, September 6, 1915. The new line turned southward on the Tunca a distance of 7.5 miles (12 kms.). Markers numbered 279 are placed on both sides of the Tunca where the boundary follows the river and again double markers numbered 280 where the line departs from the Tunca. The boundary follows southwestward a distance of 5.4 miles, thence due westward from marker numbered 289 following a distance of six miles to a tributary of the Kalamitsa river, leaving the towns of Pachama-hale and Uskudar

(Shtit) to Bulgaria. The boundary follows the Kalamitsa a distance of 5.4 miles to marker number 315, thence follows a final straight line segment of 3.4 miles southeastward to terminal marker number 320 and the Greek tripoint on the Maritsa River.

IV. TREATIES AND OTHER ACTS

The following treaties pertain directly to the present Bulgaria - Turkey boundary:

A. Treaty of Peace Between Bulgaria and Turkey, signed at Constantinople, September 16/29, 1913.

Article I, defines the Bulgaria - Turkey frontier.

The Treaty of Constantinople, and the Treaty of Bucharest, signed on August 10, 1913 between Bulgaria and Greece, Serbia, Rumania, and Montenegro ended the Second Balkan War.

B. Convention between Bulgaria and Turkey for the Rectification of the Frontier between the two Countries, signed at Sofia, August 24 (September 6), 1915.

This treaty revised the 1913 boundary by a cession of Turkish territory around Uskudar to a line about one mile east of the Maritsa River.

C. Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria, signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine, November 27, 1919.

This treaty defined the boundary according to the Treaty of Constantinople of 1913 and the Treaty of Sofia of 1915, excluded Bulgaria from the Aegean and provided for the formation of an international boundary demarcation commission.

D. La Commission de Delimitation de la Frontiere Greco - Bulgare, 1921.

This commission established according to the Treaty of Neuilly, delimited and demarcated the entire Bulgaria - Turkey boundary.

E. Treaty of Lausanne between Turkey and various Allied Powers, signed at Lausanne, July 24, 1923.

The Treaty of Lausanne defined the tripoint with Greece, which finally was fixed on the Maritsa River by a demarcation commission in 1926. The Treaty also confirmed the boundary as demarcated in 1921.

F. Treaty of Paris, February 10, 1947.

This treaty confirmed all Bulgarian frontiers "which existed on 1 January 1941."

V. SUMMARY

The Bulgaria - Turkey Boundary is 149 miles (239.5 kms.) in length, comprises 64 miles in water and 85 miles on land. The entire boundary is demarcated; 320 intervisible boundary pillars are erected on the segments on land. There are no active disputes known to exist regarding the specific alignment of the boundary. However, the possibility of boundary friction persists.

Location of the boundary markers are shown on Sheets 1 through 14 of La Commission de Delimitation de la Frontiere Greco - Bulgare (Turkiye - Bulgaristan Hududu) 1:25,000, prepared by the official Boundary Commission of 1921. For a large scale depiction of the boundary, this series is recommended. An accurate representation of the boundary is found on Army Map Service 1:50,000 scale (Series M704) Sheets 4378 I, 4378 IV, 4379 III, 4278 I, 4279 II, 4279 III, 4179 II, 4178 I, 4178 IV, 4078 I, and 2624 II (M-708). A small-scale depiction of the boundary on a single sheet (also includes the Greece - Turkey boundary) is found on Army Map Service 1:1,000,000 scale (series 1301) sheet NK-35.

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Geographer, Office of Research in Economics and Science, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of Bureau of the Budget Circular No. A-16.

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