



International Boundary Study

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Bulgaria – Romania (*Rumania*) Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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BULGARIA – ROMANIA (RUMANIA) BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Bulgaria - Rumania boundary extends for 378 miles from the Yugoslav tripoint at the confluence of the Timok and Danube Rivers in the west to the Black Sea in the east. For 294 miles, the boundary follows a set course in the Danube River. The remaining demarcated sector of 84 miles divides Dobrudja into northern (Rumanian) and southern (Bulgarian) sectors. No active disputes over the precise alignment are known.

II. GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

A. Physical

The international boundary between Bulgaria and Rumania traverses the lower Danube plains in the west and the plateau of Dobrudja in the east.

The lower Danube plains, often referred to as the Balkan Foreland in Bulgaria, are formed essentially by horizontal sedimentary strata overlaying a limestone base. In general, elevations decrease from west to east although marked variations in heights exist locally owing to active stream erosion. The surface cover comprises alluvial deposits interspersed with large areas of loess, a fine, wind-blown soil usually of considerably fertility. The Danube River, however, dominates the frontier area. In the 294 mile sector where it forms the boundary, the river varies in width from about 500 yards to about 3,000 yards. The minimum width is situated in the west while the maximum width is attained in several places along the middle and lower course of the river. Islands are found throughout the entire length.

The Rumanian bank of the Danube is generally low and is marked by a continuous series of shallow lagoons, aligned parallel to the river. They vary from a few miles to over nine miles in length. From the lagoons the banks slope gently upward to elevations of several hundred feet at distances of 10 to 20 miles from the Danube. In contrast, the Bulgarian bank possesses few lagoons and the greatest measures only 4.5 miles in length. Furthermore, the right bank is formed, for the most part, by sheer loess cliffs rising about 500 feet above the normal river level.

Seasonal fluctuations in the level of the river measure approximately 25 feet. The highest level ordinarily is attained in June and during this month most of the Danube's approximately 90 islands are flooded. The river, in addition, normally expands to include the lagoons. The seasonal low water level normally occurs in the early fall. The main navigational channel, however, remains closer to the Rumanian than to the Bulgarian shore during both periods.

The Dobrudja, situated between the lower Danube and the Black Sea, is a low, limestone plateau with elevations of more than 600 feet. The surface is very dry and covered with a shallow accumulation of loess. As a consequence, the steppe-like natural vegetation reflects the aridity of the soil.

Climatically, the frontier region resembles the interior plains region of the United States. Mean annual temperatures range between 50° and 53° F. Winter mean temperatures are between 25° and 30° F. and the Danube normally freezes over about three years out of every four with a considerable variation in the duration of the ice. Summer means range between 68° and 72° F. Average annual precipitation ranges between 20 and 30 inches with the maximum falling in the west and the minimum in the vicinity of the Black Sea. The annual rainfall is relatively well distributed with the normal maxima occurring in early summer (May - July) and minima in the winter (January - February). No month is without precipitation.

B. Historical

In the 4th century B.C., Alexander extended his domain to the Danube while subjugating the Thracian tribes of the upper Balkans. Although the possession of this territory was short-lived, the Danube, in a modern sense, became an "international boundary" for the first time. The Romans, in the 1st century B.C., conquered Moesia (Bulgaria north of the Balkan Mountains) and incorporated it into the empire and, for two centuries, the Danube again served as an important boundary. In 107 A.D. Trajan advanced across the river and conquered Dacia, laying the foundations for modern Rumania.

With the division of the Roman Empire into western and eastern sectors in 395, the Balkans became the frontier of the Eastern Empire with the Danube again, as a result of the loss of Dacia, the international boundary. Great forces were exerted on this frontier. Goths, Huns, and Avars, abandoning their traditional territory on the Asiatic steppes, migrated to the Balkans. These tribes raided and plundered the frontiers, often in alliance with Constantinople, more often in opposition. Furthermore, about 500 A.D., the Slavs, who inhabited the plains between the Oder and the Volga Rivers, also moved southwards to the Danube. Disease and the "barbarian" raids had depopulated great areas of Dacia and Moesia by the end of the 6th century. At first, most of the barbarians lived north of the Danubian boundary although isolated tribes began to settle in the vacated and devastated lands. Within a century they effectively occupied the region of Moesia.

In the 7th century, Asiatic Bulgars, closely related to the Huns and Avars, abandoned their lands in the lower Volga to move westward. They crossed the Danube in 660 A.D. and conquered the unorganized Slavs. In the following years of alternating peace and plunder, the Bulgars had become absorbed and thoroughly Slavized. Converted to Orthodox Christianity, the Bulgarians established several extensive, prosperous, but short-lived kingdoms. They, in turn, were attacked by the Magyars who were allied temporarily with the eastern empire. By 1016, Bulgaria had been reconquered by Constantinople and the Magyars had settled in the Pannonian basin to the northwest.

In the 12th century, the Rumanian peoples began to appear as a force north of the Danube. They constitute a unique group in the ethnographic mosaic of the Balkans. Formed originally by an amalgamation of peoples Roman colonists and local Dacians - they have been able to perpetuate their Latin language and heritage in spite of the flood of invaders after the collapse of Roman authority. The Rumanians had withdrawn into the protecting fastness of the Carpathians to re-emerge, relatively intact, after the pressures ebbed.

After several centuries of turmoil and changing fortunes, the Balkans fell to the Turkish sultanate in 1460. The Rumanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia became Turkish suzerainties while Bulgaria was administered directly as part of the empire. Local, social, political, and economic institutions were abolished and Bulgarian civilization was virtually eradicated.

A slow decline in the power of the Ottoman empire followed, coupled with a rise in the fortunes of Austria and Russia. A series of wars were fought and the "Eastern Question" of the Balkans threatened European stability. The Question occupied a considerable amount of energy and time of the great powers as each attempted to exert or expand its influence in the region. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Balkans were the focus of European rivalries and power politics. The term "Balkanization" became synonymous with fractionalization into small political entities often, by connotation, as a consequence of foreign interference.

In 1859, the Rumanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia elected a common prince and two years later, they coalesced as a single state. Rumanian independence of Turkey was recognized in 1878 by the Congress of Berlin. This same Congress created the Principality of Bulgaria under Turkish suzerainty. The final agreement also transferred northern Dobrudja to Rumania in exchange for the cession of Bessarabia to Russia. The Dobrudjan boundary created by the powers is essentially the boundary of today.

The Congress of Berlin, however, left many questions unanswered. Bulgarian nationalism has been awakened with the earlier creation of Greater Bulgaria by the Treaty of San Stefano. The actions of Berlin in paring down Bulgaria's size produced in the country a feeling of frustration. Since the major territorial losses were in the south and west, nationalistic ambitions were directed in that direction, towards eastern Rumelia, Macedonia, and Thrace. Thus in spite of the wars and political activity of the next 35 years, the Bulgaria - Rumania boundary remained unaffected. Bulgaria annexed Eastern Rumelia in 1885 and became independent in 1908. The First Balkan War ended in the total defeat of Turkey but the victors failed to agree on the partition of the spoils. Bulgaria, desiring a greater portion of Macedonia, attacked her former allies beginning the Second Balkan War. However, Turkey and Rumania joined in defeating an aggressive Bulgaria. In the treaty which followed, Bulgaria ceded southern Dobrudja to Rumania.

In World War I, Bulgaria sided with the Central Powers and Rumania with the Allied Powers. The ultimate collapse of the Central Powers, however, did not affect the boundary

which was defined by the Treaty of Neuilly as the land "frontier existing on August 1, 1914" to the Danube and then the principal channel of navigation westward to the Timok. (However, for a brief period between the defeat of Allied Rumania and the ultimate defeat of the Central Powers a few months later, Bulgaria briefly regained parts of her lost Dobrudjan territory.) Between the wars, the Dobrudja boundary served as a source of considerable conflict between the two states. In an effort to strengthen its claims, Rumania attempted to colonize southern Dobrudja with Rumanian settlers. Also in the 1930s, more than 45,000 Turks living in Rumania--chiefly from southern Dobrudja-- were returned to Turkey. The dream of colonization ended in 1940 with the Treaty of Craiova, a result of Axis mediation and pressure, as southern Dobrudja was restored to Bulgaria. A program of repatriation followed involving a wholesale exchange of Bulgarian and Rumanian settlers between the northern and southern sectors of Dobrudja. At the same time, the small ethnic German population was evacuated from both sectors. The net result of the movement of population has been to reduce the ethnic diversity of the area as well as to produce a much more sharply defined ethnic boundary between the Rumanian and Bulgarian populations.

The present boundary, partly because it is a more precise ethnic divide, no longer appears to be a major source of potential disagreement.

C. Communications

The Danube serves as an effective barrier for communications between the two states. At Giurgiu - Ruse, a double-deck bridge spans the river for both road and rail traffic. A few ferries provide weak links elsewhere along the river. However, in Dobrudja, three major routes cross the frontier: a) Silistra-Ostrov, b) Negru-Voda - Kardam, and c) Mangalia - Shabla, paralleling the coast. The first and third involve all-weather roads only while the second route includes road and rail lines.

III. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

For the 294 miles which the boundary follows the Danube, the thalweg, or the principal channel of navigation, serves as the line of demarcation. This channel, for the most part, tends to be closer to the Rumania than to the Bulgarian shore. The results of recent hydrographic surveys of the river are not available and hence the position of the thalweg cannot be described with certainty; however, no evidence has been presented for a significant change in position.

At Silistra, the boundary departs from the Danube and it "makes a slight inflected curve, and goes toward the south as far as half-way down the slope of the second spur of the height of Arab-Tabiassi (Arab Tabia), thence it goes down that slope at a right angle, crosses the ravine to ascend directly the summit-line of the first spur of the said height, leaving Arab-Tabiassi to Roumania. It continues in the same direction as near as possible from north to south, until it meets the Karaorman road, at a place where the path leading to the village of Almaly (Almalau) turns off. From that place as far as landmark No. 5 ... the

frontier is formed by the eastern side of the Karaorman road, which will thus belong in its integrity to Bulgaria."¹ From this point, the boundary extends generally east-southeastward in a series of straight lines to a point on the Black Sea coast approximately 8 kilometers south of the center of Mangalia.

IV. TREATIES AND OTHER ACTS

A. Treaty to modify the Treaty of San Stefano signed in Berlin on July 13, 1878 (by Austria - Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and Turkey) with ratifications exchanged on August 3, 1878. (British and Foreign State Papers, 69:749)

The so-called Congress of Berlin modified the San Stefano treaty which ended the Russo - Turkish War. It granted independence to Rumania and nominal independence to the Principality of Bulgaria. According to Article XLVI, the boundary in Dobrudja was defined as "a line starting from the east of Silistria and terminating on the Black Sea, south of Mangalia." It also stated "The frontier line shall be determined on the spot by the European Commission appointed for the delimitation of Bulgaria."

B. Act of the European Commission...defining the Boundary between Roumania and Bulgaria... signed at Constantinople, December 17, 1878. (Hertslet, Map of Europe by Treaty, Vol. IV., p. 2825)

The precise trace of the boundary was delimited by text, survey tables, and a large-scale, 1:30,000 map. In section 5, the text states "between the two connecting points defined in the previous articles, the demarcation of the frontier is, as a rule, affected according to the natural irregularities of the ground easy to recognize, and deviating as little as possible from the straight line which joins the two extreme points."

C. Exchange of Notes between the Representatives of the Powers Parties to the Treaty of Berlin sanctioning various Acts elaborated by Boundary Commissions, August - September 1880 including Modifications made in the 6th and 7th Articles of the Act of December 17, 1878, defining the Roumano - Bulgaria Frontier drawn up by the Boundary Commission (ibid., p. 2996)

The Modification... altered the original boundary near Silistra in favor of Bulgaria to maintain Silistra - Karaorman road within Bulgaria.

D. Treaty of Peace signed at Bucharest on August 10, 1913 by Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, Rumania, and Serbia, with ratifications exchanged on August 25, 1913. (BFSP op. cit., 107:658)

¹ Modification made in the 6th and 7th Articles of the Act of December 17, 1878 defining the Rouman - Bulgarian Frontier...Hertslet, Map of Europe by Treaty, Vol. IV, London, 1891, p. 2996.

Ending the Second Balkan War, the treaty of peace transferred to Rumania the southern sector of Dobrudja. During World War I, Rumania, on the side of the Allied Powers, was forced to sue for peace. The Treaty of Bucharest (May 8, 1918) ceded to Bulgaria all of southern and part of northern Dobrudja. However, the ultimate defeat of the Central Powers soon invalidated this treaty.

E. Treaty of Neuilly signed on November 27, 1919 by the Allied Powers and Bulgaria.

Article 27 (5) fixed the boundary "From the Black Sea to the Danube, the frontier existing on August 1, 1914; thence to the confluence of the Timok and the Danube, the principal channel of navigation of the Danube upstream." This action returned the terrestrial boundary to the line of the 1913 treaty.

F. Treaty between Rumania and Bulgaria signed at Craiova on September 7, 1940 with Protocol, Declaration, Accords, Notes, etc. attached. (Monitorul Oficial (Partea I) Nr. 212, September 12, 1940.)

Article I states the boundary will be established according to the description in the attached protocol which forms an integral part of the treaty. The text of the protocol is annexed.

However, the intent of the treaty was to return to the 1902 boundary, i.e., the Treaty of Berlin line as modified, negating the annexation of southern Dobrudja after the Second Balkan War.

G. Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria signed in Paris, February 10, 1947 (United Nations Treaty Series, 41:52).

The Treaty of Paris confirmed all Bulgarian boundaries "which existed on 1 January 1914." The action confirmed the Treaty of Craiova and the Congress of Berlin boundary in Dobrudja.

Identical language is used in the Treaty of Peace with Rumania signed on the same day in respect to the Bulgarian - Rumanian boundary.

Negotiations which have taken place between the two countries since the end of World War II have been concerned with administrative and technical matters. An agreement in 1948 arranged for persons living in the frontier area to cross the boundary to visit relatives and a convention in 1950 provided for the maintenance of boundary markers.

V. SUMMARY

No apparent conflict between Bulgaria and Rumania over their common boundary has arisen in the postwar period. The boundary is essentially that established by the Congress of Berlin in 1878, as amended.

For small-scale map compilation, the 1:1,000,000 maps affixed to the 1947 treaties of peace with Rumania and Bulgaria may be used. For large-scale maps, the native Rumanian 1:100,000 series published after 1940 (many reprinted in German military editions) are the best sources. Extreme caution should be exercised in the area around Silistra for many series show the boundary incorrectly.

**PROTOCOL TO RUMANIAN - BULGARIAN ACCORD
SETTING FORTH NEW BORDER BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES**

Protocol to article I of the Treaty signed at Craiova on September 7, 1940

1) The new frontier will begin on the Danube, immediately downstream from Silistra, and will end on the Black Sea at a point situated approximately 8 kilometers south of Mangalia.

Between these two points a conventional line will be traced leaving (1:200,000 map):

To Bulgaria, on the one hand, the following villages: Kalipetrovo, Kara-Orman, Kranova, Kadi-Keui (Cadiul), Terz-Kundu (Tores-Cindu), Ketchi-Deresi (Paraul Caprei), Deliyusuf Kuyussu (Paduroni), Hassantchi (Asanesti), Dourassy, Enidje (Enigea-Haidar), Hissarlik, Tchifut-Kuyussu, Murfatche (Predel), Husseintche (Viceva) and Akandji (Valtoarea).

And to Rumania the following villages: Almaly, Essekeui, Karvan Mic, Karvan Mare, Velikeui, Kalaidji (Faurei), Redjebkuyussu (Tudor Vladimirescu), Teke Deresi (Valea, Tapului), Dobrimir (Dobrimir din Deal), Hissarlik (Cetatea), Hairankeui (Dumbraveni), Dokusagatch (Magura), Dere-keui (Cerchezul), Doulikeui (Darabani), Valaly (Valcelele), Kafikeui (Coroana) and Ilanik (Vama Veche).

2) A mixed commission, consisting of an equal number of representatives on behalf of each of the two High contracting parties, will begin establishing, on the spot, the day after the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the present Treaty, the line of the new frontier in accordance with the texts and sketches (on a scale of 1:150,000 and 1:30,000) compiled and signed on September 5, 1902 by the Mixed Rumanian - Bulgarian Commission at Mangalia.

Done at Craiova, in duplicate, on September 7, 1940.

For Rumania:

Alexandru Cretzianu

For Bulgaria:

Svetoslav Pomenov

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