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INFORMATION REPORT

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/The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for IAC dissemination in accordance with paragraph 3c of NSCID #7./

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1. At midnight on 13 Jun 55, as approached Batumskaya Bukhta (Batumi Bay), latitude 41°39' North, longitude 41°38' East, it was shadowed by two 50-foot Navy patrol boats /presumably Soviet/. When the ship was 20 miles from Batumi one of the escorting vessels flashed a course of 110° to the Embiricos. The vessel followed this course until 7:00 am, when she was ordered to stop at a point ten cables northwest of Batumi Light. /The point at which she was ordered to stop is Point 1 on an overlay of Batumskaya Bukhta. Batumi Light is Point 2 on the overlay At Point 1 on the overlay two women doctors came aboard (and they appeared to be "quacks"). They checked the ship's papers on the bridge while the crew mustered on the forecastle. A sanitary inspection was then carried out, after which the doctors returned to the bridge and then left the ship. An "all clear" pennant was hoisted and an elderly pilot boarded the vessel along a course of approximately 170°30' and secured at Point 3 on 14 Jun 55.

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2. The following day a strong northwesterly wind raised a heavy sea, and the ship was ordered to shift from Point 3 to Point 4 on the overlay. On being ordered to shift the Master asked for a tug and was told that the only seagoing tug was engaged in towing barges from Poti to Batumi, and would not arrive until the following day. The tug did arrive the next day. It was about 100 feet in length. it might have been a CHF 1-19, as described on page 332 of Jane's Fighting Ships, 1954-1955. The Leningrad, a passenger-cargo vessel painted white, about 16 thousand tons, was secured at Point 5 on the overlay. The northwesterly forced it to shift and anchor at Point 6, but apparently this was not satisfactory and the vessel put out to sea.

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3. On the evening of 16 Jun 55 returned to original berth at Point 3. On arrival the ship had a draft of 27 feet. The vessel discharged cargo by cranes onto Neftyanoy Mol, Point 7, and the cargo was then transported by trucks in the direction of Point 8. When the ship had been lightened to a draft of 21 feet it was shifted to Point 9.

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NAVY review

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At this point the remainder of the cargo of 99 hundred tons of raw sugar was discharged and taken into warehouses located at Point 10. While at Point 9 the vessel bunkered with 220 tons of petroleum which was supplied by barge as there are no petroleum lines on the quay. The cost of bunkering was US$16.75 a long ton. Stevedoring was extremely bad. The laborers were about 90 per cent Armenian, and the remainder were Soviets. About 90 per cent of them were women. The master [redacted] submitted a protest to the port authorities about the languid stevedoring, and the following day about 75 sailors from the local patrol vessels were engaged.

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4. The harbor of Batumskaya Bukhta (Batumi Bay) is composed of two bays (Gavans), Neftyanaya, Point 11, and the no-longer used Kabotazhnaya, Point 12. During the stay [redacted] in port, three passenger-cargo vessels were secured at Points 13 and 14. These vessels, the Leningrad, Rossia and Bruziya, were painted all white and were believed to be confined to the Black Sea area. The vessels seemed to be carrying principally general cargo and only a few passengers were seen embarking and disembarking.

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5. A boom defense is located across the harbor entrance from Point 15 to Point 16. The gate is left open at all times, however, it could probably be closed at a moment's notice. About a dozen small naval patrol boats of about 40 to 50 feet in length were located in the harbor. The principal berthing positions appeared to be Points 17 and 18. No large naval vessels were sighted, neither were any shipbuilding yards seen.

6. On numerous occasions at night search lights, about ten in each case, were observed in the direction of Point 19 (vicinity of a small military camp), and Point 20, vicinity of a botanical garden.

7. An oil pipeline on a dock is located coming from Point 21 to Point 22. A Finnish tanker, name unknown, was loading at Point 22. [redacted] considerable grumbling because petroleum had been mixed and was causing delay. He said that water of excellent quality could be obtained, but due to low pressure only 70 tons were taken on in three days. The Leningrad, Rossia and Gruziya used a force pump to take on water.

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[redacted]

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10. [redacted] Comment: According to Lloyd's Shipping Index, [redacted] Lloyd's Register lists the Rossia and the Gruziya, however, the only Leningrad is a tanker, rather than a cargo-passenger vessel.

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[redacted]

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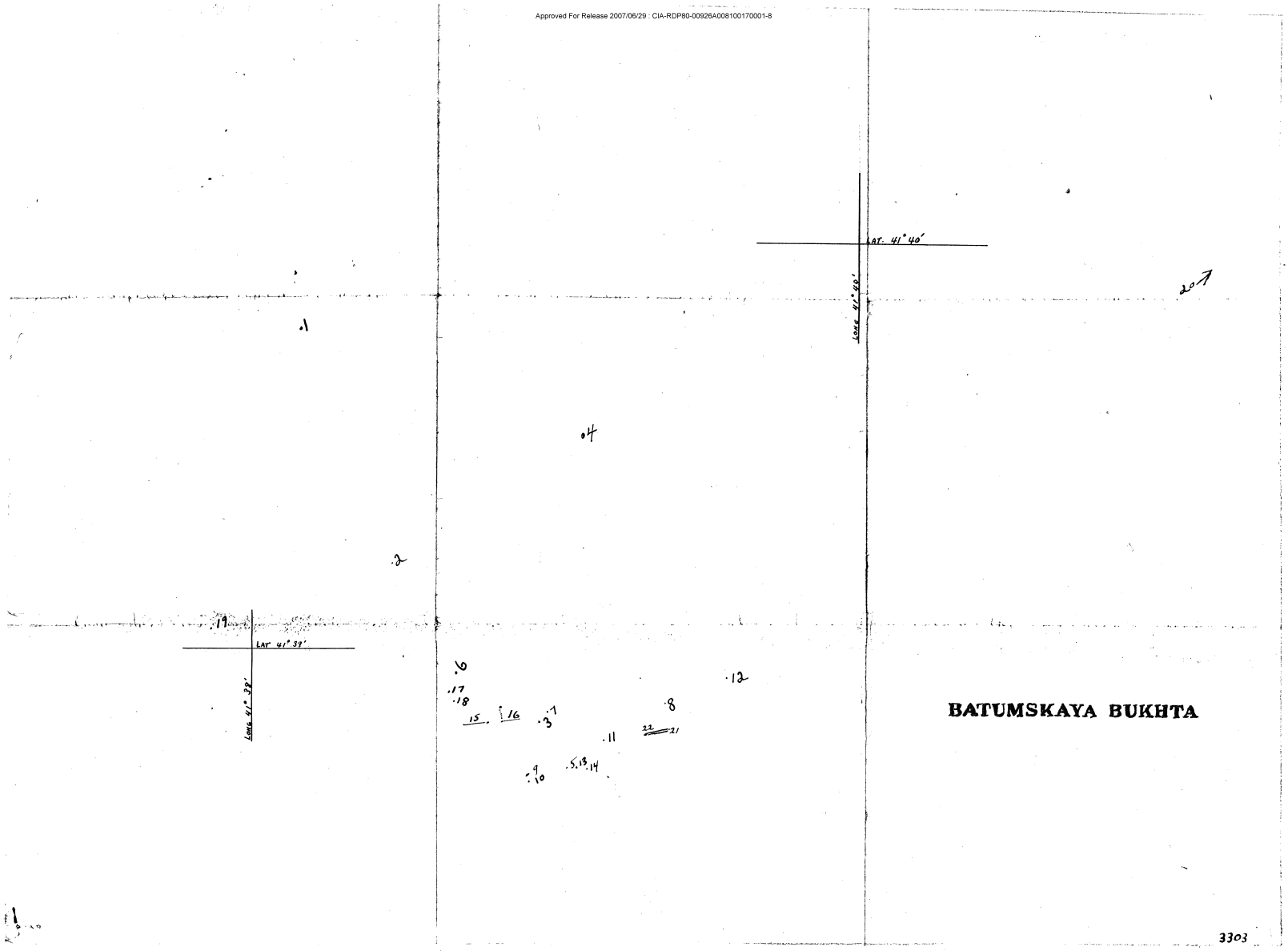

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