

27 April 1956

Board on Geographic Names

The BGN is charged by statute with the standardization of geographic names in the United States and its possessions, and all foreign areas. With the activation of the NIS Program in 1948, there was a need for the development of gazetteers to insure uniformity in geographic names throughout the approximately 85 different sections and related base maps of the NIS for which production responsibility was assigned to more than 40 different components of IAC and non-IAC agencies. Arrangements were made, therefore, to fiscally support the BGN on a continuing basis in the preparation of gazetteers for the NIS Program.

In addition to the production of the gazetteers the BGN also reviews for geographic name consistency all the contributions received from the more than 40 contributors to this program. At the time this gazetteer program was started there were no other gazetteers in existence suitable for NIS purposes, and there is still no other gazetteer program in being that can meet requirements of the NIS Program and the intelligence community as a whole.

Gazetteers have been produced on more than 85 of the 103 land areas of the world. However, because of the urgency of making approved standardized geographic names available to NIS producing offices in the early stages of the NIS Program, most of these gazetteers were produced in preliminary form with the realization that further name research and expansion of these gazetteers would be necessary to fully meet NIS requirements. Revision of these preliminary gazetteers is now underway.

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Handcarried by KAK to Saunders - CIA Budget

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Specifically, the Office of Geography, Department of the Interior, performs the following services and functions in contributing to the National Intelligence Survey:

- a. Undertakes research and generates standard geographic names for reproduction and distribution by CIA. These gazetteers cover all areas assigned for name standardization research.
- b. Effects name standardization for and editing of base maps used by all contributing agencies in their preparation of NIS Sections and other elements.
- c. Edits all NIS elements produced by the contributing agencies in the course of each fiscal year. This amounts to editing the text and accompanying tables, figures, and maps for accuracy and constancy of geographic name usage of approximately 556 NIS elements.
- d. Performs such other services as the editing of supplementary geographic name lists, the maintenance of a geographic name inquiries service, and the issuance of gazetteer correction lists.