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NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC
INTERPRETATION CENTER

**PHOTOGRAPHIC
INTERPRETATION
REPORT**

**SOVIET CONSTRUCTION OF
NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FROM IRAN**



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JANUARY 1971

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SOVIET CONSTRUCTION OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FROM IRAN

1. The USSR section of the natural gas pipeline being constructed from the Aqa Jari oil field in Iran to Kazi-Magomed, USSR, has been studied on KEYHOLE photography to determine its status and course. The pipeline, which will tie into the existing Karadag/Akstafa/Tbilisi gas pipeline, will provide an inexpensive energy source for the economic development of the Transcaucasus region.

2. The USSR section of the pipeline extends 108 nautical miles (nm) from Astara on the Iranian border to a point north of Kazi-Magomed (Figure 1). On KH-4 (search) photography of May 1970, the line appeared generally complete except for a 24-nm section between Prishib and Lenkoran Airfield as well as numerous short segments elsewhere for crossing streams and roads. No branch lines to any of the towns along the course of the line were observed, and no compressor station was yet evident. The exact point north of Kazi-Magomed where the line will join the Karadag/Akstafa/Tbilisi pipeline could not be determined on the photography. The crossing of the Astarachay river from Iran to the western outskirts of Astara was not completed. Meanwhile, the Iranian section of the pipeline, extending 450 nm from Aqa Jari in southern Iran to Astara, is being completed by the National Iranian Oil Company.

3. Analysis of the terrain from photography indicated that there were few problems to cope with in laying the pipeline in the USSR section. The first 18 nm of the pipeline north from Astara crosses cultivated and level land, and further north, in the vicinity of Pensar, it crosses low hills and numerous small intermittent streams. The last, 90-nm leg of the line, from the vicinity of Lenkoran to Kazi-Magomed, crosses terrain that varies only slightly in relief. This area is predominantly cultivated and has some marshy areas. The pipeline is not entrenched deeply in the ground and is exposed as it crosses over streams. The highest elevation the pipeline crosses is through a cut on a ridge approximately 280 feet above sea level in the vicinity of Lenkoran. The lowest elevation is approximately 50 feet below sea level at Kazi-Magomed.

4. The early stages of construction on the pipeline began [redacted] numerous pipe sections, trenching machinery, and support vehicles were observed in a cultivated area at the western edge of Astara and large stockpiles of pipe were observed in the rail yards of Astara and Salyany (Figure 2). [redacted] a construction unit was observed laying pipe 1.2 nm west of Shaglasar (inset, Figure 1). These pipe sections measure 17.0 meters (56 feet) [redacted]

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REFERENCES

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REQUIREMENT

NPIC/IEG/WGD/EURB Project 143261N0

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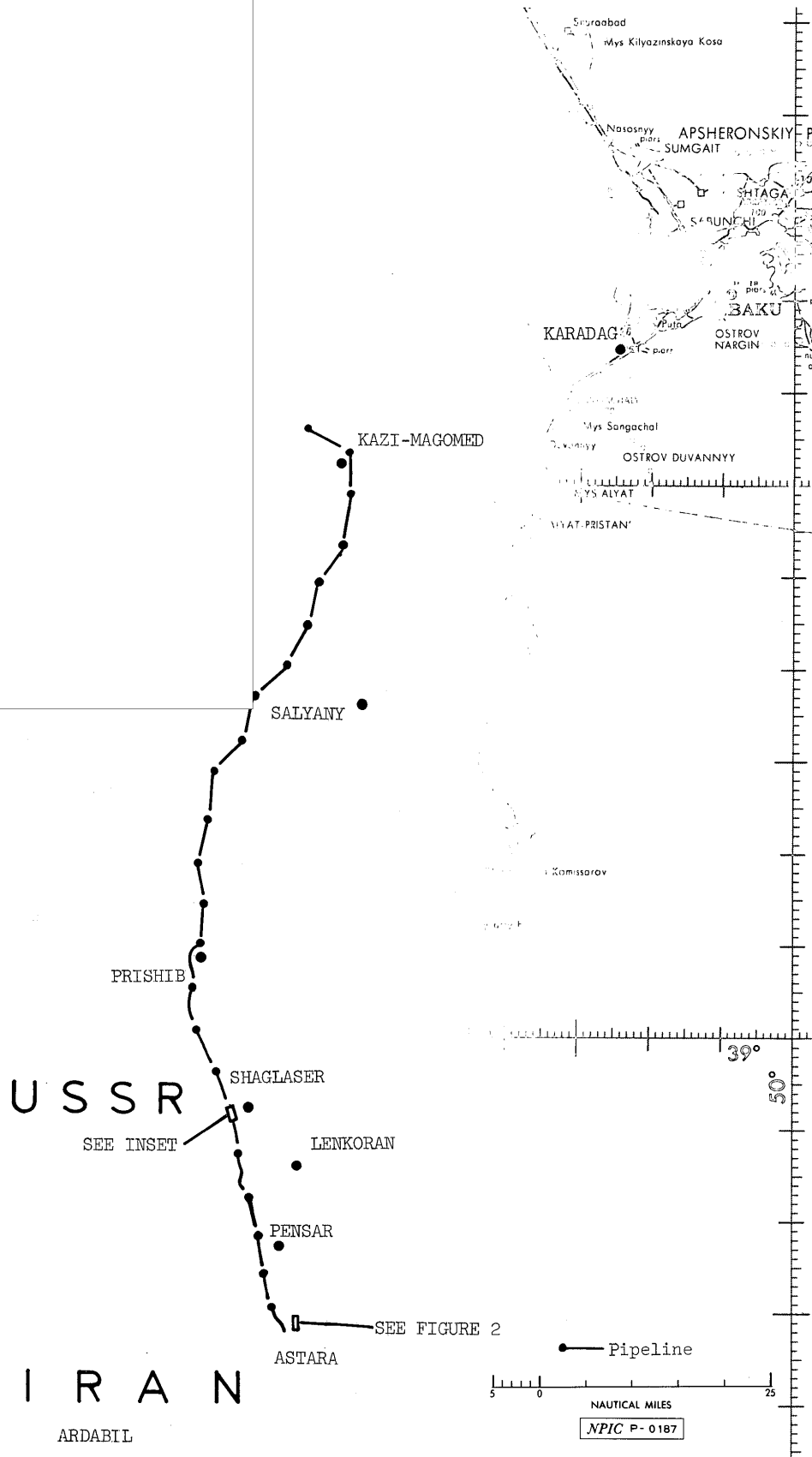


FIGURE 1. ROUTE OF USSR SECTION OF NATURAL GAS PIPELINE FROM IRAN

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