

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Bulgaria	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Mining and Research Near Stürgel, Pirdop Okoliya	DATE DISTR.	13 October 1954
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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1. In 1948 and 1949 Soviet experts carried out extensive soundings and research for uranium in the western part of Bulgaria. This work was intensified in the following years, and at the same time searches for uranium were also made in the copper, zinc, and lead mines in Bulgaria. The best results were obtained at the Stürgel mine located approximately seven kilometers from the town of Stürgel (N 42-45, E 23-52), in the vicinity of the Klisura River. However, no details are known concerning uranium production.
2. Prior to World War II the Stürgel mine employed a maximum of 400 workers. Immediately after the war it was enlarged and equipped with machinery imported from the USSR. By 1948 it employed about 1,500 workers. It produces chiefly copper, lead, zinc, and some brass.
3. The entire work system has been modernized and excavations are now made with electric drills. The mineral extracted is transported in small electrically powered trams. All activity at the mine is carried out according to Soviet methods and under the direction of Soviet technicians.
4. Under Soviet management production reached 25-30 tram-loads of ore per day as compared to 7-8 tram-loads per day prior to World War II. Between 1950 and 1953 production was again considerably increased and now amounts to 50-60 tram-loads daily.
5. A unit for selecting the ore is situated approximately 150 meters from the main entrance to the mine. The ore is transported by a narrow-gauge electrically operated line to the crushing unit and thence to the washing unit where water pumped from the Klisura River is used. After being washed, the ore is taken to a drier and then placed in canisters of approximately 50 kilograms capacity each.

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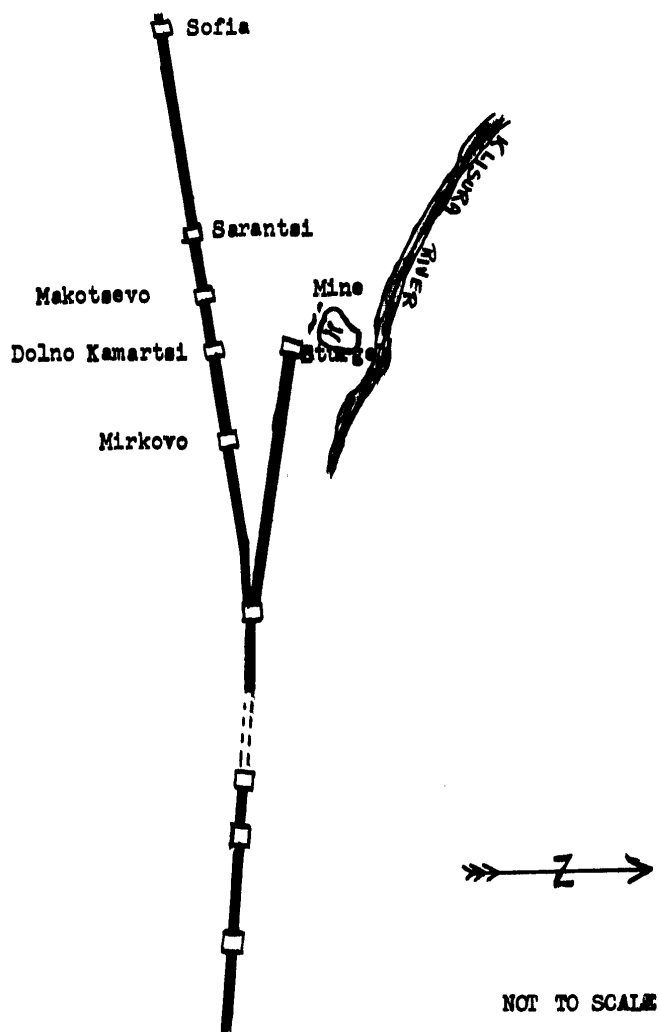
6. A small foundry near the mine smelts a minimum portion of the copper, lead, and zinc ores, while the majority of these and all the uranium ore are shipped to the USSR.
7. With the discovery of uranium the directorate of the mine and a number of the workers were replaced. At present approximately 50 Soviet directors and technicians are employed here, as is a unit of Soviet Secret Police which controls the Bulgarian unit. This latter unit is composed of approximately 120 men. There are at present 2,000-2,500 workers at the mine.
8. Workmen are selected with a view to their Communist political beliefs. Their wages are higher than those generally prevalent in Bulgaria. They enjoy complete personal freedom, but cannot leave the mining area without a pass from the Secret Police.
9. A Militia unit of approximately company strength, commanded by an unidentified captain, controls the mining area and is located in Sturgel. This unit is subordinate to the Soviet and the Bulgarian Secret Police.
10. Work is carried out in the mine in three shifts of eight hours each. All workers are members of the Communist Party as well as members of the Miners' Union, which, in fact, under the control of the Police, carries out hiring of workers. The CRPS (Obsht Rabotnicheski Profesionalen Svyuz; General Workers' Professional Union) is located in Sturgel.
11. The mine is connected to the new Sofia-Varna (now Stalin) railway line, completed in 1952. It is also connected, as is Sturgel, to the railway station of Pirdop by means of a new railway branchline, as well as by a new highway. Prior to the construction of the new railway line the ore was transported by trucks which went from the mine to the railroad station of Sarantsi (N 42-43, E 23-46).
12. Soviet and Bulgarian geologists are conducting research and soundings also in the areas toward the Yugoslav border, or more precisely north of the Belgrade-Sofia railroad line, as well as in areas in the Balkan Mountains and in various sections of Bulgaria bordering on Greece, which are well-known for their mineral wealth. Research in the direction of Yugoslavia has produced satisfactory results, but the exact location and production figures are not known to informant. On several occasions railroad convoys were observed carrying ores to the port of Varna, where they were loaded for shipment to the USSR.
13. Very recent information confirms the discovery of uranium ore deposits also near the Greek border, but no details are known concerning this. The Greeks also have undertaken research in Greece near the Bulgarian border and it appears that deposits rich in uranium have been discovered.
14. A sketch showing the approximate location of the Sturgel Mine is included as an Appendix on page 3.

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