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Description of document: 35 Department of State Self Study Guides,  
2000 - 2006

Requested date: 11-March-2007

Released date: 25-Mar-2010

Posted date: 19-April-2010  
Updated: 07-January-2013

Source of document: Freedom of Information Act  
Office of Information Programs and Services  
A/GIS/IPS/RL  
U. S. Department of State  
Washington, D. C. 20522-8100  
Fax: 202-261-8579

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United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

Case No.: 200701753

**MAR 25 2010**

I refer to your letter dated March 11, 2007 regarding the release of certain Department of State material under the Freedom of Information Act (Title 5 USC Section 552).


We searched for and reviewed the self study guides that you requested and have determined that all except one of them may be released. They are on the enclosed disc. One of the guides is being released with excisions.

An enclosure provides information on Freedom of Information Act exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable exemptions are marked on each document. With respect to material withheld by the Department of State, you have the right to appeal our determination within 60 days. A copy of the appeals procedures is enclosed.

We have now completed the processing of your case. If you have any questions, you may write to the Office of Information Programs and Services, SA-2, Department of State, Washington, DC 20522-8100, or telephone us at (202) 261-8484. Please be sure to refer to the case number shown above in all correspondence about this case.

We hope that the Department has been of service to you in this matter.

Sincerely,



*for* Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures:  
As stated.

**63934 Federal Register/Vol. 69, No. 212**  
**Rules and Regulations**

Subpart F – Appeal Procedures

§171.52 Appeal of denial of access to, declassification of, amendment of, accounting of disclosures of, or challenge to classification of records.

- (a) *Right of administrative appeal.* Except for records that have been reviewed and withheld within the past two years or are the subject of litigation, any requester whose request for access to records, declassification of records, amendment of records, accounting of disclosure of records, or any authorized holder of classified information whose classification challenge has been denied, has a right to appeal the denial to the Department's Appeals Review Panel. This appeal right includes the right to appeal the determination by the Department that no records responsive to an access request exist in Department files. Privacy Act appeals may be made only by the individual to whom the records pertain.
- (b) *Form of appeal.* There is no required form for an appeal. However, it is essential that the appeal contain a clear statement of the decision or determination by the Department being appealed. When possible, the appeal should include argumentation and documentation to support the appeal and to contest the bases for denial cited by the Department. The appeal should be sent to: Chairman, Appeals Review Panel, c/o Appeals Officer, A/GIS/IPS/PP/LC, U.S. Department of State, SA-2, Room 8100, Washington, DC 20522-8100.
- (c) *Time limits.* The appeal should be received within 60 days of the date of receipt by the requester of the Department's denial. The time limit for response to an appeal begins to run on the day that the appeal is received. The time limit (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) for agency decision on an administrative appeal is 20 days under the FOIA (which may be extended for up to an additional 10 days in unusual circumstances) and 30 days under the Privacy Act (which the Panel may extend an additional 30 days for good cause shown). The Panel shall decide mandatory declassification review appeals as promptly as possible.
- (d) *Notification to appellant.* The Chairman of the Appeals Review Panel shall notify the appellant in writing of the Panel's decision on the appeal. When the decision is to uphold the denial, the Chairman shall include in his notification the reasons therefore. The appellant shall be advised that the decision of the Panel represents the final decision of the Department and of the right to seek judicial review of the Panel's decision, when applicable. In mandatory declassification review appeals, the Panel shall advise the requester of the right to appeal the decision to the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel under §3.5(d) of E.O. 12958.

## The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

### FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Withholding specifically authorized under an Executive Order in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and properly classified. E.O. 12958, as amended, includes the following classification categories:
  - 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
  - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
  - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
  - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
  - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
  - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
  - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
  - 1.4(h) Information on weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
  - ARMEX Arms Export Control Act, 22 USC 2778(e)
  - CIA Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
  - EXPORT Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 App. USC 2411(c)(1)
  - FSA Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4003 & 4004
  - INA Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f)
  - IRAN Iran Claims Settlement Act, Sec 505, 50 USC 1701, note
- (b)(4) Privileged/confidential trade secrets, commercial or financial information from a person
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (b)(7) Information compiled for law enforcement purposes that would:
  - (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
  - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
  - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
  - (D) disclose confidential sources
  - (E) disclose investigation techniques
  - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

### Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request, excised with the agreement of the requester

# ANGOLA

## A Self-Study Guide



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The **Self-Study Guide: Angola** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Angolan history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The guide should serve an introductory self-study resource. The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this guide was prepared by Dr. William Minter, senior research fellow at Africa Action in Washington, D.C. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Minter. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are public domain, from sites that

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First Edition

August 2001

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### Capsule Chronology

**Early First Millennium** - settlement of Angola by Bantu-speaking peoples.

**1483** - First Portuguese contact with Kongo kingdom.

**1485-1550** - First sugar plantations established in São Tomé and Brazil, using slaves from Angola.

**1550-1600** - Kongo kingdom weakened by slave trade and war.

**1576** - Foundation of Luanda.

**1617** - Foundation of Benguela

**1624-1663** - Reign of Queen Nzinga of the Ndongo kingdom, one of the most famous of Angolan leaders who resisted Portuguese control.

**1641-1648** - Dutch temporarily occupy Luanda and Benguela.

**1650s to 1830s** - The slave trade and associated conflicts dominate the history of Angola, their impact extending farther and farther inland from the coast.

**1830s to 1880s** - Transition from slave trade to trade in other goods, including ivory, rubber and wax. Gradual expansion of Portuguese control inland from the coast.

**1880s to 1917** - Portuguese complete their military conquest of Angola.

**1884-1885** - Berlin Conference at which European powers decided how to divide up Africa.

**1926** - Coup establishes dictatorship in Portugal, which lasts until 1974, under António Salazar from 1932 to 1968.

**1956** - Foundation of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

**1957** - Foundation of Union of Peoples of Northern Angola (UPNA), that became the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) in 1962.

**1966** - Foundation of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)

**April 25, 1974** - Coup overthrows dictatorship in Portugal.

**January 15, 1975** - Alvor Accords signed for coalition government and transition to independence.

**November 11, 1975** - Angolan independence declared.

**May 31, 1991** - Bicesse Accords signed.

**September 29-30, 1992** - Multiparty elections mandated under Bicesse Accords held with international observation. MPLA wins parliamentary majority, and President dos Santos wins a plurality barely short of a majority. Runoff is not held as UNITA President Savimbi decides to return to war.

**November 20, 1994** - Lusaka Protocol with new peace plan signed.

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## Maps

The best reference maps can be found in *Atlas Geográfico*, published by the Angolan Ministry of Education with Swedish assistance in 1982. There are also a number of on-line maps available from international agencies, including maps of the current humanitarian situation. A good place to start to search for these is the Relief Web map centre: <http://www.reliefweb.int>





This map, courtesy of [www.theodora.com/maps](http://www.theodora.com/maps), used with permission, shows the position and principal topographical features of Angola.

The major river coming in from the coast south of Luanda is the Cuanza. The river flowing into Zambia in the far east is the Zambezi, which flows to the Indian Ocean on the other side of Africa..

The map on the next page shows the provinces into which Angola is divided.

### **Angola's Provinces**



See also the map from the United Nations in the Geography section below.

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## History

### Pre-Colonial

As early as 1,000 years ago, Angola was inhabited by peoples speaking Bantu languages, engaged in agriculture with iron tools and trade over long distances. Before the Portuguese arrived on the coast in the 16th century, African states included the Kongo kingdom and Mbundu kingdoms inland from Luanda. Ovimbundu kingdoms arose later on the central plateau.

Among leaders prominent in early Angolan history were King Afonso I of the Kongo and Queen Nzinga of the Mbundu kingdom of Matamba. In the 16th century King Afonso adopted Christianity, but his efforts at a constructive relationship with Portugal were frustrated by the slave trade. In the 17th century Queen Nzinga resisted Portuguese influence for decades.

King Afonso's exchanges of correspondence with his Portuguese counterparts are among the earliest diplomatic records of the contact of sub-Saharan Africa with Europe. In 1526, in a letter to King Manuel, he deplored the effect of the growing slave trade on his kingdom:

You should know that our kingdom is being destroyed in many ways. These are the fruit of excessive freedom given by your officials and representatives to men and merchants who come here and set up stores with goods and many things which we have forbidden. These they spread throughout our kingdom and domains in such abundance that many of our vassals, whom we had in our obedience, no longer obey. All this does great harm not only to the service of God, but also to the security and peace of our kingdom and state. ...

Many of our subjects so covet the rewards and good of your kingdom ... that in order to satisfy their greed they set upon free men ... and sell these to white men in our kingdom ... And as soon as these are bought by white men, they are ironed and branded with fire and taken to be embarked. If then they are caught by our guards the whites allege that they have bought [these captives], though they cannot say from whom ...

Quoted in Basil Davidson, *In the Eye of the Storm*, pp. 73-74.

The Portuguese soon established control over the port cities of Luanda and Benguela, but they did not conquer most of the country until the late 19th century. The dominant feature of European-Angolan relations until the late 19th century was the slave trade, mostly to Brazil. It is estimated that approximately one-third of the slaves transported across the Atlantic left from the ports of Angola and the adjoining Congo region to the north.

Historian Joseph C. Miller provides a comprehensive survey of the slave trade from Angola in *Way of Death* (1988), tracing the economics and political structure of the trade which linked Angola to the markets in Brazil, the traders from Portugal and the British financiers who provided the financial backing for the complex multi-continental trading system. His work explores the dynamic interaction between violence and trade as rulers were sold guns on credit and then required to repay their debts with human beings whose capture the guns helped secure. The result, in Miller's words, "a moving frontier zone of slaving violence," based on "a political economy in which warlords drew strength from imported slave mercenaries and guns, and in which indebted patrons, elders, and dependent gentry stocked immigrant slaves against future payments on forced loans from powerful merchant princes." Rulers and peoples who resisted were defeated or marginalized, as the system favored those most able to provide the commodity most in demand at the coast: slaves.

Inside Angola the "slaving frontier" moved steadily inland, bringing with it war. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the sources of slaves were primarily within a 200 kilometer distance from the coast at Luanda, and a lesser distance inland from Benguela. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the primary source of supply moved hundreds of kilometers further northeast of Luanda, and onto the central plateau inland from Benguela. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the supply line stretched halfway across the continent.

As seen in the previous section, the common reference to over four centuries of Portuguese colonialism is misleading. Before the end of the 19th century, colonial rule was confined to only a few enclaves. At independence in 1975 Portuguese domination was, for the most part, less than a century old, coinciding with the European occupation of the African interior by Britain, France, Belgium and Germany.

Colonial Portuguese rule in the 20th century was characterized by rigid dictatorship and exploitation of African labor. Despite theories of cultural assimilation, racial hierarchy prevailed. After World War II many new Portuguese settlers arrived, making up 5% of the population by the early 1970s.

According to Portuguese colonial theory, African natives (*indígenas*) could exempt themselves from forced labor by assimilating Portuguese culture and in effect becoming Portuguese. A small number succeeded in meeting the tests of income, education and life style to gain this *assimilado* status. Others, even if not assimilated, were incorporated into the colonial order with some relative advantage over other Angolans: chiefs used in administration, overseers, teachers in mission schools, semi-skilled workers in the ports or administration.

In the 1950s and 1960s the economy grew rapidly, with coffee, diamonds and then oil. But Portugal denied the possibility of independence, claiming that Angola was an integral part of the Portuguese nation. Angolan nationalists were not allowed to organize openly.

### *Nationalism and the Struggle for Independence*

In Luanda, the capital, the tradition of Angolan resistance to colonialism had deep roots. The relatively large number of African assimilados and mestiços provided the context for a 19th-century protest journalism, criticizing Portuguese colonialism and the way in which even educated Africans were shoved aside by new Portuguese settlers. As in other colonial contexts, most Africans with Western education accepted aspects of the colonial system. But Angolan nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s looked back to a literary tradition stressing Angolan identity and protest. It is no accident that the first president of Angola, Agostinho Neto, was also a renowned poet.

The MPLA, led by Neto, grew from this Luanda milieu, coming together as a clandestine organization at the end of 1956. Harassed by police repression, with key leaders in prison or in exile, MPLA supporters launched an armed assault on political prisons in February 1961. In response white vigilantes killed hundreds of Africans in the city's suburbs. The following month an even bloodier conflict erupted in northern Angola. Rebels linked to

the Union of Peoples of Angola (UPA, later to become the National Front for the Liberation of Angola - FNLA) killed hundreds of white settlers in the coffee plantation zone, and targeted mestiços and Africans from other parts of Angola as well. The Portuguese retaliated with vigilantes and troops, inflicting a death toll estimated at up to 50,000.

The Angolan war for independence thus exploded suddenly. It caught both the colonial authorities and the nationalist leaders unprepared. The divisions evident in that initial eruption persisted throughout the thirteen years of struggle against the Portuguese -- and beyond.

UPA had been formed in 1957 in the Belgian Congo as the Union of Peoples of Northern Angola. Led by Holden Roberto, it relied primarily on Kikongo-speaking northern Angola and on exiles in the former Belgian Congo. In the early sixties UPA also recruited student exiles from other areas of Angola, including Jonas Savimbi and his colleagues from the central plateau. The common thread was suspicion of nationalist currents in Luanda, embodied in exile by the MPLA.

Disunity was further fostered by the exile environment. Most found exile in the former Belgian Congo, itself beset by internal strife and the first major Cold War confrontation in Africa. By the end of 1963 the MPLA had been totally excluded from Congo (Kinshasa) and had set up a headquarters across the river in the former French Congo (Brazzaville). Congo (Kinshasa) was controlled by leaders supported by the United States, principally through of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Holden Roberto's movement, now called the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), was also being subsidized by the US. The US goal was clearly to build barriers against Soviet-tied radicalism, by isolating the MPLA in particular.

Disunity and geopolitical maneuvering thus undermined prospects for a sustained guerrilla offensive against Portuguese rule. The FNLA continued actions in parts of the north, as did pockets of MPLA guerrillas northeast of Luanda. The MPLA opened up a front in Cabinda from its Brazzaville base. Zambia's independence permitted the MPLA to launch an eastern front in 1966, which for some years was the most significant military threat to the Portuguese in Angola.

But there were divisions in the east as well. Breaking with the FNLA in 1964, Jonas Savimbi two years later founded the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), appealing primarily to Umbundu-speakers and others from southern and eastern Angola. He installed a small guerrilla operation in eastern Angola, in the same area as the MPLA. UNITA failed to win any open support from African states, but boasted of self-reliance and espoused Maoist rhetoric. By 1971, Savimbi agreed with the Portuguese military to concentrate their military efforts against the MPLA. When the Portuguese coup came in 1974, the MPLA was also suffering internal strife, exacerbated by the difficulties of guerrilla war and of coordination among exile leaders dispersed among different African capitals.

The scenario that followed in 1974-76 played out both the legacy of Angolan divisions and the Cold War dynamics that had previously focused on the Congo. In January 1975 the three movements and Portugal signed an agreement in Alvor, Portugal, calling for a transition government and elections leading to independence in November 1975. But the agreement could only have worked if all the parties, both Angolans and their external allies, agreed on power sharing and a process of confidence-building, or if some external force were neutral enough and powerful enough to hold the ring for peaceful competition. None of these conditions was met.

With Portuguese authority in Angola tattered, none of the three contenders for power held a decisive advantage. The MPLA had perhaps six thousand troops, most recent recruits. The FNLA enjoyed military superiority, with roughly twenty thousand conventional troops and the backing of Zaire. Politically, the positions of the Angolan movements roughly followed the stereotypes attached to them, although the labels oversimplified a complex and changing reality. The FNLA maintained its political base among Kikongo-speaking Angolans, including exiles in Zaire. It offered a program that combined populist rhetoric with promises of security for free enterprise, asking that its leadership be accepted into the emerging bourgeoisie along with white Angolans.

The MPLA offered a socialist vision tempered with pragmatism. Its major assets were popular support among the Kimbundu-speaking population of Luanda and its hinterland, along with a policy of nonracialism and nontribalism that gave good prospects of wider national support. It won loyalty among urban workers, students and middle-level government employees around the country, of all races and linguistic groups. Most whites saw the MPLA as a Marxist nemesis, although the participation of white and mestiço leftists in the movement also exposed it to 'black power' critiques from the other two movements.

UNITA, characteristically, had a less defined program. It sought to rally eastern and southern ethnic groups, while appealing to whites on the basis of opposition to the MPLA's radicalism. More than its rivals, it relied on loyalty to a charismatic leader--Jonas Savimbi. In 1974-1976, in military terms it was by far the weakest of the three movements.

## **War and The Search for Peace**

With virtually no interlude of peace, Angolans moved from the war against colonialism to wars that primarily pitted Angolans against each other. But the ups and down of war were decisively influenced by outside actors as well. The character of war shifted dramatically from period to period: open conventional battles in 1975-76, low-scale guerrilla warfare until 1981, massive South African intervention combined with logistical support for UNITA in the 1980s, an interval of peace in 1991-1992, UNITA assaults on inland cities in the aftermath of the 1992 election, a period of neither war nor peace along with nominal implementation of the Lusaka peace accord from 1994 to 1998, and a return to guerrilla warfare after the collapse of the peace accord from 1999 to the present.

The following sections provide brief summaries of these periods. For more detail on 1975-1992 see among other sources William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras* (1994). On the aftermath of the 1992 election see Human Rights Watch, *Angola: Arms Trade and the Violations of the Laws of War Since the 1992 Elections* (1994). For the period 1994 to 1998 see Human Rights Watch, *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process* (1999). For an overview of the war from 1975 to 1996, see Victoria Brittain, *Death of Dignity* (1998). A somewhat longer and very well informed account through 1996 available on-line is Karl Maier, "Orphan of the Cold War" at: <http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/country/writenet/wriago.htm>

Two eloquent descriptions in English are, for 1975, Ryszard Kapuscinski, *Another Day of Life* (1987) and, for the late 1980s and early 1990s, Karl Maier, *Angola: Promises and Lies* (1996).

## **1975-1976**

In January, only a few days after the Alvor Agreement, the US decided at the White House level to allocate \$300,000 to support the FNLA. On January 31, the transitional government was sworn in. Within days, localized conflicts between the MPLA and FNLA began again. On February 13, the Luanda office of the MPLA splinter group leader Daniel Chipenda was attacked by the MPLA. Chipenda then joined the FNLA, and became its assistant secretary general.

Two months later, the FNLA launched a military assault on MPLA positions in Luanda, casting the die for a military resolution of the conflict. Popular mobilization and the arrival of Eastern bloc arms enabled MPLA forces to expel the FNLA from the Luanda area in July, after a series of major confrontations. By all accounts the major external involvement in this period was that of Zaire. Mobutu's regime, encouraged by the US, served as patron of the FNLA, supplying funds, arms and even troops. The MPLA had a small number of foreign military advisors, mostly left-wing Portuguese but also a few Cubans. Cuba had been assisting the MPLA since the mid-1960s.

As the conflict in northern Angola continued in 1975, a new area of confrontation opened up in the south, bringing in not only UNITA but also South African and Cuban troops. Savimbi joined Holden Roberto in receiving US support, upped to \$14 million for the two movements in July. On August 14, the transitional government established by the Alvor Agreement officially collapsed.

The US also encouraged South Africa to join the anti-MPLA military alliance. South Africa sent troops into Angola in August, linking up with forces of former MPLA dissident Daniel Chipenda and with UNITA. In October, South Africans, mercenaries and troops from FNLA and UNITA joined in a well-equipped mechanized column of more than three thousand troops to launch a lightning strike aimed at reaching Luanda before the November 11 independence day. Like the US, the South African government hoped to keep its involvement secret.

The decision to escalate and involve the South Africans was opposed by some US diplomats, who doubted it could be kept secret and predicted it would backfire by discrediting the US-backed Angolan groups and provoking further escalation. Indeed, the operation did unravel with amazing rapidity. By independence day, thousands of Cuban troops were arriving in response to Neto's plea for help. The Soviet Union provided arms sufficient to equip the MPLA and the Cubans – by some estimates over \$200 million – and by mid-December the anti-MPLA coalition had lost the military initiative.

As the US scrambled to revive the flagging fortunes of its allies with CIA funded infusions of mercenaries and additional arms, the political cover for intervention was collapsing. Revelations of South African involvement tipped African opinion decisively in favor of the MPLA. In the US congressional opposition to the intervention culminated in a December amendment barring further US covert aid in Angola. New escalation was blocked. Pretoria, feeling betrayed, withdrew its armored columns in March 1976.

## **1976-1988**

During this period the pace and extent of the war was closely tied to the fate of Namibia, where South Africa continued to resist independence despite a 1971 international court ruling that its control was illegal. South Africa justified its military intervention in Angola and support for UNITA by citing Angolan support for the guerrillas of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). US-led diplomatic initiatives during this period relied on "linkage" between South African concessions on Namibia and the presence of Cuban troops in Angola. This period ended with December 1988 agreements among South Africa, Angola and Cuba laying out timetables for UN-supervised independence elections in Namibia and withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

From the South African troop withdrawal in March 1976 until 1981, the scale of war in Angola was relatively small. Despite two revolts in Zaire in 1977 and 1978, which involved Congolese exiles in Angola and were put down with the intervention of Western troops, Angola and Zaire moved toward detente. Large numbers of supporters of the FNLA, including FNLA troops, returned to Angola; many were integrated into the Angolan army. UNITA under Savimbi withdrew into the countryside, continued small-scale guerrilla attacks, and began to rebuild its military strength with Western-encouraged support from Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa..

The war escalated significantly in the 1980s, however, after the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 shifted the focus of Africa's push for liberation to Namibia and South Africa itself. By that time as well, South Africa President P. W. Botha, who took office in September 1978, had begun the massive expansion of his "total strategy" of direct and indirect military intervention in the region. And the political climate had changed in Washington as well with the coming to power of the Reagan administration.

The war in Angola during this period was effectively at least two different wars, a conventional war in Angola's southernmost provinces, and guerrilla war that extended throughout the country.



The conventional war involved primarily South African troops on the one hand, who invaded and occupied large portions of southern Angola, and Angolan government troops on the other, who periodically tried to advance into UNITA and South African-controlled areas. UNITA participated in these conventional battles as well, but in a clearly secondary role to their South African patrons. For the Angolan government, Cuban troops provided rear base defensive support for the most part, but also decisively intervened in the largest confrontations in 1987- 1988.

In that set of battles – mostly around the small town of Cuito Cuanavale – South African airpower was countered by effective Angolan and Cuban defenses so that it could no longer provide effective protection to South Africa's long-range artillery and troops. Most analysts think that this was one of the decisive factors convincing the South African government that it was better to concede a timetable for the independence of Namibia. Namibia's independence in 1990 marked the end of conventional South African military intervention in Angola.

The guerrilla war during this period was also different from the classic image of a guerrilla war, given that the supply, communications and training for UNITA were provided on a large scale by South Africa, in addition to assistance from other UNITA allies and CIA support following repeal of the congressional prohibition on such aid in 1985. UNITA's "base area" around Jamba in southeastern Angola had little indigenous population and was adjacent to and integrated into South African military operations in northern Namibia. UNITA guerrilla units further afield could count on a motorized supply line by rugged trucks in much of the country and on airdrops in areas further to the north and east. In the second half of the 1980s supply lines through Zaire as well became much more significant.

As amply documented in reports by human rights organizations, both UNITA and Angolan government forces were guilty of massive abuses of the civilian population, with a strategy that involved clearing out areas in "enemy" territory and transporting the population to areas considered under "friendly" control. UNITA also systematically targeted civilian transport and all sectors of the economy. Use of landmines was widespread by both sides, but particularly developed by UNITA as a means of targeting agricultural production as well as military targets. Another strategy widely used by UNITA was the kidnapping of foreign workers, most of whom were walked for weeks or months through the bush, and later released at press conferences in Jamba.

## **1989-1992**

*Reference:* Bicesse Peace Accord (in English)

<http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/agreements/pdf/ang1.pdf>

The 1988 agreements ended conventional South African military involvement. But South Africa, in violation of the agreement, continued to supply UNITA by air and through Zaire. Disappointing Angolan government hopes, the U.S. continued its military support

for UNITA. In its last stage of disintegration, the Soviet Union nevertheless continued to supply Angola with weapons for defense. The war continued. In May 1991, after two years of talks, the Angolan government and UNITA signed a treaty providing for a cease-fire, troop demobilization and multi-party elections. In the September 1992 elections, judged free and fair by UN observers, the MPLA won 54% and UNITA 34% in the legislative race. President José Eduardo dos Santos, of the MPLA, fell just short of 50% in the presidential contest, while UNITA leader Savimbi had 40%. [See more details below, under Politics.]

After Savimbi refused to accept the election results, Angola returned to war. UNITA, aided by supplies from Zaire and South Africa (then still under the apartheid regime), launched offensives around the country. The government responded, expelling UNITA from Luanda while armed civilians took reprisals against UNITA supporters. In 1993-94, UNITA controlled much of the countryside and some inland cities. Bitter fighting raged in most areas, causing casualties of an estimated 1,000 people a day and physical damage to both towns and countryside far above that of the previous two decades of war. At this stage, UNITA had the clear military advantage, as it had maintained its forces in war-readiness while the government army deteriorated and the new integrated "national army" was only a fiction.

Critics charged that inaction by the U.S. and the United Nations, which failed to protest UNITA's failure to disarm before the election or to react quickly when the war resumed, was in part responsible for the catastrophe. In May 1993, the United States finally recognized the elected Angolan government. In September 1993 the UN imposed an arms and fuel embargo on UNITA. New peace talks began in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 1993. A year later came a new peace treaty, including troop demobilization in exchange for a share of ministries and provincial governorships for UNITA.

## **1993-2000**

*Reference:* (1) For the period 1995 to the present, the monthly Angola Peace Monitor provides a summary of events and occasional references to other documents. It is available on-line at <http://www.anc.org.za/angola> and <http://www.actsa.org/apm>

(2) Lusaka Peace Accord (in English)

[http://www.embaixadadeangola.org/frames/ac\\_paz/ac\\_paz.htm](http://www.embaixadadeangola.org/frames/ac_paz/ac_paz.htm)

Given the recent character of this period and the greater availability of current sources in news accounts and on the web, this study guide provides only the briefest summary here. For more detail consult the references cited above, and, for analyses from different point of view, start with the sources on the next page.

The bottom line is that, despite much discussion on the "lessons" to be learned from the failure of the Bicesse Accords, and international investment in a much more costly UN operation, the second peace process also collapsed. International opinion shifted

decisively against Jonas Savimbi's UNITA army, which was preserved intact despite repeated announcements that demobilization had been completed. Sanctions on UNITA's key diamond exports (see Economics section below) were imposed as the process foundered in 1988 rather than at the beginning to facilitate implementation of the agreement. And Angolan popular disillusionment, already profound with respect to the internal belligerents, was also focused on the outside actors whose strategies for bringing peace were beset with an apparently incurable tendency to mistake words for reality.

### **Issue for Further Study**

The reasons for the successive failures of peace agreements in Angola in the 1990s are, as one would expect, hotly disputed both by the internal and external parties to the war and by those who have played some role in mediating seemingly endless rounds of negotiations (the U.S., paradoxically, at times played both the roles of belligerent and mediator). The issue is far too complex for treatment in this short study guide. Those who are interested should seek out sources in a good research library, as the sources available on-line are very limited.

Several diplomats who have written their own accounts of this period. Margaret Anstee, who headed the UN operation in Angola (UNAVEM II) during implementation of the Bicesse Accords, wrote *Orphan of the Cold War : The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process, 1992-93* (London: St. Martin's Press 1996). Ambassador Paul Hare, who now heads the U.S.-Angola Chamber of Commerce, and was U.S. special representative to the peace process from 1993 to 1998, wrote *Angola's Last Best Chance for Peace: An Insider's Account of the Peace Process* (US Institute of Peace, 1998).

There is no comprehensive analytical study to date that makes good use of Angolan as well as international sources. The Human Rights Watch report *Angola Unravels* is the most accessible and well-informed factual summary. Shorter analytical studies that are available include C. Knudsen, A. Mundt and I. W. Zartman, "Peace Agreements: The Case of Angola" (<http://www accord.org.za/publications/casestudy/2000-01/contents.htm>); William Minter, "Lessons to be Learned from the Angolan Elections: Reliable Guides or Misleading Judgements," in Rukhsana Siddiqui, *Subsaharan Africa in the 1990s* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997). A very well informed and carefully reasoned comparative analysis is Thomas Ohlson, *Power Politics and Peace Policies: Intra-State Conflict Resolution in Southern Africa* (Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Resolution, 1998). An analysis and advocacy statement by US and European non-governmental organizations on implementation of the Lusaka process can be found at:

<http://www.africapolicy.org/docs96/ang9603.1.htm> and

<http://www.africapolicy.org/docs96/ang9603.2.htm>

The UN Secretary-General's regular reports on peacekeeping missions since 1994 are available on-line at <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc.htm>

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## Geography

Located in southwestern Africa, Angola is roughly square in shape, with a maximum width of about 800 miles (1,300 kilometers), Angola covers 481,354 square miles (1,246,700 square kilometers), including the Cabinda enclave, which is located along the Atlantic coast just north of the Angola-Congo (Kinshasa) border. Angola is bordered to the far northwest by Congo (Brazzaville), to the north and northeast by Congo (Kinshasa), to the east by Zambia, to the south by Namibia, and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. There are 1,025 miles of coastline.

The coastal plain in Angola is narrow, mostly between 30 to 90 miles in width. From the plain the land rises sharply in a series of escarpments, leading to the interior plateau which forms the eastern two-thirds of the country. Even before the recent war-related population movements which have swelled Angola's coastal cities, the density of population in most of the country was sparse and highly uneven, with densities above 40 persons per square kilometer only in the rural areas inland from Luanda and on the central plateau around Huambo and Bié. Vast portions of eastern and southern Angola have densities of less than 5 persons per square kilometer, and the most remote area in the southeast was known in colonial times as "terras do fim do mundo" (lands at the end of the earth).

Urban population growth has been extremely high due to war-related displacement, and some estimates indicate over 50% in urban areas, as compared to only 14% in 1970. Luanda's population is estimated at over 3 million, or approximately one-fourth of the population of the country. Another 3 million are estimated to be living in other major cities of Lobito, Benguela, Huambo, Lubango, Malanje, and Uíge.

The Benguela Railway, which crosses Angola, served in colonial times as the outlet for trade of the Belgian Congo's copperbelt. But international traffic was suspended entirely due to the war in the early 1980s, and in the early 1990s the segment linking the interior to the coast were also cut. An Italian company began rehabilitation of the line in 1997.

With the continuation of war, road traffic is also precarious in Angola. Passenger as well as commercial traffic and relief deliveries depend on costly air transport. The map of the domestic routes of TAAG (the Angolan national airline), shown on the next map, is revealing both of the country's focus on the capital and of the remoteness of areas beyond the provincial capitals served by the airline..



Source: [http://www.taag-airlines.com/rota\\_nac.htm](http://www.taag-airlines.com/rota_nac.htm)



The most recent color version of this map can be found on-line, in PDF format, at:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/angola.pdf>



Angola has a tropical climate with a marked dry season. Most of the coast, except in the far north, is very dry. Vegetation over most of the country is savanna grasslands with scattered trees.

Angola's central plateau has significant agricultural potential. Indeed, Angola is potentially one of the richest agricultural countries in Africa. In the mid-1970s it was self-sufficient in foodstuffs and exported a surplus of maize. Yet the war and the failure to reestablish economic connections between city and countryside mean that this potential is not yet exploited. For the 2000/2001 marketing year, for example, the FAO estimated domestic cereal supply at 540,000 tons, leaving import requirements at 753,000 tons.

#### **Subject for Further Study: Cabinda**

With less than one percent of Angola's land area and less than two percent of its population, the enclave of Cabinda produces between 60 and 70 percent of the country's total oil production. It is separated from the rest of the country by the Congo River and by a narrow strip of land which is part of Congo (Kinshasa), and is bordered on the north by Congo (Brazzaville).

Cabindan nationalists seeking independence for the territory have had significant support in the territory since the 1960s, but have been divided into numerous factions and had little success in gaining support for their cause internationally or in gaining greater benefits for the people of Cabinda from either the colonial or post-colonial government of Angola.

FLEC (Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda) was founded from a merger of several other groups in 1963, and small groups of guerrillas associated with the group have been sporadically active since then. FLEC successfully called for a boycott of the 1992 elections, and only 12% of potential voters participated. The Catholic bishop of Cabinda was quoted as saying that over 95% of Cabindans would vote for independence if offered the choice.

Without that option – sure to be rejected by any Angolan government – Cabindans currently give little active support either to FLEC or to the government. The provincial government receives 10% of the oil taxes paid by Cabinda Gulf. Cabindans occupy most

top posts in the provincial government, and a few Cabindans are prominent in the national government.

However, negotiations between the Angolan government and some FLEC factions have not led to a stable settlement. Nor have oil revenues been applied to significant economic development in the province. Most observers see continuation of low-scale violence as the most likely prospect.

For a short background article about Cabinda in French, see

[http://www.chez.com/cabinda/francais/enclave\\_or\\_noir.htm](http://www.chez.com/cabinda/francais/enclave_or_noir.htm)

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## Politics

The politics of the post-colonial period was, and still is, fundamentally shaped by the unresolved war. Yet the issues that ostensibly defined the conflict – Cold War, the liberation of Southern Africa, and party ideologies – are little help in defining the real differences between the parties. Moreover, while party allegiances hold some relationship to ethnic and regional divisions, as seen in the 1992 election results, that too would be a highly misleading prism for understanding Angolan politics. The tangled history of the war, the extent to which political alliances are linked to private business and personal connections, and the widespread disillusionment of Angolans with all political leaders allow for no simple interpretation of the current political scene.

While no third party has effectively challenged the preeminence of the principal protagonists of the war, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), neither group is a coherent unity. MPLA party loyalists are only a small fraction of those who trace their political roots to that movement. The UNITA heritage is disputed by the army following Jonas Savimbi in the bush, others who participate in parliamentary politics under the UNITA label, and still others who have joined the government while not abandoning their political heritage. The most popular political option in Angola is almost certainly "none of the above."

In formal terms the political system under the MPLA prior to the Bicesse peace agreement of 1991 was a one-party state on a Marxist-Leninist basis. In practice party membership was small and bureaucrats who were not party members also had substantial influence. Factionalism within party and state, together with the inefficiency inherited from the colonial bureaucracy, often paralyzed policy formation and implementation. The first national People's Assembly was elected in 1980, but had relatively little authority. Although the strongest influence within the state was the presidency, in practice even the president had to conciliate many internal factions.

While it is little discussed in almost all accounts of Angola, the abortive coup of May 1977 led by MPLA dissident Nito Alves, in which key party officials were killed by the abortive coup-makers, and unknown numbers were executed in the wake of the coup's failure, was decisive in solidifying a climate of suspicion and fear within party ranks, which still has profound effects in Angolan society.

UNITA's administration in zones under its control was also based on Marxist- Leninist principles, although for public relations purposes the movement exalted a commitment to Western democratic values. Control was far more consistently implemented than in zones controlled by the government, and was highly centralized in the person of Jonas Savimbi. Internal rivals and protest were ruthlessly repressed, although little information about these purges leaked to the outside world until the late 1980s.

Constitutional reforms enacted by the government during 1991 provided for a national assembly and a president, each elected by direct suffrage on a secret ballot. While separate rights and duties were defined for both branches, the constitution retained a strong role for the president. Details of the electoral system were specified in an electoral law passed in April 1992.

The electoral system provided for presidential and legislative votes during the same two-day period, with voters qualified by registration cards distributed earlier in the year. It was administered by a National Electoral Commission chaired by a former FNLA supporter and including representatives of all parties. All parties were entitled to have representatives at every level down to the local polling station; both the MPLA and UNITA were present in almost every station. A second round was required in the presidential contest if no candidate gained more than 50%. Five legislative seats were allocated to each province, for a total of 70; within each province these were allocated proportionately by the D'Hondt method. In addition, 130 were allocated on the basis of the national vote.

During the election campaign, none of the new small parties, or the historical FNLA, managed to gain much support, despite popular disillusionment with the government and fear of UNITA. (The oft-cited slogan in Luanda was "MPLA thieves, UNITA murderers." Most people may have voted against rather than for, but felt they did not really have a third choice.) Election campaigning was relatively free and open in the cities, with all parties having equal access to free television time. Freedom of movement was difficult in the countryside, however, particularly in areas under UNITA control. Peace treaty provisions mandating demobilization of troops and formation of a new national army were delayed on both sides, and systematically evaded by UNITA. During the campaign President dos Santos projected an image of peacemaker, while Savimbi's belligerent style shocked many Angolans.

The election itself was conducted in an orderly fashion, with observers of the rival parties present at polling stations, and a total of almost 800 international observers from the UN, and other private and public delegations. The observers generally rated the process free and fair, and there was a high turn-out of over 90%. The MPLA won 54% in the

legislature, as compared with 34% for UNITA. President dos Santos, of the MPLA, fell just short of 50%, compared with 40% for UNITA leader Savimbi, requiring a run-off. UNITA rejected the results as fraudulent, however, and Angola returned to war.

For Angolans of all political persuasions, the election was a time of hope, and its aftermath a profound disillusionment. Although many saw it as a vote for peace rather than an exercise in choice of leadership, and in rural areas many probably doubted the secrecy of the ballot and voted for those they feared the most, the commitment to make the process work at local levels was impressive. Although the results revealed the expected regional concentration of votes, substantial minorities in almost every province voted against their presumed "natural" allegiance, as shown in the table of provincial votes on the next page.

### **Presidential Election Results, September 1992**

Candidate	Votes	Percent of Total
José Eduardo dos Santos (MPLA)	1,953,335	49.57
Jonas Malheiro Savimbi (UNITA)	1,579,298	40.07
Alberto Neto (PDA)	85,249	2.16
Holden Roberto (FNLA)	83,135	2.11
Honorato Lando (PDLA)	75,789	1.92
Luís dos Passos (PRD)	58,121	1.47
Five other candidates (<1% each)	105,596	2.68

- MPLA - Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
- UNITA - National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
- PDA - Angolan Democratic Party
- FNLA - National Front for the Liberation of Angola
- PDLA - Democratic Liberal Party of Angola
- PRD - Democratic Renewal Party

In April 1997, after repeated delays, the elected UNITA deputies took their seats in the national assembly, and a Government of National Unity and Reconciliation (GURN) was officially established.. However, Savimbi refused to participate, maintained his army, and the war resumed full-scale by the end of 1998. Almost all of UNITA's historical leaders other than Savimbi had by that time opted for the city rather than the bush.

While the dominant political discourse continued to reflect the historical bipolar division between the MPLA and UNITA, and the failure to resolve the war continued to dominate the political agenda, a wider range of political views was gradually reflected in the diverse political origins of government and army personnel, in the official "opposition" within the national assembly, and, most significantly, in the cautious emergence of independent press and civil society organizations, including those linked to the churches.

### **Legislative Election Results, by Province and Party**



Province	% MPLA	% UNITA	% Others	Total Votes
Cunene	87.64	4.58	7.78	102,958
Kwanza Norte	86.26	5.62	8.12	118,493
Malanje	78.04	11.00	10.96	238,247
Cabinda	77.62	16.09	6.29	9,595
Kwanza Sul	71.90	19.96	8.14	306,098
Luanda	70.66	18.75	10.59	751,865
Bengo	69.91	17.61	12.48	78,085
Namibe	66.65	24.14	9.21	63,700
Lunda Norte	65.52	7.46	27.02*	118,578
Huíla	63.73	25.97	10.30	385,925
Moxico	58.49	24.06	17.45	113,437
Lunda Sul	53.81	3.87	42.32*	69,335
Uíge	51.88	30.20	17.92	262,474
Benguela	37.36	53.58	9.06	486,451
Zaire	31.66	25.58	42.76**	63,922
Kuando Kubango	21.75	71.54	6.71	122,735
Huambo	15.52	73.40	11.08	394,107
Bié	13.75	76.97	9.28	266,260
All provinces	53.74	34.10	12.16	3,952,265

\* The PRS won 15.66% in Lunda Norte and 41.55% in Lunda Sul.

\*\* The FNLA won 31.37% in Zaire province.

The civil society initiatives that have emerged since 1998 involve a variety of groups and coalitions, and key participants have a conscious strategy of maintaining openness and flexibility rather than creating another "party" seen as seeking power for itself. There are common themes, however, illustrated in the statement excerpted below, one of the earliest of such public statements.

## **PEACE THROUGH DIALOGUE**

Luanda, April 2, 1999

The Angolan Group of Reflection for Peace

(Daniel Ntoni Nzinga - Reverend; Carlinhos Zassala - Professor of Agostinho Neto University; Filomeno Vieira Lopes - Economist; Francisco Tunga Alberto - General Secretary, FONGA; Rafael Marques - Journalist)

[full text available at <http://www.africapolicy.org/docs99/ang9906a.htm> ]

The time has come to address, in the public fora, the promotion of dialogue as the only way to seek adequate solutions to end the Angolan holocaust. Such a dialogue must be inclusive, in regards to all the groups and different aspirations of civil society, and throw away the idea that without foreigners Angolans are incapable of talking to each other, and devise their own way to achieve national reconciliation. War, contrary to what has been announced by the government, will not end with war. It will continue to devastate the Angolan people and their poor material belongings. ...

On the other hand, it seems to be rather difficult to talk about peace and peace initiatives, without first addressing the issue of justice. The act of acting out of the truth of the facts. ...

Concerning the current situation of Angola, a lot has been said and it is enough to generate an internal wave, a wave in favour of the defenceless victims that are slaughtered every day throughout Angola. The least Angolans can do for themselves, at this point, is to abandon fear and challenge the terror so as to call upon the reason of power holders, who do not hold the truth, to answer for the Angolan holocaust.

It is unjustifiable for Angolans, who are still sensible, to continue lamenting the fate of their sisters and brothers from Malange, Kuito, Maquela do Zombo, Andulo and Bailundo, as if it was a foreign holocaust.

The sentiment being forged in Luanda, the capital of Angola, whereby all the decision making and social definition centres are concentrated, must not continue to scorn what is happening elsewhere in the country.

We have been witnessing, with deep concern and sorrow, incitation to hatred, to death penalty of those labelled as enemies, and thus, we see an Angolan sowing hatred in the chest of other Angolan, on behalf of a power that does not serve the people.

In mainly the rural areas, civilians are being killed just for the sake of having been left alive by one of the belligerents, under the accusation of being informers of the enemy. Those who sometimes refuse to join any of the warring parties often also face the same destiny.

Since the resumption of the all out war, last December, more than 700,000 people have been forced to leave their homes and are living as displaced in inhumane conditions, relying exclusively on the mercy of the humanitarian industry. The dead are no longer being counted, neither the civilians nor soldiers while material loss is also being unaccounted for. ...

War has not been serving the Angolan people. They do not want war, regardless of its motivation, because this is a war against themselves and in which they are the only defeated ones.

No one has the right to talk on behalf of the people to carry out this civil war, either with the argument of defending the sovereignty or of resistance. People have not been consulted.

It no longer matters to point the finger to who is doing the war for the power and/or for enrichment or the maintenance of individual privileges. Therefore, it is important to gather together all the civil society sensibilities, eager for peace and social justice in order to converge the utmost public interests and peaceful struggle for a common and just cause. To end with the hatred and political intrigue which foments the division and destruction of the Angolan people.

As a reminder, successive peace processes for Angola have failed one after the other due to the lack of political willingness from both government and UNITA, in tune with the immediate interests of the International community in Angola.

There is still an opportunity for the resolution of the civil war: the recourse to civil society is the only surviving factor to set the fundamentals for overcoming the war. There is an urgent need for the intervention of civil society, with its own and autonomous voice, with the absolute denial of the war idea and as the main factor of harmonising all interests, humanly justifiable, which exist in society.

The absolute promotion of an internal dialogue, and with every local stakeholder, is the only way to seek adequate solutions towards the end of the Angolan holocaust.

Since Alvor, passing by Mombaça, Gbadolite, Bicesse, Addis Ababa, Abidjan up to Lusaka, the peace talks for Angola have always been mediated and pressed by foreigners.

As Angolans, we have to abdicate the alarms of our intolerance which leads us to wars, and then having to wait for outsiders, supposedly neutral, to mediate our crisis.

Angolans must be able and bear the responsibility for developing an internal capacity for mediating the conflict, from the bottom to the top. We must show our political and civic maturity in the resolution of the conflict's causes which generate violence among us.

It is time to join hands, unite mind and hearts, and to work together towards the common goal: PEACE.

Among other related sources, see also the web site for the Catholic-initiated Congresso pela Paz:<http://www.ecclesia.pt/destaque/angola.htm>

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## **Economy**

### **The Post-Colonial Economy**

In 1973, the last and best year for Angola's colonial economy, oil and coffee contributed 30% and 27% respectively to export earnings. One-third of the coffee production came from African farmers. Maize production was over 700,000 tons, including over 100,000 tons for export. Diamonds and iron ore also provided significant export earnings. But this system, which showed almost 8% growth rates between 1960 and 1974, still depended on administrative force for most agricultural production, and on Portuguese manpower for key economic functions in every sector except oil. Production on Portuguese-run farms provided 86% of agricultural production. Portuguese bush traders provided the commercial link tying peasants to markets. Settlers provided both markets and manpower for a growing industrial sector.

Once this economic structure collapsed, in the wake of the settler exodus and war of 1975-76, it was never restored or replaced on more than a piecemeal basis. Efforts to do so were impeded by the war and by ineffective policies, but also because there was an easily available alternative that was not affected by the settler departure. Oil production, which began in 1968 and grew rapidly, was under the control of large multinational companies--not the Portuguese. Independent Angola worked closely and cooperatively with the global oil industry, and oil revenues provided the essential resources both for defense and for feeding the burgeoning urban population. By the mid-1980s oil consistently provided over 90% of export earnings and over 50% of state revenues. Much of the rest of the economy, with the exception of diamond production, fed indirectly from oil revenues. The countryside sank into neglect.

It is an oft remarked irony that the economy of an allegedly Marxist state depended almost entirely on Western big business. And there was nothing uniquely socialist about the national oil company Sonangol, which took charge of the country's oil resources in 1976. The petroleum law of 1978 established joint ventures with private companies and production sharing agreements by which foreign companies served as contractors to Sonangol. More than twenty companies, including American, French, Italian, Japanese and Brazilian, were involved by the mid-1980s. The largest was still Cabinda Gulf, which became a subsidiary of Chevron in 1984.

The largest oil fields were off Cabinda, but other sites, mostly offshore, extended south of the Zaire River and down the Angolan coast to the Namibian border. Oil production rose steadily, from under 200,000 barrels a day in 1980 to more than 500,000 barrels a day in the early 1990s. New oil investment averaged over \$400 million a year in the 1980s, and even after the return to war in 1992 oil companies were bidding actively for exploration permits. In 1993, the Economist Intelligence Unit noted that Angola had "an excellent track record for exploration drilling successes and amicable industry-government relations." The easy money from expanding oil production was enough to compensate for falling world oil prices. While oil prices dropped from a high of almost \$39 a barrel in January 1981 to \$26 a barrel in 1985, Angolan oil revenues still grew from \$1.3 billion to \$1.9 billion in the same period. Even when prices dropped below \$20 a barrel after 1985, revenues continued to climb. But with rising payments due on earlier debt, balance of payments deficits mounted, and available funds for imports dropped drastically. The

shock both led to internal plans to move in a free market direction and accelerated efforts to reach agreement on membership in the World Bank and IMF.

The pattern, however, had been set. Under ideal conditions, perhaps, much of the oil revenue would have been invested in rehabilitating the shattered transport infrastructure, and in providing tools and consumer goods for sale to peasant farmers in exchange for food supplies for the cities. Instead, revenues went overwhelmingly for defense and to import food and other consumer goods for the cities. Despite high defense expenditures, secure land transport to rural areas became ever more elusive as conflict mounted in the 1980s. The most productive areas for grain were in the central plateau and further south in Huíla. But urban population was concentrated in Luanda, linked to provincial capitals mainly by expensive air transport.

The difficulties were real: war damage, the lack of commercial networks, and the inefficiency of state structures set up to fill the gap. But the failure was compounded by the fact that money for imports was available. Feeding the cities with imports, arguably a necessary short-term expedient, became a structural feature of the economy. The countryside became no more than an afterthought. The enclave effect of the oil sector, common to any less developed oil-producing country, was multiplied both by the disappearance of the colonial trading networks and by insurgent attacks aimed precisely at breaking the remaining links between city and countryside. Nor was there any strong countervailing force within the government to campaign against the path of least resistance: imports paid for with oil money. Little was left over for productive investment in development of any kind.

As a result, the vast majority of rural dwellers reverted to subsistence production. State farms, along with a handful of private commercial farms, continued to produce export crops but at drastically lower production levels. Abandoned Portuguese farms fell to state control, but in practice much of their land was appropriated by individual peasant families. Commercialized production of domestic staples stagnated at less than 10% of pre-independence levels. For most peasants, there was no opportunity to sell a surplus, and few goods to buy if they did sell. The state had only a fraction of the capacity needed to administer the enterprises, and only about 3% of the government budget was allocated to agriculture.

As long as they were not directly touched by war, peasant families were largely left to their own devices. But they had little access to outside goods, hampering even subsistence production. In the mid-1980s maize seed inputs were less than 10% of the quantity required. The supply of hoes also consistently fell short. Families increasingly turned to more resilient crops such as cassava, millet and sorghum. Tens of thousands fled war and sought opportunities for survival in the cities. The urban population grew from 18% of the total in 1975 to 31% in 1986. By 1990 over half Angola's population was estimated to be living in urban areas.

Although only about half of industrial enterprises came under state control at independence, leaving a substantial private sector, industrial production also plummeted.

Output in 1977 was only 18% of that in 1973. By 1985 output had recovered, but only to 54% of the 1973 total, constrained by lack of management and shortage of raw materials. Urban consumers therefore not only lacked domestic agricultural supplies, but faced shortages of manufactured goods. Even light industries such as textiles and shoes fell significantly short of recovering 1973 production levels.

Oil monies were sufficient to maintain a minimum level of imports for towns, but little more. Urban consumer demand was not satisfied, there was only a trickle left over for rural areas, and essential inputs for both agriculture and industry were in short supply. There was no hope of addressing the fundamental issues unless the link between city and countryside was restored, so that the food deficit would be met by domestic production and peasants would have income and goods to purchase from the market. State policies did not cut the link initially--that was the result of the first stage of war in 1975-76 and the Portuguese exodus. Nor is it clear that alternate free-market policies could have restored the links under war conditions. But there is no doubt that state policies failed to address the crisis. The survival mode of dependence on oil-bought imports, allocated by an inefficient bureaucracy, was one with no ready exit.

Price-controlled goods sold in state shops provided only minimal supplies to the urban population, with access pegged to employment. Salaried employees (*responsáveis*) had access to somewhat better supplies, and a small number of top officials enjoyed comfortable living standards on official rations. But, in the words of the Economist Intelligence Unit, the price control system was "so extensive and rigid, yet also so disorganized and incoherent, that it produced extreme distortions of relative values." The result was a burgeoning parallel economy, illegal and unregulated but tolerated by the state, where free enterprise and corruption ran rampant. Average citizens had to resort to the parallel economy for survival, and entrepreneurs in and out of state employment found opportunities for large profits. The goods came from resale at higher prices of purchases from state shops, from products allocated to workers at their place of work and, increasingly, from theft and fraud. Everyone had to have an *esquema* (scheme) for combining complex barter of goods and favors with transactions in Angolan kwanzas and hard currency.

Behind the facade of a state-run economy, therefore, existed another economy highly responsive to market forces. But it was only partially related to production, as peasants and rural traders found transport possible and urban vendors hawked small-scale crafts. Instead it consisted for the most part of recirculating imported goods, while draining off the energies of the work force from their formal employment. Those who made money in this free-wheeling environment included not only those with political clout but also significant numbers of Kikongo-speaking entrepreneurs returned from Zaire and Umbundu-speaking merchants from the central plateau.

Oil both saved the economy from total collapse and postponed the search for other solutions. With falling world oil prices, Angola introduced a series of economic adjustment plans between 1983 and 1990. The plans envisaged adjustments in exchange rates and prices, curbs on imports, encouragement for rural producers, scaled-back

government payrolls and a reduced role for state planning. But only the 1990 program, a year after Angola joined the World Bank, was implemented in more than a fragmentary way. Angola's balance of payments turned consistently negative beginning in 1986, with a \$300 million deficit, and was running an annual deficit of over \$900 million by 1989.

### **Current Economic Situation: Oil and Diamonds**

Angola's economy is dominated by oil, which accounted for 88% of the \$5.3 billion of export earnings in 1999. Almost all the remaining 12% export value came from diamonds, with all other commodities coming to less than half of one percent.

Angola is sub-Saharan Africa's second largest oil producer behind Nigeria. Almost all production is in Cabinda or offshore, adjacent to Cabinda as well as along the coast north and south of Luanda. Production has quadrupled since 1980, averaging 766,000 barrels a day in 1999.

While the current production comes from shallow-water wells, deep-water wells are expected to provide an increasing fraction of production in coming years, with the oil industry expected to invest as much as \$5 billion a year in new exploration and production.



In addition to royalties, foreign companies pay a "signature bonus" for the right to operate a given exploration block. In 1998-1999, for example, BP Amoco, TotalFinaElf and ExxonMobil paid a total of \$900 million for rights in deepwater blocks 31-33. Depending on such bonuses and on the international price of oil, revenue from oil may vary widely from year to year.

In 1999, oil revenues paid to the government accounted for 87.2% of government revenue and 42.4% of gross domestic product. However, these figures may even underestimate the importance of oil given that much of oil revenue coming to the Angolan national oil company Sonangol does not appear in the government budget.

Accountability for oil revenue has been a major issue both for international financial institutions and for non-governmental critics of the Angolan government.

#### **Subject for Further Study: Angola's Oil Economy**

##### **Sources to consult:**

(1) For current oil statistics see the US Department of Energy country report, on-line at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/international/angola.html>.

(2) For non-governmental critiques on oil revenue, corruption, and war:  
Global Witness, *A Crude Awakening*.

<http://www.oneworld.org/globalwitness/reports/angola99/cover.htm>

For additional Global Witness documents, see:

<http://www.oneworld.org/globalwitness/#oil>

Human Rights Watch, *The International Monetary Fund's Staff Monitoring Program for Angola: The Human Rights Implications*, June 2000

<http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/06/ango-0623-back.htm>

Unlike oil, Angola's diamonds are not located offshore, but in the interior. Most are in the remote Lunda Norte province adjacent to Congo (Kinshasa). Control over the diamond fields has fluctuated with the fortunes of war between the Angolan government and UNITA. The diamond fields, which include both alluvial diamonds and kimberlite pipes, are infamous for their "Wild West" security environment, in which private enterprise smuggling coexists with areas controlled by the government or UNITA..

Recorded exports have increased significantly in recent years, with greater government control over key fields. In 1995 exports worth \$168 million were recorded, rising to \$629 million in 1999.

In the war in the 1990s, diamond exports provided the most important source of funds for UNITA's arms purchases. In 1998, Global Witness estimated that UNITA gained \$3.7 billion from the diamond trade between 1992 and 1998. The international community was slow to act, however, and sanctions on illegal diamond exports were only imposed in 1998. Since then, despite violations, the sanctions are generally regarded as having weakened UNITA's military capacity. Along with the role of diamonds in fueling the wars in Sierra Leone and in the Congo, the Angolan case has helped spark an international debate on "conflict diamonds."

### **Subject for Further Study: Angola's Diamonds**

#### **Sources to consult:**

Global Witness, *A Rough Trade*

<http://www.oneworld.org/globalwitness/reports/Angola/cover.htm>

For summary see: <http://www.africapolicy.org/docs98/ang9812.htm>

United Nations, *Report of the Panel of Experts on Violations of Security Council Sanctions Against UNITA* ("Fowler Report," March 2000)

[http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/angolareport\\_eng.htm](http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/angolareport_eng.htm)

### **Current Economic Situation: Overview**



[For the most recent statistical information on the economy, see the staff reports from the International Monetary Fund, available on the IMF web site. The September 2000 report is at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=3686.0>]

The latest economic plans for Angola have been formulated in close coordination with the International Monetary Fund, in terms of an agreement for monitoring by Fund staff. Non-governmental critics of government policy agree with the international financial institutions in the call for transparency of government finances, but are also critical of the hardship for ordinary Angolans entailed by macroeconomic adjustment measures.

Despite its current income from oil exports and new capital investment in oil, Angola still consistently runs deficits both on its current account and its overall balance of payments. In 1999, for example, a positive current trade balance of \$2.1 billion and capital account balance of \$1.6 billion were offset by a negative balance on service and transfer payments of \$3.9 billion. Angola's long-term external debt at the end of 1999 was \$8.8 billion, 43% of it in arrears.

Inflation has been reduced from its crushing levels of the mid-1990s, but was still high and widely variable - 107% in 1998, 248% in 1999, and 325% in 2000. For all but a small minority of Angolans, economic survival requires extraordinary creativity and reliance on the informal sector.

According to the United Nations Development Program, in 1999 sixty percent of Angola's population were below the poverty line. According to the same source, between 1995 and 1999, the income of the richest 10 percent of families increased by 43 percent compared to a reduction of 59 percent for the poorest families. (Cited in FAO Assessment Mission, 17 May 2000, at

<http://www.fao.org/gIEWS/english/alertes/2000/SRANG500.htm>)

Despite its oil wealth, Angola was ranked 146 out of 162 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Report for 2001.

The humanitarian situation continued to be one of the worst in the world, with large parts of the country even inaccessible to relief operations, as shown in this UN map from May 2001.



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## Languages and Literature

As with almost all statistics concerning Angolan population, the numbers given for languages spoken in Angola rely on data that is decades out of date, and should be

taken with a great deal of caution. The "ethnic map" often seen derives from one prepared on the basis of the 1960 census, and has been recycled and updated since then without the benefit of a new nation-wide census (the 1970 census did not ask the question about language, and the 1983 census results are available only for Luanda and a few other areas).

The rough proportions are as follows. The largest language groups, all closely related Bantu languages, are Umbundu, spoken by the Ovimbundu people of the central plateau (approximately 36 percent), Kimbundu, spoken by the Mbundu people of Luanda and its hinterlands (approximately 26 percent), and Kikongo, spoken by the Bakongo people of the north (approximately 13 percent). Other Bantu languages include Chokwe, Cuanhama and Nhaneca-Humbe.

Population movement, particularly into urban areas, and the widespread use of Portuguese may have significantly altered these figures. A recent commentary notes the existence of many "pluri-ethnic" families. Particularly in urban areas, bilingualism in Portuguese and one or more African languages is common, as is the predominant use of Portuguese by people of diverse ethnic origins.

Despite the multiple conflicts afflicting the country, there is also a strong sense of national identity, or *angolanidade*. This is reflected in various aspects of culture, including dance, sculpture and literature. Literature, and poetry in particular, is closely associated with Angola's public culture, as illustrated in the extraordinarily high sales of books by Angolan authors published in the first years after independence by the Angolan Writers Union. As many as 20 books a year appeared, with some editions of 20,000 or more selling out in a few weeks.

Those interested should consult the books on Lusophone literature in the bibliography. A search on the web for "poesia angolana" or "literatura angolana" will also turn up a few excerpts, mostly in Portuguese. The novels of Pepetela, some available in English translation, are extremely popular in Angola and also recommended as accessible portraits of Angolan society.

Excerpted below, several poems by the first president of Angola.

### **Agostinho Neto**

Agostinho Neto, a medical doctor and first president of independent Angola, was also one of his country's most distinguished poets. He died in 1979. Many of his poems can be found in Portuguese on the web, or in collections of Lusophone African poetry. The most famous published collection is *Sagrada Esperança*, published in Angola by the Angolan Writers Union, and in English translation (*Sacred Hope*) by Tanzanian Publishing House and later by UNESCO. Below are brief excerpts from several of his best-known poems.

Amanhã  
entoaremos hinos à liberdade

quando comemorarmos  
a data da abolição desta escravatura

Nós vamos em busca de luz  
os teus filhos Mãe  
(todas os mães negras  
cujos filhos partiram)  
Vão em busca da vida - *Adeus à Hora da Largada*, 1957

Tomorrow  
we will sing songs of freedom  
when we celebrate  
the date this slavery ends

We are going in search of light  
your children Mother  
(All the black mothers  
whose children left them)  
are going in search of light - *Farewell at the Hour of Parting*, 1957

Latas pregadas em paus  
fixadas na terra  
fazem a casa  
Os farrapos completam  
a paisagem íntima  
A velhice vem cedo - *Civilização Ocidental*

Tins fixed to stakes  
driven in the earth  
make the house  
Rags complete  
the intimate landscape  
Old age comes quickly - *Western Civilization*

Aquí no cárcere  
a raiva contida no peito  
espero pacientemente  
o acumular das nuvens  
ao sopro da História  
Ninguém  
impedirá a chuva. - *Aqui no Cárcere*, 1960

Here in prison  
rage contained in my breast  
I patiently wait  
for the clouds to gather

blown by the wind of history  
No one can stop the rain. - *Here in Prison*, 1960

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## Religion

Statistics of religious affiliation in Angola are highly uncertain. The 1960 census counted 51% Catholic, 17% Protestant and 32% other (traditional African religions). A web page dedicated to the Pope's visit to Angola in 1992 claims 59% Catholic, 12% Protestant, and 29% "animist," while a "World Church's Handbook" gives 29% Catholic and 41% "other Christian." Particularly in the peri-urban areas, small churches with no affiliation with major denominations have grown rapidly in recent years.

While the churches are seen as one of the important forces now working for peace and national unity, they also have a complicated relationship to the political conflicts of the late colonial and post-colonial periods. In the modern colonial period the Roman Catholic Church was the state church, and the hierarchy strongly endorsed the colonial dictatorship and the war against the independence movements. Protestant churches were strictly controlled, and suspected as disloyal. From the perspective of the far-right colonial regime, Protestantism was seen as virtually equivalent to Communism.

Among the lower ranks of the Catholic clergy, and particular among missionaries from other European countries, there was dissent to this position and some support for African nationalism. The Vatican as well symbolically took a different position when Pope Paul VI met with leaders of African liberation movements in 1970, including Agostinho Neto of MPLA. In the post-colonial period, with Africanization of the Catholic hierarchy in the country, different leaders within the Catholic Church have taken a range of stands on the country's internal conflicts.

The principal Protestant churches, founded by non-Portuguese foreign missionaries, had links with parts of the country corresponding with the three major nationalist movements, thus adding their own distinct overlapping strand to divisions within the country. The Baptists, with missionaries from Britain, had their closest links to the FNLA; the Methodists, with missionaries from the United States, their closest links to the MPLA; and the United Church of Christ, with missionaries from Canada and the United States, their closest links to UNITA.

Despite this historical background, however, it would be a serious mistake to use the links between ethnic background, religious background, and political position as fixed stereotypes. The churches are a significant social force of their own at grassroots level, and one of the most important components of popular Angolan opinion in favor of peace.

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## **International Relations**

Like other Portuguese colonies, and like the Belgian Congo to its north, Angola as a modern territory was defined geographically by rivalries and compromises between larger powers that allowed small European countries to assume control over vast territories they lacked the capacity to govern. It is no accident that some of the most intractable post-colonial conflicts in Africa afflict these territories, which fell subject not only to their own internal divisions but also to multiple external forces.

Angola, moreover, is positioned in a fracture zone between central and southern Africa, vulnerable to geopolitical tremors from both directions. Added to the global Cold War and to the attraction of oil and diamond riches, these factors have created complex and indeed contradictory patterns of international relations.

### **The Regional Context**

At the regional level, Angola's post-colonial conflict was decisively affected by the first major Cold War battle in its neighborhood, which took place in Congo (Kinshasa) beginning in 1960. The failure of Angolan nationalists to achieve unity in their war against Portugal was at least in part due to the exile context in the Congo, where the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and its client Joseph Mobutu promoted Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola at the expense of the more leftist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

In the 1975-76 war, this earlier lineup helped to determine the pattern of Cold War intervention at that time (see history section above). In the current period, Angola continues engaged in the complex divisions of its Central African neighbors, with UNITA making use of these countries as supply lines and channels for diamond sales and the Angolan government using its military forces to intervene decisively in the internal conflicts in both Congo (Brazzaville) and Congo (Kinshasa). These relationships involve a complex interaction not only of regional geopolitics but also of commercial rivalries, including foreign companies and state actors with interests in the oil wealth of the region.

Angola is also a part of southern Africa, but among the members of the Southern African Development Community it is the least integrated into the region in both economic and political terms. In contrast to Mozambique, with its economy closely linked to the English-speaking countries that surround it, Angola's significant economic ties are almost entirely outside the continent, to countries engaged in the oil sector or selling goods in exchange for Angola's oil revenues. Linguistic barriers, with French the most common second European language in Angola despite a new emphasis on English, still isolate Angola from the rest of the southern African region.

Thus, while the conflicts over the independence of Namibia and majority rule in South Africa led South Africa to decisive intervention in Angola from the mid- 1970s to the mid-1990s, the spin-off effects of southern African stability in the late 1990s has had more limited effects in Angola. Economic links with South Africa have grown, but the

pattern has resembled that of commercial deals with Angola's other external economic partners rather than effective collaboration for development. The relationship between the Angolan and the South African governments has often been tense, with not infrequent misunderstandings and suspicion from Luanda of the residual influence in Pretoria of UNITA's former military and commercial patrons. Relationships between Angola and Zambia have also been strained by charges over UNITA's use of Zambian territory.

In short, the regional context for Angola has provided little support for stability in Angola, and, in the case of the Congos, made its own large contribution to continued instability.

## **The Global Context**

From the beginning of the 1960s until the mid-1990s, Angola's history was decisively influenced by the Cold War context, as is spelled out in more detail in the history section above. The alliance of the recalcitrant Portuguese dictatorship with NATO in the 1960s and early 1970s, the complex international intervention in the key years of 1974-1976, the collaboration of Washington with Pretoria in sponsoring UNITA's war in the 1980s, and the moves toward a regional settlement in the late 1980s and early 1990s form one thread which has left its legacy long after the motivations of those involved have been decisively altered.

For more background on the period 1975-1992 in particular, see chapter 5, "The Cold War Connection," in William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*. The views of a key U.S. policymaker (Assistant Secretary for African Affairs) can be found in Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa* (New York: Norton, 1992)

Throughout this period, however, another thread was present which now seems to be dominant in Angola's external relations. That thread is, of course, oil, accompanied by the other commercial relationships which are associated with imports based on oil revenues. In this part of the picture, throughout the post-colonial period, even at the height of Cold War antagonism, Angola's key external partners have been the U.S. and France. Oil companies from other countries have also gained smaller stakes. Portugal, Brazil and other European countries have also played important roles in exports to Angola, with South Africa gaining a rising share in recent years.

With Angola predicted to surpass Nigeria as sub-Saharan Africa's primary oil producer, the external relations of the oil sector will likely continue to eclipse other considerations in Angola's external relations.

## **Key Oil Company Players in Angola**

### *Major Players*

Chevron, USA

ExxonMobil, USA  
TotalFinaElf, France/Belgium  
BPAmoco, UK/USA

*Also Involved*

Agip, Italy BHP Petroleum, Australia  
Daewoo/Pedco, South Korea  
Energy Africa, South Africa  
Falcon Oil, Panamanian registration  
Naptha, Israel  
Norsk Hydro, Norway  
Occidental Petroleum, USA  
Ocean Energy, USA  
Petrobras, Brazil  
Petrogal, Portugal  
Petronas, Malaysia  
Prodev International, Swiss registration  
Ranger Oil, Canada  
Shell, UK/Netherlands  
Statoil, Norway  
Texaco, USA

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Note: This bibliography lists only a small selection of books about Angola, and only includes books in English.

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*Other*

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## Angola on the Internet

As of 2001, there is less information from and about Angola available on the web than for many other African countries, in striking contrast to the wide variety of sources on the other major Portuguese-speaking country, Mozambique. What is available on Angola is primarily in Portuguese, and addressed to an Angolan rather than an international audience. Sites in Angola are heavily used, and may be very slow in loading. For web visitors in North America, consulting these sites in late afternoon or evening, when Angolan usage is at its low point, is the most recommended strategy.

Angola's leading commercial internet service provider and web portal is Ebonet (<http://www.ebonet.net>), which has news, background information and a wide variety of other features and links. Angonet (<http://www.angonet.org>), sponsored by the Canadian non-governmental organization Development Workshop, has information from Angolan and other non-governmental organizations.

### General Sites

Angolan Government (Embassy in Washington)

<http://www.angola.org/>

Contains general background on Angola, and English-language documents and press releases from Angolan government.

Angola Peace Monitor

<http://www.anc.org.za/angola/> or <http://www.actsa.org/apm/>

Published since 1995, this monthly bulletin by Action for Southern Africa (London) provides political and economic updates on Angola. A basic reference source.

Library of Congress

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/aotoc.html>

Angola country study. Full book-length study available on-line, in small separate files, published 1989.

UNITA (Jonas Savimbi)

<http://www.kwacha.org/>

This is the perspective on Angola from the wing of UNITA headed by Jonas Savimbi, in English and Portuguese.

## **News Sites**

[allAfrica.com](http://allafrica.com)

<http://allafrica.com/angola/>

Integrated Regional Information Network

<http://www.reliefweb.int/IRIN/archive/angola.phtml>

Worldnews.com

<http://www.angolanews.com/>

Compilation by Angolan Embassy, Washington

<http://www.angola.org/news/news.cfm>

## **Specialized Sites**

Angola Peace Action Network

<http://www.web.net/~iccaf/humanrights/angolainfo/angola.htm>

Reports compiled by the Canadian Inter-Church Coalition on Africa.

Committee to Protect Journalists

[http://www.cpj.org/regions\\_01/africa\\_01/africa\\_01.html](http://www.cpj.org/regions_01/africa_01/africa_01.html)

Updates on press freedom issues.

Food and Agriculture in Angola

<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/basedocs/ang/angtoc1e.htm>

Updates from the Food and Agriculture Organization.

International Monetary Fund

<http://www.imf.org/external/country/AGO/index.htm>

Contains latest economic reports and statistics.

Religion in Angola

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/emorier/Angola.htm>

A collection of links maintained by Eric Morier-Genoud.

US-Angola Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.us-angola.org/>

Includes membership list and other economic news.

US Department of Energy

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/international/angola.html>

Contains most recent data on Angolan oil sector

*Yet More Links on Angola*

While many links are duplicated in the listings on the sites below, many are not.

Governments on the Web

<http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/ao.html>

Stanford University African Studies

<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/angola.html>

University of Pennsylvania African Studies

[http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African\\_Studies/Country\\_Specific/Angola.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Country_Specific/Angola.html)

Columbia University African Studies

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/africa/cuvl/Angola.html>

# ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



**GEORGE P. SHULTZ  
NATIONAL FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER**

School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

# **Self-Study Guide to the Arab Republic of Egypt**

The **Self-Study Guide: Arab Republic of Egypt** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Jordanian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by Dr. Louis J. Cantori, Professor of political science, University of Maryland, Baltimore county. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Cantori.

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First Edition

**April 2003**

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## EGYPT: CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

### Ancient History

5000-304 BC Pharaonic Rule

### Foreign Rule

333-323 BC Construction of Alexandria  
525 BC-640 AD Ptolemaic, Roman, Byzantine Rule  
640 AD Arab Conquest  
1517-1914 Ottoman Rule  
1789-1801 Napoleonic Conquest  
1805-1849 Muhammad Ali  
1882-1914 British Control  
1914-1952 British Control and Interference

### Egyptian Rule

1919 Revolution Against British  
1922-1952 Egyptian Independence-Parliamentary Period

### Republican Egypt-Nasser

July 22, 1952 Egyptian Revolution Led By Free Officers Under Nasser  
1952-1954 Leadership Of Muhammad Naguib  
1952-1970 Presidency of Nasser  
July 26, 1956 Nationalization of the Suez Canal  
Oct. 29-Dec. 22, 1956 British, French, Israeli Invasion  
1958-1961 United Arab Republic(UAR) Egypt, Syria, Yemen  
1960 The Socialization Of The Economy  
September 1962 Egypt Intervenes In The Yemeni Civil War  
June 5, 1967 Israel Invades Egypt  
September 28, 1970 Nasser Dies of Heart Attack and Sadat Is President(October 15,1970)

### Republican Egypt-Sadat(1970-1981)

May15, 1971 “Corrective Revolution” –The Failed Coup  
July 1972 Soviet Advisors Ordered Out  
October 6,1973 Egypt Attacks Israel  
June 5, 1975 After Negotiations, Sadat Reopens The Suez Canal  
November, 1977 Sadat Visits Israel  
1979 Peace treaty with Israel  
October 6, 1981 Sadat Assassinated

Republican Egypt-Mubarak(1981- )

1982	Israeli Withdrawal From Sinai(1979 Peace Treaty)
1987	Second Elected Term
November, 1987	Arab Summit : Arabs Resume Relations With Egypt
1988	Egypt Rejoins Arab League
1991	Egypt Leads Arab Alliance, Iraqi War
1992	Third Elected Term
June, 1995	Attempted Assassination, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
1999	Fourth Elected Term
2000	Parliamentary Elections
2001-2002	Intermediary Diplomatic Role In 2 <sup>nd</sup> Palestinian Intifada

## I. Preliminary

Unlike most such study guides, the present one does not present the important and complex country of Egypt in simple descriptive terms. Instead, the reader is asked to master a couple of interpretive concepts and these concepts then become the thread that is followed throughout. These concepts will not only lay bare the factors of stability and instability in Egyptian politics but they will also prove useful in the understanding of the politics of other Arab states.

The most striking feature of Egypt is the high degree of the unity of its geography, its ethnic make up, its culture and even to a certain degree its politics. This also explains its continuity of history and its stability. It also explains why it is said with some truth that practically anyone can rule Egypt.

It is also the argument of this study guide, however, that in fact Egypt is an example of a dual state. A dual state is one, which can be analytically divided into a political state on the one hand, and a social state on the other. The political state conforms to the conventional view of the state in terms of sovereignty, territorial boundaries, centralized executive authority, a ruling class, a national economy and an army. In the Middle East it is sometimes termed the mukhabarat or security state. It contains no more and probably less than twenty percent of the wealthiest of the population. It is this state that is engaged with in terms of foreign relations and US foreign policy.

The social state consists of the overwhelming numbers of the remainder of the population. To be sure, it consists of a hierarchy of classes such as peasants, workers, small landowners, small businessmen etc but it is not class divisions that are so important as are its group structures. These structures consist of the informal ones of family, peer group and high school/college/military academy graduating classes. Equally important are the formal ones reflecting the division of labor in society such as bar associations, trade unions etc. these

organizations carry out functions necessary for the maintenance of the state. They are in a licensed relationship to the political state in that there actually exists a law of organizations that stipulates the political quietism of these groups. In exchange, these groups are permitted to have a monopoly over these activities at a profit to themselves and as a refuge from the excesses of the authoritarian state. In the case of Egypt and many underdeveloped states, the political state does not penetrate the social state in terms of law or tax collection. It is also where the informal economy operates. It is this theme of the dual state that constitutes the theme of much of what follows. Related to this dualism, is also the controversy of whether Egypt is a “strong” state or a “weak” state. It can be said that the ability to sustain political order and stability makes it “strong” and its inability to develop, makes it “weak”.

## **II. Introduction**

**Unity.** The single most important thing to understand about Egypt is its unity. This unity is determined by the geography of being crammed into the spine of a single north-south river valley. This unity is also that of a single ethnic group, a single language of Arabic, a 90% Sunni Muslim population (approximately 10% of the population is Coptic Christian) itself without serious internal disunity and a common history stretching across millennia in stable epochs of long duration. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century this comes to cumulatively express itself in stable political rule and a deep, self-confident national identity.

**The Land.** In the third century BC, the Greek historian Herodotus noted that “The Nile is Egypt and Egypt is the Nile”. This remains the case today. The Nile originates 5000 miles to the south in Uganda and flows north towards Egypt where it stretches from its southern border with

Sudan northwards for 1500 miles to empty into the Mediterranean Sea. It represents a sliver of narrow green cultivation until it reaches Cairo where it then fans out into a delta possessing the richest agricultural soil on earth. In the delta, it is common to raise three crops a year on a single plot and to multiply this productivity further by planting different crops of different varieties and heights right next to each other. For all practical purposes, Egypt has no measurable annual rainfall so that its only source of water is this river.

The result of this reliance upon the river is that the country has mastered the management of a complex irrigation system for 7,000 years. One scholar has theorized that this has created a top down, politically authoritarian society that he terms a “hydraulic society “ similar to those of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Iraq, the Indus river in India and Yellow river in China.

**The People.** The people of Egypt at first glance appear to be as uniform as the factors of unity suggest. In physical terms they appear to have the physiognomy of the people of pharaonic inscriptions except that they are also the result of significant Arab infusions from the time of the Arab conquest of 644AD onwards. But then there is the ebony of the Nubian people south of Luxor stretching to Sudan who possibly predates the Pharaonic period. If this is not enough to dispel simple generalizations, then there are the people to the south of Cairo in the so-called Said or the “Saidi’s”. In Egyptian burlesque humor these are considered “country bumpkins” while in fact they are a nomadic people who came to Egypt perhaps in the 8<sup>th</sup> century from the Arabian peninsula. To this day, their social structure is that of the Bedouin lineage despite the fact their sedentary agricultural pursuits resemble those of the delta to the north of Cairo. It is said that even now they can trace family genealogies to present day Saudi Arabia. There is a story that one them as a labor migrant to Saudi Arabia showed up on a doorstep introduced himself as a cousin from 1000 years earlier! In fact their Arabic dialect is that of the Arabian peninsular and not that of Cairo e.g. the word for coffee is neither “gahwa”(classical) nor “ahwa”(Cairene) but is “gahwa”(Arabian peninsular).

**The Culture.** Egyptian culture in its musical, literary, poetry and cinematic aspects is looked upon with great pride by Egyptians and as worthy of emulation by other Arabs. Poetry is the main feature of Egyptian literary culture, but it is also the case that the first novel on the model of the Western format was written in Egypt prior to World War I. In all artistic and cultural forms, it is Egyptian versions of classical and modern culture that sets the example for other Arab peoples. As a result, even Egyptians at the most humble level of the society feel a strong sense of cultural pride. For example, when an American passenger speaking in Arabic expressed his admiration of Egypt to a taxi driver, the response was, “Yes, Egypt is the mother of the world”! This pride can become one of disdain as in the case of an Egyptian friend after seeing the film, “Lawrence of Arabia” declaring that he did not understand why an entire film should be devoted to a Bedouin i.e. a barbaric or Arab (Egyptian colloquial for Bedouin) people!

**History.** It would be too difficult in the short length of this self-study guide to sustain the thesis of the dual state in any detail and this is especially the case of the complex history of Egypt. At the same time however, some of its basic features are apparent even from the beginning of Egypt’s history. The first is the theme of unity already touched upon in the preceding text. This unity has two implications. The first is the relative ease with which the political state has been able to impose its authority on a homogeneous population. The second implication is that while the political state often consisted of foreign rulers who changed over time, the social state tended to remain stable and constant. One indication of this is the cumulative dialectical interpenetrating of cultural and religious traditions from one epoch to another e.g. the persistency of things pharaonic into the Greek and Roman periods and the synthesis of all into the period of Christianity and then Islam. This is so much the case that even today, the pharaonic language is preserved in the ritual of the Coptic Christian church and one is aware of the survival of pharaonic traditions in Islam e.g. the bearing of the image of the Muslim saint Abu Hagag by boat from side of the Nile to the other at Luxor, a ritual similar to one in the

ancient past when a pharaonic god was conveyed in the same way at the very same time of the year.

Throughout recorded history the civilization of the Nile Valley flourished as a result of a combination of plentiful water, good soil, and climatic conditions contributing to a long growing season. The Nile River also provided swift, efficient, and cheap transportation and became the focal point of both ancient and modern civilizations. In ancient days a series of great kingdoms ruled by pharaohs developed in the valley and made important and long-lasting contributions to civilization in the fields of science, architecture, politics, and economics. These ancient kingdoms provided a base for the development of the modern Egyptian political system. Throughout its history Egypt has remained essentially a united entity, ruled by a single government, in part because of its need for overall planning for irrigation and agricultural production.

After the sixth century B.C., Egypt fell under the influence of Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Byzantine Empire. Beginning with the Persian conquest in 525 B.C., Egypt was ruled for nearly twenty-five hundred years by alien dynasties or as a part of a foreign empire. This represented changes in the composition of the political state while the social state remained less liable to change. This foreign domination did however, leave its imprint. Christianity was brought to the Nile Valley, and in 639 AD Arab invaders from the east entered Egypt. In a process that was to take hundreds of years, the social state of Egypt was converted from the Christian society of that time to the Arab and Islamic society that it has remained ever since. Even today, however, Egypt remains 7% Coptic Christian. The period of Arab political domination, however, was broken by other powers, notably the Mamluks (1251-1517) and the Ottomans (1517-1914), with a monarchy of foreign origins ruling until 1952. This legacy of foreign control of the political state has been a significant factor in Egyptian political culture and world outlook.

In some respects, the most significant external influence came after the Ottoman Turks gained control of Egypt and made it a province of the empire in 1517. The Napoleonic invasion of 1798 and the modernization developments that followed modified this basic Ottoman influence. This assisted in the transition from the military feudalism of the past to a new system. The Western impact of the French intervention, the important reforms of Muhammad Ali (1805-1849), known as the founder of modern Egypt, and the construction of the Suez Canal in the mid-nineteenth century all contributed to the development of the modern Egyptian state.

Muhammad Ali was neither an Egyptian nor an Arab, but an Albanian who came to Egypt from Macedonia as an army commander in charge of a unit of the Ottoman army sent to deal with Napoleon. In 1805 the Ottoman sultan appointed him governor of Egypt with the title of pasha. Muhammad Ali brought significant change to the country and, to a large degree sought to gain independence from the Ottoman sultan. Under Muhammad Ali, Egypt began to develop the elements of a modern state and a more European cultural orientation. It is important to appreciate that he launched a series of ambitious domestic projects designed to improve the economy and the general condition of the state and that this was done free from the colonial inspired modernization of other third world countries in the modern period. This “self-reliance” was to have its impact upon later Egyptian political self-consciousness and nationalism. In the process, the political state was strengthened and it gained control over the social state. The political state was beginning to become organically related to the social state. Agricultural production was improved and reorganized, and a program of industrialization was inaugurated. Muhammad Ali forced Egyptian products into the European market and replaced grain production with the export crop of cotton. Turks were replaced with Egyptians in the administration and especially in the army. He stressed education and sought to improve its quality. He created a modern national army, organized on European lines in which Egyptians were increasingly being recruited even into the officer corps. During his reign, he militarily



challenged Ottoman rule to the point that his troops penetrated the Anatolian peninsula, only to have the British and French rescue the empire in the treaty of London of 1841. He created the base for a modern political system and the conditions for the rise of Egyptian nationalism. He put the elements of the political state and the social state in place.

Although European powers had been interested in Egypt for some time, the opening of the Suez Canal to world navigation and commerce in 1869 vastly increased great-power interest in Egypt. This great power interest was to interfere with the emergence of the Egyptian nation as an organic expression of a political and social state. England, the greatest sea power of the time, was particularly concerned with the canal because it provided a shorter and more efficient link to much of the British Empire, especially India. Problems associated with the operation of the canal and Egypt's financial mismanagement provided the framework for the British occupation in 1882. Foreign creditors, anxious about the funds they had entrusted to Muhammad Ali's grandson, Khedive Ismail(1863-79 ), pressed their respective governments for relief and assistance. As a result, foreign creditors controlled Egyptian finances and Ismail was deposed in 1879. Popular opposition formed against the khedive, his court, and the foreign powers. Khedive Tawfiq(1879-92 ), who succeeded Ismail, ruled a country that was heavily taxed and also under British and French financial supervision and political control.

In response to this situation, Colonel Ahmed Arabi led a group of Egyptian nationalists who, scorning the weakness of the khedive, protested British and French interference in the sovereignty of Egypt and the lack of indigenous political participation. They sought constitutional reform, liberalization of Egyptian political participation, and an end to foreign interference in the affairs of Egypt. The British and French supported the khedive. In July 1882 British forces landed in Egypt and crushed the Arabi revolt and quelled the expression of Egyptian nationalism. Although they were originally supposed to leave after the restoration of political and financial order(this was achieved in the 1890's), British forces remained in Egypt

until the 1950s, and real control over the affairs of state resided in British hands for seven decades, thereby giving Britain control over the canal. The khedive (and later king) remained the titular authority, but the British representatives (under various titles) were the final authorities on the affairs of state.

World War I added a new dimension to the commercial and strategic importance of the Suez Canal for Britain and the West. In December 1914 Britain proclaimed Egypt a British protectorate, ending the theoretical control of the Ottoman Empire, and the title of khedive was changed to that of sultan.

Opposition among Egyptians to the British intensified during World War I. Exasperation and frustration characterized the Egyptian nationalist movement. There had been some hope engendered by such events as the Arab revolt against the Ottoman sultan (portrayed so graphically in the film, "Lawrence of Arabia") and the democratic declarations of Wilson's Fourteen Points. Within Egyptian society there emerged the beginnings of nationalistic ideas of a political nature that were to spearhead the movement to remove British control and establish indigenous Egyptian rule over the country. In this post-World War I context a new political organization was formed, al-Wafd al-Misri (the Egyptian Delegation that sought unsuccessfully to attend the Versailles Peace Conference), known as the Wafd. Under the leadership of Saad Zaghlul (died 1927) and later Nahas Pasha, the Wafd sought independence from the British and self-rule in Egypt. The Wafd hoped to present its position to the great powers at the postwar conferences—especially at the Paris Peace Conference, where the fate of the Ottoman territories was to be determined. British opposition to Egyptian independence prevented the Wafd from achieving its goal.

In the aftermath of World War I, Egyptian opposition to British rule became increasingly hostile and culminated in the Revolution of 1919 led by an indigenous nationalist elite who were in effect contending with the British for the control of the political state. In order for the latter

group to be successful, they had to mobilize the social state. In the face of such pressure, the protectorate was terminated and in February 1922 the British unilaterally proclaimed Egypt a constitutional monarchy. However, the British formally reserved their freedom of action on four matters: the Sudan, the defense of Egypt against foreign intervention, the security of the canal (which remained the communications link of the British Empire), and the protection of foreign interests and minorities. In March, Sultan Fuad became the king of Egypt. Thus, by 1922 Egypt had become technically an independent country with its own king but it was a country in alliance with Britain (which provided assistance in defense and related matters). The reality was continued British control.

A constitution was written and promulgated in April 1923; a parliament was elected, and a government was formed. Domestic politics began to operate, and rivalries between power blocs and political institutions began to develop. Domestic politics reflected the rivalry between the king on the one hand and the government and parliament on the other (both of the latter were generally dominated by the Wafd, which opposed both the king and the British). The control of the political state was thus a contested one. Many of the concerns of Egyptian society, especially of the vast majority of the population who were peasants in the social state, were not effectively dealt with because the main political forces devoted their energies to conflict with each other. While there was agreement in opposing the British, the politics of Egypt for control of the political state was a triangular process of the Wafd opposing the monarchy with the British alternately playing one actor off against the other.

British influence remained paramount. British troops and officials were stationed in Egypt, mostly but not solely concerned with the canal and the security of the imperial communications system. Through them, the British were able to influence political activity and policy decisions. British-Egyptian negotiations continued, on a somewhat sporadic basis, until 1936. At that time a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty was written that altered but did not terminate the

British role. On many of the key issues little changed and British influence remained significant, although its formal trappings were modified.

World War II provided an important milestone in the political development of Egypt. Its territory was used as a base of Allied operations, notably in the German and Italian advance on Alexandria early in 1942. But the monarchy and some elements of the army (including Sadat as a young officer) were strongly against Britain as the hated occupier and in fact were sympathetic to the Germans. Britain's straightforward use of force in February 1942, when the British high commissioner surrounded the palace and forced the pro-German king to appoint Nahas Pasha and a pro-British government, highlighted British control and infuriated young nationalists. Following this incident, many nationalists, including some young officers, began to turn against the Wafd as well as the king. The war, however, sapped British strength and financial resources, and Britain was soon forced to reconsider its position throughout the Middle East, setting the stage for a major political realignment throughout the area, especially in Egypt and Palestine.

After World War II Egypt became involved in two related matters that laid the foundation for the Egyptian revolution. The first was the creation of Israel—which Egypt opposed—following the British withdrawal from the Palestine mandate in 1948, which, in turn, led to the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949. With some individual exceptions, the armed forces of Egypt performed poorly. The corruption and inefficiency of the government of King Farouk (whose rule had begun in 1936) were later cited as major causes for the poor performance of Egyptian military forces against the new state of Israel. The war was probably the most important single event in Egypt's political development before the 1952 revolution. It helped to complete the rupture between the king and the army, many of whose officers believed they had been sent to battle poorly equipped and ill trained. Nasser, in his memoirs, noted that he came to realize that the war was in Egypt and not in Palestine. The government in response to the political turmoil that followed the war instituted increasingly ruthless police actions. Egypt's economic crisis also

worsened as mismanagement and corruption became rampant. Who actually held authority over the political state remained contested in the midst of corruption and ineptitude.

The second issue was the continuing opposition to the British role in Egypt and the desire of the nationalists to eliminate British control of Egypt. Negotiations to revise the 1936 treaty, especially those aspects of the agreement relating to the questions of the Sudan and the canal, were unsuccessful. Throughout its existence, the Wafd opposed British imperialism and sought Nile unity, with the Sudan as a part of Egypt. Clashes between the British and Egyptian nationalists became increasingly frequent. On October 15, 1951, the government of Egypt under Prime Minister Nahas Pasha unilaterally abrogated the 1936 treaty and proclaimed Farouk king of Egypt and the Sudan.

By the beginning of 1952 the new government had become unable to govern. There developed an impasse in the relations between King Farouk and politicians of the Wafd, the most important political party in Egypt until its abolition following the 1952 revolution. This deadlocked the processes of government. Political disturbances, which had been growing in number since 1949, broke out, and mobs attacked foreign establishments in Cairo. The British protested, and clashes between British troops and Egyptians intensified. January 26, 1952, a day of great violence, came to be known as "Black Saturday"; the ouster of Nahas Pasha and the proclamation of martial law followed it.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS: II**

1. Why is Egypt "The most important country"?
2. What is there about Egypt that gives it its subjective feeling of being "The Mother of civilization"?
3. What might be said to be the "unities" of Egypt?

4. In the modern period, when did Egypt come to be ruled by Egyptians? Was it in 1805, 1881, 1919 or 1952?

### **III. The Egyptian Political and Social “Dual” State**

The control of the Egyptian political state until the Revolution of 1952 had been in political contest. The Revolution resulted in this political authority becoming consolidated and stabilized in the hands of a populist/authoritarian ruler and a ruling class. During the reign of Nasser until his death in 1970, the social state was to receive significant economic and social benefits. These benefits were to take the form of a redistribution of land and wealth. What was not to occur, despite much political rhetoric to the contrary, was economic development that would benefit the masses of the population. The benefits of massive infusions of foreign economic assistance and even some modernization of the economy were instead to go to the ruler, and to the ruling class. The ability of rulers to perpetuate themselves in power, to maintain the political and military security of the state and to provide economic benefits to themselves and their supporters took precedent. What was to continue to elude the state is the ability to mobilize and inspire the population to make sacrifices in the path of development. It was political stability that mattered.

**The Egyptian Revolution of 1952: The Formation of the Political State.** On July 23, 1952, members of a small, clandestine military organization known as the Free Officers launched a coup d'état that established a new system of government. This group of officers, whose inner circle numbered about a dozen, had been meeting secretly since the Arab-Israeli war, in hopes of

overthrowing the corrupt and unpopular monarchy. King Farouk was forced to abdicate and left the country on July 26, 1952.

The 1952 coup was swiftly and efficiently executed. A new group now was in control of the political state. The military controlled the major instruments of force, and there was no significant opposition to its actions. The guiding hand of the new system was the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), whose titular head was a senior military officer, General Muhammad Naguib, one of the few successful Egyptian officers in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. General Naguib had not been one of the inner circle of the young Free Officers, but he had been asked to join the conspiracy because of his rank and his fine reputation as an officer. An additional reason was probably because he was half-Sudanese by birth-the young officers still shared the dream of previous Egyptian governments: to bring the Sudan into union with Egypt.

The immediate concern of the RCC was to dismantle the corrupt structures of the monarchy and to create a new political order that would institute major social change. Since the ouster of Farouk was the major objective of the coup, the Free Officers did not have a specific and articulated plan for the ordering of Egyptian life after the coup. Their basic goal was to end political corruption and inefficiency and to prevent further humiliations such as the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949 and the British control of Egypt. Moreover, the Free Officers had not determined how to achieve their long-term goals of ousting the British from Egypt (especially the canal zone) and securing the linkage with the Sudan. A six-point statement of position was one that any nationalist could endorse. It proclaimed that the new regime declared its opposition to colonialism, imperialism, and monopolies and asserted its support for social justice, a strong military, and a democratic way of life. This constituted an appeal for the support of the social state.

Although Farouk was forced into exile, the constitutional monarchy was preserved at first, and a regency council was established to preside in the name of Farouk's infant son, Fuad

II. A general purge of corrupt officials was instituted, and land reform was declared to be a major goal of the RCC. At this time, the RCC said that it intended to return Egypt to a civilian government as soon as possible.

After a period of some uncertainty concerning the organization and structure of the government, the RCC decided that the changes envisaged were not possible within the existing political system. In December 1952 the constitution of 1923 and the parliamentary form of government were suspended. The following January General Naguib announced that all political parties had been banned and their funds confiscated— constitutional government would not operate for a three-year transition period. In February 1953 an interim constitution was proclaimed that provided the terms for the operation of the government during this time. This constitution noted that the people were the source of all authority, but it vested all power in the RCC for the transition period- the political state was to dominate the social state. With the abolition of political parties, the RCC created a new political organization called the National Liberation Rally to help mobilize political support for the new regime.

In June 1953 the RCC moved to the next step in the conversion of the political system. The monarchy was conclusively abolished and a republic was declared, with Naguib as both president and prime minister.

**The Patrimonial Leader( Nasser and the New State).** Gamal Abd al-Nasser (1952–1970), Anwar al-Sadat (1970-1981) and Hosni Mubarak (1981-present) can all be characterized as patrimonial or father-like leaders, both in terms of how they presented themselves and how they were perceived. Their leadership was often self-consciously styled on their resembling the father of the Egyptian national family. The principle of legitimacy of the patrimonial leader is an ascribed one; that is, it is a characteristic of both the leadership role itself and it is attributed to the leader by his followers. This principle, while strengthening the authority of the leader, also is not sufficient in itself. Each of these leaders was also operating as the leader of a regime that was



legitimized by the dominant idea of its time. For all three this was pan-Arabism, although from Sadat onwards, the political Islamism of the Islamic religious revival dialectically challenged pan-Arabism.

In the case of patrimonialism, all three leaders when addressing the Egyptian people often used the vocabulary of the family. This was especially the case with Sadat, who, in 1978, when he was negotiating the Camp David peace agreement with Israel, began a radio address by saying, “My brothers and sisters, my sons and daughters, I have terrible news to relate to you tonight. Today our sons prevented their fathers from going to work [i.e. students on university campuses were engaging in a campus boycott by way of protest against the policy].” It was Nasser among the three leaders who were able to go beyond the inherited patrimonialism of the leadership role and connect himself with the ideological principal of Arabism. In so doing he exceeded patrimonialism and by a combination of personality and ideology, his leadership became charismatic. His leadership was to cross borders and influence politics in other countries. His anti-colonialism not only helped force the British military to withdraw from the Suez Canal Zone in 1954, but led him to join the positive neutralism of the Bandung Conference of 1955 and to become a dominant leader in the Third World.

**The Formation of the New Ruling Class: Officers in Power.** The most crucial factor in the period immediately following the 1952 coup d'état (always called *the revolution* in Egypt) was the emergence of Gamal Abdul Nasser as the primary force in Egyptian national life. Although it became clear later that he had been the leader of the Free Officers movement since its inception, Nasser appeared in the public view rather slowly. When the Free Officers overthrew Farouk, attention was focused on General Naguib as the titular and apparent head of the new regime. Nasser appeared to be no more than another field grade officer in the RCC, an institution of the ruling elite. The RCC in the years ahead was to eventually evolve into a presidential cabinet but its membership was always to be long lived and to change only slowly

over time. This cabinet was composed of the Free Officers who donned civilian clothes but who retained the solidarity of their conspiratorial origins.

Slowly Nasser's role as the guiding force behind the revolution began to become clear as he emerged as the victor of a power struggle within the RCC. The struggle for control between Nasser and Naguib went through several stages, culminating in the ouster of Naguib on November 14, 1954, and in his being placed under house arrest. Thus Nasser's dominant position was secured within the system, allowing him to become the undisputed leader of Egypt and, later, of the Arab world.

As the years went on, the ruling elite remained composed of free officers. Only under the impact of the military defeat of 1967 was this to change. From that year until 1970 and the death of Nasser, the ruling elite changed to a technocratic civilian one as the army withdrew from politics.

**The Group Structure (Corporatism) of the Organic Political State.** Corporatism is the organization of the state not only in terms of bureaucratic structures but also in terms of the functional division of labor necessary for its maintenance e.g. trade unions, corporations, bar association etc. The important point is that these organizations exist only because the state authorizes them. Under Law 32 of 1964 and subsequent similar laws any such organization has had to formally apply for permission to exist. This licensing process actually is a compact(mithaq) between an organization and state. The state gets a function necessary for its existence carried out and also an understanding that the organization will not politically oppose the state. In exchange, the organization gets a monopoly of that function, including special economic rewards for its leaders. If the terms of the compact are adhered to, the organization is also free from the direct interference of the state. Corporatism is thus a form of devolution of authority.

It was Nasser who was to put in place the corporatist building blocs of the new state. Under his leadership, the state was preeminent. In the period leading until 1961 he organized the economy on the principle of state guided capitalism. After that date it became a state directed socialism. The succession of political parties that were organized were also state dominated. They were intended to rally support to the regime and also to act as instruments of control over the corporatist structures.

**The Single Dominant Political Party.** There have been several variations in Egypt's basic political structure since the 1952 revolution. With Nasser at its head, the RCC held the reins of political power. During this transition period a number of outstanding problems, including the final removal of British forces from Egypt and the canal zone in 1954, were finally resolved. In 1956 Nasser formally inaugurated a new system that consolidated power in his own hands.

On January 16, 1956, a new constitution was proclaimed in which extensive powers were concentrated in the hands of the president. The constitution also established a single political party, the National Union, which replaced the National Liberation Rally. The party, the National Assembly, and the other organs of government and politics remained under the control of Nasser, who was elected president by more than 99 percent of the vote in a plebiscite in 1956. The inauguration of the new constitution, formally approved in a plebiscite, ushered in a number of changes in the political system. Among these were: martial law was terminated, political prisoners were released, the RCC military members became civilians (with the exception of General Abdul Hakim Amer, who was minister of defense) who joined various agencies of the government. This new system was short-lived.

In February 1958 Nasser yielded to the demands of a new government in Syria that the two nations be joined to form the United Arab Republic (UAR). The union of these two dissimilar and geographically noncontiguous political units into a single state called for the

creation of a new political structure with, at least theoretically, Nasser sharing power with the Syrian leadership. The provisional constitution of the new UAR was proclaimed, and Nasser became president. Nasser received nearly all the votes cast in the presidential election on February 21, 1958. Both Egyptians and Syrians were represented in the institutions of government, but most of the actual governing was by decree of Nasser and his chief advisers and aides—especially General Amer, who largely controlled the Syrian region. In September 1961, Syria, disenchanted with Egyptian domination and Nasser's growing socialism, severed ties with the UAR and reestablished its independence. Egypt continued to be known by the name "United Arab Republic" until it became the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARE) in 1971.

With the termination of the union of Egypt and Syria in 1961, there was an intensification of Nasser's socialist programs in Egypt. A new governmental system was again devised and implemented soon thereafter, with a clear socialist focus. This process of socialist intensification was also an intensification of corporatism. Socialist measures adopted in the early 1960s included further agrarian reform, progressive tax measures, nationalization of business enterprises, and, in general, increased governmental control over the economy. A new charter and constitution were created, and a new single political party organization, the Arab Socialist Union (ASU), was formed. Elections for parliament took place. A new constitution was adopted in 1964 that provided the framework for the remainder of the Nasser tenure.

Nasser ruled Egypt from 1954 until his death in 1970. He was the first Egyptian since the pharaohs to control Egypt for any long period. During his tenure he captured the attention and imagination not only of the Egyptian people but also of the Arab world, much of the Third World, and other portions of the international community. Egypt ended British control, established a republican form of government, and began extensive political change.

The 1950s were the heyday of Nasser's rule. He succeeded in nationalizing the Suez Canal. He thwarted the objectives of Israel, Britain, and France in the 1956 Sinai War and was

able to turn military defeat into achievement—if not victory—with the aid of the United States and the Soviet Union, which insisted on the removal of foreign troops from Egypt. He secured arms and aid for the Aswan High Dam from the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc allies after the United States and other lenders decided not to provide the necessary assistance. Nasser became a leader of the Nonaligned Movement, and despite the many difficulties in implementing any form of Arab unity, he mobilized people all over the Arab world to think of themselves as members of a group larger than their own state. Nasser symbolized nascent Arab strength for many of the ordinary citizens of the Arab world.

Nasser's accomplishments in the 1950s were soon followed by difficulties. The United Arab Republic dissolved acrimoniously in 1961, Egypt became involved in the civil war in Yemen in the early 1960s (which turned out to be a quagmire from which it would be difficult to withdraw), and there were feuds with other Arab states and challenges to Nasser's role as Arab world leader. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war proved disastrous and resulted in the loss of the Sinai Peninsula (one-seventh of Egypt's land area), the closure of the Suez Canal, and the loss of a substantial portion of Egypt's military capability.

In 1956 Nasser engaged in a dispute with the United States and the West over funding for the construction of the high dam at Aswan and nationalized the Suez Canal, still owned by British and French capital. Although militarily defeated by a British, French, and Israeli invasion force, Nasser was to emerge as the political "victor" upon the force's evacuation and his ability to remain in power. It was the prestige of these accomplishments that led him to another blow for pan-Arabism when he engineered the union of not only Egypt and Syria but also briefly Yemen in the United Arab Republic(1958-1961).

This union did not last, however, and was followed by Egypt's military intervention in Yemen on the side of revolutionaries, which dragged on until 1967. Earlier in that year, still

within the framework of pan-Arabism, Nasser as the preeminent Arab leader, rhetorically tested Israel, only to have the latter inflict a devastating defeat upon him in the 1967 war.

Despite these reverses, Nasser was still the preeminent Egyptian and Arab, the most influential figure in the Middle East, and a focal point of regional and international attention. Nasser's role extended beyond that designated in the constitution. He exercised unwritten powers by virtue of his unique standing in the system, his accomplishments, and his charismatic appeal to the peasantry that formed the backbone of the Egyptian polity. He controlled all the main instruments of power and coercion, including the army, the secret police and intelligence agencies, and the Arab Socialist Union. He dominated the cabinet and the National Assembly. At the time of his death, Nasser's central role and his charismatic appeal to the overwhelming majority of Egyptians raised doubts about a successor's ability to replace him as the undisputed leader of Egypt and the Arab world. Nasser died of a heart attack on September 29, 1970, following intense negotiations he had brokered between King Hussein of Jordan and PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat, whose forces had been at war for that whole month in Jordan.

**The Egyptian Masses: The Social State.** The social state consists of those regions and local communities where eighty percent or more of Egyptians live relatively untouched by the authority of the state. The regions consist of the area to the south of Cairo called Upper Egypt where the authority of a Cairo distant in terms of hundreds of miles is in fact even more distant in terms of culture. The other major region is that of the delta to the north of Cairo. Cairo rests so lightly as a political capital, that it in fact is referred to in colloquial Arabic as "Misr" or "Egypt" as the Arabic name for the country as a whole. As far as local society is concerned, neither the French inspired modern legal system of the country is employed at the local level, nor is there a system of direct taxation. Instead, customary law is employed to settle local disputes or to attain justice in the case of, for example, murder. Taxation is indirect as for example in government international marketing of agricultural crops. Further evidence of this social state is evident in

the evasions of the well-intentioned agrarian reform of Nasser. The redistribution of land that occurred was supposed to have dismantled the landowning class when in fact research has shown that wide spread evasions occurred and local societies remained landowning class dominated. In other words, even Nasser's policies intended as they were to genuinely benefit the masses of the population left these same masses relatively untouched by the authority of the state. In the later regimes of Sadat and Mubarak this distance between population and state was to become even greater. This paradox of the Egyptian authoritarian state not being able to relate to its population except by police powers was to become even more evident.

Egypt's social and economic structure is closely linked to the Nile River, which has traditionally been an important source of revenue and a central factor in daily life. Even today wealth is still often measured in landownership and control of agricultural production. Despite the increasing urbanization that has made Cairo a city of over 21 million people, of whom perhaps half do not have permanent housing, the majority of the Egyptian population are the fallahin, the peasants. They are the backbone of the Egyptian system, even if they are relatively deprived economically and educationally, as well as in terms of life expectancy, wealth, health, literacy, and most of the other measures of well being. Both Nasser and Sadat traced their roots and publicized their connection to this group. In addition to the fallahin there are the traditional wealthy, upper-class landowners, the middle-class city dwellers, and the growing numbers of urbanized poor. The traditional supporters of the king and members of the court came from the upper class. Since the 1952 revolution, however, young men from the lower and middle classes have moved up the social ladder through the huge and growing bureaucracy and the military officer corps.

At the time of the revolution Egypt was a poor country facing a host of social and economic problems: low per capita income, unequal income distribution, disease, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, and a low literacy rate. Agriculture was the dominant sector of

the economy, and this required the use of Nile water for irrigation. Industry, which was significantly limited by poor natural and mineral resources and by the lack of sufficiently trained workers, was a minor factor.

The Egyptian revolution of 1952 was launched to deal with a political issue, but almost as crucial were the substantial economic and social problems of Egypt, which were among the earliest problems tackled by the regime. There was a two-class system—a very rich upper class and very poor lower class, with the latter vastly larger than the former. The upper class—bankers, businessmen, merchants, and landlords—controlled the wealth of the country and dominated its political institutions. It could and did prevent the adoption of reform measures that would diminish its economic and political control. Much of Egypt's land was concentrated in the hands of relatively few absentee landowners. The poor, mostly landless peasants constituted more than 75 percent of the population. They were illiterate and had little opportunity to improve their situation. Their health standards were deplorable. Education was severely limited. This disparity between the landowning rich and the poor peasantry was further compounded by overpopulation, exacerbated by the high birthrates of the poor. The population growth rate surpassed that of agricultural production increases. Moreover, the possibility of food production's keeping pace with population growth was limited by lack of control of the water resources of the Nile.

One of the goals of the revolution, announced shortly after the takeover by the Free Officers, was the achievement of social and economic justice through elimination of the corrupt system and the monopoly of wealth. Although lacking a specific ideology and well-developed programs for implementing these goals, the new government attempted to raise the standard of living of the average Egyptian, especially of the fallahin of the Nile Valley, and to reduce the poverty and disease that had permeated Egyptian society for so long.



**Anwar Sadat.** The constitution in force at that time did not call for Vice President Anwar Sadat to succeed Nasser in office, nor was there any indication that Nasser favored Sadat, or any particular person, as his ultimate successor. Sadat initially enjoyed the legitimacy of being the formal successor and of his long association with Nasser (he was virtually the only former Free Officer left in office by this time), but it was generally assumed that he would soon be replaced by one of the powerful rivals maneuvering behind the scene. In November 1970 Nasser succumbed to heart failure and was succeeded by his vice president, Anwar Sadat. Sadat was the last of the officers in power who had engineered the revolution of 1952. The manner in which he had survived was due to his near political invisibility. During the time until his ascension to power he was known in Egypt as Nasser's "lap dog" or alternatively as "Said Na'm Na'm" ("Mr. Yes Yes").

Unlike the revolutionary Arab leader Nasser, Sadat had no ideological principle of legitimacy attached to himself. In any case, the 1967 defeat had been the death knell of Arabism. In a remarkable fashion, Sadat quickly sensed that the next ideological stage in Egypt's political development was to be Islam. The 1967 war had triggered the beginning of the Islamic revival. Sadat moved to gain its support by beginning to free from prison the thousands of Islamic radicals placed there by Nasser. In addition, Sadat became a conspicuous practitioner of Islam by ostentatiously acquiring the dark callus on the forehead called a zabiba which results from repeated contact with the prayer rug. This permitted Sadat to not only play the role of father but also of a father-like imam or leader of prayer.

Sadat had to address the humiliation of the Israeli military occupation of the huge expanse of the Sinai peninsula as a consequence of the 1967 war. This occupation was not only humiliating to Egypt also was costing the country hundreds of millions of dollars annually in lost revenues from the closure of the Suez Canal and from seized oil fields.

Sadat began to boldly plot the military expulsion of the Israelis. Nasser had after 1967 invited 15,000 Soviet military advisors into Egypt to reform his military. By July 1972 they were ordered out of the country. They had completed their mission and their arrogance and the fact they restricted the military planning of Egypt meant they had to go. Sadat shrewdly planned the limited war of October 1973. The Egyptian surprise assault caught the Israelis off guard and the first two weeks saw a limited territorial gain in Sinai, which was needed to bring about serious diplomatic negotiations. On the other hand, in the last two weeks of the war, the Israelis had surrounded an Egyptian army and in effect this restored lost dignity to the Israelis.

Sadat initiated the diplomacy that eventually led to the withdrawal of the Israelis in 1982, but his nation was economically impoverished. He therefore began a program of political and economic liberalization (called infitah or the “opening” after the military success in Sinai) designed to appeal to the United States. The combination of this policy plus his willingness to break rank with the Arab states and negotiate with America’s ally Israel resulted in at first small and then later larger economic assistance. The result was to be ultimately, after two preliminary agreements, the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty (1979) in which Israel agreed to evacuate Sinai and Egypt established diplomatic relations with Israel.

Although Sadat was elected president in an October 1970 referendum (receiving only 85 percent of the vote, as opposed to Nasser’s traditional 99 percent), the long-term stability of his regime was not yet assured.

Sadat sought to consolidate his position but did not make a major overt move until May 1971, when he suddenly purged the government of all senior officials who opposed him. This group included Vice President Ali Sabri, a prominent left-leaning figure who had headed the ASU and was regarded as Moscow’s favorite candidate, as well as the minister of war, the head of intelligence, and other senior officials. These officials were later tried for high treason.

Sadat did not enjoy the widespread adulation Nasser had evoked from the masses and had even been derided as Nasser's yes-man. His declaration that 1971 would be a "year of decision" that would result in war or peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict did nothing to improve his popularity, as the year ended with no movement toward achievement of this objective.

By 1972 Sadat had become an object of ridicule and cruel jokes, which raised doubts about his leadership. It was in partial response to domestic criticism and to the concerns and complaints of the military that he decided to terminate the role of the Soviet advisers in Egypt in 1972. Sadat soon began to prepare for the October War (the Arab-Israeli war of 1973) because he saw little progress toward a political settlement of the conflict with Israel. He achieved a formidable success in taking the Israelis by surprise and crossing the heavily fortified Suez Canal at the beginning of the war in October 1973. Although he ultimately lost the war in a military sense, with the Egyptian Third Army surrounded by Israeli troops, his initial success in the field and his mobilization of support from the conservative Arab oil producers (who, at his behest, used oil as a political weapon for the first time) made the war a political success. Sadat was able to place Israel on the defensive internationally, to secure further international support for the Egyptian and Arab positions, and to attract increased aid from the oil-rich Arab states. Of the many honorary titles he received, Sadat was said to have favored above all the phrase that came into use after Egyptian troops took the Suez Canal back from the Israeli forces that had held its eastern shore since 1967: "Hero of the Crossing."

In April 1974 Sadat produced a document called the October Working Paper, which discussed the new era ushered in by the October War. It called for extensive reform and change in Egypt and suggested that the lot of the average Egyptian would improve. It embodied his new approach to politics and economics, especially the liberalization of politics, the economic "opening" to Western aid and investment, and the restructuring of the Egyptian government toward decentralization and away from the centrally planned economy. Sadat's turn to the West,

which actually began with the expulsion of Soviet advisers in 1972, accelerated during the period after the October 1973 war, and culminated with the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979, may all have been part of a huge economic gamble: By turning to the West, could he attract substantial aid and investment and get rid of the heavy economic burden of the war with Israel (and regain the Sinai Peninsula), while at the same time not totally alienating the oil-rich Arab states that had supported Egypt since 1967 with aid and investment?

Sadat's consolidation of political control in May 1971 was followed by changes in the political structures and processes of politics. On September 11, 1971, the present constitution was approved by general referendum. It is similar to its predecessor in continuing the strong presidential system extant in Egypt since the revolution. According to the constitution, the president of the republic is head of state. He is empowered to declare a state of emergency in the case of national danger, subject to a referendum within sixty days. Legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, composed of 444 directly elected members and two members nominated by the president; members of parliament serve a five-year term. The president may object to laws passed by the National Assembly within thirty days of their passage, but the assembly has the right to override his objection by a two-thirds vote. The president has the power to appoint vice presidents, the prime minister and his cabinet, High Court judges, provincial governors, university presidents, and even some religious leaders. He is the supreme commander of the armed forces. Although the constitution increased the powers of the National Assembly, dominant authority remained with the president, who has the right of temporary rule by decree. Presidential decrees have the power of law. The constitution includes guarantees of freedom of expression, as well as assurance of freedom from arbitrary arrest, seizure of property, and mail censorship. Press censorship is banned except in periods of war or emergency. At first, the Arab Socialist Union was declared the only authorized political party, but this was gradually modified,

beginning in 1976. Islam was declared the state religion, although freedom of religion was guaranteed.

In 1976 Sadat initiated what appeared to be a move toward a multiparty system when he announced that three ideological “platforms” would be organized within the ASU. The centrist group—the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization—had Sadat’s personal support and won a vast majority of the seats in the 1976 parliamentary election. Sadat still refused to allow independent parties to be formed, and the three organizations never took root as genuine vehicles of political participation. Only after the violent clashes over increased prices of basic commodities in January 1977 did Sadat permit parties to be formed. The opposition from these parties was too much for Sadat to bear, however, and he soon clamped down on such groups as the New Wafd Party and the leftist National Progressive Unionist Party.

In July 1978 Sadat created the National Democratic Party (NDP) and later permitted a leftist party to organize as an official opposition. Both the Egyptian Arab Socialist Organization and the Arab Socialist Union were abolished in April 1980. An Advisory Council was established to serve the functions of the old ASU Central Committee, and in the September 1980 elections for that council, Sadat’s new NDP won all 140 seats, with the seventy remaining posts being appointed directly by the president. Sadat, like Nasser before him, wanted to create a political organization but was unable to tolerate the loss of political control that would occur if these “parties” were to become genuine vehicles for mass participation.

By 1980 domestic tension in Egypt had grown, although Sadat’s grip on power was in no way diminished. Confessional conflict had occurred between the large Coptic Christian minority and the Islamic fundamentalists, and Sadat placed restrictions on both. In the years after 1979 it became clear that there remained serious opposition to Egypt’s move toward the West and its peace with Israel, especially from Islamic fundamentalists. What may have been Sadat’s economic gamble was not paying off as well as he might have hoped: There was some Western

aid and investment, but it was not substantial, and Arab aid and investment dropped sharply. Egypt had been ejected from the Arab League for making peace with Israel and remained isolated in the Arab world. More pressing yet, there had been no significant economic progress, and the standard of living of the average Egyptian was very low and getting worse. Sadat held his course. Increasing political violence, including clashes between Coptic Christians and Islamic fundamentalists marked the years 1980 and 1981. The Sadat government reacted repressively. Sadat initiated severe repression of his opposition in September 1980, beginning with the formerly tolerated leftist party, but the major move was made almost a year later, in September 1981, when more than 1,500 Egyptian political figures of all political persuasions were arrested. Certain religious groups were banned and their newspapers closed. A number of Muslim Brotherhood leaders were arrested, and Sadat dismissed the Coptic leader, Pope Shenuda III. Many fundamentalist mosques were taken over by the government, and the security apparatus began to clamp down on universities. Foreign journalists who had criticized Sadat were expelled, along with the Soviet ambassador and other Soviet diplomats

Sadat's assassination in October 1981 by Islamic fundamentalists opposed to his peacemaking with Israel changed very little about Egyptian domestic politics.

**Hosni Mubarak.** On October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Muslim fundamentalists at a parade celebrating the eighth anniversary of his supreme military achievement: the crossing of the Suez Canal at the opening of the 1973 October War. A state of emergency was declared, and the National Assembly nominated Vice President Hosni Mubarak to succeed Sadat. Although the assassins were quickly arrested, conflict broke out in Asyut between the security forces and Muslim fundamentalists. The anti-Sadat demonstrations were limited in scope and were soon quelled. A presidential referendum was held, and Mubarak was sworn in as president on October 14, 1981.

Although Mubarak cracked down on the religious extremists associated with Sadat's assassination, he released many of the other political figures whom Sadat had had arrested a month before his death. The battle against corruption started from the top, and Sadat's brother and some of his closest associates were taken to court for corrupt practices. Unlike Sadat, Mubarak and his family maintain a low profile and live modestly.

Hosni Mubarak left the basic structure unaltered. He allowed the New Wafd to participate in the 1984 parliamentary elections, but the NDP won handily and some opposition parties failed to get sufficient votes to secure even one seat in the assembly. The NDP, still the party of the president, won 384 seats in the November 1990 election, with the main opposition parties boycotting the polls. Mubarak was elected to a third presidential term in October 1993. Parliamentary elections were scheduled for November 1995 and presidential elections for October 1999.

Despite all the changes, Egypt remained a strong presidential system with a facade of elections and party rule. The judiciary is independent, but the government can, and has, used military courts or the "state of emergency" (in force without interruption since 1981) regulations to ignore judicial decisions it does not favor. There are eleven legal political parties in addition to the NDP, the government party. Neither the other parties nor the NDP has much mass support. The greatest threat to the government is from the various Islamic fundamentalist groups. The largest, oldest, and best organized is the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 in Egypt. It was banned by Nasser in 1954 and is still technically illegal, but it is officially tolerated because its efforts to Islamize society are made from within the existing political system. This is not the case with the more radical Islamic groups that have resorted to violence to advance their cause. After the assassination of Sadat, there was a lull in these violent activities. They resumed in the 1990s, as the radical groups gained young recruits frustrated at unemployment and poverty. In October 1990 the speaker of the People's Assembly was killed. An anti-fundamentalist journalist was

assassinated in June 1992, part of a dramatic upsurge in fundamentalist violence, often directed against Coptic Christians, government officials, and, starting in October 1992, against foreign tourists. Although the attacks on tourists have abated somewhat, it has only been at the cost of brutal government suppression.

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Despite the release of many political detainees, Mubarak kept a tight rein on Egyptian politics. The state of emergency remains in force, even though the emergency following Sadat’s death has long passed. Mubarak made substantial economic progress and managed to put Egypt



back into the center of the Arab world without reneging on the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979. He faced down serious challenges to his rule, such as the February 1986 uprising by 20,000 conscripts of the Security Force, and the challenges that the Islamic fundamentalists have continued to pose, all of which were brutally suppressed. As long as Mubarak continues to retain the all-important confidence of the Egyptian military, his regime is stable.

**The Parliamentary Elections of October and November 2000.** The parliamentary elections in October and November 2000 were illustrative of his present strengths and weaknesses and the themes of the strong and the weak state. The elections were evidence of the relative strength of the state in that in the final analysis the results showed the ability of the state to continue to manufacture a desired political outcome. The government's National Democratic Party (NDP) was finally able to cobble together a majority of 388(87%) seats out of a total of 444 contested seats (10 can be appointed by the president). This percentage compared with 97% in 1995. But these figures do not show the degree of the government's declining ability to authoritatively dictate the desired outcome by the forced mobilization of the voting population. In fact, in actual voting success the NDP won only about 175 seats outright and had to pressure/bargain with 213 "independents" to persuade them to switch to the government party.

The genuine electoral contest was not with the official opposition parties but rather with further "independent" candidates who in fact were identified as the illegal, politically moderate Muslim Brotherhood (MB). They ended up with a remarkable 17 seats but these were gained despite beatings, intimidation and occasional killings. What is further remarkable about this is that the perpetrators of the violence were not the usual state security forces but rather male and female toughs hired by NDP candidate's intent upon gaining their due. In other words, even the classic exercise of coercion had slipped from the hands of the state into the hands of the state's underlings. The relative success of the MB also was further evidence of the degree of the Islamization of the Egyptian State.

**Changes in the Ruling Class.** The ruling class provides the patrimonial leader with the support necessary to make him authoritative politically. The relationship is one of political support on the one hand and economic benefits on the other. The existence of such a class in Egypt over the last 200 years of modernization has been intensely investigated by scholars in the three different time periods from the period of the great modernizer of Egypt, Muhammad Ali(1805-1849) onwards, the Revolution of 1919 against the British and in the time of Nasser. This phenomenon has been the basis of political strength over this long period and at the same time it is the basis of the strategic weakness of the state in performance terms. The developmental potential of the state is traded off for enduring political loyalty and stability. The definition of the ruling class (ayyan or khassa) is that it consists of the top 20 percent of the population that receive 48 percent of the income of the country. Accompanying this concentration of wealth is also the ruling class's ability through government and, increasingly, private-sector leadership to dominate the corporatist group structures of the society. This symbiotic relationship accounts for how in the pre-1991 period of stronger geopolitical Egyptian regional hegemonic leadership, domestic stability strengthened the leaders' foreign policy hand. On the other hand, in the post-1991 geoeconomic period, this relationship became one of a dysfunctional inability to develop and produce, thus weakening Egypt's ability to compete economically.

The idiom of expression of contemporary Egyptian politics has combined several political ideas such as a state nationalism of a Western type overlaying older ideas of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. Over the past fifty years, political expression by both those in power and by the organized politically disaffected has used various combinations of these ideas over the years, beginning with Nasser's Arab socialism and, now, increasingly, by contemporary militant political Islamism. The Egyptian political structure, on the other hand, has remained relatively

constant. The principal elements of the Egyptian political structure are patrimonial leadership, a powerful ruling class, and influential corporatist groups.

**Informal Corporatist Groups.** The corporatist group structure reflects the division of labor necessary for the maintenance of society. These groups consist of two categories. There are first, the informal family, peer group, and “old boy” networks, which provide the basic procreation and support functions of society. Second, there are the formal groups that carry out the labor of society, such as trade unions and bar associations. The Egyptian family (a‘ila) is classically Middle Eastern sedentary in character. It is patriarchal, extended, endogamous, and patrilocal. It is both the model of political authority as reflected in the concept of “patrimonialism” and the basic unit of allegiance in Egyptian society. Family loyalties and the authority of the father are primary. The extension of loyalty to a network of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and so on makes the range of the family extensive. The practice of arranged marriages and first cousin marriages increases family solidarity. So does the tendency of families to live concentrated in a single geographical area. At the age of puberty, the boy leaves the house of his closely-knit family and forms a play and membership peer group called a shilla. The shilla is a lifetime membership group that has responsibilities for the security of the neighborhood. On occasion, such as the 1977 riots in Cairo over the raising bread prices the shilla can become politically activated.

Those who graduate from high school, university, or military academy have alumni status as a dufaa known by the year of graduation. For example, it was the dufaa of 1938 from the Royal Military Academy that carried out the revolution of 1952. The class of 1938 served together and was promoted together on the principle of solidarity. It was they who went to fight in Palestine against the Zionist Jews in 1948. There they suffered the humiliating defeat that they attributed to the corruption of their leaders. In the words of Nasser, “The Enemy was in Egypt!”. This solidarity grouping provides a further potentially political membership group.

**Formal Corporatist Groups.** Corporatist groups are formal for at least two major reasons. The first is that they can not exist at all except with the permission of the state and by law. It is the need to formally apply for such approval that makes them corporatist groups and not civil society groups. The second reason is that in fact, once given approval to operate, they then have a familiar identity as trade unions, medical associations, engineering societies, and so on. An informal compact (mithaq) is entered into whereby the organization agrees that it will not engage in political activities and will support the state in exchange for a grant of a monopoly of its sector.

Illustrative of this point about licensing is the role of the army and that of the Islamic groups. The army is the keystone institution of Egyptian society. It is the arbiter of Egyptian politics and the guarantor of the “strong” state. Its “license,” therefore, follows from the respect the state accords it. It does not, however, seek a political role for itself. Under Nasser it possessed this role and the result was the ignominious defeat of Egypt in 1967. Thus in the “bread” riots of 1977 in protest against the threatened end of food subsidies, the army intervened, restored order, and withdrew. It was to do this again in 1986 when paramilitary troops rebelled. The segment of the army prepared to carry out this support of the regime and the defense of the constitution has been the army of combat. There is also the army of production, which significantly makes Egypt self-reliant in arms production but also produces consumer goods. The army is free from budgetary accountability and the “production” army is especially free from scrutiny is monopolistic in its activities and probably prone to corruption.

Whereas the army has found its accommodation within the system, the Islamic groups have not. The mainstream of Islam would like to be licensed and included in the system but the regime refuses to do this. Instead it lumps such moderate groups together with the extreme and violent minority.

These groups have the primary responsibility for their internal affairs, including the ability to benefit themselves economically. The internal affairs of such groups, with the exception of the professional army, are characterized by the presence of informal corporatist groups such as family, peer groups and old boy networks in elections to the presidencies and executive committees of the trade unions, bar associations, and other groups. The informal groups have acted as political parties or factions. More recently, Islamic groups, notably the moderate Muslim Brotherhood, have supplanted informal groups. This has prompted government interference in these elections and even their cancellation.

Sadat's successor, Hosni Mubarak, left the basic structure unaltered. He allowed the New Wafd to participate in the 1984 parliamentary elections, but the NDP won handily and some opposition parties failed to get sufficient votes to secure even one seat in the assembly. The NDP, still the party of the president, won 384 seats in the November 1990 election, with the main opposition parties boycotting the polls. Mubarak was elected to a third presidential term in October 1993.

**The Dualism of Egyptian Society: The Failure of Development.** The existence of a political class of great wealth and privilege suggests the possibility that Egyptian society might be interpreted in terms of class structure: for example, bourgeoisie, proletarian, and peasant classes. It is a further dimension of the politically strong and capability weak state that this is not the case. The ability of a strong executive and a cooperative political class to maintain themselves in power does not mean that they can organize the society for productive purposes or coerce or mobilize the masses of the population for greater levels of production. In other words, the quietism of the politically strong state distances itself from the masses and the weakness of the economic state creates a gap and space and not the conditions of alienation and class-consciousness.

It has been suggested that the informal sector is also Islamic. As a result, political and economic distance exists between the political and economic capabilities of the state on the one hand and the masses on the other. It is estimated that 80 percent of small businesses are in the informal sector and free from the payment of taxes but only 30 percent of the GDP is located there. This gap is reinforced by the 54 percent illiteracy rate that creates dialectical and regional differences. As noted, a further gap is in law enforcement, where sometimes the most serious of criminal acts are dealt with informally by means of customary law.

The parliamentary elections in October and November 2000, already noted above, were illustrative of these themes of the strong and the weak state. The elections were evidence of the relative strength of the state in that the state was able to manufacture a desired political outcome. But these figures do not show the government's declining ability to dictate the outcome by the forced mobilization of the voting population. In fact, in actual voting success the NDP won only about 175 seats outright and had to pressure/bargain with 213 "independents" to persuade them to switch to the government party.

### **STUDY QUESTIONS: III**

1. Was the revolution of 1952 a revolution or a military coup d'etat? Did it spring from the base of society or did it originate at the top? Did it result in profound political and social change?
2. Is the Egyptian ruling class understood best in terms of its closeness to the Egyptian political state or as an expression of the social forces of the Egyptian social state?
3. A major emphasis in American foreign policy is the promotion of democracy. The informal and formal groups of a society are said to constitute a "civil society" that constrains and puts limitations upon the state. To what extent and in what way might this be the case in Egypt?

4. The government of Egypt is incapable of delivering essential social services to the masses of the population. Islamic organizations have been able to do this. What are the political consequences of this?

5. The succession of Nasser (1952), Sadat (1970) and Mubarak (1981) has coincided with a changes in society and policies. These changes have been sweeping and dramatic. What are they?

#### **IV. Islam and Politics**

Frequent references have been made to the expression of Islamism i.e. Islam as a political ideology, in the analysis of Egypt as a dual state. The subject is so central to the understanding of Egyptian politics from the 1970's onwards, however, that it is useful to pause and comment on the sweep of Islamism over the last two decades. The first thing to appreciate is that Islamism or the political ideology of Islam is the successor to the ideology of Arabism. Arabism began to develop out of the Revolution of 1952 as the ideology of Gamal Abd al Nasser, first as an expression of Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism and then from 1961 onwards as Arab socialism. But while Nasser was able to successfully defeat British and French colonialism, he was to fall victim to the success of Israel as a colonial power in the 1967 War. This spelled the death knell of Arabism and the birth of the Islamic revival and its political ideological version as Islamism (and what might be called "Christianism" among Egypt's 7% Coptic Christian population). A cultural customary reaction to a "disaster" on the scale of Egypt's and the Arab worlds defeat of 1967 was to attribute it not to the superiority of Israeli arms but to attribute it to God's judgment on a wayward people. Both Muslim and Christian over the next decade turned spiritually inwards and the Egyptian religious revival began. When Muslim and Christian alike were to see angels over the Israeli defensive positions in the 1973 War, the religious revival was validated and reinforced.

As already noted, when Sadat succeeded to the presidency he sought to capitalize on this sentiment by relenting on that had been Nasser's crack down on religious organizations. From 1971 onwards, he was to release thousand's of them from jail while at the same time never permitting them to organize legally. Those released from jail were broadly members of the Muslim Brotherhood. This had been a major opposition group prior to the 1952 Revolution and they were to continue as such against Nasser. Sadat succeeded in gaining their acceptance of him by the majority of the group. In a speech to their leadership he once said that while their organizations remained illegal, he did permit the publication of their illegal newspaper! This was to prove the difficulty for him and for his successor, Mubarak. Both leaders recognized the power and popularity of the religious opposition, but both were and are so beholden to the ruling class that remains Nasserist, Arab nationalist and secular that neither was able to create a political space for the religious opposition. The majority of the Brotherhood now wanted to participate in politics but neither Sadat nor Mubarak was prepared to grant this. The moderate majority began to turn to the provision of social and emergency services the government was too inefficient or corrupt to deliver. These services were routine medical services , day care services etc. In the 1992 earth quake it was they who provided relief and not the government. Islam gained luster from these benefits.

An Egyptian joke made the point at the time regarding the earthquake:

President Mubarak held a cabinet meeting immediately after the calamity in which 500 people died. He asked for each minister to report what he was doing to meet the needs of the Egyptian people. As usual, it was the minister of interior who was eager to report first. "Your Excellency", he said, "My officers are busy rounding up suspects and I am confident that very soon, I will be able to report the name of the person responsible!"

There was, however, a younger generation of the Brotherhood that was to become far more militant . The result has been a long history of religiously inspired violence directed at



both presidents, that was to see Sadat killed in October 1981 and an assassination attempt against Mubarak in 1995.

How Islamism has actually progressed is quite complex and this is especially the case when attempts to answer the question of its present state. From the beginning, there was a numerically small but organizationally vicious and violent strain. This began with an armed attack upon the Cairo Military College in 1974 and was to continue as the *gemaat Islamiyya* or Islamic Group. This organization began in the university science faculties but also found “water within which to swim” in the culturally distinct area of upper Egypt to the south of Cairo and among peoples from that area in certain neighborhoods of Cairo. In fact one such neighborhood in 1992 was occupied by 14000 Egyptian troops who fought against the local population for days. The purpose was to arrest local Islamic leaders and to end their influence. When a Western journalist visited the area three years later, Islam was still strong and vibrant.

In 1997, there occurred what was to become the last violent act of militant Islamism. Fifty-four Italian tourists were killed in Upper Egypt. Two things followed from this attack. The first was a wave of populist revulsion against the tactic. The second was a very severe crackdown by the government. In addition, the government began to penetrate the internal politics of Egyptian corporatist groups. The result was that democratically elected members of the brotherhood were excluded from internal positions of authority. The combination of these two factors has ushered in a period of Islamic quietism that continues to the present time. But this quietism has not meant that the government is any less relenting against the moderate main stream Islamism of the Muslim Brotherhood. In July 2002, a runoff election for the parliament was held in Alexandria. The outcome in 2000 which saw a female member of the Brotherhood elected had been challenged by the government. In the new elections, observers noted hardly anyone actually entering a polling booth. Despite this, the Brotherhood candidate who had earlier

received thousands of votes now received hundreds and the national Democratic Party candidate of the government who had earlier received hundreds, now received thousands. Once again, an Egyptian political joke captures the essentials of democratic practices in Egypt:

President Mubarak was concerned about the ability of President Bush to be elected. He therefore sent his trusted electoral advisor to Washington to assist the American president. When he returned to Egypt he was expecting to be praised for his accomplishment. Instead, President Mubarak was very angry, saying “ I sent you to see that President Bush was elected the American president and instead you got me elected the president of the United States!”

Even the subtleties of the preceding analysis does not complete the account of Islamism in Egypt. Even while the state has been cracking down on the Islamism of the social state, it is also the case that the very political state that has been draconian in its policy has itself become more Islamized. The reason for this is that the official head of Islam in Egypt , the Shaykh al-Azhar(the leader of the great university by that name) has himself been extending his own religious authority. When asked by the government to, for example, to give a religious decree against terrorism he has exacted concessions to the expansion of his authority e.g. the right to censor books, a right formally belonging to the government. One author has termed this “Islamization by stealth”. It is apparent, that the so-called secular state of Egypt is in fact significantly Islamized, a fact not lost upon a believing population!

#### **Study Questions: IV**

1. When and in what way did Islamism come to supplant Arabism in Egypt?
2. What has been the source of militant Islam in Egypt and why has it been important?
3. What are the features of main stream Islam in Egypt and why is it important?

## V. The Egyptian Economy: Wealth and Poverty

Egypt, the “gift of the Nile,” has been dependent on that single main source of fresh water for the thousands of years of its recorded existence. There is a narrow strip of poor land along the Mediterranean coast where some crops can be grown when there is minimal rainfall. Except for this area and a few small oases, all agriculture is dependent on irrigation from the Nile. The land made inhabitable and cultivable by the river constitutes a small portion of Egypt’s overall land area (about 4 percent); therefore, agricultural production, despite the rich soil of the Nile Valley and the favorable climate, has been limited. Nevertheless, it is the main occupation of, and provides the livelihood for, most Egyptians.

The limited agricultural production does not provide sufficient food for Egypt’s increasingly large population. Egypt’s population growth rate has hovered at about 2.6 percent per year. This is one of the lowest rates in the Middle East. Even at this lower rate of growth, Egypt’s population is now moving towards 70 million in 2002, a number that is beyond Egypt’s projected capacity to feed, clothe, house, and employ.

Agrarian reform became the first and most significant domestic effort of the new regime, as demonstrated by the Agrarian Reform Law of September 1952. It limited individual landholdings to less than two hundred faddans (approximately two hundred acres), reduced the rents paid for lands, and increased agricultural wages. In an effort to redistribute existing agricultural land and to divide the wealth of the country more equitably, some lands were expropriated (with compensation) and redistributed.

Related to the Agrarian Reform Law were other measures of considerable importance, of which the construction of the Aswan High Dam was among the most significant. The purpose of the dam was to improve Egypt’s economic system by increasing the already high productivity levels of the Nile Valley lands through an improved irrigation system. The dam was designed to

increase water storage capacity, to prevent devastating floods, to add cultivable land, and to create substantial additional hydroelectric capacity. The dam also had symbolic value as an achievement of the revolution.

The Aswan High Dam has had mixed effects. Many of the anticipated benefits have been realized. There has been a significant increase in the cultivated area of Egypt and in net agricultural output; flood control has also fostered productivity gains; additional electrical power, primarily for industrial use, has been made available; navigation along the Nile, which is utilized as a major transportation artery in Egypt, has been improved; and a fishing industry has been developed in Lake Nasser. However, there are some problems. For example, the silt that fertilized the lands of the Nile Valley with the annual flood has been trapped behind the dam in Lake Nasser. This makes it necessary to use larger amounts of chemical fertilizer, which is imported and expensive. Salinity has increased in the northern portion of the river and in some of the land that was formerly drained by floods.

The 1952 revolution was of little immediate consequence to the Egyptian economy. The land reforms resulted in some redistribution of land and wealth, but the economy continued to be based on private enterprise. Although some restrictions were placed on the economy, they were directed mainly toward foreign trade and payments. By the end of the 1950s government attitudes had shifted to favor public participation in, and direct regulation of, the economy; in 1961 a series of decrees nationalized all large-scale industry, business, finance, and virtually all foreign trade. Private enterprise and free trade were replaced by Arab socialism, which was proclaimed the basis of the economic system. In practice, this meant establishing a mixed economy with a large public sector (including all foreign trade) and with the remaining private economic activities subject to various kinds of direct controls. Prices were regulated, and administrative action and decision determined resource allocation.

The system derived its socialist character mainly from the fact that the government controlled all big business. Modern manufacturing, mining, electricity and other public utilities, construction, transport and communication, finance, and wholesale trade were primarily owned by the government, whereas most retail trade, handicrafts and repair, housing, professional services, and agriculture were privately owned. The government imposed some controls on agricultural production through its control of the irrigation system and through compulsory participation in government-sponsored agricultural cooperatives. Control was also exercised over the distribution of capital goods, raw materials, and semi-manufactures as well as over prices and wages.

By 1962 the Egyptian economy and the context in which it functioned had changed considerably. Ownership of the main branches of the economy had been transferred to the government. The wealth remaining in private hands was essentially real estate and that, too, was carefully controlled. Government budgets accounted for about 60 percent of the gross national product. Inequality of wealth and income had been greatly reduced, largely through a process of agrarian reform, higher taxation, the extension of social services, and a series of nationalizations and sequestrations. The role of foreigners in the economy had been substantially reduced and, in some sectors, eliminated. Industry had made substantial progress—accounting for more than 20 percent of the GNP—and continued to increase its proportion.

Efforts to improve the economic system were severely hampered by the losses suffered in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. As a consequence of that conflict, Egypt lost substantial revenues from the closure of the Suez Canal, the loss of some oil fields in the occupied Sinai Peninsula, and the loss of tourism. All three elements had been important to Egypt's earning of foreign exchange for its development and for the purchase of needed imports.

After the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, partly intended to create new economic opportunities, President Sadat inaugurated the economic infitah, or open-door policy, to

encourage foreign and domestic private investment. The Suez Canal was reopened in 1975, and the Sinai oil fields were later returned to Egyptian control. Fueled less by these economic policies and more by external factors such as oil revenues, Suez Canal tolls, tourism revenues, and remittances from Egyptians working abroad, economic performance began to improve and the gross national product increased by an annual average of over 9 percent between 1974 and 1981. Major aid from Arab oil-producing states, which had been contributing huge amounts of money every year since 1967, ceased after Egypt signed the peace treaty with Israel in 1979, although U.S. aid increased greatly.

Although there had been some improvements during the Sadat era, Hosni Mubarak encountered chronic economic difficulties upon taking office in 1981: an expensive government welfare system, rising inflation, foreign exchange shortages, balance-of-payments problems, and a foreign debt estimated at about \$21 billion. Five years later the foreign debt had grown to more than \$46 billion, making Egypt the region's greatest debtor nation. The debt had risen to about \$51 billion by 1989.

Three factors have combined to make Egypt's economic picture brighter. First, by 1987, thanks to Mubarak's low-key diplomacy, ties had been restored with the Arab world; aid and investment from the wealthy Arab states had begun to return. Second, Egypt's support of the Saudi-U.S. coalition in the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis brought huge infusions of cash and debt cancellation from the Arab oil producers (\$2 billion in cash and \$7 billion in debt cancellation in 1990-1991), reducing Egypt's external debt to \$40 billion in 1990. New grants were made by the European nations, and U.S. aid rose significantly. The third factor improving Egypt's economic situation was the decision by Mubarak in 1991 to begin a massive structural adjustment program in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The program was designed to move Egypt toward a market economy; it included a wide range of monetary

reforms, ending most subsidies on basic commodities (except bread). Progress has been made on this major program, though privatization (a sensitive political issue) is proceeding slowly.

By early 1994 Egypt's economy had shown distinct improvement. The country had a strong balance-of-payments position and was proceeding with debt reduction more or less according to its rescheduling agreements. Major government efforts at birth control had succeeded in lowering the rate of population increase from about 3 percent in 1985 to about 2.3 percent in 1993. Although cotton exports had declined, agricultural output rose by about 5 percent in 1992, with record harvests of wheat, rice, corn, and citrus fruits. Suez Canal revenues had risen. Egypt has sizable gas reserves as well as oil and is hoping to turn to gas for much of its energy requirements, given problems with hydroelectric power generation resulting from droughts upstream on the Nile. An estimated 2.5 million Egyptians working abroad continue to send remittances home, but this source of foreign exchange is vulnerable to a variety of changes in other nations and the international economy.

In late 1992 fundamentalist attacks on tourists resulted in a sharp drop in revenues from this important source of foreign exchange. Although the violence had subsided somewhat by early 1994, tourism levels were still below the years leading up to 1992. Population growth, though advancing at a lower rate, is still high; the population reached about 60 million in 1994. The same densely populated land must support increasing numbers of people every year. Furthermore, migration to the cities has created nightmarish housing shortages, especially in Cairo, where the population grew from about 7 million in 1976 to about 9 million in 1980 and to over 16 million in 1993. Life expectancy at birth has risen to about sixty, but this is still far below the figure for the developed countries. The most important single economic problem remains one that is itself a product of a host of complex economic factors: A large portion of the Egyptian people live at no more than the subsistence level.

### **Study Questions: V**

1. Egypt is frequently cited by the World Bank and the IMF along with Turkey and Tunisia as examples of success at structural adjustment, privatization and the creation of a market economy.

What is the evidence of this?

2. It is also the case, however, that perhaps this success is limited in effect to the Egyptian political state. Have these successes benefited the overwhelming majority of the population located in the social state?

### **VI. Egyptian Foreign Policy**

Napoleon once labeled Egypt “the most important country” because of its central location, between Africa and the Middle East and the routes to Asia. In the post-World War II period Egypt has become even more significant. The Suez Canal, although it cannot accommodate the largest supertankers, is a prime artery for oil. Egypt is a leader among African, Islamic, Arab, and other developing nations. It is also the primary state for the establishment of peace or the waging of war in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It has been courted by both the United States and the Soviet Union, each in pursuit of its own interests in the region and in the broader international community.

Egypt is the leader of the Arab world in a number of other respects. Its population and military forces are the largest. It has led the Arab world in communications (publishing, arts, literature, films) and other spheres. In the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, Egypt spearheaded Arab contact with the Western world and helped to develop the intellectual bases for Arab, as well as Egyptian, nationalism. It was a leader in the establishment of the Arab League. Furthermore, its Suez Canal was an important strategic and economic asset.



After the 1952 revolution Egypt emerged as an important Third World neutralist and nonaligned power, and Egypt and Nasser were increasingly relied upon for leadership in the Arab world and beyond. Egypt's foreign policy was virtually nonexistent prior to the 1952 revolution, since non-Egyptians largely controlled Egypt. Major and assertive foreign policy positions developed only after the revolution and seemed to be reactive, responding to events as they developed. Nasser's foreign policy focused, in the first instance, on the need to eliminate the British colonial presence in the Canal Zone and in the Sudan. In the second instance, there was the problem of Israel. It is in these contexts that relations with the United States and the Soviet Union emerged.

Initial successes included the agreement on the withdrawal of the British from their positions in Egypt and the resolution of the Sudan problem (although Sudan eventually chose independence rather than union with Egypt). On February 12, 1953, Britain and Egypt signed the Agreement on self-government and self-determination for the Sudan, which provided for the latter's transition to self-government and its choice between linkage with Egypt or full independence. The Suez question was settled in an agreement of October 19, 1954. That agreement declared the 1936 treaty to be terminated and provided for the withdrawal of British forces from Egyptian territory within twenty months.

Relations with the superpowers were different. Although the United States was initially helpful to the new regime and provided technical and economic aid, as well as some assistance in the negotiations with the British, there were difficulties concerning Nasser's requests for arms. Moreover, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles viewed Egypt's increasingly close ties with Communist China and the Soviet Union with suspicion. The Baghdad Pact, a Western-oriented defense alliance, conceived and sponsored by the United States, was not viewed positively by Nasser, who saw it as a threat to Arab independence and autonomy. Raids on Israel by fedayyin and counter-raids by Israel into Gaza sparked, in Nasser's view, a need for arms for defense, and his quest led him to closer links with the Soviet bloc, thus further straining ties with the United

States. The Dulles decision that the United States would not fund the Aswan High Dam was a major blow to the plans of the new regime, which decided to continue building and to secure the necessary funding and assistance from alternative sources. The Soviet Union was prepared to assist in the construction and to provide some financial aid. But in Nasser's view a more demonstrable act was needed. Thus, in July 1956, he nationalized the Suez Canal and stated that the canal revenues would go to the construction of the dam.

The crucial exchanges between Nasser and the United States set the tone for the less-than-cordial relationship that followed. While the U.S.-Egyptian relationship was deteriorating, the Soviet role in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Arab world) was improving. Soviet assistance for the Aswan Dam project and the supply of arms essential to the continued stature and satisfaction of the Egyptian military and, ostensibly, to the defense of Egypt against Israel were elements that helped to ensure the positive Soviet-Egyptian relationship.

Then came the Sinai-Suez war of 1956, when Israel, France, and Britain joined in an effort to unseat Nasser and restore the canal to Western control while destroying Egypt's military capability (especially its ability to use the newly acquired arms). The United States opposed the invasion and exerted considerable pressure on its three friends to withdraw from Egyptian territory. In assisting the Nasser regime, the United States won much goodwill in the Arab world, especially in Egypt. But this goodwill was soon dissipated when the United States became involved in the 1958 Lebanese crisis and opposed the Egyptian position.

The chill between the United States and Egypt thawed slightly during the Kennedy administration, but with the death of John Kennedy and the establishment of President Lyndon Johnson's position on foreign policy, the relationship began to deteriorate once again. By the time of the Six-Day War of June 1967, relations between the two states were poor, and the war itself precipitated the break of diplomatic relations. The relationship between the United States and Egypt remained antagonistic until the end of the October War, when President Richard

Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger established the policy that led to a rapprochement between the two states. A cordial relationship grew in the mid-1970s in virtually all the bilateral spheres, demonstrated by state visits by Sadat to the United States in 1975 and 1977 and a 1974 state visit by Nixon to Egypt.

Relations with the Soviet Union were somewhat different. Beginning in the mid-1950s, Soviet economic and technical assistance were important elements in the Aswan Dam project and in Egypt's economic development. Military assistance was another element in the developing relations of the two states. Because Nasser felt that Egypt required arms to maintain the regime and to deal with Israel, the Soviet Union became a major factor inasmuch as it was prepared to provide arms under cost and payment terms acceptable to the Egyptians. The Egyptian military soon had a Soviet arsenal. Soviet equipment provided the arms essential for the Egyptian armies in the 1956, 1967, 1969–1970, and 1973 wars. But despite the consummation of a treaty of friendship between the two countries in 1971, the Soviets were never popular with senior members of Egyptian military.

The rift between Egypt and the Soviet Union began when the Soviet Union attempted to influence the choice of Nasser's replacement after his sudden death in 1970. After Sadat's consolidation of his position following the arrest of his major opponents, Egypt's relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated further, as the Soviet Union and its Egyptian clients began to differ on the type of equipment the Soviets were willing to provide and on Soviet attempts to constrain Egyptian military plans. This culminated in the expulsion of Soviet advisers in July 1972. Although Egyptian-Soviet relations improved somewhat during the months that followed, the relationship never returned to its former levels. After the October War, Egypt complained that the Soviets were lax in re-supplying the Egyptian military forces. Egypt increasingly turned to the West, especially the United States, and Sadat articulated the view that the United States held the crucial cards for peace in the region and could also become the source of essential

economic and technical assistance for Egypt. The relationship seemed to be a zero-sum game: Better relations with the United States spelled poor relations with the Soviet Union.

Arab nationalism has always been a key concept in Egyptian foreign policy, although its passionate espousal during the Nasser period diminished to lip service under Sadat and Mubarak. In his Philosophy of the Revolution, Nasser argued that Arab unity had to be established, for it would provide strength for the Arab nation to deal with its other problems. Arab unity was a consistent theme during the period of his tenure. Sadat retained that general theme but focused much of his foreign policy on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the future of the Palestinians. His signing of the Camp David Accords and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty of 1979 left him open to charges that he had forgotten the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world in his pursuit of Egyptian interests alone. The brotherhood of the Arab people has not disappeared from the political lexicon of the Egyptian leadership. Even during the early 1980s, when Egypt remained isolated from the Arab world, Mubarak did not disown the concept. The heyday of Arab nationalism, however, had clearly passed, for a number of reasons, including perhaps Sadat's willingness to go it alone with Israel and Mubarak's ability to survive the isolation from the Arab world that followed.

Another important theme of Egyptian policy has been its leadership role in the Arab world. Developed as a part of the pan-Arab or Arab nationalist approach, this theme acquired added dimensions with Nasser's increasing interests in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region in the 1960s. Increasingly, Egypt became the Arab leader in the conflict with Israel. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the wars of 1956, 1967, and 1970 (the War of Attrition along the Suez Canal) consumed Nasser's attention in foreign policy, and Egypt played the leading role in most aspects of the Arab side of the conflict. After 1967 the radical/conservative split in the Arab world was more or less healed at the Khartoum Summit, and Egypt's leadership began to encompass even the more conservative Arab states.

Following the October War, Sadat initiated a dramatic transformation of Egyptian foreign policy. He began with the assumption that the key to both his domestic and his foreign policy problems lay in closer ties with the United States, for he felt that only the United States could push Israel to relinquish territories occupied in the 1967 war (most critical for Egypt, the Sinai) and provide the technical and economic assistance the Egyptian economy desperately needed. The U.S. option thus seemed logical for both political and economic reasons.

The postwar approach began in the months following the war. In January 1974, Kissinger achieved a first-stage disengagement agreement separating Israeli and Egyptian forces along the Suez Canal and in Sinai. Relations between Egypt and the United States began to improve dramatically, and relations with the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate. After further and substantial effort, a second-stage disengagement between Israel and Egypt, known as Sinai II, was signed in September 1975. It provided for further Israeli withdrawals and the return to Egypt of important oil fields in Sinai. Nixon visited Egypt in June 1974, with the Watergate scandal at its height, and Sadat later visited the United States (October-November 1975).

In the wake of the Sinai II agreement, Egyptian policy took on a new cast. Sadat seemed to be interested in maintaining the role of the United States as the power that would help attain peace by pressuring Israel to change its policies. Movement was slowed, however, by regional developments—especially the civil war in Lebanon and by the U.S. presidential elections. The conclusion of the elections in November 1976 and the temporary winding down of the Lebanon conflict set a new process in motion. During the initial months of President Jimmy Carter's administration there was substantial movement toward the establishment of a process to lead toward peace or at least toward a Geneva conference designed to maintain the momentum toward a settlement. But the movement seemed to have slowed substantially by October 1977, thus leading to Sadat's decision to "go to Jerusalem" and to present his case and the Arab position directly to the Israeli parliament and people. In so doing he set in motion a new approach to the

Arab-Israeli conflict in which direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations became, for the first time, the means to peace in the Middle East.

The direct negotiations were continued at the Cairo Conference and Ismailia Summit of December 1977 and in lower-level contacts over the ensuing months. Then, in September 1978, Sadat met with President Carter and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin at the Camp David summit, which provided a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel and, ultimately, for a broader arrangement between Israel and the other Arab states. On March 26, 1979, Sadat signed the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in Washington. Implementation of the treaty, which normalized relations between the two states, proceeded as scheduled, and diplomatic relations were established. At the same time, various contacts were made, including tourist and communications links. These actions led to Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League and its isolation in the Arab world, which refused to accept Sadat's argument that the treaty and peace with Israel were in the best interests of the Palestinians and the other Arabs. Failure to achieve substantial progress toward implementation of the other Camp David framework, which provided for arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza, further complicated Egypt's and Sadat's position. Despite U.S. effort, the talks were suspended.

Sadat's assassination in October 1981 raised questions about Egypt's foreign policy direction, particularly its arrangements with Israel. President Mubarak reaffirmed and built upon the policies he inherited from Sadat, emphasizing negotiated solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict, maintenance of the peace with Israel, and close and positive relations with the United States. The peace treaty's provisions were implemented on or ahead of schedule. Although Mubarak insisted on maintenance of the peace with Israel, he also has been critical of Israel at times. He sharply criticized Israel's June 1982 invasion of Lebanon and withdrew his ambassador from Israel following the Sabra and Shatilla refugee camp massacres in September 1982. Egypt's embassy remained in Tel Aviv, however, just as Israel's embassy remained in

Egypt, the Egyptian ambassador later returned.) Nevertheless, Mubarak worked to reduce Egypt's Arab world isolation by gradually restoring and improving relations with the Arab states. He succeeded in improving ties with the moderate Arab states, and Egypt was readmitted to the Islamic Conference in early 1984. Mubarak also shrewdly utilized the opportunity presented by the Iran-Iraq war to improve his ties with several Arab moderate states, in part through offers of assistance to Iraq. By 1987 he had succeeded in returning Egypt to the mainstream of the Arab world without making a single concession, and in May 1989 Egypt rejoined the Arab League.

Another inter-Arab conflict gave Mubarak the chance to improve Egypt's situation. Egypt played a key role in pulling together the Arab states opposed to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. With Saudi Arabia and Syria, Egypt provided the major Arab element of the coalition that joined with U.S. and European forces in the offensive against Iraq in January 1991. Egypt sent the second-largest foreign force in the Gulf after the United States: 27,000 men to Saudi Arabia and some 5,000 to the UAE.

After the Gulf war, Egypt's relations with several of the Arab states—Syria and Libya in particular—improved sharply. Libya invited Egypt to mediate in its conflict with the United States and the United Kingdom over the bombing of the Pan Am jetliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Conversely, Egypt's relations with the Arab supporters of Iraq—Jordan, Yemen, and Sudan—have remained poor. Relations with Sudan deteriorated not only because of a border quarrel but also because of Mubarak's fears that the Islamic fundamentalist government in Khartoum was sponsoring the training and infiltration of fundamentalist insurgents into Egypt and other moderate Arab states (such as Algeria).

Relations with Israel under Mubarak have been correct, if not warm, but Mubarak has played a strong role in supporting and sponsoring Israeli negotiations with other key players in the Arab-Israeli conflict, principally the PLO and Syria. In Cairo in February 1994 Israeli Foreign Minister Peres and PLO Chairman Arafat signed an agreement that recorded some

progress in implementing the breakthrough agreement signed by the PLO and Israel in Washington in September 1993.

Relations with the United States have remained positive since their restoration in 1974. The personal chemistry between Sadat and Carter was an important factor in this development. Mubarak has been able to broaden and strengthen the relationship since his accession to office. Numerous exchanges of visits between U.S. and Egyptian officials (including regular trips by Mubarak to Washington) have allowed the dialogue on Middle Eastern and other issues to continue. U.S. economic and military assistance to Egypt rose to several billion dollars a year in the 1980s and to about \$2.5 billion a year in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Mubarak obtained an unwritten agreement to have U.S. aid to Egypt tied to the level of aid to Israel, although at a slightly lower level.

**The al-Aqsa Intifada and Egyptian Foreign Policy.** The road to the al-Aqsa Intifada was the result of the shortcomings of the American foreign policy of the Clinton administration. This policy began in a hapless fashion by the exclusion of the Americans from the Oslo Accords. These secret meetings also excluded the internal Palestinian leadership whose leadership of the first intifada had created the political pressure to make the diplomacy of the Oslo Accords possible. Thus the signatories to the accords had narrower concerns than the achievement of peace. Arafat was desperate to abandon the Diaspora and gain the appearance of sovereignty in Palestine, while Israel wanted to do the American bidding and give the Arabs a reward for having stood as allies against Saddam Hussein in the second Gulf War. The major issues of Jerusalem, the settlements, the right of return for the Palestinians and even the final boundaries of Israel and the new Palestinian state were to be put off until last and secondary procedural largely confidence building issues were discussed over the next seven years. At the same time in contradiction to the alleged goal of land for peace, the Israeli settlers who were eventually slated



to be theoretically removed from the occupied area or at least reduced in numbers, were in fact increased by one third.

In July 2000 at Camp David things came to a boiling point. There was the appearance of concessions by the Israelis e.g. a vaguely worded formula for a Palestinian presence in Jerusalem but there were no maps. In the absence of the maps, it became clear to the Palestinians that what appeared to be additional territorial concessions to themselves were in fact crisscrossing corridors of continued Israeli control of a non-territorially contiguous Palestine. Even an Arafat who was inclined to go along with most compromises could not accept this without risking his own overthrow. Palestine was now seething with resentment when General Sharon proved that he could visit the Temple Mount as any Israeli could and was entitled to do so. The 1000 police who accompanied him in this exercise saved his life from the violent protest that erupted.

The al-Aksa Intifada has put Mubarak and Egypt into a reactive and defensive stance. The first intifada from 1987-1992 occurred in a regional context in which Islamism had not as yet politically firmly established itself in Egypt or elsewhere with the important exception of Iran. The trend was evident but the political arrival had not yet been achieved. Mubarak had been fighting a secularist war to contain Islamism domestically. In a very complicated way his very effort to achieve the limitation of Islam actually fostered its growth. In an important study of this process, an author has termed this "Islamization by stealth". Mubarak has successfully repressed a violent minority Islamic opposition group but in the process he now has to carefully pay attention to nearly universal Islamic sympathy for the Palestinians. Partly for this reason and partly in order to carve out a negotiator role for itself, Egypt withdrew its ambassador from Israel.

The domestic pressures building upon Mubarak necessitated the withdrawal of its ambassador. From the beginning of the al-Aksa Intifada, Egypt has also attempted to accommodate to American pressure by acting as an intermediary between Arafat and the

Palestinians and the Israelis. U.S. policy under Clinton committed the Central Intelligence Agency in efforts to bring about security cooperation between the two sides. This also involved feverish peace efforts in the remaining weeks of the Clinton administration. With the election of President Bush, an American policy of hands off was initiated.

In the face of this, Egypt, in company with Jordan, proposed a peace program which called for a cessation of settlement activity in return for a reduction in violence. Evidence of further policy activism by Egypt was the support they generated at the Arab summit meeting on May 19, 2001. The former Foreign Minister of Egypt, Amr Mousa who was now Secretary General of the Arab League played an important leadership role in rallying support for the Palestinians. This was facilitated by the fact that Amr Mousa had become Secretary General of the Arab League. In that position, he was able to get the Arab states to take a position of recommending cutting off contacts with Israel. At the time there was some question whether or not this would result in any concrete action. There is increasing evidence that this action plus a similar one at the subsequent conference of the Organization of the Conference of Islamic States has resulted in increasing pressure upon the Israelis. For example, Egyptian joint energy ventures of great strategic importance to the Israelis are now beginning to come apart.

In sum, the al-Aksa Intifada has presented Egyptian foreign policy with a major challenge. This challenge goes even deeper than the political “strong state” and the economic/capability “weak state” distinctions developed in this chapter. The “strong state” after all has had important foreign policy advantages for Egypt. Now what is beginning to happen, as observed in the weakening of the capabilities of the National Democratic Party in the recent parliamentary elections, is that the popular and Islamic support for the Palestinians is so great that it threatens the very stability of the regime itself. Even the narrowness of Egypt’s political strength is under stress.

**Conclusion: Foreign Policy, Economic Rents and the “Weak “ State.** A major strength, at least from the viewpoint of the foreign policy decision-makers, is the centralization of authority in a patrimonial executive supported by an acquiescent political class. On the other hand, Egypt’s lack of economic resources severely limits its ability to influence other countries to adopt policies in furtherance of its national interests, either through diplomacy or, indirectly, through force of arms. As a result, Egypt has had to pursue a foreign policy of seeking infusions of foreign financial and military assistance to maintain internal stability and external security and to create economic growth.

During the cold war, Egypt’s ability to play one superpower against the other facilitated this effort, and with tensions running in the Middle East, it was successful in building up its military, first with Soviet and then, in the 1970s, with American arms. When President Sadat negotiated a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Egypt exchanged peace for economic assistance, and since that time, Egypt has received the second largest amount economic assistance given by the U.S. worldwide, next to Israel itself.

Beginning in the 1970’s, Sadat began a policy of cultivating what has become a policy of long duration of very large American economic and military assistance. Essentially, he pursued a policy of force and diplomacy with Israel that began with a surprise attack upon the Israeli defensive positions along the Suez Canal in 1973 and ended with a bilateral peace treaty with Israel in 1978.

Since that time, in exchange for that peace, Egypt has been receiving the second largest economic assistance given by the U.S. worldwide, next to Israel itself. This assistance has strengthened the weak infrastructure of Egypt without, however, requiring Egypt to achieve developmental capability and economic independence.

It has been development assistance, which has increased the potential for such development without, however, achieving development. The effect is to allow the strong and

weak characteristics of the Egyptian State to coexist and continue. The non-productive Egyptian State has taken on the coloration of market economics and reform. But the show case quality of this has weakened the state in foreign policy terms, so much so that it cannot even attract foreign investment never mind exert foreign policy influence. In addition, the collection of “rents” in addition to foreign assistance also reinforced this weakness. These rents have consisted of worker remittances from Egyptian workers in the oil rich states, Egypt’s own oil revenues and Suez Canal revenues. Rents operate to keep the state afloat and to maintain the political status quo.

In the era of globalization and the appearance of the peaceful settlement of disputes in the 1990’s Egypt was a weakened player. The Oslo accords of 1993 created seven years of a peace process on the Palestinian issue while Iraq was contained by U.S. policy. In the absence of foreign policy crises, which might be useful to exert its influence and exercise regional hegemony, Egypt was the foreign policy wallflower of the region. During this period of presumed movement towards peace in the 1990’s, economic globalization became the theme of regional conferences in the Gulf and in Morocco at which Israel was a prominent attendee. The “rent” seeking Egypt of weak economic capabilities was not a meaningful player in the search for foreign investment and technology. This does not mean that Egypt was not useful to American policy when from time to time it was able to play an intermediary role in Palestinian – Israeli negotiations. It does mean, however, that it was Israel itself that emerged as a potential economic power and it was Turkey and Iran that exercised hegemonial influence.

The apex of Egyptian regional influence in the Arab world occurred in the 1960s under the charismatic Gamal Abd al-Nasser. Sadat became a pariah in the Arab world following his peace treaty with Israel, and though his successor, Hosni Mubarak, engineered Egypt’s return to the Arab fold, his priorities have centered more on domestic problems than foreign policy.

### **Study Questions: VI**

1. Egypt has always been skillful in its ability to manipulate the international system to its own benefit. This was dramatically the case during the Cold War when Egypt attempted to play America off against the Soviets. How do the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973 illustrate this ability?
2. How has Egypt been able to collect “foreign policy rents”?
3. How and in what way has Egypt been useful to American interests?

### **VII. Conclusions**

1. Egypt as a politically strong authoritarian state is able to use political repression to maintain political stability, including the suppression of militant and moderate Islamic opposition groups.
2. It has also been able to divert wealth to the political class, including a new grouping of young businessmen. It has accomplished this through undertaking structural economic reform and directing the benefits of privatization of a segment of state enterprises to the same class. As a result, the macro figures of the economy appear positive whereas in fact, the economic capabilities of the economy have improved only slightly.
3. As a result, Egypt is in other respects a weak state. It is a state that does not develop and consequently fails to benefit the masses of the population.
4. In the era of globalization, Egypt is not a player. It can neither attract significant foreign investment nor can it play a dynamic role in seeking foreign markets. It is a state that sits on the international economic sidelines.

5. Even as a politically strong state with an important military capability, it can not assert itself in foreign affairs. The reason is that as a rentier state it must cater to the interests of the sources of its rent including its neighbors and foreign allies.
6. When it does exercise leadership in regional affairs as with its support of the Palestinians this is due significantly to reasons of regime survival in the face of an aroused Islamic opposition.
7. For the economic, political and cultural reasons indicated in this analysis, until fundamental political change occurs, Egypt is a country that is moribund between its past and its future. It can survive and it can exert marginal political pressure.
8. In foreign policy terms Egypt's survival is intimately tied to American economic and military support. For its part, America gains from this the usefulness of Egypt as an intermediary for American policy in the Middle East. In a certain respect both Egypt and America complement each other in policies of treading water. Egypt treads water in order to assure regime survival and America treads water because it lacks the resolve to compel a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Both countries have a vested interest in the political status quo.

### **Further Reading**

A review of the background of modern Egypt and the nature of its people is essential to an understanding of its political culture as well as more contemporary works. One important book based on personal observations and steel engravings describing Egypt in the 1840's is

William Lane's Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians (New York: Dutton, 1923). The historical background of modern Egypt is considered in Peter Mansfield, The British in Egypt (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971); and Nadav Safran, Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804–1952 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961). Jamal Mohammed Ahmed, in The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), provides an introduction to the intellectual foundations of Egyptian nationalism.

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Studies of the local politics of Egypt include Iliya Harik, The Political Mobilization of Peasants: A Study of an Egyptian Community (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1974); James B. Mayfield, Rural Politics in Nasser's Egypt: A Quest for Legitimacy (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Amitav Ghosh, In an Antique Land (New York: Vintage, 1992)

Other aspects of Egyptian politics: P.J. Vatikiotis, The Egyptian Army in Politics: Pattern for New Nations? (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1961); and Malcolm Kerr and El Sayed Yassin, eds., Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).

Egyptian foreign policy has not engendered many full-length studies. Nevertheless, several works provide a useful beginning. They include A. I. Dawisha, Egypt in the Arab World: The Elements of Foreign Policy (New York: John Wiley, 1976). More specific themes are considered in Karen Dawisha's Soviet Foreign Policy Towards Egypt (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); and Ismail Fahmy's Negotiating for Peace in the Middle East (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). See also, Gregory Aftandilian, Egypt's Bid for Arab Leadership: Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993).

Valuable studies of Egypt's economy are provided in Charles Issawi, Egypt in Revolution: An Economic Analysis (London: Oxford University Press, for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1963); Robert Mabro, The Egyptian Economy, 1952–1972 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Patrick O'Brien, The Revolution in Egypt's Economic System: From Private Enterprise to Socialism, 1952–1965 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs); Khalid Ikram, ed., Egypt: Economic Management in a Period of Transition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1980); Louis J. Cantori and Iliya Harik, eds., Local Politics and Development in the Middle East (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 1984), and Alan Richards, Egypt's Agricultural Development, 1800–1980: Technical and Social Change (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983).



Some more recent studies include Robert Springborg's Mubarak's Egypt: Fragmentation of the Political Order (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); Raymond Baker's Sadat and After: Struggles for Egypt's Soul (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990); Phebe Marr, ed. Egypt at the Crossroads (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1999), including chapters on foreign policy, national security and the military. On Islam in present day Egypt, see Denis J. Sullivan and Sana Abed-Kotob, Islam in Contemporary Egypt (Boulder, Colo.: Rienner, 1999) and especially, Genieve Abdo, No God But God: Egypt and the Triumph of Islam (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). There is also the chapter by Louis J. Cantori, "Egypt: Moribund Between Past and Future" in Robert O. Freedman, ed. The Middle East Enters the 21st Century (Gainesville, Florida: University Presses of Florida, forthcoming, 2002) and also, Louis J. Cantori and Sally , Chapter 13, "Arab Republic of Egypt" in David E. Long and Bernard Reich, Government and Politics of The Middle East and North Africa, New Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, forthcoming 2002).

**For web resources on Egypt see:**

- Egyptian Army: [www.washingtoninstitute.org](http://www.washingtoninstitute.org)
- Egyptian Government and Political Guide:  
<http://www.arabii.com/egypt/govt.htm>
- Egyptian Political Resources: <http://www.politicalresources.net/egypt.htm>
- Library of Congress: [www.locweb2loc.gov](http://www.locweb2loc.gov)
- The "New York Times" of Egypt in English, al-Ahram Weekly:  
[www.ahram.org.eg](http://www.ahram.org.eg)
- Official Egyptian Site: [www.sis.gov.eg](http://www.sis.gov.eg)

- The Politics and Economy of Egypt: [www.inform.umd.edu](http://www.inform.umd.edu)
- English Language Reporting , Middle East Times, [www.metimes.com](http://www.metimes.com)

# Australia

## A Self-Study Guide



*The Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia*

GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Australia* is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Australian issues related to history, geography, culture, economics, government and politics, international relations, and defense. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Australia is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or major public libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide* to Australia was prepared by Ambassador Richard W. Teare, Director of the Center for Australian and New Zealand Studies in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and former Deputy Chief of Mission of the United States

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First edition  
January 2002

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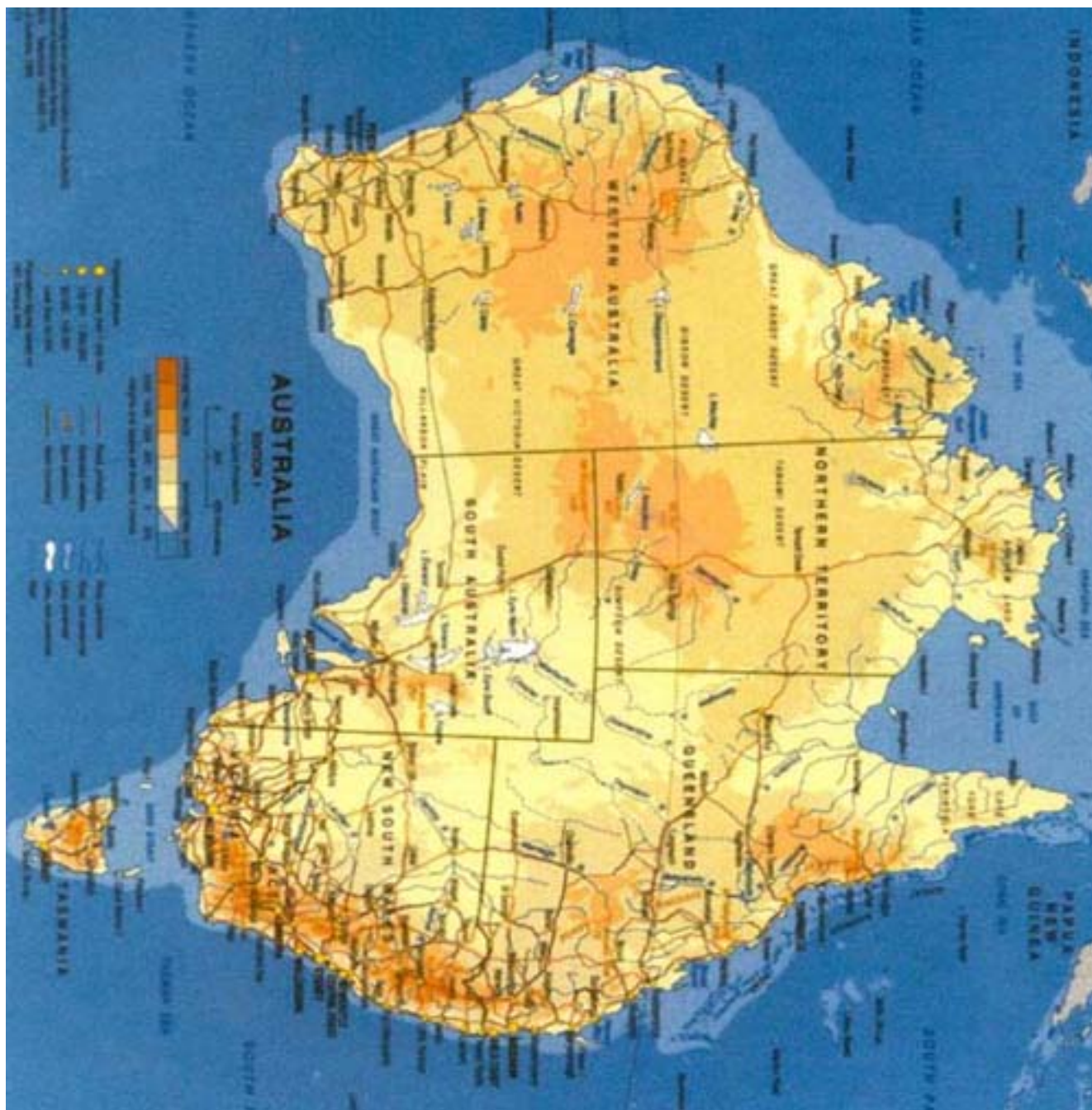
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## THE LAND

Australia is the largest island and the smallest continent on earth. It is also one of the world's largest nations, with an area of 7,686,850 square kilometers (2,967,910 square miles), ranking sixth in size, after Russia, Canada, China, the United States and Brazil. Its size closely approximates that of 'the Lower 48' states of the United States.

Australia is located southeast of Asia, close to insular Southeast Asia. The Pacific Ocean lies to the east and the Indian Ocean to the west; the two meet north of Australia in the Timor and Arafura seas. Because of Australia's relative isolation from Europe, mainland Asia and the Americas over millennia, the country has animal and plants species that exist nowhere else in the world. Among the animal species are the kangaroo and the emu, which appear on Australia's coat of arms, and the koala and the duck-billed platypus. That same isolation has protected the country from a number of contagious diseases. But isolation has also made travel and transportation difficult, time-consuming and expensive and has contributed to a sense of remoteness, factors that have combined to create, for Australians, what has been called 'the tyranny of distance.'

Australia is the lowest of the continents and, after Antarctica, the driest. The average elevation is 330 meters (1,082 feet). The tallest peak, Mt. Kosciusko, measures 2,228 meters (7,310 feet). The Great Dividing Range in the eastern part of the country sets off the populated coastal plain from the vast interior. The Western Plateau rises to 600 meters (2,000 feet). The Great Sandy Desert and Great Victoria Desert are largely arid, and northern portions of Western Australia and the Northern Territory are extremely hot. The northeastern part of the country, by contrast, receives heavy rainfall, and the Cape York Peninsula has jungles.

Water supply is a chronic problem for Australia. The exceptions are those areas in the northeast with heavy rainfall and those parts of the southeast served by the Murray-Darling and other river systems. Elsewhere, droughts may last for months and even years. Brush fires and forest fires are common and indeed necessary to the regeneration of some types of vegetation. The droughts sometimes are broken by brief but heavy rains, which cause temporary flooding and bring out species of amphibians that have lain dormant in the ground for long periods.

## THE PEOPLE

Australia's population in mid-2001 was estimated to be 19,358,000, with a growth rate of 0.99 per cent per year. Australia conducts a census every five years; results of the census conducted on the night of August 7, 2001, will be available in 2002. Despite the country's image as a frontier nation with a vast outback, it is in fact one of the world's most urbanized nations, with more than 85 per cent of the population living in cities, and most of those in a narrow swath of the southeastern part of the country.

Life expectancy for children born in 2001 was estimated at 79.87 years: 77.02 years for males, and 82.87 for females.

Ethnically, the population is estimated to be 91 per cent Caucasian, 7 per cent Asian, and 2 per cent Aboriginal and other.

In terms of national origin, the population is extremely diverse: 23 per cent were born in another country, and an additional 25 per cent have at least one parent who was born in another country. Immigrants from more than 140 countries have been naturalized to Australian citizenship. Government statistics show that

Australians speak more than 100 world languages and nearly 200 indigenous languages. About 15 per cent of Australians speak a language other than English at home. The top five are Italian, Chinese, Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese.

Literacy among those over 15 is estimated to be 100 per cent.

The nominal religious affiliation of the population is: Anglican, 26.1 per cent; Roman Catholic, 26 per cent; other Christian, 24.3 per cent; and non-Christian, 11 per cent.

The labor force numbers approximately 9.5 million persons, divided approximately as follows:

Finance and services, 32 per cent;  
Public and community services, 20 per cent;  
Wholesale and retail trade, 21 per cent;  
Manufacturing and industry, 22 per cent; and  
Agriculture, 5 per cent.

Most new jobs created in the last 15 years are in the services sector. An estimated 35 per cent of employed Australians now work in professional, managerial, technical or administrative jobs.

## Questions and Issues:

Australia's population is projected to stabilize at around 23 million by the year 2025, with 25 per cent of that number aged 65 and above. Some authorities say that population is much too small to provide economic or military security and that the country should aim for a population of 50 million by the year 2050. Others say the country's limited water supply and existing environmental problems argue against any such dramatic growth. Who's right?

National Geographic magazine in July 2000 described Australia as a nation "under siege" in environmental terms. Prosperity has come "at a cost: As housing and pastures expand, forests fall, woodlands thin out, and fragile ecosystems become unstable." Among the problems are overgrazing, deforestation, salinization, infestation by feral animals, fire, pollution of surface water and groundwater by mining operations, and atmospheric pollution. Can Australia cope with these problems without sacrificing economic prosperity?

## HISTORY

Aboriginal peoples have lived in Australia for at least 60,000 years. Some scholars believe it may have been even longer. The ancestors of the Aborigines probably came from Southeast Asia. At the time of European settlement they inhabited most areas of the continent, each speaking one or more of hundreds of separate languages. Religious and cultural traditions varied from one region to another but reflected

strong connection with the land. Tribes had complex social structures, simple but efficient technology, and highly developed decorative arts (see CULTURE, below). It is now well established that peoples of Asia and Oceania traded and had other contacts with the Aborigines of Australia for hundreds and probably thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans.

European explorers of the 15th and 16th centuries reached the East Indies and many islands of the Pacific but managed to miss Australia. In 1606 a Spaniard, Luis Báez de Torres, sailed through the strait between Australia and New Guinea that now bears his name; he may or may not have sighted Australia. In the same year the Dutch sea captain Willem Jansz landed some of his men on the continent, where they found a hostile reception.

Abel Tasman, another Dutch navigator, sailed along the western and southern coasts in 1642 and discovered an island, which he named Van Diemen's Land, in honor of the governor of the Dutch East Indies. The continent became known generally as New Holland, although the Dutch established no settlements. The name Van Diemen's Land was changed to Tasmania in 1855.

The first English explorer to set foot on Australian soil was William Dampier, who landed on the northwest coast in 1688. Only in 1770, however, when Captain James Cook charted the east coast in the *Endeavour*, was Australia claimed for the British crown, under the name of New South Wales.

The British at this period had severe criminal laws and not enough space in their prisons. They had customarily sent some convicts to the North American colonies but had to end that practice with the outbreak of the American Revolution. The writer Robert Hughes in his book *The Fatal Shore* has observed that American rhetoric about refusing to accept convicts was hypocritical cant, for "the trade in black slaves had turned white convict labor into an economic irrelevance." Hughes adds that on the eve of the Revolution the American colonies were receiving more slaves in one year, 47,000, than England had sent convicts in the previous fifty years.

In the face of the new situation in North America, the British quartered some convicts on old, deteriorating ships known as "hulks" anchored in the Thames, but the numbers of prisoners continued to grow, and a longer-term solution was clearly needed. Sir Joseph Banks, the prominent naturalist who had sailed with Cook and had since become President of the Royal Society, suggested Australia as a destination for convicts.

Thus an initial group of convicts, guards and administrators, aboard eleven ships, the First Fleet, left Portsmouth, England on May 13, 1787, and arrived at Botany Bay on January 20, 1788. Captain Arthur Philip, Commodore of the First Fleet, preferred nearby Port Jackson – Sydney harbor – and landed there on January 26, the date now observed as Australia's national day.

Over the next eighty years, about 160,000 convicts were sent to Australia, more than 15 per cent of them women. Transportation to Van Diemen's Land ended in 1853, and to Western Australia in 1868. However, free settlers had greatly outnumbered convicts from the early years of settlement, and the Australian colonies flourished during most of the 19th century, thanks to the wool industry and to mid-



century gold rushes. The “bush” was vast, labor was scarce, and farming, mining and trade all contributed to general prosperity.

This is not to say that Australia was peaceful; on the contrary, life on the frontier and in the goldfields was rough, excessive drinking was common, and firearms were prevalent. In 1854 miners in Ballarat, Victoria, who complained about police repression and corruption in the courts formed a mass movement to demand justice. Some of them built a stockade near the Eureka Hotel and began to drill for battle. Troops and police cracked down, and in the ensuing fight 25 miners were killed and 30 wounded; an officer and three privates were killed, and eleven other privates were wounded. The colonial government redressed some of the miners’ grievances, but the Eureka Stockade became a powerful symbol for labor and political activists for decades thereafter.

The ‘bushranger’ or frontier outlaw became a prominent figure. The most famous and controversial of them was Ned Kelly, son of poverty-stricken Irish exiles who in 1878 killed three police constables who were hunting him. Kelly and his gang then took to robbing banks and distributing at least some of the proceeds to the poor. Kelly became a hero, a Robin Hood, to many and a dangerous enemy to the colonial government, the police and the army, and to the economic establishment. In 1880 he was betrayed, wounded, captured and hanged. He remains a compelling figure in Australian national life, most recently portrayed in Peter Carey’s brilliant novel *True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000), which purports to be Kelly’s own memoir.

At the same time, Australia was becoming more egalitarian and more democratic. The colony of Victoria introduced the secret ballot in 1855, and the term ‘Australian ballot’ carried over into American political life. The colony of South Australia granted women the right to vote in 1892, the first substantial political entity to do so. (New Zealand became the first nation to do so, one year later.)

Colonial politicians also began to see merit in the idea of unity. A series of conferences during the 1890s led ultimately the establishment of a federal government on January 1, 1901. Australia remained within the British Empire. Of the 3.8 million Europeans at that time, three-fourths had been born in Australia. The vast majority were of English, Irish or Scottish descent, and generally speaking had a higher standard of living than did people in the British Isles.

In the years from Federation through 1914, Australia made substantial progress in agriculture and manufacturing. Institutions of government and social service were established. World War I, however, was devastating for Australia. Almost 400,000 men, of a male population of less than three million, volunteered for military service. About 60,000 died, and tens of thousands more were wounded or gassed.

Men of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed on the Gallipoli peninsula on April 25, 1915, in an attempt to capture a Turkish stronghold and, ultimately, to control the Dardanelles. The operation bogged down. The ANZACs fought heroically and took severe casualties before they were finally withdrawn late in the year. But the experience of the campaign, and combat on the Western Front later in World War I, contributed to the formation of national spirit in both Australia and New Zealand and to the extremely close bond that endures between the two.

At the same time, many Australians of Irish descent did not wish to fight for the British crown. The government of Prime Minister Billy Hughes twice sought authority, through referendums, to conscript young men for military service, and lost both times.

The inter-war period was difficult for Australia. Servicemen returning from the battlefronts of Europe tried to reconstruct their lives. Political parties fractured. The Depression hit hard. Banks failed. Income disparity increased.

World War II, however, brought a revival of national pride and self-confidence as Australia contributed significantly to the Allied victory. At the outset, in late 1939 and 1940, Australian troops were sent to support the British in North Africa, the Middle East, Greece and Crete. With the rapid Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia in late 1941, however, and after the attack on Pearl Harbor and with the fall of Singapore imminent, Prime Minister John Curtin stated:

“Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links of kinship with the United Kingdom.”

For Australia, this departure from the concept and practice of Imperial Defence was revolutionary. By February 1942, Australian troops aboard ship were steaming back toward the Pacific, at British behest, for use in Sumatra and Java to reinforce the Singapore-Malaya region. They were too late to be of help there, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wanted them diverted to Burma. The Australian War Cabinet disagreed. Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt urged Curtin to reconsider, but he refused, saying:

“Australia’s outer defences were now quickly vanishing, and our vulnerability is completely exposed.”

The British acquiesced, and the troops returned to Australia. Within days of Curtin’s decision, Japanese troops landed on the north coast of New Guinea and started through the mountains, over the Kokoda Trail, toward Port Moresby. Had they reached their objectives, they could have established air bases within easy range of targets in Australia. As it was, Japanese aircraft bombed and strafed Darwin 64 times, killing 243 people on the ground.

However, the Japanese were stopped on the Kokoda Trail in bitter fighting. The tide of war began to turn with the American-Australian victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942. With Australian assistance, American forces prevented the establishment of a Japanese air base on Guadalcanal later that year.

General Douglas MacArthur made his headquarters in Australia from March 1942 through October 1944 and from there directed the Allied campaign that gradually rolled back Japanese occupation of the islands and the Southeast Asian mainland.

Australia boomed after World War II. Many women who had gone to work in factories during the war continued to work in peacetime. Manufacturing grew. The production of wool and wheat increased. In the 1950s, mineral resources were exploited and the government undertook major public works projects, including the giant Snowy Mountain hydroelectric scheme. Many Displaced Persons from Europe immigrated to Australia, joining migrants from the traditional sources in the British Isles. Nevertheless, the 'White Australia' policy, adopted early in the century to protect domestic labor by excluding Asian immigrants, remained in force.

Australia sent troops to Malaya in 1955 to combat the communist insurgency there and in 1965 sent troops to Viet-Nam, at American request (see FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE).

A coalition government of the Liberal and Country (now National) parties dominated Australian political life from 1949 to 1972, aided by a schism in the Australian Labor Party. The leader of the coalition from 1949 to 1966 was the powerful Sir Robert Gordon Menzies.

The election of a Labor government under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1972 brought dramatic changes in social and economic policy and in foreign affairs, including an end to the 'White Australia' policy on immigration and to Australian involvement in Viet-Nam. Whitlam, however, was dismissed on November 11, 1975, by the Governor-General he had appointed (see GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS).

Australia accepted many 'boat people' and other refugees from Indochina in the years after 1975 as country became more and more diverse, and more and more prosperous. Today, in terms of purchasing-power parity, Australia's per capita Gross Domestic Product is at the level of the dominant economies of Western Europe: Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Italy.

In 2001, Australia faces a number of issues, examined more fully in following sections:

Whether to become a republic (which would remain within the Commonwealth of Nations), and if so, how to choose its Chief of State

How to come to terms with its Aboriginal population

How to relate to its Asian neighbors, and, in particular, to Indonesia

## **Questions and Issues**

Has Australia at last overcome the embarrassment of its convict origins?

Has 'geography' won out over 'history' and made Australia an Asian country? Do Asians agree?

# **CULTURE**

Australian culture is probably not sufficiently appreciated, either at home or overseas. Australian intellectuals often criticize their countrymen for adopting a “cultural cringe” – an automatic assumption that works of art, literature, film or the like that are created in Australia cannot match those imported from overseas, particularly the United Kingdom or the United States.

But in fact Australia has developed a distinctive culture and has produced world-class works and performers in a number of fields.

Australian literature is considered to have begun with the novel *For the Term of His Natural Life* by Marcus Clarke, published in 1874, a story of life in an Australian penal colony. Another landmark of early literature is *Robbery Under Arms* (1888), the story of an outlaw gang by Thomas Alexander Browne under the pseudonym Rolf Boldrewood.

In the late 19th century, “bush ballads” – poems describing the colorful and adventurous life of the countryside – achieved widespread popularity. The leading bush-ballad poet was A.B. (“Banjo”) Patterson, whose most famous work is “Waltzing Matilda.” The poem was set to music and is regarded as the unofficial national anthem. Henry Lawson, who produced many short stories and poems about life in the bush, was the finest writer of this early period.

Notable Australian writers of the 20th century include:

-- Henry Handel Richardson (pen name of Ethel Florence Richardson Robertson), author of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* (a three-volume work: *Australia Felix*, *The Way Home*, and *Ultima Thule*), based on her father’s life and times, part of which he spent in the gold fields of Ballarat, Victoria;

-- Patrick White, novelist who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1973, best known for *The Tree of Man*, *Voss*, and *Riders in the Chariot*.

-- Thomas Keneally, author of *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*; *Schindler’s Ark*, upon which the Spielberg film *Schindler’s List* is based; and many other works.

-- Peter Carey, who has written *Oscar & Lucinda*, *Jack Maggs* and *True History of the Kelly Gang*.

Others are Morris West, Colleen McCullough, Bryce Courtenay, A.D. Hope, Christina Stead, Kate Grenville and David Malouf.

The first Australian musical performer to achieve international stardom was the opera singer Dame Nellie Melba (1861-1931); the next was Dame Joan Sutherland (b. 1926). The works of composers such as Percy Grainger, Malcolm Williamson and John Antill are performed internationally, and Sir Charles Mackerras is one of the leading conductors of his generation.

In popular music, Australian performers from Helen Reddy and Olivia Newton-John to Midnight Oil and INXS have become known internationally.

The Aboriginal people had their own artistic tradition long before European settlement. The Aborigines painted on rock – many such paintings survive – and on tree bark. The years since 1970 have seen a revival of Aboriginal art in new media: traditional sand paintings have been transferred to canvas, often in acrylic paint. Many Aboriginal works are, in effect, maps of sacred ancestral lands and journeys through those lands; others show animals, often in “x-ray” style with stylized skeletal structure; and still others are designs from the prehistoric and mythic period known as The Dreaming.

White Australian painters of the late 19th century, some of whom had trained in Europe, painted landscapes and scenes of frontier life. Among the best known are Frederic McCubbin, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton. Prominent 20th-century painters include Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Fred Williams and Arthur Boyd.

The Australian film industry is almost as old as our own but suffered from American competition in the 1930s and nearly disappeared. Since the 1960s it has experienced a notable revival, led by directors such as Peter Weir (*Picnic at Hanging Rock, Gallipoli*), Bruce Beresford (*'Breaker' Morant, The Fringe Dwellers*) and Baz Luhrman (*Strictly Ballroom, Moulin Rouge*). Stars of stage and screen of an earlier era who were born or raised in Australia include Dame Judith Anderson, Cyril Ritchard, Errol Flynn and Peter Finch; among contemporary stars with similar links are Bryan Brown, Rachel Ward, Geoffrey Rush, Nicole Kidman, Mel Gibson, Judy Davis and Cate Blanchett.

Australia may be the most sports-minded nation in the world, with millions of active participants and even more millions of passionate fans. The oldest established sport is cricket, which gave Australia its greatest sporting – many would say ‘national’ – hero, Sir Donald Bradman, who died in 2001 and whose image was immediately placed on Australia’s 20-cent coin. Australia is known also for its four codes of football – Australian Rules, soccer, Rugby union, and Rugby league; and for swimming, surfing, and competition among life-saving clubs. Australians have also adopted North American sports such as basketball, baseball and softball, and have played in the National Basketball Association and in American baseball’s minor leagues.

Australian tennis-players, in particular, have compiled impressive records in international competition, from Rod Laver, Roy Emerson, Ken Rosewall, Margaret Court and Yvonne Goolagong-Cawley to Pat Cash, Patrick Rafter and Lleyton Hewitt.

## Questions and Issues

Can Australia conserve and promote indigenous culture? Can Australia define and preserve its own national traditions against the onslaught of American culture? Does it want to do so?

Paul Hogan as “Crocodile Dundee” did much to promote Australia but also presented an anachronistic

and unrepresentative image of the country. How should Australia present itself in the 21st century?

# SOCIAL ISSUES

## The Aboriginal Question

The primary social issue facing Australia today is the status of its Aboriginal peoples in relation to the rest of the population. The issue is often summed up under the term “Reconciliation,” which implies an obligation upon the part of the European-descended population to make amends to the Aboriginal people and to extend to them the social, education, occupation and other benefits that other Australians have long enjoyed.

The situation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples resembles in many ways that of Native Americans in the United States. So does their proportion of the total Australian population: 1 to 2%. However, in the United States, New Zealand and Canada tribal land rights were recognized, to some degree, in the form of treaties. In Australia, this was not the case.

When it sent settlers to Australia at the end of the 18th century, the British government adopted the theory of *terra nullius*, meaning that, in law, Australia was “land belonging to no one.” It was, in effect, as if the Aboriginal peoples were not there, and certainly that they had no right of ownership to the continent on which they had lived for tens of thousands of years.

Indeed, the Aboriginal population – estimated at 300,000 in 1788 – declined precipitously during the 19th century as the result of disease, sporadic battles with settlers, loss of traditional lands, and other causes. Aborigines on the island of Tasmania were exterminated. Thereafter, Aborigines remained on tribal lands or have lived on the fringes of white society.

In the 20th century, the Aboriginal population stabilized and is estimated today at 350,000, or about 2 per cent of the national total, many of whom are of mixed Aboriginal and white blood.

For many years in the 20th century agencies of the Australian government sought to assimilate Aboriginal children by taking them from their own families and placing them in white homes. In many cases, however, the children – girls, in particular – were used as domestic servants, and in all cases the emotional trauma for the children and their own families was ignored. The children thus removed have become known as “the Stolen Generation.”

In the last 40 years, Australian governments and the general public have to some degree modified their attitudes toward the Aboriginal population, and over the same period the political consciousness of that population has risen, thanks in part to a militant black-power movement that began in the early 1970s.

In a 1967 referendum, an overwhelming majority of the electorate voted to remove a constitutional

prohibition of direct federal aid to Aborigines and to include them in future censuses.

In recent years Aborigines have increasingly pursued the issue of land rights through the legal system. The results have included two important court decisions, significant legislation, and continuing negotiations. Monash University Law Lecturer Pamela O'Connor summarizes major developments of the 1990s in these terms: In the *Mabo* decision of 1992, the High Court of Australia “declared that Australian common law recognizes a form of native title to land. The court held that native title exists where the indigenous people have maintained their connection to the land and title has not been extinguished by legislation or government action.” Federal legislation in 1993, the Native Title Act, “complemented the *Mabo* decision<sup>1/4</sup>[by establishing] a claims process and regulat[ing] future government acts affecting native-title land.” Then, in the case of *The Wik Peoples v. Queensland*, 1996, the High Court held that “the grant by the Queensland Government of pastoral leases over native title did not give the lease-holders a right of possession and did not extinguish native title,” because the Queensland leases were not exclusive ones. (Pastoral leases cover some 40 per cent of Australia’s land area, and in some states as much as 80 to 90 per cent. Pastoral lease-holdings include large tracts of land in remote areas – areas in which Aboriginal peoples are most likely to have maintained their traditional connection with the land.)

The process of adjustment to these landmark decisions is still going on. The Howard Government’s Native Title Amendment Act of 1998 devolved considerable authority in this realm to the state governments, and it requires claimants to prove actual connections to the land they claim. State governments continue to wrestle with the issue; there have been instances of successful negotiation and renegotiation of leases, and no consistent pattern of implementation has yet emerged.

The overarching issue of “Reconciliation” remains open in 2001. The Howard Government has declined to issue an apology to the Aboriginal peoples, apparently in part out of fear that to do so would open the federal government to monetary claims and massive litigation. The Australian Labor Party, for its part, has yet to define precisely what it means by “Reconciliation.”

It is clear that future governments of Australia will have to grapple with issues of justice for the nation’s original inhabitants.

## Immigration

The issue of immigration has also had a vexed history in Australia. The wish to preserve a predominantly European society in Australia dates back as far as the 1840s, when squatters – persons who settled without permission on Government land – sought to bring in laborers from China to replace convicts, and others opposed the idea. Chinese came to Australia in considerable numbers during the gold rushes of the 1850s, and there were anti-Chinese riots in the 1860s, although the population was only 3 per cent Asian. Later in the century, indentured laborers were imported from Melanesia to work in the sugar-cane fields of Queensland.

The historian Manning Clark has written: “Experiences between 1860 and 1900 strengthened the demand

for exclusion and discrimination. The American Civil War seemed to prove the folly and evils of using slave or semi-slave coloured labour. Political equality and the career open to talent were incompatible with a plantation economy in which the base of the social pyramid always consisted of one class. European domination of Asia was taken to illustrate the teaching of Darwin on the survival of the fittest. The workers were convinced that the use of coloured labour threatened their standard of living and their privileges. The middle classes were afraid of the threat to European civilization and to British political institutions, as well as of the evils of miscegenation.”

It was in this climate that the first Federal Parliament, in 1901, passed an Immigration Restriction Act. It enjoyed the support of all three political parties and of all but a couple of members, and it established what became known as the ‘White Australia’ policy, which was to prevail for the first two-thirds of the 20th century. Naturally, the policy tended to heighten Australia’s isolation and alienation from Asia, and it created much ill will, particularly in the years after World War II as several nations of Southeast Asia achieved independence.

Asians observed that Australia took many immigrants from Europe in the years 1945, not only from the British Isles but also Displaced Persons from Central Europe and the Baltic States and, for the first time in significant numbers, from nations of Southern Europe such as Italy, Greece and Malta.

Eventually, in the words of journalist Paul Kelly, “White Australia fell victim to decolonisation, the demise of Empire and the transformation of Australian national interests.” He notes that the Australian Labor Party abandoned its commitment to the policy in 1965 and that in 1966 the policy was abolished by the government of Prime Minister Harold Holt. But, Kelly continues, “Its interment was accompanied by funeral obsequies which revealed that the principle of a homogeneous Australia remained alive. The nation had merely decided that racially based discrimination was officially unacceptable. There was no alternative vision to replace White Australia nor any intention to permit significant non-white immigration.”

The aftermath of the Vietnam War demonstrated that the policy had indeed changed. After a slow start in 1975 and 1976, Australia by the end of 1982 had taken in about 70,000 refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – more, in proportion to its population, than the United States or any other nation of the world.

Yet this influx generated a backlash by 1984, when the eminent historian Geoffrey Blainey ignited a national debate with his complaint that the Labor government of Prime Minister Bob Hawke was pursuing immigration policies that would result in “an Asian Australia.” The controversy re-emerged in 1988 after the issuance of a report on immigration commissioned by the Hawke government; John Howard, Leader of the Opposition when the report appeared, implied that he favored a reduction in the rate of Asian immigration, and his handling of the issue contributed to his replacement as Leader the following year.

The issue of immigration continues to cause political turbulence. Resentment of immigration, and particularly Asian immigration, was a major element in the rise of Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party (discussed below, under GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS) in the late 1990s. Beginning in about 1999, Australia began to experience the arrival of substantial numbers of asylum-seekers, primarily from



Afghanistan. These movements appeared to reflect a belief that Australia was among the most liberal countries in granting asylum.

Many of these people traveled to Malaysia or Singapore by air, then to Indonesia, and embarked from the south coast of Java for Australia, often in unsafe vessels. By mid-2001 Australia had more than 8,000 such persons in custody and had had to house some of them on disused military bases. Some asylum-seekers rioted to protest the conditions of their confinement, and there was at least one suicide.

In August 2001, an Indonesian boat carrying more than 400 asylum-speakers began to sink. A Norwegian freighter, the *Tampa*, rescued its passengers and crew and proposed to deliver them to Christmas Island, an Australian possession in the Indian Ocean south of Java. Prime Minister Howard refused to allow the *Tampa* to enter Australian territorial waters; eventually dispatched Special Air Services troops to commandeer the ship; and had the asylum-seekers placed aboard Australian Navy vessels and taken to New Zealand and Nauru, which had agreed to accept them for processing of their claims. The tough line Howard abruptly adopted, although criticized abroad, was popular with much of the Australian population and is considered to have sealed his and his coalition's comeback, from far behind in the opinion-polling early in 2001 to a third consecutive victory in November.

Immigration will be an issue for the new Australian Federal Parliament that convenes early in 2002, just as it was for the first Parliament in 1901.

## Other Social Issues

Most other social issues in Australia are familiar ones to Americans. They include the status of women generally and the issue of equal pay for equal work; discrimination against Asians, in particular, and against other racial and ethnic minorities; the adequacy of pensions for retirees and of medical care, housing, and education for disadvantaged elements of society. Generally speaking, however, Australian society is more egalitarian than American society and lacks the extreme disparities of income-distribution found in the United States.

## Questions

Can Australia achieve reconciliation with its Aboriginal peoples without provoking serious backlash by its much larger 'redneck' minority?

How *should* Australia deal with asylum-seekers, given its location and its inability to control

departures from Indonesia, and in light of its international obligations and its tradition as a nation of immigrants?

## ECONOMICS

Australia through most of its history has depended heavily on the export of primary commodities: agricultural products and minerals. That statement applies today, even as the country develops its technological prowess and benefits increasingly from 'invisible exports' such as tourism and education.

In the 19th century, Australia's mainstays were livestock (beef and sheep, the latter raised for wool as well as for meat), wheat-growing and mining. The discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851 prompted a gold rush that accelerated immigration. Many miners who had failed in California came to Australia to try their luck.

About two-thirds of Australia is farmland, but most of this area is dry land suitable only for grazing. Only about five per cent of the farmland is devoted to crops, and only a small percentage of the cropland is irrigated. Nevertheless, thanks of mechanization and the use of sophisticated techniques, Australian farmers – only 5% of the population -- produce virtually all the food the nation needs and vast quantities of wheat, in particular, for export. Temperate-climate fruit such as apples and pears are grown throughout the country. The vineyards of South Australia and New South Wales produce excellent grapes, and Australian wines now have a substantial market share in the United States. The wet tropical climate of coastal Queensland allows the production of sugar cane, pineapples and bananas.

By 1900, Australia exported large amounts of copper, gold, silver, lead, tin and zinc, and they remained the mining industry's chief products through the first half of the 20th century. During the 1950s geologists discovered large deposits of bauxite, coal and iron ore and, during the 1960s, manganese, uranium, nickel and petroleum. Many of these mineral deposits lie in remote areas and were very expensive to develop. Much foreign capital was involved, and much of the product is exported – e.g., coal to Japan.

Today, Australia is the world's leading producer of bauxite and is a ranking producer of all the other minerals mentioned above. Australia is also the source of most of the world's high-quality opals.

Historically, Australia has imported more manufactured goods than it has exported, an unusual situation for a developed country. Australia produces most of its own consumer goods, although some of its manufacturing industries relied heavily on foreign capital – in the case of automobiles, for example, Ford and General Motors (as Holden) were among the leading original producers, although Japanese makes now dominate the market. Australia still relies on imports for capital goods and passenger aircraft. The two largest categories of imports in 1998-99 were cars, 7%, and computers, 5%.

While merchandise, including primary commodities, continues to dominate Australia's exports, the composition has changed considerably since the mid-1980s. By 1998-99, exports of manufactures (28%) and services (25%) exceeded exports of agricultural products (24%) and minerals (23%).

Japan is Australia's largest single export market, taking 20% of merchandise exports. The United States is usually second, with about 9%, followed by South Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, China, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia. (Collectively, the nations of the European Union account for 14%, and ASEAN, as a group, for 12%)

The United States is Australia's largest supplier, with 22% of the import market in 1999. Japan is second, with 14%. Germany and China each account for about 5%. (The European Union collectively accounted for 24% in 1999 and the ASEAN nations for 13%.)

Australia is thus one of the few nations in the Asia-Pacific region with which the United States regularly runs a trade surplus.

Tourism is one of Australia's fastest-growing industries. The country offers a wide range of attractions, from the sophistication of Sydney and the beauty of its harbor to the stark grandeur of Uluru (Ayers Rock) in 'the Red Center,' and from the Great Barrier Reef to Kakadu National Park. More than four millions tourists arrived in 1999 and spent more than \$5 billion. All told, tourism contributed three per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. The Government claims that its Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) system is the most advanced such system in the world. It allows visitors from the United States and 30 other countries to obtain authority to enter Australia when they book their travel, and within a matter of seconds, thus meeting the visa requirement.

Australia has 38 universities, almost all of them publicly funded. Higher education has become a significant earner of foreign exchange. In 1999, about 130,000 international students were enrolled in Australian institutions – more than in any other country except the United States and the United Kingdom – and another 27,000 were studying in Australian university branches offshore. The top eleven source-countries for students are in East Asia and South Asia, with the largest numbers coming from Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia. International education earned Australia more than \$2 billion in 1999.

Australia has long campaigned for the liberalization of international trade. In 1986 it convened "the Cairns group" of non-subsidizing agricultural producers, named for the town in Queensland where its first meeting was held, whose aim is to eliminate barriers to world trade in agriculture. In 1989, then-Prime Minister Bob Hawke proposed the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, a grouping originally of 12 economies, including the United States and Canada, intended to devise and implement concrete measures for the promotion of trade throughout the region. Over the years APEC has instituted ministerial meetings in numerous fields and, beginning in 1993 at the invitation of then-President Bill Clinton, annual meetings of heads of government. Meanwhile, the forum has grown to include 21 member-economies.

Australia is also a member of virtually all the international financial institutions established since World War II, of the specialized agencies of the United Nations, and of the World Trade Organization.

Over all, the Australian economy performed well in the 1990s, with growth in productivity, reduction in unemployment, low levels of inflation, relatively low rates of interest, and modest budget surpluses. Australia managed to avoid most effects of the Asian economic crisis of 1997-98.

The Howard government introduced a Goods and Services Tax of ten per cent, on July 1, 2000, and at the same time eliminated or reduced a number of other business-related taxes. The GST is a broad-based value-added tax originally announced as applicable to almost all goods and services. However, inconsistencies in the application and implementation of the GST made it an issue in the 2001 election campaign.

## Questions and Issues:

Can Australia increase its exports of manufactured goods so as to escape dependence on the fluctuating prices of primary commodities – which still account for 55% of exports?

Can Australia go on indefinitely importing more than it exports?

## Comparative Economic Statistics

(dollar-figures are United States dollars)

	Australia	United States
Population (July 2001 estimates)	19,358,000	278,058,000
Gross Domestic Product (2000 estimates)	\$445.8 billion	\$9.963 trillion
GDP real growth rate (2000 estimates)	4.7%	5%
GDP per capita (2000 estimates)	\$23,200	\$36,200
GDP composition by sector (1999 estimates)		
Agriculture	3%	2%
Industry	26%	18%
Services	71%	80%
Population below poverty line (1999 estimate)	Not available	12.7%
Household income or consumption by percentage share (Australia 1994; U.S. 1997)		
Lowest 10%	2%	1.8%
Highest 10%	25.4%	30.5%
Inflation rate (consumer prices)(2000 estimates)	1.4%	3.4%
Labor force (Aust, Dec '99; US, 2000)	9.5 million	140.9 million
Unemployment rate (2000)	6.4%	4%
Budget Revenues	\$94 billion	\$1.828 trillion
Expenditures (1999 estimates)	\$103 billion	\$1.703 trillion
Exports (f.o.b., 2000 estimates)	\$69 billion	\$776 billion

Imports (f.o.b., 2000 estimates)	\$77 billion	\$1.223 trillion
External debt (2000)	\$220.6 billion	\$862 billion

# GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## Structure of Government

Australia is a parliamentary democracy. The system of government is a federal one, and an outgrowth of the colonial era. The six colonies established in the late 18th and 19th centuries – New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia – were each linked to London. After years of discussion and several conferences in the 1880s and 1890s, they decided to federate. (New Zealand was invited to join the federation but declined.)

Federation became effective on January 1, 1901. A Governor-General was appointed as the official representative of the sovereign, Queen Victoria, but each of the states retained a Governor, also appointed by the Crown.

However, the architects of federation and drafters of the Australian Constitution were influenced also by American thought and practice. They based membership in the lower chamber of the legislature on population and named it ‘The House of Representatives.’ They decided to base membership in the upper chamber on equality among the states and to call it ‘The Senate,’ but they gave it substantially less power than that wielded by the U.S. Senate.

Today, each of the six states has 12 Senators, and the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory have two Senators each, for a total of 76. The Constitution provides that membership of the House of Representatives be approximately twice that of the Senate, and the House today has 150 members: New South Wales, 50; Victoria, 37; Tasmania, 5; Queensland, 27; South Australia, 12; Western Australia, 15; Northern Territory, 2; and the Australian Capital Territory, 2.

Members of the House of Representatives are elected from single-member districts for terms of three years. Voters must rank each candidate in order of preference. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of the vote, the distribution of preferences determines the winner. This system is considered fairer than the ‘first-past-the-post’ system used in the United States, under which a candidate who is in fact opposed by a majority of voters can nevertheless be elected.

The party – or coalition of parties – that commands a majority of votes in the House of Representatives then forms the government and normally continues in office until the next election. The government must hold an election after three years but has the option of calling an election at an earlier date. For example, the Liberal-National Coalition Government of Prime Minister John Howard, elected in March 1996,

called the next election in October 1998, after two years and seven months.

The government thus formed becomes Australia's executive and is referred to as The Ministry. It typically consists of about 30 ministers, who come from both the House of Representatives and the Senate; typically, House members hold about two-thirds of the seats. A smaller number of ministers – 17, in 2001 – constitute the Cabinet, and the others are referred to as the Outer Ministry. Several other members of the two chambers are designated Parliamentary Secretaries for various ministerial portfolios and are in effect deputy or junior ministers.

The Prime Minister leads the Cabinet, and the Treasurer is, traditionally, the second most powerful member and usually the heir-apparent to the Prime Minister. When the Liberal-National coalition forms the government, the leader of its National Party component is ordinarily designated Deputy Prime Minister. A Prime Minister from the Liberal-National coalition chooses his own cabinet, with an eye to balance between the two member-parties and the sexes and among the states and age cohorts. By contrast, when the Labor Party controls government, its members in the two chambers collectively elect those of their number who will serve in the Cabinet and Outer Ministry, with strict regard to the representation of each of the party's several factions. For both government and opposition, party discipline is much stronger than in the United States.

For the Senate, each State and Territory is considered a single electorate, and voters' preferences are allocated under a system of proportional representation. This system gives small parties and independent candidates a chance of being elected – and, indeed, small parties and independent Senators often hold the balance of power in the Senate. Senators from the states serve six-year terms, and those from the two territories serve for three years. In normal circumstances, half of the Senators are elected every three years.

Each of Australia's states has its own parliament and government, headed by a Premier who is the leader of the party that holds a majority in the lower house or in a unicameral legislature. Five states have bicameral parliaments. In each case, the upper house is the Legislative Council. In New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, the lower house is styled the Legislative Assembly; in South Australia and Tasmania, it is the House of Assembly. Queensland, alone among the states, has a unicameral Legislative Assembly, as do the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

State governments in Australia have considerably more power than do states of the United States. For example, the State Premiers have a say in the distribution of federal revenues, and they meet annually with the Federal Prime Minister and Treasurer to determine that distribution. State ministers responsible for such matters as transportation and the environment meet collectively, at least annually, with their federal counterpart (and, frequently, with the counterpart minister from New Zealand). Unlike governors in the United States, State Premiers in Australia seldom shift to federal politics.

Federal and state politics are often counter-cyclical. As of December 2001, the Liberal-National coalition has won three consecutive general elections and has held office at the federal level for almost six years, but the Australian Labor Party controls government in five of the six states and in the Northern Territory.

The Australian judiciary system is relatively simple. It consists of a High Court of seven members that has both appellate and original jurisdiction and is the final arbiter of constitutional questions. Below it is a Federal Court of some fifty judges who are distributed among the state and territory capitals in proportion to workload. There are also a federal Family Court and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. States and territories have Supreme Courts and lower courts; decisions of the state Supreme Courts may be appealed to the federal High Court.

## Political Parties

The Australian Labor Party is the oldest of the country's political parties and is an outgrowth of the trade-union movement. It claims its date of origin as 1891, and in 1901 it organized on a federal basis during the first sitting of the new Parliament. In 1912, under the influence of the American labor movement, it standardized the spelling of its name as 'Labor' rather than 'Labour.' It also claims to have been the first labor party in the world to succeed at electing governments: three federal governments by 1915, and success also in each of the states. The party governed again from 1929 to 1931 and during and after World War II (see HISTORY) but then fell victim to divisions over communist membership in its ranks and was out of office at the federal level from 1949 to 1972.

The party has largely left behind its working-class base and socialist principles and has moved close to the center in terms of economic policy. It has also strongly supported defense cooperation with the United States, both in the 1940s and again in the 1980s and 1990s, although many members campaigned energetically in the 1960s and 1970s against Australian involvement with the United States in Viet-Nam.

The National Party of Australia dates its origins to the Country Party of Australia, established in 1913. Its base is in rural areas and its leanings are conservative. It has participated in governing coalitions for long periods since 1923 but generally as the junior partner.

The Liberal Party of Australia was established in 1944 and styles itself the party of "individual freedom and private enterprise," and also as Australia's most successful party since World War II. It maintains loose ties with the Republican Party in the United States, with which it has considerable ideological affinity.

The Australian Democrats date from 1977 and claim to speak for "ordinary Australians," with a reformist agenda, strong environmental concerns, and a record of opposition to many policies of the Liberal-National coalition and to some of those of the ALP. The Democrats have yet to win a seat in the House of Representatives, although they have come close, but they have recorded as many as a million votes in Senate elections and, currently hold the balance of power in the Senate, with nine seats as of December 2001 and eight from July 1, 2002.

The One Nation Party sprang to life in the late 1990s and reflects the dissatisfaction of some lower-middle-class Australians of European descent with recent political trends, such as the judicial decisions granting

land rights to Aboriginal peoples, and welfare and affirmative-action programs for Asian immigrants. One Nation's founder, Pauline Hanson, appeared to speak for an unreconciled ten per cent or more of the population that resented what it saw as the 'coddling' of recent immigrants and ethnic minorities and sought to restore what it claimed are 'traditional Australian values.'

Hanson and her followers were strongest in Queensland but had support nationwide. They drew substantial numbers of votes in the 1998 Federal election but elected no one to the House of Representatives and only one member to the Senate. In the same year, however, One Nation won 11 seats in the 89-member Queensland Legislative Assembly. By the beginning of 2001, the party had fractured in Queensland, with resignations in the Legislative Assembly, and in the state election of February 2001 it took only three seats. There were also divisions in the national leadership and allegations of fraud.

Some observers now consider One Nation a spent force. However, the party's brief success strengthened the suspicion of some Asians that Australia is, or still is, a racist nation at heart. The Howard coalition government drew considerable criticism, at home as well as around Asia, for its failure to condemn One Nation, Hanson and her policies in a forthright way. Also, it is clear that Hanson tapped a vein of nativist, racist sentiment that continues to represent a real political force. A continuing question for conservative parties at the federal and state levels is whether to accept One Nation 'preferences' – second-choice ranking – for their candidates; such preferences are often important in determining electoral outcomes.

## Recent Political History

Since the early days of World War II, control of the government has rested alternately with the Australian Labor Party on the one hand and, on the other, with the Liberal Party of Australia and its ally the National (formerly Country) Party in coalition.

ALP prime ministers led the country from 1941 to 1949. Sir Robert Menzies, who had served as Prime Minister from 1939 to 1941, returned to office in 1949 and served until 1966, a tenure that has not been equaled. Four other coalition prime ministers followed, through 1972, at which time Labor regained power under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.

Whitlam's term of office ended in drama and controversy on November 11, 1975. In a climate of increasing inflation and unemployment, his government was losing popularity. His coalition opponents used their majority in the Senate to threaten to stop government appropriations ("supply") in the hope of forcing Whitlam to resign, thus producing a new election. Whitlam refused to resign but could not obtain legislation to fund government operations. The Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Whitlam government, resolved the impasse by removing Whitlam from office and naming the Liberal Party leader, Malcolm Fraser to form a government. Fraser's coalition won the election held the following month, and the coalition remained in office until early 1983.

This event, known simply as "The Dismissal," has had a profound and lasting effect on Australian political life, greater in psychological terms than the legacy of Watergate in the United States. A major



question is whether the Governor-General acted within the terms of his ill-defined “reserve powers” in dismissing Whitlam.

Labor returned to office in 1983 and won four consecutive elections thereafter. The Liberal-National coalition won elections in March 1996, October 1998, and November 2001.

## Composition of the House of Representatives

(40th Parliament, elected November 10, 2001)

Coalition Government:	81 seats	(68 Liberal Party, 13 National Party)
Country Liberal Party:	1 seat	(Australian Labor Party)
Opposition:	65 seats	
Independents:	3 seats	
TOTAL:	150 seats	

## Composition of the Senate

	(Dec. 2001)	(From July 1, 2002, when terms begin of Senators newly elected or re-elected on Nov. 10)
Australian Labor Party:	28 seats	27 seats
Country Labor Party (NSW):	1 seat	
Australian Democrats:	9 seats	8 seats
Australian Greens:	1 seat	2 seats
Independents:	2 seats	2 seats
Liberal Party:	31 seats	31 seats
National Party:	3 seats	3 seats
Country Liberal Party:	1 seat	1 seat
One Nation Party:	1 seat	1 seat
TOTAL:	76 seats	76 seats

## The Republic issue

The Governor-General is the Queen’s representative in Australia. The first Australian-born, Australian-citizen Governor-General was appointed in 1931; another served from 1947 to 1953; and all Governors-General since 1965 have been Australian citizens (including one who immigrated in his youth). They have been nominated by the Australian government of the day and merely confirmed and officially

appointed by the crown. Nevertheless, many Australians have long believed it makes no sense that their sovereign should be a foreign monarch who resides 10,000 miles away.

Prime Minister Paul Keating in the early 1990s initiated active public discussion of the issue and announced that he would hold a referendum on the issue if he were returned to office in 1996. He was not, but his successor John Howard – a monarchist – pledged that he would carry through with a constitutional convention and, if indicated, a referendum. The convention took place in early 1998, and the referendum was scheduled for November 1999.

Public-opinion polling shows that about two-thirds of the population favors a republic in concept. However, Howard managed to bring about a stipulation that the chief of state in a republic, to be called the president, would be chosen not by direct election but from a list submitted by a bipartisan commission likely to consist mainly of politicians, and then chosen by a two-thirds majority vote of the two houses of Parliament sitting jointly. The Constitution would be amended by substituting ‘President’ for ‘Governor-General’ wherever that term occurred, but no attempt was made to define the vague ‘reserve powers’ of the chief of state, which had proved so controversial in the removal of Prime Minister Whitlam in 1975. Furthermore, Howard proposed a new preamble for the Constitution and put the question of its adoption on the referendum ballot also.

The proposed method of selection of the president would appear to have precluded the election of a strong partisan or indeed of anyone objectionable to a major party. However, many voters wanted a directly elected president and did not want ‘politicians’ so centrally involved in the process. Many supporters of direct election therefore joined with those opposed to the *concept* of a republic. In the end, the vote was 45 per cent in favor of the republic, so the proposal failed. So also did Howard’s proposed new preamble.

It appears certain that the issue will recur in the near future: The Australian Labor Party is committed to the goal of a republic, and likely successors to John Howard as leader of the Liberal Party are understood not to share his anti-republican views.

## Questions

Debate in the Australian Parliament is well-attended and often witty and vituperative – in contrast with proceedings in the U.S. Congress. What explains the differences: Tradition? Physical arrangements, with Government and Opposition facing each other?

What will be the practical consequences for domestic politics and for foreign relations of Australia’s becoming a republic?

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE

Is Australia a nation of Asia, or a European outpost in Asia? This has been an underlying question in

Australia's foreign relations for many years, and notably so since World War II. It is sometimes described as the contest between 'history,' European, and 'geography,' Asian. Even as the Asian element of Australia's population – now about 7 per cent – increases, the dominance of the English language and Australia's strong connections with North America, the United Kingdom and New Zealand tend to cause others in Asia to think of Australia as a place apart. And Australia's attitudes toward immigration, in the period of the 'White Australia' policy and since, have of course influenced Asian attitudes toward Australia.

One symbol of this 'identity' problem is that, for regional voting purposes at the United Nations, Australia is, and has always been, a member of the "West European and Others" Group (WEOG), which also includes New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

Support for the United Nations is one of the fundamentals of Australia's foreign policy. Australia is a founding member of the organization; supplied the third president of the General Assembly, Dr. H.V. Evatt, in 1948-49; and has served four terms on the Security Council. Australia also served as the administering authority of two of the eleven trusteeships under the United Nations system: Papua New Guinea and Nauru. (Australia had administered the same territories between World Wars I and II, under Class C mandates from the League of Nations.)

Even more central to Australian foreign policy, however, are these themes:

Its alliance with the United States;

Its close linkages with New Zealand in matters of economy and defense;

Its efforts to preserve peace and security in its immediate region;

Its promotion of policies intended to liberalize international trade and its maintenance of good relations with as many trading partners as possible; and

Its sponsorship of arms-control measures.

## **The Alliance with the United States**

The two nations have been closely associated in matters of war and peace since World War I, when some of the American troops on the Western Front in France fought under Australian command. The association resumed after Pearl Harbor, in the face of the Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia and incursions into the Pacific (see HISTORY). Combined Australian-U.S. operations in the Battle of the Coral Sea and in New Guinea stemmed the tide of Japanese aggression and led to the island-hopping campaign in which the Japanese were ultimately dislodged.

The experience with Japan had a profound effect on Australia. The then-Leader of the Opposition, the

Honorable Kim Beazley, stated in 2001: “For Australia’s part, the key issue of the day [in the late 1940s] was how to deal permanently with Japan. Today it is hard to comprehend that our core thinking on external affairs until the early 1950s revolved around how to deal with the emergence of Japan. Washington was never going to get to first base with Australia on the issue of containing communism in Asia unless it settled our minds on the question of Japan.”

Fearful that Japan’s signature of a peace treaty with the United States might permit a return of Japanese militarism, Australia and New Zealand pressed the United States for a treaty of mutual defense. The resulting document, the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, or ‘the ANZUS Treaty’ for short, was signed at San Francisco on September 1, 1951, and entered into force on April 25, 1952.

Before the treaty was signed, Australia had already demonstrated its commitment by joining in the U.S.-led United Nations effort to repel communist aggression in South Korea.

Independently of ANZUS, Australia contributed troops to the American effort in Viet-Nam, initially a battalion-sized unit and later a task force of two battalions and support services, with a New Zealand artillery battery attached, that operated principally in the area immediately east of Saigon. Almost 50,000 Australian troops served in Viet-Nam; 520 died as a result of the war, and 2,398 were wounded. Over time, however, Australia’s participation in the war drew massive protests and became the cause of what is considered the greatest social and political dissent since the conscription referenda of World War I. Australian involvement was reduced in the early 1970s and terminated outright by the Labor government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam at the end of 1972.

Meanwhile, the United States and Australia during the 1960s established Joint Defense Facilities in Australia, the most important of which were at North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar. The facilities were critical to U.S. strategic programs and operations but caused controversy in Australian domestic politics, partly on theory that their presence made Australia a nuclear target of the Soviet Union.

In their earliest days, the facilities were essentially American-run, with Australia primarily a landlord and a recipient of the intelligence information the Facilities produced. In the 1980s, thanks largely to the foresight and energy of Kim Beazley, then Minister for Defence in the Hawke Labor government, management of the Facilities became truly joint. At the same time, Beazley’s ‘demystification’ of the facilities, which demonstrated their utility in matters of arms control, helped to defuse them as a political issue. So too did the formal end of the Cold War.

In subsequent international crises, Australia contributed forces to the coalition effort in the Gulf War. The United States in turn contributed equipment, intelligence information, communications capability, and air- and sealift to the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), the Australian-led United Nations effort to restore order in East Timor after the August 1999 referendum in which voters overwhelmingly chose independence and drew heavy retaliation from Indonesian troops and government-backed militias.

Most recently, the Australian Cabinet on September 14, 2001, in consultation with the United States,

invoked Article IV of the ANZUS Treaty, after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Article IV states:

“Each party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties

would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet

the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.”

(Article V states that Article IV applies to “...an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of any of the Parties...”) This is the first time the Treaty has been invoked. Australia proceeded to commit troops, aircraft and ships to the U.S.-led anti-terrorism effort in Afghanistan.

The Australian-United States relationship is not ordinarily dominated, however, by great issues of national security. Rather, there is daily interaction between the two governments on a host of issues, including international trade, arms control, environmental pollution, law enforcement, transportation, taxation, and the like.

The relationship is as close and cordial as any the United States enjoys and is rivaled only by those with the United Kingdom and with Canada.

## **Relations with New Zealand**

If relations between Australia and the United States are close, those between Australia and New Zealand are closer still, in the sense that the two countries, under the rubric of the Closer Economic Relations (CER) agreement instituted in 1983, have gone much of the way toward merging their economies. Duties and other trade barriers have, effectively, been abolished. The free movement of people between the two countries, and the automatic permission to work in each other’s country, make them the most integrated labor market in the world.

Defense relations, on the other hand, have been troubled since 1984-85, when the New Zealand Labour Party government of Prime Minister David Lange in effect denied access to New Zealand ports for nuclear-capable and nuclear-powered warships of the U.S. Navy. The later enactment of that policy into law prompted the United States to suspend its ANZUS Treaty obligations toward New Zealand. It caused some political difficulty for the Hawke Labor government in Australia, because left-wing elements in the ALP strongly advocated policies similar to New Zealand’s, and difficulty for the Australian Defence Force, which – because the United States declined to exercise with New Zealand forces – was obliged thereafter to conduct two sets of exercises: high-technology exercises with United States forces, and lower-order exercises with the New Zealanders.

Australia nevertheless attempted in the 1990s to involve New Zealand in Closer Defence Relations (CDR), in parallel with CER. This process appeared to work for a time: New Zealand bought two

‘ANZAC-class’ frigates built in Australia and stationed a squadron of Royal New Zealand Air Force A-4 Skyhawks in Australia, where they regularly exercised with the Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Australian Navy.

The trend toward CDR slowed in the late 1990s with New Zealand’s decision not to purchase a third or a fourth ANZAC frigate. And defense cooperation received a body-blow in 2001 when the New Zealand government, now again under the control of the Labour Party, decided to eliminate the combat element of the Air Force (the A-4s) and to upgrade only the maritime-surveillance capability of its P3 Orion aircraft rather than to join Australia in acquiring new capabilities for anti-submarine warfare.

Nevertheless, defense ties between the two date from the fateful landing at Gallipoli in 1915 and have continued through New Zealand’s crucial contribution of an infantry battalion to INTERFET, from its outset in 1999. The close identification of the two countries on a wide array of policy issues ensures that relations will continue to be close, if at times contentious.

## Australia’s Immediate Region

Australia sees itself, correctly, as a prominent middle-ranking power in Asia and as by far the most powerful of the Pacific Island nations. It exercises leadership among the island nations through the Pacific Forum, the group of island-states which meets annually at head-of-government level, and the Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission), an organization of island-states and metropolitan powers from outside the region: the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. Australia is also a ‘dialogue partner’ of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), as is the United States.

Australia pays particular attention to developments in its former ward, **Papua New Guinea**, and directs a substantial portion of its foreign aid to that troubled country. It was Australian intervention that in 1997 headed off a scheme by the then-government of Papua New Guinea to employ European-led African mercenary soldiers to quash the long-running insurgency on the island of Bougainville. Revelation of the plan in the Australian media and strong action by the Australian Government stopped the scheme before the training of PNG troops by the mercenaries really began.

Australia, together with New Zealand, has been troubled by instability in other island states, notably **Fiji** and **Solomon Islands**, but has not managed to identify, much less impose, concrete solutions.

By far the most complex problem in Australia’s regional relations, however, has been **Indonesia**. A determination to “get along” with its populous northern neighbor led Australia over the years to accommodate the Indonesian leadership to a high degree. Australia acquiesced in the Indonesian takeover of the eastern half of the island of Timor after the sudden, irresponsible departure of Portuguese colonial authorities in 1975, and despite the murder of several Australian journalists by Indonesian forces.

Australia continued to court the Soeharto régime in Jakarta for another two decades. This process culminated in the signature by Prime Minister Paul Keating in late 1995 of a mutual security agreement

with Soeharto that had been negotiated in secret. Its intent, apparently, was to reassure Indonesia of Australia's continuing friendship, not least by balancing Australia's links with Singapore and Malaysia under the Five-Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

Keating's agreement did not last long, however. Soeharto fell from power in 1998; events following the referendum in East Timor in 1999 caused Australia to step in, by means of INTERFET; and Indonesia could not prevent INTERFET's creation and deployment but resented very strongly what it saw as Australia's intrusion into its internal affairs.

The case of East Timor has also caused recriminations in Australian domestic politics, where some Labor Party elements have criticized their elders, Whitlam and Keating, for deferring for so long to Indonesia, and where former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who was caretaker Prime Minister when Indonesia invaded East Timor and elected in his own right a few days later, now calls for dramatic changes in Australian foreign policy and questions the utility of the ANZUS alliance.

No other nation looms so large in Australian thinking as Indonesia or has presented Australia with so many problems. However, Australia's relations with Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of **Malaysia**, have been contentious since at least the mid-1980s, when Malaysia executed two Australian citizens on narcotics charges despite appeals for clemency by Prime Ministers Hawke of Australia and Thatcher of the United Kingdom. Mahathir attempted to establish an East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) that would have rivaled Hawke's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and would, presumably, have excluded Australia from membership. At later stages, Prime Minister Paul Keating called Mahathir 'recalcitrant,' setting off an angry reaction, and Mahathir has delighted in the political phenomenon of the One Nation Party, which he takes as evidence that Australia is a racist nation and not really part of Asia.

By contrast, Australia's relations with other Southeast Asian nations are generally very good. Australia conducts military exercises with **Singapore** – and Malaysia – under the Five-Power Defence Arrangements (the other parties being New Zealand and the United Kingdom). **Thailand** and **The Philippines** both contributed troops to INTERFET. Australia, with Indonesia, had a leading role in the United Nations effort to restore civil government in **Cambodia** and was one of the first outside nations to invest and institute aid programs in **Viet-Nam** and **Laos** after the Viet-Nam War.

Australia's relations with the **People's Republic of China** are conflicted. There is a strong desire to exploit China's huge market and growing prosperity, but there are also strong reservations over China's behavior in matters of human rights and in other fields such as intellectual-property rights. Australia shares the desire of the United States for a peaceful resolution of differences between the PRC and **Taiwan**, which is also a significant trading partner of Australia's.

Australia's attitudes toward **Japan** have changed markedly since the late 1940s and early 1950s, when Australia worried about a revival of Japanese militarism. Japan today is Australia's leading export market and second-largest supplier of imports; has major investments in Australia; and is a major source of tourists.

## International Trade

Australia's sponsorship of 'the Cairns Group' of non-subsidizing agricultural producers and of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum is discussed above, under ECONOMICS. Australia has supported and benefited from efforts by the United States to open markets in third countries, such as the U.S. campaigns to gain entry into Japan for beef, apples and rice. But Australia and the United States have also disputed each other's trade practices over the years. The Australians complained, for example, that the American Export Enhancement Program (EEP) – intended to head off European sales of wheat, barley, non-fat dried milk and other commodities to nations of the Middle East and South America – were cutting into Australia's share in some of its 'traditional' markets. The United States has its own complaints about Australian practices, such as a refusal to allow the importation of hides for use in automobile upholstery. In mid-1999 the United States imposed punitive additional duties – so high as to constitute quotas – on imports of lamb from Australia and New Zealand. The two exporters took their case to the World Trade Organization – and won, obliging the United States to rescind the additional duties.

More generally, however, the two countries cooperate in matters of international trade. As of mid-2001, Australia was seeking a bilateral Free Trade Agreement with the United States. Negotiations appear unlikely to begin, however, until the U.S. Executive Branch again has Trade Promotion Authority (formerly known as Fast-Track Authority) from the Congress.

## Arms Control

Australia has a length record of support for arms-control measures, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the banning of chemical and biological weapons, and the establishment of an international regime to control the spread of missile technology (MTCR). Australia ratified the Ottawa treaty that outlaws the production, stockpiling transfer and use of anti-personnel landmines, and the Australian Defence Force destroyed its stocks of mines several years ahead of schedule.

Australia has not hesitated to chide the United States when our actions have failed to match Australia's own – as when the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

## Defense

Australia has a long and proud military tradition. It begins in the Sudan and the Boer War in the 19th century, but its most famous expression was in World War I, at Gallipoli and elsewhere, as the nation made enormous sacrifices. There is scarcely a town in Australia without its monument to those who fought and died in 'the Great War' of 1914-1918.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) today comprises the Army, the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), and



the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). In time of peace, Australia has one officer of four-star rank, the Chief of Defence Force, a post that rotates among the services. The over-all active-duty strength of the ADF as of February 2000 was about 56,050, down from roughly 60,000 in 1995 but on its way back up.

The Army has an active-duty strength of 24,290. The core of the land force is two high-readiness infantry brigades of about 3,000 men each, one of light infantry and one mechanized. There are also armored and artillery units and a Special Air Services regiment. The Army's inventory includes 48 Leopard tanks, 127 Armored Personnel Carriers, and 84 Light Armored Vehicles. Army Aviation has a total of 130 aircraft, mainly helicopters.

The RAN has 12,800 personnel. Its primary role is maritime interdiction. It is currently developing the Collins-class diesel submarine, which will be the largest conventionally powered submarine in the world. By 2005, the Navy is to have 14 warships: eight frigates, each equipped with a Seasprite helicopter and armed with the Sea Sparrow anti-air missile system; and six Collins-class submarines, capable of launching MK 48 wire-guided torpedoes and Harpoon missiles.

The RAAF, with 13,950 personnel, has 71 F/A-18 aircraft for air combat and 33 F-111 long-range bombers. Even with recent modernization and upgrades, however, the F/A-18s will need to be replaced by 2015 and the F-111s by 2020. New generations of air-combat and strike aircraft will require very significant budgetary outlays. Also in the inventory are 19 P-3C Orion aircraft for anti-submarine warfare and maritime surveillance; 24 C-130 Hercules and 14 DHC-4 Caribou transport aircraft; and five Boeing 707s, four of them configured for air-to-air refueling.

Australia spent about \$8 billion, or 1.9 per cent of GDP, on defense in 1998. This figure was down from 2.5 per cent of GDP in the mid-1980s, and many observers believe that defense spending will have to increase in percentage terms.

The deployment of 5,000 personnel to East Timor in late 1999 stretched the Land Force very thin and led to a realization that numbers, which had been reduced, would only have to go up again.

There is also a recognition that missions such as INTERFET, like the numerous other peace-keeping operations in which Australia has participated in recent years, are now the norm, and will probably remain so.

## Questions and Issues

Australia's intervention in East Timor in 1999 was a dramatic change of policy toward Indonesia. What will be the consequences for Australia's relations in the region?

In 1999, Prime Minister Howard failed to rebut promptly an interviewer's suggestion that Australia had acted in East Timor as "deputy sheriff" for the United States and was criticized both at home and abroad. Can Australia cooperate with the United States but also act independently, when necessary, and avoid the

‘deputy’ allegation?

Can the Australian defense establishment afford to reconfigure itself for the sort of low-intensity conflict that seems increasingly likely and at the same time maintain interoperability with U.S. forces at a high and costly level of technology?

## TIMELINE

60,000 years ago - Estimated date of arrival of the first human inhabitants of present-day Australia. Other estimates range from 30,000 to 100,000 years.

1606 – First transit of the strait between New Guinea and Australia, by Spanish navigator Luis Báez de Torres; first known sighting of Australia by a European navigator, Dutch sea captain Willem Jansz.

1642 – Dutch navigator Abel Tasman sails around much Australia and discovers the island he names Van Diemen’s Land, now Tasmania. Australia begins to be known as New Holland, although there are no Dutch settlements.

1770 – Captain James Cook explores and charts the east coast of Australia, claims the area for Britain as ‘New South Wales.’

1788 - ‘The First Fleet’ of eleven British vessels, under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip and transporting mainly criminals, their warders and guards, arrives at the site of present-day Sydney on January 26 (Britain being no longer able to send prisoners to what had been its North American colonies).

1788 – Colony of New South Wales organized. Others follow: Van Diemen’s Land in 1825, renamed Tasmania in 1855; Western Australia in 1829; South Australia in 1836; Victoria in 1851; Queensland in 1859; Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory in 1911.

1840 – Britain proclaims sovereignty over New Zealand, which is established as part of the colony of New South Wales.

1851 – Gold rush in Victoria.

1854 – Massacre at the Eureka Stockade, Ballarat, Victoria.

1878-1880 – Ned Kelly and his gang flourish in the hinterlands of Victoria.

1885 – New South Wales sends an infantry battalion, an artillery battery and an ambulance detachment – 768 men in all – to serve with British forces in the Sudan.

1890s – A series of conferences leading to Federation.

1898 – Australian volunteers fight as part of the British Imperial force against the Boers in South Africa.

1901 – Australian colonies officially federate (January 1). Federal Parliament meets for the first time, in Melbourne.

1905 – Australia assumes administration from Britain of the southeastern quarter of New Guinea and renames it the Territory of Papua.

1908 – Canberra chosen as site of federal capital, in a compromise between Sydney and Melbourne.

1912 -- American architect Walter Burley Griffin wins competition for design of the new capital city.

1914 – World War I begins. Australia immediately commits troops to the British Imperial force in the Middle East; takes over Kaiserwilhelmsland, the Germany territory in the northeast quadrant of the island of New Guinea.

1915 – April 25: The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), together with British and French troops, lands on the Gallipoli Peninsula and attempts to seize it, and thus control of the Dardanelles, from the Turks. After fierce fighting and many casualties, ANZAC troops are withdrawn late in the year. During the war, the issue of conscription is twice put to referendum and loses both times.

1917-18 – Australian troops heavily engaged on the Western Front.

1919 – Australia joins League of Nations; receives Class C mandates to administer former German territories of New Guinea and Nauru.

1939 – World War II begins in Europe; Australia immediately sends forces to North Africa and the Middle East.

1941 – Japanese forces advance rapidly down Malay Peninsula, take Singapore; Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. Prime Minister Curtin states that Australia will henceforth look to the United States as its primary ally.

1942 -- Japanese forces thwarted on Guadalcanal and on the Kokoda Trail in Papua; Battle of the Coral Sea and Battle of Midway mark turning points in the war. Japanese aircraft attack Darwin 64 times; 243 persons killed. Curtin, defying Churchill, orders that Australian troops, already en route back but too late to reinforce Malaya/Singapore, return home defend Australia, rather than go to Burma..

1945 – Australia becomes a founding member of the United Nations; is assigned Trusteeships to administer the Territory of Papua & New Guinea and the island of Nauru.

- 1949 – Australia and New Zealand propose negotiation of a mutual-defense treaty with the United States, which is somewhat reluctant, and over British objections.
- 1950 – North Korean forces invade South Korea; Australia quickly agrees to join U.S.-led United Nations Command.
- 1951 – ANZUS Treaty signed (September 1); comes into effect April 25, 1952.
- 1955 – Australian troops join British and New Zealanders in opposing Communist insurgency in Malaya.
- 1956 - Melbourne hosts XVIth Olympiad.
- 1965 – Australia deploys battalion-size force to Viet-Nam, later expands it to a two-battalion task force.
- 1966 – President Lyndon B. Johnson pays state visit to Australia, the first visit by a serving U.S. President. (Subsequent state visits: George H.W. Bush, 1991-92; Bill Clinton, 1996.)
- 1967 - Prime Minister Harold Holt disappears while swimming; President Johnson attends his funeral in Canberra .
- 1972 – Whitlam Labor Government elected; last Australian troops withdrawn from Viet-Nam.
- 1975 – November 11: Governor General Sir John Kerr dismisses the government of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who has been unable to get “supply” (appropriations legislation) through the closely divided Senate. Kerr, who had been appointed by the Whitlam government, asks opposition leader Malcolm Fraser to form an interim government. In December, Fraser’s Liberal/National coalition wins elections; governs until 1983.
- 1983 – Australian Labor Party, led by Bob Hawke, wins election to inaugurate 13 years of ALP rule.
- 1988 – Australia celebrates bicentennial of European Settlement.
- 1989 – Prime Minister Hawke proposes the establishment of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.
- 1991 – Hawke is deposed by his Treasurer, Paul Keating, who, contrary to expectations, wins election in 1993.
- 1996 – Liberal/National coalition, led by Prime Minister John Howard, wins election in March; repeats in October 1998 and November 2001./

1999 – Australia organizes and leads the United Nations’ International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) to quell violence after people of East Timor vote overwhelmingly for independence in U.N.-sponsored referendum.

2000 – Sydney hosts XXVIIth Olympiad.

2001 – Australia celebrates centennial of Federation.

## INTERNET SITE GUIDE

### General Information and News

The Australian Federal Government’s web site -- [www.fed.gov.au/KSP/](http://www.fed.gov.au/KSP/) -- covers all branches of the government and has links to the sites of the state and territorial governments.

The National Library of Australia – [www.nla.gov.au](http://www.nla.gov.au) -- is Australia’s largest library and a rich source of information. Its site includes links to many other sites and other resources, such as “Australian Newspapers on the Internet.”

World-wide Web Virtual Library for Australia – [www.api-network.com/vl/](http://www.api-network.com/vl/) has links to many useful and interesting sites.

Australia Unearthed – [www.atc.net.au/market/regions/americ/unearthed/unearthed.htm](http://www.atc.net.au/market/regions/americ/unearthed/unearthed.htm) -- is a good source for tourist information.

All of Australia’s television networks and major newspapers have web sites. The newspapers include the following:

The Australian: [www.theaustralian.news.com.au/](http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/)

The Age (Melbourne): [www.theage.com.au/](http://www.theage.com.au/)

The Australian Financial Review: <http://afr.com>

The Sydney Morning Herald: [www.smh.com.au/](http://www.smh.com.au/)

### Culture

Australia’s Cultural Network – [www.can.net.au](http://www.can.net.au) -- is the online gateway to Australian cultural

organizations, websites, resources, events and news.

Australian Humanities Review – [www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/](http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/) -- is a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary electronic journal on Australia, published quarterly but with regular updates between issues

All of Australia's universities have web sites. The address is usually the name of the university, dot edu, dot au, preceded by www.

## History

The Australian War Memorial – [www.awm.gov.au/index\\_flash.asp](http://www.awm.gov.au/index_flash.asp) -- is an excellent source on all aspects of Australian military history.

## Government and Politics

Index to Parliamentary Information – [www.aph.gov.au/parlindx.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/parlindx.htm) -- offers vast amounts of information on Parliament, its members and its work.

Each of the major political parties has a web site:

The Australian Labor Party: [www.alp.org.au/](http://www.alp.org.au/)

The National Party of Australia: [www.ozemail.com.au/~npafed](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~npafed)

The Liberal Party of Australia: [www.liberall.org.au](http://www.liberall.org.au)

Australian Democrats: [www.democrats.org.au](http://www.democrats.org.au)

One Nation: [www.onenation.com.au/firstpage.html](http://www.onenation.com.au/firstpage.html)

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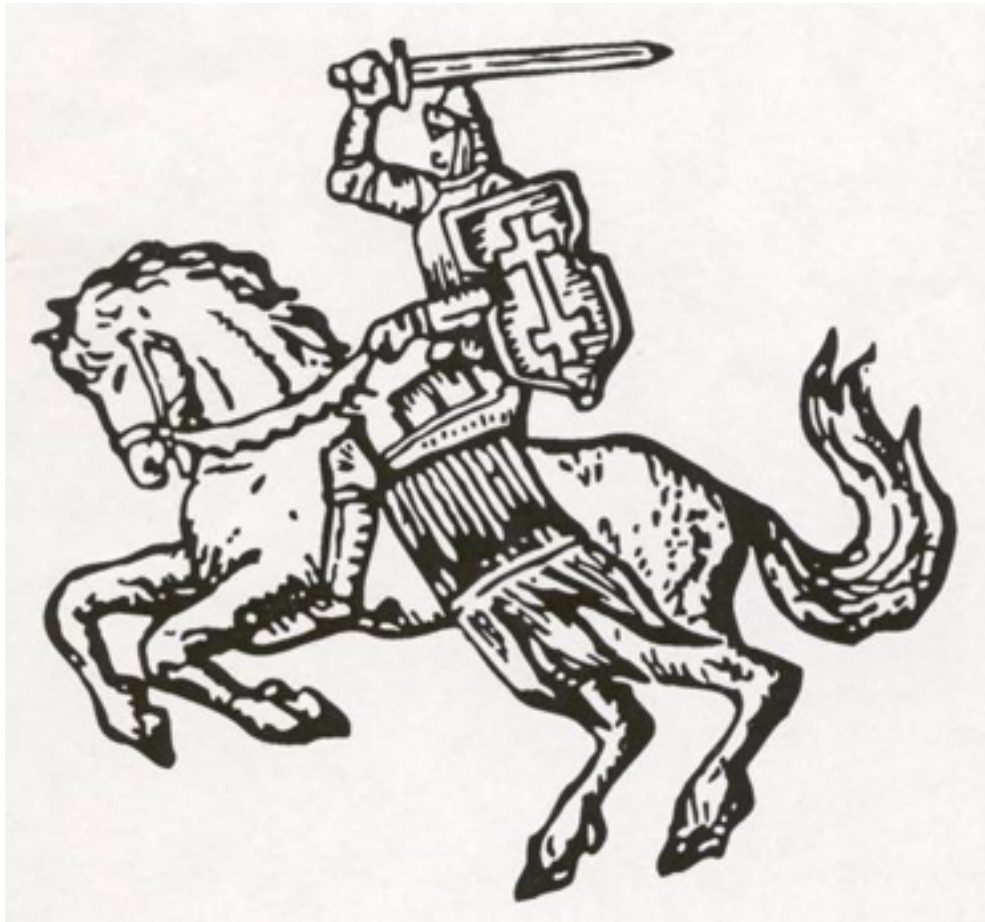
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# Self -Study Guide to Belarus



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The *Self-Study Guide : Belarus* is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Belarus' issues related to history, culture, politics, economics, security and international relations. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Belarus' affairs are far too complex and broad to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the appropriate sections. Most of the referenced material can be found either on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide* to Belarus was prepared by Dr. Martyna Fox, chair for Russian and Eurasian area studies at FSI. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of attributed

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June, 2002

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In an attempt to balance the established English language spelling of adjectives referring to things Belorussian with the spelling preferred by contemporary Belarusian scholars, names of historical territories up to and including the Soviet era will preserve the traditional English spelling, while adjectives referring to the culture, language, nationality or developments in contemporary Belarus will adopt the other.

# **Part I: The Land and the People**

# 1. Land

The **Republic of Belarus** is a landlocked country in north-eastern Europe with the territory of 207,600 sq km. It borders five states: the Russian Federation to the East, Latvia to the North East, Lithuania to the North, Poland to the West, and Ukraine to the South. The capital of Belarus, Minsk, is located in the center of the country and has a population of 1,700,000.

## Topographic features

The landscape of the country is glacier-shaped. Belarus is predominantly flat, with low hills in the north-east (the highest point is 364m) and swampy lowlands in the south.

## Network of rivers

With over 20,000 small and medium rivers and 11,000 lakes, Belarus' dense network of waterways is unique in Europe. Four major rivers link it to the Baltic and the Black Sea basins: in the North, the Neman and West Dvina empty into the Baltic Sea; the Dnieper and its tributary, Pripjat', flow into the Black Sea. These rivers have been instrumental in providing access to the cultures and economies of East and West throughout the history of the region.

Today, Belarus's waterways have been augmented by a network of canals providing it with a relatively easy access to the Baltic Sea (Belarus has an agreement with Poland providing access to the port facilities at Gdynia).

## Climate

Belarus lies above 50° longitude, that is on the level of Manitoba. Yet the relative proximity of the Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic Sea tempers its continental climate. Summers, lasting up to 150 days, bring moderate temperatures between F 60 - 70°, and in winters temperatures fall to between -5 and 32°F. Precipitation is abundant, averaging 550-700 mm a year.

## Soils and agriculture

One third of Belarus' territory is covered by forests. The most impressive the Belovezha National Forest (1,450 sq km) and the Naliboki National Forest (1,400 sq km) include the last stands of primeval forests in Europe.

The country's swampy soils are poorly suited to agriculture; consequently, Belarus has specialized in raising cattle. Today, its main agricultural products include meat, dairy products, potatoes and flax.

\*(See the section on the environment for the impact of Chernobyl on agriculture in Belarus).

## **Natural and mineral resources**

Belarus has very few mineral resources, consisting of small deposits of iron ore, nonferrous metal ores, potash and rock salt.

Because it lacks coal, oil or other energy products, Belarus is dependent on energy imports from the Russian Federation. For its production of electric power, Belarus relies on 22 thermal power plants and 9 small hydro-electric plants.

## **2. The People**

In 2000, the population of Belarus comprised just over 10,000,000 people, with a density of approx. 50 persons per sq km.

### **Largest Cities:**

Minsk: 1,672,000 inhabitants

Gomel: 501,000

Mogilev: 367,000

Vitebsk: 356,000

Grodno: 302,000

(Source: EIU Country Profile for Belarus, 2001/2002)

### **Ethnic origins**

Belarusians are grouped with the East Slavic family of languages together with the Russians and the Ukrainians. However, many scholars believe that the Belarusian ethnogenesis began with the fusion of the Slavic and Baltic populations native to the area.

### **Ethnic structure**

The 1989 population census (the Soviet Union's last) provided the following ethnic breakdown for the Republic of Belarus:

Belarusians: 77.8%

Russians: 13.2%

Poles: 4.1%

Ukrainians: 2.9%

Others: 2.0%

A large percent of the ethnically Russian population came to Belarus after WW II and is concentrated in the urban and industrial centers. Ethnic Poles live in the Western part of Belarus, close to the border with Poland. The Ukrainians, by contrast, are concentrated in the south.

Other ethnic groups in Belarus include the Lithuanians, Latvians, Tatars and Jews.

## **Jewish History in Belarus**

Jews first settled in the Belorussian territories at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Early royal charters allowed them to live in the cities of Brest and Hrodna and to engage in financial operations as well as in trade and crafts. With the expansion of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (within which Jews had achieved prominent positions), Jews from Germany and Poland arrived to settle in central and eastern Belarus. Administratively, the Jewish settlements were organized into *kahals*, or self-run religious communities. Religious and cultural life flourished, with a number of yeshivas (Brest, Mir) and religious movements achieving diaspora-wide fame.

When Belorussian territories became part of the Russian empire at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the official Pale of Settlement was established. It prohibited the Jews from living, working or owning real estate east of the former Polish-Russian border. Consequently, the Belorussian lands held one of the largest concentrations of Jewish population in Europe (1.2 million in 1897). By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most Belorussian cities had ethnically Jewish majorities: 58% in Minsk, 53% in Viciebsk, 61% in Hrodna. Despite occasional outbreaks of anti-Semitism, and the official policy of Russification, Jewish centers of life in Belarus remained vigorous in the late Tsarist empire.

This entire community and way of life was destroyed during World War II as a result of Nazi genocide. Of Belarus' 2.2 million victims in WW II, the vast majority was Jewish. Frequently, whole populations of Jewish towns and villages were exterminated on the spot; relatively few were sent to concentration camps. (See permanent exhibits at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC).

In 1989, there were 112,000 Jews in Belarus. It is estimated that since then about 40 to 50% have emigrated. Nonetheless, in 1991, the Belarusian Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities was established to promote a renewal of Jewish cultural and religious life and to defend the rights of the Jewish minority.

## **Identity**

Belarusian identity is rooted in religion, language and folk culture. Whereas the ethnic and cultural identity of the Belarusians is quite strong, their national awareness was weakened by a history first as a 'stateless' people, and more recently, as a 'compound' state.

Contemporary Belarus comprises territories which were historically controlled by the Lithuanian/Polish



state in the west and north, and by the Russian state in the south and east. Consequently, the Belarusian population has been subject to centuries of Polonization on the one hand and Russification on the other. As a result of these pressures, cultural and political elites among the Belarusians tended to adopt either the Polish or the Russian culture as their own, leaving the task of preserving Belarusian language and culture largely to the peasants.

Another factor was the presence of many other ethnic minorities within Belarus. As has been mentioned, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century most Belorussian cities had Jewish majorities as well as influential Polish and Russian minorities. Thus, Belarusian culture had a limited geographic and class reach, and Belarusian identity played a limited political and nation-building role.

The multi-ethnic character of the Belorussian lands is well illustrated by the continued and wide-spread bilingualism: 63% of the population of Belarus is bilingual, including 70% of ethnic Belarusians. However, whereas 70% of ethnic Belarusians living in the cities considered Belarusian to be their native language, 97% of those living in the countryside did so. **Nationalism and Nation-building**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Belarusian national idea was predicated on political independence, democracy, and social justice. Political independence would put an end to the cultural pressures from the outside, while democracy and social justice would allow the Belarusian identity of the peasants to replace that of the Polonized or Russified elites.

This essentially defensive nationalism was no match for the Soviet system. During the Soviet era, despite the outward symbols of statehood, Belarusian national awareness was further undercut by the official policies of Sovietization which, as a practical matter, meant once again the Russification of all spheres of public life. This process only intensified in the wake of World War II, when Belarus' population losses caused Moscow to resettle large numbers of ethnic Russians there.

The decisive point for the awakening of national awareness among the Belarusians was the Chernobyl disaster of 1986. The radioactive fallout and its calamitous consequences combined with the obtuse behavior of Moscow sparked the rise of the Belarusian Popular Front. Thus the independence movement in Belarus contained once again a mixture of environmental and social as well as nationalist elements.

The process of nation-building in today's Belarus has been complicated first and foremost by the lack of democratization. Belarusian national awareness continues to be hampered by the fact that the country's policymaking elite, centered on President Alexander Lukashenka, is more Russified than the population. Its policies (especially that of seeking a closer union with the Russian Federation) have further encouraged bilingualism and other manifestations of a dual, Russo-Belarusian culture.

## 3. Culture

### Language

The Belarusian language belongs to the East Slavic family of languages and is closely related to both Russian and Ukrainian. Belarusian contains many loan words from Polish and from Russian, reflecting centuries of cultural pressures from these neighbors. The standard literary Belarusian language, codified in 1918, is based on a central Belarus dialect and is written in the Cyrillic alphabet.

The 1920's and the early 1990's were the only periods during which the Belarusian language flourished and was promoted as the official language of the country. In the Soviet era, Stalinization and the growing predominance of Great Russian nationalism reversed the gains of Belarusian language. The official Soviet policy of Russo-Belarusian bilingualism resulted by 1992 in 60% of Belarusians preferring to use Russian in daily life, and 75% preferring bilingualism in public life.

More pernicious, however, has been the emergence of the so called *trasyanka*, (translated as “mixture of hay and straw”) which is a lexical and grammatical mixture of Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Polish. *Trasyanka* is used widely in rural areas and has emerged as the “popular” language of the country.

The issue of language has become highly politicized during Alexander Lukashenka's tenure. Although the Constitution confirms in Article 17 that “the state language is Belarusian,” a Lukashenka-supported referendum reintroduced official bilingualism in 1995. Currently, the official media portray those using Belarusian as opposition members seeking to destabilize the country (the Belarusian Language Society, for instance, was expelled from its offices in 1998). The President, by contrast, speaks almost exclusively in Russian and insists that the majority of Belarusians are Russophones.

### ***Belarus* or *Belorussia*? The Spelling Dilemma**

What's in the spelling of a name? Historical, as well as the established English language usage, refers to the country as *Belorussia* or *Byelorussia*, and to its people and culture as *Belorussian*. However, since 1991, the preferred usage among most scholars of that country is ***Belarus/Belarusian*** – as in the official name of the Republic of Belarus. This shift is due to the fact that the older spelling (*Belorussia*) was perceived as Russocentric, reflecting the view that “*Belorussians*” (i.e. White Russians) were but a branch of the Great Russian nation.

Consequently, this guide will retain the older spelling in reference to the historical lands up to and including the Soviet era. But in reference to the culture, people, or contemporary developments, the current *Belarusian* version will be used.

### **Religion and religious minorities**

Belarus has historically been a multi-confessional country, reflecting both its multi-ethnic character and the varying cultural influences of the neighbors.

In 1996, there were 26 registered religious denominations:

Orthodox:	938 parishes/centers
Catholic:	373
Pentecostal:	261
Baptist:	192
Old Believer:	31
Jewish:	15
Muslim:	15
Greek Catholic:	11
Jehova's Witnesses:	11

Orthodoxy: Christianity in its Eastern Orthodox form was introduced in Belarus at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century from Kiev. After the Mongol invasion, the center of gravity for Eastern Orthodoxy moved to Moscow, which became the sponsor and defender of the Orthodox church in Belarus. After the absorption of Belorussian lands into the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, the Orthodox church faced strong Catholic pressures. The Union of Brest, concluded in 1596, put the Belorussian Orthodox Church under the control of the pope while allowing it to preserve its hierarchy and Byzantine rite. The resulting Greek-Catholic (or Uniate) Church was the predominant church in Belarus until it was abrogated by Tsar Nicholas in 1839. After that date, the Uniate Belarusians were forcibly converted to Orthodoxy by the Russian authorities. The Orthodox Church suffered heavy persecution during the Soviet era; only during the perestroika did religious revival take place. In 1989, the Moscow Patriarchate elevated Minsk to be the Belarusian exarchate, recognizing the Belarusian Orthodox Church's separate status.

Catholicism spread to Belarus in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, after its territories became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Most of the culturally Polonized noble elite adopted Catholicism and by the 18<sup>th</sup> century 15% of Belarusians were Catholic (although subsequently those numbers have decreased). In Western Belarus, where the ethnically Polish minority is concentrated, Catholicism and Polish identity has continued to be firmly intertwined. Today, the Catholic Church in Belarus has grown considerably and is the second largest denomination after the Orthodox Church.

Protestant Denominations: Although the first Protestant communities, the Calvinists and the Lutherans, arose in Belarus already during the Reformation, for the most part they remained small. In modern Belarus, by contrast, the Baptists and the Pentecostals have been the most quickly growing denominations, despite the fact that under the Soviet rule these denominations were singled out for particularly harsh persecutions. As a result, during the 1970's, a number of Belarusian Baptists and Pentecostals emigrated to the United States.

Jews: Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the lands of Belarus held one of the largest concentrations of Jewish population in the world. It was also a great center of religious learning and the birthplace of several religious movements within Judaism, such as the Hassidic movement. As a result of the Holocaust in

World War II, this religious community has almost completely disappeared. Today, 15 religious Jewish communities survive.

**Islam:** Muslims in Belarus are mostly ethnic Tatars who settled in those regions in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1996, the Muslim Religious Union of Belarus counted 13,000 members.

## **Culture**

The culture of Belarus, like its history, reflects the great role of geography and natural conditions. In a country of thick forests and wide marshes, Belarusian folk culture was deeply traditional and permeated with ancient customs and beliefs. Despite formal Christianization in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, pagan holidays survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with some Christianized pagan holidays, like *Dziady* (or All Saint' Eve), celebrated even today. This folk culture and rural themes, more broadly remained the chief source of inspiration for nationally-minded Belarusian writers, such as Yanka Kupala (1882 - 1942) or Yakub Kolas (1882 - 1956).

At the same time, Belarus' geographic location turned it into a cultural crossroads: Western influences were brought in by the Polish, Jewish and Baltic elements, those of the East by the Russians, Ukrainians and even the Tatars. Most of these cultural imports were limited to the urban dwellers and social elites; still, they contributed to the emergence of an essentially inclusive and multifaceted cultural outlook among the Belarusians.

## **Questions and Issues:**

What has been the impact of Belarus' geographic location on its people?

How did the natural conditions of the Belarusian lands shape the popular culture?

What was the role of Belarus' ethnic and religious minorities in its history?

How did the outside influences shape the Belarusian language? What is its situation today?

Sources for Further Study:

*Belarus and Moldova Country Studies*, ed. J. Zaprudnik, (Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1995);

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*Nationalities Papers* (Association for the Study of Nationalities, vol.27, no.4, 1999)

# Part II: History and its Legacies

## 1. Timeline

- 600-700 A.D. Arrival of Slavic tribes on today's Belarusian territories
- 700-900 Merging with the Balts
- 980 Emergence of first city centers, dominated by Kiev
- 988 Christianization of Kievan lands
- 1044 Erection of St. Sophia Cathedral in Polacak
- 1236-63 Absorption of Belarusian lands into the Grand Duchy of Lithuania
- 1569 Establishment of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania
- 1580's Arrival of Catholic missionaries, Orthodox resistance
- 1596 Establishment of the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church
- 1696 Replacement of "Rusan" by Polish in official documents
- 1772 I Partitions of Poland; Eastern Belarus incorporated into the Russian Empire
- 1795 Final partition puts all Belarusian territories under Russian rule
- 1839 Forcible return of Uniates to the Russian Orthodox Church
- 1863 Anti-Russian uprising in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus followed by extensive repressions and Russification
- 1906 Publication of Belarusian weekly *Nasa Niva* – first nationalist publication
- 1915 German occupation
- 1918 All-Belarusian Congress establishes Belarusian Democratic Republic (disbanded by Bolsheviks)
- 1919 Establishment of the Belarussian Socialist Republic

- 1920 Russo-Polish war results in partitions of Belarussian lands
- 1937 Beginning of Stalinist purges and creation of the Kurapaty death camp
- 1938 World War II begins, Soviet Union annexes West Belarus
- 1940's German occupation; guerilla warfare and extermination of the Jewish communities
- 1945 BSSR one of the founding members of the United Nations
- 1986 The Chernobyl plant accident
- 1989 Belarusan Popular Front established
- 1991 Belarus declares independence in wake of August coup
- 1994 Election of Alexandr Lukashenka

## **2. Early and Modern History**

### **Emergence of the Belorussian lands**

Between 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, two important processes helped form early Belarus. First, the fusion of the Slavic and Baltic populations along the upper Dnieper and Dvina rivers lay the foundation for the Belarusan language and cultural identity. Second, the process of Christianization, started in 988, brought literacy and political contacts with the trading centers of Kiev in the south and Novgorod in the north, and eventually, the emergence of the first Belorussian city-principalities.

### **Grand Duchy of Lithuania**

Conflicts with the German religious orders settling along the Baltic coast (the Livonian Order and the Teutonic Order) brought a new era to the Belorussian lands. To oppose these Orders, a Lithuanian Duke Mindaugas began consolidating and expanding his rule over most Belorussian territories. Throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Rus' and Samogitia, as it came to be known, continued its territorial growth and came close to bridging the Baltic and the Black Seas. Since the Lithuanian ruling house converted to Eastern Orthodoxy, Belarusan language became the official language of record of the Grand Duchy; it preserved that status until 1696.

### **Belarus and the Polish state**

In 1386, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland were joined in a dynastic union. The Lithuanians officially converted to Catholicism (most of the population had remained pagan until then). Within a few years, Catholic churches began appearing on the Belorussian territories, while the Orthodox Church of the Grand Duchy and Poland became independent from Moscow in 1472. Other Western influences quickly followed, especially in political institutions and education. Growth of self-governing cities encouraged crafts and trade. Reformation itself also left a deep imprint on the religious beliefs and culture. This period came to be seen as the “golden age” of Belorussian lands.

However, further political union with Poland and the pressure of the Catholic Church increased religious tensions in Belarus. The Union of Brest, concluded in 1596, founded the Uniate Church and undermined the position of Orthodoxy in Belarus. This only added to the growing cultural cleavage between the Polonized elites and the Belarusian people.

### **3. Belarus and the Tsarist Empire**

#### **Partitions of Poland**

Continuous wars and the concomitant weakening of the Polish state in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries led to its partition among the neighboring states. By 1795, all Belorussian territories became part of the Russian empire. In one of the first edicts directed at Belarus, Catherine II established a Pale of Settlement on its territories to prohibit the Jewish population from living or working east of the former Polish-Russian border.

#### **Early Belorussian nationalism**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all religious and ethnic groups in Belarus were subject to official Russification policies, but their impact was the greatest among the Belarusians. In 1839, the Uniate Church was abolished and Belorussian Uniates were forcibly converted to Orthodoxy. Belorussian language was declared a “dialect” of Russian and the name of Belarus was officially changed to “the Western gubernias,” (although even that ancient name (translated as White Rus’). This was taken as a proof that the Belarusians were but a branch of the Great Russian nation). After a large number of Belarusians joined in the Polish uprising against Russia in 1863, severe reprisals were taken and Russification of Belarus only intensified.

As among other subject nationalities in the Tsarist empire, a nationalist movement arose among the Belorussian intelligentsia in reaction to the repressive Tsarist policies. From the outset, this movement was grounded in the revival of Belorussian language and the development of its literature (see for instance the writings of poet Francisak Bahusevic). It also developed a strong socialist and populist leaning, since the majority of ethnic Belarusians belonged to the peasant and lower classes. For example, the banner newspaper of Belorussian cultural and political life, *Nasa Niva*, was founded by the Belorussian Socialist Union in the wake of the Revolution of 1905.

## World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution

For most of the duration of World War I, the Eastern front divided Belorussian territories, with one third of Belarus falling under German control. After the Revolution of 1917, the first All-Belarusan Congress decided to establish a democratic, independent government in Belarus, but the Bolshevik forces quickly subdued this movement. Another chance was seized when the Germans occupied Minsk in 1918: in March, the same All-Belarusan Congress proclaimed the founding of the Belarusan Democratic Republic. This fait accomplis forced the Bolshevik regime in 1919 to support the creation of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Between 1919 and 1920, the Belorussian territories became a bone of contention between Poland and the Bolshevik government. As a result of the Polish-Russian war, Belarus was officially partitioned under the Treaty of Riga (1921). Poland received Western Belarus (40% of territory and 38% of population). The remaining territory constituted the Belorussian SSR.

## 4. The Soviet Era

### Belorussian SSR

The first years of Soviet rule in Belarus were marked by relative liberalism in both the linguistic/cultural and economic areas. In 1924, for instance, equal rights for the four main languages of the Republic (Belarusan, Yiddish, Polish, and Russian) were guaranteed. Belarusan language itself gained a number of institutions of higher learning, as well as numerous literary clubs and local publications. The New Economic Policy allowed for a strong recovery, especially in the agricultural sector. But collectivization imposed by Stalin after 1928 had calamitous consequences for the landholders of Belarus most of whom had middle-size holdings. Hundreds of thousands of those peasants (identified as the so called “kulaks”) were sent to camps, soon to be joined by large numbers of Belarusan intelligentsia. By the 1930’s, Stalinist purges and peasant persecution in Belarus reached catastrophic proportions. Data remain scarce, but the discoveries of mass graves in the Kurapaty Forest (by Zenon Poznyak, a founder of the Belarusan Popular Front in the 1990’s) confirm the tragic scale of Stalinist repressions in Belarus.

### Kurapaty Forest

In 1988, a team of archeologists under the leadership of **Zenon Poznyak** discovered an execution site in the Kurapaty Forest near Minsk. Used from 1937 until 1941 (when Nazi troops occupied the area), Kurapaty consisted of mass graves of 100,000 to 250,000 civilians killed by the Soviet secret police, or NKVD.

Poznyak’s discovery became a symbol of Stalinist and Soviet repression in Belarus. It helped spark the Belarusan Popular Front and played an important part in the formation of an independence movement in Belarus at the end of the 1980’s.



## Belarusans in Poland

Whereas the position of ethnic Belarusans in Poland was fundamentally better than the position of those in the USSR, between 1921 and 1939 their treatment worsened considerably. Growing authoritarianism of the Pilsudski government led to a general shift in the treatment of all ethnic minorities and decreased the Belarusian representation in the Polish Parliament. Many Belarusian schools and newspapers were closed and the Polish population was encouraged to settle in Belorussian territories. Even the economic development lagged behind that of central Poland.

## 5. The Experience of World War II

For the Belarusans, World War II began with the German attack on Poland in September, 1939. Within weeks, the Soviet troops also moved into Poland to occupy Western Belarus and Ukraine, which under the terms of the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact were to be incorporated into the Soviet Union. Mass arrests and deportations followed, concentrating on ethnic Poles, but also the intelligentsia and Polish army personnel of any background. By June 1941, when the Nazi forces attacked the Soviet Union, many Belarusans welcomed them hoping for an end to the Communist persecutions.

### The Holocaust on Belorussian territories

The Nazi plans for Belarus essentially called for the elimination of both the country and its population. First, the Belorussian territories were once again fragmented: some portions were folded into other political entities (Lithuania, Ukraine and East Prussia), while central and eastern Belarus came under direct German military rule (*Weissruthenische Generalbezirk*). Second, the Nazi occupiers planned to eliminate the people itself by Germanizing about a quarter of the most “racially acceptable” Belarusans and exterminating the rest.

That, first and foremost, meant the genocide of the Jewish population. Over 260 concentration camps were established, often overlapping with the existing Jewish ghettos. Thus, in the Minsk ghetto, over 100,000 Jews were killed, in Brest 34,000, in Babrusk 20,000, in Viciebsk 20,000. Since most Belorussian cities had Jewish majorities, all of them became sites of genocide. Frequently, smaller Jewish towns or villages were surrounded and massacred on the spot.

In addition, death camps were created to exterminate not only the local population, Jewish or Belarusian, but also victims brought in from the West. The most infamous camps included Trascianiec (206,000 victims), Minsk, Azarycy, Babrujsk, Bierazavac, and Kaldyceva.

### Partisan warfare

Although a portion of the population in Belarus worked with the Germans to organize their own police force and administration structures, the majority sided with the growing resistance movement. The partisan forces were organized by Moscow and were frequently headed by either communist leaders or by

commanders parachuted in from the other side of the front. Belarus' natural conditions deep forests and marshes favored guerrilla-style warfare. At its peak, over 350,000 people were involved in the partisan movement. But this widespread support brought the price of severe reprisals: wholesale burnings of villages and massacres of their populations.

### **Belarusan dispersion**

All in all, between 1939 and 1945 Belarus lost more than 2.2 million inhabitants, with 209 leveled cities and 9,200 destroyed villages. 380,000 laborers were deported to Germany before 1945; tens of thousands of others fled with the retreating German army in fear of Soviet reprisals. Finally, in the first post-war years over 450,000 Belarusian Catholics and ethnic Poles resettled in Poland. It has been estimated that as a result of these losses, the demographic deficit for Belarus for 1939-1959 topped 6 million people.

The dispersion of the Belarusians in the wake of World War II is at the roots of the relatively large diaspora. By 1990 an estimated 3.5 million Belarusians and their descendants lived outside the borders of Belarus, including 600,000 in the United States.

### **Belarusian Diaspora:**

**Russia:** 1,200,000  
**United States:** 600,000  
**Ukraine:** 440,000  
**Poland:** 250,000  
**Kazakhstan:** 183,000  
**Argentina:** 150,000  
**Latvia:** 120,000  
**Lithuania:** 63,000

## **6. The Road to Independence**

### **Political context: Glasnost'**

Throughout the era of Brezhnevite stagnation, the Belarussian SSR was characterized by relative economic stability (the republic enjoyed one of the highest living standards in the USSR), but also a profound conservatism of the Communist ruling elite. The coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985 however marked a new period in Soviet domestic politics. His policies of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (public openness) created new expectations among the Belarusians.

### **Chernobyl and its impact**

The first test of perestroika came when the world's worst nuclear disaster struck in Chernobyl on April 26, 1986. Although the power plant was located just across the border with Ukraine, the prevailing winds

carried over 70% of the radioactive fallout into Belarus, contaminating over 46,500 square kilometers, or 23% of Belarusian territory. Yet, both Moscow and Minsk authorities remained silent about the accident for several days, at one point going as far as to confiscate all Geiger counters from the population. This cover-up led to large protests and demonstrations in the Homiel region the most severely afflicted area.

Eventually, the authorities resettled 24,700 people from the 30-kilometer radius around the reactor (in the next 8 years, the number of those resettled would reach 130,000 people). But the immediate medical, social and economic cost was overwhelming.

## **Independence movement in Belarus**

As a result of the Chernobyl disaster, segments of the Belarusian intelligentsia became more politically mobilized. From 1986 through 1988, petitions were circulated demanding that not only the physical fallout from Chernobyl be attended to, but also “the cultural Chernobyl” that is the destruction of Belarusian culture and language. Nationalist and cultural groups began to emerge.

This process was further spurred by the discovery of mass graves in the Kurapaty Forest in 1988. The dual grievances: Chernobyl and Kurapaty, became the rallying cry for the emerging nationalist movements. In October 1988 the Belarusian Popular Front was formed to encourage national renewal and political reform. (See the sidebar on Kurapaty Forest and Zenon Poznyak.)

At first, the politically mobilized Belarusians remained in minority. The March 1990 elections to the Belorussian Supreme Soviet still gave 86% of seats to the Communist Party of Belarus, and 83% voted for the preservation of the Soviet Union. But unrest spreading throughout the Soviet Union found its echoes in Belarus as well. In April of 1991, a series of strikes shook the entire republic. The CPB itself was beginning to show strains and divisions. Finally, after the unsuccessful putsch in Moscow in August 1991 brought declarations of independence from Belarus’ immediate neighbors (Latvia, Estonia, and Ukraine), the Supreme Soviet in Minsk declared the independence of Belarus on August 25, 1991. On September 25, 1991, the Soviet officially changed the name of the state to the Republic of Belarus, adopting a new national flag and a new coat of arms.

## **Rise of the Commonwealth of Independent States**

Despite the declarations of independence sweeping the USSR in the wake of the August coup, both Moscow (now under Yeltsin’s leadership) and Minsk (led by the new head of the Supreme Soviet, Stanislav Shushkyevitch) were hoping to preserve some sort of union, at least among the three Slavic republics. Consequently, the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine met in the Belovezha Forest (in Belarus) in December of 1991 to dissolve the Soviet Union and to establish a commonwealth.

By December 21, this union was joined by the five Central Asian states, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and was officially named the Commonwealth of Independent States.

## Questions and Issues:

What were the positive and the negative legacies of Belarus' relations with Poland and its culture?

What was the role of the Orthodox worship in Belarus (be it under the Uniate or Orthodox Church)?

How did the Tsarist rule impact Belarusan identity?

How successful was the policy of Sovietization and Russification in Belarus? In what areas in particular?

What was the impact of World War II on the population of Belarus?

How did Chernobyl mobilize the Belarusan population?

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Jan Zaprudnik, *Belarus: At a Crossroads in History* (1993)

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L. Dobroszycki, J. Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (1993);

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## **Part III: Belarus Today**

### **1. Constitutional Structure**

#### **A Quasi-Parliamentary Republic: 1991- 1994**

From August 1991 through the end of 1994, political power in Belarus was concentrated in the hands of the undemocratically elected Belarusan Supreme Soviet. (See above on the elections of March, 1991). The Communist- dominated Soviet rejected wide-spread calls for disbanding, setting instead the deadline for the new elections for the spring of 1994. Meanwhile, both the Supreme Soviet and the government of

Prime Minister Kyebich steered a very conservative course in relation to political and economic reforms. For instance, a privatization law (passed in 1993) protected the existence of collective farms, it also delayed privatization of state-owned enterprises until 1995. In the political arena, the Communists and the apparatchik allies of Prime Minister Kyebich ousted Stanislav Shushkyevich from chairmanship of the Supreme Soviet in January 1994. The opposition forces, centered around the Belarusian Popular Front, remained largely powerless to affect the scope and the speed of reforms.

## **A Presidential Republic: 1994 - Present**

On March 30, 1994, the Supreme Soviet adopted a new constitution for the Republic of Belarus. Assuming that Prime Minister Kyebich would win the presidential elections, his allies in the Soviet pushed for a strong presidential system. But in a surprise victory, an anti-corruption candidate, Alexander Lukashenka, won more than 80% of the vote in the elections of June 1994.

After an initial “grace period” from the opposition, Lukashenka and the parliament went at loggerheads over the limits of presidential power. The most important issue was the president’s right to dissolve the parliament. After a national referendum on this question was forced by Lukashenka in 1995, a hunger strike by the opposition deputies was led by Zyanon Poznyak, the leader of the BPF. In the end, the opposition deputies were forcibly removed from the building of the parliament, and the national television and radio were cordoned off and put under direct control of the Lukashenka administration. Hastily called parliamentary elections fell well short of the standard for free and fair process.

Two other questionable referenda (in 1995 and 1996) granted Lukashenka the mandate to disband the Soviet (which he did in 1996, replacing it with a handpicked bicameral National Assembly) and to adopt a new constitution granting him sweeping powers over other branches of the government. Thus the Republic of Belarus currently has two constitutions and, arguably, two parliaments, since many members of the disbanded Supreme Soviet continue operating a vocal shadow parliament, albeit outside the official political structure.

## **The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus**

Officially proclaimed on July 27, 1994, the Constitution established a presidential republic with a pluralist political system. The right to vote was extended to all Belarusian citizens 18 and older.

The national government consisted of three branches of the government: legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislature consisted of a unicameral body (the Supreme Soviet) of 260 deputies, elected every 5 years. Its duties included calling national referenda, interpreting the constitution, and scheduling parliamentary and presidential elections. The Supreme Soviet also elected members of high-level courts, the Procurator General, and the members of the board of the National Bank of Belarus. Finally, the Soviet had the power to confirm the state budget and to ratify international treaties.

The president was to be elected every five years through a popular vote. The president is both the head of

state and the head of the government. As commander in chief, the president is in charge of “taking measures to protect the country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

The judicial branch consisted of three courts: the Constitutional Court (nominated by the president and appointed by the Supreme Soviet), the Supreme Court (with its lower level courts), where cases are open to all, and finally, the Supreme Economic Court.

In 1996, several key amendments were adopted through a controversial referendum. They included creating a new bicameral National Assembly (110 deputies and a senate), extending the presidential term to 7 years, giving the president the right to annul decisions of local councils, to set election dates, to appoint Constitutional Court judges, and to appoint for life 1/3 of the senators in the National Assembly. The referenda also approved re-adopting the old Soviet Belarusian flag and granting the Russian language equal official status with Belarusian.

The Belarusian Constitution also officially sanctions the system of mixed economy and pledges full employment to all citizens.

## 2. Domestic Politics

### The Presidential Apparatus

Under Lukashenka’s authoritarian rule his executive apparatus proved to be a most valuable political tool. As the head of the government, Lukashenka appoints and dismisses the prime minister, and directly supervises the Council of Ministers and the National Bank. This puts him firmly in charge of the economic and fiscal policies. As the commander-in-chief and the head of the National Security Council, Lukashenka also has complete control over the armed forces and such power institutions as the Belarusian KGB (which officially retains that acronym).

Lukashenka’s overwhelming powers of incumbency were brought to stark relief in the presidential elections of August 2001.

### Political Parties and the Opposition

Although nearly 30 political parties have been legalized since 1990, only about 2 to 5% of the population belong to any of them. Due both to the apathy of the voters and to Lukashenka’s manipulation of the electoral process, political parties have not proven to be effective political organizations.

The fundamental division among parties in today’s Belarus lies between the allies of President Lukashenka and the opposition parties. Among the most important pro-government parties are the Communist Party of Belarus, their ally the Agrarian Party, the left-leaning Party of Popular Accord and the Party of All-Belarusian Unity. The pro-reform camp includes the United Civic Party, the Social Democratic Hramada, and the Belarus Christian-Democratic Party.

The Belarusian Popular Front remains the most widely supported opposition party despite internal tensions and splits. Founded by Zyanon Poznyak in 1988, the BFP was Belarus' first political movement. The party was committed to a nationalist ethos, the defense of Belarus' independence, and support for a Belarusian cultural revival. After Zyanon Poznyak's exile in 1996, the more nationalist-minded wing split from the BFP, leaving the party's leadership in the hands of the more pragmatic and reform-oriented Vintsuk Viachorka. Since the split, the party has regained its status as the main center of opposition and proved very successful at building coalitions with other opposition forces.

The last parliamentary elections (in October 2000) only reinforced the hostility between the opposition and the Lukashenka government. The opposition was characterized by the government as "criminals plotting against the country" and was denied access to the state-controlled media. Consequently, the majority of opposition parties boycotted the elections. Most new deputies to the National Assembly have no party affiliation.

### Leading Political Figures:

**Alyaksandr Lukashenka:** a former state farm director, gained prominence as head of the Supreme Soviet's anti-corruption committee. Since his election in 1994, Lukashenka has relied on heavily censored media and a "personality cult" to maintain popularity in the country.

**Zyanon Paznyak:** a historian who uncovered the Kurapaty Forests massacre site, Paznyak was the founder of Belarus' first opposition party, the Belorussian Popular Front. An outspoken critic of the Lukashenka regime, he left Belarus in 1995 after an arrest warrant for him was issued by the authorities. Living under political asylum in the United States. Zyanon Paznyak remains a key figure in the nationalist movement and heads the Conservative Christian Party of the Belarusian Popular Front.

**Uladzimir Hanczaryk:** leader of the Belarusian Federation of Trade Unions, was the joint opposition parties candidate in the presidential elections of September 2001.

**Vintsuk Viachorka:** a veteran opposition politician, active in the nationalist movement since the 1980's, one of the founders of BPF. Since October 1999, when the more strongly nationalist wing broke away from BPF (see Paznyak's Conservative Christian Party), Viachorka proved successful at coalition-building among all opposition forces. Credited with revitalizing the opposition movement in the run-up to the presidential elections of October 2001.

### Mass Media

Despite existing legislation that guarantees freedom of the press, the state remains in firm control of the mass media in Belarus. It directly funds many publications and controls such resources as printing plants, broadcast facilities, paper supply, and distribution networks. This indirect control was demonstrated for instance in 1995 when several independent Belarusian newspapers including the most popular, *Svaboda*

were forced to move their printing operations to Lithuania. By 1997, these newspapers were banned altogether. The pro-government newspaper with the largest circulation is *Sovyet'skaya Belorussiya*. But the declining income of the population has sharply pushed down newspaper readership in general: it fell from 29 copies per 100 people in 1991 to 11 in 1999.

Electronic media, both state-owned and privately-held are under even tighter supervision. For instance, state law stipulates that radio and television must cover all statements and appeals by the president, the speaker of the parliament, or the prime minister. By contrast, officially registered opposition parties were denied access to mass media during the elections despite international pressure (even the OSCE unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a compromise over media access for the presidential elections of 2001).

In addition to the state-owned national Belarusian Television channel, several privately-owned cable outlets also exist, although they do not provide news coverage. Most Belarusian homes are however within the reach of the Russian national media, such as ORT or NTV. The most important independent radio station *Racyja* uses programs produced by independent Belarusian journalists, but is broadcast from facilities in Poland.

On May 2, 1997, the United Nations General Assembly named Belarus as one of the 10 worst offenders of freedom of the press.

## **The NGO's**

By 1996, about 900 non-governmental organizations had been registered throughout Belarus. They included educational, women's, cultural, environmental, youth, religious, and business groups. Their membership is estimated between 75,000 and 100,000. U.S. and other Western organizations have provided technical and other assistance to many of these groups, especially those working in the health, environment and social areas, such as the United Way of Belarus, or the Fund for the Children of Chernobyl.

The Belarusian NGO's, however, are not allowed by the government to take any part in the political process. Consequently, many of them resort to public demonstrations as the most direct way of publicizing group interests.

Independent trade unions in Belarus were probably the most widely supported non-governmental democratic organizations in the country. The two most important trade unions are The Free Trade Union of Belarus and the Belarusian Independent Trade Union. A number of other independent trade unions were banned in 1995.

## **The Problem of Democratization**

Lack of democratization and civic society remains the most important stumbling block not only in the political arena, but also in the economic development of the country. Lukashenka's hold on the extensive



state bureaucracy, as well as on the rural and older segments of the population, helps him retain popularity. It also enables him to push through (albeit with high degree of manipulation) national referenda which appear to give him official mandate for his policies. However, the rule of law and law-abiding state institutions are entirely lacking in Belarus, further undercutting prospects for a developed civic society and a vigorous economy.

## Questions and Issues

What were the roots of the presidential system in Belarus?

Why are political parties in Belarus relatively weak?

What is the basis of Lukashenka's popular support? What are his main constituencies?

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David Marples, *Belarus: A Denationalized Nation* (1999);

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A. Karatnycky, A. Motyl, ed. *Nations in Transit: 1997. Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States* (1997)

## 3. Economy

### Government Policy on Reforms

Under the banner of the "Belarusan economic model," the administration of President Lukashenka has blocked fundamental reforms of the Belarusan economy. Since high employment remains a constitutional responsibility of the state, all large industrial enterprises of the Soviet era continue operating under state control and account for the bulk of the country's industrial output. Widespread subsidies and cheap credit have led to shortages of goods and a spiraling inflation (average of 114% per year in 1996-2000). These policies have also led to the suspension of the IMF financing and other IFI programs.

### Privatization

The privatization process in Belarus has been among the slowest in the former Soviet Union. It has been concentrated in housing (30% of housing units), small business, banking, service, trade, and

transportation. Yet, even in those sectors, the government frequently either remains a major stock-holder or appoints veto-wielding members to the boards of joint-stock companies. Overall, it is estimated that the private sector accounts for 15% of Belarusian GDP.

No private land ownership rights have yet been established.

## **Agriculture**

In agriculture, state and collective farms continue to dominate, with less than 1% of arable land in the hands of individual farmers.

Current agricultural output is at 65% of the 1989 levels. Part of this decline is due to the fact that Belarus' agriculture specialized in meat and dairy products and was dependent on fodder and grain deliveries from the other republics. It was thus particularly vulnerable to the economic disruptions that followed the breakup of the USSR. The continuing reliance on state and collective farms perpetuates the inefficiency of this sector and requires heavy state subsidies.

## **Energy**

Since Belarus lacks natural energy resources, it currently imports 100% of its coal and 90% of oil and gas. Belarus also has to import electricity from Russia and from Lithuania. It has recently postponed plans to build its own nuclear energy plant.

Russia serves as the main supplier of Belarus' energy needs, and provides them at a preferential rate. Even so, Belarus' energy debts topped \$250 million in 2000. Despite periodical threats from the Russian gas monopoly, *Gazprom*, Russia has generally adopted a lenient policy towards Belarus, frequently accepting write-offs or refinancing of debt.

## **Foreign Trade and Investment**

Russia remains Belarus' largest trading and investment partner, not only because of the surviving manufacturing and trade ties from the Soviet era, but also because of Belarus' position as the transit corridor between the Russian Federation and Europe. Both Belarus' agriculture and manufacture depend on Russian raw materials and energy supplies. Consequently, over 30% of its imports come from Russia, while almost 50% of Belarusian exports go there. This dependence on the relatively unstable Russian economy further undermines Belarusian economic performance. The chief non-CIS trading partners of Belarus are Germany and Poland.

Foreign direct investment remains low: the cumulative level since 1991 reached \$290 million. Foreign-owned firms employ less than 2% of the workforce and account for 9% of the industrial output. The most important investors come from Germany (12%), the Netherlands (10%), and Russia.

Sources for Further Study:

*Belarus: Country Report 2001 and Country Profile 2001*, The Economist Intelligence Unit

## 4. Society

### Demography

The demographic structure of Belarus is characterized by two negative trends: the decline and the ageing of the population. Death rates have exceeded birth rates since 1993, resulting in a population loss of 400,000 between 1993 and 2000. The after-effects of Chernobyl contribute significantly to these trends, both in lowering the fertility rate and in increasing infant, child, and adult mortality rates. Falling birth rates cause in turn the graying of the population. The population of less than working age (currently at 21%) is falling as a proportion of the total and equals now the percentage of those over working age.

Rapid post-World War II urbanization of Belarus brought the number of rural inhabitants from 57% in 1970 to just 30% in 1999.

### Health Issues: Chernobyl after-effects, HIV/AIDS crisis

Health levels have deteriorated since 1991. Life expectancy at birth now stands at 67 for all, with that for men falling to 62. This decline is attributable partly to decreased health spending (4.9% of GDP in 1999) and partly to the continuing effects of the radioactive contamination after Chernobyl. For instance, in two towns most seriously affected by the accident, Gomel and Mogilev, thyroid cancer among children rose from 2 new cases in 1987, to 50 by 1991, and 90 in 1995.

Another serious health crisis in Belarus involves increased incidence of HIV/AIDS. These cases are due to much increased intravenous drug use and spread in the heterosexual population.

### Women's Issues: Trafficking in Women

Belarus is one of the Slavic former Soviet republics where trafficking in women has become an issue. Low economic standards and expectations encourage many to seek work abroad, but women are particularly vulnerable to entrapment by organized crime.

### Environment

The chief environmental issue in Belarus remains the post-Chernobyl contamination. In addition to the 30 km exclusion zone around the Chernobyl plant, many "hot spots" were revealed throughout the late 80's and 90's, and population continued to be relocated. The more pernicious and long-lasting effects, however, have to do with agriculture: loss of arable land, impact on livestock and animal products,

finally, impact on widely-consumed forest products (berries, mushrooms).

## Questions and Issues

What was the overall impact of the Chernobyl disaster on Belarus? Look at the political, environmental, health, social, and economic areas.

### Sources for Further Study

European Public Health Information Network for Eastern Europe web site: <http://www.euphin.dk/>

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Zhores Medvedev, *The Legacy of Chernobyl* (1990)

Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women web site: <http://www.inet.co.th/org/gaatw>

## 5. National Security

### Nuclear Weapons

Belarus was briefly a nuclear power as a result of the collapse of the USSR. All tactical nuclear weapons were withdrawn to Russia by 1993 and the present Belarusian constitution declares the country to be a non-aligned and non-nuclear power. The Belarusian parliament has also ratified the START-1, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the 1992 Lisbon Protocol, under which it pledged to remain a non-nuclear state.

### Armed Forces

Belarus' armed forces totaled 83,100 in 2000, including 43,500 ground forces and an air force of 22,500. The additional reserves count almost 300,000 men. The defense budget in 2000 fell to \$100,000,000.

The 1996 revisions of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe limit Belarus to 1,800 tanks, 2,600 armored personnel carriers, 1,615 artillery pieces, 260 combat aircraft, and 80 attack helicopters.

Among other power ministries, the Ministry of Internal Affairs controls 23,000 men, including 11,000 of its own troops and 12,000 border guards. The precise number of people working for the Belarusian KGB is not known.

## Part IV: External Relations

Belarus is and will be an important player in Eastern Europe, although not on the basis of its size or economic potential but as a result of its crucial geopolitical location. On the East-West axis, the country is situated between the Russian Federation and the NATO countries; on the North-South axis, it lies half-way between two important subregions: the northern grouping of the Baltic States and Poland, and the southern grouping of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.

## **1. Belarus and the Russian Federation**

Belarusan foreign policy has been firmly focused on Russia since Alexander Lukashenka's election in 1994. Three areas of the Russo-Belarusan relations that are particularly relevant are political, military, and economic.

### **Russo-Belarusan Integration**

First steps toward a greater integration of the Russian Federation and Belarus were taken in 1995, when Alexander Lukashenka and Boris Yeltsin signed a treaty on friendship and cooperation. Further treaties extending that cooperation came in 1996 and 1998. The latest and most comprehensive treaty the Belarus-Russia Union Treaty was signed in 1999. It envisages the creation of a supra-national union state with its own legislative bodies, and close coordination in defense, economic, and monetary policies.

The new Union bodies are to include the Supreme State Council (comprised of the leaders of both countries), a joint Council of Ministers, and a bicameral union parliament. Both countries would wield a veto and each will take turns to chair the Councils. The joint Council of Ministers would supervise the creation of a common economic space, and coordination of the fiscal, monetary, and credit policies. Tariffs and monetary systems are to be harmonized only in 2005.

The Union Treaty stops well short of surrendering either country's sovereignty to these new institutions (a step with little value for the Russian Federation). Furthermore, the accruing economic and political burdens of the current union with Belarus make it unlikely that Russia will be interested in deepening the unification process.

### **Military Cooperation**

Military cooperation with Russia was close even before the 1999 Union Treaty. It appears particularly closely coordinated in the area of air defense. For instance, Russian strategic missile forces operate a new early warning radar in Baranovichi, only 140 km from the Polish border. Russian military forces are also allowed to use other Belarusan military infrastructure, such as airfields (including for Russian strategic bombers and long-range cruise missile carriers), roads, and communication centers.

Yet, despite the fact that work is progressing on a joint Russo-Belarusan military doctrine, the Russian Federation appears unwilling to fully coordinate with Belarus such areas as the land forces; it has also not

shown interest in using Belarusian territory for the deployment or storage of nuclear weapons.

## **Economic Ties**

As detailed in the section on trade and investment, Russia remains Belarus' most important trade partner, export market, and the chief source of energy supplies. But beyond these mutually beneficial aspects lies the thornier issue of a common monetary and tariff system. Belarus' policy of cheap state credit and the concomitant inflation has made the coordination of fiscal and monetary policies a sticking point in negotiations with Russia.

## **2. The CIS**

The early mission of the Commonwealth of Independent States was to fill the institutional vacuum left by the dissolution of the USSR. The CIS was to help coordinate economic, social, and foreign policy activities through bi-annual meetings of its chief body, the Council of the Heads of State. Minsk was chosen as the seat of the Executive Committee, which was to act as the secretariat of the CIS.

However, with different CIS countries beginning to focus on other regions and international organizations, the role of the CIS became more limited. Numerous CIS agreements are signed, but few are enforced. Among the most significant agreements are the 1992 Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security, the 1995 Customs Union among Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, and the Eurasian Economic Community agreement of 2000.

Economically, the most important CIS countries for Belarus are Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

## **3. Belarus and its other Neighbors**

### **Relations with Ukraine**

Belarusian relations with Ukraine have been largely a function of both countries' relationship with Russia. Kiev decided early on that its own relations with Minsk especially in the security area would become more limited as the integration process deepened between Belarus and Moscow. One area of successful cooperation involved the demarcation of the common border, which was completed and officially ratified by May 1997. Other areas include joint work on environmental issues (especially on the Chernobyl-related problems), and development of economic relations between border regions in both countries. Military cooperation remains on a slow track, largely because of the fundamental difference of view on NATO and its potential expansion in the region.

### **Relations with Poland**

Poland's relations with Belarus are largely colored by two factors: the common (and not often happy)

history, and the opposing strategic orientation of both countries.

At present, Poland is both a member of NATO and an applicant for the EU. With that in mind, Poland views Belarus as a major geopolitical and military issue, and second, as a potential source of political, economic and social instability in the East European region.

Polish-Belarusan security relations must thus be seen as an element of Russo-European relations and of the overall European security structure. However, a host of ethnic and border issues have a direct impact on their bilateral relations. The approx. 0.5 million ethnic Poles in Belarus remain a concern for both countries. The worsening economic and political conditions in Belarus may mean a much increased legal and illegal economic migration into Poland. At the same time Poland's efforts to prepare for the EU membership have included much stricter border controls, since the Polish-Belarusan border will in fact become the external boundary of the European Union. In the short and medium term, these border control issues are likely to create difficulties in maintaining economic and cultural ties with Belarus. A small number of regional cooperation initiatives involving Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Russia (especially the Kaliningrad exclave) have been promoted recently to help balance the Polish-Belarusan relationship and further the stability in the region.

### **Relations with Lithuania and the Baltic States**

Among the Baltic States, Lithuania has the most extensive relationship with Belarus, not only as a neighbor but also as a historically related entity. Yet, even that relationship is closely interwoven with the broader relations between Russia, Poland, Ukraine, and Western Europe.

As a potential candidate for NATO as well as the EU, Lithuania shares some of Poland's concerns in regard to its security relations with Belarus. It notes, for instance, that while the three Baltic States with a total population of 8 million currently have among them 15,000 military troops, Belarus boasts 113,000. Lithuania has also been concerned with the increasingly authoritarian bend of the Lukashenka administration.

Despite these concerns, Lithuania and Belarus have chosen to focus on the more pragmatic aspects of their bilateral relationship. Those include transfer of Belarusian exports through the Klaipeda seaport, sale of electric power to Belarus from the Lithuanian nuclear power plant at Ignalina, terms of transit from Belarus to the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, and finally, the mutual readmission of refugees (specifically, the large number of Asian immigrants seeking access to Europe who have been let out of Belarus into Lithuania).

In February, 1995, Lithuania and Belarus signed the Treaty on Cooperation and Good-Neighborly Relations and the Treaty on the Border between the Republic of Lithuania and the Republic of Belarus.

## **4. Belarus and Western Europe**

## **Belarus and the European Security Structure**

Belarus' constitution defines it as a non-nuclear, non-aligned state. Although Belarus is part of the 1992 Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security, its fundamental security guarantee lies in its military relationship with the Russian Federation.

Belarus' relationship with NATO remains frozen since 1997 by the decision of the North Atlantic Assembly. Not surprisingly, Minsk has declared numerous times that it vehemently opposes expansion of NATO membership, especially to the Baltic States. Clearly, though, Minsk's views on this matter take a distant second place to those of Moscow. Russia, in turn, has hinted that further NATO expansion may result in redeployment of Russian forward forces on Belarusian territory.

As a signatory of the CFE treaty, Belarus was behind schedule in meeting its conventional arms reductions, but should meet the revisions to that treaty passed in 1996/1997.

## **Belarus and the OSCE**

Belarus and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have had strained relations since 1995. As a chief European institution charged with monitoring democracy and human rights, the OSCE has been at the forefront of criticism of the Lukashenka regime. For instance, the OSCE has refused to recognize the results of the 1996 referenda on presidential powers and most recently it proclaimed the presidential elections of 2001 seriously tainted. It has also protested the phenomenon of "disappearing" prominent opposition activists in the run up to the national elections.

## **Belarus and the EU**

The European Union has been somewhat less vocal in criticizing Belarus' domestic record, but it also limited its economic and political ties with Belarus. For instance in 1996, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Community suspended its provisional trade agreement with Belarus in protest over the forced referendum. Perhaps the lowest point of Belarus' relations with the EU countries came in 1997, when under a pretext of sewer repairs, Lukashenka evicted EU ambassadors from their residences. Most of them were then recalled, eventually returning several months later.

# **5. Relations with the United States**

## **Nuclear Weapons**

The high point in the U.S. - Belarus relations came in February 1993, when the Belarusian Supreme Soviet ratified the START 1 Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, committing the country to remove all nuclear weapons from its soil and thus achieving the overriding U.S. policy goal in Belarus. In January 1994, President Clinton visited Belarus largely as a gesture of gratitude to Minsk for close cooperation in solving the problem of nuclear proliferation.



## **Democratization and Technical Assistance**

In the period between 1991 and 1994, Belarus was a recipient of humanitarian, technical, economic and democratization assistance from the U.S. in keeping with the patterns for the entire Former Soviet Union. However, with the coming to power of Alexandr Lukashenka, the relationship between the U.S. and Minks became increasingly strained. The 1995 shooting of the American team of balloonists by the Belarusian air force, the controversial nature of the 1996 referenda, and finally the eviction in 1997 of the U.S. (as well as EU) ambassador from his residence all led to severe limitation of official relations with Belarus: by the end of 1997, the U.S. ambassador was recalled for consultations for almost 12 months and even the \$32 million in Nunn-Lugar funding for further nuclear cleanup was suspended.

Two additional trends which influenced the U.S. view of Belarus were human rights violations and the concomitant growth of Lukashanka authoritarianism, and also the aggressive push on the part of the Belarusian president for a deepened integration with Russia. While the latter was officially described by the U.S. policymakers as strictly a matter between the Russian Federation and Belarus, it has become clear that the U.S. no longer saw Belarus as a potential independent player in the East European region. The U.S. policy was by then described as one of “selective engagement,” where focus of U.S. contacts would lie with civic and non-governmental groups, rather than with the Belarusian government itself.

Since Lukashenka was reelected to a new term as president in October of 2001, prospects for changes in the U.S. -Belarusian have dimmed once again.

Source for Further Study:

Sherman Garnett, R. Levgold, eds. *Belarus at the Crossroads* (1999)

## **Part V : Resources**

### **Journals and Periodicals**

*Nationalities Papers* (also available online)

*Post-Soviet Affairs*

*Problems of Post Communism*

*Demokratizatsia*

*East European Constitutional Review*

*Current History*

*Foreign Affairs*

## **Web and Online Resources**

Transitions

RFE/RL Reports

Johnson's List

Economist Intelligence Unit [www.fggm.osis.gov/EIU](http://www.fggm.osis.gov/EIU)

# The BENELUX Countries

SELF STUDY GUIDE TO

**BELGIUM**  
**The NETHERLANDS**  
**LUXEMBOURG**



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## **The Benelux Countries**

### Self Study Guide to **BELGIUM** **THE NETHERLANDS** **LUXEMBOURG**

The *Benelux Self-Study Guide* is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to the history, culture, politics, economics, security, and international relations of the “Benelux” countries – Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg. The guide should serve as an introduction to and a resource for independent study of the region. Readers are encouraged to explore questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals, and web sites cited in the appropriate sections.

This self-study guide was prepared for the Foreign Service Institute by Robert Rinehart, The George Washington University, and by Thomas Rochon, director of the Graduate Record Examinations Program at the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policies or positions of the U.S. Department of State.

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First Edition  
June 2003

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# EUROPE





**TIMELINE**  
**For the Low Countries**  
**Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg**

59-54 BC	Caesar's Gallic Wars.
57 BC	Belgica organized as a Roman province.
Late 4th century AD	Salian Franks entered Belgica as Roman allies.
431 AD	Franks united under Merovingian dynasty.
c. 496	Frankish King Clovis accepted Catholicism for himself and for the Franks.
c. 675	Pepin of Heristal invested "mayor of palace" in Austrasia.
714	Charles Martel succeeded his father Pepin in Austrasia.
732	Charles Martel defeated Arabs at Tours/Poitiers.
751	Carolingian mayor Pepin III deposed Merovingian Childeric III.
768	Charlemagne succeeded as king of the Franks.
800	Charlemagne crowned Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III.
814	Louis the Pious and son Lothair succeeded as co-emperors.
840	Oaths of Strasbourg.
843	Treaty of Verdun recognized Lothair's "Middle Kingdom."
855	"Middle Kingdom" divided on Lothair's death.
870	Lotharingia divided by Treaty of Mersen between French king and German emperor.
9th-10th centuries	Feudalism introduced in the Low Countries.
987	Hugh Capet displaced last of the Carolingian kings.

11th-12th centuries	Growth of towns; “industrial revolution” in southern Netherlands. Feudal Netherlandish states virtually independent of French king and emperor.
1060	Conrad, descendant of Siegfried of the Ardennes, recognized as Count of Flanders.
1204	Baldwin, crusader count of Flanders and Hainault, elected first Latin Emperor of Constantinople.
1294	Flanders allied with England against France.
May 1302	Matins of Bruges.
July 1302	Battle of the Spurs at Courtrai.
1305	French king recognized Flemish independence.
1308	Henry of Luxembourg elected Holy Roman emperor as Henry VII; Luxembourg dynasty held imperial title until 1437.
1338	Alliance of Netherlandish towns led by Jacob van Artevelde of Ghent.
1340	Artevelde concluded Flemish alliance with England in Hundred Years War.
1382	Flemish communes defeated at battle of Roosebeke.
1384	Margaret of Flanders and her husband Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy, succeeded her father, Count Louis of Male.
13th-early 14th centuries	Great age of desmesne farming.
1348-1349	Low Countries hit by Black Plague.
1385-1477	Consolidation of Burgundian rule in the Netherlandish state under four dukes; flowering of Flemish art.
January 1477	Charles the Bold killed at the battle of Nancy.
February 1477	Grand Privilege restored liberties of Netherlandish states.
April 1477	Mary of Burgundy married by proxy to Austrian Archduke (later Emperor) Maxmilian of Habsburg who acted as regent for their son Philip the Handsome.

- 1500 Charles V, son of Philip the Handsome and Joan of Castile, born in Ghent.
- 1511 Erasmus of Rotterdam published *The Praise of Folly*.
- 1515 Charles V came of age as duke of Burgundy and lord of the Netherlandish states.
- 1516 Charles proclaimed king of Castile and Aragon in Brussels.
- 1519 Charles elected Holy Roman Emperor in succession to his grandfather Maximilian of Habsburg.
- 1522 Charles' tutor Adrian Florensz of Utrecht elected pope as Hadrian VI.
- 1523 Protestant Reformation introduced in the Low Countries.
- 1543 Charles V issued the Great Privilege in Brussels joining the Netherlandish states constitutionally.
- 1555 Charles V abdicated sovereignty in the Netherlands at States-General in Brussels in favor of his son Philip II, also king of Spain.
- 1545-1563 Council of Trent initiated the Counter-Reformation.
- 1559 Peace of Cateau-Cambresis ended war between Spain and France.
- 1560 "League of Magnates," led by stadtholder William the Silent, prince of Orange, and counts Egmond and Horn, began to express discontent with reforms proposed by Philip II; French Calvinist preachers arrive in the Netherlands.
- 1566 Magnates presented Request to Philip II to withdraw the Inquisition.
- 1567 Duke of Alba appointed Spanish governor in the Netherlands.
- 1568 Council of Blood convicted and executed Egmond and Horn; William outlawed.
- 1572 William recognized in Holland and Zeeland as leader of resistance to Spanish rule and re-appointed stadtholder by the Estates; Gueux seize Brill and Flushing.
- 1577 Pacification of Ghent; Union of Brussels united Netherlandish states in a "common fatherland."

- 1578 Archduke (later Emperor) Mathias of Austria invited to become governor of the Brussels union, which soon splits into rival unions of Arras and Utrecht; beginning of 70-year Dutch War of Independence.
- 1579-1586 Utrecht union allies in the southern Netherlands pacified by Spanish troops under Alessandro Farnese.
- 1581 States-General of the Union of Utrecht repudiated fealty to Philip II, creating the United Provinces.
- 1584 William the Silent assassinated in Delft; succeeded as stadtholder by his brother Maurice of Nassau.
- 1586 Johan van Oldenbarnevelt grand pensioner of Holland.
- 1588 Defeat of the Spanish Armada.
- 1588-1598 “The Ten Years” – Maurice reorganized the Dutch army and consolidated his control of the United Provinces.
- 1598 Philip II handed over title to sovereignty over the entire Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her husband, Austrian Archduke Albert.
- 17th century Despite almost continuous war, art flourished in the Netherlands, north and south, during the “Golden Age.”
- 1602 Dutch East Indies Company chartered by States-General initiating Dutch colonial expansion in Asia, Africa, and America.
- 1609 Albert concluded 12-year truce with United Provinces.
- 1609-1621 Domestic political and religious conflict in the United Provinces; Oldenbarnevelt championed the authority of the estates against the power of the stadtholder.
- 1610 Arminians addressed Remonstrance to Holland estates.
- 1618-1619 Oldenbarnevelt and Hugo Grotius arrested; Oldenbarnevelt hanged. Synod of Dordrecht condemned Arminianism; Remonstrants suppressed.
- 1621 Death of Albert of Austria; without an heir, Southern Netherlands (Belgium and Luxembourg) receded to Spain. Truce not renewed; war resumed.

- 1621 Dutch West Indies Company chartered, promoting colonization in the Americas.
- 1628 Frederick Henry succeeded as stadtholder on the death of his half-brother Maurice; Remonstrants rehabilitated.
- 1633 Financial panic in Holland resulted from crash of the tulip market. Peace negotiations with Spain failed.
- 1641 William (II), son of the stadtholder, wed the daughter of Charles I of England.
- 1648 United Provinces and Spain agreed to the Peace of Munster. Spain recognized Dutch independence, including control of the Generality.
- 1650 Holland estates opposed William II; Amsterdam occupied by stadtholder's forces.
- November 1650 Death of William II.
- 1650-1672 Holland, Zeeland, and other provinces without a stadtholder.
- 1652-1654 First Anglo-Dutch War.
- 1653-1672 Johan de Witt grand-pensioner of Holland.
- 1664-1672 Second Anglo-Dutch War. New Netherlands lost to England.
- 1667-1668 War of Devolution; France invaded Spanish Netherlands.
- April 1668 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle; Spain ceded territory to France.
- 1672-1678 Second War of Devolution; United Provinces and Spain allied against France and ally (to 1674) England. French invaded Dutch territory.
- July 1672 William III appointed stadtholder.
- August 1672 Johan de Witt resigned as grand-pensioner; murdered by a mob in the Hague.
- 1674 Treaty of Westminster; separate peace with England.
- 1677 William III of Orange married Mary Stuart, daughter of Duke of York (later James II). United Provinces and England formally allied.

- 1678 Treaties of Nijmegen concluded war with France.
- 1689 “Glorious Revolution” in England. William III and Mary II ascended the English throne.
- 1691-1697 War of the Grand Alliance. United Provinces, England, Spain, Austria and allies opposed French expansion; William III headquartered in Brussels.
- 1697 Treaty of Rijswijk.
- 1701-1713 War of the Spanish Succession. United Provinces allied with England and Empire in “world war” against France and Spain. The Low Countries major theatre of military operations.
- 1702 Death of William III.
- 1702-1747 Holland and other provinces without a stadtholder. Authority assumed by grand-pensioner and States-General. Urban oligarchy dominant in United Provinces.
- 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Southern Netherlands (Belgium and Luxembourg) assigned to Austrian Habsburgs; provincial estates governed under local leadership.
- 1722 Ostend Company founded in Austrian Netherlands.
- 1740-1780 Popular reign in the Austrian Netherlands of Maria Theresa. Beginning of “Industrial Revolution.” Traditional institutions thrived.
- 1740-1748 War of the Austrian Succession. Southern Netherlands earned title as “cockpit of Europe.” United Provinces neutral.
- 1747 William IV of Orange named stadtholder in all provinces.
- 1751 Infant son of William IV succeeded as stadtholder as William V. Provincial estates acted as regents.
- 1756-1763 Seven Years War. France and Austria allied.
- 1780 Dutch fortress at St. Bartolemy first to salute American flag.
- 1781 United Provinces declared war of Britain in support of the United States. British blockaded Holland and captured Dutch colonies.

1780-1791	Unpopular reign of Joseph II. “Enlightened” reforms imposed on Austrian Netherlands.
1783	Nassau Succession Agreement.
1787	Reform party, the “Patriots,” suppressed in the United Provinces.
1789	Brabant estates opposed reforms to centralize administration in the Austrian Netherlands. Armed uprising in Brussels and other cities.
1790	Proclamation of the “United States of Belgium.”
1791	Austrian army reentered Belgium to restore order. Leopold II shelved reforms.
1792	Austrian army defeated; French occupied Austrian Netherlands.
1795	Former Austrian Netherlands (Belgium and Luxembourg) and Liege annexed by France. United Provinces occupied by French without opposition; Batavian Republic established under dictator-pensioner Rutger van Schimmelpenninck.
1806	Kingdom of Holland created for Louis Bonaparte. Napoleon declared “Continental System” to blockade British trade. British imposed counter-blockade, paralyzing Dutch economy.
1810	The Netherlands annexed by France. British seized Dutch colonies.
1813	Napoleon defeated at Leipzig. Pro-Orange revolt against French in Holland.
March 1814	William, Prince of Orange, inaugurated as “sovereign prince” by Assembly of Notables in the Hague; assumed provisional administration of former Austrian Netherlands
1814-1815	Congress of Vienna.
June 1815	Battle of Waterloo (near Brussels). Belgo-Dutch force, commanded by Prince of Orange, fight on allied side.
August 1815	Constitution promulgated for Kingdom of the United Netherlands linking the Netherlands and Belgium in a constitutional monarchy under a hereditary ruler, William I of Orange, who also received Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in personal union.

1815-1830	Political union of the Low Countries. Protests in Belgium against economic restrictions. Belgian liberals and traditionalists found common cause against Dutch.
1819	Dutch recognized as an official language in Flanders.
1830	Revolt in Brussels and Liege. "Petitions of Grievances" against union gained wide support. Provisional government declared Belgium independent.
1831	Belgian independence recognized by European powers. Leopold I of Saxe-Coburg named "King of the Belgians."
1839	The Netherlands recognized Belgian independence. Britain guaranteed Belgium's "perpetual neutrality." Luxembourg divided: northern Luxembourg became Belgian province, grand duchy remained in personal union with Dutch crown. William I abdicated.
c. 1840	Flemish movement began to promote recognition of the Dutch language in Belgium.
1848-1849	Liberal constitutions adopted in Belgium and the Netherlands. Liberal leader Rudolph Thorbecke dominant figure in Dutch politics.
1853	Thorbecke resigned to protest opposition to restoration of Catholic hierarchy in the Netherlands
1856	Commission appointed to study the "language question" in Belgium; deliberated for remainder of 19th century.
1857	Education Act enacted in the Netherlands, recognizing the state's responsibility for inculcating "Christian and social virtues."
1860s	Liberal ministries led by Thorbecke. Social and economic reforms introduced.
c. 1860-1899	Guido Gezelle promoted the revival of Flemish as a literary language.
1868	Liberal constitution adopted in Luxembourg, enabling the grand duchy to be administered separately from the Netherlands. European powers guaranteed Luxembourg's neutrality in the Treaty of London.
1870-1871	Belgian and Luxembourg neutrality complicated by Franco-Prussian War.



1870s-1880s	Competing socialist and confessional trade unions established in Belgium and the Netherlands.
1878	Abraham Kuyper founded the Antirevolutionary Party in the Netherlands.
1879	Education Act, imposing state control of education, resisted by Catholics.
1884	Catholic party formed first government in Belgium, retaining one-party majority until 1914.
1873	Bilingualism recognized in Belgium.
1884	Berlin Congress recognized Leopold II's personal title to the Congo Free State.
1887	Election reform doubled the franchise in the Netherlands. Social reforms introduced by Catholic government in Belgium.
1888	Coalitions of Protestant and Catholic confessional parties became the dominant factor in Dutch politics.
1889	Subsidies voted for denominational schools in the Netherlands.
1893	Universal manhood suffrage and plural voting approved in Belgium.
1896	Franchise extended with restrictions in the Netherlands.
1897	Christian Historical Union broke from Kuyper's Antirevolutionary Party. Social Democrats entered the Dutch parliament.
1898	Dutch recognized as an official language in Belgium.
1899	Death of William III. In accord with the Nassau Succession Agreement, Luxembourg passed to Adolph of Nassau-Weilburg. First Hague Peace Conference convened. Proportional representation introduced in Belgium.
1901-1905	Kuyper led confessional coalition governments in the Netherlands.
1905-1909	Liberals governed in the Netherlands with Social Democrat support.
1908	Congo annexed as Belgian colony.

1914-1918	World War I. Germany invaded Belgium, August 4, 1918. One million refugees fled the country. Belgium and Luxembourg occupied for four years. Belgian army remained in the field under King Albert I. Belgium devastated by warfare.
1917	Church-related schools supported by the state in the Netherlands. Universal manhood suffrage enacted.
1918	Clear majority for confessional coalition in the Netherlands. Ruys de Beerenbrouck first Catholic prime minister. Social and labor reforms introduced. Women enfranchised.
1919	Belgium participated in Versailles Conference; received reparations, territorial concessions, and mandate to Ruanda-Urundi. Catholic party lost parliamentary majority sustained since 1884. Catholic-led coalitions characterized interwar period. Marie Adelaide, regarded as pro-German, abdicated as grand duchess of Luxembourg.
1920	Belgium abandoned neutrality. Entered military convention with France.
1921	Belgium-Luxembourg customs union formed. Dutch recognized as the administrative language of Flanders.
1925	Locarno Treaty noted the abrogation of previous treaties guaranteeing Belgian neutrality. Belgo-Dutch treaty to settle question of Scheldt navigation rejected by upper chamber of the Netherlands parliament.
1926	Confessional coalition in the Netherlands fell when Protestant parties joined Liberals in rejecting diplomatic representation in the Holy See.
1926-1939	Confessional-Liberal coalitions in the Netherlands.
1930s	The Great Depression brought massive unemployment to the Low Countries.
1934	King Albert killed in climbing accident.
1936	Germany occupied the Rhineland. Belgium reverted to neutrality; released from Locarno obligations.
1939	Social Democrats entered the Dutch government.
1939-1945	World War II.

May 10, 1940	The Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg invaded by Germany after reassurances of respect for their neutrality. Rotterdam bombed. Dutch capitulated after five days, Belgium after 18 days of fighting.
1942	Japan occupied Netherlands East Indies.
1944	Convention on three-country postwar customs union agreed on in London by governments-in-exile
September 1944	Allied forces entered Belgium.
October-November 1944	“Operation Market-Garden”
December 1944-January 1945	Battle of the Bulge
1945	Governments-in-exile return. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg charter members of the UN. Nationalists proclaimed independent republic in Indonesia.
1946-1947	Enactment of legislation contained in the “Social Pact” laying the foundation for the welfare state in Belgium
1946-1959	Confessional-Labor coalition governments in the Netherlands.
1947	The Hague Protocol on Benelux economic integration.
1948	Benelux Economic Union put into effect. Women enfranchised in Belgium.
1948-1954	Marshall Plan aid contributed the economic reconstruction of the Benelux countries.
1949	Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg charter members of NATO. Referendum in Belgium on the return of Leopold III.
1950	Leopold III abdicated in favor of his son Baudouin. Independence conceded to Indonesia in personal union with the Netherlands.
1950-1953	Korean War. Belgium and the Netherlands contributed troops to the UN action.

- 1952 European Coal and Steel Community founded.
- 1954 Republic of Indonesia broke ties to the Netherlands.
- 1958 School Pact accepted in Belgium.
- 1960 Enactment of the *Loi unique*. Belgian Congo became independent as Republic of Congo.
- 1962 Independence for Rwanda and Burundi.
- 1963 Language frontier in Belgium redefined and fixed.
- 1966 Democrats 66 established to challenge pillarization. William-Alexander born, first son born to the Dutch royal house since 1851.
- 1968 French faculties “expelled” from Catholic University of Louvain/Leuven; established New Louvain as separate university. Social Christian Party split along linguistic lines.
- 1971 Equal distribution of cabinet portfolios between Flemish and Walloon ministers mandated in Belgium. Cultural communities recognized.
- 1972 Christian Democratic Appeal formed in the Netherlands. Belgian Liberals split into separate Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels parties.
- 1974-1979 Social Christians out of office in Luxembourg for first time since 1919
- 1977 Egmont Pact authorized five-tier federal government for Belgium.
- 1978 Belgian Socialists split into separate Walloon and Flemish parties.
- 1980 Constitutional reforms prepared the way for devolution in federal Belgium.
- 1984 Brussels “Capital Region” organized. Regions assumed fiscal responsibilities
- 1991 Ruud Lubbers formed conservative Christian-Liberal in the Netherlands.
- 1993 St Michel Agreement approved. King Baudouin died.

1994	Wim Kok formed coalition with Liberals and Democrats 66. First Dutch government since 1918 without participation of a confessional party.
1995	Muslims under Dutch protection at Srebrenica massacred by Serbs.
1998	“Direct democracy” proposal failed approval in the Netherlands.
1990	Liberal-led coalition in Belgium. Social Christians denied office for first time in 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
May 2002	Pym Fortuyn assassinated. General election in the Netherlands Christian Democrats returned as largest party in Second Chamber, followed by List Pym Fortuyn.
July-October 2002	List Pym Fortuyn entered short-lived Dutch government
January 22, 2003	General election in the Netherlands
May 18, 2003	General election in Belgium
June 2003	General election anticipated in Luxembourg

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this self-study guide is to provide basic background information on Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg for Foreign Service officers and other personnel scheduled for assignment in those countries. The guide attempts to present information in such a way that users can obtain a better understanding of each country individually and of the “Benelux” region and to have a more productive and pleasant tour of duty. Users are encouraged to consider the questions and points for discussion at the conclusion of most sections in the guide and to pursue those of special interest by drawing on resource materials cited.

### THE BENELUX COUNTRIES AT A GLANCE

#### **Kingdom of Belgium**

*Koninkrijk België*

*Royaume Belgen*

*Königreich Belgien*

Capital: Brussels (Dutch, Brussel; French, Bruxelles)

Head of State (since 1993): King Albert II of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha

Population: 10,200,000

Languages: Dutch, French, and German

Area: 11,780 square miles (30,520 sq. km.)

#### **Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

*Groussherzogtom Lëtzebuerg*

*Grand-Duche du Luxembourg*

*Grossherzogtum Luxemburg*

Capital: Luxembourg

Head of State (since 2000): Grand Duke Henri II of Nassau-Weilbeck

Population: 450,000

Languages: Lëtzebuergesch, French, and German

Area: 999 square miles (2,586 sq. km.)

#### **Kingdom of the Netherlands**

*Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*

Capital: Amsterdam

Seat of Government: The Hague (Den Haag)

Head of State (since 1980): Queen Beatrix of Orange-Nassau

Population: 15,800,000

Languages: Dutch and Frisian

Area: 13,250 square miles (41,865 sq.km.)

BELGIUM, THE NETHERLANDS, and LUXEMBOURG are founding members of the *United Nations* – UN (1945), *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* – NATO (1949), and the *European Community* (1956-7), subsequently *European Union* – EU.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The acronym **BENELUX** was coined in the customs union agreements adopted by the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg that came into force in January 1948 in the Treaty of Benelux Economic Union, revised in November 1960. These agreements created institutional structures for the economic integration of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. These institutions included:

- The Committee of Ministers on which sat heads of government of the three countries, accompanied by their foreign ministers and ministers of trade, economics, finance, agriculture, and social affairs, meeting to coordinate implementation of the union treaty.
- The Council of Economic Union staffed by civil servants responsible for executing decisions of the Committee of Ministers.
- The Secretariat-General that prepared proposals submitted to the Committee of Ministers for consideration.
- The Court of Justice that handed down binding interpretations of rulings common to the three countries.
- The Inter-Parliamentary Council, an advisory body composed of representatives of the three national legislatures.
- The Economic and Social Advisory Council, drawn from representatives of non-governmental economic and social organizations.

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg had an even longer record of cooperation predating the Benelux arrangement. The 1960 Benelux Economic Union was based on a customs union agreed to in London in 1944 by wartime governments-in-exile of the three countries and that took effect on January 1, 1948 after revision in the Hague Protocol of the previous year and ratification of the Treaty of Brussels. The customs union was itself an extension to the Netherlands of the 1921 Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union that abolished customs duties between those two countries and adopted common trade conventions. The Benelux agreements abolished tariff duties within the union and applied a common tariff to imports that was half-way between the higher Belgian-Luxembourg rates and the lower Dutch rates. The duty-free list of imports adopted earlier by the Netherlands was reduced, thereby raising the common tariff rate. Certain domestic restrictions to trade, e.g., licenses and subsidies, remained in each country, and national production was protected by complex regulations as a buffer against the eventual liberalization of postwar European economies. Most of these restrictions were eliminated in 1950. Following the establishment in 1953 of the European Coal and Steel Community, of which the Benelux countries were members, interest shifted from agreements among neighboring countries to European integration. The prime ministers of the three countries, meeting in 1955, proposed an

initiative to expand cooperation in a European “community” that resulted in the signing of the Rome Treaty two years later.

The activities of the Benelux Economic Union have been folded into those of the European Union. In addition, the regional governments of Flanders and Wallonia have bilateral arrangements with the Netherlands in areas formally handled by Belgium under the Benelux treaty.

“Benelux” has become a convenient shorthand for the three-country region. Outside the context of activities covered by the treaty, however, the term “Benelux” is seldom used in the three signatory countries to describe their region collectively. If any one term is appropriate, geographically or historically, to describe Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg collectively, it is *The Low Countries*.

**The Netherlands** (Dutch, *Nederland*, or, literally, “The Low Country”). Also called “Holland” in English, the name of two provinces in the Netherlands (North Holland and South Holland) that as a single entity were historically the dominant region in the United Provinces. “Holland” is thus a misnomer, though one that is widely used and understood, just as “England” is often used when the more precise reference is to Great Britain.

In conventional English usage, the inhabitants of the Netherlands, the language they speak, and the adjectival form specifying things pertaining to them and their country are *Dutch*. The term is derived from the Old Germanic *duutsc*, meaning “language of the people,” and, in forms found in Middle Netherlandish as well as in Middle English, was used to describe Low German dialects, including Netherlandish, and the people who spoke them. From the late sixteenth century, “Dutch,” originally used in derision and contempt in English, was gradually restricted to Hollanders and other Netherlanders.

**Belgium** (French, *Belgique*; Dutch, *België*) from the *Belgae*, Celtic tribes that inhabited the area in antiquity. *Belgica* was a province of the Roman Empire, and the term continued to be used in classical and poetic references to the entire Low Countries into modern times. Modern Belgium is divided into two regions, Dutch-speaking *Flanders* (Dutch, *Vlaanderen*) and French-speaking *Wallonia* (French, *Wallonie*). The former placename is derived from the Latin *pagus flumensis*, or, literally, the “flooded country,” applied to the region by the Romans. The placename “Flanders,” which in its restricted meaning identifies a distinct province, now divided, is also applied to the entire Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. “Wallonia” is a survival of a primitive Germanic term *wahl* (“strangers”) by which Germanic folk described the Romanized populations, often Celtic, with whom they came into contact and which is also found, for example, in the placenames *Wales* and *Wallachia*. Dutch-speaking natives of Flanders are *Flemish* or, rarely, *Flemings*. French-speaking natives of Wallonia are *Walloons*.

**Luxembourg** (Lëtzeburgesch, *Lëtzebuerg*; German, *Luxemburg*) derives its name from the origins of its capital city as the “Little Fortress” (archaic *Lucilinburhuc*; later Germanic *Lützelburg*).



## SOCIAL and CULTURAL DYNAMICS

### LANGUAGES

*Nederlands* (conventionally called *Dutch* in English) is the Germanic language native to more than 20 million people in the Netherlands and Belgium. The Dutch language, as spoken as the mother tongue by 6 million people in Belgium, is commonly referred to in that country as *Vlaams* (*Flemish*), the language of Flanders. Flemish is not a separate language from or a dialect of the Dutch as spoken in the Netherlands. Although there is some vocabulary peculiar to Dutch-speakers in both countries, e.g., loan words used in the Netherlands that have not been adopted in Flanders and some archaic expressions used in Flanders that are not heard in the Netherlands, Standard Dutch (*Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands*, literally “General Cultured Netherlandish”) is the accepted language spoken and written in the Netherlands and by Dutch-speakers in Belgium. Within the Netherlands, Dutch is sometimes referred to as *Hollands*. Regional variants of standard Dutch are heard in both countries, and distinct accents easily identify their speakers with particular locations. *Frisian*, a language distinct from both Dutch and German, is spoken in Friesland and is acknowledged as an official language along with Dutch in that northern province of the Netherlands.

*French* is the mother tongue of more than 4 million Belgians in Wallonia and Brussels. Although regional dialects are absent, French is spoken by most with an easily discernable “Belgian” accent. Both French and Dutch are required subjects in all Belgian schools. Most educated Flemish speak French as well as Dutch, and many are tri- or quatra-lingual, also competent in German and English. Walloons are much less likely to achieve fluency in Dutch. There are approximately 70,000 *German*-speaking Belgians in the Eupen-Malmedy region, where they enjoy protected language rights and exercise control over cultural affairs and education.

Luxembourg is officially tri-lingual in French, German, and *Lëtzebuergesch*, a Franconian dialect also spoken in the Moselle region outside Luxembourg. French is the language of administration and has outstripped the use of German in business and other venues. Education is conducted in German and French. Newspapers are published in both languages. *Lëtzebuergesch* is the language commonly spoken among family, on the street, and in the countryside, and its use in elementary school classrooms has increased.

*English* is widely spoken in all three countries.

#### Questions/Discussion

Discuss the political and social implications of bi-lingualism and multi-lingualism in the Low Countries.

Describe the relationship between language and concepts of ethnicity.

Is it necessary to be Dutch-speaking in order to be recognized as being Dutch? Explain.

Discuss the cultural importance of the widespread use of English in the Benelux countries. What is the relationship between participation in the global economy and competence in English?

Compare the affinities of the Flemish with the Netherlands and the Walloons with France.

### **Suggested Reading**

Reinder P. MEIJER. *Literature of the Low Countries*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes, 1978.

Els WITTE and Harry van VELTHOVEN. *Language and Politics: The situation in Belgium in an historical perspective*. Brussels: VUB University Press, 1999.

## **ETHNICITY and POPULATION**

The notions about the ethnic composition of the peoples of the Low Countries received over generations in school textbooks and repeated in popular, scholarly, and official publications pointed to the Germanic origins of the population of the Netherlands and Flanders. The former stemmed from the indigenous Batavians and Frisians, the Flemish from the Salian Franks who entered the region in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The French-speaking Walloons were recognized as being descended from the Romano-Celts of Belgica who were not displaced by Germanic folk or assimilated by them. Luxembourgers traced their roots to a mixed Celtic and Germanic ancestry. As far as it goes, the received wisdom on ethnic origins is correct, but it does not describe accurately the evolution of ethnic identity over centuries or the increasingly diverse ethnic composition of population in the region at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In Belgium, language determines ethnicity. Some “Flemish” family names are, in fact, French in origin, and many “Walloon” family names are clearly Flemish. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, for example, large numbers of Dutch-speaking workers from Flanders took industrial jobs in Wallonia, where the only language used on the job or in the street was French. Instruction in the schools attended by the children of these regional migrants was only available in French. By the next generation, the families of those workers were Walloons. Likewise, in the Netherlands, to be Dutch is to be a Dutch speaker and to conform to Dutch social values and cultural norms.

In a sense, the Low Countries have always been “countries of immigration.” Already in the Middle Ages, the region was a magnet for merchants and mechanics from Germany,

England, Italy, and elsewhere attracted by opportunities offered in trade and industry. In later centuries, the northern Netherlands provided safe refuge for religious dissidents and exiles – German and English sectaries (including the Plymouth Pilgrims), French Huguenots (many of whom were, in fact, Walloons), and Sephardic Jews from Spain and Portugal and, later, German Jews, most of whom blended into the “Dutch” population.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, numbers of workers came from Poland and southern Europe to find employment in Belgium’s burgeoning industrial sector and many stayed to become Belgians. The names of some well-established Luxembourgish families are Italian, Spanish, or Portuguese in origin.

The Netherlands accepted large infusions of former colonial subjects from Indonesia and Surinam. When the latter achieved independence in 1969, nearly half of the Surinamese people took the option of retaining their Dutch citizenship and passports, and several hundred thousand “returned home” to the Netherlands. The Surinamese are Dutch-speaking and have integrated successfully into Dutch society. Christian Moluccans formed the base of the Dutch army in the East Indies and fought loyally alongside Dutch troops during the Indonesian insurgency against restored Dutch colonial rule following World War II. Tens of thousands of Moluccans fled to the Netherlands after Indonesian independence in 1949. Although they are Dutch-speaking and accustomed to generations of service under the Dutch, many have found it impossible to assimilate. Now, in the third and fourth generation in the Netherlands, some refuse to accept their “exile” as permanent and continue to agitate for an independent state in their home islands. By contrast, there has been no significant migration to Belgium from former African colonies. Those relatively few Africans who have settled in Belgium come mainly from professional backgrounds.

In the decades since the 1960s, increasingly large numbers of non-European immigrants arrived in the Low Countries from North Africa, South Asia, and Turkey and elsewhere the Middle East. Many came initially as guest workers to supply much needed semi-skilled industrial and unskilled menial and service labor during a period of rapid economic expansion, but remained as permanent residents. Others benefited, especially in the Netherlands, from liberal family-reunion and asylum laws. Immigrants and their descendants make up more than 10% of the country’s population. Many have taken advantage of employment and education opportunities to become productive members of society, even when they have been reluctant to assimilate culturally.

With the introduction of freedom of movement of people across the EU, aliens from these same regions have taken advantage of porous national frontiers to enter the Low Countries and to settle there illegally, some in search of better living conditions through employment and others, according to some Dutch and Belgian observers, to gain access to the benefits of liberal social welfare programs. The situation was deemed sufficiently critical for Belgium to withdraw temporarily from the Schengen Agreement in 2001 in order to halt the inflow of aliens while authorities sought out and expelled those who had already entered the country illegally. Responsible Dutch and Belgian authorities as well as populist politicians remark on the high incidence of crime among this population; self-imposed isolation in “ghettos,” as evidenced by an absence of effort to learn the language of the host country; and the retention

of social customs, particularly regarding women, that are at variance with the norms of the host countries. The late Pim Fortuyn achieved wide support for his allegations during the 2002 election campaign in the Netherlands that aliens, particularly Muslims, posed a threat to liberal Dutch social and cultural values and were a drain on resources supporting the social welfare system. Legislation was subsequently proposed in the Netherlands that imposed restrictions on asylum rights and limits on further immigration. It also mandated compulsory courses in Dutch language and culture for applicants for permanent residence.

Belgium and the Netherlands, whose populations grew rapidly in the immediate post-war era, have birthrates well below replacement level. Maintenance of current population levels, not to mention population growth, comes from immigration and the offspring of immigrants. Luxembourg, by contrast, has one of the two highest birthrates among EU countries. With its impressive economic growth, open borders, and a multi-lingual environment, Luxembourg has become home to many from neighboring EU countries. About 90,000 people commute every day from France, Germany, and Belgium to jobs in tiny and accessible Luxembourg. Nearly 30% of permanent residents, about 125,000 people, are foreigners. Some observers predict that the grand duchy's population will double by mid-century. Steady population growth is seen as necessary to pay for the social welfare system and to fund pensions.

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp, and Brussels, the "capital of Europe," are cosmopolitan and highly internationalized cities. Non-European migrants comprise an estimated one-third of the population of Rotterdam and one-fifth of those living in Antwerp. This has caused a backlash in the voting population of these cities. Pim Fortuyn's political party won one-third of the votes in local and general elections in Rotterdam in 2002, and the right-wing nationalist Flemish Bloc carried a quarter of the votes in Antwerp.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Discuss the concept of "national identity" as it applies to small, open countries like Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

In the past, what have been the most important factors in integrating migrants into society in those countries?

Suggest and discuss scenarios relating to the impact of non-European immigration on "national identity" in the Low Countries.

Predict possible political solutions or reactions to problem posed by non-European immigration.

Is there a contradiction between assertions that immigrants are a burden on the social welfare system and the contention that population growth is required to sustain funding for the system?

## Suggested Reading

Allison BLAKELY, *Blacks in the Dutch World*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University press, 1993.

John GEIPEL. *The Europeans*. New York: Pegasus, 1968.

## RELIGION

Belgians and Luxembourgers traditionally identified themselves as either formally Catholic or as *laique* (i.e., secular, non-religious, and often anti-clerical). The Netherlands, by contrast, was historically a predominantly Protestant country, but one that had a large Catholic minority that constituted a majority in some parts of the country. Since the 1960s, these categories of religious practice and non-practice, by which one could even determine voting patterns, are of greatly diminished importance.

Belgium and Luxembourg were overwhelmingly Catholic countries, but, within Belgium, Flanders was the more Catholic region, Wallonia the more secular. To be *laique* in Belgium is not simply to be secular but to belong to a “*spiritual family*” that might be either liberal (meaning laissez-faire conservative) or socialist. In 1960, at least 80% of the Belgian people were baptized Catholics. Sixty percent attended Mass regularly in Flanders, 40% in Wallonia. There were not more than 50,000 active Protestants in Belgium, a number sustained 40 years later by Protestants from elsewhere in Europe working in Brussels. In Luxembourg, 97% were baptized Catholics.

Estimates from the same period showed that the Netherlands was 45% Protestant, 35% Catholic (and growing), and 20% unaffiliated with any religious group. About 75% of Protestants belonged to the official Netherlands Reformed Church (*Nederlands Hervormde Kerk*), Calvinist in doctrine but meant to be inclusive of the largest possible segment of the Protestant community. Most of the rest of Dutch Protestants adhered to more self-consciously orthodox Calvinist communions, whose doctrines were more demanding and restrictive. The largest of these groups was the Reformed Church (*De Gereformeerde Kerken*), to which about 10% of the Dutch people adhered. There were also small Lutheran and Mennonite communities. Catholics in the Netherlands were subject to political and social discrimination until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Catholic Church, as represented by its hierarchy, was, in response, both reactive and insular-- determined to organize every aspect of the daily life of Catholics in order to maximize their power and protect them from discrimination. But there co-existed a liberal dimension to Catholic thinking and practice that manifested itself during the Second Vatican Council and became pervasive within Dutch Catholicism in the 1960s.

Defense of religious identity and community in the Netherlands -- and defense of religion and language identity in Belgium -- led in each country to the creation of what is known as the pillar system, or *pillarization* (Dutch, *verzuilen*). Members of each religious and language group formed their own schools, hospitals, labor unions, newspapers, radio and television programming groups, recreational associations, and so forth. The religious and language communities of the Netherlands and Belgium lived apart, though they generally lived peaceably. Political parties were each closely tied to one of the pillars; their role was to champion the interests of the group in governmental circles. The Dutch and Belgian governments have responded by funding all religious schools, hospitals and other institutions on a proportional basis.

Over the last forty years, the Low Countries have become progressively de-Christianized. Attendance at religious services has declined sharply, in most cases by more half from the figures cited in the early 1960s. The reduction of religious sentiment has diminished popular identification with the pillars. In Belgium, devolution of authority to regional government has also reduced the need for pillarized politics at the federal level.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Discuss the relationship between religious affiliation and “identity,” and between religion and political preferences.

Has state recognition of church-based activities had a positive or adverse affect on religious tolerance in the Low Countries?

Does state recognition compromise the independence and integrity of the churches? In the Netherlands, has it compromised or encouraged national cohesion? Explain.

How has the development of Dutch and Belgian pillars facilitated the absorption of new groups in society?

### **Suggested Reading**

Gerard DEKKER and Jan PETERS, “Religion and the Vitality of the Netherlands” in *The Vitality of the Netherlands*, Armand Clesse and Herman van Gundteren, eds. Luxembourg: Institute for European and International Studies, 1999, 63-72.

Jenny MASUR, “The Society and Its Environment” in *Foreign Area Studies, Belgium: A Country Study*. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1985, 100-106.

Thomas ROCHON. *The Netherlands: Negotiating Sovereignty in an Interdependent World*.  
Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999, chapter 3.

## GEOGRAPHY

The Low Countries are drained by three river systems: the Rhine, the Meuse (Maas), and the Scheldt. The three rivers form a delta in the southern Netherlands and northern Flanders, from which their estuaries empty into the North Sea. The Lek and the Waal divide from the Lower Rhine between Arnhem and Nijmegen, and flow to the sea, the former to the north and the latter to the south. Another Rhine tributary, the IJssel, leaves the Lek at Arnhem, winding north to the IJsselmeer. The Meuse, which rises in the Longres Plateau in France, flows parallel to the Waal to the north for 80 miles on the way to the sea. The Scheldt and its numerous tributaries drain the Central Plateau. Formerly, the western and eastern branches of the Scheldt's estuary bracketed the large island of Walcheren, now attached to the mainland by an isthmus.

The fact that many of Europe's great rivers drain to the sea through the Low Countries has created both opportunity (trade) and threat (flooding). Most of the Dutch provinces of North and South Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland, parts of North Brabant and Groningen, and all of Flevoland lie below sea level. Sixty percent of the population lives on land that would be submerged during high tides (not to mention seasonal flooding) if nature were allowed to rule.

A long history of catastrophic floods has created an unparalleled expertise in the Low Countries in "water engineering," including flood control dikes and the reclamation of land by draining water. From the year 1200 to the present, the Dutch have added 20 percent to the area of their country (7,000 square kilometers). Just over one third of that amount was created in the Lake IJssel project -- a vast reclamation project that turned the Zuider Zee into a fresh water lake (the IJsselmeer), and created a new province (Flevoland). Even the largest Dutch cities, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, exist by virtue of Dutch water engineering. Rotterdam, the world's busiest cargo port, would not even have access to the North Sea were it not for the Rotterdam Waterway. Amsterdam, once called "the Venice of the North" is built on marshland. The city's buildings are supported by wooden piles driven thirteen to sixty feet into the ground.

In Belgium, the Central Plateau rises gently from the Flanders Plain to elevations of up to 700 feet in Hainault and Brabant. The region is drained by the Scheldt and its several tributaries. In the watershed between the Scheldt and the Meuse, the lower Kempenland Plateau is heathland containing the coal basin that was a principal source of Belgium's prosperity. South Limburg slopes to the south and east and is cut by alluvial valleys. The Meuse-Sambre Valley stretches for more than 100 miles along the southern edge of the Central Plateau in Belgium. It varies in width from three to 10 miles, an area in which about a quarter of Belgium's population lives.

The Ardennes lies south of the valley, an undulating sandstone and limestone plateau cut by deep winding valleys formed by small rivers that flow westwards to the Meuse. Summits reach up to 2000 feet. Half the upland area is heavily wooded by oak and beech, the valleys



marked by peat bogs and heathlands. The Ardennes extends eastward to the Grand Duchy and the Belgian province of Luxembourg.

A line of ironstone hills that have a mean altitude of about 1000 feet crosses the southern two-thirds of the province and grand duchy. Known as Belgian Lorraine in the former and Bon-Pays or Gutland in the latter, the area provides lush pastureland in small river valleys and beech woods on the hillsides.

Coastal and inland plain areas of Belgium and the Netherlands have a typical maritime climate, damp, cool, and frequently overcast. Climatic conditions in the interior and upland regions in the south are transitional between maritime and continental norms. Mean average rainfall in the several geographical regions of the Low Countries ranges between 25 and 32 inches.

The Low Countries have a high population density which is especially concentrated in several urban areas and conurbations. Throughout the region, however, there is a clear demarcation between urban and rural environments. The *Randstad*, or “Ring City,” is a vast conurbation, including Amsterdam and The Hague, that houses nearly 40% of the Dutch population. The area is at a maximum 30 miles in width and stretches 110 miles from Dordrecht to Haarlem, virtually the entire length of North and South Holland. The Randstad is polycentric and built-up areas are interspersed with extensive green spaces that allow the conurbation to “breathe.”

### **Questions/Discussion**

Based on its geography, justify the use of the term “Low Countries” to describe the region.

In what ways has geography influenced the political and economic ties of the Low Countries with neighboring countries in Europe and overseas?

Explain the importance of the polders.

### **Suggested Reading**

Aubrey DIEM. *Western Europe: A Geographical Analysis*. New York: Wiley, 1979.

Peter HALL. *The World Cities*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

## FLAGS

The original colors of the Netherlands were horizontal stripes of orange-white-blue derived from the arms of the Prince of Orange. Because the orange stripe surmounting the white stripe was prone to fade and could not be easily recognized at a distance at sea, red replaced orange on the upper stripe on the Dutch maritime ensign already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The red-white-blue combination was eventually adopted on the national flag, probably at the insistence of the republican opposition to the House of Orange in the Estates-General. The horizontal tricolor of Luxembourg is almost identical to that of the Netherlands, from which it is derived, except for the length of the fly being longer and the shade of blue somewhat lighter.

The national flag of Belgium is a tricolor composed of vertical stripes of black-gold-red in the format of the French *tricolore*. The colors are those of the Duchy of Brabant adopted as the emblem of the 1830 revolution.

The royal and grand-ducal families fly personal standards, which in the Netherlands and Luxembourg retain the color orange from the arms of their ruling families. Each province and most cities and towns in Belgium and the Netherlands have distinctive flags, some of which have colors and design of great antiquity. The flags of Flanders (sable “Lion of Flanders” on a gold field), Wallonia (red “Cock of Wallonia” on a gold field), Brussels (blue iris on a white field), and the German-speaking community (lion and blue florettes on a white field) are displayed in their respective regions alongside or sometimes in place of the national flag. The EU flag is commonly flown on public buildings in all three countries.

### Question

What do national symbols, such as flags, contribute to an understanding of the history of the Low Countries?

### Suggested Reading

E.M.C. BARRACLOUGH, ed. *Flags of the World*. London and New York: Frederick Warne, 1969.

## EUROPEAN UNION

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were signatories of the treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first of the European “communities,” in 1952, together with France, Germany, and Italy. The same six nations were charter members of the European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market, created by the Treaty of Rome in 1957, and of the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) that came into force in 1958. Collectively, these institutions, headquartered in Brussels, were the European Community (EC), which evolved into the European Union (EU). The Benelux Treaty (1960) anticipated subsequent developments in the EU toward “ever closer union.”

The Treaty of European Union, usually referred to as the Maastricht Treaty, was formulated while the Netherlands held the rotating presidency of the Council of Ministers, responsible for proposing and implementing the EC’s agenda. The treaty, adopted in 1992, would provide a framework for achieving a common foreign and security policy as well as cooperation in home affairs. It also completed the “common market” and endorsed monetary union and adoption of a common currency.

The Maastricht Treaty viewed European union in terms of three “pillars.” The first pillar referred to the institutional structures of the EU and set criteria for monetary union. The second pillar embodied the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the third pillar covered justice and police issues, including immigration, asylum, and the movement of people across national borders. The Schengen Agreement, named for the town in Luxembourg where it was signed, sought to harmonize national implementations of third-pillar objectives. National passports are also recognized as EU passports, and EU citizens enjoy freedom of movement across the borders of member countries. The first pillar deals with areas of exclusive EU competency, while the second and third pillars cover areas that are essentially intergovernmental and are negotiable among member countries. Belgium, for example, withdrew temporarily from the Schengen Agreement for a three-month period in 2001, effectively closing its borders during that period to migrants and asylum seekers not authorized by the Belgian government in order to identify aliens residing illegally in the country.

Citizens of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg are also citizens of the EU, sharing rights guaranteed to nationals of other member countries. EU citizenship does not preempt responsibilities imposed by member countries on their citizens.

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg participate in the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) that provides for a common monetary policy supervised by the European Central Bank (ECB), based in Frankfurt. The three countries adopted the common currency, the *euro*, together with nine other EU members, effective January 1, 1999 with euro notes and coins introduced in 2002.

## PARTICIPATION IN EU INSTITUTIONS

Polls over several decades have indicated overwhelming approval by citizens of the Benelux countries for closer European integration. Brussels is the administrative “capital” of the EU, and other EU institutions and agencies are located in Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Within the EU, the Benelux countries were staunch advocates of monetary union and have supported EU enlargement, social harmonization, and democratization of decision making.

Benelux heads of government and government ministers represent their respective national policies and exercise executive authority for the EU on the Council of Ministers and the European Council. Since the last EU enlargement in 1993, each of the three holds the rotating six-month presidency of the council once every seven and a half years. Belgium, the last Benelux incumbent, held the presidency during the second half of 2001. The Netherlands is scheduled for its next presidency in 2004, Luxembourg in 2005. Luxembourg’s prime minister Jean-Claude Juncker is on record contending that the presidencies of smaller countries are more focused and efficient than those of larger countries. Reservations run deep in the grand duchy about mooted reforms to the rotating presidencies that might deprive Luxembourg of its next scheduled presidency.

Votes cast by governments of EU-member countries represented on the Council of Ministers total 87 and are apportioned according to population. The Netherlands, which has just over 4% of the EU’s population, and Belgium, which has just under 3%, are both allotted 5 votes. Luxembourg, with one-tenth of one percent of the total, casts two votes, approximately ten-times the voting strength per capita of Germany. The support of smaller EU members, including the Benelux countries, is generally needed for a qualified majority of 62 votes on issues not requiring unanimity. As a consequence of further devolution of Belgian state authority, Flanders and Wallonia rather than the national government represent the interests of their regions on the council. Both are active in the EU’s Committee of Regions, Assembly of European Regions, of which they are founding members.

Each Benelux country appoints one commissioner to the 20-member European Commission, the administrative body of the EU. Tiny Luxembourg has supplied two presidents of the commission, nominated by heads of government sitting as the European Council. Approximately 15,000 European civil servants work out of offices in Brussels and Luxembourg to administer EU agencies under the direction of the commission. The European Court of Justice, the EU’s highest legal authority, is based in Luxembourg, as is the European Investment Bank, the EU’s concessionary infrastructure-financing arm.

Although the European Parliament (EP) holds plenary sessions in Strasbourg, its secretariat is headquartered in Luxembourg, while parliamentary committees meet in Brussels. The current EP, elected for a five-year term in 1999, seats 626 delegates elected from the 15 EU-member countries. Although nationally elected representatives to the EP normally campaign

on domestic rather than “European” issues, they sit in multinational parliamentary party groups, not in national delegations. Thirty-one representatives are elected from the Netherlands, 25 from Belgium, and six from Luxembourg.

The Amsterdam Treaty, concluded during the 1997 Dutch presidency, gave the EP responsibility for holding confirmation hearings for commissioners and, by a vote of two-thirds majority, the power to force the resignation of an individual commissioner or the entire European Commission. In 1999, the commission and its president, former Luxembourg prime minister Jacques Santer, was compelled to resign following an investigation of charges of fraud, mismanagement, and cronyism.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Explain the importance of European integration to smaller countries, including the “Benelux Three.”

Discuss the special position of these countries in EU institutions.

What are some of the advantages and potential disadvantages of EU enlargement for the Benelux countries?

### **Suggested Reading**

Desmond DINAN. *Ever Closer Union*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

Eleanor ZEFF and Ellen PIRRO (eds). The European Union and the Member States: Cooperation, Coordination, and Compromise. Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001. See chapter 4, “Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg: Diversity Among the Benelux Countries,” by Jan Beyers; Bart Kerremans and Peter Bursens.

## FOREIGN POLICY

There is no “Benelux” foreign policy, despite consultations among the governments of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Each of the three countries concentrates on agreements made in a European context, but each conducts its own discreet foreign policy that shares common commitments to the UN, NATO, and principles of international law. Each country focuses increasingly on alignment with the foreign and security policy dimensions of the EU and limits unilateral initiatives. Arms control and especially the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are high priority considerations.

The three countries have different perceptions of their roles in international affairs, conditioned by geography, wealth, and history. While the Dutch consider the Netherlands a “medium”-sized country (as Swedes, for example, consider Sweden), Belgians unassumingly refer to Belgium as a “small” country (much as Danes do Denmark). Luxembourg’s tremendous economic clout locates that country on a level above mini-state status. Both Belgium and the Netherlands were colonial powers until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and the latter was also a great maritime power whose involvement in Asia, Africa, and the Americas dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Foreign relations of the three export-oriented countries have traditionally been influenced by economic considerations.

For good reason, Belgium was called the “cockpit of Europe.” For centuries, it was the frontier between France and Germany and the real estate over which dominant powers fought for strategic advantage. Belgian and Luxembourg neutrality was violated by Germany in World War I, though the Dutch successfully remained out of the war. All three countries were occupied during World War II, and all three definitively abandoned neutrality after the war. As small- and medium-sized powers, they each emphasize multilateral approaches to the solution of international problems.

As a matter of principle, Belgium intervenes internationally only when it has something concrete and constructive to offer. An example of one such initiative was the report generated by then-foreign minister Pierre Harmel in 1966 recommending increased political consultation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact over tactical missile deployment in Europe. The Harmel Report is considered to have been an important element in the process of *détente* during that period. Belgian initiatives under the direction of Foreign Minister Louis Michel often emphasize ethical considerations, human rights, and greater reliance on international law in the formulation of foreign policy. Belgium asserts the principle of the “universal jurisdiction” of Belgian courts in cases involving war crimes and human rights violations.

Federal Belgium’s regions and communities have played a constitutional role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy since the state reform of 1993. They have full competence in foreign relations in those fields for which they have domestic responsibility.

Dutch foreign policy has been consistently interventionist and has involved itself in a greater range of issues outside Europe. In the words of Joris Voorhoeve, Dutch foreign policy is based on overlapping considerations of “peace, profits, and principles,” with no one consideration ever excluding the others. The main elements affecting those considerations have been national security, regional integration, open markets, and support for overseas development and human rights. The Netherlands has been for many years one of the most generous per capita contributors to technical assistance and development aid. The Netherlands supports the imposition of internationally recognized legal norms. Appropriately, The Hague is the site of the World Court as well as the more recently established International Criminal Court (ICC).

### **Questions/Discussion**

Why is multilateralism the core principle of foreign policy for all three Benelux countries?

In what ways have political and economic considerations been complementary in the formulation of Dutch and Belgian foreign policies?

Discuss differences between the foreign policy orientations of Belgium and the Netherlands, and explain the reasons for them.

To what degree have the “Benelux Three” surrendered control of foreign policy to the EU?

### **Suggested Reading**

Jonathan E. HELMREICH. *Belgium and Europe: A Study in Small Power Diplomacy*. The Hague: Mouton, 1976.

Joris J.C. VOORHOEVE. *Peace, Profits, and Principles: A Study of Dutch Foreign Policy*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979.

## **NATIONAL and REGIONAL SECURITY**

The national security of the three Benelux countries is firmly rooted in NATO, of which they are founding members, and in its Atlantic dimension, which they regard as remaining essential to European security. NATO is headquartered in Brussels, and the Supreme Headquarters for Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is based in nearby Mons. Headquarters for Allied Forces Northern Europe is located in the Netherlands.

The EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC), on which representatives of the Benelux countries participate, coordinates the common policy of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in consultation with NATO. Harmonization of EU and NATO planning and deployments is considered indispensable by the three countries, which reject any suggestion of a EU force operating independently of NATO. Regular 23-country meetings are conducted at all levels between NATO, which includes six non-EU members in its Euro-Group, and the EU, which includes four non-NATO members.

Since 2000, the EU's interim military staff and NATO have shared in-house expertise. In practice, however, the former is a secretariat, not a command staff, and it does not conduct operational-level military planning. There is no separate EU planning capability outside NATO's established planning structures.

The European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) was proposed at the Helsinki Summit in December 2000 with the stated aim of mobilizing 60,000 personnel from EU member countries to carry out the so-called Petersburg Tasks, including humanitarian assistance, rescue missions, disaster relief, conflict prevention, and peacekeeping missions. The Netherlands has pledged 4500 troops to the notional ERRF, Belgium about 1000.

While actively engaged on the PSC, the Benelux countries rejected creation of an EU military force independent of NATO. In 2002, however, the Belgian prime minister called for a radical rethinking of the EU's defense policy. Guy Verhofstadt proposed consideration of ESDP as a collective alliance independent of NATO. He argued in a letter to EU heads of government that NATO was becoming an American "tool box" for building coalitions in the war on terrorism and in April 2003, in reaction to the U.S. military intervention in Iraq, which it did not support, the government hosted a meeting with the heads of government with Luxembourg, France and Germany to explore further a separate EU military force

That said, total defense spending among the EU-15 decreased by 15% to under \$150 billion in the five-year period 1997-2001. ERRF lacks independent compatible information technology, access to intelligence, logistical support, and lift capacity. No common regional security concept has been agreed on by EU members.



## BELGIUM

Belgium abandoned conscription in the 1990s in favor of professional volunteer armed forces. Prior to the end of eight-month national service, conscripts comprised only one-third of active duty forces, but they provided the bulk of a large reserve force designed to fill out unit cadres. Active duty force levels have been cut by half since the abolition of conscription, reserves by 40%.

### Belgian Armed Forces, 2002

Active: 37,600

Army: 26,400

Navy: 2600

Air Force: 8600

Reserves: 100,500

Including 72,000 army reservists and 15,500 medical personnel

Defense budget (2001): \$2.2 billion

The armed forces is one of Belgium's few remaining *national* institutions.

The Belgian army is capable of deploying one mechanized infantry division composed of three brigades, each deploying one armored battalion, equipped with *Leopard* MBTs, and two mechanized infantry battalions backed by assault helicopters. Two brigades are kept at 70% strength to be reinforced by reserves, one at 50% strength. One brigade is stationed in Germany. Elite troops, including those in airborne and commando units, are highly rated for their training and effectiveness.

The navy is trained and equipped for coastal and North Sea missions under joint command with the Dutch navy. Components include three ASW frigates, 11 fast attack craft equipped with Exocet SSMs, and minesweepers.

The air force's inventory of combat aircraft consists of 72 F-16s organized in six squadrons. Flying hours available for Belgian pilots are below the NATO norm. Transport capacity is limited.

Belgium contributed a battalion-level unit to SFOR-II in Bosnia and UN observer teams in Kashmir, Western Sahara, and with KFOR in Kosovo.

Implementation began in 2002 of a plan for the gradual restructuring of the armed forces, to be completed by 2015. The plan is based on the premise that it is unlikely the armed forces will be mobilized at full strength in any potential future conflict. (See "Mission of the Armed Forces.") "Rationalization" is the keyword in the plan, which envisions Belgian components of not more than 5000 personnel and assets deployed as part of a broad coalition in crisis-management scenarios. The armed forces would be reduced by 10% to under 40,000

personnel integrated, together with a medical corps, under a single unified command. Some activities would be outsourced to the civilian sector.

## The NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands also moved to an all-volunteer force in the 1990s, reducing the size of personnel in the armed forces by half after the end of the Cold War. As in Belgium, conscripts, who normally accounted for nearly half the active force, were trained in periods of 14-17 months to provide a standing reserve of more than 150,000 available to complete units maintained by regular cadre. The army continues to rely on a small reserve component to reinforce cadre in combat and support units.

### Dutch Armed Forces, 2002

Active: 50,430

Army: 23,100

Navy: 12,130

Air Force: 10,000

Constabulary: 5200

Reserves: 32,200, including 22,000 army reservists.

Defense budget (2001): \$5.6 billion

In wartime, the Dutch army is capable of fielding one mechanized infantry division, equipped with *Leopard* MBTs, several hundred APCs, and self-propelled artillery. Combat ready units include 12 tank, armored infantry, and air-mobile battalions, supported by six artillery battalions. Two battalions are stationed in Germany. The army is backed up by territorial units from a lightly-armed Home Guard.

The Netherlands has a proud and strong naval tradition. Combat assets include two destroyers and 12 smaller frigates, armed with *Harpoon* SSMs, plus four submarines and anti-mine warfare vessels. The naval aviation branch flies ASW and reconnaissance patrol aircraft and ship-based helicopters, and a single naval patrol plane is regularly on duty with NATO in Iceland. A corps of 3100 marine infantry is organized in three battalions, one of which is integrated with the Royal Marines in a joint UK/Netherlands amphibious landing force. The Dutch navy operates under joint command with the Belgian navy with headquarters at Den Helder. Units are also periodically assigned to the base at Willemstad in Curaçao. Coast Guard craft combat smugglers and attempt to interdict drug traffic in the waters of the Netherlands Antilles.

The air force has at its disposal 108 F-16s, deployed in nine squadrons, as well as efficient reconnaissance and limited transport capability. The Netherlands intends to participate in the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft program. Flying hours for Dutch pilots are in line with the NATO norm.

The Royal Constabulary (*Koninklijke Marechaussee*) is a paramilitary police corps numbering 5200 personnel and responsible for providing internal security, criminal investigation, border

and passport control, highway patrol, transportation (including airport) security, and armed crisis intervention. Officers of the *Marechaussee* are highly respected and have a reputation for being “tough” in the execution of their duties.

The Netherlands retained a mechanized infantry battalion under UN command as part of SFOR II in Bosnia following the tragedy involving Dutch peacekeepers at Srebrenica. Dutch observers served in Ethiopia/Eritrea and others were assigned to KFOR in Kosovo. A joint Dutch-German command was prepared to take charge of the international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan at the end of 2002.

## **LUXEMBOURG**

Luxembourg’s armed forces consists of 900 personnel organized in an infantry battalion and two reconnaissance companies. One company is normally assigned to the Belgian mechanized infantry division. A small number serve abroad under UN command as observers with SFOR II and KFOR.

For legal purposes, NATO’s 17 E-3A early-warning aircraft (AEWs) are registered to Luxembourg and bear Luxembourg roundrels for identification. Luxembourg personnel were assigned to the flight and maintenance crews of the five AEWs taking part in Operation Deliberate Forge.

## **MISSION of the ARMED FORCES**

Belgian and Dutch armies, operating under NATO command, were equipped and configured to defend assigned forward areas in Germany. Mechanized divisions were trained to fight in conventional and nuclear environments. Although active and reserve forces were drastically downsized in the 1990s, combat units are still largely composed of “heavy metal” components intended to counter threats envisioned during the Cold War. The mission of the armed forces of the Benelux countries, like those of other NATO countries, has not been clearly redefined. Nor is there a commonly agreed upon assessment of threats to national and regional security. While retaining a capability for territorial defense under NATO command, Belgian and Dutch armed forces are being reconfigured gradually to meet the long-range demands of peacekeeping and crisis intervention outlined in the Petersburg Tasks.

## **DEFENSE SPENDING and PROCUREMENT**

Belgium and the Netherlands drastically reduced defense expenditures in the 1990s. Belgian spending was cut by one-third in the five-year period 1997-2001 to a total of \$2.2 billion, the lowest per capita expenditure in NATO after Poland and Luxembourg. The Netherlands’

outlay for defense was more than double that of Belgium in 2001 (\$5.6 billion) but had still dropped by 25% from the 1997 level.

Belgium has an important arms industry built around *Fabrique Nationale* (FN) of Liege. The FN 7.62 automatic rifle is standard NATO issue. Although a less aggressive exporter than in earlier decades, FN remains a major supplier of small arms throughout the world. The Dutch produce avionics and have naval shipbuilding and repair facilities. Funds available for R&D, however, are virtually nil in Belgium in 2001 and are declining in the Netherlands.

The level of equipment procurement by Belgian and Dutch armed forces is constant, but the latter was spending nearly five times as much on acquisitions in 2001 than the former. F-16s in the Belgian and Dutch air forces are undergoing extensive “mid-life” up-grades. The Netherlands has tentatively agreed to re-equip with the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF).

### **Questions/Discussion**

What is NATO’s primary mission in the post-Cold War era? Are there important secondary missions?

Discuss areas of cooperation and possible contradictions in missions assumed by NATO and those proposed for an EU security force.

What roles are the Benelux countries best able to perform within NATO and ERRF?

### **Suggested Reading**

The International Institute for Strategic Studies. *The Military Balance 2001-2002* and *Strategic Survey 2001-2002*. London: IISS, 2002.

Thomas ROCHON. *The Netherlands*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999, chapter 8.

## HISTORY

Although the region is relatively small (about the size of West Virginia), the history of the Low Countries looms large in world and European history. Both Belgium and the Netherlands were colonial powers. The Netherlands was for a century the world's most important maritime power, and Belgium was one of the homes of the Industrial Revolution. The influence of the Low Countries on the world economy is far greater than their size might indicate.

Historical issues in the Low Countries are invariably European issues, and, over the centuries, many decisive conflicts in European history have been resolved on their soil – in modern history from Waterloo to the Battle of the Bulge. The region, once part of the “Middle Kingdom,” was a meeting place of Celtic and Germanic peoples, of Roman order and barbarian hordes, and a buffer between France and Germany, aptly called the “cockpit of Europe.”

The Low Countries shared a common history until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but, as Johan Huizinga, the distinguished Dutch historian, demonstrated, the line of historical continuity was broken during the years of the Dutch Revolt and could not be restored. What remains, however, are the separate and vibrant national histories of three countries.

### **Celt, Roman, and German**

"All Gaul," Caesar observed, "is divided in three parts -- *Gallia, Acquitania, et Belgica*." The province of Belgica remained an integral part of the Roman Empire for 500 years, during which time the Celtic tribes that lived there, the Belgii, became thoroughly Romanized – Asterix notwithstanding! The empire's frontier was eventually planted farther east along the Rhine in *Germania Inferior*, a province inhabited by the Batavians. The region was connected to the rest of the Roman Empire by a system of roads not surpassed in Europe until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, functioned under a common legal code, and used a common language, Latin. Towns were founded that enjoyed the amenities of Roman urban life.

Germanic tribes began applying pressure on the frontier already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. When Roman troops evacuated the province in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, the vacuum was filled by the Franks, Germanic allies of Rome whose chieftains exercised commissions from the emperor to defend the region against their cousins, the Frisians and the Saxons. Their warlords became a ruling class on Roman territory. In 496, Clovis, king of the Franks, converted to Catholicism and was followed in that by his folk. Clovis also established the *Merovingian* dynasty of Frankish kings that in time won over most of what had been Roman Gaul and would become the Frankish lands, or France.

## The Carolingians

Succeeding generations of Merovingian kings ruled over several kingdoms. One of them, *Austrasia* (the “eastern lands”) was co-extensive with much of the present-day Benelux countries. The kings appointed officials, called “mayors of the palace,” an office usually hereditary, to administer the kingdoms in their stead. By the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, Pepin Herstal, had collected mayoralties of the Merovingian kingdoms under his control. His son, Charles Martel, who defeated the invading Arabs at Tours in 732, left his name to the dynasty – the *Carolingians*, and Charles Martel’s son Pepin III deposed the last of the Merovingian kings, a puppet whose family, always brutal, had become decadent as well. Pepin was recognized with papal approval as king of the Franks.

Pepin’s heir, Charles, known as Charles the Great or *Charlemagne*, transformed the Frankish kingdom into a European empire. Charlemagne, who kept court in the old Roman towns at Nijmegen and Aachen in Austrasia, defeated the Frisians, conquered the Saxons, and extended Carolingian dominion across Germany. On Christmas Eve 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne in Rome as emperor in succession to the western Roman emperors as a reward for subduing the Lombards in Italy.

Having built a large empire, the Carolingians fell back on the Frankish custom of sharing family property among legitimate sons. In 843, in the Treaty of Verdun, the Carolingian Empire was divided among Charlemagne’s three grandsons into three separate kingdoms – a West Frankish kingdom in what would become France, an East Frankish kingdom in Germany, and the “Middle Kingdom,” left to the eldest, Lothair. *Lotharingia*, as the kingdom was called, included Austrasia, the Carolingian heartland, as well as Burgundy, Provence, the upper Rhineland, and northern Italy, a rich but ungainly piece of real estate lacking in natural frontiers. In the Verdun treaty is found the remote political origins of France and Germany -- and the end of the political unity of western Christendom.

On Lothair’s death in 855, the “Middle Kingdom” was divided three ways. Louis the Fat, the German king, took Italy and the imperial title; Charles the Bald, the French king, annexed Provence; and the dead king’s son, Lothair II, kept the Low Countries and Alsace-Lorraine. And, when the younger Lothair died in 870, his uncles met at Mersen to split what had remained of Lotharingia between them. In doing so, they drew a line through the Low Countries and through western Europe over which their immediate descendants began fighting and over which their successors continued to fight – until 1945.

## The Middle Ages

In order to supply and maintain a ready force of mounted warriors, the Franks had, in the 8th century, introduced the practice of *vassalage* by which a warrior commended his service to a warlord in return for which the lord gave his vassal the use of property for his support in the field. This was a social and political relationship. The property involved in the arrangement was a *feudum*, hence, “feudalism.” In time, possession of property implied a vassal’s obligation to fight at the behest of his lord. The economic system that provided the wealth to

support the military obligation was *manorialism*, derived from a pre-existing Roman model, in which manors held in feudal tenure were worked, as the system developed, by peasants bound to the land in premedial serfdom. Manorialism remained the basis for the agricultural economy in much of the Low Countries into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, long after vassalage and feudalism had passed into history.

Under the Carolingians, feudal states had been established whose lords commended themselves as vassals to the king, who resided at the apex of the feudal pyramid and who, in turn, had vassals and sub-vassals commended to them. Feudal relationships in the Low Countries were complex, giving rise to continuing conflicts of interest. There were, in fact, two overlapping feudal pyramids, one in the south (Flanders and Artois) that had the French king at its apex and the other where the German emperor was suzerain. Beneath them were levels of “great vassals” – dukes, counts, and lords, and, beneath them, baronies, lordships, abbeys, and knightly holdings. There were, in addition, ecclesiastical states, ruled by their bishops as feudal lords.

#### Feudal States in the Low Countries

Duchies	Brabant Gelderland Limburg Luxembourg
Counties	Antwerp Artois Drenthe Flanders Gelderland Hainault Holland Limburg Namur Zeeland
Lordships	Friesland Groningen Overijssel
Ecclesiastical States	Cambrai Liege Utrecht

The feudal ties to the emperor in the northern Netherlands were not as strong as those to the king of France in the south, but even those links weakened and the feudal states were virtually independent of their suzerains after the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The counts of Flanders, for

example, possessed the wealth of kings, married into royal families, and held the title of Latin Emperor in Constantinople in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The ducal house of Luxembourg produced two German emperors and two kings of Hungary in the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The great feudal families also often married among themselves and were joined by kinship. The wars among them, also frequent, had the quality of family feuds.

Duchies and counties were often joined in personal unions, only to split in another generation and form new combinations that may not have been territorially contiguous. Titles were bequeathed, purchased, and usurped, given as dowries and, then, divided among the children of the family. The ruler might wear several crowns, but each state retained its own laws and customs, flag, coins, and legislature.

External trade began to revive along the river systems in the Low Countries in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Merchants and craftsmen congregating at ports, in old Roman towns, and around fortresses promoted the rebirth of urban life in the 11<sup>th</sup> century at, for example, Bruges at the bridge over the Zijn, at Ghent in the shadow of the castle on the Scheldt, near the dikes on the Amstel, and at Ypres, Antwerp, Brussels, Utrecht, Doderecht, and other locations, more, at first, in the south than, later, in the north. Depending on location, trade in the Low Countries was oriented to England or France, up the Rhine to Germany, or to Scandinavia.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the southern Netherlands (along with northern Italy) participated in Europe's first "industrial revolution." Sheep raising on the lowlands of Flanders, Artois, and Brabant provided the wool that fed the looms in the towns in those provinces. When demand for the raw material exceeded domestic supply, the textile industry turned to England for its wool. Towns in the northern Netherlands imported timber and naval stores from the Baltic to build ships for fishing and the carrying trade.

The "estates" – the bishops and clergy and the nobility and, only later, citizens of the towns or *communes* – were represented in the Netherlandish parliaments that met periodically in each province. Each represented a source of income for the ruler and agreed to tax themselves in return for the redress of grievances and recognition of liberties.

The communes often presented a problem for the landholding nobility because these "urban democracies" existed outside the feudal structure. Often controlled by small oligarchies, they were governed by councils independent of feudal lords and answered directly to the duke or count. Troublesome though their demands might often be, the rulers, in turn, were likely to grant the towns greater liberties because of the wealth that they generated. The towns were themselves deeply divided by class animosity, the balance of political power differing among them, however, from town to town. Class struggle was endemic. The urban patricians, who built their great gabled houses on the market square, were merchants and entrepreneurs whose fortunes equaled all but greatest of the landed nobility. The craftsmen, well organized in the guilds, owned the workshops that put out goods on contract to the patricians and vied with them for political control of the councils. On the lowest rung of the social and economic ladder was a usually turbulent urban proletariat employed by the guildsmen. In Flanders particularly, relations with the count and the nobility and among the urban classes were



complicated further in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by the wars between the suzerain, the king of France, and England, the province's most important trading partner.

When Philip IV of France tried to bring Flanders under royal control, the French king found allies among the Flemish patricians, who offered him their direct allegiance. But the old count of Flanders, Guy Dampierre, had the support of the gildsmen. The Flemish militias, pikemen and crossbowmen mobilized by the communes, utterly routed over-confident French knights at the Battle of the Spurs at Courtrai in 1302. As their reward, the communes exacted greater liberties from the count.

Jacob van Artevelde, a brewer from Ghent and political leader of his commune, negotiated an alliance of several Flemish towns – Bruges, Ypres, Antwerp, and Ghent – to proclaim armed neutrality in the war between France and England that resumed in 1345 but also concluded a commercial treaty with England to assure the supply of wool and grain. The count, Louis Nevers, loyal to his obligation to his suzerain, was defeated when he moved against the allied communes and was forced to recognize their autonomy.

The autonomy movement spread outside Flanders to towns in other parts of the Netherlands, but, ultimately, neutrality was impossible to sustain and the communes joined in a formal alliance with England, pledging their allegiance to Edward III who claimed the crown of France. The struggle of the communes to defend their autonomy became a theatre in the Hundred Years War. In 1382, the French defeated the communes at the battle of Roosebeke and restored the authority of the count of Flanders over them.

### **The Burgundian Period**

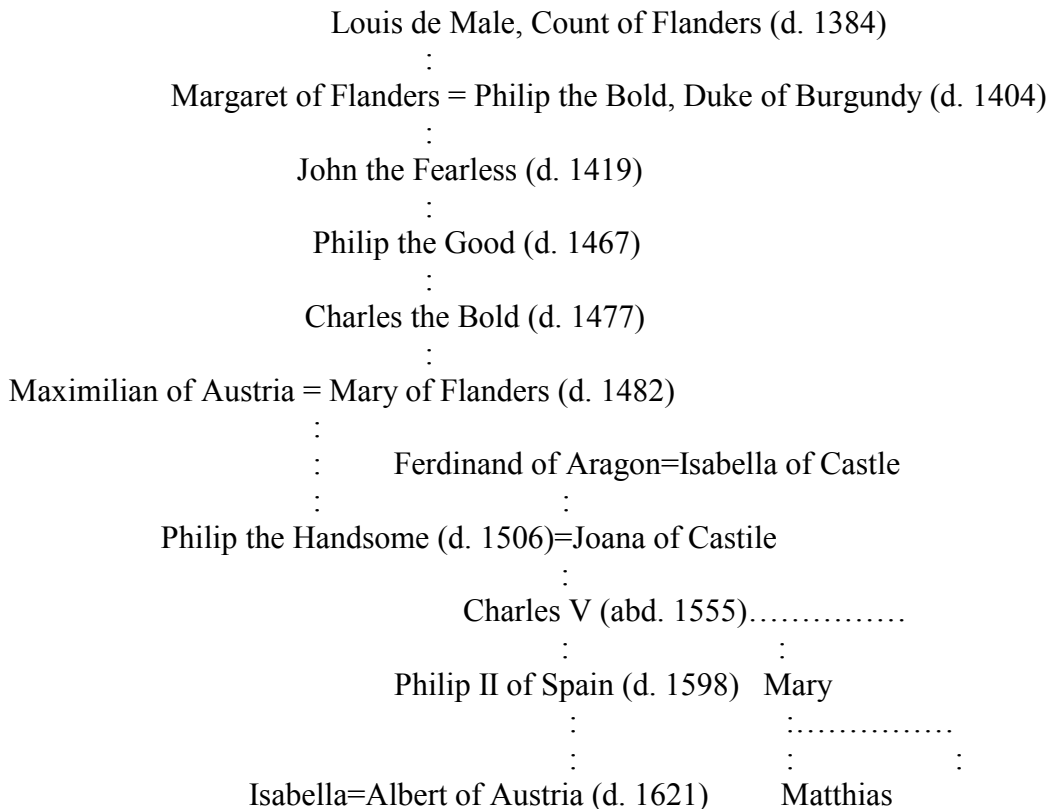
Two years later, Count Louis de Male, died, leaving as heir his daughter, Margaret, whose husband Philip the Bold, the Valois duke of Burgundy, was welcomed by the Estates as count of Flanders, thus uniting two of the richest areas in late medieval Europe. The Burgundian period gave Flanders a line of four strong rulers who, over nearly a century, acquired title to other Netherlandish states. Although they never bore a royal title, the count-dukes – Philip, John the Fearless, Philip the Good, and Charles the Bold -- had wealth, power, and prestige greater than that of all but a few kings.

The Burgundian period was the “golden age” of Flemish art. Its patronage was bourgeois, not aristocratic, and demanded an unrelentingly exact realism that featured bright colors made possible by the innovative use of oil-based pigments. In a violent world confronted by plague, war, and doubt that had strained the imagination, the Flemish “primitives,” so-called, depended on literalness in order to be seen.

Charles the Bold was killed at Nancy in 1477 in battle with the Swiss. The Estates sanctioned the marriage of Mary, his daughter and heir to the Netherlands and Burgundy, to Maximilian, heir to the Habsburg realms – Austria, Bohemia, Lombardy, and more --and the title of Holy Roman Emperor. Their son Philip the Handsome was married to Joana, daughter of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, through whom their son Charles (1500-1558) inherited

the Spanish throne and colonial empire. Charles was born in Ghent and raised speaking the languages of Flanders. As Charles V, he became emperor and claimant to the Burgundian and Habsburg inheritances. His was a dominion greater even than Charlemagne's.

### Succession of the Houses of Flanders-Burgundy-Habsburg in the Low Countries



### Questions/Discussion

Consider the legacy of Romanization in the Low Countries. Did it survive the fall of the Roman Empire in that region? How?

Relate linguistic differences in the Low Countries to the events of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.

What effect did Carolingian dynastic practices have on European history in the 9<sup>th</sup> century – and thereafter?

Describe and compare the political connections in the Middle Ages between the Low Countries and France, Germany, and England.

How was feudalism responsible for the delineation of distinct political units in the Low Countries?

Discuss the conflict of interests among the nobility and in the towns arising from competing allegiances to local sovereigns and their suzerains.

Discuss the composition and function of the estates-general in the Netherlandish states. How “representative” were they?

Discuss and critique the Pirenne Thesis which argues that the growth of trade was the exclusive cause for the reinvigoration of urban life in the Low Countries in the Middle Ages.

Describe class divisions in Netherlandish towns.

Cite some reasons for the decline of urban “democracies” in the Low Countries from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Account for the rise and decline of the Valois dukes of Burgundy in the Low Countries.

### **The Age of Charles V**

The 16<sup>th</sup> century was absolutely decisive in the history of the Low Countries. The total population of the provinces in the region in 1500 was about two million, one-fourth of which was in Flanders and another fourth in Brabant. Holland had a population of about 250,000, more than half of it living in 18 incorporated cities. About 40% of the population of the southern Netherlands was urban as well.

Charles, who would eventually preside over a world empire, came of age as duke of Burgundy in 1515 and assumed the various titles of the Netherlandish states. He intended to bind the 17 states of the Habsburg Netherlands together constitutionally within the *Burgundian Circle*. Burghers in Holland wanted strong government to protect their carrying trade and approved the plan. Cities in Flanders, however, and the landed nobility there were more jealous of their ancient liberties. When Bruges and Ghent resisted, their privileges were revoked.

Like the Burgundian dukes who preceded him, Charles relied on *stadtholders*, appointed in each state to serve as his viceroy and as military commander. The stadtholders were often drawn from a corps of professional administrators. Among them were the counts of Breda in Brabant, who were from a branch of the German house of Nassau.

In 1543, the Netherlandish states were joined formally under a single constitution, called the *Great Privilege*. Each retained its own provincial government, directed by a stadtholder, and provincial estates, but they were under the supervision of a “central” government in Brussels. Hereditary succession was confirmed in all of them, so that they could not in future be divided among heirs.

Then, in 1555, Charles V – emperor, king, archduke, duke, count, and holder of many other titles – abdicated them all and retired to a monastery. He divided the vast Habsburg empire between his brother Ferdinand, who received the dynasty’s German possessions along with

the imperial title, and his son Philip (1527-1598), who became king of Spain as Philip II and received the Habsburg possessions in Italy and the *Burgundian Inheritance*, including the Netherlands.

### **The Reformation**

Despite the decay of religious institutions, there was a tradition of popular piety and prophetic mysticism in the Netherlands in the late Middle Ages. Netherlandish clerics were prominent in the Conciliar Movement, intended to reform the administration of the Church through the regular meeting of general councils of its bishops. The Brethren of the Common Life, a lay religious order, promoted reform through education. One of their students, Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), perhaps the most prominent scholar of his time, sought to put humanistic studies at the service of the renewal of the Church from within. The Netherlandish artists Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel depict the physical and psychological turmoil of the period in their paintings.

The teachings of the French Protestant reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) found an early and receptive audience in Wallonia and among the burghers of Antwerp, who carried his message to the northern Netherlands, often as refugees from Spanish persecution. By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, few towns of any size in Holland were without a *Vaalsekerke* (Walloon Church). The clarity, certainty, and absence of ambiguity in Calvin's acceptance of predestination and justification by faith appealed to tough-minded, business-like citizens of the Netherlandish towns who embraced its spiritual cost-effectiveness.

### **The Dutch Revolt**

The beginnings of the "Dutch Revolt," the 80-year War of Independence fought in the Netherlands against Spain, coincided with the introduction of the Protestant Reformation and the consequent reaction of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Philip II stayed in the Netherlands only a short time after his accession there. He returned Spain in 1559 and never left it again. He appointed his half-sister Margaret of Parma to be his governor-general in Brussels, but it was Philip who pronounced the policies from Spain that his viceroy was expected to enforce in the Netherlands. Whatever he might have imposed on his subjects there, often from a distant court in Germany or Spain, Charles V was at least recognized as Netherlandish. Philip II was a Spaniard.

From his court in Spain, Philip II took four initiatives in the Netherlands that alienated most of his subjects, regardless of class or religion. He laid out a plan for further consolidating the Netherlands and integrating the region directly into the Spanish imperial system, including control of its trade. This required a substantial reduction of the autonomy of the town councils and the provincial estates, followed by the introduction of a system of regular taxation that would yield revenues without having to seek their advice and consent. Finally, he introduced the Inquisition into the Netherlands to stamp out Calvinism. Finally, a large

Spanish army was dispatched to defend the Netherlands from France – and to enforce the king’s will.

It was Spanish encroachment on local liberties, not religion, that was the foremost concern of the Estates-General that met to reject Philip II’s initiatives. The protest was led by the League of Magnates, including the counts Egmond and Horn, who were Catholics, and William, called “the Silent,” the stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht.

William the Silent (1533-1584) was the scion of the house of Nassau. Born in Germany, he was count of Nassau-Dillenburg, inherited the county of Breda from the Netherlandish branch of the house and the principality of Orange, an imperial enclave in southern France, from another member of his multi-faceted family. Raised a Lutheran in Germany, he became a Catholic to accept Charles V’s commission to serve him in the Netherlands. Philip II conferred the stadtholderships on him in 1559. William the Silent was a successful *politique* for whom religious commitment in those fractious times served political expediency.

As Spanish attempts to enforce religious conformity increased, Calvinists in Antwerp and other towns reacted by sacking churches and religious houses with iconoclastic fury. Town officials stood by as mobs destroyed stained glass, statues, and paintings. In 1566, the League of Magnates presented the *Request* to Philip II to withdraw the Inquisition from the Netherlands and repeal the edicts against heresy. Philip responded by sending the duke of Alva as captain-general to reassert by military means both Catholic orthodoxy and his own authority in the Netherlands. Egmond and Horn were arrested by Alva and executed at the orders of the Council of Blood. William escaped to Holland and raised support there and in Zeeland. He recruited initially from two groups: from the Calvinist burghers, who, although still a minority in Holland’s cities, had at their disposal the town militias, and from the *gueux*, or “sea beggars,” fishermen, merchant seamen, and sometime pirates from Zeeland. He trusted them because they were willing to fight the Spaniards, and they followed him because they recognized in the stadtholder a soldier who could lead the resistance to Spain. William the Silent thus became defender of local liberties and the leader of the Calvinist cause in Holland and the Dutch revolt against Spain that would continue as the *Eighty Years War*. But Dutch Calvinists were iconoclasts and the *gueux* were pirates, and, eventually, because of his allies, William lost the confidence of Catholic magnates and many of the landed nobles towns in the south.

For 15 years (1566-1581), terms for peace, not independence, was the issue between William the Silent and Philip II, who was recognized as legitimate ruler even in Holland and Zeeland. All attempts at a truce failed until 1577, when an agreement on an armistice and a formal union of states was reached at the *Pacification of Ghent*. The armistice set the stage for the *Union of Brussels* the following year. Its founding document referred to the Netherlands, south and north, Catholic and Protestant, as the “common fatherland” of its people. Spanish troops, who had caused havoc by their mutinies, were paid off and prepared to return home.

The Estates invited Matthias of Austria to replace his and Philip II’s uncle, Don Juan of Austria, the victor of Lepanto, as governor. Matthias, who was 20 years old, was a younger son of the heir to the Habsburg titles in Germany. Styled “Defender of the Liberties of the

Netherlands,” the task before him was to mediate the quarrel between the Estates and Spain and to counteract the influence of William the Silent, but no settlement was possible without cooperation between the largely Catholic nobility and the now Calvinist stadtholder.

In the settlement, Catholicism was recognized everywhere in the Netherlands. Otherwise, the issue of religious toleration was left open in the southern provinces. Protestants were not satisfied with an understanding that restricted Protestantism anywhere. As the religious issue became more sharply defined, the rift opened more widely between Catholics and Protestants.

Holland and Zeeland, where William had been reconfirmed as stadtholder and captain-general by Matthias, withdrew from the Brussels Union, and, in 1579, two rival leagues were formed. In the northern Netherlands, both Protestants and Catholics adhered to the *Union of Utrecht*, pledging to resist the Habsburgs, while the estates of southern provinces joined the Catholic *Union of Arras*, submitting an appeal to Philip II to defend the Church in the Netherlands. Matthias left the Netherlands. In 1608, he would become Holy Roman Emperor and the disputed succession to imperial lands after his death, in 1618, provided a motive for the Thirty Years War.

The formation of the rival unions and the demise of the short-lived Brussels Union, whose constitution had spoken of a “common fatherland,” marked the definitive division of the Low Countries. The southern and northern Netherlands would thereafter develop in different directions.

In 1581, the States-General of the Utrecht Union repudiated Philip II, creating the *United Provinces*. Spanish troops moved to occupy the fortresses they had recently abandoned as a base for the conquest of the northern Netherlands. It was a task that even the large and splendid Spanish army could not accomplish. Nor could the Dutch expel the Spaniards from the south, where they always stumbled on the unwillingness of the Catholic people to rally to Calvinist rebels.

Finding legitimacy was a problem for the United Provinces too. It was a republic, unable to secure recognition even from its ally, England. The search to recruit a prince failed to come up with a suitable candidate. In practice, however, the government of the republic was a disguised monarchy under the rule of the stadtholder, William the Silent. When William was assassinated at Delft in 1584, his brother Maurice was elected stadtholder and captain-general to succeed him.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Assess the contribution of Charles V to the unity of the Netherlands or his blame for its disunity.

What was the role of the office of *stadtholder*? How did it compare with the office of the Frankish *mayors of the palace*?

What religious trends were evident in the Low Countries in the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries that anticipated the Protestant Reformation?

Give some reasons why Calvinism might have been popular in the Netherlands. Did the belief form the temperament of its adherents, or did the temperament of the Netherlanders encourage its acceptance?

How did the religious climate in the northern Netherlands differ from that in the southern Netherlands? How important were the differences in preventing the realization of a “common fatherland” in the Netherlands?

What were the principal factors contributing to the Dutch Revolt? Did the same factors determine the progress and resolution of the conflict? To what extent and why did the southern Netherlands remain loyal?

How did William the Silent select his allies in the struggle against Spain?

Cite some advantages of prolonging the wars with Spain for the United Provinces. What was the importance of Hugo Grotius to the Dutch war effort?

What were the limits of religious tolerance in the United Provinces? Were they imposed mostly for theological reasons or were they essentially political in nature?

## **The Golden Age**

The war with Spain continued with periodic English and French interventions, the battle lines flowing back and forth with repeated campaigns and sieges. The Dutch captured northern Brabant and Limburg, a largely Catholic area organized as *The Generality*, an occupied dependency administered by the States-General of the United Provinces in which they were not represented. At sea, the long arm of Dutch naval power harried the Spanish merchant fleet, cut lines of communication, and attacked Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Partly due to French mediation, a 12-year truce was concluded in 1609 that preserved the *status quo* in the Netherlands for its duration.

In 1598, Philip II handed over title to the whole of the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her husband-to-be and cousin the Habsburg archduke Albert of Austria as independent sovereigns, not as the agents of Spain. An autonomous Netherlands under Habsburg rule was proposed as a solution by which the south and north could be reconciled and reunited. The consolidation of Catholicism in the southern Netherlands during the years of the truce, particularly under the influence of the Jesuits on education and the intellectual life of the country, discouraged any rapprochement with the Protestant north. Isabella and Albert were childless, and, on the archduke's death in 1621, the southern Netherlands reverted to Spain.

The truce opened the opportunity for political dissent in the United Provinces that was muted when the country was threatened by invasion, particularly opposition the ascendancy of the

*House of Orange.* The estates of each of the Dutch provinces elected a stadtholder. In Holland and Zeeland, the office had passed without debate from William to Maurice as head of the House of Orange. Maurice – or another member or supporter of the family -- was elected in other provinces as well. Each province retained its traditional estates that chose parliamentary leaders often drawn into conflict with the stadtholder. The constitutional relationship between stadtholder and estates was not always clear or consistent from province-to-province.

The estates of Holland that assembled in The Hague was typical. The Noble Great Mighty Lords Estates of Holland and West Frisia, as it was styled, was composed of 19 delegations, one representing the estate of the landed nobility and others sent by the 18 cities in Holland. (Before 1567, a twentieth estate had represented the Catholic bishops and clergy.) Each estate was led by an elected *pensioner*, and the collective body of estates was presided over by the *Grand Pensioner* chosen from their number, whose job it was to work out the sense of the estates on an issue before them and devise a resolution that could be approved by a unanimous vote. The estates of the several provinces might convene periodically in the *States-General* of the United Provinces.

After the death of William the Silent, a struggle for supremacy in Holland developed between the stadtholder, expressing a monarchical tendency, and the pensioners, upholding the republican principle. The stadtholder was accused of using the resources of Holland to protect the interests of the United Provinces at the expense of – and against the interests of Holland. Within the Holland Estates, the landed nobility and the city of Amsterdam supported the prerogatives of the stadtholder and the House of Orange against the opposition of the other city estates, led by the grand pensioner Jacob van Oldenbarneveldt. In the States-General, Holland and Zeeland were often aligned against the opposition of the other provinces. From province to province, the landed classes were opposed by the urban patricians and Orangists by republicans. These social and political conflicts, in differing combinations, were fought in every town and province.

The political conflict was further complicated by religious issues. The United Provinces was unique in its commitment to religious tolerance. Jews and Protestants of many persuasions found welcome and tolerance there. Catholics were tolerated as well, if they kept a low profile. But similar open-mindedness was not always present within the Calvinist community itself. In its quest for doctrinal certitude, Calvinism was uneasy with ambiguity and contradiction and found many ways to punish dissent within its ranks.

Jacob Hermannzen, a member of the faculty at Leiden University, who was known as *Arminius*, attempted to confront the apparent contradiction between the divine sovereignty that assumed predestination and the human freedom that presumed the existence of free will. Arminius taught that God wills all to be saved but allows man to exercise free will in accepting or rejecting the grace necessary for salvation. There were evident political ramifications to his teaching. Protesting against the overlapping ecclesiastical and political establishments, Arminius called for a “free church in a free republic.” His followers, known as the *Remonstrants*, appealed to the States-General with the support of van Oldenbarneveldt to end state oversight of the church.



Maurice had no interest in the theological aspects of the debate, but he rejected the Remonstrants on political grounds and ordered ministers to keep silent in their pulpits on the issues raised by Arminius. Many Remonstrants fled into exile. Disorder broke out in some Dutch cities, and van Oldenbarneveldt authorized town councils to mobilize the local militias. The grand pensioner, who was accused of undermining the authority of the stadtholder, was arrested and hanged for treason in 1619.

The stadtholder, freed from van Oldenbarneveldt's opposition, did not seek to renew the truce in 1621, and the wars resumed. The conflict had been profitable for the Dutch. Treasure passed through Spain as if through a sieve to finance the war in the Netherlands, much of it into Dutch coffers. Piracy against enemy shipping in time of war and the blockade of rival ports in the southern Netherlands was given legal justification by Hugo Grotius in *The Law of the Sea*. Dutch colonial expansion in Asia (Ceylon, Malaya, the East Indies), the Cape of Good Hope, the West Indies, Brazil and Surinam, and in North America often came at the expense of European enemies and fuelled the enormous prosperity of the United Provinces.

On his death in 1628, Maurice was succeeded as stadtholder by his half-brother Frederick Henry, a tolerant man who allowed the Remonstrants to return to Holland. He ruled clearly as a monarch from his illustrious court in The Hague, and his family concluded a royal marriage in England. Also a man of considerable good taste, the stadtholder was a patron of music, scholarship, architecture, and, especially, art. The art of the Golden Age, however, was not aristocratic but reflected the bourgeois culture of urban patrician patrons and was thoroughly secular. By contrast, the high baroque art of the Spanish Netherlands was ecclesiastical and aristocratic and reflected a Catholic sensibility.

Frederick Henry determined to end the wars. The Dutch were signatories to the *Treaties of Westphalia* in 1648 and made peace with Spain in 1656, concluding the *Eighty Years War*. Dutch independence was formally recognized, and the United Provinces were confirmed in the possession of northern Brabant and parts of Limburg. Spain kept Antwerp, but the Scheldt was closed to traffic to its port. The Treaty of the Pyrennes that ended the war between Spain and France in 1659 stripped Thionville and Montmedy from Spanish Luxembourg. Spain also lost the province of Artois to France.

Although a governor was appointed by Madrid to serve as viceroy in the Spanish Netherlands, the provinces and towns were administered by their traditional estates and councils with a considerable degree of local autonomy. Members of noble families were in service to the Habsburgs in Spain. Flemish and Walloon troops fought with distinction in the Spanish army in the Netherlands and in others theatres. But, in contrast with the prosperity of the United Provinces, the economy of the Spanish Netherlands was generally depressed through the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the vigor of urban life declined.

Frederick Henry died before the conclusion of the Westphalia treaties. His son William succeeded to all of his offices as in an hereditary monarchy. The wars concluded, Holland wanted to reduce the size of the army, which it largely financed. The stadtholder refused to

accept the decision of the Holland Estates and undertook a military occupation of the province. Confrontation between the dynasty and the republic was averted only because of his death from smallpox before the birth of his son, who would also be named William (later William III).

Holland and all but two of the other united provinces were without stadtholders from 1650-1672. (Friesland and Groningen retained the stadtholdership under a cadet branch of the House of Orange.) Republicanism was ascendant during that period. Political power in the United Provinces resided with patricians in the States-General whose leading figure was the grand pensioner of Holland, Jan de Witt.

The basis of political power lay in the governing councils of the Dutch towns. Councilors or *regents* were typically elected for life from among the wealthiest individuals in the town on the theory that men of achievement were best able to govern in the interest of the town as a whole. They agreed that government must respect local liberties, both as a matter of principle and because local freedom contributed to the building of a more prosperous society. Rule by the wealthy led to government that was limited in scope and that sought to create conditions for the further growth of wealth.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch developed a global trading empire that put the United Provinces in the first rank of European powers and that laid the foundations for a global economy. The Dutch were quintessential “middle men” who established multilateral trade networks in which they were carriers and warehousemen for a variety of goods whose origins and final destinations lay outside the Netherlands. The storehouses of Amsterdam and Rotterdam were filled with grain from the Baltic, timber from Norway, coals from Newcastle, copperware from Hamburg, canvas from Russia, Swedish pitch and tar, wines from France and Germany, soap from Marseilles, English leather and lead, olive oil and honey from Spain. Pasta was made in Holland from Baltic wheat, brought to Italy in Dutch ships, and exchanged there for the marble that was used to build the stately homes of Amsterdam.

These trade relations were solidified by a complex set of commercial arrangements and political ties. The Dutch controlled trade in the Baltic and, to protect that dominance, used diplomatic influence and naval power to assure that neither Sweden nor Denmark gained a decisive advantage over the other in their frequent wars that would upset the balance of power in the region. Dutch banks made loans to the king of Sweden, who put up Swedish copper mines as security, and invested in Danish agriculture. Dutch investors purchased mining and timber concessions in Sweden and Norway. Dutch interests extracted, refined, and shipped all of the sulfur produced in Iceland. Exports of caviar, tar, hemp, salmon, and wool from Russia were all Dutch monopolies. In Poland, the Dutch operated the Mint, giving them control over that country’s currency.

The greatest achievements of the Dutch commercial empire were made, however, by the East India Company, formed in 1602 as a government-sanctioned monopoly financed by private investors who traded shares in the company on the *bourse* (stock market). Directors of the East India Company quickly understood that there were great profits to be made by

organizing trade in Asia by establishing a permanent presence there, building warehouses and stations at ports of call, rather than by merely sponsoring trading argosies that shuttled between Asian and European ports. The company's early voyages had acquired tea and spices in exchange for gold and silver, but this pattern was soon replaced with a multilateral system of trade relations that capitalized on price spreads such as nutmeg that sold in India for thirty times what it cost in the *Spice Islands* of the East Indies. The Japanese, though not interested in European goods, were ready to trade copper and gold for silk, tea, and porcelain from China, cotton cloth, sugar, and opium from India, cinnamon, pearls, and nuts from Ceylon, hardwoods from Siam, and spices from the East Indies, products that found markets in Europe as well. Having understood each of the markets in which it was involved, the East India Company developed a pattern of overlapping triangular trade in Asia. Buying and selling at each port of call, the company sped up its turnover and maximized its profits.

A large portion of the domestic Dutch economy also relied on overseas trade. Shipbuilding and ancillary industries that employed sail-makers, rope-makers, lumber-cutters, smiths, and carpenters flourished in the coastal towns of Holland and Zeeland. Many goods shipped to warehouses in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and other towns were processed there in workshops, cutting-rooms, mills, refineries, breweries, and distilleries before being shipped on to their destinations. The Dutch became leaders in the dyeing and dressing of cloth, processes that accounted for nearly half of the price of finished woollens. The tile-making industry was developed to compete with Portuguese tiles. Some towns became identified with specialized industries – clothmaking and weaving in Leiden, silk and lace in Haarlem, cheese in Gouda, tobacco in Utrecht, china and tiles in Delft, gin in Schiedam. Warehousing and insurance for cargoes contributed as much to the Dutch economy as the trade itself. Credit banking developed to handle the many currencies and notes of obligation involved in multilateral trade. Amsterdam's private banking industry created an international market in stock and commodities futures.

In the process of creating a global trading network, the Netherlands also became a colonial power whose empire at its height controlled a million square miles of territory strategically located to advance its commercial interests. For the most part, the Dutch were content to limit their contacts overseas to trade, usually operating through treaties with local rulers. However, they were also quite prepared to exert direct political and military control when it was necessary or more convenient to do so. The East India Company established outposts under its control at the Cape of Good Hope and in India. It also extended direct control over Java in order to further the intensive cultivation of coffee.

In 1624, the newly founded West India Company built the first in a series of forts as a base for fur trading along the Hudson, Delaware, and Connecticut rivers in what became the colony of *New Netherlands* in North America. The town of New Amsterdam grew up around the fort and trading post situated at the tip of Manhattan Island and became a free port and the administrative center for the colony. The company granted titles to “plantations” along the Hudson to tenants. In 1655, the Dutch seized the small Swedish colony at the mouth of the Delaware River. Earlier, in 1630, an expedition dispatched by the West India Company captured Pernambuco, the center of the rich sugar-growing district in northern Brazil and planted a Dutch colony there that was governed by a member of the House of Orange. The

company also set up stations on the West African coast for the embarkation of slaves to work on its sugar plantations in colonies in the West Indies and Surinam.

The *Golden Age* was not a peaceful period. After the peace with Spain, France became the chief threat to the United Provinces. Commercial rivalry drew the Dutch into two naval wars with England (1652-1654, 1664-1672). The Portuguese drove the Dutch out of Brazil in 1654, and, in 1664, the English took the ill-governed New Netherlands colony, renaming it New York. More ominously, Louis XIV began a series of “wars of devolution” in the 1660s intended to extend the borders of France to a natural frontier on the Rhine. In 1672, the French took Utrecht and, then, occupied large parts of the country outside Holland and Zeeland.

### **William III**

Under popular pressure, the States-General surrendered power to the young William of Orange (1648-1702) and named him stadtholder in 1672. De Witt was murdered in The Hague by vengeful Orangists. William concluded an alliance with England, Spain, and Austria that brought a temporary end to the wars and French withdrawal from the Netherlands.

The stadtholder William, who was the nephew of Charles II, contracted a marriage with his English cousin Mary. When her father, James II, was deposed by Parliament in the *Glorious Revolution* of 1688, the couple became the joint monarchs of England as William III and Mary II. William defeated James in Ireland with an army that included Dutch troops, but his main concern as the king of an adopted country was largely to obtain the resources and manpower from England to defend the Netherlands against France.

The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713) was the last of Louis XIV’s devolution wars. It was also the last time that the Netherlands would act as a great power in Europe. The direct line of the counts of Breda beginning with William the Silent and his brother Maurice ended in the fourth generation when William III died without an heir in 1702. No successor to the stadtholdership of Holland was elected, and the grand pensioner was again recognized as chief executive of the United Provinces to conduct the war and to conclude the *Peace of Utrecht* in 1713. Louis XIV achieved in war his aim of putting his Bourbon grandson on the Spanish throne, but the southern Netherlands remained Habsburg, passing to the Austrian branch of the family.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Characterize the aims of Dutch colonial expansion in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Explain the economic decline of the Spanish Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Was Spanish rule there a tyranny?

Explain the differences in artistic styles in the United Provinces and the Spanish Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Was/were the United Provinces a republic or a monarchy? Is it more accurate to use the singular or the plural verb with reference to the United Provinces?

Give reasons for the on-going conflict between the *stadtholder* and Estates and describe political alignments in the United Provinces.

Why was the *Golden Age* “golden”?

What was Louis XIV attempting to achieve in the wards of devolution? Why was the English alliance so important to William III?

What were the consequences of the War of Spanish Succession for the Low Countries?

### **The Low Countries in the Eighteenth Century**

The United Provinces successfully defended its independence in the wars with France but emerged from the last of them exhausted and weakened. The merchant fleet had suffered huge losses. The treasury was empty and the economy stagnant. In the years following the war, the army and navy were neglected. The ruling oligarchy in the States-General was abusive of power. The United Provinces was still a rich country but wealth was poorly distributed among the provinces. Its commercial influence declined in relation to England and France, and, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the country lost its status as a first-class power.

The United Provinces had the right under the Utrecht treaty to garrison the “barrier fortresses” in the Austrian Netherlands in the event that war there with France threatened its security. The Dutch succeeded in remaining neutral, however, during the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748) and the Seven Years War (1756-1763) that were fought on Belgian soil, the “cockpit of Europe.” Belgian interests, it would be pointed out, were sacrificed to those of the welfare of Europe.

Austria did not dominate the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Habsburg provinces in the Low Countries. The connection between them was that they shared the same sovereign. The Austrian emperor-archduke was represented in Brussels by a governor, while a minister from Brussels, representing the estates, had a seat on the imperial cabinet in Vienna. The provincial estates and city councils exercised a large degree of autonomy, and the Austrian Netherlands was, in practice, a decentralized collection of separate provincial and local jurisdictions operating independently of one another. It was an untidy but generally popular system.

The archduchess Maria Theresa (1717-1780) shared that popularity among her Belgian subjects. She patronized the Church and education lavishly. Belgium became a site for the beginning of the modern *Industrial Revolution*. Mills and mines in Wallonia, the energy and

entrepreneurship of its people, and state subsidies provided the basis for economic growth. Efforts to open overseas trade were thwarted by the Dutch, however.

Joseph II (1741-1792), who succeeded his mother, was an “enlightened despot,” a rationalizer and a centralizer of institutions annoyed by what to his logical mindset was the medieval chaos of Netherlandish institutions. At one point, he tried to work out a deal to transfer Belgium to France in exchange for permission to annex Bavaria to Austria. His empire-wide *Patent of Toleration* (1781) was deeply offensive to his Belgian subjects, for some because it granted recognition to Protestants but to others because it infringed on the liberties of local institutions. Religious houses were suppressed, seminaries closed, and schools secularized. Traditional institutions, courts, and local administration were reformed without local consultation. Taxes were imposed from Vienna. Commerce was regulated in onerous ways. Liberals and traditionalists united against what they saw as the destruction of their country’s autonomy.

When, in 1789, the Brabant Estates refused to consent to taxation, the Austrian army entered Brussels, setting off a general uprising that forced an Austrian withdrawal. In 1790, the rebellious estates produced a constitution for the “United States of Belgium.” Not all the provinces were equally enthusiastic, however. The Austrian army returned the following year and scattered the rebels, but the new emperor, Leopold II (1747-1792), shelved the reforms they had resisted.

The French occupied the Austrian Netherlands in 1792 after defeating the Austrian army at the battle of Jamappes. In 1795, the Belgian provinces, including Liege and Luxembourg, were annexed by France, largely to the indifference of their people. In Luxembourg, however, there was an uprising, the *Kloppelkieg*, in protest against the imposition of military conscription.

In the United Provinces, the stadtholdership, vacant in Holland and Zeeland, had continued as before in Friesland and Groningen in the hands of a branch of the Orange-Nassau family. In 1747, William (IV), the heir of that line, was elected stadtholder in all the provinces to counter a perceived threat from France. He also had a mandate to introduce political reforms. On William’s death in 1751, his three-year old son, also William (V), was recognized as “hereditary stadtholder” and the States-General assigned to act as regent during his minority. The United Provinces was clearly now a republic that had a “royal” family.

Traditionally, the Orangists were drawn from all classes – except from a patrician oligarchy that was profoundly republican. Shopkeepers and artisans of the lower middle-class, for example, had regarded the House of Orange as its protector against the patrician oligarchy. As institutional paralysis set in, however, even these groups became alienated by the inability of the stadtholder to secure reforms.

The neo-republican and democratic movement in the United Provinces gained momentum at the time of the American Revolution. Inspired by the Americans, instructed by English political ideas, and, later, sympathetic to the French Revolution, the *Patriots* called for a re-

volution, in the Lockean sense, to restore the republican and “democratic” customs that they accused the stadtholder of having nullified.

### **The Napoleonic Era**

The Dutch offered no resistance to French occupation in 1795. Delegates to a constitutional convention divided along political lines between radical unitarians and moderate federalists. The French settled the debate in favor of the *Batavian Republic*, modeled on the *Directory* in France and presided over by a committee chaired by the *dictator-pensioner*, Rutger van Schimmelpennick. It was an efficient government, federal in form but unitary in practice and centralized to a degree previously unimaginable, that eventually adopted the Napoleonic Code in Dutch courts. In 1806, Napoleon created the *Kingdom of Holland* and named his brother Louis as its king. But, in 1810, when Louis began putting Dutch interests above his brother’s imperial designs, Napoleon annexed the northern Netherlands to France.

The Napoleonic Wars were costly for the Netherlands. Huge resources were expended on Napoleon’s war efforts. The British occupied Dutch colonies and trading stations, most of which were returned in 1815 but some – Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope – were lost permanently. Trade was cut off by the British blockade and a large part of the merchant fleet sunk or seized. After Napoleon’s defeat at the battle of Leipzig in 1813, Orangists revolted in Holland. Dutch and Belgian troops, many of them veterans of Napoleon’s army, fought on the side of the Allies at Waterloo under the command of William, Prince of Orange.

Although the French interlude in the governance of the Netherlands and Belgium was brief, it left permanent effects in the form of a centralized state. A single legal code applicable to all the provinces was developed, and the powers of local and provincial authorities were reduced. Development of a national tax code gave the central state its own resources for the first time, and also shifted the tax burden more equally among all citizens, away from the consumption taxes that had weighed heavily on the lower classes while leaving untouched the accumulated wealth of the privileged few. A system of universal education was adopted and the state set general standards to be met by public and private schools alike.

### **Questions/Discussion**

In what sense was the mood of the Austrian Netherlands “reactionary” in the 18<sup>th</sup> century? The United Provinces?

Explain the causes of the Brabant rising against the Austrians in 1789. Did it have any connection with the beginning of the Revolution in France?

Why did the Dutch submit so readily to French domination? What were some of the consequences of Dutch collaboration?

Discuss and compare the historical status of Napoleon in the histories of Belgium and the Netherlands.

## The United Netherlands

After Napoleon's defeat, the Allies brought the son of the last stadtholder back to the Netherlands to rule, not as stadtholder but as a sovereign prince – William I, King of the United Netherlands, under whom the northern and southern Netherlands would be rejoined. His kingdom was created by Britain for “the convenience of Europe,” but its creation was desired by neither the Dutch nor the Belgians. William himself actually hesitated to accept the royal title unless he understood that there had been a “popular” call for his return. He was sworn in before an “Assembly of Notables” in 1815, not crowned. The United Netherlands was a constitutional monarchy that had a written constitution providing for a centralized government and a national parliament, elected by very limited suffrage and, in which, the north and south had equal representation. It had dual capitals, the seat of government alternating between Amsterdam and Brussels. In practice, William circumvented parliament and typically governed by means of orders in council. The king was enabled to circumvent parliamentary control, in part, because his family’s wealth from its interests in the East Indies allowed him to live on his own.

In the reshaping of Europe at the *Congress of Vienna* (1815), the eastern third of Luxembourg was transferred to Prussia. The remainder was recognized as an independent grand-duchy in *personal union* with the king of the United Netherlands, although William I clearly treated the country as a province of his kingdom. Luxembourg, however, was formally a member of the German Confederation and the *Zollverein*, the German customs union. The great fortress of Luxembourg received a Prussian garrison that was quartered there until 1867.

Belgium and the Netherlands in the north were divided at this point by 250 years of history in which they had developed separately and differently in important areas – politically, economically, socially, and culturally. The northern Netherlands had a commercial and service-based economy that processed colonial goods for re-export. Domestic producers, including agriculture, were protected by restrictions on imports and colonial preferences. Belgium, by contrast, had an industrial economy whose export trade was oriented to competitive European markets. It was an emerging capitalist economy, eager to embrace free trade. Belgium produced food for the domestic market but relied on importing cheap food to feed its labor force. Belgian industry should have profited from exports to Dutch colonies, but the Dutch resisted intrusion into protected markets. The Dutch, worried about competition to their ports, also kept closed the Belgian port of Antwerp as it had been since the Eighty Years War.

Catholic and Protestant clergy alike opposed universal religious toleration and the secularization of education. The francophone elite there resented the recognition of Dutch as an official language in Flanders. Flemish-speakers in rural Flanders were reluctant to identify with the Dutch-speaking Protestant north. The Dutch clearly regarded Belgium as an extension of the Netherlands rather than as a partner. Belgians responded that, while the south accounted for two-thirds of the United Netherlands’ 5.5 million population, it shared equal representation with the north in the national parliament.



Smoldering grievances ignited in the streets of Brussels and Liege in 1830, inspired by the July Revolution in Paris. Elected officials set up a provisional government that cut Belgium's ties with the United Netherlands. Those leading the movement for separation were urban, middle-class, and French-speaking but were drawn from both liberal and traditionalist camps. Dutch troops dispatched to suppress the rebellion were driven out of Brussels by the local militia, but the Dutch commander of the fortress at Antwerp turned its guns on that city. France intervened the following year when the Dutch army threatened to invade Belgium.

The National Congress, elected after the proclamation of independence, ratified a constitution early in 1831, and, in June, elected Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (1790-1865) to be *King of the Belgians*. Leopold's candidacy had been strongly promoted by Britain at a conference of the great powers in London that formally recognized Belgium's independence. As Lord Palmerston advised the conferees, "If Belgium did not exist, we would have to invent it." An Anglo-Belgian treaty of 1839 guaranteed Belgium's "perpetual neutrality."

William I refused to accept Belgium's independence and the break up of the United Netherlands. His recognition of it in 1839 was accompanied by his abdication. Many in the Netherlands welcomed both the end of the union and the departure of William I.

Luxembourg sent delegates to the Belgian National Congress in 1830, but the Prussian garrison held the fortress for the Dutch king. In 1839, the grand-duchy was partitioned, the French-speaking western portion joining Belgium and the remaining portion of the grand-duchy in the east continuing in personal union with the king of the Netherlands. Grand-ducal Luxembourg was granted a liberal constitution, allowing for a deliberative legislature, in 1848.

### **Questions/Discussion**

What were some of advantages and disadvantages for the Netherlands and for Belgium of the 15-year union?

Comment on Huizinga's contention that historical continuity in the Netherlands, north and south, had been irrevocably broken during the years of the Dutch Revolt and could not be restored.

Interpret Palmerston's dictum: "If Belgium did not exist, we would have to create it."

### **The Netherlands in the Nineteenth Century**

With the dissolution of the union with Belgium, the Netherlands experienced a resurgence of national sentiment, reflected in a literary revival, the ascendancy of liberal nationalism, and ferment within the Calvinist community. While fundamentalist orthodox Calvinists broke from the broad-based established Reformed Church, secularist liberals began redefining Dutch politics. Johan-Rudolf Thorbecke led the Liberal movement from 1849 to 1872 and

was prime minister during much of that period. He was also a leading force in adopting the liberal Constitution of 1849, which remains the Netherlands' basic constitutional document. The constitution provided for the direct election of the Second Chamber, or lower house of the States-General, which became a deliberative assembly to which government ministers were responsible. It extended suffrage and lifted disabilities on Catholics that had been in force since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The constitution also spelled out the responsibility of state to provide education under secular auspices.

The constitutional reform brought a dramatic shift from ministries appointed by the king without reference to the legislature to ministries that required the confidence of parliamentary majorities. Thorbecke's governments were opposed by conservatives not reconciled to the new constitution and by orthodox Calvinists opposed to the extension of political rights to Catholics as well as by his personal rivals within the Liberal movement. His policies were supported by the Liberal mainstream, by moderate Calvinists, and by Catholics, who had very limited representation. The more the Liberals were able to extend suffrage, the greater were the number of Catholics who appeared on the voter rolls.

Representatives of the four "pillars," or *zuilen* – Liberal, Protestant, Catholic, and Socialist, that dominated Dutch politics by the end of the century were not initially organized as political parties but as "clubs," interest groups or associations of like-minded people. Thorbecke's Liberal constituency was largely urban and middle-class, drawn from business, professional, and property-owning circles. Within their ranks were both libertarians and social liberals. Although secular in their political ideology, most Liberals were at least nominally members of the established Calvinist church. Secularism and liberal Protestantism were not incompatible.

Protestant political "clubs" were populist and claimed to represent the "small people" in the countryside. They attracted the support of orthodox Calvinists opposed to the secularism of the Liberals, and they allied themselves with conservatives against such Liberal initiatives as the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy. The first genuine political party was the Protestant Anti-Revolutionary Party founded by Abraham Kuyper in 1878. Kuyper proposed progressive social programs that prompted the party's right-wing to bolt and form the Christian Historical Union. Their defection encouraged moderate Protestants to move from the Liberal to the Anti-Revolutionary Party.

The Catholics had no club or party until late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although many were disenfranchised, they were a majority in some parts of the country and made up a large minority in the big cities. Those who could vote initially supported the Liberals because of the relief from disabilities they offered them in a Protestant-dominated system.

The trade union movement was established in the 1870-1880s by the separate pillars. The Catholic union was led by a priest, the Protestant union by a minister, and the socialist union by a former minister. The first socialist party was set up as the political arm of the socialist union in the 1890s. The socialist pillar was revolutionary, republican, and anti-clerical. In time, a struggle between social democrats and communists divided the movement.

The two biggest issues of the late-19<sup>th</sup> century were extension of the suffrage and control of education. The Liberals had sponsored reforms that extended voting rights to Catholics, the urban working-class, and Kuyper's "small people," all constituents of rival pillars. In 1887, the electorate was doubled in size, and, ultimately, the larger electorate worked to the disadvantage of the Liberals who had sponsored it.

The Constitution guaranteed freedom of education, but it recognized that the state, not the churches, had responsibility for inculcating "all Christian and Social virtues" in the schools. The Liberals wanted non-denominational secular education over which the state exercised a monopoly. The Protestants could not accept the idea of secular state-run schools teaching moral values, and the Catholics deserted the Liberals on the issue to support them.

After the 1887 election, the Anti-Revolutionaries and the Catholics formed a new government that enacted social legislation and provided subsidies to confessional schools, a system that continues in effect. The confessional parties regarded the Socialists as socially divisive because of their Marxist emphasis on the class struggle, but both maintained contact with them through the trade union movement. Socialists did not participate in government but their parliamentary support was accepted.

In 1896, the franchise was doubled again. Voting patterns were established that prevailed for the next 25 years. The Catholics regularly won 25-30% of the vote, the Protestant parties 20-25%, the Socialists 15-20%, and the Liberals, still the largest single party, 35-40%.

William II of Orange-Nassau, King of the Netherlands – and Grand Duke of Luxembourg – died in 1890 without leaving a male heir. Female succession was permitted in the Netherlands, where his daughter Wilhelmina succeeded to the throne, but not in Luxembourg at that time. Referring back to an 18<sup>th</sup>-century family pact, the *Nassau Settlement*, designed to meet such a circumstance, the head of another branch of the family, Adolph, Duke of Nassau-Weilburg and a Catholic, was designated as grand-duke and established a separate line of succession in Luxembourg.

### **Belgium in the Nineteenth Century**

Political developments in Belgium after independence in 1830 paralleled those in the Netherlands. Politically effective Belgians identified with one of three "pillars," or "spiritual families" – Liberal, Catholic, and Socialist – which also dictated social and professional associations. The Liberal party, founded in 1846, dominated Belgian politics until 1880s. Secular and anti-clerical, the Liberals favored a widened suffrage based on property qualifications and education, and also proposed to expand access to education in an exclusively state-supported school system. Representing a business-oriented urban middle-class constituency, they advocated an unimpeded market economy and free trade but also approved subsidies and public investment to support industrial development and infrastructure.

Catholic political organizations were approved by the hierarchy in the 1860s to lobby for a continuing Church role in education. A confessional political party was later established to promote Catholic education and to push for extension of voting rights, particularly to Dutch-speakers. Catholic politics had a very broad base, including support from all classes and in all regions of the country, although stronger in Flanders than in Wallonia. Catholic trade unions and business and agrarian associations supported the party, which, in turn, backed subsidies to protect smallholders and peasant farmers and public involvement in the economy to protect jobs and labor rights. The Catholic party was capable of winning parliamentary majorities from the mid-1880s until 1919 and led most coalition governments until 1999.

The Belgian Workers Party was organized in 1885 as an adjunct to the socialist trade union movement. It was a party of far left, stronger in Wallonia than in Flanders, radical rather than reformist, and called for public ownership and state intervention in the economy. The party proposed legislation for social welfare programs and employment security. The socialists cooperated with the Catholics in support on social reforms.

As in the Netherlands, extension of suffrage and reconciling the claims of secular and religious education were major issues. The Liberals were kept in power by middle-class electorate. Although the liberal constitutional reform of 1848 increased the voter rolls, smallholders, propertyless workers, and most of the Flemish countryside were largely excluded from them. Liberals were committed to further reforms that included the gradual expansion of the franchise in conjunction with the expansion of public education. The Catholics, who had organized initially to protect the role of the Church in education, campaigned for speedier enfranchisement to excluded classes. Enlarging the pool of voters invariably meant more Flemish and rural voters, which meant increased support for the Catholic party.

In office after 1884, Catholic-led governments extended suffrage to areas that further increased the party's base of support. Those governments also denied the state a monopoly in education and guaranteed the Church's continuing influence. The *libertie subsidie* (literally, subsidized "liberty") gave state funding to social institutions, including schools and hospitals, operated by organs of the "spiritual families," and entrusted them with responsibility for social welfare programs. The Church was the principal beneficiary of this policy. During a period of intense labor unrest and social strife, legislation was enacted regulating work-hours and child labor. In 1893, *compulsory* manhood suffrage was introduced, increasing the size of the electorate from 140,000 voters to 1.4 million in a single act. Plural voting (of up to three votes per person) was also allowed for those additionally qualified by education, taxable income and property, and family status. With the enfranchisement of rural and Flemish working-class masses, socially conscious Christian democrats, or *Daenists* (after the priest-politician Adolph Daens) gradually became the dominant faction within the Catholic "spiritual family," although not initially with the support of the Belgian hierarchy. Between 1894 and 1914, the Catholic party held at least two-thirds of the seats in the national legislature. During the same period, the Socialists overtook the Liberals as the second largest party and became leader of the opposition. Catholic governments won grudging Socialist support for social reforms inspired by papal encyclicals on the rights of workers, but the Catholic party opposed what it considered the divisive class conscious politics espoused by

the Socialists – as well as by middle-class Liberals. The Liberals, despite their anti-clericalism, allied themselves with the Catholics on many issues and, with Catholic backing, were successful in having *proportional representation* adopted in 1899.

In Belgium, there was another issue – language rights – that overlapped the others and became the most persistent concern of successive governments and a recurrent irritant to relations between French- and Dutch-speakers within each “spiritual family.” Although public business was conducted in Dutch in many Flemish cities, including Brussels, French had been the language of administration and justice in Belgium since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The reintroduction of Dutch as the official language in Flanders in 1823 after an absence of 300 years compromised Walloon allegiance to the United Netherlands. After independence, Dutch was again downgraded in Flanders, where its use was restricted in education and prohibited in the courts. The use of French was the vehicle for upward social mobility and professional advancement. The families of the numerous Flemish migrants to Wallonia became French-speaking Walloons in the second generation. A nationalist movement, the Flemish Meeting Party, was formed in 1862 to protest conditions in Flanders and also to lobby for recognition of the Dutch language in that region. Bilingualism was introduced in Flanders with limited success in 1873 and Standard Dutch approved as an official language in Belgium in 1898. In practice, however, French retained primacy of place in the national government. It was the only language of command in the armed forces until after World War I, and restrictions on the use of Dutch in courts of law remained in force into the 1920s. Brussels, seat of the French-speaking Belgian government, had also become by the turn-of-the-century a predominantly French-speaking city whose administration was conducted in French.

Not only had Dutch disappeared from council chambers and courts in Belgium, it had also been abandoned as a vehicle for the expression of higher culture in literature. The revival of Dutch as a literary language in Flanders was the mission of the Flemish cultural hero Guido Gezelle (1830-1899). Priest, teacher, and poet from Bruges, Gezelle demonstrated the lyric qualities of his mother tongue and taught a generation of Flemish writers to take pride expressing themselves in it.

### **Colonial Enterprises**

The government of the Batavian Republic took over control of the assets of the corrupt and poorly managed East India Company in 1798. The company’s former territories, occupied by the British during the Napoleonic Wars, reverted to the Netherlands in 1815 as colonial possessions. The administration of Java, Sumatra, and the numerous island groups that comprised the Dutch East Indies was harsh and exploitative. (The excesses of Dutch colonialism in the East Indies were vividly described in the classic novel *Max Havelaar* (1860) by Edward Douwes Dekker, who published under the penname “Multatuli.”) In 1830, for example, the so-called “culture system” was imposed in an effort to graft an export-oriented agricultural economy on traditionally self-sufficient village communities. Land and labor were commandeered to produce commodities – coffee, sugar, indigo – that were delivered by farmers to the colonial government as taxes-in-kind for export to the

Netherlands. The system was successful financially but disrupted social institutions and the traditional economy. In 1870, it was abolished in favor of leasing large tracts of land to Dutch and foreign investors. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Dutch government had formally adopted an “ethical policy” that emphasized the Netherlands’ moral responsibility of guardianship over the welfare of its colonial subjects. The reforms devised in and directed from The Hague failed to meet the growing demands of Indonesian nationalists.

It is estimated that more than 300,000 West Africans were transported as slaves to Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles from the arrival of the West India Company after 1621 until the trade was ended in 1820. Slavery was not entirely abolished on the large plantations in Surinam that produced coffee, cocoa, cotton, and sugar until 1863. The plantation economy later depended on indentured labor brought from India. There was little development in Surinam, which became a colony directly ruled by the Dutch government in 1815, outside that which facilitated the production and export of plantation-based commodities. After the turn of the century, the focus of the economy shifted away from the plantations to rice-growing smallholders, many of them Javanese whose immigration continued until the onset of World War II. The Netherlands Antilles comprised six Caribbean islands, the largest of which, Curacao, had been taken from Spain in 1634. The Dutch islands, which had earlier prospered from the slave trade, plantation-grown sugar, and smuggling, declined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Economic revival occurred only after 1918 with the opening of large refinery in Curacao and, subsequently, in Aruba to handle crude from the Venezuelan oil fields.

Leopold II (1835-1909) determined that Belgium needed overseas colonies in order to compete for raw materials and markets with other major European industrial powers. Unable to engage the Belgian government in his colonial project, the king took a private initiative by sponsoring the Committee for the Study of the Upper Congo, an agency for colonialism cloaked as a scientific and philanthropic venture to explore and study a region that was still largely a blank space on the map. Between 1879 and 1884, Leopold’s agent, the explorer Henry Stanley, concluded treaties with chiefs on the right bank of the Congo that gave the committee sovereign status in the region. Congo Free State, established in the region by another of Leopold’s front organizations, the International Association of the Congo, received international recognition, including from the United States, as an independent sovereign state, a status confirmed at the Berlin Congress in 1885. Leopold extended the borders of the Congo Free State to Katanga to block claims made there by Cecil Rhodes, but he pledged to keep the region open to private traders from all countries. Local resistance was absent, but Belgian-led mercenaries fought and won military campaigns against Arab slave traders.

Leopold, who was largely responsible for subsidizing the Congo Free State, soon appealed to the Belgian government to assume some of the financial burden. A solution was found in the *regime domanial*, a system by which land declared vacant by the free state became its property and the rubber and ivory collected there by Africans drafted for compulsory labor service became its property as well. This device netted Leopold and his associates enormous revenues but ended private trade in the region that the king had agreed to at the Berlin Congress.

The excesses committed in Leopold's Congo Free State and the oppression of its people, extreme even the standards of European colonialism in that day, would within a few years enrage international opinion and embarrass Belgium. In 1902, an international congress meeting in The Hague condemned the operation and demanded that the Belgian government assume responsibility for the Congo, which was formally annexed as a colony of Belgium in 1908 as Belgian Congo. Free trade was reintroduced and the corporation, whose profits had been available to Leopold to use at his own discretion, suppressed. Economic development became largely the responsibility of private investment by large enterprises. During the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Belgian Congo became one of the world's leading sources of copper and diamonds. Belgian colonial policy was characterized by a high degree of administrative centralization and paternalism in dealing with subject peoples. Control was entirely in the hands of the Belgian government, exercised through the colonial affairs ministry in Brussels and responsible to the Belgian parliament.

### **Questions/Discussion**

What were the social, economic, and political aims of liberalism in the Netherlands and Belgium in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

Trace the origins of the "spiritual families" in Belgium and the "pillars" in the Netherlands. What were the effects of expanding suffrage on relative strength of the pillarized political parties?

Discuss the importance of education as a political issue in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Explain Leopold II's motives in sponsoring colonialism in Africa.

### **World War I**

At the Hague Conference in 1904, the Dutch government took an initiative to establish a multilateral regime in the form of an international court of justice capable of preventing a European war. Both the Netherlands and Belgium were neutrals, the latter's neutrality guaranteed by treaty agreement with Britain and the other European powers. Dutch neutrality, however, was not guaranteed, and the Dutch recognized that their country could remain neutral in case of war only if *all* the great powers agreed to respect it. The Netherlands had an ambiguous relationship with Germany. On the one hand, the Dutch were fascinated with Germany's prestige and influenced by its culture. Anti-British sentiment was also rife in the Netherlands as a result of the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa and sometimes translated into sympathy for Britain's European rival. On the other hand, there existed a genuine fear of German intentions in the event of a European war. It was known, for example, that German plans for an attack on France, the so-called Schlieffen Plan, initially called for a swing through the southern Netherlands. Germany unilaterally proposed "neutral" status for the Netherlands, but the Dutch would agree to a German guarantee only if France ratified the agreement.

In August 1914, Germany invaded Belgium without a declaration of war. Britain honored its commitment under the 1839 guarantee of Belgian neutrality, referred to by the German foreign minister a “scrap of paper,” and joined its allies, France and Russia, in a declaration of war against Germany. The Belgian fortresses fell in the German onslaught and most of the country, including Brussels and Antwerp, was occupied, but the Belgian army remained in the field, under the command of King Albert I, and fought along side the Allies through the war.

The German administration of occupied territory was repressive by the standards of the time. A million Belgians fled as refugees, 700,000 to the Netherlands. Workers were deported and industrial plants were dismantled and shipped to Germany. The Germans tried to exploit differences between the Flemish and Walloon populations, largely without success, and backed down in front of demonstrations in Brussels protesting their proposed division of the country into separate zones of occupation. The Belgian people rallied behind the moral leadership of Cardinal Mercier, whose outspoken opposition to German policies made him the their spokesman. The population, however, was left destitute by the war and stalked by starvation. The American Commission for Relief in Belgium, expended nearly \$1 billion in aid contributed to provide food and medical supplies in occupied territories, and its director, Herbert Hoover, concluded agreements with both Britain and Germany to allow their shipment and distribution to the needy Belgians.

Belgium was at the table with the victorious Allies at the Versailles Conference in 1919 but was never included in the inner circle with the United States and the other great powers. In compensation for the destruction inflicted on it during the war, Belgium was awarded reparations from Germany. Adjustments were made to the Belgo-German border that ceded Eupen and Malmedy to Belgium, which also received a mandate to Ruanda-Urundi (Rwanda and Burundi), former German colonies. Abandoning neutrality, Belgium entered into a military cooperation pact with France.

When executed in 1914, the Schlieffen Plan was modified, the sweep of its right flank tightened to enter Belgium just below the Dutch border. The Netherlands maintained its neutrality but allowed Germany to use Dutch rail lines in Limburg to transport troops. The Netherlands also had difficulties with the Allied blockade, which could not discriminate between goods intended for its domestic market or for Germany on ships headed to Dutch ports. When the Dutch granted asylum to the German Kaiser, Belgium requested the return of Dutch Flanders and Limburg – lost in the 17<sup>th</sup> century – in compensation. The claim remained outstanding through the 1930s. A treaty negotiated between Belgium and the Netherlands in 1925 to open the Scheldt to Belgian traffic was rejected by the Dutch parliament.

Luxembourg was occupied by the Germans from the opening days of the war until the Armistice in November 1918. The next year, the grand-duchess Marie Adelaide, accused of pro-German sentiments during the occupation, was compelled to abdicate in favor of her sister Charlotte. In a referendum held in 1919 in response to a claim advanced by Belgium to annex the grand-duchy, however, overwhelmingly expressed their desire to remain an independent country under the House of Nassau-Weilburg. In 1922, Belgium and



Luxembourg established the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union, a precursor to BENELUX that linked trade and monetary policies.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Contrast the bases of Dutch and Belgian neutrality on the even of World War I. Was Dutch neutrality compromised?

Discuss the logic political coalitions in the Netherlands and Belgium in the inter-war period.

### **The Inter-War Years**

The Western Front had stretched across western Flanders from the coast near Nieuport, through Dixmunde and Ypres, to the Lys River during the entire four years of World War I and major battles were fought on that small corner of Belgian soil. Belgium had been devastated and its economy disrupted. The task of reconstruction was huge. In the first postwar election in Belgium in 1919, in which plural voting was abandoned, the Catholic party lost the absolute majority it had held since 1884. A voting pattern was established that endured for the next 20 years, the Catholics, still the largest party and strongest in Flanders, receiving 35-40% of the vote; the Socialists, strongest in Wallonia, winning 30-35%, and the Liberals and other smaller parties 25-30%. Governments, which averaged only 15 months in office during the period, were alternately Catholic-Liberal or Catholic-Socialist coalitions, always led by a Catholic prime minister. Extensive social reforms were adopted, services and benefits administered by agencies of the “spiritual families” financed under the *libertie subsidie*. Dutch was recognized as the only *official* language in Flanders, raising protests from French-speaking Belgians in that part of the country. The language controversy continued unabated and apparently defied solution. Francophone political movements and reactive Flemish movements arose that challenged parties representing the “spiritual families” in Wallonia and Flanders and that caused internal divisions in those parties. Exaggerated charges were made alleging Flemish collaboration with the Germans during the occupation. King Albert I, a war hero and national icon with whose monarchy both French- and Dutch-speaking Belgians could identify their common loyalty, was killed in a climbing accident in 1934 and was succeeded by his son Leopold III.

Following the 1918 election in the Netherlands, a Catholic-Protestant coalition government was formed, led by the C.J.M. Ruys de Beerenbrouck, the Netherlands’ first Catholic prime minister. He and the moderate Protestant Anti-Revolutionary leader Hendrikus Colijn would alternate in office throughout most of the inter-war period. Both men were deeply patriotic, Ruys de Beerenbrouck, an educator committed to social reform, and Colijn, a director of Royal Dutch Shell and editor of the newspaper *De Standaard* (who would die in a Nazi concentration camp). But the coalition was not easy to maintain. A Colijn-led government fell in 1925 when the conservative Christian Historical Union bolted the coalition in opposition to a proposal to open diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Thereafter, the confessional parties usually required the support of the Liberals to form governments, while the Social Democrats constituted the opposition. A parliamentary stalemate set in that

seemed to make elections irrelevant.. In election after election, the Catholics took 30% of the vote, the two Protestant parties divided 25%, and the Social Democrats also won 25%, while the fragmented Liberals and minor parties collected the remainder. The Protestant parties were split and found it impossible to work with the Social Democrats, and the Catholics were never comfortable cooperating with the Liberals. The Social Democrats entered the Dutch government for the first time on the eve of war in August 1939.

The Great Depression hit Belgium and the Netherlands very hard. Unemployment in both countries in 1934 reached 40%. Social insurance programs introduced during the 1920s acted as a buffer and provided some relief, but authoritarian solutions found advocates, even within mainstream democratic parties of the left and right. The Communists had very little support in Belgium and seldom attracted more than 2% of the vote in Netherlands, in both countries a testimony to the strength of the democratic socialist and confessional trade union movements. Flemish nationalists, who, in 1939, won nearly 20% of the vote in Flanders, flirted with fascism but focused on promoting Flemishness.

Leon Degrelle's *Rexist* party was francophone and fascist but portrayed itself as a "Belgian" rather than a regionalist movement. Opposed by the Church, Degrelle's attempts at an alliance with Flemish nationalists failed as did *Rexist* efforts to win support at the polls. In the Netherlands, Anton Mussert's National Socialists overtly emulated Hitler's Nazis. Its candidates received 8% of the vote in local elections in 1935, the same result achieved by the Communists. The Dutch Nazis were thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the electorate, however, when it became obvious that Germany was rearming and posed a threat to the Netherlands.

## **World War II**

Belgium and the Netherlands put trust in the efforts of the League of Nations to prevent war. Both countries cooperated in implementing proposals for disarmament, less enthusiastically with sanctions imposed by the League. Their democratic governments eyed with suspicion the challenge to democracy posed by Communists and domestic fascists and with growing concern rearmament by Nazi Germany. The Netherlands, ruler of an Asian empire, also confronted a threat posed by Japanese expansionist policies. While the Netherlands clung to a policy of traditional neutrality, Belgium, in 1936, repudiated its military cooperation pact with France and returned to neutrality for fear of being dragged in to a new European conflict. Belgium protested extension of the Maginot Line opposite its border as a provocation to Germany that would compromise its neutral status.

On May 11, 1940, Germany invaded the three Low Countries. The Netherlands fell after five days of fighting and the bombing of Rotterdam. The royal family fled into exile in England where Queen Wilhelmina appointed a Dutch government-in-exile. Her prime minister D.J. de Geer was removed from office in September, however, when it became known that he had attempted to negotiate a truce between Britain and Germany. His replacement Pieter Gerbrandy served throughout the war as head of the exiled government and also formed the first postwar Dutch government.

Belgium held out for 18 days during which its armed forces suffered 20,000 casualties. Leopold III refused to abandon his troops in the field and, after Belgium's capitulation, was held in Germany until the end of the war as a hostage for the good behavior of his subjects. The king successfully negotiated the release of Belgian prisoners-of-war but was accused of collaborating more than was necessary to accommodate German demands. Socialist leader Achille van Acker formed a government-in-exile in London. The Allies obtained access to crucially important supplies of rubber and, eventually, uranium from the Belgian Congo.

The German occupation of the Low Countries during World War II was extremely repressive. Food shortages were severe and unrelieved. Labor conscription was imposed and workers transported to Germany. Luxembourg was annexed to the *Reich* and its citizens drafted to serve in the German army. Collaboration was significant in some segments of the population, including Flemish nationalists and the fascist followers of Mussert and Degrelle. Local Nazis were placed in positions of authority, trade unions dissolved, and the economies of the three countries integrated with Germany's. Several thousand volunteers were recruited for Dutch and Belgian *SS* units. Thousands in the three countries were arrested and sent to concentration camps, where many died. Nine out of ten Dutch Jews perished in the Holocaust, and only 20,000 out of 90,000 Belgian Jews survived it.

Resistance movements were active from the start of the Nazi occupation and were increasingly effective in aiding the Allied war effort as the war continued. Dutch and Belgian units served with Allied forces throughout the war, and Dutch merchant ships sailed in Allied convoys. General strikes protesting the deportation of Dutch Jews and the retention of Dutch prisoners-of-war shut down the Netherlands in 1941 and 1943 were of symbolic value although ineffective in influencing German actions. A strike made at great risk by Dutch railway workers in 1944, however, slowed shipment of supplies and reinforcements to German forces during the Allied offensive in the Netherlands. The Low Countries were the theatre for heavy fighting in the last nine months of the war. Allied forces crossed into Belgium in September 1944. Operation Market-Garden, the failed attempt to open an early bridgehead into Germany, was conducted in the Arnheim-Nijmegen area in November, and the German offensive in the Ardennes region of Luxembourg and Belgium was halted during the Battle of Bulge in December 1944-January 1945. The Allies bombed targets in the Low Countries, and, late in the war, German V-bombs wrecked destruction on Antwerp. The Allied drive into Germany bypassed part of the Netherlands, which remained under German occupation until the end of the European war in May.

In December 1941, Japanese forces attacked the Dutch East Indies, which had been an important supplier of oil to Japan until an embargo was imposed earlier that year, defeated the Dutch naval units in the Java Sea, and completed their conquest of the islands by early spring 1942. No significant local resistance was made to the occupation, and Indonesian nationalists cooperated with the Japanese. Dutch civilians in the East Indies were imprisoned under harsh conditions for the duration of the war.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Argue the case for and against the return of Leopold III after World War II.

## The Postwar Recovery

By 1945, the productive capacity of the Dutch economy had reduced to nearly half of its 1940 level, 40% of housing had been damaged, and much of the transportation infrastructure destroyed. At the end of the war, starvation conditions existed in areas that had remained under German occupation, a consequence of deliberate deprivation of the population there. By contrast with the Netherlands, destruction of Belgium's industrial plant was relatively limited, and the United States contributed substantial loans to construction in 1945-1947. By the summer of 1947, industrial production was 15% above prewar levels, and Belgium was, for a few years, the top producer of iron and steel in Europe. Antwerp became the chief port handling supplies for Allied forces advancing into Germany and, later, for occupation forces. Belgium also benefited from a dollar surplus derived from wartime exports from the Belgian Congo. Controlling inflation and contending with labor disputes stemming from demands for higher wages were among the most pressing problems faced by immediate postwar Belgian governments. Luxembourg's industrial capacity had not been seriously impaired during the war. Problems arose, however, reintegrating manpower siphoned off by conscription into the German army and by deportation. Food and fuel shortages demanded making difficult choices in the allocation of available supplies. Price and wage controls and rationing were imposed in all three countries.

The economic recovery of the three countries in the immediate postwar years and the physical reconstruction of infrastructure depended, however, on material assistance from the United States. The European Recovery Program, better known as the *Marshall Plan*, was authorized by the United States Congress in December 1947 to fund a unified program for economic reconstruction. The Marshall Plan was administered by the United States in conjunction with the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), established in 1948 by participating European governments working together to recommend and coordinate projects. Between 1948 and 1952, the United States disbursed more than \$17 billion to provide the means for Europeans to rebuild their war-torn countries. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg received more than \$1 billion in assistance. In 1961, OEEC was replaced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to assist member governments in formulating policies promoting economic and social welfare and harmonize assistance to developing countries, using experience gained earlier administering the Marshall Plan.

Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg were founding members of the United Nations (UN). Paul Henri Spaak was named first president of the UN General Assembly in 1945, and, later, while Belgian prime minister and foreign minister, served as president of the OEEC. In 1948, the three countries ratified the *Benelux* customs union, negotiated four years earlier by the governments-in-exile, and, in quick succession, entered into a series of agreements that established the basis for European economic and political integration and security during the Cold War. That same year the Benelux Three joined Britain and France in creating the Western European Union (WEU) and, the following year, became charter members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which Belgium's Spaak and Dirk Stikker of the Netherlands were early secretaries-general.

In 1952, they joined France, Germany, and Italy in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first of the “European Communities” intended to eliminate all barriers to trade in those products. The foreign ministers of ECSC member countries met under Spaak’s chairmanship in Messina in 1955 to consider an extension of economic integration. Their negotiations resulted in the *Rome Treaties* establishing the European Economic Community (EEC, commonly referred to as the “Common Market”) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) that entered into force in 1958. Spaak is regarded as having been instrumental in locating the headquarters for the several communities in his country’s capital, Brussels. (See “European Union”)

Although the pillars remained in tact, Dutch political parties realigned after the war and postwar politics became more fluid than had been the case in the interwar period. The Labor Party (PvdA) replaced the prewar Social Democratic party. More moderate than its predecessor, the PvdA, won recruits from the ranks of left-wing social liberals and some Protestant and Catholic progressives, while retraining its base in the socialist trade union movement. The defection of the social liberals allowed the competing prewar Liberal State and Liberal Democratic parties to merge in the center-right People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD).

Postwar politics in Luxembourg returned to its prewar three-party pattern – liberals to the right, socialists to the left, and broadly based Christian democrats occupying the center of the spectrum – similar to that in Belgium and typical of the Low Countries. The Communists, however, had a relatively larger base of support in Luxembourg than in either Belgium or the Netherlands. Governments were formed either by the Christian Social People’s Party alone or by the “Social Christians” in coalition with the liberal Democratic Party. The pattern was broken only in 1974 when the Social Christians were defeated in elections and, for the first time since 1919, were out of government. The Social Christians regained power in 1979 and have led every government since that date. Pierre Werner was prime minister from 1959 to 1984, except for that four-year interval. When Werner stepped down, he was succeeded by Jacques Santer, who remained prime minister, leading a Social Christian-Socialist coalition government, until his appointment as president of the European Commission in 1995.

In Belgium, the Catholic party, dominant since 1884, was re-founded in 1945 as the Social Christian Party, which described itself as a “conservative” party in the Christian democratic tradition rather than as a specifically “Catholic” party that maintained formal ties to the Church. The Social Christians also enlisted individual members rather than, as the old party had, counting any member of a Catholic organization as automatically a party member. The Belgian Workers Party was reorganized as the Socialist Party, still strongly anticlerical and having its strongest backing in Wallonia. The Freedom and Progress Party succeeded the prewar Liberal Party. In the late 1940s, the three “spiritual families” commanded the support of 90% of the electorate. The Flemish nationalist movement, discredited by real and alleged collaboration with the Nazis, was revived only in 1960s by the moderate People’s Union (VU).

In all three countries, measures were taken after 1945 to prosecute collaborators and war profiteers. In Belgium, it was calculated that a bare 2% of the population had been active collaborators, but 75% of the 77,000 brought to trial were Flemish. Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Hitler's notorious *Reichskommissar* in the Netherlands, was arrested, found guilty by a Dutch court of war crimes, and executed. It took some time to disarm former resistance fighters, many of whom were Communists who had joined the resistance after Germany invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 and who kept their weapons after the liberation.

Compulsory military service was reestablished to build up armed forces that were reequipped in large part by the United States after 1949 to fulfill their NATO responsibilities. Dutch and Belgian units served under UN command during Korean War. Dutch troops were also deployed to suppress the nationalists and to reassert Dutch rule in Indonesia, where the nationalists, led by Sukarno, had proclaimed independence for Indonesia in 1945 and established effective control in Java and Sumatra. The Dutch government proposed creation of a decentralized "United States of Indonesia," comprised of 15 states, in partnership with the Netherlands. The nationalists conducted partisan warfare that Dutch forces were unable to contain on the main islands. Under pressure from the UN and the United States, the Dutch, in 1949, conceded sovereignty to a federal Indonesia in union with the Netherlands and withdrew Dutch and colonial troops. In 1954, Sukarno absorbed the federated states into the unitary Republic of Indonesia and unilaterally dissolved the union.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Assess the importance of the U.S. role in the economic reconstruction of Belgium and the Netherlands in the immediate postwar period. Compare the economic situations of the two countries.

The Benelux Three took leading roles in the process of European integration. Explain why they were ideally suited to that task.

### **Dutch Politics, 1945-2002**

The socialist PvdA and the Catholic People's Party (KVP) won the largest share of the vote, about 30% each, in the four general elections held in the Netherlands between 1946 and 1956. Although together the three major confessional parties, Catholic and Protestant, received half the vote, governments formed during the period were either left-center PvdA-KVP coalitions led by a Labor prime minister, Willem Drees, or center-left KVP-PvdA coalitions headed by a Catholic prime minister, Louis Beel. These governments gradually expanded the welfare state and the role of the public sector in the economy.

A shift in coalition alignment occurred in 1959 when the KVP and PvdA broke on the issue of wage policy. While Labor backed higher pay hikes to meet inflation, the KVP argued that the increases themselves would spur inflation. Between 1959 and 1965, Catholic prime ministers led broad center-right coalition governments that included KVP together with the Protestant Anti-Revolutionaries (ARP) and Christian Historicals (CHU), sometimes joined by the VVD. The Catholic-Labor coalition was revived in 1965, but the government it

produced was short-lived, collapsing the following year when the KVP rejected PvdA demands for budget-busting increases in public expenditures.

The late 1960s was a watershed in Dutch politics. Typical of the political environment in much of Europe in that era, its center of gravity shifted to the left, and the PvdA, in particular, was radicalized in keeping with the times. Hans van Mierlo founded a new party, Democrats 66 (D66), that appealed immediately to a young and better-educated, social liberal constituency. Van Mierlo argued persuasively that the traditional pillars no longer represented social, economic, and political realities in the country. At the same time, the decline in support for the confessional parties that claimed to represent the Catholic and Protestant pillars mirrored the sharp decline in church attendance and formal affiliation with the churches. Likewise, the secular parties seemed no longer hostile or posed a threat to religious institutions, and they made gains at the expense of the confessional parties as Catholics and Protestants voted their various social and economic interests rather than support their pillars.

Twenty-four parties presented lists in the 1967 general election, 12 of which won seats in the Second Chamber under the Netherlands' no-threshold system of proportional representation. Although both parties lost seats, the KVP and PvdA, retaining 79 seats out of 150 between them, remained, by far, the largest parties. Catholic Piet de Jong formed a center-right coalition government that included his party, ARP, CHU, and VVD. As support for the three main confessional parties continued to diminish, they formed an electoral alliance, the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), that presented candidates on a common list in the 1972 election. The alliance parties joined the PvdA, D66, and small leftist parties under Labor prime minister Joop den Uyl in a left-center coalition government. CDA cooperation with the left floundered in 1977 over the issue of land ownership and property taxes. CDA leader Andries van Agt would have preferred to continue in coalition with the PvdA but was rebuffed and agreed instead to lead a center-right coalition with the VVD. The relationship was a rocky one. The VVD demanded spending cuts opposed by the CDA, and the CDA resisted tax cuts proposed by the VVD.

The parties of the CDA formally merged as a united party in 1980 in anticipation of elections the next year. Despite – or, perhaps, because of gains made by the VVD in 1981, the CDA and PvdA put aside deep differences between their leaders to form the next government. But disagreement between the coalition partners on economic policy, employment schemes, taxation, defense spending, and cruise missile deployment quickly eroded any spirit of cooperation that may have existed, and the government fell within six weeks of its formation. It was succeeded by a CDA-VVD coalition, led by Ruud Lubbers, that governed the Netherlands ably for next eight years. Lubbers was a young and attractive political leader, the Jesuit-educated son of a wealthy Rotterdam family, who had risen quickly through the hierarchy of the old KVP. His center-right government introduced tax reforms and market-oriented economic programs that were in tune with the Reagan-Thatcher decade, but compromises made in these areas by factions within the governing parties and divided personal loyalties placed strains on the coalition.

In 1988, after long and difficult negotiations between the two government parties – and between the government and the two parliamentary parties that required trade-offs by all sides, the government introduced a budget that made drastic reductions in spending for social entitlements to compensate for lowering taxes. However, the government significantly altered the enabling legislation in deference to opposition from the opposition PvdA, which, as the largest single party in the Second Chamber, held the largest number of seats on parliamentary committees. VVD members of parliament, who had been elected on a platform of welfare-state and tax reform, were outraged and felt betrayed by the government that they had supported and, especially, by the VVD members of that government.

The plot thickened the next year when environmental legislation that had been initiated by the VVD and had been a long time in preparation was introduced. The bill, consented to by VVD ministers in the government, included increased tax-at-pump on fuel. The VVD had carefully cultivated a “green” image, but VVD members of parliament had also campaigned on a platform in the last election that committed them not to agree to any new taxes. Finding the bill’s revenue provisions unacceptable, they voted as a bloc against the bill and, in effect, brought down the government in which their party participated.

In the general election that followed in 1990, the VVD gained seats but was left out of the next government. Lubbers succeeded in forming a CDA-PvdA coalition government, although both parties had lost seats. The CDA and PvdA suffered severe losses in local elections and, in the 1994 general election, were both clearly the losers, dropping 20 and 12 seats respectively. The PvdA slumped to 25% of the vote, the CDA to only 23%, together a loss of 40% of the votes received in the previous election. The CDA, reduced to 34 seats in the Second Chamber, was disregarded as a candidate for participation in the next government. Wim Kok, the moderate and very pragmatic leader of the PvdA, whose party was the second biggest loser in election, cobbled together, after three-months’ negotiations, a new government together with the two winners, the VVD and D66. The former had gained nine additional seats with 20% of the vote, the latter had picked up 12 with 16%. Hans van Mierlo, the founder of D66 who had campaigned to move Dutch politics beyond pillarization, was appointed foreign minister, entering the first government in more than 75 years to be formed without participation by a confessional party.

The CDA was tired, and the electorate was tired of the CDA. Lubbers had stepped down before the election from the leadership of the party that had been considered indispensable to forming any government, replaced by Eeclo Brinkman, who was colorless and not well known. Many of the party’s traditional constituency shifted their support in 1994 to the VVD, D66, or to the small, conservative Protestant parties. Among them, many elderly voters were lost when the CDA proposed reductions in pensions. Enthusiasm for its issues – for example, advocacy of “family values” -- had faded, and the party conceded to legislation further legitimizing euthanasia, drug use, abortion, gay rights, and different interpretations of “family.” To some observers, it appeared that the idea of Christian democracy as distinct from the socialist left and the liberal right was dead in the water.

The Lubbers government had decided to send Dutch troops to take part in the UN’s peacekeeping operations in Bosnia. Perceived as a commitment to defend human rights in a



war-torn corner of Europe, the decision was backed by very broad parliamentary approval. The Dutch military command was, at the time, reluctant to undertake the mission, but, in September 1994, on the Kok government's watch, a 400-man battalion was deployed to Srebrenica, a UN-designated "safe area." The unit was poorly trained and equipped to maintain a peace that did not, in fact, exist. Later the next year, shortly before it was scheduled to pull out, the Dutch garrison tasked to protect the city's Muslim population was, in effect, taken hostage by the large, well-armed Serb force besieging Srebrenica that then proceeded to massacre more than 7000 of those who had sought refuge there. Amidst recriminations within the defense ministry and armed forces, investigations were immediately launched to determine responsibility for the tragedy. A parliamentary commission concluded subsequently that the Netherlands bore responsibility for the events surrounding the fall of Srebrenica. Dutch politicians, it found, had "failed" in their responsibilities by dispatching a force inadequately prepared and supported for the mission assigned to it in Bosnia. Dutch military commanders were also signaled out for criticism of their conduct of the operation. No blame was attached to the soldiers of the Dutch battalion.

The two larger coalition partners, the PvdA and VVD, gained eight and seven seats respectively in the 1998 general election, more than offsetting D66 losses. Kok's government coalition had a comfortable parliamentary majority and won a clear mandate to continue in office. The Green Left doubled its share of the vote, but the VVD, which had a strong "green" plank in its own platform, vetoed its suggested participation in the government. It was clear during the campaign that the CDA did not want to take part in government, and its leader Jaap de Hoop Scheffer admitted that the party was "not ready" to return to office. The CDA managed to win only 18% of the vote, the total vote for confessional parties barely reaching 25%. The secular center-right received 35%, the socialist and "green" left 40%.

Kok formed a new PvdA-VVD-D66 government in only three days of bargaining. Frits Bolkestein, always considered too "Anglo-Saxon" and insufficiently "European," was gradually eased out as VVD leader into "active exile" as an EU commissioner and was replaced by Hans Dijkstal, a less argumentative figure who enjoyed better relations with Kok than his predecessor. Van Mierlo resigned from the government and party leadership because of ill-health and was succeeded by Thom de Graaf. Kok II won high marks for its skillful handling of the economy.

D66, which had attracted under 10% of the vote in the last election, introduced legislation to adopt "direct democracy" in the form of initiatives, compulsory referenda, and recalls to veto acts of parliament, a long-standing objective of the party that van Mierlo had founded to decentralize authority in the Netherlands. The VVD had also signed on to the project in the two parties' joint platform in 1998. The measure was accepted in the Second Chamber, but it was resisted in the First Chamber by a handful of VVD members and was defeated there by a single vote that deprived it of the two-thirds required for passage of a constitutional amendment. As a result, in May 1999, D66 withdrew from the government. Kok remained in office at the head of a PvdA-VVD caretaker government, planned for a new election in the autumn, but also kept open consultations with D66. A compromise was worked out that

allowed for enactment of legislation providing for non-binding “consultative” referenda, and D66 reentered the government.

In April 2002, only a month before the scheduled general election, the Kok government suddenly resigned. The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, an academic research organization that it had tasked seven years earlier to investigate the conduct of the Srebrenica operation, had issued a report running into several thousand pages that detailed the flawed political decisions and military planning that had contributed to the disaster in Bosnia. The report sparked an acrimonious argument among ministers, many of whom were also in the cabinet in 1995, who denied or allocated blame. Jan Pronk, PvdA environment minister who had been minister for overseas development in 1995 and not directly involved in decisions bearing on Srebrenica, assumed a share of the blame as having been part of the government, and he resigned. Kok argued that the resignation of one minister unilaterally implicated the whole government collectively. The Kok government remained as a caretaker until a new government could be named after the May 2002 general election, but Kok himself stepped down as party leader and PvdA standard-bearer in the election in favor of Ad Melkert.

The 2002 election campaign focused on immigration and the integration of immigrants into Dutch society, questions of growing concern to the public that Dutch politicians had been reluctant to confront in the past. In a few months, Pym Fortuyn, a journalist and media personality, played on that concern to transform the local populist party, Liveable Rotterdam, that he founded to contest city elections into a national personalist party, List Pym Fortuyn (LPF), arguing that non-European immigrants threatened the liberal Dutch social values and cultural norms. Other parties scrambled to pick up on an issue that had struck a sensitive nerve in the country. Little more than a week before the May 15 vote, Fortuyn was assassinated (– the first political assassination in the Netherlands since Johan de Witt was lynched by a mob in 1672.) To Fortuyn’s popular appeal across the country was now added a sympathy factor for the LPF after his death.

What followed on election day was a veritable “earthquake” in Dutch political history. With nearly 80% of the potential electorate voting, the LPF emerged as the second largest party, coming from nowhere to capture 17% of the vote and 26 seats in the Second Chamber. The CDA bounced back remarkably to reclaim by a large margin its position, lost in 1994, as the largest party, winning 28% of the vote that gave the party 43 seats. The government parties were devastated: The PvdA, VVD, and D66 lost half of the vote they had received in 1998, together garnering less than a 36% share. The LPF carried constituencies as diverse as the Rotterdam-Schiedam area, The Hague, Dordrecht, the Amsterdam-Haarlem area, Breda, Zwolle, and Flevoland. The PvdA kept constituencies in Amstertdam, Utrecht, and in Friesland and Groningen. Otherwise, the CDA prevailed most other constituencies across the Netherlands. Part of the CDA’s success was attributed to a conservative backlash against the previous government’s permissive social policies. The CDA won back voters lost earlier to the VVD, while the LPF profited from defections among traditional PvdA voters, especially in working-class sections of Rotterdam.

CDA leader Jan Peter Balkenende was tapped to form a new government, coalition crafted through “quiet consensus” with the VVD to include the leaderless LPF that took office in

July. While the government ignored most of the LPF's more radical legislative proposals, it quickly introduced popular measures to restrict immigration and to require Dutch language training for those applying for residence in the country. Balkenende, a Protestant who had worked earlier in his career for a Christian radio network, had opposed legislation loosening regulations on euthanasia and drug use and, during the campaign, had adopted a tough line on immigration. Dijkstal and Gerrit Zalm, the highly regarded finance minister in the previous government, retained positions in the new government. The LPF was a one-man band now led by incompetent nonentities who began to quarrel among themselves and with other members of the government no sooner than it had been formed. There was no certainty that the LPF's parliamentary party would be disciplined enough to vote as a bloc, and some wondered if Fortuyn himself, a maverick by nature, would have wanted to be in government if he had lived. "The spirit of a dead man," it was remarked, was "hardly a sound manifesto" for a political party. Peter Langendam, an LPF minister, embarrassed the government when he accused the left of being responsible for Fortuyn's murder. Another LPF minister left office. The antics of the LPF in government cost it dearly in public opinion polls. Most analysts had given the unlikely three-party coalition no more than two years in office. That estimate proved to be optimistic. By October, Balkenende had reached the limits of his tolerance for the LPF. Regarding it as no longer workable, and tendered his government's resignation to Queen Beatrix. A general election was set for January 22, 2003.

### **Belgian Politics, 1945-2002**

In the first five years after the end of World War II, Belgium was governed by a grand coalition of the parties of the "spiritual families," Socialist-led under Achille van Acker. The state assumed close oversight of the economy, and the groundwork was laid for the welfare state with enactment of the *Social Pact*. Voting rights were extended in 1948 to women to the evident advantage of the Social Christians, who governed alone from 1950 to 1954. With the exception of the years 1954-1958 and one brief period in the 1960s, leadership of Belgian governments, formed in varying coalitions with Liberals, Socialists, and "linguistic" parties would remain in the hands Social Christians until 1999 under a succession of Flemish prime ministers – among them Leo Tindemans, Gaston and Marc Eyskens, Wilfrid Martens, and Jean-Luc Dehaene. In election after election, the Social Christians and Socialists each received over 30% of the vote, the Liberals averaging 20%.

Belgium experienced a reorientation of its economy as postwar industrial growth was focused on Flanders. Easy access to the reopened port of Antwerp and a willing work force attracted private investment from abroad for "new" industries. Meanwhile, traditional heavy industry in Wallonia was becoming increasingly redundant, the victim of worn-out plant facilities, mines that were too expensive to operate profitably, and labor unrest. Flanders soon outstripped Wallonia in output and tax revenue produced as the region already had in population. For the Flemish, the policy of equalization of public investment in the two regions meant throwing taxes raised in Flanders down a dark hole to subsidize inefficient industries in Wallonia. For Walloons, selfish Flemish arguments about efficiency and cost effectiveness meant the destruction of Wallonia's industrial job base. The debate split the "spiritual families" along linguistic lines.

Divisions between the two regions and their respective linguistic communities were also reflected in the debate over the *royal question*. Leopold III, who had chosen to remain with his troops rather than flee into exile in 1940, had been kept by the Germans first under house arrest at Laeken, the royal residence, then to the castle at Sigmaringen, where he spent of the war years, and, finally, to Austria, where the king was liberated by American forces. Not allowed by Prime Minister van Acker to return home, Leopold stayed an exile in Switzerland. His brother, Prince Charles, was named regent in Belgium. Those opposing Leopold's return, including Socialist leaders van Acker and Paul-Henri Spaak, charged that the king's authority had been compromised by his alleged collaboration with the Germans. The Socialists were joined in their opposition by the Liberals and the Communists, who had won 10% of the vote in first postwar election, and by a majority of public opinion in Wallonia and Brussels. The Social Christians and a majority of Flemish public opinion favored the king's return. It was not uncommon for Walloons to denounce the Flemish generally as well as the king as collaborators. The debate was limited, however, to discussion of Leopold's personal qualifications to be king and not – at least, by most of his opponents -- of the future of the monarchy.

A referendum was held in 1949 on the issue whether or not Leopold would return to Belgium and continue to reign as King of the Belgians. Leopold, whose cause was not helped by his abrasive personality, claimed he would feel justified in returning if the “yes” vote was 55%. Spaak set the figure acceptable for receiving him back at 67%. The results showed 57.68% of the country favoring the king's return, but there was a great and telling disparity between the vote in the two regions and in Brussels that underscored divisions between Walloons and the Flemish that were even more striking than the division among the “spiritual families.” While 72% of voters in Flanders called for Leopold's reinstatement, it was opposed by 58% in Wallonia and 52% in Brussels. Admitting that it was the mission of the monarchy to provide the symbol behind which the nation could unite, Leopold left it to the parliament to interpret the will of the Belgian as expressed in the referendum. In 1950, he abdicated, making way for his son Baudouin (Boudewijn) succeed him when he came of age the following year.

In 1952, parliament enacted an education reform proposed by the Social Christian government that formally recognized a system of Church-run “free” schools that received state support with few restrictions attached and operated parallel to the secularized state school system in which religious education was prohibited. In 1954, the new Socialist-Liberal government overturned the reform. The Socialists argued bluntly that the working class was not sufficiently sophisticated to be conscious of its socio-economic status because of the primacy of religion in the lives of many of them and that Church-run schools had been the principal means of pulling the working class into the Catholic pillar. Revocation of the education reform was, therefore, a means of attacking the opposition's political base.

Catholics protested the move in massive, well-organized rallies across the country that drew hundreds of thousands participants. In 1958, the Social Christian-Liberal government won passage of the compromise School Pact that introduced a “market solution” to funding education. Schools, whether secular or religious, were thereafter funded according to the number of students enrolled in them. The School Pact was a clear victory for Catholics over

the secular parties and demonstrated the tremendous ability of the Church and its political allies to mobilize public support.

The Belgian Congo was ruled by a highly centralized administration directed from Brussels. Despite the introduction of elected municipal councils in 1957, demands for a greater measure of local self-government were largely ignored. Protest against the slow pace of change by political groups, based on ethnic ties, exploded when French colonies were granted independence in 1958. In January 1959, Patrice Lumumba, leader of one of those groups, the National Congolese Movement, openly called for independence amid violence that broke out in Leopoldville. One year passed before the Belgian government called a conference of leaders of rival groups in Brussels later to consider the future direction of the colony. Under pressure from Congolese leaders, the government and conferees agreed to set June 30, 1960 as the date for independence. The Independent Congo Republic was proclaimed as scheduled, but conditions there rapidly disintegrated as rival leaders and regional separatists struggled for control. A multilateral peacekeeping force was dispatched by the UN Security Council as Belgian armed forces and settlers were withdrawn. The colonial episode in Belgian history ended finally in 1962 when Ruanda-Urundi became independent as the countries of Rwanda and Burundi.

In 1960, Gaston Eyskens' center-right Social Christian-Liberal government introduced an austerity budget package, or *loi unique* (single law), authorizing tax increases and decreased public expenditures for social programs, as well as cuts in subsidies to the coal mines in Wallonia. The package also included a five-year plan for industrial expansion that called for greater labor flexibility. The Socialist trade union in Wallonia called a general strike to protest the "*loi inique*" ("evil law"), and appealed to the Flemish unions to support the action. The Catholic trade union, which accounted for more than half the union membership in Flanders, refused to cooperate, and the strike failed, after a two-month work stoppage, to win concessions from the government.

Walloon trade unionists saw the Flemish refusal as a betrayal of working-class interests, but the issue developed into one less concerned with labor policy or the class struggle than with rival regionalisms. Socialist labor leaders demanded the division of Belgium and autonomy for their region, arguing that francophone Belgians could no longer trust an existing political system in which "clerical, conservative Flanders can impose its will on socialist, progressive Wallonia." Their protests contributed directly to the creation of regionalist political parties in Wallonia and in the Brussels area committed to protect and to promote francophone interests. The francophone parties picked up the argument for a federal Belgium that had already been advanced from the Flemish side by the People's Union.

In 1961, a Social Christian-Socialist coalition government came to office committed to reconciling differences between the two language communities and to solving the riddle of Brussels – a predominantly French-speaking city whose suburbs were expanding into the Dutch-speaking areas that surrounded it. In 1963, a revised language border and a bilingual solution for Brussels and its suburbs was presented for parliamentary approval. One purpose of both moves was to limit the further spread of francophone Brussels. The fixing of a linguistic frontier brought complaints from both French- and Dutch-speaking localities that

now found themselves of the “wrong” side of the border. Much publicized among these was the French-speaking town of Fourons (Flemish, Voerens) that was transferred from the Walloon province of Liege to the Flemish province of Limburg when the border was adjusted. The political response to these efforts was the defeat of the government parties in the 1965 general election and substantial gains for the regionalist parties that indicated the radicalization of voters in both regions on the language issue.

Simmering tensions between French-speaking and Dutch-speaking faculties and students at the Catholic University of Louvain (Leuven), located in the Flemish part of Brabant, boiled over in 1968 in acrimonious campus demonstrations that turned to violence. (A pontifical university established in 1425, it was the oldest institution of higher learning in the Low Countries.) In effect, the francophone faculties were “expelled” from the university by their Flemish colleagues. A decision was made reluctantly by the Church hierarchy and approved by the government to recognize the separation, to divide the university’s assets, including its million-volume library, and to establish two new and distinct universities, Leuven, a Flemish university that retained the facilities in that city, and “New Louvain,” a francophone university located nearby but across the linguistic frontier in the Walloon part of Brabant. Both claimed 1425 as their date of founding.

Nineteen sixty-eight was a turning point in Belgian politics. Bad feeling between French- and Dutch-speakers within the ruling Social Christian Party over the Louvain/Leuven affair forced the resignation of the government. The regionalist parties were further strengthened in the election that followed. A four-month cabinet crisis ensued before Gaston Eyskens was able to patch together a new government composed of divided Social Christians and the Socialists. Seven more governments would be formed in the next 12 years, and all fell as a direct result of disagreements over the language question. Provoked by the university crisis as well as differences over the platform in the general election, the Social Christian Party also split in two in 1968, and there would be thereafter two entirely separate Christian democratic parties, the Flemish CVP and the Walloon PSC. In 1972, the Liberals similarly shattered in three, separate parties being formed in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels, and the Socialists in 1978 broke along linguistic lines. The constellation of parties representing the “spiritual families” – Catholic, liberal, and socialist – now numbered seven, each of which would bargain separately for inclusion in government. The possibilities for including parties outside the “spiritual families” broadened to include regionalist parties, and the Communists were left as Belgium’s only bilingual party. The cabinet was divided equally between Walloons and Flemish, overlapping party affiliations, and dual ministries established, a practice formalized in the constitution in 1971.

That same year a giant step was taken toward devolution of responsibilities from the national government to sub-national authorities. A constitutional reform recognized three *cultural communities* -- French, Dutch, and German – each of which had executive and legislative councils (elective after 1984) responsible for education, culture, and other language-related policies. The revisions to the constitution were a statement of intent indicating the direction that future reforms would take.

Leo Tindemans, a conservative Flemish Social Christian, formed a six-party coalition in 1977 that linked the four Social Christian and Socialist parties together with the Flemish VU and the Brussels francophones, the Democratic Front, determined to draft a solution to the language question, demands for regional autonomy, and the status of Brussels, which, by its very nature, would be both radical and a compromise among competing interests. The result was the *Community Pact* of 1977-1978, which embodied the agreements negotiated in *Egmont Pact* calling for a five-tier system of government that included the national government, three regional governments, three cultural communities, the provinces, and the communes. It was regarded as a masterpiece of political accommodation, but it failed approval. For unitarians, it sacrificed too much of national sovereignty; for federalists, devolution under the plan was inadequate; and, for regionalists, it failed to meet all of their demands. Tindemans, a “universalist” determined to reconcile national and regional interests, failed to carry his own party with him in an intense struggle for its soul with his rival, Wilfrid Martens, a federalist. The Socialist Party split, the government fell, and a general election was called.

The 1978 election was inconclusive, and, except that the VU lost votes in Flanders because of its support for the pact, there was little change in the relative strength of the major parties. The focus of the election, however, was not state reform but rather the economy and unemployment. After three-months of negotiations that tested various formulas for coalitions, Martens succeeded in forming a five-party government that included both Social Christian and Socialist parties and the Democratic Front. It was one of nine governments that Martens would lead between 1979 and 1992 that sometimes included a regionalist party.

The devolution of responsibility from the national government to the regions and communities intended in the Community Pact was implemented incrementally. In 1980, a constitutional reform modified previous agreements on devolution, opening the way for the creation of the Brussels “Capital Region” and the shift of fiscal responsibility to the three regions – Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels in 1984 and negotiations leading to the comprehensive *St Michel Agreement* of 1992. But the period between the failure of the Egmont Pact and the agreement at St Michel was marked by continuous contention over the linguistic-regional divide that compromised the stability of successive Belgian governments. In 1981, for example, the government’s rejection of a demand by the Walloon Socialists, a coalition partner, to return Fourons to Liege led to its resignation and a general election. Jose Happart, the mayor of Fourons, became a symbol of francophone defiance of Flemish-led national governments and polled the largest single personal preference vote in the country in the 1984 election to the European Parliament.

Government formation became more difficult. After the 1987 general election, it took a hundred days to form Martens VII, a three-party Social Christian-Flemish Liberal coalition that lasted barely three months. Its successor, Martens VIII, was a broadly based, five-party coalition that included Social Christians, Socialists, and the VU and provided the two-thirds parliamentary needed to enact constitutional reforms. That government, which survived for more the three years, failed to produce the anticipated reforms and fell when the VU walked out to protest government approval of sales by “Walloon” arms-makers to a Middle Eastern buyer. Martens IX, which reprised the four-party Social Christian-Socialist coalition,

collapsed after four days in September 1991. Walloon ministers threatened to block a telecommunication contract for Flemish companies unless Flemish ministers approved use of proceeds from television licenses to increase pay for francophone teachers in Wallonia, who were out on strike and whose pay raise had been blocked in parliament by the Flemish parties because an equivalent raise had not been asked for teachers in Flanders. Such was the state of relations between Flemish and Walloon ministers that the one would not talk to Walloon journalists and the other refused to appear on television with Flemish colleagues. The king refused to accept Martens' resignation because of the impossibility of forming a new government and asked him to carry on as a caretaker until the next general election.

The total Social Christian share of the vote in 1992 dropped six points to 25% nationally, the lowest since the modern party system based on the "spiritual families" had developed. Martens was personally discredited in the CVP because he conceded too much to the PSC, which won less than 7% of the vote. The Walloon Socialists were secure in their region despite the reaction to corruption in the party leadership, but both socialist parties campaigned on platforms that were more nationalistic and, therefore, more divergent than in earlier elections. The salient issue was neither devolution nor unemployment but concern about immigration by non-Europeans to Belgium. The xenophobic Flemish Bloc (VB), whose motto was "Fight Back," overtook the moderate VU in Flanders, while even the Walloon Liberals campaigned to "Stop the Invasion." But the election campaign was marked by indifference and disenchantment with the established parties. Twenty-five percent of voters were "undecided" only three days before the election. One consequence of voter apathy – and, perhaps, a "vote-for-Mickey-Mouse" reaction to compulsory voting – was the election of four candidates from the Van Rossem List, a personalist slate put up by a wealthy heroin addict, seeking parliamentary immunity from conviction on a narcotics indictment, who campaigned to abolish marriage and the monarchy – and to legalize drugs.

Jean-Luc Dehaene succeeded Martens, whose protégé he had been, as leader of the CVP. He was credited with having held the party together in 1987 but had stepped aside then for Martens. Dehaene had risen through the ranks of the Catholic trade union movement in Flanders and was regarded, depending on the task, as the CVP's "carthorse" or its "bulldozer." With "reluctance," Dehaene agreed to form a four-party government of "losers" with the Social Christian and Socialists that was short of the two-thirds majority required to initiate constitutional reform. Supported by the Liberals and Greens, Dehaene pushed through approval of revisions to the constitution in 1993 based on the St Michel Agreement that provided for reform of the national legislature and the five-tier solution to the questions of devolution and language policy envisioned earlier in the Egmont Pact. Equalization of funding to the regions was ended. Regional debt was absorbed for one time by the national government, allowing regional governments to start business with a clean slate. Subsequent funding would be on the basis of tax revenues received from the regions and of outstanding need.

In 1993, King Baudouin died suddenly while on holiday in Spain. Often called the "only Belgian" and whose image transcended regional and linguistic differences in his realm, the passing of a beloved king was deeply mourned by his subjects. Baudouin was succeeded by his brother Albert.



Approval of the state reform – as far as it went – was confirmed in the 1995 general election. Dehaene formed a multi-party coalition that included Social Christians and Liberals. Guy Verhofstadt, leader of the Flemish Liberals who had been budget minister in the last Martens government, was named deputy prime minister. The government was forced to confront a public debt equal to 135% of GDP and demands from the regions, which started with a clean slate but were running up their own debt, and, particularly, from Wallonia for assistance for health and education.

Debt reduction was impressive but failed to lower ratio below 100%. Efforts were made to fine tune the state reform and, especially, to clarify relationships among the five tiers of government.

The 1999 general election was viewed as a turning point in Belgian political history. The results were close, but, for the first time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Liberals outpolled the party representing the Christian pillar in Flanders, the former winning 14.3% of the vote and CVP 14.1%. The Socialist and regionalist parties lost votes as well as did the Social Christians, who were excluded both from the national and the regional governments, all now led by Liberals. Verhofstadt formed a six-party government that included Flemish and Walloon Liberals, Socialists, and Greens and provided a comfortable parliamentary majority.

Political allegiances were seen as being in transition, and adherence to a “spiritual family” could no longer be taken granted. Voters had become pragmatic and unpredictable. A large floating vote had emerged, and observers anticipated that voting patterns were likely to change from election to election in future. Furthermore, the leadership of the CVP, longer regarded as the natural party of government in Belgium, was exhausted. In the months following the elections, political parties splintered, merged, attempted to rearrange profiles, and changed their names.

The Verhofstadt government unveiled an economic stability program intended to balance the federal budget in 2002 and create a surplus by 2005. Rising regional debt complicated the calculations. The *Lamberton Accords*, meant to be the capstone on the process of devolution, were approved in 2001 for implementation in 2002. Appeals by the regions pending in court stalled imposition of the accords, which were certain to be an issue in the 2003 general election.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Explain the importance of Christian democratic or confessional parties in the Benelux countries since 1945. Account for their apparent decline in the 1990s. What is likely to be their role in the current decade?

Outline the background to the “language question” in Belgium. Why is devolution regarded as an appropriate answer?

Give the rationale for *pillarization*. In what ways did it contribute to national unity? In what ways may it have detracted from national solidarity.

Account for the relative volatility of Dutch and Belgian politics in the 1990s.

What are the most important social and economic issues confronting the Benelux countries at the “turn-of-the-century”? Do they have political solutions?

### **Suggested Reading**

See “Selective Bibliography”.

## **POLITICS and GOVERNMENT**

Politics and government in the Benelux countries today share many characteristics. They are constitutional monarchies based on the hereditary succession of the monarch. They are parliamentary democracies whose legislatures are elected by systems of proportional representation that encourage multi-party participation in the political process. Governments are responsible to parliamentary majorities and are invariably broadly-based coalitions. The Netherlands and Luxembourg are unitary states, however, while Belgium is the most decentralized country in Europe.

### **The NETHERLANDS**

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy, whose king or queen have, since 1868, named only those governments that have majority support in the Second Chamber. During World War II, with the parliament suspended and many political leaders in prison or underground, Queen Wilhelmina signed or refused to sign decisions made by the government-in-exile based on her own judgment of what was needed. After the war, however, the monarch returned to being a purely symbolic head of state. The reigning monarch, Queen Beatrix, is greatly respected for her ability to walk the fine line of speaking out on moral issues without getting in the way of elected politicians or becoming ensnared in party disputes.

The cornerstone of Dutch government is the national legislature, the States-General (*Staten-Generaal*), which is composed of an upper house, the First Chamber (*Eerste Kamer*) and a more powerful lower house, the Second Chamber (*Tweede Kamer*). The 150 members of the Second Chamber are chosen directly by the voters in elections held no more than four years apart. The Second Chamber is called upon to handle between 250 and 300 bills in a typical 10-month parliamentary session.

There are about thirty standing committees in the Second Chamber, plus a number of other committees that make rulings on procedural matters. Committees in both chambers are formed so as to reflect party strengths in the chamber as a whole, but committee chairmanships are also spread among the political parties in accord with their parliamentary strength, regardless of whether or not the party participates in the governing coalition.

There may be as many as a dozen parties represented in the Second Chamber. Elected members of a party form a group (*fractie*) whose task is to coordinate the development of party positions on various issues. There has been a significant increase in party discipline in voting on legislative proposals. Surveys of Second Chamber members show that they view themselves primarily as representatives of their party's voters and, consequently, feel bound to vote the party line under most circumstances. Party discipline is so great that few recorded votes are taken in the Second Chamber.

Legislation passed in the Second Chamber must also receive approval in the First Chamber, which is composed of 75 members elected to 4-year terms by the members of the *Provincial States* (state assemblies). Bicameralism came to the Netherlands in 1815 with establishment of the First Chamber as a body appointed by the monarch. The original purpose of the chamber was to guarantee the Belgian aristocracy a voice in government, when their provinces in the south were merged into the Kingdom of the United Netherlands. The composition of the First Chamber was transformed in 1848 when royal appointment was replaced with election of members by the Provincial States. The number of representatives allotted to each province is proportionate to their share of the national population. Consequently, the composition of the First Chamber does not differ in regional balance from that of the Second Chamber. The balance among parties, however, reflects the compositions of the states assemblies and may differ from that the Second Chamber. (See Figure, “The Netherlands: Legislature and Government.”)

#### Provinces of the Netherlands

	<u>Provincial Capitals</u>
Drenthe	Assen
Flevoland	Lelystad
Friesland	Leeuwarden
Gelderland	Arnhem
Groningen	Groningen
Limburg	Maastricht
North Brabant	’s-Hertogenbosch
North Holland	Haarlem
Overijssel	Zwolle
South Holland	The Hague
Utrecht	Utrecht
Zeeland	Middelburg

The First Chamber does not have the right either to initiate legislative proposals or to amend them. Consequently, the choices faced by the First Chamber are essentially either to accept the bill as it stands or to reject it entirely. As a result of its limited powers, the First Chamber does not subject legislation to the same exhaustive technical and partisan analysis that goes on in the Second Chamber. The First Chamber normally meets just one day per week, and 80 percent of its members pursue a career outside politics while serving as Senator. The upper chamber may be accused of unnecessary duplication of legislative scrutiny when it accepts a law as proposed and of undemocratic interference with the directly elected Second Chamber when it rejects a law. Even so, the First Chamber does on occasion reject major pieces of proposed legislation, such as a bill to liberalize abortion in 1976 and a bill to establish referenda in 1998.



The Dutch government (*regering*) is formally composed of the monarch and the ministers. In practice, the ministers alone exercise the prerogatives of government; they are known collectively as the *ministerial council*, or cabinet. The ministerial council is composed of fourteen members, including the *minister-president* (prime minister), twelve ministers who each head one of the bureaucratic departments, and one minister without portfolio whose task is to press for interdepartmental cooperation on assistance to third world countries. Postwar ministries attest to the issues of a densely populated and increasingly affluent country; for example, Housing and Space Planning (1945); Culture, Recreation, and Social Work (1952); and Public Health and Environmental Protection (1971).

The ministers were originally advisers to the monarch, who consulted them as seen fit. Today, the responsibilities of the ministerial council include negotiating treaties and naming judges, provincial governors and mayors. Most importantly, the ministerial council develops draft legislation to submit to the First and Second Chambers of the States General.

The ministerial council is led by the minister-president, who is head of government and usually the leader of the dominant party in the governing coalition. The minister-president chairs the ministerial council, sets its agenda, and determines its schedule of meetings. He also concludes the council's deliberations on a given issue by formulating a resolution that will achieve consensus agreement among the ministers. The powers of the minister-president have grown by virtue of his role on the European Council, a body composed of EU heads of state that meets twice per year and sets the basic direction of EU policy. (See "Participation in EU Institutions.")

Even so, the powers of the minister-president remain modest in comparison with the British prime minister or the German chancellor. As head of a coalition government, the Dutch minister-president cannot shuffle ministers with the impunity of a British prime minister, nor can he command a minister to follow a particular policy, as the German chancellor often can. The Dutch ministerial council meets in advance of European Council summits to determine what the minister-president may and may not agree to during the discussions. The power of the minister-president derives not from ability to command or to decide, but it stems rather from the ability to find policy formulations acceptable to all parties in the coalition and, ideally, all ministers in the cabinet. The successful minister-president must above all be skilled in the art of identifying compromise positions. As Ruud Lubbers, who served as minister-president in three governments between 1982 and 1994, described the job, "People often argue in order to get their way; I argue primarily to find solutions that others can agree with." Unlike heads of government in most other parliamentary systems, the Dutch minister-president is still a "first among equals."

Nearly all draft laws examined in the Second Chamber are developed in the bureaucratic departments and reviewed in the ministerial council before being formally submitted to the Second Chamber. Although the Second Chamber has the right to initiate legislative proposals on most topics, it does so only about a half dozen times per year. Fewer than one hundred chamber-initiated bills have passed since 1813, though the majority of that number has been passed in the last 30 years. Ninety-eight percent of all legislative proposals in the

Netherlands are initiated by the ministerial council, compared to an average of under 60% in other European parliamentary democracies. About 95% of the 250 to 300 bills submitted annually by ministers are ultimately passed, though many of them only after being amended.

Given the dominance of the ministerial council in developing legislation, the high point of Second Chamber influence on the government comes during negotiations leading to the cabinet formation. After an election for the Second Chamber, a specially appointed negotiator, the *informateur*, makes the rounds of party leaders to determine which parties might participate in the next ministerial council. The *informateur* gathers information about likely coalition prospects and drafts elements of a possible coalition policy platform. As soon as the *informateur* develops a sense of the desired composition of a majority cabinet and the main areas of policy agreement within that coalition, he submits his report to the monarch. Perhaps the most important part of that report is the nomination of a *formateur*, who will complete the government formation and, most likely, become its minister-president. Among the immediate tasks of the *formateur* are to develop further the governing program, to achieve agreement on the specific division of ministries between governing parties, and to develop a list of the individuals who will occupy those seats.

The division of ministerial portfolios among the governing parties is often a contentious point. Ministries must be fairly divided between coalition partners, taking account of those that are more and less powerful. Sometimes a party will insist on controlling a specific ministry, or insist that a rival party not control a particular ministry. The major economic portfolios of Finance, Economic Affairs, and Social Affairs are usually divided among coalition partners, as are the major international departments of Defense and Foreign Affairs. It is typical for the entire process of identifying a coalition that developing a governing program (*regeerakkoord*) and assigning specific ministries to the coalition parties to requires two to three months after an election.

The Dutch civil service is organized into departments, each led by a cabinet minister and, in the case of the larger departments, one or two state secretaries (junior ministers). Given that ministers and state secretaries cannot know all that goes on within the department, they must rely upon senior civil servants to anticipate decisions that are important or that may become politically sensitive, and to bring these to the minister for a final decision. Civil servants draft regulations and legislation for review by the ministerial council and approval by the Second and First Chambers.

Senior civil servants are nearly always careerists who have worked their way up the organizational ladder of their departments. There is relatively little recruitment from industry, political and social organizations, or academia. By the time they reach the highest levels of a department, then, it is typical for civil servants to have spent their entire careers immersed in the department's work and perspectives. This is an effective strategy for maintaining an autonomous organizational culture within each department.

The Netherlands does not grant to its courts the power of judicial review. Statute law is, in effect, constitutional law. There is, however, an extensive consultation process before submission of a draft law to the Second Chamber, in which the Council of State (*Raad van*

*State*, established in 1531) offers advice on the constitutionality, technical legal quality, and likely effectiveness of proposed laws. Moreover, although statutes enacted by the legislature are not subject to judicial review, regulations promulgated by the civil service may be taken to court. Administrative courts hear over 50,000 cases per year.

The power of the courts to scrutinize governmental action is expanded still further by the constitutional provision that the judiciary may test laws against international treaties into which the country has entered, including the Treaty of Rome and the UN Human Rights Treaty. The courts may not declare a law invalid due to incompatibility with the Dutch constitution but they may do so on the grounds of incompatibility with international treaty obligations. Since the basic civil and political rights guaranteed in the Dutch constitution are all restated in similar terms in treaties to which the Netherlands is signatory, the power of testing laws against treaty obligations is a significant one. The Treaty of Rome and subsequent commitments to the EU have successfully been used as a means of attacking a number of laws and regulations related to equal pay for men and women, as well as equal benefits from the social insurance system.

### **Electoral System**

Election campaigns are relatively short and inexpensive in the Netherlands. The official electoral campaign lasts for just 43 days and consists primarily of sending parliamentary candidates to contact voters in workplaces and shopping areas, while the party leader (*lijsttrekker*, or head of the party list) makes one major appearance designed to produce a daily sound-bite for the evening news. Each party receives an hour of radio time every week and seven hours of television time per year, more time being given during the six weeks of an election campaign. Recent elections have also featured debates among the leaders of the different parties.

### **Political Parties**

Dutch political parties were traditionally categorized as being either secular or confessional (i.e., identified with a religious “confession,” or church) and represented one of the four pillars (*zuilen*): Socialist and Liberal in the “secular” camp, Protestant and Catholic in the “confessional” bloc. Although the pillars have lost most of their relevance, three major political parties trace their descent from this configuration.

Christian Democratic Appeal (*Christen-Democratisch Appel* – CDA) is a result of the 1980 merger of the Catholic People’s Party and two Protestant parties, the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the more conservative Christian Historical Union. The CDA occupies the broad center of the Dutch political spectrum and emerged, by far, as the largest party in the 2002 general election, attracting nearly 28% of the vote. That result, however, was considerably smaller than that which the three confessional parties, standing separately at the polls, could expect to receive 40 years ago. Party leader and Harry Potter look-alike Jan Peter Balkenende, a Protestant and a former economics professor, is largely credited with having



reversed the party's decline in the polls. Two small conservative Protestant parties well to the right of the CDA commanded less than 5% of the vote.

The People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (*Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* – VVD), established in 1948, assimilated the members of older liberal parties. It espouses traditional European liberal values favoring free enterprise and individual initiative but also promotes social liberalism and supports the welfare state. Hans Dijkstal, who had led the VVD since 1998, was admired by some for his ability to broker compromises. For others, however, the VVD in government compromised principle with its PvdA partners more than was necessary and lost ground in 2002 as a consequence. Dijkstal was replaced as party leader by Gerrit Zalm, the popular finance minister credited with managing an unpopular government's successful economic policy.

The Labor Party (*Partij van de Arbeid* – PvdA) is a social democratic party that was the product of a post-war merger of the old Socialist Party with left-wing confessional and social liberal groups. The PvdA, which led governments in the 1990s, was the biggest loser in the 2002 election that reduced its share of the vote to only 15%. Following the election, Wim Kok's successor Ad Melkert, an unlikely leader acknowledged to be low on charisma, stepped down in favor of the telegenic, thirty-something Wouter Bos.

The program of Green Left (*Groen Links* – GL), led by Paul Rosenmöller, combines a mix of environmentalism and socialism. The Socialist Party (*Socialistische Partij* – SP) competes for support on the far left of the political spectrum under the dynamic leadership of Jan Marijnissen. Together, in 2002, the three "socialist" parties received the votes of 28% of the electorate.

Democrats '66 (*Democraten '66* – D'66) was founded (in 1966) with the distinct aim of supplanting obsolete pillar politics with programs addressing relevant issues. The party called for devolution of power from the highly centralized national government to local governments and backed enactment of legislation through popular referenda. It has been a party beloved of intellectuals and civil servants. Admitted to government in the 1990s, D'66 seemed itself to become less relevant and declined steadily at the polls as some of its objectives were accepted into the political mainstream. Party head Thom de Graaf is widely respected as a measured and rational politician has failed to reverse his party's decline in popularity.

Liveable Netherlands (*Leefbaar Nederland* – LN) came on the national scene in 2000 as a right-wing populist protest movement that entered candidates successfully in local elections. LN focused on crime and the growing presence of unassimilated immigrants as issues ignored by the mainline parties. Pym Fortuyn split from the LN in 2001 to form the "Liveable Rotterdam" in his native city, where his personalist movement won a quarter of the vote in local elections. Fortuyn won support throughout the country and fielded a list of candidates nation-wide under the label List Pym Fortuyn (*Lijst Pym Fortuyn* – LPF) in the 2002 general election. Although Fortuyn was assassinated before the election, his personalist "list" emerged from it as the second largest "party" in the Second Chamber with 17% of the vote, pulling voters from the mainline parties and overshadowing the LN. Personal

animosities among politically inexperienced LPF ministers, dismissed by critics as “people of low breeding,” forced the resignation in October 2002 of the recently installed coalition government. The issues around which the LPF was formed remain salient, but prospects for its future as a coherent political party are dim.

The waning significance of pillar-based loyalties to parties has meant that voters are more likely to embrace such issues as strength of the economy and progress on the environment. Party leaders have also become more important as personifications of the party. Modern electoral campaigns are in large part contests between the party leaders who compete as potential prime ministers, thus personalizing party choice to an unprecedented degree. Development of the media-centered campaign—including televised debates between the major party leaders—also contribute to the growing prominence of the party leader as articulators of the party’s campaign themes. Voters have responded as never before to the appeals of particular leaders. These range from the youthful and “Kennedy-like” Hans Wiegel of the VVD in 1982, to the sober, hard-working, and slightly ruffled Christian Democrat Ruud Lubbers in 1986 and 1989, to the fatherly, moderate, inclusive Labor leader Wim Kok in 1994 and 1998, to the firebrand populist Pym Fortuyn in 2002. Each of these leaders led their parties to unprecedented electoral success by attracting support outside of the traditional constituency of that party.

Members of the Second Chamber are elected by proportional representation. Parties submit lists of candidates and the voter selects one of those lists. Each party then elects to the Second Chamber the number of nominees proportionate to the total number of votes received by the party. Since it requires only two-thirds of one percent of the vote to gain one of the 150 seats in the Second Chamber, the quota for entry of a new party is just under 60,000 votes nationwide. The electoral system makes challenges by new political parties exceptionally easy to mount.

For decades after the advent of universal suffrage in 1917, the societal organizations that made up the pillars did their part to strengthen the link between pillar loyalty and party support. It was not uncommon for the faithful to be reminded from the pulpit of their obligation to vote for the “correct” party, and these reminders were particularly forceful in Catholic churches across the country. Each pillar would support its associated political party, and each pillarized party would then be represented in the Second Chamber in proportion to its weight in the population. Party strengths varied only slightly between elections. For much of the twentieth century, the three major confessional parties could count on electoral support that closely and consistently reflected the relative strengths of each religious group in society. Similarly, secular members of the working class could be counted on to vote for the PvdA, and non-religious members of the middle class consistently supported the secular, conservative VVD.

With the decline in loyalty to the pillars, the Dutch electorate began to shift their loyalties from the traditional parties. By the mid-1960s, there was a growing pool of voters prepared to shop between the parties and to choose on the basis of issues presented in the campaign rather than on the grounds of long-standing sub-cultural commitments. The electorate was subject to three basic shifts in political orientation going on at more or less the same time:

secularization, de-confessionalization, and the decline of class conflict. Each of these trends weakened the responsiveness of the electorate to party appeals based on religion and class. Even as religious belief and social class were declining in their power to structure the vote, other issues were becoming more important to the Dutch electorate. Among the most important new issues are democratization of the political system, environmental protection, women's rights, and control of immigration and reduction of crime. New political parties sought, in some cases with considerable success, to redirect people's attention to issues that had tended to be neglected in a political system oriented to the defense of religious and class interests. The most dramatic recent example of this phenomenon is the List Pim Fortuyn, which won 17% of the votes and 26 seats in the Second Chamber in the elections of May 2002.

### **The Meaning of Pillarization**

The Liberal reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century set the stage for the main lines of Dutch politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (See "The Netherlands in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.") Threatened by Liberal policy to secularize education and by the rise of Catholic influence, Calvinist leaders began a campaign to organize popular support to protect Protestant privileges. The Calvinists mobilized as a means of revitalizing traditions of doctrinal strictness and religious fervor and also to restore the central role of Protestant belief in the nation's governance. Catholic mobilization followed in a defensive vein, drawing on a history of discrimination to persuade Dutch Catholics, who constituted a large minority in the overall population of the Netherlands, of the necessity of retreating to a collectively organized isolation from the Protestant and secular majority. Socialist mobilization followed the same pattern, since, by the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was obvious that a well-organized movement of the working class was seen as the only means of stemming the loss of its loyalty to the Catholic and Protestant trade unions.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant, Catholic, liberal, and socialist associations had coalesced into four broad but ideologically integrated networks of social, professional, and political organizations. Referred to as the "pillars" of Dutch society, each was intended to replicate an entire sub-national society for adherents of a particular set of beliefs. Each group sponsored its own organizations that enabled members to conduct their lives separately from those in the other pillars. The Dutch people were, in effect, compartmentalized by choice into a series of parallel societies offered each group their own hospitals, schools, newspapers, labor unions, social insurance, business and professional associations, and political parties as well as scouts, hobby clubs, and sports teams and, eventually, radio and television programming. These organizations were legally recognized and received public financial support on an equal footing.

The most remarkable area of growth in pillarized organizations was in the mass media. By the 1950s, for example, the Catholic population of five million was served by the Roman Catholic Press Service that provided readers with 22 daily newspapers (two of them distributed nationally), another 22 weekly newspapers published in small towns, 270 weekly and monthly magazines, and 42 scholarly journals. Catholic, Protestant, and secular

journalists were each trained in their own schools. Pillarization of the print media made possible the classic Dutch story of the greengrocer who asks a customer if she prefers her vegetables wrapped in a Catholic, Protestant, or socialist newspaper. The tradition of pillarized control of the print media was extended to other mass media as they developed. Airtime on the radio frequencies was divided among associations created to produce and broadcast Catholic, Protestant, socialist, and “liberal” (or “general”) programming. After World War II, political leaders representing the pillars were able to squelch the demand for commercial television stations and, instead, extended the authority of the pillar radio associations to television as well.

The pillars completely structured social and political life in the Netherlands for the first two-thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but beginning in the 1960s their relevance began to wane. One reason for that was the pervasive secularization of Dutch society as a whole that leveled differences between the secular and confessional pillars and reduced the importance of projecting a religious identity outside of church. Democracy '66 was founded on the idea that the pillars were anachronisms. Middle-class and working-class Catholics and Protestants might more readily identify politically, for example, with the VVD or PvdA and support their economic or social policies without seeming to compromise their religious beliefs. Church affiliations also declined sharply. Secular institutions and political parties were no longer threatening, and, by the late 1960s, Dutch Catholic bishops, for example, no longer pronounced that a good Catholic had to join the Association of Catholic Unions or vote for the Catholic Peoples Party.

The revolution in telecommunications also contributed to the erosion of the pillars. Cable and satellite dishes made the monopoly on broadcast time held by the pillars unfeasible. EU directives mandated that national television markets could not be protected by governments of member countries. These changes made it impossible to continue the isolation of pillarized communities – or, for that matter, to keep viewers from watching Dutch television in preference to programming from other countries.

Even so, for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political party loyalties in each pillar were so strong that election results varied little over the decades, other than the glacial shifts that occurred as Catholics, for example, became an increasingly larger part of the Dutch population. Arend Lijphart, the Dutch social scientist, has pointed out that the pillars brought a large measure of peace to a Dutch society whose deep religious, class, and ideological cleavages might otherwise have led to instability.

### **The Dutch Welfare State**

The Netherlands has become widely known for being one of those countries that has a particularly extensive and generous welfare state. Although the economy is decidedly capitalist on the production side, with full rights of private property, the welfare system gives the distribution of incomes something of a “socialist” tinge. All people are expected to work to their capabilities, but incomes have been made partially independent of the job one does—or indeed whether one works at all.

Until the 1960s, the Netherlands was a welfare-state laggard in comparison with most western European countries. Rapid growth of the welfare state began only in the late 1950s. Once begun in earnest, though, it grew rapidly. By the mid-1960s the proportion of GDP spent on social welfare transfers in the Netherlands had outdistanced other European countries. Financing for new welfare state programs after World War II came primarily from payroll deductions paid into a series of “social funds” dedicated to each of the insurance programs—sickness, disability, retirement, unemployment, widows and orphans, and so forth. In the thirty years from 1946 to 1976, the Dutch welfare state expanded from the provision of minimum income relief to the poor to the guarantee of a minimum income as well as insurance against income loss due to sickness, disability, unemployment, death of the head of household, or retirement. At its peak, the welfare state sought to give all citizens the opportunity to participate fully in the society, regardless of the job they work at or whether they work at all.

The most consequential of the universal programs was the Worker’s Disability Act in 1967, which replaced existing accident and disability insurance for on-the-job injuries with a general guarantee of income replacement in the event of partial or full disability. Benefits were related to earnings, and for workers deemed completely disabled (i.e. unable to work at all), the benefit was equal to one’s last wage. The duration of the benefits was indefinite until one reached retirement age, at which point the benefit shifted from disability to the retirement program. The high water mark of the Dutch welfare state was reached when the Worker’s Disability Act was generalized from the labor force to the entire population. This 1976 extension in effect gave all individuals the right to an income for life if they were disabled, whether or not they had ever been part of the workforce.

Although the Dutch welfare state is quite extensive, its primary emphasis is on income *maintenance* rather than income *redistribution*. As a result of this emphasis on income replacement and minimum income guarantees, the percentage of people living in poverty in the Netherlands was in 1979 the lowest in the European Union. At the same time, the Netherlands has had a relatively small decline in income inequality during the postwar period.

By the mid-1970s, the Dutch welfare state was the largest in the world if measured by the yardstick of spending as a proportion of the national economic product. At its peak, over one-half of the Dutch GDP traveled through the public sector, and about half of that amount was collected for redistribution by social welfare agencies to the sick, the disabled, the elderly, or the unemployed. This is a far higher percentage than that found, for example, in Sweden and Denmark (45% of GDP), or the United States (25% of GDP).

In the process of implementing universal social insurance programs, however, the very logic of the welfare state began to change. During the 1970s, the idea spread that government should no longer provide simply for an *economic* minimum income, but rather for a *social* minimum income. The idea of the “social minimum” entered the Dutch welfare-state vocabulary, creating a gradual shift from the original concept of the welfare state to a new concept that might be called the “social welfare state.”

In the area of general income assistance, for example, there was an increasing concern that public assistance recipients should live in a way that mirrors broader social patterns, even if on a modest scale. For example, public assistance benefits were augmented in 1964 to include a vacation allowance; if the normal Dutch family took a vacation every year, then the logic of full social participation demanded that those on public assistance also have the means to take a vacation. Local governments also decided to offer a daily newspaper to those on public assistance, again with an eye to the conditions necessary for full social participation.

In 1970, this logic was carried still further by coupling public assistance to the net minimum wage. The minimum wage itself was set at 80 percent of the net average wage. This had the effect of maintaining a constant (and relatively modest) gap between public assistance and the lowest paid jobs, and between the lowest paid jobs and the average job. A further step in development of the social welfare state came in 1976, when sickness, disability, unemployment and retirement benefits were all tied both to the price index and to changes in the wages of private sector workers. As wages rose, so would social insurance payments. As prices rose, both wages and social insurance payments would be adjusted. In 1979, this automatic indexation was extended to those receiving public assistance benefits, completing the guarantee that all citizens would share in the increasing levels of prosperity. The minimum subsistence goals of poor relief under the welfare state were now completely abandoned in favor of the far more ambitious goal of making public assistance indistinguishable from a modest working wage.

The social welfare state rests not just on guarantees of a minimum income, but also on access to education, health care, cultural events, and quality options for leisure. This has led to an extensive policy of subsidizing social and cultural organizations ranging from ballet companies, theater groups, and orchestras to stamp collecting clubs, sport associations, and youth groups. Over 80% of the price of a theater ticket is paid by the government, as is 10% of the price of a movie ticket.

One of the most striking perspectives of the social welfare-state philosophy is its redefinition of the meaning of work. With a guaranteed right to a level of public assistance not far below the minimum wage (and a minimum wage that is itself pegged to remain not far below the average wage), the monetary incentive to work is significantly diminished. Under the social welfare state, work is a form of economic and social participation as well as a means of earning money. The quality of the work experience becomes more important; the monetary rewards of work less so. The social welfare state does not imply that work is an option one may or may not choose. But it does embody the belief that a person should have the opportunity to work at a job suitable to his or her own tastes and skills.

More recently, the Dutch government has pulled back from the welfare state programs designed in the 1960s and 1970s. Retrenchment of the welfare state began in 1981 with the installation of a center-right government determined to restore budgetary balance. The previous emphasis on citizen entitlements gave way to a new focus on economic efficiency.

Under the governments of Wim Kok (1994-2002), the language of welfare- state solidarity was supplemented by an emphasis on the need to maintain incentives for work.

### **Overseas Territories**

The Netherlands Antilles (Curacao, Bonaire, Saba, St Maarten, and St Eustatius) and Aruba are self-governing overseas territories of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Dutch government retains responsibility for foreign affairs and defense. Queen Beatrix is represented in both territories by a governor-general who exercises executive authority in external affairs in consultation with the respective elected territorial governments. Executive authority in internal affairs, including control of police, communications, and fiscal and monetary affairs, in each territory is conducted a council of ministers, or government, responsible to the territorial legislature. The Netherlands Antilles has a 22-member legislature, the Estates (*Staten*), in which each of the five constituent islands in the territory is represented. Self government was achieved in 1954. Since 1977, each island has had a separate constitution for local affairs in addition to subscribing to the territorial constitution. Aruba separated from the Netherlands Antilles in 1980 out of concern for what its leaders considered the political dominance of Curacao. The Estates of Aruba consists of 21 members elected from constituencies on that island. A minister-plenipotentiary appointed by each government takes part in deliberations of the Dutch government when it discusses external affairs pertaining to the territories.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Give some reasons why government formation requires many weeks of negotiations while usually no more than six weeks is needed for staging a general election.

The Netherlands is a unitary state. Describe the representational base for the First Chamber. Explain in party strengths in the First and Second Chambers.

Why are relations between ministers from a party in government and its parliamentary party in the *fractie* sometimes strained?

The traditional “pillars” are said to be in decline as frameworks for political participation. Speculate on the possibility of new “pillars” developing that reflect contemporary concerns, new ideologies, or emerging divisions in Dutch society. What might some of those “pillars” be?

### **Suggested Reading**

Armand CLESSE and Herman van GUNSTEREN, eds. *The Vitality of the Netherlands*. Luxembourg: LIEIS, 1999.

Robert H. COX. *The Development of the Dutch Welfare State: From Workers' Insurance to Universal Entitlement*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993.

Arend LIJPHART. *The Politics of Accommodation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Thomas ROCHON. *The Netherlands*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999, chapters 4-7.



## BELGIUM

Between 1970 and 2001, Belgium moved through a series of constitutional reforms from being a highly centralized unitary state to a decentralized federal state in which responsibilities have devolved from the national government to three regions and three linguistic communities. Government functions are delineated on five levels and carried out by five tiers of government:

- National
- Communities
- Regions
- Provinces
- Communes

The monarch is the head of state, in whom the country's constitution vests executive authority. However, he does not properly represent the State, which is an apparatus of power, but the Country and its People, hence the title: *King of the Belgians*. He is not crowned but, on acceding to the throne, takes an oath before both houses of the legislature "to observe the Constitution and the laws of the Belgian people..." The king is nominally commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He is responsible for appointing the government on the advice of the parliamentary majority and legitimizing legislation with his signature. Of the king's two roles, political and representative, the latter symbolic role is the more important. It is sometimes pointed out that the king is "the only Belgian."

### Belgium: Tiers of Government

<u>Level</u>	<u>Agencies of Government</u>	<u>Competence</u>
NATIONAL	Prime Minister and Government Chamber of Deputies and Senate	Foreign Affairs Defense Fiscal Policy (including tax collection) Post Office Pensions Judicial Appeals
COMMUNITIES	Cultural Councils for: Dutch-speaking Flanders (*) and Brussels French-speaking Wallonia and Brussels German-speaking Eupen-Malmedy	Education Cultural Affairs Language Rights Radio and TV Science Research International relations in above areas

REGIONS	Minister-President and Council and Regional Legislature in: Brussels (bi-lingual) Flanders (Dutch-speaking) Wallonia (French-speaking)	Social Assistance Health Housing Economic Development Agriculture Trade Promotion Environment Water International relations in above areas
PROVINCES	Governor (appointed by monarch) and provincial parliaments in ten provinces, five Flemish: Antwerp, East Flanders, West Flanders, Flemish Brabant, and Limburg; five Walloon: Hainault, Liege, Luxembourg, Namur, and Walloon Brabant.	Police Courts Utilities
COMMUNES	Mayor and council	Social Services Roads Fire Departments

(\* ) Incorporated in Flemish regional administration.

The government, headed by the *premier* (prime minister), is in effect the executive committee of the parliamentary majority to which it is responsible. Governments are by necessity multi-party coalitions in which parties representing both language groups participate. Until the present government was appointed, ministers, including the prime minister, were usually designated by party bosses. The same names often appeared in successive governments holding different offices. The current prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt, and the foreign minister, Louis Michel, are both leaders of their respective parties.

Belgium's bicameral legislature was restructured as part of constitutional reforms in 1993. The Chamber of Representatives is composed of 150 members (reduced from 212) elected to a four-year term from party lists in 20 multi-member constituencies according to proportional representation. Voting is compulsory. Governments are formed by those parties capable of commanding the support of a majority in the lower chamber. Ministers must reply to questioning in the Chamber and are subject to votes of confidence. Governments may be removed by a vote of "constructive" no-confidence that requires the Chamber to propose an alternative majority.

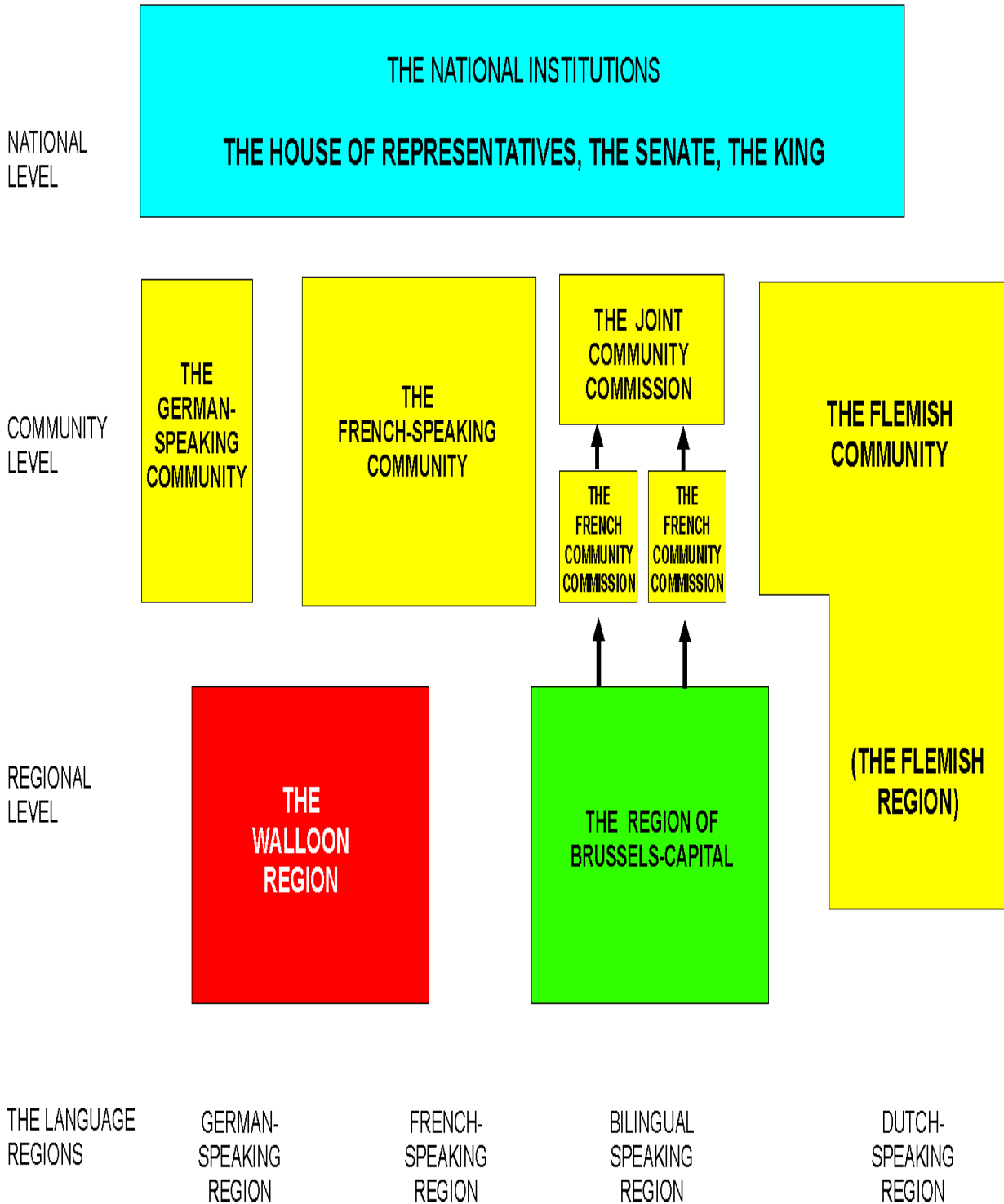
The upper chamber, the Senate, has 71 members (reduced from 184). Forty Senators are chosen by electoral colleges elected by proportional representation from constituencies that combine several of those used to elect members to the lower chamber; 21 are appointed by the Community councils; and 10 are appointed by the Senate itself. Members of the royal family are *ex officio* senators.

Passage by the Chamber of Representatives alone is sufficient to enact legislation. The Senate, however, can intervene to demand a second reading in that body or can return bills to the lower chamber for amendment or clarification. It also exercises suspensory powers over legislation and can initiate legislation. The Senate has no role in government formation.

Constitutional changes have been proposed under the 2001Lambermont Accords that would again restructure the legislative branch. Under these proposals, the 10 provinces, plus Brussels, will constitute 11 electoral constituencies, and the Chamber of Representatives will be increased in size to 200 members to accommodate 50 elected by the three cultural communities. A 5% threshold will be imposed to discourage fragmentation of parties. The Senate will become a “Chamber of Communities and Regions,” whose members will represent the regional governments and the cultural communities. The second reading of legislation, now conducted by the Senate, will be transferred to a committee of the lower chamber. The two-thirds majority needed in both chambers to alter the constitution in this way is not presently available. Introduction of the proposal will therefore be deferred until the next parliament, seated in 2003. If approved, the constitutional revision will not be effective until the election of the following parliament in 2007.

The first article of the Belgian constitution as amended in 1993 states that: “Belgium is a federal state that consists of communities and regions.” Belgian federalism is underlaid by the principle of *subsidiarity*, which dictates that anything that can be dealt with at a lower level must not be passed on to a higher political or administrative level.

# The Institutions of Belgium



The national or Federal Government, retains responsibility in those areas that come within the sphere of national interest as well as over everything that does not fall within the express powers of the Communities and the Regions. Federal ministers are required to put their ministries at the service of the regions when requested. Constitutionally, federal, community, and regional authorities have equal status but exercise different competencies. The Lambermont Accords, approved by the Chamber of Representatives in 2001, are intended to fine-tune these relationships among the several tiers of government.

As introduced, three elected cultural councils were responsible for the administration of education and cultural affairs and oversight of language rights in Dutch-speaking Flanders, French-speaking Wallonia, and for the German-speaking population in the Walloon region. The Flemish Community Council and French Community Council also had representatives elected from bi-lingual Brussels.

Regional authorities were subsequently established for Flanders and Wallonia and in the Brussels-Capital Region, each of which elects a regional legislature. Regional governments, responsible to those legislatures, are composed of a council headed by a minister-president (prime minister). Responsibility for most areas generally defined as “domestic” was devolved from the national to the regional governments.

Belgian federalism is asymmetric. After creation of the regional authorities, the Flemish Community Council merged with the Flanders Region, and today both are administered by a single government and legislature. However, the French Community and the Walloon Region remain separate. Following the reforms of 1993, however, the French Community handed over a wide range of competencies to the Walloon and Brussels-Capital regions, retaining culture, education, and the media.

The Brussels-Capital Region and French-speaking Brussels suburbs in the province of Flemish Brabant present particularly complex and challenging situations. Language is the defining characteristic of the Flemish and Walloon regions, and those regions are not bi-lingual. French-speaking residents of the Flemish Region must specifically request documents in French from the regional or municipal governments, which are required by law to hold meetings and issue documents only in Dutch. Similar requirements pertain in Wallonia for the exclusive use of French. The Flemish Region has designated “Language Facility Municipalities” in six suburban communes on the language frontier outside the capital region, where the French-speaking deputy governor of Flemish Brabant is responsible for dealing with language disputes. Flemish authorities contend that that this arrangement serves to facilitate French-speakers learning Dutch while retaining their own cultural identity. All 19 communes in Brussels have a French-speaking majority, but each is required to appoint a Dutch-speaking alderman to its executive. The Flemish Region and Community handles Dutch-language education and cultural affairs in the Brussels Region. Members of the Brussels-Capital legislature sit on the French Community Council in Wavre, provincial capital of Walloon Brabant.

Belgium: Composition of Federal and Regional Parliaments and Community Councils

Federal Legislature

Chamber of Representatives

150 representatives elected from 20 constituencies

Senate

71 senators

40 directly elected senators

25 from Dutch-speaking electoral college

15 from French-speaking electoral college

21 “community” senators appointed by Community

councils

10 from Flemish Community

10 from French Community

1 from German Community

10 co-opted senators appointed by Senate

6 appointed by Dutch-speaking caucus

4 appointed by French-speaking caucus

Regional Parliament of Flanders/Flemish Community Council

124 members

118 from Flanders

6 from Brussels (who exercise a double mandate in Brussels

Council)

Regional Parliament of Wallonia

75 members

Brussels Capital Council

75 members

65 French-speaking councilors

10 Dutch-speaking councilors

French Community Council

94 members

75 from Wallonia

19 from Brussels

German Community Council

25 members



The ten provinces of Belgium are autonomous administrative institutions, but they are subordinate to the jurisdiction of federal, community, and regional authorities. Provincial legislative councils are directly elected and approve measures related to provincial competencies. Councils in each province elect a permanent delegation, chaired by a royal-appointed governor and responsible for day-to-day administration. In 1993, the bi-lingual province of Brabant was divided into Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant.

Provinces of Belgium		
Region	Province	Provincial Capital
Flanders	Antwerp	Antwerp
	East Flanders	Ghent
	Flemish Brabant	Vilvoorde
	Limburg	Hasselt
	West Flanders	Bruges
Wallonia	Hainault	Mons
	Liège	Liège
	Luxembourg	Arlon
	Namur	Namur
	Walloon Brabant	Wavre

There are nearly 600 municipalities or *communes* in Belgium, compared to almost 3000 before their consolidation in 1975. Each commune elects a municipal council that, in turn, nominates the royal-appointed mayor and elects aldermen who serve as the municipal executive. The choice of the mayor typically reflects the political orientation of the council majority. The Flemish Region has proposed direct election of mayors in Flanders after ratification of the Lambermont Accords. Critics are concerned that this plan would usher in debilitating cohabitation situations in local government. Appeals have been launched by both the French and Flemish communities challenging the constitutionality of the Lambermont Accords. Decisions on their appeals will not be made until after the next election in 2003. If the appeals are upheld, observers believe that prospects for stable regional government, especially in Brussels, could be adversely affected.

The Belgian judiciary is independent of the government and legislature, and enjoys a reputation for integrity and professionalism. The Court of Cassation is the highest court in the judicial system. It is the final court of appeal and decides constitutional questions.



## Political Parties

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Belgians identified themselves with one of three “spiritual families” – Catholic, socialist, or liberal – that determined political affiliation expressed in Christian democratic, social democratic, and liberal parties. The first was “confessional,” maintaining close ties to the Church and supporting its role in social affairs, especially education. It was broadly based, appealing from the center of the political spectrum to active Catholics of all classes, particularly in Flanders, with platforms that were socially progressive, culturally conservative, and politically democratic. Socialist and liberal parties were secular and often anti-clerical. The former considered itself a workers’ movement of the left and had its strongest support in the socialist trade unions in competition with Catholic unions. It sanctioned state intervention in the economy and advocated the introduction of the social welfare state. On these issues and others, the socialist left was closer to the Catholic center than to the liberals, who occupied the right side of the political spectrum. Liberal support was based in an urban, middle-class constituency that favored democratic reforms in a context unfettered by confessional privilege or socialist ideology. Although supporting social reforms as well, liberals would limit state intervention in the market economy. Both secular “families” supported state control of education and both were far stronger in Wallonia than in Flanders.

The “spiritual families” overlapped the language divide and, to some extent, were able to contain nationalist and regionalist movements within their established parties. Affiliation with a “family” often dictated social institutions and professional associations to which one belonged, similar to the Dutch pillars. Distinctly nationalist or regionalist parties never achieved “family” status despite their electoral successes nor have the environmentalist parties.

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, each of the three parties – Social Christian, Socialist, and Liberal -- divided along language lines. In place of three large parties, there were thereafter *seven* political parties (the Liberals split in three – Walloon, Flemish, and *Bruxellois*). These were not language-designated wings of the same party, but entirely separate political parties. Since 1994, a further realignment of political parties has occurred, and the process appears to be on-going. Existing parties have splintered and merged, been re-named or become extinct. On major social and economic issues, there is general, if sometimes qualified, agreement among political parties. (This condition does not extend, however, to regional and language issues.) The secular parties are no longer hostile to the Church, and practicing Catholics are confident that the role of Church, for example in education, is secure. Rather than referring to a “spiritual family” for direction, voters are likely to consider pocketbook issues, personality of the leadership, alienation from parties in office, and regional interests. Region is the most important determinant of political affiliation. But the parties identified with “spiritual families” still polled nearly two-thirds of the vote in the 1999 election.

The Flemish Liberals and Democrats (*Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten* – VLD) emerged from the 1999 general election the largest of 11 parties winning seats in Chamber of Representatives – by two-tenths of one percent and one seat over the Flemish Christian People’s Party. Only rarely since the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a liberal party outpolled a Catholic

party. Party leader, now Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, took control of the Flemish Liberal party while still in his 20s, changed its name, and refurbished its image. He was an admirer of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In office, he has spoken approvingly of Tony Blair's "Third Way" position. Adopting the strategy of the francophone liberals, the VLD has reached out to confessional and nationalist voters. A Christian democratic faction formally merged with the VLD in 2002.

Verhostadt's liberal counterpart in Wallonia, Foreign Minister Louis Michel, leads the newly amalgated Reform Movement (*Mouvement Reformateur* – MR) in succession to the Liberal Reform Party and its common-slate electoral allies, the Democratic Front, the Brussels liberal party, and the Christian democratic Citizens' Movement.

The Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste* – PS) concentrated on regional politics in Wallonia, where it traditionally was the largest party, during long periods of Catholic-Liberal coalition government. The party is led by the popular Elio Di Rupo. Although never in a leading position in the region, the Socialist Party, subsequently renamed the Socialist Party-Another Way (*Socialistische Partij-Anders* – SP.A), in Flanders held its own in successive elections and increased its share of the Flemish vote in 1999.

The Christian democratic parties suffered defeat at the polls and loss of prestige in the 1999. The Christian People's Party came second to the VLD in Flanders and surrendered the leadership position in national politics that it had maintained for decades. In an effort to sharpen its regionalist credentials, the party has changed its name to Christian Democratic and Flemish (*Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams* – CDV), following the general election. A faction left the CDV to form a new party, New Christian Democrats, which, in turn, joined the VLD. More radical changes occurred within the ranks of the francophone Christian democrats. The Christian Social Party in Wallonia morphed into the Humanist Democratic Center (*Centre Democratique Humaniste* – CDH), allowing that the party was no longer exclusively Christian. The Citizens' Movement, a Christian democratic party centered in Brussels, merged formally with francophone liberals in the Reform Movement.

Belgium has some of the most comprehensive laws in Europe to protect the environment. These laws lay responsibility on producers instead of consumers, and impose prohibition rather than regulation. "Green" parties have had a major impact on national legislation but are divided along linguistic lines, *Ecolo* from Wallonia and *Agalev* from Flanders.

The People's Union (*Volksumie* – VU) was a moderate Flemish nationalist party and an early standard-bearer for separatism that contributed to setting up a federal system in Belgium. However, the VU's moderation and the accommodations that the party made in government weakened its nationalist profile and eroded its voter base. Nationalist support passed in successive elections to the Flemish Bloc (*Vlaams Blok* – VB), a pugnacious right-wing separatist party that has pronounced xenophobic tendencies. Party leader Philip Dewinter claims that the VB is no longer concerned with state reform to increase regional autonomy within a federal Belgium. The VB instead calls for an independent Flanders within a federal Europe and has preempted the use of many of the symbols of Flemish identity. It opposes further in-migration to Flanders and proposes repatriation of foreigners already residing

there. Other Flemish parties have tried to isolate the VB and have adopted stronger regionalist profiles, but have failed to win back voters lost to it. The VB has been particularly successful in local elections, winning more than a quarter of the vote in Antwerp. The party's region-wide approval rating approaches 20%.

The VU, which shared electoral slates with the social liberal ID21, broke apart following its poor showing in the 1999 general election. The conservative wing of the VU re-formed as the New Flemish Alliance (*Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie* – NVA), which took over VU seats in the Chamber of Representatives. The NVA, led by Geert Bourgeois, stands to attract some voters from the VLD who are fed up with Verhofstadt for “selling out” Flanders in the Lambermont Accords, but who are unwilling to vote for an extremist VB. A left-wing faction of the VU, together with the remnants of ID21, formed a new social liberal party, *Spirit*, whose leadership expressed solidarity with the SP.A and suggested running on a common slate with the Flemish Socialists..

The National Front (*Front National* – FN) is the xenophobic francophone counterpart of the VB and claims an affinity with the French party of the same name.

## **Issues**

The six parties that formed a coalition government in 1999 under Guy Verhofstadt had won collectively 57% of the total vote in the general election that year and enjoyed a 19-seat majority in the Chamber of Representatives. Political debate since then has involved not so much opposition from the opposition CDV and its francophone counterpart as it has conflicts of interest among the coalition partners.

The Lambermont Accords, approved in 2001 and intended for implementation before the 2003 election, have been challenged in court by both the Flemish and Walloon communities, which, in turn, put pressure on government parties from both sides of the linguistic frontier to modify the agreement. Tension within the coalition on this issue increases the prospect of destabilizing it prior to the next election.

The government proposes tougher measures on crime and immigration. In 2000, for example, Belgium dropped out of the Schengen Agreement temporarily in order to close its borders to stop further immigration while measures were being taken to round up illegals already in the country. The government acted under pressure to take action to head off extreme right-wing exploitation of those issues.

The government's Stabilization Program, introduced in 2000, which aimed at balancing the budget by 2002 and creating surpluses thereafter, fell behind schedule. The government must also deal with high public debt and regional demands for additional expenditure on health care and education. Difficulties in balancing the need to increase revenue and to attract investment have also divided government parties. Liberals are committed to hard-nosed fiscal consolidation. The Socialist and “Green” parties proposed introduction of new capital gains taxes, while the Liberal parties point out that the absence of these taxes has attracted direct

investment to Belgium. The parties recognize the necessity of action to increase labor force participation, which in Belgium is well below the EU average. They also agree generally on various means of attack – reduction of employer contributions to social benefits, corporate tax reform to favor small business, and, more contentiously, modification of wage indexation.

The coalition turned down proposals by Ecolo transport minister Isabelle Durant for far-reaching restructuring of the Belgian railway system, including greatly reduced fares to encourage ridership and double-decker cars to improve capacity. The “Green” parties were isolated in support of her proposals.

Controversial legislation that also split the coalition was introduced in 2002 to extend voting privileges in local elections to resident non-EU citizens. The measure was proposed by the Socialist and “Green” parties, with the support of opposition CDH. It was opposed, however, by the VLD with support from the CDV, neither party being willing to risk tarnishing its nationalist image. The MR was also opposed, as party leader Louis Michel sought to avoid a split that might endanger government stability in the run-up to the 2003 election.

Public approval of the Verhofstadt government declined from 47% in 2001 to 40% in mid-2002. Approval was markedly lower in Flanders than in Wallonia and Brussels. Meanwhile, support for the six government parties remained collectively above 50% in Flanders, and 75% in Wallonia and Brussels.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Discuss and evaluate Belgium’s devolved five-tier system of government. What is the relevance of the federal government?

In the light of the discussion suggested above, comment on the assertion that Belgium is an example of “extreme federalism.”

Why is the growth of the Brussels suburbs such a problem?

How typically are government ministers, including the prime minister, selected?

Demonstrate the rationale for bicameralism in Belgian legislature.

What are some of the positive and negative aspects of compulsory voting?

Account for the rise of the Flemish Liberals and the decline of the Flemish Social Christians in the late 1990s.

On a case by case basis, what is the relevance in the changes in the names of political parties and the internal realignment of parties across “spiritual families” after the 1998 general election?

### **Suggested Reading**

Michel BOUDART, eds. et al. *Modern Belgium*. Palo Alto: SPSS, 1990.

Els WITTE and Harry van VELTHOVEN. *Language and Politics: The situation in Belgium in an historical perspective*. Brussels: VUB UP, 1999.



## LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg is a constitutional monarchy in which effective political power is exercised by three branches of government. The Government, including the prime minister and cabinet, is responsible to the majority in the Chamber of Deputies, Luxembourg's unicameral legislature. The 60-member Chamber is elected to a maximum five-year term by proportional representation within four electoral districts, and exercises an independence of action rare in European parliamentary systems. Both the Government and the Chamber propose legislative initiatives. The third source of authority is the Council of State, which fulfils some of the functions of an upper chamber. It is composed of 21 councilors appointed by the Grand Duke on the recommendation of the Government and Chamber. The Council is called upon to offer an opinion on the constitutionality of all legislation before it is submitted to the Chamber for a vote.

The Grand Duke exercises executive authority within limits imposed by the constitution. The monarch's responsibilities include representing Luxembourg as head of state, appointing the Government on the advice of the Chamber, and signing legislation into law.

Luxembourg is a unitary state in which jurisdiction for local administration is vested in 118 communes, each of which has an elected council that in turn elects the mayor.

### **Political Parties**

Luxembourg's three largest political parties follow the pattern of the Belgian "spiritual families" – Christian democratic, social democratic, and liberal democratic. Two parties of the center-right are regarded as "bourgeois," and one party of the center-left is traditionally regarded as a "workers" party. Two are secular parties, one is confessional.

The Christian Social People's Party (*Chrëschtlich Sozial Vollekspartei* – CSV) is Luxembourg's Christian democratic party. It is the largest political party and is regarded as the natural party of government. No government can be formed without its participation, and most twentieth-century governments were led by it. The CSV retained the support of 30% of the electorate in the June 1999 general election.

Identified traditionally as a confessional party, the CSV has a close though informal relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in Luxembourg and has a long history of protecting the prerogatives of the Church in education and social affairs. Situated in the broad center of the political spectrum, the CSV attracts votes from all classes and can govern with either the social democratic left or the liberal right.

The CSV favors a strong market economy capable of supporting an extensive social welfare state. It is supported by the Catholic trade union movement as well as by professional and

business associations. In office continuously for many years, the CSV exercises patronage, for example, in public utilities employment.

The CSV benefits from a large and well-articulated party organization. Advancement within the “spiritual family” is, in fact, often a *family* affair. The CSV is led by Jean-Claude Juncker, who became prime minister in 1995 at the age of 40 in succession to Jacques Santer.

The Democratic Party (*Demokratesch Partei* – DP) is a secular, liberal party, associated in Luxembourg with the moderate political right. It combines concern for social liberalism with fiscal conservatism. Traditionally a strong advocate of the market as a directing force in the economy, it is cautious about state intervention and seeks to restrain public expenditures. Based on the support of an urban middle-class constituency, the DP averages 20% of the vote in general elections but often commands a larger share in local elections. It is a business-friendly party that has the confidence of employers associations and of professionals. The party has also gained increasing support from public-sector employees. The DP is led by Lydie Polfer, who was for 18 years mayor of the city of Luxembourg and who is more popular in public opinion than is her party as a whole.

The Socialist Workers’ Party (*Lëtzebergesch Sozialistesch Arbechterpartei* – LSAP) is a moderate, reformist social democratic party. It has formal ties to the socialist trade union movement, with whose support it can normally expect to win a quarter of the vote in general elections. The LSAP also receives significant electoral support from the middle-class. The party has been seen lacking in leadership since the retirement of its long-time chief, Jacques Poos, in 1999.

The LSAP was the junior partner in a governing coalition with the CSV for 15 years (1984-1999), and this has cost the party an independent identity and profile. Before the last election, the only distinction between it and the confessional CSV was the secular LSAP’s demand for a formal separation between the Church and state. This issue was of minor interest to most voters, and the result was a loss of four parliamentary seats that drove the LSAP into opposition.

The Left (*Dei Lenk/La Gauche* – DL) is a democratic socialist movement that has assimilated former communists and other leftist currents. It sometimes poaches on the left wing of the LSAP. Although its electoral strength is minimal, the DL exercises some influence in socialist labor unions.

The Green (*Dei Greng* – DG) is Luxembourg’s environmentalist party. It is also committed to a broad range of liberal social and life-style issues. The DG platform appeals to many young voters and to those disenchanted with the established “spiritual families.” However, support for the party seems to have peaked at under 10% of the electorate.

Symptomatic of the rise of single-issue politics, the Action Committee for Democracy and Pension Justice (*Aktiounskomitee fir Demokratie an Rentengerechtigkeet* – ADR) polled more than 10% of the vote in 1999. The “Committee” began life as a pressure group



composed of private-sector workers demanding pensions comparable to those of public-sector employees.

## **Issues**

The loss, in the “earthquake” 1999 general election, of six of the 38 seats held by the governing parties brought to an end the 15-year CSV-LSAP alliance in CSV-led coalition governments. The liberal DP was the main beneficiary of voter dissatisfaction, gaining three seats and replacing a weary LSAP in a center-right coalition with the CSV that governs with a four-seat parliamentary majority. DP leader Lydie Polfer was named deputy prime minister and appointed foreign minister in the new government. Relations between the government parties are sensitive.

Issues confronting the government include: pensions, harmonization of banking regulations with EU norms, and transportation. The previous government reduced state pensions for public-sector employees to two-thirds of salary at the time of retirement. In a reform that satisfied no one, legislation made public sector and private sector pensions equivalent. The ADR had campaigned to raise private-sector pensions to the previous public-sector level of five-sixths of one's last salary. The DP also backed the public-sector employees in their bid to preserve pensions at the higher rate. The government parties have suffered in the opinion polls on this issue.

Prime Minister Juncker has continued to press for further reform of the welfare state to cope with a population that is aging. He has emphasized the need for Luxembourg's population to double by mid-century in order to sustain economic growth and to maintain the welfare state. But Luxembourg also has a critical need for increased public investment in social infrastructure and transportation if the country is to accommodate a population of 800,000. Though Luxembourg has a reasonably high birthrate by contemporary European standards, most population growth is projected to come through immigration.

The DP torpedoed plans for a rapid rail transit system proposed by the previous government to bring cross-border commuters to Luxembourg. The environmentalist party DG backed the proposal, as did Luxembourg Railways. Retail establishments in the city of Luxembourg, where Polfer had been mayor, were worried that construction would disrupt business and prevent customers from shopping by automobile.

Despite its commitment to European integration, Luxembourg protects its “niche of sovereignty” in the financial services sector and resists imposition of a “coexistence model” for exchange of banking information. Juncker admits that diversification of the financial services sector has mitigated the need for banking secrecy. Even so, the government is determined not to give up policies that are in violation of EU norms. Ninety percent of the EU's offshore fund assets are managed in Luxembourg.

### **Questions/Discussion**

What are some of the likely factors contributing to tension between the coalition partners in the sitting Luxembourg government?

Are there advantages to having an appointed upper chamber responsible for reviewing legislation approved by an elected lower chamber?

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## ECONOMICS

### BELGIUM

Belgium is Europe's most intensively industrialized country, although today the service sector is over twice as large as manufacturing in share of GDP (services, 67.1% of GDP, industry 24.7%, and agriculture 1.3%). Belgium's "social market" economy is advanced and is regarded as the most "open" in Europe. Belgium, with a GDP in 2000 of 244 billion euro (2.9% of EU GDP) and a population of 10.2 million (2.7% of EU population) is also one of Europe's wealthiest countries. With a per capita GDP of 23,921 Euro in 2000, the Belgium figure amounts to about 80% of the United States level, a figure exceeding the EU average of 70%.

Following a period of steady growth in the late 1990s, the Belgian economy in 2001 experienced its sharpest downturn since the oil shock of 1973-1974. Growth dipped that year to less than 1%. Only a slight improvement was registered in 2002, as private consumption remained sluggish. Inflation fluctuated between 2 and 3%.

Exports comprise over 75% of GDP (import ca.73%), a figure standing in contrast to its principal trading partners -- The Netherlands at 50% and Germany and France at 25%. Services comprise an increasing portion, but trade related to goods still amounts to ca. 70% of exports. Chemicals, machinery (including armaments), and transport equipment each account for about 20% of total exports, 75% of which is directed to EU countries. Belgium remains an important producer of steel. Food items and beverages also constitute a small but important niche sector for domestic and export markets.

Belgium is blessed with excellent infrastructure that links it to trade partners and to world markets beyond Europe. The ports of Antwerp, which is one of the three largest ports in the EU in terms of volume handled, and also Zeebrugge and Ostend and the river port of Ghent utilize state of the art facilities. Antwerp is a general cargo port but also handles bulk goods such as ore and oil. The petrochemical industry and automotive companies are among its best customers. Zeebrugge specializes in container transport and is an unloading berth for shipments of natural gas. It is also an important fishing port. Ferries to England and other passenger ships operate out of Ostend. Ghent connects to the North Sea from the West Scheldt by way of the Ghent-Terneuzen Canal and can accommodate ocean-going vessels. Inland navigation on an intricate system of canals connected to river routes helps Belgium retain its position in freight transport.

Belgium is also the core of a European rail and road transport system that consists of a diversified network of high-quality connections with France and beyond to Britain in the west, the Dutch Randstad to the east, and the *Ruhrgebiet* in Germany. The rail network is one of the densest in Europe. Although *Sabena*, the national flag carrier, has gone out of business, the international airport at Brussels still serves an estimated 15 million passengers annually. Traffic intensity on highways has almost doubled since 1980.

Belgian interest rates are low, both short- and long-term. The continuing fall of long-term interest rates in the late 1990s helped stimulate private investment, particularly in the construction industry.

Belgium's debt ratio reached 135% of GDP in 1993. Fulfilling the fiscal convergence criterion for monetary union set out in the Maastricht Treaty became an overriding priority for the Belgian government, which also determined to eliminate the snowball effect of interest charges on public debt. An immediate goal was set to reduce annual budget deficits to a maximum 3% of GDP. A medium-term goal was also adopted of achieving a balanced budget targeted by means of rigorous economies in public spending and tax reform. Belgium succeeded in meeting this convergence criterion in 2001 and the progressive reduction of the budget deficit continued in 2002. The debt ratio remains over 100% of GDP.

Given the very high level of public debt, fiscal consolidation remains a major priority of the Belgian government. The Stability Program for 2002-2005 aims at creating a budget surplus while improving critical services such as rail transportation. Tax reforms and the opening of previously protected markets, included in the program, are touted as incentives for attracting greater foreign investment in Belgium.

Responsibility for the country's economy, outside that part of it managed by the EU, has devolved, like most other aspects of Belgian society, to the regions. Flanders is one of the most prosperous regions in Europe. Prominent economic sectors are technology intensive, including the electronic, metallurgical, chemical, and textile industries. Three major automotive companies – Ford, General Motors, and Volvo – have assembly plants in Flanders, taking advantage of the port of Antwerp. Trade, including diamonds and services, supplies two-thirds of Flanders' GDP. Despite large corporate investment, the backbone of the Flemish economy is located in small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Historically, Wallonia's economy has relied on the exploitation and processing of its natural resources – iron and coal, stone and timber, and water. The steel industry, the manufacture of metallic, textile, and glass products, and ore extraction remain the economic bedrock of the major industrial centers of Liege and Charleroi. Converted and modernized production facilities have found opportunities for development in electronics -- including computers, telecommunications, and aeronautical equipment -- as well as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and ceramics. Some older Wallonian industries have become redundant. Two-thirds of Wallonia is eligible for EU aid for the revitalization of those areas.

Regional budgets, which began with a clean slate at the time of devolution in 1993, have tended to generate deficits. Education and health services in Wallonia were under-funded as a result of lower than anticipated revenues. The revenue short fall was even more acute in Flanders, where the budget was kept in balance by reducing services rather than by raising regional taxes.

Unemployment was apparently stuck at an intractable rate of 7% in 2002. The salient cause has been the economy's inability to create new jobs over the long-term.

Labor costs, a large part of which consist of benefits, are high. Even mild inflationary pressure triggers indexed wage increases. The working-age population, including an increasingly larger proportion of women and young people, increased in size in the 1990s, leading to an increased discrepancy between supply and demand on the labor market. Generous unemployment compensation rather than under-demand for labor may also contribute to protracted joblessness. Worker productivity is among the highest in the industrialized countries, due in part to the continued prominence of industry. However, the rate of labor force participation in Belgium is one of the lowest in the EU.

Collective bargaining is mandated by law. Trade unions and the employers' organization conduct industry-wide negotiations or "social consultations" on wage and benefit packages. Agreements are automatically modified in accordance with wage indexation.

## LUXEMBOURG

At ca. \$44,000 (Purchasing Power Parity) in 2002, Luxembourg has the highest per capita income among EU member countries. Indeed, according to OECD figures for 2002, the country had the highest GDP per capita in the world. Per capita GDP at 125% of the United States level. The Luxembourg economy averaged 5% annual growth in the late 1990s, peaking at 7.5% in 2000. Growth dipped sharply in 2001 but rebounded to a projected rate in excess of 4% in 2002. The recovery was credited to the short-term impact of tax reductions on private consumption.

A liberal tax framework, encouraging private domestic and foreign investment, and large public investment in infrastructure, education, and services are credited with fueling dynamic growth. Recent budgets have succeeded in providing for expansionary public spending combined with tax reduction while maintaining budget surpluses. Expenditures increased in the late 1990s at a rate of 10% annually. Revenues from buoyant domestic demand and high growth have been sufficient to sustain the social welfare system, including substantial pension increases.

Heavy industry is of paramount importance to the economy, and, despite the faster growth of service industries, still accounts for the largest portion of GDP. Steel provides 25% of export income, and all manufactured goods close to 65%. Plant utilization is greater than 90%.

Financial services are responsible for 40% of GDP, and companies supplying business services report growth rates of more than 20% annually, the highest of any sector of the economy. Funds managed by Luxembourg financial institutions account for 20% of the EU's market share. This sector grew from virtually nil after the then-EC allowed funds based in one country to be sold throughout the Community in 1985. The number of funds domiciled in Luxembourg by 1987 had doubled to 800 by 1990 and doubled again to over 1600 by 2000, listing more than \$700 billion in assets and annual profits of \$3 billion.

Luxembourg has established “niches of sovereignty” in areas such as pension fund management. Enabling legislation has allowed institutions to bypass some difficulties in fund management encountered by other EU countries. Luxembourg-managed funds cater openly to German and other European investors anxious to avoid paying withholding taxes at home. Luxembourg has resisted moves for greater transparency in banking transactions and opposes exchanges of banking information based on a “coexistence model” in the name of protecting the privacy of individual investors. The government has expressed its determination to defend Luxembourg’s existing regulatory framework in the face of EU insistence on eliminating banking secrecy.

There are concerns in Luxembourg that the financial service sector has grown too large too quickly, and that the country’s economy risks becoming overly dependent upon it. The government proposed encouraging Internet banking and entrance into the mortgage bond market to reduce dependence on traditional banking houses. Mergers, consolidations, and closures during the 1990s sharply reduced the number of banks in operation.

Luxembourg benefits from a skilled, multilingual workforce, including an estimated 90,000 who cross the border on a daily basis from neighboring France, Belgium, and Germany. The “Luxembourg Model” describes the interaction between the government and its “social” or “corporate” partners. Government, unions and employers associations are responsible for negotiating wage and benefit packages. Industry-wide collective agreements automatically link wages increases to inflation, which, despite wage indexing, has been negligible.

Job growth lags at under 5% annually, however. Among other causes, labor laws make redundancies very expensive for employers. Firms, therefore, are reluctant to hire new employees if there is a prospect of future lay-offs. While registered unemployment has been low at 2-3%, a significant portion of it consists of long-term unemployed.

## **The NETHERLANDS**

The Netherlands has just 0.3% of the world’s population but enjoys 3.4% of the world economic product with a GDP of \$434 billion in 2002. This performance is made possible largely by the emphasis on trade within the Dutch economy. Two-thirds of Dutch GDP is exported, and the value of imports is 62% of GDP. Dutch multinationals such as Philips, Royal Dutch Shell, Heineken, AKZO-Nobel, and Unilever give the country a significant presence in the international economy. And Dutch firms have always maintained a relatively large share of their investment and employment outside of the country. Increased capital mobility and the integration of the European market have made it ever easier for Dutch business leaders to view their domestic operations as but one piece of an international puzzle of production and distribution. The Dutch economy is structured as a piece of a larger whole.

Dutch exposure to the international economic system is magnified by its lack of natural resources (other than natural gas). Broadly speaking, the Netherlands imports unfinished

goods, adds value to them, and then re-exports the products. The country tends to have a trade deficit with exporters of raw materials, including the United States.

The Dutch reliance on trade goes back to antiquity, but was particularly pronounced in the “golden age,” when the country was the world's leading maritime power. The 17<sup>th</sup> century economy was founded on trade, shipping, finance, and agriculture. The lack of raw materials in the country meant that Dutch investors who became involved in industrial production sent their capital abroad. By 1850, Belgium, which had been industrialized earlier, had five times as many railroad lines and steam-powered industrial enterprises as the Netherlands.

Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Netherlands did enter a period of rapid industrialization, centered on shipbuilding, the manufacture of engines and vehicles, food processing, and chemicals. An international butter dealer, Antoon Jürgens, bought the patent in 1871 for a product he named “margarine,” and was soon employing thousands of workers. A bit later, in 1890, the Philips brothers began to make light bulbs in the town of Eindhoven.

Because of its reliance on international trade, the depression of the 1930s hit the Netherlands even harder than it did most other countries. Unemployment averaged 25% between 1932 and 1939, with as much as one-third of the labor force out of work. The Dutch economy was also hard hit in the 1970s when its industrial base became non-competitive on international markets. In 1970, 5% of all Dutch industrial jobs were in shipbuilding. By the mid-1980s, the last of the major shipbuilding yards collapsed, unable to compete with costs that were 50% lower in Japan. Similarly, the number of textile and clothing manufacturing jobs was reduced from 60,000 to 20,000 between 1968 and 1978. The coalmining sector was completely eliminated.

The fastest growth sectors in the Dutch economy in the 1960s and 1970s were technologically advanced, capital intensive, and relatively light in the use of labor to produce value. These include such industries as chemicals, metallurgy, electronics, and oil refining. At the same time, between 1963 and 1980, the share of the labor force in traditional industries declined substantially as firms responded to escalating labor costs by moving their low-skilled industrial jobs abroad. By 1980, there were only 40% as many jobs in low-technology industrial sectors as in high-technology sectors. The industrial share of the labor force fell from 36% in the early 1970s to 27% in 1987.

This structural transformation has moved the Dutch economy into the services sector, with the remaining manufacturing activities becoming ever more capital-intensive and high value-added. Services now make up over 70% of the Dutch economy. Traditional economic activities, such as dairy farming, have increased in scale and become significantly more capital-intensive. The largest half dozen Dutch firms, which together account for over a quarter of all employment, have more employees outside of the Netherlands as they do within the country.

Although the strategy of rapidly escalating minimum and median wages is good for economic transformation and productivity, those with less education and those who work in declining industries pay the price with high rates of unemployment. Since 46% of the

unemployed in the early 1980s had only an elementary school education, the strategy of forcing high-technology industrial growth was bound to create a significant problem of structural unemployment due to the mismatch between the needs of the economy and the training of the unemployed.

Unemployment, both official and disguised, became an increasing burden on the Dutch economy through the 1970s and 1980s. The generous Dutch welfare state could be paid for when the number of income earners exceeded the number of benefit recipients by a factor of eight to one, as was the case in 1960. By 1983, there were only 2.2 workers paying into the social funds for each benefit recipient. As the earner/recipient ratio became less favorable, a financial crunch loomed on the horizon. Nearly one-sixth of the labor force claimed disability benefits in the early 1990s, a rate nearly three times that of the United States. Unemployment peaked at 16% in the early 1980s, and a growing army of workers over the age of fifty took early retirement. As a consequence, the government deficit ballooned, resulting in a doubling of public debt between 1970 and 1987. In the mid-1980s, only 52% of the population between 15 and 64 was employed.

The fight against unemployment (and against abuse of disability benefits) became the centerpiece of Dutch economic policy in the 1990s. Doctors have been required since 1993 not only to indicate the extent of disability but also whether the individual is capable of seeking alternative work. All disability beneficiaries are now reexamined periodically to ascertain that they remain unable to work; when the program was originally designed it was assumed that one remained disabled indefinitely. The maximum benefit has also been reduced from 80% to 70% of the last earned wage, making disability benefits equivalent to unemployment benefits. The duration of disability benefits has also been limited.

Even more important than reform of the disability program have been efforts to make the labor market more flexible. Since the early 1980s, unions and employer organizations have agreed to couple wage moderation with employment growth aided by increased flexibility in labor markets and an aggressive strategy of publicly funded job training. The success of these agreements has become known as the "Dutch model" or the *polder model*. Real wages grew in the Netherlands at a rate of just 1.5% per year between 1984 and 1990, and, during the 1990s, real wages grew at a rate less than 1%. Between 1982 and 1996, the Netherlands experienced 1.6% job growth per year, the same as the American rate of job creation and four times the rate elsewhere in Europe. In 1994, there were still 500,000 unemployed in the Netherlands; by 2002, however, that number was down to 170,000. This was less than half the average unemployment rate elsewhere in the European Union.

Job growth in the Netherlands during the 1990s was largely in the services sector. Moreover, a startling number of the new jobs are part-time or temporary. By 1996, 37% of all jobs in the Netherlands were part-time, more than double the rate of part-time work in neighboring economies. About three-quarters of Dutch women in the labor force work part-time, the highest rate of part-time work in the OECD countries. An additional 3.5% of the labor force works in temp jobs, also a rate substantially higher than neighboring countries. This changing profile of the labor force represents a fundamental break from the previous emphasis on high skill/high wage jobs in the Dutch economy. The average real wage in the



Netherlands compared to that of France, Germany, and Italy peaked in 1976 and has been declining since then.

In 2002, the Dutch job-creation machine began to run out of steam, and unemployment increased for the first time in a decade. Economic growth, which had run at 3.5 to 4% for a decade, slipped back to 1%. Under wage pressure from a labor force at full employment, inflation doubled in 1991 to four percent from the two percent levels that had been maintained during the 1990s. Having put so many Dutch people into the labor force over the last decade, the current challenge is to find ways to increase productivity in order to meet rising aspirations without increasing unemployment and inflation.

### **Questions/Discussion**

Define and discuss the “Polder Model.”

How has geography affected economic development in the Benelux countries?

Discuss the historical differences in the Belgian and Dutch economies and explain divergence in their development.

Account for the growth of the Flemish economy in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and differentiate economic priorities in Flanders and Wallonia.

What are the outstanding effects of labor policy on employment in each of the Benelux Three?

Assess the importance of the financial service sector to the Luxembourg economy.

Comment of the proposition: “The Benelux countries were historically preconditioned for *globalization*.”

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## APPENDICES

### **BELGIUM: Legislature and Government**

Chamber of Representatives (150 seats, elected to 4 year term in June 1999)

Party	% Vote	Seats
Flemish Liberals and Democrats	14.3	23
Christian-Democratic and Flemish	14.1	22
Socialist Party (Francophone)	10.1	19
Reform Movement	10.1	18
Flemish Bloc	9.9	15
Socialist Party – Another Way	9.6	14
Ecolo	7.3	11
Agalev	7.0	9
Humanist Democratic Center	5.9	10
New Flemish Alliance	5.6	8
National Front	1.5	1
Others	2.1	0

Senate (40 seats, elected to 4 year term, 31 indirectly elected in June 1999)

Flemish Liberals and Democrats	15.4	6
Christian-Democratic and Flemish	14.8	6
Reform Movement	10.6	5
Socialist Party (Francophone)	9.7	4
Flemish Bloc	9.4	4
Socialist Party – Another Way	8.9	4
Ecolo	7.4	3
Agalev	7.1	3
Humanist Democratic Center	6.1	3
New Flemish Alliance	5.1	2
Indirectly Elected		31

Coalition Government formed 1999: Flemish Liberals and Democrats, Liberal Reformist, Socialist Party (Francophone), Socialist Party (Flemish), Ecolo, and Agalev. Election scheduled for May 18, 2003.

Head of Government since 1999: Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt (Flemish Liberal and Democrat)

## **LUXEMBOURG: Legislature and Government**

Chamber of Deputies (60 seats, elected to 5 year term in June 1999)

Party	% Vote	Seats
Christian Social People's Party	30.2	19
Socialist Workers' Party	24.2	13
Democratic Party	22.0	15
Action Committee	10.5	7
The Green	7.5	5
The Left	3.8	1
Others	1.1	0

Coalition Government formed 1999: Christian Social People's Party and Democratic Party.  
Head of Government since 1994: Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker (Christian Social)

## THE NETHERLANDS: Legislature and Government

Second Chamber (150 seats, elected to 4 year term May 2002)

Party	% Vote	Seats
Christian Democratic Appeal	27.9	43
List Pym Fortuyn	17.0	26
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	15.4	24
Labor Party	15.1	23
Green Left	7.0	10
Socialist Party	5.9	9
Democrats 66	5.1	7
Christian Union	2.5	4
Political Reformed Party	1.7	2
Liveable Netherlands	1.6	2
Others	0.4	0

First Chamber (75 seats, elected to 4-year term by provincial councilors in March 1999)

Party	% Vote	Seats
Christian Democratic Appeal	26.0	20
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	25.2	19
Labor Party	19.9	15
Green Left	10.4	8
Democrats 66	5.5	4
Christian Union	4.7	4
Socialist Party	3.1	2
Political Reformed Party	2.7	2
Independent (joined Liveable Netherlands)	2.5	1

Coalition government formed July 2002: Christian Democratic Appeal, People's Party of Freedom and Democracy, and List Pym Fortuyn. Resigned October 2002. Caretaker government until new government is formed following elections on January 22, 2003. Head of Government: Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende (Christian Democratic Appeal)

## **SOVEREIGNS of the Low Countries since 1815**

### **Kingdom of the United Netherlands**

William I of Orange-Nassau 1815-1839

### **Kingdom of Belgium** (Kings of the Belgians)

Leopold I of Saxe-Coburg 1831-1865

Leopold II 1865-1909

Albert I 1909-1934

Leopold III 1934-1950

Baudouin/Boudewijn 1950-1992

Albert II 1992-

Heir Apparent: Crown Prince Phillip, Count of Flanders

### **Kingdom of the Netherlands**

William I of Orange-Nassau 1815-1840

William II 1840-1849

William III 1849-1890

Wilhelmina 1890-1948

Juliana 1948-1980

Beatrix 1980-

Heir Apparent: Crown Prince William-Alexander, Prince of Orange-Nassau

### **Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**

William I of Orange-Nassau 1815-1840

William II 1840-1849

William III 1849-1890

Adolph of Nassau-Weilburg 1890-1905

William IV 1905-1912

Marie-Adelaide 1912-1919

Charlotte 1919-1964

Jean 1964-2000

Henri 2000-

Heir Apparent: Crown Prince William, hereditary Grand Duke of Luxembourg

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[www.diplobel.be](http://www.diplobel.be)

#### Luxembourg

[www.resttena.lu/luxembourg/lux\\_welcome.html](http://www.resttena.lu/luxembourg/lux_welcome.html)

#### The Netherlands

[www.bz.minbuza.nl](http://www.bz.minbuza.nl)

[www.nbt.nl](http://www.nbt.nl)

#### European Union

<http://europa.eu.int>

[www.eurunion.org](http://www.eurunion.org)

#### United States Department of State

[www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) for "Background Notes"

## Newspapers

[www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com) (*Financial Times*)

[www.yahoo.com/news/newspapers](http://www.yahoo.com/news/newspapers)

## **Videos**

*Antonia's Line* (Dutch: Netherlands/Flanders)

*Ciske the Rat* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*Daens* (Dutch and French: Belgium)

*The Discovery of Heaven* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*For a Lost Soldier* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*Rembrandt – 1659* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*Soldier of Orange* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*The Vanishing* (Dutch: Netherlands)

*The Wall* (French and Dutch: Belgium)

## ADDENDUM

### The Netherlands: Elections to the Second Chamber. January 22, 2003

Party	%	Seats/150	+/-2002
Christian Democratic Appeal	28.6	44	+ 2
Labor Party	27.3	42	+19
People's Party For Freedom and Democracy	17.9	28	+ 4
Socialist Party	6.3	9	
List Pym Fortuyn	5.7	8	-18
Green Left	5.1	8	- 2
Democrats 66	4.1	6	- 1
Christian Union	2.1	3	- 1
Political Reformed Party	1.6	2	
Party for Animals	0.5		
Liveable Netherlands	0.4	0	- 2

# BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA SELF STUDY GUIDE



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Bosnia-Herzegovina has often been described as a miniature Yugoslavia, in which throughout history no ethnic group has predominated and in which all three major nationalities have vied for power and resources. The country has also proved an enigma, in that centuries of multi-ethnic coexistence were violently shattered when Yugoslavia itself disintegrated at the beginning of the 1990s. In seeking to understand the complexity of relations between Muslims (Bosniaks), Serbs, and Croats, it is important not only to examine their history, social structure, religion and culture, but also the impact of competing political ambitions once the communist superstructure began to unravel. How did ultra-nationalism become such a powerful tool for promoting social mobilization, ethnic conflict, and territorial division?

Bosnia-Herzegovina also provides us with a valuable case study of international involvement to resolve an escalating war in the middle of the Balkans. The various forms of military, political, and economic intervention have been riddled with criticisms and shortcomings. Ultimately, however, one must ask the question whether in the absence of an international protectorate and foreign economic assistance Bosnia-Herzegovina can survive as a single state. This Self-Study Guide is intended to elicit thought and debate on these perplexing issues and to engender a more intensive focus on a country that has preoccupied the international community for over a decade.

The first edition of this Self-Study Guide to Bosnia-Herzegovina was prepared by Janusz Bugajski, Director of East European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington

D.C. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and of sources attributed in the text and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and non-profit use only.

First Edition

July 2002

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### BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA TIMELINE

- 1800 BC: Settlements of Illyrians, first inhabitants of what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, traceable to the Neolithic period.
- 9 AD: Illyrians conquered by the Roman Empire.
- 6<sup>th</sup> century AD: Settlement of Slavic tribes.
- 7<sup>th</sup> century AD: Second wave of Slavs, particularly Serbs and Croats.
- 958 AD: Bosnia first mentioned by that name in a surviving document.



- 1180: Ban (governor) Kulin establishes an independent Bosnian state.
- 1326: Ban Stephen Kotromanic's conquest of Hum (later Hercegovina) unites Bosnia and Hercegovina for the first time.
- 1377: Stefan Tvrtko, crowned Tvrtko I, King of Serbia and Bosnia. Medieval Bosnia reaches its zenith under his rule.
- 1448: Stefan Vukcic, lord of Hum, declares his independence and gives himself the title *herceg* of Hum, thus the land becomes known as Hercegovina.
- 1463: Ottomans conquer Bosnia.
- 1483: Ottomans conquer Hercegovina.
- 1875: Peasant uprising against Ottoman rule.
- 1877: Russia declares war on the Ottoman Empire
- 1878: Congress of Berlin. Ottoman authority abolished. Austro-Hungarian Empire occupies and administers Bosnia-Hercegovina.
- 1908: Austro-Hungarian Empire formally annexes Bosnia-Hercegovina.
- 28 June 1914: In Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, Gavrilo Princip, a young Bosnian Serb nationalist assassinates Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand.
- July 1914: Austro-Hungarian Empire declares war on Serbia. During the war most Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Muslims remain loyal to Austria-Hungary.
- 1918: End of World War I, Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrates. Bosnia becomes part of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.
- 1929: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes is renamed as Yugoslavia.
- April 1941: Following the German invasion, Bosnia-Hercegovina is divided into German and Italian occupation zones. Most of the country is incorporated in the Independent State of Croatia, a puppet state of Nazi Germany controlled by the Croatian fascist *Ustase* movement.
- November 1943: A Congress of the Yugoslav Communist party proclaims a new federal

## Yugoslavia.

- May 1945: End of World War II.
- November 1945: Communist government installed in Yugoslavia headed by Josip Broz Tito. Yugoslavia becomes a federal state of six republics, including Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- 1948: Yugoslav Communist Party breaks away from Stalin's Soviet Union and is renamed as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY).
- 1968: Muslims are officially recognized as Yugoslavia's sixth national group.
- 1980: Tito's death. Onset of political and economic crisis.
- 1990: Disintegration of the LCY and multiparty elections held in all six Yugoslav republics.
- March 1992: Referendum on independence in Bosnia-Herzegovina demanded by EU. Bosnian Serbs boycott the referendum, but 97% of the Croats and Muslims vote for independence.
- 6 April 1992: Bosnia's independence is formally recognized by the international community.
- April 1992: Full-scale anti-civil war erupts as Serbian forces target Muslim civilians to gain territorial conquest.
- June 1992: The United Nations mounts a humanitarian operation in Bosnia and approximately 7,000 UN troops are dispatched to the republic.
- May 1993: A United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTFY) is established in the Hague, Netherlands.
- November 1995: The Dayton peace accords are signed by the three protagonists.
- December 1995: The first United Nations High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Carl Bildt, the former Prime Minister of Sweden, is appointed.
- 16 December 1995: NATO launches the largest military operation undertaken by the Alliance, Operation Joint Endeavor, with the deployment of 60,000 IFOR (Implementation Force) troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- 14 September 1996: The first post-war general elections held under the supervision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

- 20 December 1996: A NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR), consisting of 31,000 troops, is activated on the date the IFOR mandate expires.
- June 1997: UN High Representative Carl Bildt is succeeded by Carlos Westendorp the former Spanish Secretary of State for European Affairs.
- 12-13 September 1998: Bosnia's second general elections overseen by the OSCE.
- August 1999: Wolfgang Petritsch, the former Austrian Ambassador to Yugoslavia is appointed UN High Representative.
- November 2000: A new round of general elections in which centrist and civic parties increase their parliamentary seats.
- May 2002: Britain's Paddy Ashdown is appointed UN High Representative.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this self-study guide to Bosnia-Herzegovina is to provide some basic background information and analysis for persons being assigned there. The information is presented in such a way as to enable easier digestion. Each section concludes with several questions for further exploration and a brief list of pertinent resource and research materials. Several websites containing information on Bosnia-Herzegovina are located at the end of the guide.

## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina lies at the center of the Balkans or South East Europe. It is bordered on the north, west, and southwest by Croatia, on the east by Serbia, and on the southeast by Montenegro. It also has a narrow outlet to the Adriatic Sea of 12 miles around the town of Ploce. The republic occupies an area of 19,741 square miles and is historically divided between the larger and more northern Bosnian territory and the smaller southern area known as Herzegovina.

The country is predominantly mountainous. Its main ranges, forming part of the Dinaric Alps, run in a northwest-southeast direction and include Pljesivica, Grmec, Vitorog, Klekovaca, Cincar, and Radusa. The highest peak is Maglic (7,828 feet) near the border with Montenegro. The southwest

part of the country contains arid limestone plateaus with caves and underground drainage. The uplands are commonly denuded of forests because of thin soil and deliberate deforestation. Cultivable land is found between ridges containing alluvial soil. Central Bosnia contains forested terrain and fertile soils are found in the northern lowlands bordering Croatia.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's major rivers include the Sava, a tributary of the Danube, which forms the northern frontier with Croatia; the Bosna, Vrbas, and Una, which flow north into the Sava; the Drina, which forms the eastern border with Serbia; and the Neretva, which flows from Herzegovina into the Adriatic. Bosnia also has an abundance of underground rivers, glacial lakes, and natural springs.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is cut off from the Adriatic climate zone by the Dinaric Mountains. Bosnia's climate is generally mild but with some sharp cold spells during the winter months. The heaviest rains in Bosnia fall in late spring. Herzegovina experiences hotter weather in the summer, with the major rainy season during the fall. The higher elevations have short and cool summers and longer and colder winters.

Approximately 40% of the country is forested with pine, beech, and oak predominating. About 14% of the land is arable and 20% is permanent pasture. Among the most common fruits are grapes, apples, plums, and pears. The diverse wildlife includes bears, wolves, wild boars, wildcats, chamois, otters, foxes, badgers, and falcons. The country's major natural resources include coal, iron, bauxite, manganese, timber, copper, chromium, lead, zinc, and hydropower. Much of Bosnia's infrastructure was destroyed during the 1992-1995 war and the country suffers from air and water pollution and inadequate sanitation facilities.

## HISTORY

### Early History

The territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina formed part of the Illyrian kingdom that stretched across the northwest Balkans; the Illyrians had settled in the area in about 1800 BC. The region became part of the Roman province of Illyricum at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, Gothic tribes conquered the northwestern and central Balkan territories. They were followed by Turkic Avars and by Slavic tribes. The Avars were defeated by the Frankish king Charlemagne in 796 AD and the Slavic populations accepted overall Frankish suzerainty.

For the next four centuries, various Slavic princes ruled the mountainous Bosnian area, including the Croatian Kingdom from the 9<sup>th</sup> century until the 11<sup>th</sup> century. At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a

powerful Serbian kingdom was founded under the rule of Stjepan Nemanja. By the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, his descendant King Stjepan Dusan controlled a region stretching from the Adriatic to the Aegean seas that included parts of eastern Bosnia.

During the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Hungary conquered large parts of Bosnia and turned the region into one of its *banats* (provinces) under the control of *bans* (governors). Bosnia's rulers gained increasing independence from their Hungarian overlords with the rule of Ban Kulin at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Ban Stjepan Kotromanic extended Bosnia's territory to include the Orthodox province of Hum, later known as Hercegovina, and much of the Adriatic coast. Krotomanic's nephew and successor Stephen Tvrtko further extended the boundaries of these territories, and in 1376 proclaimed himself King of Serbia and Bosnia. The Bosnian kingdom disintegrated after the death of Tvrtko. A rebellious Bosnian chieftain seized the Hum region early in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and established it as Hercegovina ("independent duchy").

### Ottoman Control

The Ottoman Turks invaded Bosnia in 1386 and by 1463 most of the region became an Ottoman province and remained under Istanbul's control for more than 400 years. The population of the area included Roman Catholic Croats, Orthodox Serbs, and Bosnian Slavs who converted to Islam during Ottoman rule. The conversion process was the result of several factors: a lack of allegiance to either Catholicism or Orthodoxy, an absence of well organized Christian Churches, and the promise of improved political, social, and economic positions under Turkish rule. A local Muslim hereditary nobility developed together with a class of landowners. These Muslims developed a sense of ethnic and regional identity which produced tensions with their Catholic and Orthodox neighbors. The relative independence of the Orthodox Church under the Ottoman's "millet" system of self-governing religious communities, stimulated Serbian nationalism in areas of eastern Hercegovina and north west Bosnia.

### Austrian Rule

In 1875, a large Christian uprising against the Muslim elite was put down by the Turks but it provoked Great Power intervention and the Ottomans were forced to surrender control over Bosnia-Hercegovina. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, following the Russo-Turkish war, the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary negotiated with other European rulers for administrative rights over the area and in 1908 annexed the two Bosnian provinces.

Bosnia became a center of nationalist agitation for political independence and cultural autonomy. Europe began to take sides in the disputes: Austria-Hungary and Germany opposed growing Serbian nationalism, while Russia and Britain generally supported it. The weakness of Ottoman rule encouraged some Slavic activists within the Austro-Hungarian Empire to press for union with kindred peoples elsewhere in the Balkans. This "Yugoslav" movement for south Slav unification was opposed by nationalist pan-Serbian and pan-Croatian groupings.

The Bosnian Muslim political emergence became more pronounced during Austrian rule between 1878 and 1918. Vienna encouraged a Bosnian national identity as a counterpoint to Serbian and Croatian irredentism and Yugoslavism, and it tolerated Islamic cultural activism. Such policies stimulated religious differentiation at a time of rising nationalism throughout the Balkans. Croatian nationalists rejected a south Slav union and sought a Greater Croatia to include all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They considered all Bosnian Muslims to be Croats who had converted to Islam during Ottoman rule. Serbian nationalists demanded a Greater Serbia to include Bosnia-Herzegovina and claimed the Muslims as converted Serbs. Both sides tried to absorb Bosnia's Muslims and to elicit their political and ethnic loyalty in order to gain a majority in the country.

### Royalist Yugoslavia

In June 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, Archduke Francis Ferdinand was assassinated in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo, an act that precipitated World War One. Gavrilo Princip, the assassin, was a Serbian student from Bosnia whose Young Bosnia movement believed that Vienna's policies would deny Serbia's territorial ambitions. Most of the Bosnian Muslim and Croatian population rejected Serb nationalist claims and sought to develop Bosnia-Herzegovina into an autonomous entity within the Habsburg monarchy.

During World War One, some Croats and Serbs fought together, hoping to create a kingdom that would unite all the South Slavic peoples, while others pursued an exclusively nationalist agenda. The Muslim population remained divided as to their political allegiances. On 1 December 1918, following the defeat of Austria-Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina became part of the independent Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes under the Serbian monarchy of Aleksandar I from 1921 to 1934. When political conflicts between Croats and Serbs exacerbated national tensions, Aleksandar tightened control over the country and in 1929 he renamed the kingdom Yugoslavia ("land of the South Slavs").

Croat and Serb leaders clashed over the Yugoslav state structure, with the Croats favoring a looser federal state while the Serbs were intent on a more centralized system. Bosnia's Muslims were caught in the middle of this struggle and were pressured to support either Croatian or Serbian separatism. While Muslim leaders generally supported the centralist constitution, a growing number claimed that Bosnian Muslims should be recognized as a distinct national group. However, Serbia's royal dictatorship denied the existence of separate nations in Yugoslavia and established new administrative districts (*banovinas*) that cut across ethnic and historical boundaries. Bosnia-Herzegovina was partitioned between four *banovinas*, each with a Muslim minority, thus alienating the Muslim population from the monarchist state.

### Communist Yugoslavia

On 6 April 1941, the Axis powers invaded and dismembered Yugoslavia. Germany and Italy supported the formation of a fascist puppet state encompassing much of Croatia and Bosnia-

Hercegovina, which was headed by ultra-nationalists in Croatia. The *Ustase* leadership of the Independent State of Croatia sought to annex Bosnia and engaged in a policy of full-scale genocide against the Serbian population, while Serbian monarchists (*Cetniks*) slaughtered thousands of Muslims because of their alleged collaboration with Zagreb and their supposed "Turkish" identity. Although some Muslims engaged in anti-Serbian massacres, a significant number of Bosnians in all three ethnic groups favored the multi-ethnic communist partisan forces led by Marshall Josip Broz Tito.

At the end of the war, Tito restitched the various parts of Yugoslavia and created a federation with Bosnia-Hercegovina as one of the constituent republics. This was accomplished despite insistence by Serb activists that the region be transformed into a province of Serbia and Croatian demands for closer links with the Croatian republic. The Bosnian republic was designated as a multi-ethnic unit, thus precluding domination by any of the three constituent national groups. Such a policy was supported by Muslim leaders as a means of preserving their national and religious identity. During the 1960s, Tito's regime granted Bosnia's Muslims a distinct ethnic status, in a policy designed to place them on an equal footing with Serbs and Croats. They received their own power base in an increasingly decentralized Yugoslav communist structure.

One of Tito's objectives was to prevent either Serbia or Croatia from dominating the federation and reviving claims to Bosnian territory; hence the political and economic infrastructure of the republic was substantially expanded. Tito sought to balance Yugoslavia's national units and promote the growth of an overarching "Yugoslav" identity as well as a multi-ethnic Bosniak consciousness. He also endeavored to strengthen Muslim identity to counteract Serb and Croat ambitions and forged a distinct Muslim political base in the republic.

In the 1971 Yugoslav census, Slavic Muslims were elevated to the status of a distinct nation, equal to that of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins, and Macedonians. During the 1970s, the government adopted a more tolerant approach toward organized religion, including Islam, and Bosnia's Muslims experienced a cultural and religious revival. Many Muslim leaders concluded that similarly to the other Yugoslav republics, Bosnia-Hercegovina should be defined as their national territory. This sparked opposition among Serbian and Croatian leaders who feared that they would become minorities in the republic.

Bosnia-Hercegovina became the only republic without a predominant nation as all three groups (Muslims, Serbs, and Croats) were considered equal constitutional entities, even though Croats and Serbs had their own "home" republics. The 1974 Yugoslav constitution underscored the equality of Bosnia's "constituent nations," an arrangement designed not only to prevent the dominance of one ethnic group but to avoid any compacts between two nations that would "minoritize" the third. Muslims were formally defined as a nation; thousands of people who had previously declared themselves as Serbs, Croats, or Yugoslavs assumed this definition in the new censuses.

Yugoslavia's complex system of governmental succession did not allow for effective central rule

while the republican administrations sought an accelerating devolution of powers. During the 1980s, following Titos' death in 1980, the disintegration of the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia and growing national and ethnic polarization aggravated the position of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a region contested between Serbia and Croatia.

Economic difficulties also fueled inter-republican competition for scarce resources and increased social and ethnic tensions throughout the federation. Political and economic liberalization in Yugoslavia was evident in the late 1980s under the government of federal Prime Minister Ante Markovic. But the unraveling of communist rule also sparked demands for republican autonomy. As political liberalization gathered pace in all six republics, in February 1990 the Bosnian Assembly passed a law allowing for political parties to be formed freely in preparation for the first post-war multi-party elections.

### Disintegration of Yugoslavia

In July 1990, the Bosnian Assembly declared the republic a "democratic and sovereign state," signaling the first step toward a looser federal arrangement but avoiding any explicit moves toward separation from Yugoslavia. The result of the November 1990 elections read like a census of the republic's population, with nationalist parties of the three major groups taking 80% of the vote in proportions reflecting their percentages of the population. Residents elected deputies to the 240-seat bicameral legislature, divided between a Chamber of Citizens (130 seats) and a Chamber of Municipalities (110 seats) as well as members of the collective presidency. Ethnic parity was to be maintained in all three institutions.

The elections were designed to balance the representation of the three constituent nations in the Bosnian presidency, government, and parliament. Each ethnic group formed its own party: the Muslim-based Party of Democratic Action (PDA), the Serbian Democratic Party (SDP), and the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU). Although non-nationalist parties won a quarter of the seats in the Chamber of Citizens they had no lasting impact on political developments and could find no coalition partners. In the final tally, the PDA gained 86 seats in the Assembly, the SDP 72, and the CDU 44; the 38 remaining mandates were shared among eight political groups.

The victory of the three ethnically based parties both reflected and encouraged national identification among citizens. The key government positions were awarded to the three ethnic groups. Alija Izetbegovic, head of the PDA, was chosen as President of the nine-member presidency, a post that was established on a rotational basis among the three ethnic components. Jure Pelivan of the CDU was chosen as Prime Minister to head the republic's government, and Momcilo Krajisnik of the SDP became speaker of the National Assembly. Although the results preserved a tri-ethnic balance in the legislature and the presidency, they also further polarized the country.

Leaders of the three national parties formed a coalition government. While the three ethno-parties



agreed to share power at the national level, in various municipalities (*opštinas*) the victorious parties proceeded to assume absolute control in local governments. The Serbian *opštinas* increasingly refused to recognize Sarajevo's authority. Beneath the facade of cooperation at the republican level, an intense power struggle was evident when parliament attempted to enact new legislation in response to the accelerating disintegration of the Yugoslav federation. It proved impossible to pass a new constitution, as the agreement of all three major parties was required. The Serbian side refused to countenance any constitutional changes propelling Bosnia toward statehood, while Muslim and Croat leaders feared that the secession of Slovenia and Croatia would leave the republic in a precarious position by strengthening Serbia's position in the shrunken federation.

As Slovenia and Croatia pressed for independence, Bosnia-Herzegovina found itself caught in the middle. Leaders of the three ethnic groups were increasingly pressured to side with either Serbia or Croatia. Serbian leaders voiced concern about an emerging Muslim-Croat alliance that would exclude Serbs from key government posts. Serb activists also calculated that Croats and Muslims would seek closer political and military ties with Croatia. Meanwhile, Muslim and Croat leaders grew anxious that local Serbian activists in league with the Socialist regime in Belgrade were planning to engineer a crisis in the republic in order to detach large areas of Bosnia from Sarajevo's control.

Serbian leaders sought to preserve a unified Yugoslav state with some measure of republican autonomy. Croatian leaders veered toward Bosnian sovereignty and independence. Caught between demands for Bosnian separatism and Yugoslav federalism, Bosnia's Muslim leaders could not afford to take a neutral position: either option would have led to confrontation with Serbs or Croats. As war raged in neighboring Croatia and the prospect of international recognition appeared as a distinct possibility, the Muslim leadership leaned toward secession from Yugoslavia and the preservation of a unitary Bosnian state. While this move largely satisfied Croatian aspirations, the Serbian leadership warned that they would not accept Bosnian independence. The slide into all-out war had begun in earnest.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What were the origins of the Slavic populations that settled in the lands that later became Bosnia-Herzegovina?
- What role did the three major religions (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Islam) play in Bosnian history?
- Have there always been conflicts between Serbs and Croats?
- Was the long era of Ottoman occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina a period of consistent and severe repression?

- How much support was there for the creation of the first Yugoslavia among Bosnia's three ethnic groups?
- What was the extent of genocide and inter-ethnic violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina during World War Two?
- How did Marshall Tito manage to bring the warring factions together at the close of World War Two to create a single Yugoslavia and a single Bosnian republic?
- Trace the creation of a Muslim Bosniak identity during the pre-communist period and under communist rule?
- What was the impact of the 1990 multi-party elections on ethnic relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina?

### **Resource Materials for Further Study**

Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984

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## INDEPENDENCE, WAR, AND DIVISION

### Serbian Separatism

By early 1992, Serbian leaders had carved out their own jurisdictions in Bosnian municipalities where Serbs formed absolute or relative majorities and threatened civil war if Sarajevo moved toward statehood. Croatian leaders in Herzegovina also began to make preparations for territorial autonomy in the event that Bosnia-Herzegovina remained in a truncated Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, the Belgrade government accused the Bosnian Muslim leadership of planning to transform the republic into an Islamic state and with pretensions to other Muslim-inhabited areas of Serbia. The charge was vehemently denied by President Izetbegovic, who considered it a propaganda ploy designed to mobilize both Serbs and Croats against Bosnian independence.

As tensions mounted, in October 1991 Muslim and Croat deputies in Bosnia's parliament declared the republic's sovereignty and neutrality stopping just short of independence. Serbian leaders boycotted the session, declared the vote unconstitutional, and announced that they would not recognize Bosnian laws. Fearing an assault by the Yugoslav army, Muslim and Croat leaders decided to hold a referendum on independence. The ballot in February 1992 was boycotted by the majority of Serbian residents, but over 64% of the electorate turned out and voted overwhelmingly for Bosnian independence. Sarajevo promptly declared an independent state and gained international recognition. The move proved unacceptable to local Serb leaders, who launched an armed offensive within the republic with the active support of the Yugoslav army, charging that Sarajevo's policies threatened their national rights.

A series of steps were undertaken to solidify exclusive Serb control over the bulk of Bosnian territory, in an evident prelude to secession. In October 1990, the SDP set up a Serbian national council in the town of Banja Luka; a move that was condemned by the government for violating Bosnia's sovereignty by setting up parallel authorities. In April 1991, a Serb Community of Municipalities of Bosnian Krajina was declared, consisting of 14 Serb majority municipalities in western Bosnia that bordered the Serb-held territories in Croatian Krajina. Municipal governments in heavily Serb-populated areas of eastern, northern, and southeastern Bosnia also prepared to form autonomous communities avowedly to protect Serb interests against Muslim-Croatian separatism.

Sarajevo charged that the self-proclaimed communities under-mined the Bosnian administration and were the first steps toward establishing autonomous regions. In September 1991, Serb leaders announced the formation of a Serbian Autonomous Region of Eastern and Old Hercegovina; it covered eight municipalities in southeastern Bosnia inhabited primarily by Serbs. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Krajina region was declared the Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina. Even more ominously, local Serb police forces and party radicals proceeded to establish armed "volunteer units" and steadily eliminated Sarajevo's jurisdiction in these areas.

During the fall of 1991, three more autonomous Serbian regions were proclaimed in northeastern Bosnia, northern Bosnia, and the Mount Romanija region east of Sarajevo. Leaders of the new territorial units threatened to establish a unified Serbian republic, secede from Bosnia, and remain in a federal Yugoslavia. They asserted that a declaration of Bosnian independence and the non-recognition of Serbian territorial autonomy would precipitate bloodshed. Muslim and Croat leaders declared that no autonomous regions could be formed on the republic's territory and dismissed any planned referendums on autonomy. Serbian representatives responded in February 1992 by adopting a constitution of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

### Croatian Separatism

Although CDU leaders criticized Serbian steps toward secession, activists in Croatian-majority municipalities, in close liaison with the authorities in Zagreb, proceeded to form their own quasi-autonomous regions. They claimed that they did not want to live outside of Croatia if a large wedge of Serbian-controlled territory separated them from other republics. In November 1991, a Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosnia was established to include 30 municipalities containing a large Croatian population in western Hercegovina and central Bosnia. The community was declared a distinct political entity that would recognize the government in Sarajevo only as long as the republic upheld its sovereignty. A Croatian Community of the Bosnian Sava Valley was also established to incorporate eight municipalities in northern Bosnia. In January 1992, a third Croatian Community of Central Bosnia was formed, comprised of four municipalities. Croat leaders declared themselves in favor of union with Croatia.

Serbian and Croatian moves toward secession were accompanied by a propaganda barrage emanating from Belgrade as well as Zagreb alleging that Muslim extremists led by President Izetbegovic were intent on transforming Bosnia-Hercegovina into a militant Islamic state in which Serbs and Croats would be subject to persecution and genocide. They cited passages from Izetbegovic's previously banned *Islamic Declaration* as proof of his allegedly fundamentalist aims; the passages were taken out of context and presented as a manifesto for restructuring Bosnia into a Muslim state. Such charges were strenuously denied by the PDA, which asserted that it supported a tolerant, secular and multi-ethnic state.

### Bosnia's Independence

In December 1991, EC (European Council) foreign ministers decided to recognize the

independence of all Yugoslav republics fulfilling four fundamental conditions, including commitments to various human rights accords, guaranteeing rights to national groups and minorities, respect for the inviolability of frontiers, and agreement to settle state succession and regional disputes. In January 1992, Slovenia and Croatia were recognized as independent, while Macedonian recognition was blocked by Greece. Bosnia-Herzegovina met most of the EC requirements, but it was not granted recognition because no referendum had taken place to ascertain "the will of the inhabitants" for constituting an independent state.

In response to the EC decision, the Bosnian presidency authorized a referendum. The SDP, led by its chairman Radovan Karadzic, declared the referendum illegal because it was not approved by the full Assembly and did not have the support of all three constituent nations. Although Serbian leaders did not comprehensively disrupt the plebiscite, local officials in Serbian-dominated areas refused to cooperate. 63.4% of eligible voters participated in the referendum, and 99.7% cast their ballots for independence. The constitutionally required two-thirds majority was thereby attained as the majority of Muslims, Croats, Yugoslavs, and other minorities favored Bosnian statehood. Immediately after the balloting, a shooting incident in Sarajevo suddenly raised tensions and Serb militias established barricades around various cities in preparation for armed confrontation.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was recognized as an independent state in early April 1992. The day after recognition, the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina was formally proclaimed and SDP representatives withdrew from all Bosnian governmental institutions and openly recognized the authority of their own separate administrative organs. Momcilo Krajisnik, assumed the presidency of the Serbian Assembly and Radovan Karadzic the presidency of the Serbian Republic.

## Anti-Civil War

In April 1992, the political impasse in Bosnia was transformed into an outright armed conflict launched by Bosnia's Serb leaders. The Sarajevo government had already lost administrative control in most Serbian majority regions. Militarily, Sarajevo was incapable of either neutralizing the Serb forces or protecting Muslim residents. As the war in Croatia died down in early 1992, the Yugoslav army transferred much of its heavy equipment and troops into Bosnia-Herzegovina. Militia detachments had been formed in the five Serbian "autonomous regions" and a military command was already functioning parallel to the Serb Assembly.

In June 1991, the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav Army General Staff had ordered that all weapons belonging to Bosnia's Territorial Defense Forces be placed under the federal army's control. Much of this weaponry was apportioned to Bosnian Serb commanders and additional war materiel began to flow in from Serbia and Montenegro. Between March and May 1992, the bulk of the Yugoslav army stationed in Bosnia was transformed into a new Serbian army commanded by a former Yugoslav army general, Ratko Mladic.

With overwhelming firepower and material support from Belgrade, Serbian forces overran nearly

two-thirds of Bosnian territory by the close of 1992. Bosnia's Muslim forces were caught unprepared and suffered severe casualties across the republic. Serbian "ethnic cleansing" operations were comprehensively applied to terrorize Muslim communities and create "purified" and contiguous Serbian territories across western, northern, and eastern Bosnia. Over a million people were displaced from their homes.

As the conflict escalated, Croatian leaders in western Hercegovina formed their own army and government structures while nominally pledging allegiance to the government in Sarajevo. Suspicions persisted that if Bosnia were allowed to fracture, then Croatia would claim its share of about one-fifth of the republic. As Serb forces consolidated their hold over captured territories, a separate Serbian Republic was declared with the avowed aim of linking up with Serb-captured territories in Croatia and eventually joining the rump Yugoslavia. But although Serb forces controlled the major towns in about 70% of Bosnia's territory, Sarajevo remained under siege and much of the countryside became a battleground between competing guerrilla forces.

About 150,000 people were presumed dead or missing during the war and nearly two million became refugees. What began as a rebellion against Bosnian statehood by radical elements of one of the major nationalities had turned into an ethnic war purposively targeting civilians between leaders of the three communities seeking outright territorial control. Bosnia's Muslim and Serbian leaders continued to uphold diametrically opposed positions on the republic's future. While Serb spokesmen sought a far-ranging "cantonization" tantamount to partition, the Muslim leadership wanted to maintain a unitary state with extensive territorial and political decentralization but not based on ethnic criteria. The Croats increasingly veered toward partition as the Bosnian government proved unable to fully control the republic.

Serbian military objectives were twofold: to link up and expand the territories they controlled in northern and eastern Bosnia, thus creating a contiguous Serb republic between Croatia and Serbia; and to eliminate the non-Serb populations in this new political entity. A campaign of terror was unleashed against non-Serb civilians; atrocities committed by irregular forces were loudly publicized to intimidate remaining residents and escalate the war psychosis.

The systematic nature of the "ethnic cleansing" campaign indicated that the policy had been planned and approved at the highest political levels. It served several purposes: to eliminate the non-Serb population as a potential source of resistance; to provide war booty for local guerrillas and gunmen recruited in Serbia; to gain the loyalty of Serbs evacuated from other locations by allowing them to occupy captured houses and land; and to entrap non-combatant Serbs in a permanent conflict with Muslims in which the militias could pose as defenders protecting Serbs from Muslim revenge attacks.

The rapid success of Serb forces galvanized Bosnia's Croat leadership and strengthened the position of those favoring partition. The moderate CDU leader, Stjepan Kljucic, who had strongly favored an integral Bosnia, was replaced, and the more radical Hercegovinian Mate Boban, took charge of political and military operations in Croatian-majority regions. Boban criticized the

Bosnian leadership for its lack of preparedness and military incompetence while establishing a separate military structure in western Hercegovina, central Bosnia, and the Posavina region, styled as the Croatian Defense Council (CDC). Under the chairmanship of Jadranko Prlic, it made preparations to establish a separate Croatian republic with the option of joining Croatia at some future date.

Suspensions surfaced that Boban and Karadzic had fashioned a secret deal to partition Bosnia. In July 1992, Boban declared the autonomy of Herceg--Bosnia with its capital in Mostar and proceeded to consolidate a separate administrative structure. Nevertheless, the Croat side retained its membership in the Bosnian presidency and continued to provide military assistance to the beleaguered Muslim forces. In Sarajevo, Tuzla, and other large towns, a marked degree of political and military cooperation remained visible. Many urban Serbs and Croats in Bosnian-controlled territory refused to recognize either the Karadzic or the Boban leadership and upheld their allegiance to the principles of a single multi-ethnic state. By the close of 1992, a separate Serbian state was already functioning and in August 1992, a Serb Assembly meeting in Banja Luka renamed the new entity the Serb Republic (*Republika Srpska*).

### International Intervention

In June 1992, the United Nations mounted a humanitarian operation in Bosnia; it was named as UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force). Approximately 7,000 troops were dispatched to the republic. Their mission was largely confined to providing relief supplies to Sarajevo and other besieged cities. Food and medical aid also became a weapon in the siege of Bosnian cities. Serbian and Croatian militias periodically blocked U.N. convoys and severed essential water, electricity, and gas supplies in order to demoralize and starve out Muslim defenders. In August 1992, under the direction of Cyrus Vance, the personal representative of the U.N. secretary general, and David Owen, an EC-appointed mediator, the London Conference on Yugoslavia made efforts to find a political solution and enforce an agreement.

Following several rounds of negotiations, in October 1992, the Vance-Owen plan was formulated. It advocated the creation of a decentralized state consisting of nine largely autonomous provinces, three for each nationality, and a central region around the capital Sarajevo. In each province one of the three ethno-national groups would predominate, thus opening up the possibility of population transfers under international supervision. The central government would have only minimal responsibilities, including foreign affairs, international commerce, taxation, and national defense.

The Vance-Owen plan was only acceptable to the Croats, who stood to gain pockets of territory outside the regions they already controlled, particularly in northern and central Bosnia. The Muslims would lose land in the north and the center but would regain some territories in eastern Bosnia that had been captured by Serb forces. Serbs were outraged by the proposed maps: acceptance would have meant the surrender of nearly a quarter of the occupied territories, with extensive territorial fragmentation in eastern Bosnia and the loss of their northern corridor. The

Croatian side promptly accepted the plan while the Muslims held out until March 1993, realizing that further opposition would simply prolong the war and ensure further Serbian conquests. By accepting the plan, Sarajevo estimated that significant international pressure would be exerted on the Serbs, particularly as calls for a U.N. intervention escalated.

Fearful of international military involvement, Serb leaders adopted a dual-track approach. They continued to procrastinate in giving a final decision on the plan while launching new offensives in eastern Bosnia during March and April 1993 to eradicate the remaining Muslim pockets. Karadzic initialed the Vance-Owen plan under pressure from Serbian President Slobodan Milošević who estimated that the combined effect of tightening U.N. sanctions against Yugoslavia and the possibility of bombing assaults on Serb positions would have precipitated a major crisis inside Serbia itself. But the validation of Karadzic's signature was made contingent upon the acceptance of the plan by the self-styled Serbian parliament which in April 1993 further delayed a decision by calling for a referendum among the Serb population. The ballot took place in May 1993 and the Vance-Owen plan was overwhelmingly rejected by voters.

Western indecision was quickly exploited by Bosnia's Serb leaders who pressed on with their military offensives. By the end of May 1993, the republic descended into an all-out land-grabbing operation. Bosnian Croat forces launched offensives against their erstwhile Muslim allies in central Bosnia and proceeded to expel the remaining Muslim population from western Hercegovina. Bosnian Serbs intensified their assaults on the surviving Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia, reducing them to barely defensible pockets that the U.N. declared as "safe havens" but failed to protect.

On 1 March 1994, fighting between Bosnian Muslims and Croats ended when the two groups signed a comprehensive cease-fire agreement in Washington. They also created a joint federation and a new constitution was promulgated on 30 March 1994. The federation was based on territory amounting to 58% of Bosnia-Herzegovina, contingent upon the recovery of territory from the Serbs. The federation was based on eight cantons, four of which would be Muslim-dominated; two controlled by Croats; and the remaining two of mixed ethnicity. International actors calculated that a political solution first had to be found between Bosniak Muslims and Croats in order to apply greater pressure on Bosnian Serbs.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What major factors led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia?
- What was the position of the international community with regard to the survival of Yugoslavia as a single state?
- Describe how the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was engineered by rival nationalist politicians.



- How extensive was the campaign of “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia-Herzegovina and what was the ultimate purpose of this policy?
- What factors propelled the international community to intervene in Bosnia-Herzegovina through a humanitarian mission?
- How effective was the Muslim-Croat federation as a functioning state?

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## POST-WAR BOSNIAN POLITICS

**The Dayton Accords** Events moved quickly during the summer of 1995. Serbian forces overran the UN "safe havens" of Srebrenica and Zepa and massacred thousands of Muslim civilians. NATO forces mounted a major air-strike campaign against Serbian positions to prevent further attacks. In cooperation with Bosnian Croat units, Bosnian government forces captured large areas of western Bosnia and the Serbs suffered their first major defeat of the war.

By the late summer of 1995, the Muslim-Croat federation controlled more than 50% of the country's territory. Following lengthy negotiations mediated by U.S. assistant secretary of state Richard Holbrooke, Presidents Izetbegovic, Tudjman, and Milosevic initialed a comprehensive agreement in November 1995 near Dayton, Ohio. Officially signed in Paris the following month, the Dayton accords were intended to guarantee a lasting peace in Bosnia and to reconstruct the country as a single state consisting of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (also known as the Muslim-Croat federation), which would receive 51% of the territory, and the Serb

Republic, which would receive 49%.

The accord established Sarajevo as a unified city under the control of the central government. It also called for free elections to posts in both the central government and entity administrations, to be held in September 1996 under the supervision of the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). To ensure peace, a NATO Implementation Force (I-FOR) was placed in Bosnia in January 1996. The force consisted of 60,000 troops from more than 20 nations, including approximately 20,000 U.S. soldiers and large numbers of French and British troops. The troops were stationed primarily along the demarcation line between the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb Republic.

The three parties complied with the main military provisions of the Dayton accords by withdrawing their weapons and troops from the zones of separation and releasing most of their prisoners of war. However, other provisions of the agreement proved more difficult as Serbian and Croatian nationalists resisted the integration of ethnically divided communities. They also delayed the return of refugees to their homes. It took several months of negotiations before the Bosnian government at the central level was finally formed. The first session of the two-chamber Bosnian parliament took place in early January 1997 after months of obstruction by Serb representatives.

## Political Structure

According to the provisions of the Dayton agreement, Bosnia-Herzegovina obtained two major administrative divisions: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Federacija Bosna i Hercegovina*) and the Serbian Republic (*Republika Srpska*). Brcko in northeastern Bosnia became a self-governing administrative unit under the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but is not part of either entity. The Dayton Agreement included a new constitution that is now in force, while the country's legal system is based on civil law

Regarding the executive branch, the chief of state is the Chairman of the collective Presidency, which has three members and rotates every eight months. The head of government is the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. The Cabinet is the Council of Ministers nominated by the council chairman and approved by the National House of Representatives. The three members of the presidency (one Bosniak, one Croat, one Serb) are elected by popular vote for a four year term; the member with the most votes becomes the chairman unless he or she was the incumbent chairman at the time of the election. The chairman of the Council of Ministers is appointed by the presidency and confirmed by the National House of Representatives

The legislative branch consists of a bicameral Parliamentary Assembly (*Skupstina*). It includes a National House of Representatives (*Predstavnicki Dom*), with 42 seats: 14 Serb, 14 Croat, and 14 Bosniak whose members are elected by popular vote to serve two-year terms. The House of Peoples (*Dom Naroda*) consists of 15 seats: 5 Bosniak, 5 Croat, and 5 Serb whose members are elected by the Federation's House of Representatives and the *Republika Srpska's* National

Assembly to serve two-year terms.

The Bosniak-Croat Federation has a bicameral legislature that consists of a House of Representatives (with 140 seats and members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms); and a House of Peoples (with 74 seats: 30 Bosniak, 30 Croat, and 14 others). *Republika Srpska* has a National Assembly with 83 seats, where members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. The power sharing arrangements at all political levels demonstrated that ethnic proportionality combined with the separatist objectives of Serbian and Croatian representatives contributing to frequently paralyzing the central government institutions.

In the judicial branch there is a Constitutional Court consisting of nine members. Four members are selected by the Federation's House of Representatives, two members by the National Assembly of the Serb Republic, and three non-Bosnian members by the president of the European Court of Human Rights. A new state court, established in November 1999, has jurisdiction over cases related to state-level law and appellate jurisdiction over cases initiated in the two entities. The entities each have a Supreme Court and a number of lower courts. There are ten cantonal courts in the Federation, plus a number of municipal courts. *Republika Srpska* has five municipal courts

### **War Crimes and Refugee Issues**

In early 1996, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) based in The Hague, Netherlands, stepped up its activities. More than 50 Bosnians, the majority of whom were Serbs, were indicted by the ICTY for massacring civilians during the war. Those indicted included Radovan Karadzic and Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic. Although several lower ranking war crimes suspects were apprehended, the more important leaders successfully evaded capture. In July 1996, the ICTY issued international arrest warrants for both men on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. Later that month, U.S. officials secured Karadzic's resignation. Mladic was dismissed from power in November 1996 by Biljana Plavsic who had replaced Karadzic as President of the Serb Republic.

A number of trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia have been concluded. In January 2000, five Bosnian Croats were convicted of crimes against humanity in connection with the killing of over 100 Bosniak civilians in the village of Ahmici in Central Bosnia in the spring of 1993. They received sentences ranging from six to 25 years' imprisonment. In March 2000, another Bosnian Croat, General Tihomir Blaskic, the highest-ranking army commander tried by the Tribunal, was found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Lasva River valley in central Bosnia. He was sentenced to 45 years' imprisonment, the longest sentence handed down so far.

Among other trials conducted before the Tribunal were those of Bosnian Serb General Radislav Krstic, accused of planning and ordering the killing of thousands of Bosniak men and boys after the fall of the former UN protected enclave of Srebrenica. Krstic became the first person to go on

trial before the Tribunal on charges of genocide. The trial of three Bosnian Serb paramilitary commanders accused of crimes against humanity in Foca was also underway. This trial was expected to set legal precedents in prosecutions for sexual crimes against women. In October 2000, Bosnian Serb Milorad Krnojelac went on trial on charges of war crimes committed in Foca prison. The trial of Bosnian Croats Dario Kordic and Mario Cerkez also continued. Both stood accused of war crimes against the Bosniak population in the Lasva River valley in Central Bosnia.

NATO's Stabilization Forces (SFOR) apprehended and dispatched to The Hague several other war crimes suspects, including the former Serb Republic presidency member Momcilo Krajisnik, who had been secretly indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity. Some suspects died during attempted arrests by NATO troops. In 2000, the new democratic government in Croatia transferred Mladen Naletilic, a Bosnian Croat indicted for war crimes in Mostar, to the Tribunal's custody. During 2001 and 2002, NATO forces failed to capture the former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, despite several attempts, while General Ratko Mladic was believed to be in hiding inside Serbia protected by elements of the Yugoslav military establishment.

The Bosnian conflict left some 200,000 people dead while 2.2 million, over a half of the country's population, were forced to flee. Most of the remaining refugees have decided to stay abroad, while only 300,000 of them expressed a wish to return. Under pressure from international agencies, local authorities have pressed on with the eviction of illegal occupants, thus enabling pre-war owners to repossess their property.

The return of refugees was mandated in the Dayton agreement, but had not transpired in any significant numbers by the close of the 1990s. This was especially true regarding the return of people into areas where their ethnic group was in the minority after the war. During 1998, up to 830,000 people within Bosnia remained displaced from their previous homes. In general, the major nationalist political leaders among all three groups have sought to ensure that ethnic divisions are consolidated. Despite the assurance of security and the termination of armed hostilities, NATO had failed to guarantee the return of all refugees and the freedom of movement for all Bosnian residents.

According to figures published by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 60,000 registered minority returns took place during 2000 and approximately 92,000 in 2001. About 90,000 refugees were expected to reclaim their homes or move back to their villages and neighborhoods during 2002. The number of internally displaced people and refugees at the beginning of 2001 amounted to approximately 500,000 and 700,000 respectively.

The acceleration in the process of refugee returns after 2000 was primarily stimulated by the spontaneous return of displaced people to destroyed housing, mostly outside urban areas. Meanwhile, returns to town and city centres were proceeding slowly, primarily as a result of the failure to implement property legislation enabling owners to repossess their houses. In September 2000, the UN High Representative removed 15 government officials in the Serb entity from office for their obstruction of the return process. In addition, many of the spontaneous returns were

unsustainable because of a lack of funding for the reconstruction of housing and infrastructure. Refugees also faced violence from local gangs intended to discourage their return in many parts of the country. The voluntary return of most refugees would be an important indicator of the establishment of the rule of law and governmental accountability throughout the country.

## **Struggle for Power**

National elections were held in Bosnia-Herzegovina in September 1996. Six other ballots also took place for: cantonal assemblies (in the Federation), the House of Representatives in the Federation, the National Assembly of the Serb Republic, the Presidency of the Serb Republic, the House of Representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The election campaign was riddled with violations that would have disqualified the ballot under normal conditions. No free movement of people existed between Muslim-Croat and Serb territories, many war criminals were on the ballot, freedom of assembly remained tenuous, and the major media outlets were dominated by nationalists who wanted to seal Bosnia's division not reunification.

The ruling Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian nationalist parties scored major victories, each capturing about 80% of the vote of their ethnic constituencies. The Party of Democratic Action (PDA) won the largest number of seats in Bosnia's central legislature. Seats on the three-member collective presidency went to Bosnia's Muslim president Alija Izetbegovic, Serb leader Momcilo Krajisnik, and Croat leader Krezimir Zubak. Izetbegovic received the most votes and thus chaired the presidency. Disputes surfaced between Muslim and Serbian leaders over the role and power of the collective presidency. The Serb side often raised questions to sow confusion and paralyze the newly constituted governing bodies.

The Serbian Democratic Party (SDP) won the majority of seats to the assembly of the Serb Republic, and Biljana Plavsic, a member of the SDP, continued as president of the entity. The PDA won the largest number of seats in the Muslim-Croat federation's House of Representatives, followed by the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU). The presidency of the Muslim-Croat federation was chosen by the federation's parliament and thus was not contested. The overwhelming victory of the country's ruling parties reflected the suppression or media neglect of opposition parties in the weeks leading up to the elections. Many observers feared that the success of nationalists would serve to ratify Bosnia's partition along ethnic lines. Instead of cementing together the two halves of Bosnia, the general elections seemed to consolidate the power of the three ethno-nationalist political forces.

The Karadzic faction withdrew its representatives from the joint Council of Ministers and blocked meetings of the Bosnian collective presidency. Their battles with Plavsic revolved around control over the army, police forces, political and economic networks, and the mass media. Police units divided into two: about half of the 20,000 officers backed Plavsic's attempt to take over Serbian institutions. The remainder, together with an estimated 3,000 "special police" troops, remained loyal to the old SDP leadership. Two rival power centers emerged in the Serb Republic. Plavsic

created her own party in Banja Luka and attracted some former Karadzic loyalists. The Serbian media also split and became the propaganda mouthpiece of two factions: Karadzic hard liners in Pale and Trebinje and Plavsic rebels controlling Banja Luka television.

In December 1996, NATO launched a new, 31,000-strong stabilization force (S-FOR) in Bosnia to replace the 60,000-member I-FOR, whose one-year mandate had expired. The S-FOR mission was to deter new hostilities and provide a secure environment for civilian peace efforts. Washington contributed 8,500 troops to the new force. In February 1998, NATO leaders decided to extend the S-FOR's mission past June 1998 while the ICTY delivered a historic verdict when it convicted Dusan Tadic, a Bosnian Serb, of crimes against humanity for participating in an ethnic cleansing campaign against Muslims. This trial marked the first time an international court had tried and convicted someone for war crimes since the close of World War Two.

### A Dysfunctional State?

During 1997, Serb Republic President Plavsic clashed with a Serb Assembly dominated by hard-liners. With Western backing, Plavsic formed a new party, the Serb People's Alliance (SPA), in August 1997. On 3 July 1997, the Serb Assembly called for Plavsic's dismissal, accusing her of betraying the Serbian cause. She responded by dissolving the Assembly and legislative elections were called for 22-23 November 1997. Following the vote, a new National Assembly was formed and nationalist predominance was gradually undermined.

18 members of the Bosnian Serb assembly were Muslims, elected by Muslim refugees voting in their home areas. These new legislators combined with Plavsic supporters in January 1998 to elect as Prime Minister the businessmen Milorad Dodik, who had only limited ties with the Bosnian Serb wartime leadership. For the first time since the war began the Bosnian Serb government was not controlled by the SDP. Dodik led a minority government dependent on the support of the PDA and the CDU; but the latter two were formally excluded from the government for fear of losing Serb support for Dodik. Dodik sought to minimize SDP influence in the Serb entity, especially by breaking that party's hold over the media. He also moved the government of the Serb Republic from Pale to Banja Luka, where Plavsic had more influence.

Nationalists on all three sides hampered the free movement of people and the process of ethnic homogenization continued. Moreover, Serbian leaders hampered the functioning of the central government in Sarajevo. Although the three-person Bosnian presidency was formed together with an executive cabinet in which all three ethnic groups were represented, the powers of the central government remained limited while the entity authorities retained substantial control.

In the Bosnian Federation, Muslim leaders complained that Croatian leaders were sabotaging the agreements and constructing their own state structure. Croat representatives claimed that their counterparts in Sarajevo were refusing to approve true power sharing institutions for the Federation. Moreover, they voiced fears that a "unitary federation" would give the Muslims a

dominant role in the midst of growing Islamic nationalism. In effect, federal institutions remained largely paralyzed and cantonal and local authorities exercised more effective control.

Croatian nationalists retained strong vested interests in a permanent division of the country. Millions of black-market dollars were earned from the war and from the subsequent peace. Politically connected criminal gangs in the Croatian territories were manipulating nationalist sentiments, instilling fear in the local population, preventing the normalization of life throughout western Hercegovina and siphoning off vital funds from the government in Sarajevo. The CDU retained a monopolistic organization that eliminated all space for a free mass media and political pluralism. As a result, ethnically separate political and military structures continued to operate within the Federation.

In the Serb Republic, President Plavsic realized that without Western economic assistance the entity faced catastrophe. In order to retain power she challenged Karadzic, Krajisnik, and other war profiteers. Her campaign against corruption struck a chord among many ordinary Serbs. Plavsic in effect challenged the monopoly of the SDP. Some observers feared that the Serb entity could dissolve into an all-out civil war and a split into two antagonistic parts: the western section based around the Plavsic and Dodik leadership in Banja Luka and the eastern Karadzic group in Pale.

Fresh elections to the Bosnian Serb Presidency and for the Serb member of the collective Bosnian presidency took place on 12-13 September 1998. The latter ballot was won by Zivko Radisic from the Socialist Party of the Serb Republic (SPSR). Nikola Poplasen, a leader of the Serbian Radical Party, won the vote to the Serbian presidency but was barred from taking office by the UN High Representative Carlos Westendorp because of his staunch opposition to Bosnian integration. A new series of municipal elections took place in April 2000, but showed mixed success in integrating Bosnia and curtailing the powers of nationalist forces. Serb nationalists won in 49 municipalities, while Croatian nationalists captured 25. The Muslim Party of Democratic Action won in 23 by itself and in 11 more in coalition with the more moderate Party for Bosnia-Hercegovina. There were some encouraging signs in that the multi-ethnic Social Democrats won in 15 municipalities and made important electoral advances.

After general elections in November 2000, a new central government took power in February 2001, consisting of a post-election coalition that excluded the nationalist parties from power. This coalition, the Alliance for Change, was centred on the multi-ethnic Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH). The Alliance also came to power in the Federation. However, the Bosnian Party for Democratic Action and the Croatian Democratic Union remained powerful. The Serbian Democratic Party won a significant plurality in the Serb Republic in the November 2000 ballot, while its coalition partner in the government, the moderate Party for Democratic Progress of Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, remained dependent on the SDP in order to remain in office.

International agencies remained hopeful that the general elections scheduled for October 2002



would further strengthen the multi-ethnic parties and undermine the three nationalist formations. To achieve such an objective, a comprehensive package of election law reforms would be necessary and the powers of the two entity governments would need to be whittled down.

Parallel political structures in the Serbian entity and the Croatian dominated cantons in the Bosnian Federation maintained their own intelligence services, economic networks, and financial sources. Many of these sources were either illicit or deprived the central government in Sarajevo of necessary revenues from taxation or customs duties. Their activities were enhanced by the shortcomings evident in the judicial system and in law enforcement. Much needed was the merger of disparate intelligence services linked with particularistic interests into a professional organisation under central government control. In June 2002, it was announced that a common intelligence service was to be established for the all-Bosnian state institutions.

According to the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the year 2000, Bosnia's dominant political parties continued to exert influence over the media, while freedom of the press was restricted in both entities. Government pressures against journalists remained high although threats of physical violence were decreasing. Academic freedom was restricted and the authorities continued to impose some limits on freedom of assembly and association. Both governments and private groups continued to restrict religious practice by minorities in majority areas. Although freedom of movement continued to improve, some restrictions remained in practice. The police failed to ensure security for all refugees returning to areas in which they were an ethnic minority.

Endemic corruption, an obstructionist bureaucracy, too many layers of government, and insufficient clarity in property ownership have greatly inhibited foreign investment and stifled local entrepreneurship. Limited economic opportunities have exacerbated the emigration of many of Bosnia's best-educated and most ambitious young people. The country was clearly in need of a unified legal system to deal with business, tax, privatization, and property ownership, as well as the functioning of a single state customs service responsible to the central government in Sarajevo for gathering revenues.

Military reform was long overdue in the country, as Bosnia-Herzegovina needed a single army in order to participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. The existence of three military structures (Serbian, Bosniak, and Croatian) has proved financially and politically costly while impeding the modernization, standardization, streamlining, and professionalization of Bosnia's armed forces.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- Provide an assessment of the Dayton accords and to what degree have its principles been implemented in practice.

- What are the major differences between the United Nations UNPROFOR mission and NATO's IFOR and SFOR operations?
- What are the major post-war impediments to creating a single Bosnian state?
- Has the international presence consolidated unity or division in the country, and how dependent is Bosnia-Herzegovina on international actors for its political survival?
- What impact has the war crimes issue had on the process of post-war reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina?
- How important is the return to their homes of refugees and displaced persons in rebuilding a multi-ethnic Bosnian state?
- Assess the nature and consequence of political conflicts between nationalists and multi-ethnic liberals in the two Bosnian entities.

### **Resource Materials for Further Study**

Thomas Ambrosio, "The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Failure of Implementation," in John S. Micgiel (Ed.) *State and Nation Building in East Central Europe: Contemporary Perspectives*, New York: Columbia University, Institute on East Central Europe, 1996

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## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

### International Protectorate

The Bonn Conference in December 1997 empowered Carlos Westendorp, the UN High Representative, to impose solutions on the three Bosnian protagonists. The High Representative was authorized to make binding decisions on how to run the central government, impose interim solutions during disputes, and fire Bosnian officials who blocked progress toward integration. Some observers considered Westendorp's new mandate to be a major step toward transforming Bosnia into an international protectorate. Westendorp complained that the country lacked human and minority rights protection, laws on foreign investment, customs rules, national political parties, and public corporations. The Bonn Document called for a sustained campaign against official corruption and efforts to break the links between nationalist politicians and criminal rackets.

The international community provided several billion dollars in aid to Bosnia after the signing of

the Dayton accords. But there were persistent complaints that funds had been misused and primarily benefited the ruling nationalists. No major boost in production was registered and the Serbian entity in particular remained pauperized and devoid of any significant reconstruction assistance because of the obstruction of nationalist politicians. The reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single state and the promotion of a central political authority frustrated the international community. Nationalist politicians, especially from the major Serbian and Croatian parties, persistently blocked the process of state integration. The country remained polarized along ethnic lines as nationalist parties controlled decision-making in the two entities. Exclusivist nationalist parties continued to pose as the defenders of allegedly endangered “national interests.”

International agencies favored the marginalization of nationalist hard-liners among all three ethnic groups. For example, during his term in office, Westendorp dismissed the President of the Serb Republic, Nikola Poplasen, for interfering in the country’s democratic process and for supporting partition. Westendorp also tried to intensify the state-building process by various unilateral measures such as deciding on the country’s new flag, national anthem, a joint currency, a common passport, and common national license plates.

Nationalist politicians in several cantons who openly violated the Dayton provisions were either removed from office or barred from standing in future elections. Westendorp also began to restructure the Bosnian media by wresting control of several television stations from the ruling nationalist parties. Although the High Representative did not technically command any military force, his control of major aid and reconstruction resources enabled him to enforce most of his decisions.

The degree of Westendorp’s intervention led to complaints about externally imposed solutions among various Bosnian activists. Others believed that the High Representative had not sufficiently exercised his authority or unnecessarily delayed the full implementation of the Dayton accords. Westendorp’s successor, Wolfgang Petrisch, concentrated his efforts on reforming Bosnia’s corrupt judicial system, buttressing its precarious independent mass media, and improving its educational system. International representatives also condemned the activities of the Croatian Herzegovinian ultra-nationalist networks, which thwarted the development of a functioning democracy and prevented the emergence of a competitive market economy. They criticized the Franjo Tudjman government in Croatia for supporting illicit structures inside Bosnia and for harboring designs on Bosnian territory.

Without international pressures and financial incentives, the position of Bosnia’s refugees and local minorities would be have been even more precarious. International dependence was also evident in the Bosnian economy. Real growth continued to stagnate as a consequence of numerous factors, including corruption and mismanagement, over-dependence on international agencies, and limited indigenous economic development. Since 1995, Bosnia benefited from substantial foreign economic aid particularly from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Reports also surfaced that government leaders had misappropriated large amounts of cash from

public funds or from international aid projects. The embezzled funds were believed to amount to a substantial portion of all state finances. The allegations were vehemently denied in both entities but they soured the climate for further foreign assistance and investment. International agencies also bemoaned the lack of a proper banking system and an effective tax and tariff collection agency in the country. Both factors encouraged illegitimate business activities and undermined the authority of the central government.

The survival of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single state remained dependent primarily on the presence of NATO and other international institutions to provide physical security, state resources, economic reconstruction, institutional continuity, and territorial integrity. Hard-line nationalists calculated that international resolve would weaken over time and that their resistance to ethnic reintegration and civic democracy would eventually pay off as international organizations disengaged from Bosnia and *de facto* recognized the existence of two sovereign states.

Meanwhile, Bosnia's democrats were frustrated by the initial weak pressures exerted by international organizations on nationalist "warlords" and the slow development of civic institutions. But the civic activists and integralists were also cognizant that over-dependence on international actors could undermine the authenticity and indigenous development of Bosnia's multi-ethnic and civic-democratic institutions.

Although centrist and civic forces proved more successful in the general elections on 11 November 2000, the three nationalist parties gained sufficient representation to obstruct multi-ethnic integration. In particular, the SDP and the CDU continued to block democratic reform and governmental authority at the central level. The issue of systemic corruption and organized criminality grew in significance during the 1990s and increasingly preoccupied international actors.

In June 2002, the newly appointed UN High Representative Paddy Ashdown pledged a prolonged campaign against crime and corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The country would acquire special anti-corruption bodies within the judiciary by the end of the year, and Ashdown called for the "creation of special organized crime, economic crime, and corruption panels in the criminal division and appeals division of the new State Court of Bosnia-Herzegovina."

## International Relations

In the early part of the 1990s, the Serbian and Croatian governments harbored clear designs on Bosnian territory and sponsored proxy forces in the republic to promote partition and potential annexation. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic was closely involved in promoting the Bosnian war through military, financial, economic, political, and intelligence support to the Bosnian Serb leadership. Croatian President Franjo Tudjman likewise maintained a close relationship with the CDU political and military leaders in Herzegovina.

Following the signing of the peace treaty at Dayton in 1995, Bosnia's foreign policy has developed parallel to various international efforts in Southeast Europe. The principle pillars of Bosnian foreign policy revolve around building lasting regional security structures, and ensuring closer regional economic cooperation.

In March 1998, an agreement was signed to institutionalize regular high-level consultations between Sarajevo and Zagreb, while an agreement was reached during the summer of 1998 providing Bosnia with easier access to the Adriatic Sea through Croatian territory. Nonetheless, Bosniak Muslim leaders remained suspicious that the Croatian government still held aspirations to divide the country. A provocative speech by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in February 1998, which called for a partition of Bosnia along ethnic lines, was vehemently condemned by Muslim leaders and by the international community.

Bosnia's relations with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) remained stalled. The government in Belgrade proved hesitant in unequivocally recognizing the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, Yugoslav President Milosevic played off rival factions in the Serbian entity in order to maintain his influence in the country. Fears were also generated during the summer of 1998 that the brewing conflict in the Serbian province of Kosovo could have negative consequences in Bosnia by encouraging the secession of the Serb republic and the Croatian regions.

In 1999, some members of President Tudjman's ruling party in Croatia called for the creation of separate Croatian and Muslim entities in Bosnia to replace the existing Bosnian Federation. Muslim leaders considered this a move toward Croatian separatism, and Bosnia's deputy Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic declared that Tudjman should be sent to The Hague tribunal for his role in war crimes committed during the 1993-1994 Muslim-Croat war. By contrast, Croatia's democratic opposition called for the decentralization of political power rather than the creation of three entities. They believed that Bosnia's cantons (or districts) should become the main locus of political authority in which the three ethnic groups could gain greater representation.

After Tudjman's death at the end of 1999 and the election of a democratic coalition government in Croatia in January 2000, substantial progress was achieved in relations between Sarajevo and Zagreb. Croatia displayed its commitment to an integral Bosnia and thus improved prospects for eliminating separatist trends in Croatian Herzegovina. In March 2000, the new Croatian President Stipe Mesic visited Sarajevo and announced that Zagreb would no longer interfere in Bosnia's internal affairs or finance the Croatian separatists as had been the case under Tudjman's tenure.

The new Croatian government recognized the territorial integrity of Bosnia and adopted a "one-Bosnia" approach. A number of important bilateral agreements have been signed between the two countries, including cooperation on refugee repatriation, cooperation between the two Defense Ministries on regional security, and cooperation on border controls. The two sides have also signed an agreement finalizing the Bosnian-Croatian border. In sum, 76 bilateral agreements have been signed between the two states.

The ouster of Slobodan Milosevic in October 2000 generated hope that Sarajevo's contacts with Belgrade would be placed on a more constructive footing. The Yugoslav government formally recognized the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This opened bilateral channels and the two states have begun to cooperate on an array of issues, including refugee repatriation, movement of people and capital, and the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague. The two countries have forged a favorable economic relationship, particularly in the field of energy, signing a free trade agreement in February 2002. Normalization of all types of traffic remains an important precondition for unimpeded communication between the two countries. In this context, activities have been intensified with a view to the conclusion of necessary agreements.

International pressures have been exerted on the FRY (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) government to sever military assistance to the Bosnian Serb military and to establish more cooperative relations with the central government in Sarajevo. Close personal and institutional links between the Serb Republic and the Yugoslav government in Belgrade remained a cause of international criticism as they undermined the forging of a unified Bosnian state.

Bosnia has pursued cooperative relations with the majority of EU countries, the US, and member states of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Countries), particularly Iran and Turkey. Sarajevo established cordial ties with all countries making significant contributions to its reconstruction and development as well as other member countries of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC). The priority of the government is to take steps toward European and trans-Atlantic integration, including admission to the Council of Europe, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Bosnia's participation in three multilateral initiatives is of particular relevance: the EU Stabilization and Association process, the Stability Pact, and the OSCE Agreement on Regional Stabilization. In May 1999, the European Commission outlined the EU's Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), anchored to a common set of political and economic conditions that needed to be met for a country to move toward EU assimilation. That same year, Bosnia began actively participating in the EU Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). A road map was adopted, which Bosnia pledged to implement in full by end of 2002. SAP emphasizes the need for regional cooperation.

The Stability Pact was an attempt by the EU to implement a political and economic strategy in Southeast Europe to ensure security and growth. Under the provisions of the Stability Pact, Bosnia pledged to work towards the creation of a Free Trade Area, the establishment of a Migration and Asylum Initiative, and the resolution of refugee matters. Sarajevo agreed to participate in all negotiations on regional arms control and for achieving a regional military balance based on the lowest level of armaments. It also consented to negotiate for voluntary limits on military manpower, restrictions on military deployments and exercises, and restraints on the location of heavy weapons.

After the fall of communism and the outbreak of war, and the imposition of international economic sanctions, criminal activities turned much of the Balkan region into a hotbed for drugs and arms trafficking, people smuggling, and prostitution. Accordingly, the Bosnian authorities have promised to work actively in limiting and eliminating regional organized crime and corruption. Sarajevo is cooperating with other Balkan states in collecting and sharing intelligence data on trafficking networks. It is committed to a regional approach, through the adoption of similar standards, in the fight against organized crime. It is also a strong supporter of the Task Force on Trafficking in Women and Children of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What is the legal basis for the international presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is the country in effect a United Nations protectorate?
- What role has NATO played in Bosnia-Herzegovina in its first out of area post-Cold War mission?
- Consider some of the positive and the negative consequences of Bosnia's dependence on international institutions?
- What would be your suggestion for creating a stronger, self-sustaining, and integrated Bosnian state?
- What role have both Serbia and Croatia played in Bosnian politics and in the country's economic development, and how has this changed since the demise of Presidents Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic?
- How does Bosnia-Herzegovina fit into the evolution of the wider Balkan region since the disintegration of Yugoslavia?

### Resource Materials for Further Study

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## **CULTURE, SOCIETY, AND GENDER**

### **Ethnic Groups**



Bosnia-Herzegovina's three major ethnic groups are Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. According to the last official republican census, completed in 1991, Muslims formed 43%, Serbs 31%, and Croats 17% of a total population of 4,364,574. By mid-2001, the population estimate stood at 3,922,205 although a precise figure was difficult to establish because of the dislocations caused by military action and "ethnic cleansing" in the 1990s.

The population ratios remained roughly similar in the wake of the 1992-1995 war, although the Croatian share reportedly dipped below 15%. Also in 1991, over 5% of the population declared themselves as Yugoslavs, but this category largely evaporated as a consequence of the armed conflicts and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. During the war, the term Bosniak generally replaced Muslim as an ethnic term partly to avoid confusion with the religious term Muslim. Other smaller minorities resident in Bosnia included Romas, Albanians, Montenegrins, Jews, and Slovenes. A Jewish community had found safe haven in Sarajevo in 1492 after their expulsion from Spain. There were no religious or ethnic ghettos in the larger cities and the republic's churches, mosques, and synagogues were often located close together, indicative of the tolerant character of Bosnian society.

Bosnia-Herzegovina was in a unique position among the former Yugoslav republics, in that no single nation or nationality formed an absolute majority. By the late 1980s, Bosnia's ethnic balance was compounded by a complex territorial mix among the three major communities. In the 99 municipalities outside of the capital Sarajevo, Muslims formed absolute majorities in only 32, and few of these were territorially contiguous: the biggest concentrations were in northwestern, eastern, and central Bosnia. Serbs constituted absolute majorities in 30 municipalities, most of these in western, northeastern, and southeastern Bosnia. Croats formed absolute majorities in only 14 municipalities, the majority in the western Herzegovina region.

In 23 municipalities, no ethnic group possessed a clear majority and even in districts where one ethnic group predominated there were large minorities of one of the other two nationalities. Cities were ethnically very mixed; in the smaller towns specific groups tended to live in different quarters; while in villages one group tended to predominate.

The major language of all three ethno-religious communities was formerly known as Serbo-Croatian or *stokavian*, a dialect selected by the intellectual founders of Yugoslavia to be the chief language of the new state. There were some minor variations in pronunciation and vocabulary but these variants were more similar to each other than to the Serbo-Croatian spoken in Belgrade or Zagreb. Bosnia also had two alphabets, the Latin and Cyrillic scripts, and both were taught in schools and used in the press.

Since the breakup of Yugoslavia, leaders of the three ethnic groups have endeavored to forge their linguistic distinctiveness by adding new vocabulary and officially referring to their language as either Bosniak, Serbian, or Croatian. While Croats and Bosniak Muslims largely dispensed with the Cyrillic alphabet, Serbs discarded the Latin script.

### ***Composition of Population, 1991 Census***

Ethnic Group	Number	% of Population
Muslims	1,902,954	43.60
Serbs	1,370,476	31.40
Croats	755,071	17.30
Yugoslavs	240,052	5.50
Others	96,02	12.20
Total Minorities	4,364,574	100.00
Total Population	4,364,574	100.00

### **Major Religions**

The major distinguishing feature in Bosnia is religious affiliation. While the predominant Bosniak population is Muslim, the Serbs are overwhelmingly Christian Orthodox, and the Croats are Roman Catholics. The Muslim name, as an ethnic category and one of Yugoslavia's constituent nations, was adopted by the Communist authorities to preserve a multi-ethnic balance in Bosnia and prevent Serbian and Croatian domination.

The dividing line stemming from the Christian schism in the 11<sup>th</sup> century passed through Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian historians claim that most of the local population felt no particular allegiance to either Croatia or Serbia as control over the territory was changeable and often nominal and both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches were organizationally weak. Many of the local inhabitants either belonged to an autonomous and schismatic Bosnian Church or to a heretical dualist sect known as the Bogomils. Many Bosnians converted to Islam during Ottoman rule in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries as a consequence of weak allegiance to Catholicism, Orthodoxy, or Bogomilism, as well as opportunities for improved political position, social status, and economic benefits under Ottoman rule. The form of Islam was generally Sunni and was moderate in its orientation.

Religion has a close association with national identity despite poor attendance at religious services and other rituals. Despite the prevalence of secularism, a religious revival was visible during the collapse of communism and as a consequence of the brutal 1992-1995 war. Indeed, Muslim-Bosniak consciousness and identity expanded and solidified during the course of the conflict. However, the form of Islam in Bosnia is moderate with few if any militant or fundamentalist elements despite attempt by states such as Iran to promote more extremist Islamicist sentiments. For example, the consumption of alcohol was commonplace among all groups, without any prohibitions. Since the war however, it has been discouraged in some Muslim areas as Islamic rituals and practices have intensified.

The Bosnian Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including private and public worship. Although in general, individuals enjoyed this right in areas that were ethnically mixed or where most people adhered to one majority religion, the ability of individuals to worship in areas where their religion was in the minority was restricted, sometimes violently, according to several human rights reports.

Administrative and financial obstacles to rebuilding religious structures impeded the ability of minorities to worship and contributed to impeding their return in many areas. The absence of a police force willing to protect religious minorities and a judicial system capable of prosecuting crimes against them constituted major obstacles to safeguarding the rights of religious minorities. According to U.S. State Department reports, the Bosnian Serb government, local governments, and police forces frequently allowed or encouraged an atmosphere in which abuses of religious freedom could take place.

## **Cultural Factors**

Before the 1992-1995 war, about two thirds of the Bosnian population was rural although the dry plateaus in Hercegovina were more sparsely populated than the central and northern zones of Bosnia. The country had a traditional urban-rural divide with a good deal of mutual stereotyping between the two groups that often transcended ethnic and religious differentiation. During the 1960s and 1970s, the urban population almost doubled as many young people left the countryside for the industrial centers of Sarajevo, Zenica, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Mostar, and were often accommodated in suburban apartment blocks.

Bosnia had an urban population that aspired to the living standard common in western Europe and was increasingly intermixed ethnically, residentially, and occupationally, with increasing cross-ethnic marriages. About one third of all urban marriages on the eve of the 1992-1995 war were between partners from different ethnic backgrounds. The rural population remained more divided ethnically and was generally poorer. As a result of the wars, ethno-religious identification has risen among all three major groups.

The largest cities had mixed populations in 1991, but the war and its aftermath made them almost homogenous. For example, Banja Luka, 55% Serbian in 1991, was almost 100% Serbian by 1993. In 1991, Mostar was 34% percent Croatian, 35% Muslim, 19% Serbian, and 10% "others" (people who registered no ethnic affiliation); but by 1995 it had been divided into an almost purely Croatian western part and a Muslim eastern part. Under the terms of the 1995 Dayton accords, Sarajevo, located in the Muslim-Croat federation, is a united city under federal Bosnian control. However, the city's population changed from 49% Muslim before the war to 90% Muslim by 1996, and the Bosniak-Muslim authorities permitted few non-Muslims to return in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Bosnia's pre-war ethnic diversity enriched its cultural life. Epic stories, a form of traditional oral literature, were still sung throughout the republic well into the 1950s. Bosnian urban love songs,

largely Muslim in origin, were popular throughout the former Yugoslavia. Ivo Andric, a Serb who was raised Catholic in Bosnia, won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1961. His novels include *Na Drini Cuprija* (1945; *The Bridge on the Drina*, 1959), in which a bridge from the Ottoman period symbolically united Bosnia's peoples. The film director Emir Kusturica, of Muslim origin, made internationally acclaimed films in Sarajevo. His film *When Father was Away on Business* was a finalist for the Academy Award in the United States for best foreign film in 1984. That film had a cast and crew that included Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. Through 1991, the Bosnian rock group *Bijelo Dugme* was extremely popular throughout Yugoslavia, playing music influenced by the various traditions of Bosnia.

The cultural mix has declined since the war. The Bosniak authorities regard Andric as having been anti-Muslim, and they closed the museum devoted to him in his home town of Travnik. Filmmaker Kusturica moved to Serbia in 1992 while his internationally acclaimed 1995 depiction of the war, *Underground*, was condemned in Sarajevo.

The most important library in Bosnia was the National and University Library in Sarajevo. It was deliberately destroyed by militant Serbian shelling in 1992. The world famous bridge in Mostar, built by Ottoman rulers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was intentionally destroyed by the shelling of militant Croats in 1994. Throughout Bosnia, Orthodox and Catholic churches and mosques were deliberately targeted and destroyed during the war. Among the most important losses were two mosques in Banja Luka that were on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) register of world cultural monuments. They were leveled by Bosnian Serb authorities in 1992.

## Social Structure

Bosnia's social structure has few traditional features remaining but mostly modern pan-European elements. The basic unit is the nuclear family, although in some areas the ancient Slavic *zadruga* or extended family remains a source of cooperation. The fairly recent trends toward urbanization, mostly since the end of World War Two, meant that many families retained relatives in both the city and the villages and could draw upon resources from both environments. Bosnian Moslems tended to maintain fewer connections between city and country, because since Ottoman times they have tended to be largely an urban population. Under the communist system, family and friendship networks were employed to gain various benefits.

Bosnia-Herzegovina had a high rate of population growth in comparison with the other Yugoslav republics. When the republic achieved independence, much of the population was young, with over a quarter under the age of 15. In addition, large numbers of Bosnians lived as guest workers in Germany, Austria, and other West European countries. Before the war, Sarajevo had a population of 526,000 inhabitants, while the other sizable cities included Banja Luka, Mostar, Tuzla, and Zenica. Since the war, according to estimates made in 2001, the population structure has altered, with 20% under 15 years old, 70% between 15 and 64 years of age, and 9% over 65

years old.

Before the 1992-1995 war, Bosnia-Herzegovina was a modern and industrialized European country with good educational, welfare, and health care standards. Education was compulsory and free for all children from ages 7 through 15. Secondary education was also free. Wartime destruction or damage to schools disrupted education for many children, although “war schools” were created in other buildings. There are officially four universities in the country, in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Mostar. The university in Mostar, however, has split into two unrelated institutions, a Croat university in western Mostar and an Islamic one in eastern Mostar.

## **Gender Issues**

Although women were guaranteed full equality and entry into the work force under the communist system, this often resulted in women performing two jobs, one at the office or factory and one at home. Polygyny as a Moslem custom was practiced only in isolated regions of the country as most marriages followed modern customs. Arranged marriage between families also largely disappeared. The size of Bosnian families, especially in the urban areas, has also been decreasing as education and living standards increased.

During the 1992-1995 war women in general were the major victims of ethno-nationalist policies. They were the primary victims of rape and displacement. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of women and girls raped during the conflict. Human-rights observers, journalists, and witnesses reported on the organized and systematic rape of at least 20,000 women and girls by the Serbian military and the murder of many of the victims. Croatian and Bosnian militias also engaged in rape and abuse but on a smaller scale. Rape was employed as a deliberate military tactic in the process of “ethnic cleansing.” Rapes were committed in a sadistic fashion to humiliate the victims, their families, and the entire community. Women and girls aged anything between 6 and 70 were gang-raped in special camps in various parts of the country. Rape was used as a strategic weapon condoned by local political and military leaders.

Since the war many Muslim women have adopted Islamic dress styles that had not been common in the cities before the war. The destruction of the economy and the loss of employment has also thrust many previously working women into traditional female roles as housewives and mothers.

After the conflict, some women became ardent pacifists and supported the process of reconciliation. A minority of women began to create independent civil organizations in order to have a greater political input in policy making. New women’s civil groups developed out of the need to help the victims of war especially given the collapse of the former state welfare system. However, they have often lacked domestic visibility and recognition for their efforts. Women’s groups received support from international agencies not only for their work with war victims but also in their attempts to increase women’s political involvement.

According to human rights groups, violence against women, particularly domestic violence, was a persistent yet underreported problem. A report by the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights in 2000 estimated that approximately 30% of women in the country were victims of domestic violence; however, there was little reliable data available regarding the extent of the problem. Discrimination against women in employment also persisted in the country particularly in rural areas and few women occupied positions of real economic or political power. Women have been discriminated against in the workplace in favor of demobilized soldiers.

Trafficking in women from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for purposes of sexual exploitation was a serious and growing problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina. There were no existing laws that specifically prohibited trafficking in persons. The country remained a major destination and transit point, and to a lesser extent a country of origin, for women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation. Bosnia was extremely vulnerable to trafficking in persons, because of weak laws, porous border controls, and corrupt police who were easily bribed. Many of the women were smuggled through Bosnia to Italy, Germany, and other Western European countries for prostitution.

International organisations have attempted to address the problem of people smuggling and programs have been established to repatriate trafficked women who seek to return home. A number of shelters have been created to house trafficked women while they await return to their countries of origin. However, public awareness of the problem remains low and trafficking is tolerated at most levels of society.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- Describe the relationships between the three religious communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina before and during communist times.
- What impact did the 1992-1995 war have on traditional customs and group identities?
- What was the impact of the 1992-1995 war on Bosnia's smaller minorities (Romans, Jews, and so on)?
- How significant are religious beliefs and institutions in structuring the values and behavior of the three Bosnian nationalities?
- How has the position of women changed in the country during and after communist rule? How has it altered in the aftermath of the 1992-1995 war?

### **Resource Materials for Further Study**

CIA World Factbook, Bosnia and Herzegovina

"Bosnia and Herzegovina," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2002  
<http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2002 Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

*The Warburton Report*, European Community 1993. *Bosnia Herzegovina, Rape & Sexual Abuse by Armed Forces*, Amnesty International Jan 1993.

Catherine MacKinnon, `Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace`, to appear in *Of Human Rights* (Basic Books 1993).

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Sabrina Ramet (Ed.), *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

## ECONOMICS



### Economy and War

Even prior to the 1992-1995 war, Bosnia-Herzegovina was among the poorest republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). It ranked next to Macedonia in terms of the lowest per capita income. Its GDP was estimated at US\$ 10.6 billion, or about US\$ 2,429 per capita. The economy was industrially diversified with the majority of the population employed in the manufacturing, mining, technology, and service industries. Industries such as metallurgy, chemicals, and manufacturing constituted the most important economic sectors, accounting for about 65% of GDP. In the service arena, the most developed was the civil engineering sector.

Overall, the labor force was highly educated with a small but capable entrepreneurial class. In addition, due to its strategic geographic location and mountainous nature, Bosnia was home to

some of the largest and heavily overstaffed Yugoslav military industry. Yugoslav leader Marshall Tito had pursued the development of military industries in the republic with the result that Bosnia hosted a large share of Yugoslavia's defense plants.

The 1992-1995 war caused Bosnian's production to plummet by about 80%. In total, 70% of factories and 60% of all buildings were destroyed in the fighting. By the end of the war in 1995, Bosnia's GDP fell to less than US\$500 per capita -- about 20% of the pre-war level. Total output collapsed to between 10% and 30% of pre-war production. Most of the existing physical capital, including factories, shops, mines, and electrical power plants, was destroyed.

The war also brought about a devastating loss to human capital. Half of the pre-war 4.5 million people were displaced, almost a quarter of a million people lost their lives, and the social fabric of the Bosnian people was profoundly disturbed and forever altered. In addition, the war caused a significant brain drain, which has seen only minimal reversal, as post-war income levels remain low. The material damage was estimated to be approximately six to ten times higher than the US\$ 5.1 billion, which was earmarked for reconstruction and recovery by international donors in the "Three to Four Years Priority and Reconstruction and Recovery Program" launched at the end of 1995.

### Post-War Economic Developments

The 1992-1995 war caused production to plummet by 80% between 1990 and 1995, while unemployment soared. After the NATO mission was deployed in Bosnia, output initially recovered between 1996 and 1998, but growth slowed down again in 1999 and 2000, and GDP remains far below the 1990 level. Economic data are of limited value, however, because although both Bosnian entities issue figures, reliable national-level statistics are not available. Official data also fails to include the large share of activity that occurs on the black market.

The *marka*, the national currency introduced in 1998, has gained wide acceptance, and the Central Bank of Bosnia-Herzegovina has dramatically increased its reserve holdings. However, the implementation of privatization has been slower than anticipated. The country has received substantial amounts of reconstruction assistance and humanitarian aid from the international community but does not seem to be prepared for an era of shrinking outside aid and declining dependence.

In the year 2000, the GDP real growth rate stood at 8%, while per capita GDP only reached \$1,000 -- approximately half the pre-war level. The composition of GDP earnings by sector included: agriculture, 19%, industry, 23%, and services, 58%. Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to record one of the lowest GDPs in Eastern Europe. In 2000, the country registered the second lowest GDP in the region, placing itself just above Albania.

Bosnia's labor force approximated 1,026 million people while the unemployment rate reached



between 35% and 40% in 1999, and many individuals were forced to operate in the informal economy. Workers in the unofficial market typically receive no benefits, but those with formal employment are often paid only partial salaries, which are often distributed several months late. Pensions and other benefits are also paid only in part and are invariably delayed due to a lack of government revenues.

The major industries include steel, coal, iron ore, lead, zinc, manganese, bauxite, vehicle assembly, textiles, tobacco products, wooden furniture, tank and aircraft assembly, domestic appliances, and oil refining. Bosnian industry remained greatly overstaffed, as one reflection of the lingering socialist economic structure. Agricultural products consisted of wheat, corn, fruits, vegetables and livestock. Although agriculture is now almost entirely in private hands, farms are small and inefficient, and the republic traditionally is a net importer of food. Moreover, with the exception of Croatia, Bosnia runs a trade deficit with all of its major trading partners.

Almost seven years after the signing of the Dayton accords, Bosnia's economy is still far below the pre-war level. Many people have no regular jobs, while most young people are trying to leave the country. Most of the money entering Bosnia has come in the form of international aid -- over \$5 billion in the past six years -- while foreign direct investment has been low, and is currently in decline. Government spending is struggling to prevent investment capital from declining further as foreign investors pull out. Economic development has been largely confined to basic reconstruction requirements financed by international donors.

Higher government spending is crucial if Bosnia is to realize economic prosperity and return its war-torn economy to a pre-war level. Incoming foreign funds, in terms of credit lines to small and medium size enterprises, are far too small to boost or even sustain current development. Most of the limited economic growth has been spurred by small enterprises, while structural reforms in the large enterprises and banking sectors have so far been insignificant.

Bosnia's economy remains largely divided in a manner corresponding to its two political entities. An uneven development of the two economies, with that in the Serb Republic (SR) lagging far behind the Federation, is exerting significant pressure on social and political developments. In addition, effective monetary and fiscal policy-making is largely impossible as the Serb Republic runs its own economic programs. However, it does not have an independent monetary policy and no independent central bank, but is represented in the governance of the Central Bank of Bosnia-Herzegovina; the Main Bank in the SR is a unit of the Central Bank of B-H. Wide economic differences between the two entities have led to substantial variations in living conditions. Although efforts have been undertaken to unite the divided economy, the restricted movement of capital and labor has retarded progress.

Unemployment is a serious concern and will likely remain a major obstacle to Bosnian's economic recovery. The official unemployment rate is estimated around 35%, although, experts argue that it is in fact much higher. A large portion of those technically employed are on the employment waiting list, while others do insignificant part-time jobs. The average monthly wage remains low

in Bosnia, forcing many young educated people to leave the country in search of better opportunities elsewhere. With a growing gap between Bosnia and its neighbors (in Bosnia's disfavor) in terms of economic recovery, capital and labor flights are likely to intensify. Even though the market is well supplied, and prices are much lower than in other East European countries, the purchasing power of the population as a whole remains low.

A large portion of the labor force is engaged in material reconstruction, public administration, and international organizations, all of which offer only temporary employment or are poor stimulators for capital accumulation. For example, from June 1996 to December 1998, a total of 555 small projects, such as road and electric lines repair, and reforestation, were implemented, all of which temporarily eased unemployment as they were all labor intensive. However, these are only short-term solutions. High unemployment and low-income levels also provide a steady source of human capital to the growing Balkan illicit economy. As unemployment remains high, any efforts by the Bosnian government to combat organized crime, corruption, and reverse the illicit economic activity are significantly compromised.

Although privatization is amongst the central pillars of Bosnia's economic recovery, an effective transition to a free-market economy has been slow. Transparency and legal mechanisms accompanying privatization in other East European countries are largely missing. Oftentimes contradictory legislation has compromised transparency, providing a rich seam of corruption for some state officials. Corporate ownership and foreign private incentives are still strangled by Bosnia's socialist heritage. Investment protection laws, especially laws concerning foreign investment, are underdeveloped, and the maze of bureaucracy is a barrier to foreign investment.

Bosnia's power politics are also a major obstacle to privatization. The entity governments have made some progress on reforms in the banking and financial sectors, but privatization of the state-owned strategic enterprises remains slow. Too many layers of bureaucracy at state, entity, and local level discourage free enterprise and business development and are also proving expensive to maintain from state revenues.

While more than half of the population subsists below the poverty line, many war profiteers and political elites have dominated the privatization process. Hence, the risks associated with investment are often higher than the potential profit on investment. Significant efforts in developing a functioning capital market (such as creating institutions to monitor and support the privatization process) could help limit corruption and implant greater investor confidence. The successful development of a functioning capital market would also help to fill the legal vacuum, which currently shields corruption and other illicit activities.

The economy remains heavily dependent on international assistance. A major player in Bosnia's economic reconstruction has been the European Union's European Commission (EC). The EC has adopted a double transition strategy in rebuilding Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the one hand, it supports programs that stimulate economic growth and development; on the other hand, it runs programs that prepare Bosnian society for democratic development.

Following the signing of the Dayton accords, the EU Council of Ministers established political and economic conditionality for the development of bilateral relations with Bosnia and the country began to benefit from direct assistance. In 2000, this aid totaled some \$104 million, with a grand sum of over \$890 million since 1997. In 1999, the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) was launched with a prospect of Bosnia's integration into EU structures. An EU Road Map set out a number of essential steps to be undertaken by the government in order to open negotiations on a Stabilization and Association Agreement. Duty-free access was also provided to the EU market for products from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The objective of the SAP was to support Bosnia in fostering inter-entity cooperation, helping inter-ethnic reconciliation and the return of refugees, establishing functioning institutions and a viable democracy based on the rule of law, and laying the foundations for sustainable economic development. Over \$2 billion in EU funds have been committed to Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1991. Between 1991 and 2000 humanitarian aid totaled \$1,032 billion. In 2001, more than \$105 million of assistance was committed under the new CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization) Program. In addition the EU member states contributed over \$1.2 billion in aid between 1996 and 2002.

The World Bank has been the other major provider. On 28 March 2002, the World Bank approved US\$30 million for the Road Management and Safety Project for Bosnia, which aims to improve traffic flows and reduce accidents. Since joining the World Bank in 1996, commitments to Bosnia-Herzegovina have totaled approximately US\$770 million for 36 projects. There are currently 20 active projects in Bosnia sponsored by the World Bank. In sum, EU, World Bank, and IMF financing have played a major role in the reconstruction of the Bosnian economy, but the question remains open whether the country can successfully wean itself away from long-term international dependency and establish a competitive and self-sustaining market economy.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- Compare the economic position of Bosnia-Herzegovina with that of the other republics of communist Yugoslavia.
- What impact did the 1992-1995 war have on the country's economic development?
- What kind of economy has been constructed in Bosnia since the signing of the Dayton accords?
- How significant is organized crime and corruption in the Bosnian economy and what impact does it have on the country's economic development?

### Resource Materials for Further Study

“Rebuilding Bosnia and Herzegovina: Achievements and Difficulties,” Country Report, Center for Balanced Development, Sarajevo, 8 February 2000.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina: World Bank Approves Road Rehabilitation Project,” The World Bank, 23 May 2002.

CIA Factbook, 2001, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

International Crisis Group Reports and Briefing Papers, “Why Will No-one Invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina?” *Balkans Report #64, 21 April 1999*

International Crisis Group Reports and Briefing Papers, “Bosnia’s Precarious Economy: Still not Open for Business,” *Balkans Report #115, 7 August 2001*

## CONCLUSION

This Self-Study Guide to Bosnia-Herzegovina provides an overview of the complex history of the country, its ethnic and religious mix, its culture, social structure, gender relations, and economic system. It focuses in some depth on the fragility of the reborn Bosnian state and its continuing dependence on international institutions for national security, political cohesiveness, and economic survival. A series of questions are posed after each chapter and a relevant bibliography is provided to enable the reader to explore salient issues in greater depth. In sum, Bosnia-Herzegovina remains a challenge for the student as well as for the policy maker.

## USEFUL WEB SITES

Embassy of Bosnia in Washington, DC <http://www.bhembassy.org>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs - [www.mvp.gov.ba](http://www.mvp.gov.ba)

Chamber of Commerce of BiH: [www.komorabih.com](http://www.komorabih.com)

Central Bank of BiH [www.cbbh.gov.ba](http://www.cbbh.gov.ba)

Foreign Investment Promotion Agency [www.fipa.gov.ba](http://www.fipa.gov.ba)

Human Rights Ombudsperson for BiH [www.bihfedomb.org](http://www.bihfedomb.org)

Elections Committee of BiH [www.izbori.ba](http://www.izbori.ba)

Government (Federation) BiH [www.fbihvlada.gov.ba](http://www.fbihvlada.gov.ba)

Government Republika Srpska [www.vladars.net](http://www.vladars.net)

Agency for privatization (Federation) BiH [www.apf.com.ba](http://www.apf.com.ba)

Agency for privatization (Republika Srpska) [www.rsprivatizacija.com](http://www.rsprivatizacija.com)

OHR - Office of the High Representative [www.ohr.int](http://www.ohr.int)

UNMIBIH - UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina [www.unmibh.org](http://www.unmibh.org)

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina [www.oscebih.org](http://www.oscebih.org)

SFOR - Stability Force [www.nato.int/sfor](http://www.nato.int/sfor)

US Embassy in Sarajevo [www.usis.com.ba](http://www.usis.com.ba)

USAID in Bosnia and Herzegovina [www.usaid.ba](http://www.usaid.ba)

BiH Tourism [www.bhtourism.ba](http://www.bhtourism.ba)

BiH Press News Agency [www.bihpress.ba](http://www.bihpress.ba)

RTV BiH [www.rtvbih.ba](http://www.rtvbih.ba)

Oslobodjenje [www.oslobodjenje.com.ba](http://www.oslobodjenje.com.ba)

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- Books include *Political Parties in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Politics in the Post-Communist Era*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002, *Ethnic Politics in Eastern Europe: A Guide to Nationality Policies, Organizations, and Parties* (M.E. Sharpe, 1994); *Nations in Turmoil: Conflict and Cooperation in Eastern Europe* (Westview, 1993 -- selected by Choice as one of the outstanding academic books for 1993 -- Second Edition, 1995); *East European Fault Lines: Dissent, Opposition, and Social Activism* (Westview Press, 1989); and *Czechoslovakia: Charter 77's Decade of Dissent* (Praeger/CSIS, 1987).
- Chairs the South Central Europe Area Studies at the Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State.
- Conducted consultancy work for the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Free Trade Union Institute (AFL-CIO), the Rand Corporation, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the 21st Century Foundation, and several other private organizations and foundations.
- Columnist for the political weekly *Nacional* in Zagreb, Croatia, for the daily *Albania* in Tirana, Albania, for the weekly *Koha Ditore* in Prishtina, Kosova, and for the Bulgarian weekly *Kapital* in Sofia.

# BURMA

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
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School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The **Self-Study Guide: Burma** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Burma is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared in 2001 by Dr. Josef Silverstein, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Rutgers University. The second edition includes updated information provided by David Jensen, Coordinator for Southeast Asia Studies at the Foreign Service Institute of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. The views expressed in this guide are those of the authors and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center

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Second Edition  
March 2006





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# GEOGRAPHY

## A. THE LAND

Burma<sup>1</sup> is the westernmost nation in Southeast Asia. It shares a common border with India and Bangladesh to its west, and with China, Laos and Thailand to its north and east. Burma extends south and southwest to the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. The modern state of Burma encompasses approximately 262,000 square miles; it is approximately the size of the State of Texas and about twice the size of Japan. Lying between the northern latitudes of 10 and 28, most of the land mass and population centers are in the tropics.

The country has two distinctive geographical features. First, its most prominent feature is the north-south valleys, mountains and rivers. Burma's longest and most significant river is the Irrawaddy, which flows from the northeast south to the Andaman Sea. The Chindwin River, which begins in the northwest of Burma, is a tributary of Irrawaddy. The confluence of the Irrawaddy and the Chindwin Rivers is near the town of Myingyan in central Burma. The Irrawaddy and the Chindwin are navigable for 900 and 400 miles respectively; both can be used for commerce throughout the year. The Sittang River lies in the eastern part of Burma. Its origin lies in central Burma, flows through the area east of the Pegu Yomas, and empties into the Gulf of Martaban. The Sittang is important for irrigation but only has limited commercial value as a navigable waterway, because of its changing currents and natural obstructions. The fourth important river is the Salween River; it rises in Tibet, passes through Yunnan, China, and flows southward through the eastern hill states of Burma and empties into the Andaman Sea near Moulmein. Parts of the Salween serve as the border between Burma and Thailand. It cannot be used for extensive travel because of rapids and other obstructions. The Salween is important as a means for floating teak and other commercial logs to seaports at its mouth.

Because the major lines of communications follow the contours of the land and rivers, the early important cities and towns were located along a north-south axis. Several capitals of the Burman Empire were located on the Irrawaddy River near its confluence with the Chindwin, approximately 400 miles from the sea. After the British conquest, the capital was shifted to the banks of the Rangoon River near the mouth of the Irrawaddy River and the cities along the south and southwestern coast became the loci of administration, trade and commerce.

Second, the country is naturally divided into two distinct areas: the delta and plains and the Tenasserim form lower and central Burma; the upper Irrawaddy valley and the semicircle of

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<sup>1</sup> On May 27, 1989, the military rulers of Burma decreed that the nation's name be changed to "Myanmar." This was one of many name changes made by the military rulers to eliminate the last vestiges of British colonial rule (1824-1948). "Myanmar" is used by the government and appears in all documents and newspapers in the country. However, in international documents and in diplomatic correspondence, opponents use the name "Burma" in defiance of the regime. In this Guide, the name "Burma" will be used and the name "Myanmar" will appear only if it relates to a document or contained in a speech.

hills and mountains in the north form upper Burma. The political and cultural heartland of the Burmans<sup>2</sup> is located in central Burma. Lower Burma and the delta is the home of the Pyu and Mon peoples, who preceded the Burmans, establishing their villages and political centers in the coastal region of lower Burma. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Burmans defeated the Mon and, later, the Arakanese, who lived in the southwest coastal region, and united the territories under their rule.

The Irrawaddy valley is the center of the Burman population. The greatest concentrations live in and around Rangoon and Mandalay. Thousands of pagodas erected during the Pagan era, still standing today, attest to the handiwork of the Burmans and the importance of Buddhism as their faith and inspiration.

The hills and mountains to the north, west, and east protect central and lower Burma from neighbor states. This area is the least developed in Burma and is sparsely populated by a variety of ethnic groups.

The hills and border regions are rich in minerals and timber. With only primitive roads and bridges across gorges and rivers, resource extraction and travel in these areas is difficult.

Today, upper Burma is connected to the central and southern regions of the country by river, rail, road, and air transport. China and India are accessible via traditional roads and modern air transport; prior to the Second World War the all-weather “Burma Road” was constructed, connecting China and Burma. In recent years, roads in the hill areas have been strengthened and resurfaced for all-weather use to sustain passage by heavy trucks and military equipment. The traditional homelands of many of the indigenous groups of this area straddle the international borders and the peoples have closer ties with their ethnic kin in China and India than with the lowland settlers of central and lower Burma. Following World War II, the upper and lower regions of the country united to form the modern state of Burma.

## B. WEATHER

Two-thirds of Burma lies within the tropical zone and is subject to annual monsoons. The country experiences three seasons: the wet (mid-May to mid-October), the dry (mid-October to March), and the hot (March to mid-May). During the wet season, the monsoon blows from the southwest across the Bay of Bengal, delivering approximately 200 inches of rain annually in the coastal areas of Arakan and Tenasserim. The delta plains of the Irrawaddy River receive

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<sup>2</sup> Consistent with scholarly and popular usage, “Burman” is used as the ethnic term for the majority group, while “Burmese” is used as the political term for all the inhabitants of the country.

approximately 100 inches during the same period. The central area of Burma (the dry zone) receives approximately 25 to 50 inches of rainfall annually. The rain in this region is irregular, making farming difficult in areas without supplemental irrigation. Approximately 80 to 90 inches of rain fall annually on the Shan plateau and in the Kachin State. In far-northern Kachin, the mountains around Putao reach 20,000 feet and are snow capped most of the year.

Burma experiences a variety of temperatures from the delta and coast in the south to the high mountains in the northern Kachin State. During the cold, dry season, the temperature in lower Burma ranges between 67-88 degrees (F), in central Burma, 58-84 degrees (F), and in northern Burma, 55-76 degrees (F). Humidity is generally low during this time. In the hot, dry season, the temperature in the lower region ranges between 75-95 degrees (F), in the central region, 75-98 degrees (F), and in the north, 65-88 degrees (F). In the wet season in lower Burma, it is between 76-86 degrees (F), in central Burma, 77-91 degrees (F) and in the north, 74-87 degrees (F) with high humidity at low elevations.

### C. NATURAL RESOURCES

Burma has an abundance of natural resources. The regular seasonal rainfall and rich soils allow for extensive food production—including rice, millet, beans, and fruit—both for domestic consumption and for export. On the Shan plain in the temperate zone, fruits, vegetables, tea, and coffee are grown. Farmers in the Shan State have a sericulture industry and produce silk cloth for domestic use.

Burma's forests are high in biodiversity. These forests contain the largest stands of teak wood in mainland Southeast Asia, as well as other hard and softwoods and bamboo. These are valuable resources for export. Until recently, the forests were well managed and cutting was controlled. However, in recent decades, legal and illegal cutting of the most valuable hard woods has occurred. Forests are fast disappearing as timber firms and poachers cut other trees to access the teak stands.

Before World War II, Burma was the second largest exporter of oil in Southeast Asia. At the outset of the Second World War, Burma sabotaged machinery with the intent to deny oil to the Japanese. In the post-war period, oil never again became a major commodity either for domestic use or export. During the 1990s, natural gas was discovered in large quantity offshore in the Andaman Sea. With the application of modern technology, additional gas fields have been located. This reserve will be an important energy and revenue source for Burma in the future.

The coastal waters in southern Burma contain plentiful fish stocks. In the pre-World War II period, fish paste and salt fish were in demand both for domestic consumption and export. Today, shell fish is harvested, frozen, and packed while fleets are out to sea; once the boats return to harbor, the catch is sold throughout the world. Burma also is developing fish farms in the coastal areas of lower Burma and raising and exporting shrimp. With an expanding worldwide market faced with depleting global fish stocks, the farms are seen as a more

sustainable alternative. Also, along the coast of Tenasserim is an abundance of pearl producing oysters. The pearls are of high quality and in demand by international jewelers.

Burma is well endowed with minerals, concentrated in the sparsely populated border areas and in the hills and mountains in upper Burma. Tin, tungsten, lead, silver and copper, jade, and other precious stones are common. Tin and tungsten also are found in the Kayah State and in Tavoy, in the south. In the 1950s, coal was discovered in the western part of Burma proper and in the Chin Hills. In 2001, new large copper deposits were also discovered in upper Burma. The export of these and other minerals are an important source of income for the government, but little of this revenue reaches the local labor force. Due to the internal wars and political unrest in the minority areas, full exploration of Burma's natural resources has not yet been undertaken. But once internal security is guaranteed, Burma's abundance of minerals and other natural resources will generate income for decades to come.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Is it in the interests of Burma's government to encourage migration from the crowded urban areas to the sparsely populated central and northern regions of the country? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this policy?
2. Before the Second World War, Burma was the largest exporter of rice. Could Burma reclaim its market share? How?
3. If the state could only find a single sector of the economy, what would be the benefits and drawbacks of investment in agriculture versus natural resources?
4. What is the importance of the three-season pattern of weather to the economy of Burma?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of adopting Burmese English or some other local or international language as Burma's national language?

### ***Suggested Readings***

In the last two decades there have been no new authoritative sources on Burma geography. In addition to Item 1 in the Bibliography, consider the following:

1. Knappen Tibbet Abbett McCarthy, *Economic and Engineering Development of Burma*, Aylesbury, Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., 1953, Chapter I.
2. E.H.G. Dobby, *Southeast Asia*. London, University of London Press Ltd., 1961, Chaps. 9, 10, 11.
3. Reference works: *The Far East and Australasia*; any year, beginning

with the first edition published in 1969. Also, The Encyclopaedia Americana and The Encyclopaedia Britannica.



# HISTORY

## A. EARLY HISTORY TO BRITISH RULE

Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Burmans unified the peoples and the territory under their leadership on three separate occasions. In 1044 A. D., the Pagan Dynasty was founded on the banks of the Irrawaddy River in central Burma; the Kings expanded their authority to include their immediate neighbors. The Pagan Dynasty, which lasted until the Mongol invasion in 1287, is considered Burma's "Golden Age." During this period, its Kings brought Theravada Buddhism to the people and inspired a flowering of Mon- and Indian-influenced arts and culture. Pagodas were first introduced during this time.

The fall of Pagan was followed by an interregnum that lasted for 200 years. During that period, the Shans sought to succeed the Burmans and establish a political center at Ava, though they failed to maintain a strong and united state. Fleeing warfare, many Burmans migrated east and south during the period and established a new political center in Toungoo.

The second unification of Burma occurred from 1486 to 1752. The Toungoo Kings expanded the territory and population under their authority to an area almost the size of modern Burma. This period was marked by wars, the conquest of the Shans, and the destruction of the political center of Siam at Ayuthaya. But the wars with Siam reached stalemate. Internal power struggles led to Toungoo's decline, and the Kingdom left no great cultural or architectural legacy.

The third Burman unification came in the 18<sup>th</sup> century under a new line of Kings. The Konbaung Dynasty was established by Alungpaya in 1752 and lasted until 1886. The founder of the dynasty defeated the Mons and Arakanese and united the south with the heartland. His successors on the throne renewed Burma's wars with Siam and launched assaults beyond the western frontiers against Assam and Manipur. The rulers of the Konbaung Dynasty fought off four invasions by the Chinese. Westward expansion led to clashes with the British, the new Asiatic power. In 1824, the British invaded and won the first of three wars with the Burmans that brought a permanent end to the Kingdom.

There are three political legacies of the period of Burman rule. First, Theravada Buddhism remained at the core of the beliefs and values of the Burmans. Many ethnic minority groups remained as animists or spirit worshippers, or as converts to Christianity, and underwent different cultural development from that of the Burmans.

Second, the Burmans never established a peaceful succession to the throne nor never developed a strong and autonomous administrative system. While the King was absolute, the administrative system was weak. In day to day affairs, local authority was exercised under a patron-client system.

Third, there lacked a strong, continuous, centralized authority over the ethnic minorities in the hills and upland areas. As long as the minorities accepted the suzerainty of the Burman King, the local leaders were free to govern the lands in their traditional ways. The Burmans never sought to acculturate or assimilate the minorities.

The economy was subsistence-based, and rice was the staple crop. Foreign trade was a royal monopoly, but the Burman rulers and people had little contact with the outside world. The coastal dwelling Arakanese and Mons had foreign contacts as they traded and repaired ships. Warfare between the Burmans and neighbor states encouraged further intermingling; defeated peoples were taken captive and forced to settle in Burmese villages where intermarriage often took place.

## B. COLONIAL RULE: 1824-1948

Burma and the British fought three wars between 1824 and 1886. The British were victorious in each because of superior modern weaponry and Western military science. After each war, the British annexed large portions of Burma to their empire. The first war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826 and Burma's loss of Arakan and Tenasserim. After the second war in 1852, the Burmans lost all of lower Burma. After the third war in 1885, the British seized the remainder of the Burman Empire and exiled its king and court to India. On February 26, 1886, Burma was annexed to India.

Under foreign rule, Burma underwent vast changes. The British established a strong hierarchical administrative system that linked the central government with the villages. Authority was dictated through the village headman who served as a salaried employee of the government and its link to the people. It was based on colonial laws and recognized local customary practices.

The British rulers separated religion from government. Without political backing, authority and discipline within the religious orders broke down. Also, the demand for traditional education provided by the Buddhist monks declined as Christian missionary schools emerged and siphoned off students who wanted instruction in English and subjects the monks were unable to teach. In the 1920s, the government began to establish English-language and Anglo-vernacular schools. These changes in the roles and functions of the religious orders contributed to their loss of place and social significance in Burma's changing society.

The economy underwent major changes. Commercial agriculture replaced subsistence farming. Farmers were encouraged to move from their villages in upper to lower Burma and take up new land. To do so, they had to borrow money. Lenders – predominantly Indian – provided loans at high rates of interest and when the peasants could not pay, they were evicted. The land was given to new farmer-debtors who repeated the process. The movement of farmers contributed to social alienation and the growth of crime and discontent. The system produced

more rice and, in 1939, Burma became the world's largest exporter. It also produced indebted peasants, moneylenders, and wealthy absentee landowners.

The world depression that began in 1931 caused the world market price of rice to plummet. Burman farmers migrated to the cities where they competed with Indian laborers for employment. Often, Burmans were used as strikebreakers who were excused once labor disputes were settled. This generated hostility between Burmans and their Indian peers, causing a major race riot in Rangoon in 1936.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the urban Burmans organized the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) to protest Westerners' violation of pagodas and shrines. This marked the political awakening of the Burmans. In 1917, the YMBA broadened into the General Council of Burmese Association (GCBA) and became fully political. In 1920, university students made their entry into politics by calling a national strike to protest plans for the new university.

In 1923, the people were given a partially elected legislative council and control of two government ministries, but no real political power. In 1930, the Saya San revolt, which sought to end British rule and restore the monarchy, erupted in the countryside. The revolt was put down with military force. At about the same time, young intellectuals in Rangoon started Thakins, a new political movement that called for the use of the Burmese language in print and speech to strengthen nationalist objectives. In 1937, Burma was separated from India and given its own constitution, a bicameral legislature and responsible government. The Governor continued to control several key departments and to administer the Frontier Areas—minority areas—without consulting parliament or his ministers. The system lasted four years and four Prime Ministers made a credible start at tackling some of the nation's worst problems. World War II and the Japanese invasion of Burma halted the political and constitutional experiment.

The Japanese invaders scored quick successes against the British and drove them from lower and central Burma and parts of the hill areas. Aiding the Japanese was a new Burman army secretly organized and trained by the Japanese before the war. The Burma Independence Army served alongside the Japanese invaders. In 1943, Japan granted Burma nominal independence, and allowed it to form a government with the pre-war leader, Dr. Ba Maw, as the Adipadi (leader). Dissatisfied over its lack of real authority, Burman military and civilian leaders formed a secret resistance movement, Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). On March 27, 1945, the Burman army—now called the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF)—joined forces with the British and hastened the defeat of Japan in Burma.

The war disrupted Burma's society and destroyed the economy. Cut off from India and the West, the peoples of Burma returned to subsistence agriculture. As the British retreated in 1942, nearly a million Indians emigrated from Burma back to their homeland. The British reoccupied Burma in 1945.

At the war's end, the British issued a White Paper that called for the revival of the economy and society so that political progress could resume. The Burman nationalists rejected

this formula and an impasse developed. A change in British government in August 1946 led to an invitation in December to U Aung San, the leader of the AFPFL, to come to London to discuss Burma's political future.

The London meeting of Burma and British leaders agreed that the Burmans and the minorities should meet to decide on the political unification of Burma, schedule an election, and form a constitution. When the delegates returned to Burma, Aung San and AFPFL leaders met with Shan, Kachin and Chin leaders at Panglong in the Shan State, where they agreed to cooperatively devise a union of Burma.

While the constituent assembly was in session, Aung San and six members of his cabinet were murdered. The governor appointed U Nu, a close ally of Aung San, as his successor. The constitution was completed and on January 4, 1948, Burma became a free and independent state. The loss of Aung San and the failure to find a satisfactory way to divide power and create national unity through a federal union was a major cause of the civil wars that followed independence and lasted through the next half century.

### C. THE CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD: 1948-62

Confrontation groups within the Burma Communist party (BCP) attempted to displace the government and bring about the Karen and Karenni secessions from the Union. Burman and Karen battalions defected and joined the war against the state. Ethnic battalions of Burman soldiers swelled the ranks of the army and assumed leadership ranks throughout the military. The army proved successful in the field where the opposition forces failed to form a unified military and political opposition. The Burma army reclaimed the Irrawaddy Valley and drove the enemy into the hills and jungles, making it possible for the state to take back former rebel-held areas. In 1952, when Nationalist Chinese and the BCP forces occupied parts of the Shan States, martial law was declared in the occupied areas and the military assumed control; its occupation acquired a reputation for brutality and illegal behavior toward civilians which continues to the present. Burma also sought the aid of the UN to expel the invaders.

National elections were held in 1952 and 1956. In both, the AFPFL won overwhelmingly. In 1958, the party split. To avoid a relapse to civil war, Prime Minister Nu appointed General Ne Win to form a Caretaker Government, hold new elections, and restore civilian democratic rule. The interim Government lasted for eighteen months. When national elections occurred again in 1960, U Nu's faction, the Clean AFPFL, won a landslide victory. The Stable AFPFL, the opposing faction, accepted the election results. In 1961, U Nu's announced that he would not seek a second term, sparking a power struggle within the party. The intra-party dispute provoked fears amongst the people of a repeat of 1958. On March 2, 1962, General Ne Win led a coup, dismissed the constitution, and established a Revolutionary Council (RC) that consisted of senior military officers.

#### D. MILITARY RULE—FIRST PHASE: 1962-74

The RC governed through a hierarchy of Security and Administrative Councils (SAC) of military personnel, police and civil servants. The SAC replaced the former federal system, and formed a dual hierarchy of Workers and Peasant Councils. In July 1962, it organized a political party, the Burma Socialist Program Party (Lanzin) as the first step in the creation of a new political system. Also, during this early period, it issued a political manifesto, the “Burmese Way to Socialism,” that outlined the ideas of the “new order.”

The RC isolated Burma from the outside world. It halted student exchange programs with the West, expelled aid groups, and suspended or limited cultural contacts with Western nations. In 1963, the RC nationalized the banks as the first step to implement its goals. Later, the same year, it nationalized all production, distribution, import and export. The farmers continued to plant and sell their products to the state while the private business sector came under government control and administration. Without adequate preparation and trained administrators, the economy deteriorated. To fill the void, black markets developed. Throughout this period, the government was unable to restore production, improve distribution, or win popular support. By 1964, its new economic policies, which were detrimental to the private sector, caused thousands of Indians to emigrate from the country. The RC tried to appease minority factions in 1963 though talks broke down and the opposition resumed armed conflict against the state. During this period, corruption and popular discontent took root among society.

In 1967, the Chinese Cultural Revolution led to conflict as Burma sought to prevent Chinese politics from influencing its internal affairs. Relations between the two were not restored until 1970. During that interval, China gave military assistance to the BCP, located along its border with Burma. When relations between the countries resumed, China halted its aid to the BCP; it, in turn, became involved in the illegal opium trade in the border area it occupied as a way to finance its war against the state.

Former Prime Minister Nu, whom the military arrested at the time of the coup, was released from jail in 1969. Nu then proceeded to the Burma-Thai border and organized a revolt against Ne Win. Despite support from the ethnic minorities in the area, the coup failed. Other revolts by Shans, Kachins, Karens, and Chins erupted in search of either secession or autonomy from the Union. By the end of the RC period, it was clear that the Burma army could neither successfully negotiate peace nor defeat the dissident groups. The stalemate continued until the end of the 1980s.

In 1971, the rulers announced that a new constitution would be written and civilian rule restored. Less than a year later, the members of the RC transformed themselves from soldiers to civilians and changed the RC to the Government of the Union of Burma.

The new constitution was ratified in 1973 and came into effect March 2, 1974, following a parliamentary election.

## E. CONSTITUTIONAL DICTATORSHIP: 1974-1988

The new constitution declared that the BSPP was the leader of the nation. The same article declared that Burma was to be a one-party state. The Constitution stipulated that the BSPP was responsible for selecting parliamentary candidates and advising the government at all levels.

The constitution also declared that the People's Assembly was also solely responsible for its interpretation. The state was divided into seven divisions and seven states. There were four levels of government, and all were united by the principles of democratic centralism, collective leadership and decision making.

The people had rights and duties that were not absolute. All citizens, regardless of race or sex, were equal before the law and enjoyed equality of opportunity. It established the broad principles of citizenship that could be altered by ordinary law. Basic rights, as recognized in the Declaration of Human Rights, existed but could be revoked if the Government ruled that such rights undermined the unity and solidarity of the national groups, security of the state, or the socialist social order.

Within three months following the establishment the new regime, riots occurred in Rangoon and elsewhere over food shortages. A year later, student riots broke out over a proper burial of U Thant, the retired third Secretary General of the UN. The government used violence to restore law and order. In 1976, assassination attempts were made on the life of General Ne Win. Much of the disorder resulted from the lack of jobs, food shortages, and widespread corruption in government. International foreign financial aid did little to restore stability in the economy or confidence in the government.

On August 10, 1987, Ne Win admitted publicly to "failure and faults" in the past management of the economy. Amid deteriorating economic conditions, exacerbated by poor agriculture output, economic mismanagement, and increased inflation, the government took its first steps away from socialism. In early 1988, the government ended its 25-year monopoly on rice exports. Also, it demonetized much of the currency, without replacing it, to combat the black market. The policy was misguided, however, as it only affected students who carried cash instead of using bank accounts. The students responded with demonstrations, and the government closed the universities.

In March 1988, new students/police clashes broke out at Rangoon Technical Institute and spread to Rangoon University. The police and military used extreme violence to put them down; public demonstrations followed. A major demonstration in central Rangoon led to rioting with 41 known student deaths. Again, the universities were closed.

When the universities re-opened, student demonstrations resumed, more killings occurred, and, despite the invocation of martial law, the general public joined the student demonstrations calling for the restoration of civilian democracy. At the extraordinary BSPP Congress in July, Ne Win resigned as party Chairman and recommended a national referendum on the issue of restoring a multiparty system. The Congress rejected the proposal and voted in favor of making General Sein Lwin the new Chairman. Lwin was known as the “Butcher of Burma” for his violent suppression of student demonstrations in 1962 and again in 1976. He lived up to his reputation during a mass demonstration on August 8, 1988. More than a thousand were killed. General Sein Lwin resigned and was replaced by Dr. Maung Maung, a civilian lawyer/writer and close friend of General Ne Win. He took a more accommodating stance toward those arrested for political demonstrations and promised a referendum on the political system.

At a mass rally on August 26, the daughter of Aung San, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, spoke for the first time. Her words electrified the people and thrust her into the leadership of the movement to restore freedom and democracy.

On September 18, the military struck again; this time they overthrew the constitution they wrote in 1974 and the government they supported. The new leaders formed a ruling body, called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), and issued their first announcement that outlined their immediate goals, which included restoration of law and order, peace, and new elections. They sent the army into the streets where the civilian demonstrators were shot and killed. Thousands of civilians were killed and more than 10,000 students fled to the hills and border areas seeking refuge.

## F. MILITARY RULE—SECOND PHASE: 1988-The Present

The new government faced worldwide criticism for using violence against unarmed and peaceful demonstrators. There were few professional journalists inside of Burma when the soldiers struck, and the information reported was based on rumors and unverified reports, with the most reliable coming from foreign embassies in Rangoon. As participants and victims of the military sought escape and refuge amongst the minorities along the borders, first-hand accounts gave a clearer picture of what had taken place inside of Burma that confirmed earlier accounts. A week after the military seized power, General Saw Maung, leader of the SLORC, announced his intention not to retain power for long. The regime’s objectives, he said, were national defense, security, the maintenance of law and order, and transferal of power following free and fair elections. However, the regime had dismissed the 1974 constitution, and abolished the legislature, judiciary, and governmental institutions. SLORC thus ruled by martial law, force and decree. It systematically used violence against all suspected of belonging to the opposition.

In November, the military altered Burma’s economic and foreign policy. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, Thailand’s General Chaovalit became its first high-ranking foreign visitor. Burma rewarded

Thailand when it entered into agreements that allowed the Thais to cut and export Burmese teak and fish in its waters. The Thais promised to round up and return “misguided” students who had taken refuge in Thailand. In August 1989, a Burmese high-ranking delegation, led by General Than Shwe, went to China and purchased US \$1.2 billion in new weapons and training. The weapons arrived a year later.

Also at this time, a number of western oil companies took advantage of the new investment law in Burma to search for oil and natural gas. Little oil was found, though commercial quantities of the natural gas were located in the Andaman Sea.

In March 1989, the BCP split when its ethnic cadres forced the Burman party leaders to flee to China. The cadres announced their rejection of Communism and formed independent nationalist groups. The SLORC sent representatives to negotiate cease-fire agreements with the new groups to allow them hold their weapons, continue to administer their own areas, and pursue local economic activity without interference. In exchange, the minorities promised not to make war on Burma or to join other minorities with whom SLORC remained at war. The offer was accepted and set off a chain of cease-fires with most of the ethnic minorities. Only the Karen, Shan, Karenni and Chin maintained armed conflict with the state. Also, in July 1989, SLORC placed Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest, which was maintained until 1995.

The promised national election took place on May 27, 1990. Ninety-three parties contested for 485 seats. The National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won a large majority with 392 seats. The real loser was the National Unity Party (NUP), the renamed BSPP, which won only 10. The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy won the second-highest stake with 23. However, the NLD win proved to be a pyrrhic victory. The military refused to allow the new Government to assume power. SLORC issued Declaration 1/90 that stated that it was no longer bound by any constitution, ruled by martial law, and would continue to rule. To the consternation of SLORC, Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Just as SLORC was on the verge of silencing its opposition and begin making strides in the economy, the party underwent changes in both leadership and policy. General Than Shwe replaced General Saw Maung as the leader of SLORC. Within days, he announced an end to the war against the Karen (but they soon resumed fighting), the release of political prisoners, and the formation of a national convention to write a new constitution. These changes did not ease SLORC’s rule or alter the way the world viewed it. Both the UNHRC and the UNGA adopted strong resolutions unanimously condemning SLORC’s human rights violations and called upon it to honor the election results. SLORC ignored them.

In January 1993, the National Convention was assembled with 702 hand picked delegates. Only 99 of the elected Members of Parliament were invited to attend. The sessions were carefully orchestrated and controlled. After several months of meetings, 104 principles for the new constitution were announced. The most controversial was the maintenance of the military’s leading political role in the future state. In November 1995, the 86 delegates from the



NLD withdrew from the National Convention after SLORC rejected its appeal for democratic reforms of the Convention. In March 1996, the military adjourned the Convention indefinitely. When the NLD announced that it would draft a constitution, SLORC issued Law 5/96 to make such action illegal.

The government eased restrictions on Aung San Suu Kyi in 1992 to permit visits by her family. In 1994, it allowed U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson, the first non-family member, to visit her. On July 10, 1995, the rulers released Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest.

The release of Aung San Suu Kyi did not bring real political change to Burma. Instead, her “freedom” was restricted, and while she made one trip out of Rangoon she was denied several others. She sought to initiate dialogue with SLORC, but was refused. She managed to “meet the people” through informal talks at the gate of her house where people assembled, but the meetings grew so large and popular that the SLORC closed off the road to block public access.

The signs of economic improvement during the first half of the 1990s did not last. Initially, there was a burst of activity to exploit natural resources and to develop tourism and industry. Tourism drew foreign investment for hotels, shopping centers, entertainment, infrastructure, and transport services. But as international boycotts proliferated, the number of visitors declined and tourism stagnated. Hotels stood empty and business in imported expensive merchandise came to a halt. Also, Burma’s inability to create and maintain a stable currency had the effect of discouraging both visitors and investors.

The SLORC went through a second political change in 1997. The name of the ruling group became the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), to indicate that Burma was going in a new direction—from law and order to peace and development. The three leading generals, Than Shwe, Maung Aye and Khin Nyunt, continued to lead, while several of the senior members of SLORC were dropped and two were investigated for corruption. The new ruling group added the twelve regional commanders; the administration also changed personnel and added a few civilians.

A new political crisis developed in 2000 when Aung San Suu Kyi and a few NLD leaders tried to travel outside of Rangoon on party business. As before, the military intercepted her and returned her to her home. After a second try, she was placed under house arrest. Unlike the period since 1992, however, the SPDC denied access to her by all but a few NLD leaders who were not under arrest. As tensions rose over this new contest between the NLD and the SPDC, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General, Ambassador Razali Ismail, came to Burma to hold discussions with SPDC leaders and with Aung San Suu Kyi. As a result, secret talks between the rivals began in October. They continued the next year with no word about their subject matter and results. But changes began to take place which suggested progress—high ranking political prisoners were released, the press no longer called Aung San Suu Kyi disparaging names, attacks on the NLD stopped, and party headquarters reopened.

On May 6, 2002, Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed to leave her home, and she subsequently traveled widely throughout the country. On May 30, 2003, she and a convoy of her supporters were attacked by a group of government-affiliated thugs. Many members of the convoy were killed or injured and others remain unaccounted. Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of her party were detained, and the military government forcibly closed the offices of the NLD. Although NLD headquarters in Rangoon is still open, all the party's other offices remain closed, and Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo remain under house arrest.

On October 19, 2004, hard-line members of the senior leadership consolidated their power by ousting Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and removing him and his allies from control of the military intelligence apparatus. In late November 2004, the junta announced it would release approximately 9,000 prisoners that it claimed had been improperly jailed by Khin Nyunt's National Intelligence Bureau. In July 2005, Burmese authorities released at least 323 political prisoners. Those released since November 2004 include Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, both key figures in the 1988 demonstrations.

The central government has had a contentious relationship since the country's independence with minority ethnic groups who call for autonomy or secession for their regions. In 1948, only the capital city itself was firmly in control by the authorities in Rangoon. Subsequent military campaigns brought more and more of the nation under central government control. Since 1989, the regime has signed a series of cease-fire agreements with insurgent groups, leaving only a handful still in active opposition.

In April 2005, an explosive device detonated at a busy market in Mandalay, killing at least three people. In May 2005, three large bombs exploded simultaneously in Rangoon at two crowded shopping areas frequented by foreigners and at an international trade center, killing at least twenty people and would several hundred. Both events were a significant departure in terms of targeting and level of sophistication from other bombings that had occurred in recent years. The junta blamed the bombings on political opposition groups, which they denied.

At the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Burma stands still politically; there is no end of military rule in sight. The cease-fires between the ethnic minorities and the SPDC remain in place with no evidence of what will be the next step in majority-minority relations or how the gulf will be bridged. The past two decades brought no significant economic progress or improvement in Burma's standard of living. Burma remains perceived as a political pariah to most states in the world.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. In what ways does the study of the history of Burma help you understand the issues in the present political impasse which confronts the nation?

2. In what ways does the present regime (SPDC) resemble the royal governments of Burma before the British conquest? In what ways does it resemble British rule?
3. Considering that Burma's history since independence has seen the pursuit of three kinds of economic policy—mixed, socialist and state capitalist—what influence has economic policy had on Burma's politics?
4. Both India and Malaysia have multicultural, multi-religious societies and were former British colonies. How do you explain the fact that they have been able to transcend these facts and become peaceful, unified states while Burma has not?
5. What was the impact of the Japanese occupation of Burma between 1942 and 1945 on the country's political institutions and processes that followed?

### ***Suggested Readings***

Note: The bibliography lists some of the best recent historical studies. The following sources provide background information for the questions below.

Sources: Item 11 in the bibliography is a good place to begin. In addition,

- The more traditional history of D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) London: Macmillan, 1968. Chapters 14, 20, 21, 22, 34, 35.
- An excellent history of the Toungoo Period and an original theory of cycles of Burmese Kingship is in Bibliography Item 26.
- For a good examination of the modern Burman-minority problems, see Bibliography Items 40 and 44.
- For a topical survey of the present, see Bibliography Item 39.

## PEOPLES AND CULTURES

### A. SOME GENERALIZATIONS.

The total population of Burma was estimated at 50.5 million in 2005 (according to estimates of the UN Fund for Population Activities -- UNFPA), and is growing by about 1.3 percent per year. About 31 percent of the population is considered urban while the remainder is categorized as rural. Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 constitute about 20 percent of the total population. Public funding for health and education is among the lowest in the world, under 0.2 percent and 0.5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), respectively for the 1999-2000 period.

The last official national census was taken in 1983. It was neither complete nor accurate because there were areas in the country where civil war and political unrest made it impossible for the enumerators to visit and make their count. The Census Department made estimates of the people in the uncounted localities and added those to the total counted and published the result as the nation's population. It reported that the total population was 35,307,913 million people including an estimated 1,183,005 persons in areas not counted. Because there has been no new national census, the government annually estimates population increases on the basis of a growth factor of approximately 2% and adds that to the previous year's announced population.

Burma is a multiethnic society. The 1983 census identified eight major groups:

Burman	69.0%
Chin	2.2
Kachin	1.4
Karen	6.2
Kayah /Karenni	0.5
Mon	2.4
Rahine (Arakanese)	4.5
Shan	8.5

There were several smaller groups—those with a population of less than 168,000—who were aggregated and reported as 0.1% of the total population. Today, for political reasons, the military government argues that there are 125 distinct ethnic groups and insists that all must be represented and given some local power over their own group in the future constitution of Burma.

Anthropologists find it useful to classify the peoples of Burma according to whether their culture can be identified either as plains or hill. Plains culture is defined as people living in settled communities with relatively complex social and political organization that extends beyond the family and village. Their centers of population are permanent, their religions, languages, arts and crafts are influenced by India. Religion is fundamental to their values and beliefs; it is organized beyond the village and is a permanent fixture of the society. The peoples have written languages. Their major occupation is wet-rice farming, and they supplement their incomes through household crafts such as weaving, pottery-making, and metal working as well as vegetable cultivation and animal husbandry. The Burmans, delta Karens, Mons, Rahine, and Shans fit generally into this classification.

Hill culture refers to people who live in small groups on the slopes and tops of hills, with relatively autonomous and uncomplicated political organization. Despite the number and size of some groups, there is no tendency to form into larger political organizations or challenge the dominance of the plains people. Their religions generally are animistic, although some of the hill peoples converted to Christianity during and after the arrival of European missionaries. Their economies are based on a shifting, slash-and-burn type of agriculture called *taungya*. Rice is their chief crop, mainly grown for consumption rather than trade. In addition, hill people cultivate vegetables and hunt and gather fruits and other jungle products to supplement their diets. In some of the upland areas, they grow tea. The Chins, Kachins and Karens who live in the eastern hill areas of Burma, together with numerous small ethnic groups, fall into this category.

The second largest group of the hill peoples in Burma is the Karens. This group is believed to have migrated to modern-day Burma from China in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century. The Karens consist of three major subgroups: the Pwo, who live in lower Burma and the Tenasserim;

the Sgaw in the watershed between the Sittang and Salween rivers, and the Bwe in the eastern hills close to the border with Thailand. Karens have their own languages and customs, which still persist today. The Bwe were animists and Buddhists; many of the Pwo and Sgaw converted to Christianity. Historically, the Karens never were united with the Burmans, who looked down on the Karens and treated them as inferiors. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the Anglo-Burman wars, the Karens aided the British and this deepened the divide between the Karens and Burmans. The separation between the two continued under British rule and into the present.

The Bwe Karens, who live in the area of the present Kayah State, formed groups larger than the village and organized themselves into feudal states. A treaty between the Burman King and the British in 1875 recognized the independence of the people of the “State of Western Karenni.” It is this treaty which the Kayahs look back upon as the basis for their claim to independence after the British transferred power to the peoples of Burma in 1948.

The Kachins and Chins are both true Hill peoples. The Kachins live in northern Burma, and the Chins are found in the west. Both live in small groups or tribes and are hunters and gatherers. Each has its own languages and traditions. As hill dwellers, they moved their villages frequently in search of new fertile ground for agriculture. Both were animists and, like the Karens, accepted conversion to Christianity by the American Baptist missionaries who lived among them. In the pre-colonial period, the Burmans governed neither group directly nor did they interfere in local affairs. Both the Burmans and, later, the Chins, were recruited for service in the army by the British due to their reputation as excellent soldiers.

In the north and eastern sector of Burma are the Shan, the largest ethnic minority in the country. They are believed to have originated in Yunnan, China and were part of a vast Tai migration to the south. The Shan are not hill peoples in the same way as the Karen, Kachin and Chin. They had a feudal social organization and lived under local hereditary chieftains, called *Sawbwas*. They lived apart from the Burmans and had their own language, written script, history and literature. The Shan cultivated rice, which was the mainstay of their diet. As Theravada Buddhists, Shan culture had many similarities to the Burmans. In the areas where the two lived in close proximity, intermingling and acculturation took place. Despite this, the Shans retained their separate identity and way of life.

After the fall of Pagan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Shans united to assert their authority over the fallen Kingdom. But the unity among the Shans did not last. Wars against the Burmans continued through the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Shans were defeated. They were forced to accept indirect rule and maintained their traditional ways.

Two other important ethnic minorities are the Mons and Arakanese. These groups settled in lower Burma in the coastal regions. The Mons migrated to Burma long before the Burmans arrived. They had contacts with the Indian subcontinent, and it was from India that they acquired Theravada Buddhism, developed an alphabet, and adapted Indian law to their local needs. The Mons were in contact with the Pagan Kingdom in the north, and it was from the Mon that the Burmans acquired their present form of Buddhism. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Burmans conquered

the Mons, who later broke away and restored their independent status. Over the centuries, the two engaged in wars that ended in the defeat of the Mons in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. After their victory, the Burmans made a serious effort to assimilate the Mons, but to the present, separate Mon identity and culture persists.

The Arakanese were part of the original Burman migration from the Himalayan region in Asia. After this group entered the present area known as Burma, it continued southward, to establish its own Kingdom in the southwest coastal area of the country. Like the Burmans, the Arakanese became Theravada Buddhists. They came as farmers, using wet-rice techniques to grow their crop. Many also became seafarers and traders. The Arakanese developed trade with India and other seafaring nations and used money as a medium of exchange. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Burmans conquered the Arakanese and moved many of their Buddhist sacred items to the Burman capital in central Burma. Despite their defeat and integration into the Burma Kingdom, the Arakanese retained their separate identity and language.

Peoples of foreign origin form a small but important segment of the population. In the 1983 census, the Chinese and Indians were aggregated together with other unnamed foreigners; the two constituted the largest portion of the 5.3% of non-Burmese. Using language as a criteria and assuming the enumerated Muslims and Hindus were Indians, the Indian Muslims composed 3.83% and Hindus represented 0.5% of the total population. Assuming the remaining foreigners as Chinese, they constituted approximately 1% of the population. Most are Buddhists of sects found in China. They blend into society through adoption of Theravada Buddhism, local languages and dress. Most reside in or near the cities and towns and are engaged in business and other urban activities. They find it easy to intermarry with Christians and animists. Since the present government of Burma seized power in 1988, there has been a steady increase of Chinese in northern Burma, especially in Mandalay. There, the city is changing as new hotels, amusement centers and businesses are built and run by the Chinese. These changes displace older buildings and occupations and give the city, which Burmans considered the center of Burman-Buddhist culture, a strong Chinese veneer.

Before the Second World War, the Indians were the largest community of foreigners in Burma; they, too, lived primarily in the urban areas. At the beginning of the war, there was a large exodus of Indians due to fear of the invading Japanese. After the war, most of those who left were prevented from returning by Burmans who were intent upon reducing their number. Most Indians in Burma either are Hindu or Muslim. Since both religions discouraged out-marriage with members of other faiths, they live apart in their own areas and use their traditional dress and languages. Before the Second World War, there were racial clashes between Burmans and Indians. In 1964, new laws that reflected Burman nationalism administered by a military government, resulted in a new Indian exodus from the country and a permanent reduction in the numbers. Those who remained have lived peacefully and accepted the laws and rules that favored the indigenous population. In recent years, with the military again in power, there have been racial and religious disputes between Burmans and Indians, which are believed to have been caused or used by government agents as a way to deflect criticism away from the government.

In its analysis of the religions of the peoples of Burma, the 1983 census reported that 89% of all the people declared themselves to be Theravada Buddhists. The Burmans and Mons were the largest groups in this category. Among the hill peoples, the Baptist and Catholic Churches had the largest numbers of converts. The form of Christianity practiced by those who converted or inherited from their parents is a mixture of indigenous religions and Christian rituals that have become the basis of their values and traditions.

Taken together, religion, physical separation and cultural differences form dividing lines between plains and hill peoples; there is no evidence that the differences have diminished since the Union of Burma was formed in 1947.

## B. IMPORTANT CHANGES IN BURMA SOCIETY

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century began, Burma was ruled by a military government that was strongly nationalistic and identified nationalism with one group—the Burmans. One of the first things it did after it seized power in September 1988 was to change many of the names and spelling of other existing names to reflect the fact that Burma is a Burman state. The rulers changed the name of the country, by dropping the English spelling of Burma and replacing it with the Burman word, *Myanmar*. It also changed the names of several cities for the same reason.

Burman became *Bamar*,  
Karen became *Kayin*,  
Rangoon became *Yangon*,  
Pegu became *Bago*,  
Moulmein became *Mawlamyaing*,  
Irrawaddy became *Ayeyarwady*.

In 1946, the British administration created a new Burma army of 10,000. It consisted of 50 percent Burmans, while non-Burmans constituted the remainder. When it was created, the units carried the ethnic name of the group of which it was composed. Today, few ethnic minorities exist amongst the officers and probably no more than 15-20 percent of the rank soldiers remain non-Burmans.

The 1947 constitution designated Burmese and English as the official languages, and local languages only could be used at the local level for education and informal communication. Today, Burmese is the only national language, and while local languages are still used in a variety of informal ways, these have no standing in law and government.

Households of single families are typical in Burman villages. Members of the same family group together and establish enclosed compounds. When couples first marry, they often



live for a short period in a parent's household. Once they can afford to live independently, they build a house in the family compound. In contemporary urban areas, families who live in apartments and houses prefer to live near family members, but this is not always possible.

In Burman society, there is near equality between the sexes. Equal education is open to both; in the professions, except in the military, both can rise to the top. In the market place, women conduct "business" with customers, and in the household they control the family money. Marriage is a secular affair; if a married couple decides to separate, divorce is a simple civil act. Property is divided and each party is free to remarry.

One of the few things that have not changed from pre-colonial times is the dress of the Burman people. Traditional clothing for both sexes is the *longyi* (sarong), *aingyi* (short fitted jacket), and open slippers. Sex difference is recognized immediately by the colors and patterns of the *longyi* and the way it is worn. The clothes are ideally suited for the hot tropical weather.

Religion is at the center of family life. Buddhism has long been the core of Burman culture. The importance of the practices of the faith is made obvious in the daily activities of the people. These include: giving food to the monks who pass the homes daily, giving to charity, giving presents to monks on auspicious days, and holding a *shinbyu*—celebration at the time a son enters the monastery. More important is the absorption of the teachings of the faith and living accordingly. To send a child to the monastery to learn from the monk-teacher is one of the most important ways the faith is passed from generation to generation. Theravada Buddhism is not a jealous faith, and one can marry outside it.

Social stability in pre-colonial Burma drew its main strength from the common faith that Burmans and many of the minorities under their rule shared. The religion had no centralized bureaucracy. In each village, there was a monastery under a semi-independent abbot. The abbot and monks were under the authority of the head of the faith that was appointed by the King. Only this head could disrobe a monk who disobeyed his vows. In most other ways, the local order and monastery was autonomous under its own organization.

Burmans have always valued education. Traditionally, there was a strong tie between education and religion as the monasteries served as schools, with the Buddhist monks serving as the teachers. The content of education was moral training—how to live and behave. The students learned to read religious tracts and to memorize the teachings of the Buddha and his disciples. Under colonial rule, the form and content of education changed. Christian missionaries opened schools in which English was the language of instruction and students were taught subjects as preparation for employment in the lower rungs of the civil service or in business. To learn about their religion and its values, they had to attend monastery schools.

The government failed to broaden the curriculum of monastery schools. As a result, it funded lay schools, opened to both sexes, which instructed modern subjects in Burmese, but the level of teaching was poor. After World War I, these were replaced by government-supported, Anglo-vernacular schools, where English and Burmese were the languages of instruction and a

more modern curriculum taught by better teachers. The missionary schools continued and offered stronger programs and preparation for university and the professions. Monks and monasteries continued to offer traditional education in the rural areas but no longer enjoyed the status and standing that their calling once gave them. Class sizes diminished, and the best students were drawn away to Western schools and a future life in the modern economic and political sectors of society.

### C. SOME RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR IDEAS IN BURMESE THOUGHT

There is no God or author of the universe in Theravada Buddhism. Buddhists believe that fixed and orderly laws govern the universe. Everything and everyone is subject to the law of impermanence and change. Man is part of the changing world of appearances, and according to the doctrine of *samsara*—the wheel of rebirth—he passes through an endless cycle of births, deaths and rebirths until he realizes the true nature of things. The Buddha expressed these ideas as the Four Noble Truths.

The Buddha also taught that man is free and can escape from the wheel of rebirth if he follows the Eight-Fold Path of right living, right thought, and right actions. Power, prestige, and material things are false and impermanent. Once man realizes the truth of the Buddha's teachings and lives accordingly, he can escape. Because man's present condition is based upon his acts in his previous existence, he can do little in this lifetime to change his condition. But by following the teachings of the Buddha and accepting the truths the Buddha taught, man can effect his future existence and ultimately escape the wheel of rebirth.

While Buddhism places full responsibility upon each person for his condition, the idea of individual freedom and responsibility did not transcend from the religious realm and become part of secular thought. Instead, Buddhism taught that government was one of the five evils that man must endure. The right to rule, to occupy the palace, and to hold the symbols of power came to the King because of the merit he acquired in previous existence. As the ruler, he was expected to follow the Ten Duties of the King and other codes of behavior. No matter how far the King departed from the Ten Duties, there was no right of revolution in Buddhist thought to justify his overthrow.

As a result of these and other beliefs, ordinary people were not concerned with the affairs of state. They did not expect the state to do anything to improve their lives and did not think of the state as a vehicle for social or economic change.

Many of these beliefs continue to the present and help explain the Burman's willingness to accept bad government, its excessive demands, and its victimization of the people through theft, war, and plunder.

Burmese thought has a second and newer root, i.e., the idea of democracy and the peoples' right to rule themselves. British colonial rule spawned an unintended revolution in

thought and action by introducing a new way of looking at the individual, government, and society. The British did not come to Burma to introduce Western ideas of liberty, freedom, and self-rule. These and other ideas entered the minds of the people as a by-product of the study of British history and ideas and the concern of colonial government for the rule of law, order, and property.

Western secular political thought rested on several important principles. First, the state and its rulers were of this world. Second, all men, rulers and subjects alike, were under law. Third, authority under law was the basis of power to govern and not the accumulation of merit in past existence. Fourth, the state and its officers could be challenged when either had transcended legal limits.

Freedom in modern Burma is not contrary to tradition; it stands at the heart of the Buddhist faith. What has been overlooked is that Burman-Buddhists learned new meanings and uses of freedom from British and other Western sources and incorporated them into their own beliefs and values.

As Burma became more involved through colonial rule and trade with the world beyond its borders, these and other Western ideas entered Burman thought and action at the same time the colonial order moved away from being a purely administrative to a participatory political system. The peoples of Burma became aware of their power to change things through the application of their modern learning, the use of the law, political organization, and agitation.

The hill peoples, who make up approximately 30% of the population and live apart from the Burmans as well as each other in villages scattered over high elevations, never were integrated into Burman society. As noted above, they continue to use their own languages and live in their traditional ways. The emergence of a strong Christian and Western orientated overlay, together with community leadership that was initially supplied by the missionaries, and later, by local ministers and lay leaders, widened the gap between the Burmans and non-Burmans. These differences grew under British rule when the minority areas were legally separated from the Burma heartland, when the minorities were able to attend university and enter the professions, the police, and the military. During the Second World War, the split between the Burmans, who organized an army under the tutelage of the Japanese to fight the British, and the minorities, was complete. Only after the Japanese-sponsored Burma army revolted and joined the British in 1945, did the two move closer together.

During the colonial experience, the Karens developed a nationalist ideology to counter that of the Burmans. Before the Second World War, Karen leaders began to call for a separate Karen state and the use of the Karen language either instead of, or in addition to, Burmese in schools, government and business. The Burman army assault upon the delta Karen, early in the war, deepened the historic rift between the two and played a major part in keeping them apart at the time the Union was being contemplated. When the time came to discuss and decide Burma's political future, the Shans, Chins and Kachins supported the idea of a Burma federation uniting

all groups while the Karens rejected it; like their distant relatives, the Kayah, they wanted a state of their own outside of the Union.

National disunity in the post-independence period traces its roots to these and other differences which, more than a half century later, remain unsolved.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. The narrative in this chapter implies that social statistics on Burma are unreliable. What are the implications of this for social scientists who study Burma?
2. What is the basis for the Burman claim to rule the land?
3. Why has there been no real assimilation and integration of the minorities in modern Burma?
4. Are Buddhism and Western thought and ideas at such variance that the two cannot blend and support democracy in Burma?
5. It is a common argument in the Western business community today that if foreigners visit and do business in Burma it will help the people to know and understand democracy better and want to live under a democratic system. In the light of this, why didn't Burma's long contact with the British and Americans have a stronger impact on the political values and attitudes of the post-independence Burma army and its leaders?

### *Suggested Readings*

There are a number of good studies cited in the bibliography that focus upon the broad general topic. For an examination of social and economic statistics, consult recent reports of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

- To put the broad topic in perspective, read Bibliography Item 5 on land tenure at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- On ethnic issues, see Bibliographic Item 29 on the Burman family.
- On religion and politics, consult Bibliographic Item 43.
- On ethnic politics, read Bibliographic Items 41 and 44.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

### A. NATIONAL UNITY

The basic problem in Burmese politics is the absence of national unity among the people. It takes three forms -- unity between the Burmans and the minorities, unity among the several minorities, and the place of immigrant minorities.

Unity in Burma never meant full assimilation and integration of the minorities and the majority Burmans. Throughout Burmese history, the people have lived apart, meeting at the margins where they came in contact. There, some assimilation and integration took place through the use of common languages and sharing of common culture. But even at the margins, the separate identities continued.

No government, from pre-colonial times to the present, had an integration or assimilation policy. Governments were content to leave the people alone so long as they obeyed the laws and did not interfere with each other. The Burmans, as Buddhists, were not proselytizers, and neither were the animistic ethnic minorities. Religion was identified with particular groups, and it remained that way.

At the root of ethnic pluralism in Burma was the geographic pattern of population settlement. The land was large and the total population was small; there was no overcrowding and therefore peoples lived apart and settled in the pattern discussed earlier. Even when Burmans moved from the central areas of Burma to the delta and coastal regions to live amongst the Mon and Arakanese, they retained their separate identities and cultures. There was some assimilation and intermarriage, but it wasn't forced. It also was not extensive enough to obliterate the historic identities of the several groups in Burma.

The 1947 constitution was supposed to identify the division of power between the central government and the states. The minorities thought that the constitution established a federal government, but the law never included that word and, as it turned out, it was more unitary than federal. There were no state courts. These and other restraints and omissions denied the states the local power they assumed they received when the constitution was written and adopted (for more on this topic, see Chapter on Politics below).

Within the states, the smaller ethnic minorities were not guaranteed any seats in the State Councils, nor were they assured of any powers to control the use of their languages and protection of their cultures.

These problems within the states highlighted the inequalities between the minorities and the Burmans and between the dominant minority and others in the several states.

## **B. THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION**

Under British rule, the government encouraged Indians to settle in Burma. They initially recruited farmers, but most of those who came did not remain long on the land, but instead moved to the cities and towns in search of urban employment. Later, others came to work for the government as soldiers, police and civil servants. As Burma opened up, Burmans in upper Burma were encouraged to move south, Indian moneylenders came and financed the development of commercial agriculture. Chinese also came during this period, as they had earlier, but in smaller numbers and without encouragement and support from the government.

They, too, moved to the towns and cities and became shopkeepers, merchants and bankers. Together, the Indians and Chinese formed the basis of a middle class and the beginnings of an Asian financial class. The indigenous peoples were not encouraged or assisted in moving to the cities and taking up urban jobs and adopt urban lifestyle; instead most remained as farmers.

As political changes came in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Indians were provided with communal seats in the 1923 Legislative Council, and the Chinese received the same in the 1937 parliament. While Burman-immigrant relations were harmonious before 1930, afterward, as the world depression hit Burma and rice farmers lost their land, racial tension between Burmans and Indians emerged. In 1936, there was a major racial riot in Rangoon and elsewhere in urban areas. At issue were both religious matters and economic competition for jobs.

In the beginning of World War II, the Japanese invasion and the British retreat from Burma compelled a million or more Indians to seek refuge in India because of fear of being left without Burman protection. After the war, the Burman leaders blocked many Indians from returning, even though the British argued against this. During the war, the Chinese remained in their adopted land and shared the hardships of occupation with the Burmans.

Once the course of Burma's independence was set, the authors of the constitution defined citizenship broadly. There was one form of citizenship throughout the Union and all people were equal before the law, regardless of birth, religion, gender, and race. The citizenship provisions in the constitution were not absolute, however, as ordinary law could change them. Before the end of the first year of independence, parliament passed new ordinary laws to limit their original intent.

In 1954, parliament passed a Citizenship Act that outlawed dual citizenship. This was directed at the Chinese because the government in China held that their people could never surrender Chinese citizenship. This conflicted with Burma law that declared that to become a naturalized citizen, a person had to renounce allegiance to a foreign government. When the military seized power in 1962, it withdrew citizenship from the Indian population in Arakan. While it gave every person a registration card that verified his citizenship status, the *Rohingyas*, or Indians, were given foreign registration. Despite the law, many were denied cards of any kind with no explanation. An identity check in 1977 in Arakan led to the flight of over 200,000 *Rohingyas* and created an international incident involving Bangladesh, where the refugees took refuge. In the face of international pressure, the Burma government agreed to allow the return of the refugees and received them in stages.

In 1982, the Burma government promulgated a new Citizenship law that recognized three different grades—full, associate, and naturalized. Full status was awarded to those people who could prove that their ancestors settled in Burma before 1823. Associate citizenship went to those who could not offer the required proof. Naturalized citizenship went to those persons who had one parent who was a foreigner, or whose parents were a union of a foreigner and an associate citizen. Again, Indians with a long history of residency in Burma were victimized.

The severity of the law did not apply to the Chinese. Through intermarriage or assimilation, they were able to live and work in Burma and procure registration cards illegally. The law took its heaviest toll on indigenous peoples living in war zones who were not properly registered. These individuals were declared as stateless.

After the SLORC seized power, it was initially more tolerant of the Indians in Arakan and allowed them to form parties and contest the 1990 election. But in 1991, the Indian parties were dissolved, and the army began harassing people of Indian descent. This forced a second outflow of more than 250,000 to Bangladesh and again provoked an international incident. Although Burma eventually allowed more than 200,000 to return, new incidents occurred during the decade that kept Burma-Indian relations tense.

The Chinese experience in Burma under SLORC/SPDC was different. China provided weapons and aid, and recognized the SLORC when the rest of the world did not. Perhaps consequently, Burma's military rulers took no action as new immigrants flooded northern Burma and settled in and around Mandalay where they bought property, erected buildings, and transformed the former capital into a Chinese commercial city.

Although these changes disturbed many Burmese, they did not challenge government indifference nor seek to stop it. But, toward the Indians in Mandalay, the Burmese acted differently. There, incidents and rioting occurred as the Burmans accused the Indians of ridiculing Buddhism or making other attacks on the faith and the Burman-Buddhist people. As noted earlier, many saw the military actions as a way to deflect popular criticism from the rulers.

### C. OTHER SOCIAL ISSUES

Historically, there were two classes of people—the King (plus members of his family and court) and the people. The latter were divided between those who owed service (military individuals who were *Ahmudan*) and those who paid taxes in lieu of service (the *Athi*). These classes were not rigid, and intermarriage occurred. Anyone could become a member of a Buddhist religious order and gain prestige and honor through practice of the faith regardless of their origins and class standing before joining.

British rule replaced the King with a colonial administration that consisted of European members of government, military, and business. As education broadened and Burmese gained higher Western education and professional standing, they rose in the social order but remained inferior to the British elite.

In post-independence Burma, educated persons and professionals enjoyed the highest rank. But, following the seizure of power by the military, the professional officers and soldiers rose to the top of the social order, regardless of education and standing. This may be changing as the military has created special communities for military officers and their families with schools through the university only for the children of the Armed Forces. The system remains fluid as



once high-ranking soldiers retire or leave the military, they lose their standing and prestige. General Ne Win was an exception. As a leader during World War II, Ne Win had been head of the army since 1949. There is a popular belief that he had both *ana* and *auza* (power and influence)—characteristics of one whose past merit was the basis for his high standing and authority which people recognized and acknowledged. Aung San Suu Kyi, too, is recognized by the people as the daughter of the nation's founding father and has *ana* and *auza*.

In Burman society, women have equal standing with men in most matters. They control trade in the market, have equality in inheritance, exercise control over their dowries both in marriage and divorce, share governance of the household, and control the family wealth. Women have full access to education and a large percentage of medical doctors and other professionals are women. In the democratic era, they enjoyed high standing and positions in parliament, state government, and the parties. This has declined since the military came to power; there are no high ranking female military officers outside of the medical corps.

Most of the populations live without basic sanitation or running water. In 2000, the World Health Organization (WHO) ranked Burma among the lowest countries worldwide in healthcare delivery to its citizens. High infant mortality rates and short life expectancies further highlight poor health and living conditions. The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a serious threat to the Burmese population, as do tuberculosis and malaria. In 2004, the UNDP's Human Development Index, which measures achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment, and adjust real income, ranked Burma 132 out of 177 countries.

There are numerous documented human rights violations in Burma (see annual human rights reports compiled by the United Nations and the U.S. Department of State), and internal displacement of ethnic minorities is also prevalent. Several million Burmese, many of whom are ethnic minorities, have fled Burma for economic and political reasons to the neighboring countries of Bangladesh, India, China, and Thailand to seek work and asylum. More than 160,000 Burmese now live in nine refugee camps in Thailand and two in Bangladesh, while hundreds of thousands of other Burmese work and reside illegally in the countries in the region.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Compare and contrast the ways the democratic government of Burma (1948-62) and the military government (since 1962) treated the ethnic minorities.
2. How do you account for the differences in the way Burmese governments treated the Chinese and the Indians?
3. What was the basis for citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law and how does it differ from the original ideas of citizenship under the 1947 constitution?

4. Does the military form a new class in Burma's society and if so, what social class has it displaced at the top of the social order? What does its existence in 2006 tell you about social classes in Burma?
5. Why do the ethnic minorities cling to the idea of a federal union as the only way to unite the ethnic groups in Burma? Why do the military leaders reject it as a solution?

### *Suggested Readings*

- On the immigrant population, read Bibliography Item 10; also see, Chakravarti, N.R., *The Indian Minority in Burma*, London, Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Also see Silverstein, J., "Fifty Years of Failure in Burma", Brown, M.E. and Ganguly, S. (eds.), Government Politics and Ethnic Relations in Asia and the Pacific, Cambridge, The MIT Press, pp. 171-196.
- Also see Smith, M., Ethnic Groups in Burma, London: Anti-Slavery Society, 1994.
- On the subject of culture, see Singer, N.F., *Burmese Dance and Theater*, London, Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Also see LeMay, R., The Culture of South-East Asia, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1956, Chapter III, and Lowry, J., Burmese Art, London, HMSO, 1974.

# ECONOMICS

## A. THE ECONOMY DURING DEMOCRATIC RULE

Under British rule, Burma's economy shifted from subsistence to exchange. By the beginning of the Second World War, Burma was the world's largest exporter of rice. Burma also became the area's second largest producer of oil; in addition, it earned large revenues from the export of timber and various minerals. Burma had no large industry, but it had many small factories that produced consumer goods for the domestic market. Burma had great economic potential with its variety of untapped natural resources.

During World War II, the British denied all economic resources they could to the invading Japanese by destroying oil wells, bridges, roads and transportation equipment.

The Japanese victory isolated Burma from India, its major source of manufactured and consumer goods and a large market for its rice. As a result, the Burmese people stopped growing rice for export and reverted to subsistence rice agriculture. Once the war ended, the British focused on rebuilding the economy as its first priority; this, as noted earlier, put it in conflict with the Burman nationalist leaders who wanted to recover freedom first so that they could decide how to rebuild the economy and the nation.

Burman nationalists in the prewar period were determined to end the nation's economic dependence on rice. They hoped instead to build a more balanced economy based on both agriculture and manufacturing. In 1947, Aung San called the Sorrento Villa meeting of party and other leaders to devise a two-year economic plan for the nation's development. The plan called for the state to develop industry, to provide loans to the farmers to restore agriculture, to eliminate landlordism, to end land alienation, to experiment with mechanization of agriculture, and to establish collective farms. The plan was never implemented because of internal conflict after independence that limited the reach of the government. New economic plans were formulated in the 1950s with the help of foreign advisors who were drawn from the West. The strong Leftist social objectives of the AFPFL leaders gave way to more traditional ways of farming, organization of rural society, and development of the economy's industrial sector.

During this period, the state was the exclusive buyer of rice at fixed prices and seller to the world at market prices. The differential was kept by the state to be used to modernize the economy. While the system produced rice, it also caused discontent among the farmers who had no real incentive to improve either productivity or the quality of their product. After the Korean War, the international market for food declined. Burma lost markets and had large unsold stocks of rice. The East European countries helped reduce the surpluses through barter. Imports were not always of high quality or suitable for use in tropical climates. There also was little or no variety. Burma turned to the U.S. for needed consumer goods, purchased by special arrangement for local currency that the Americans promised not to convert to dollars. This worked well for the few years it was in effect.

In the cities, the Indians and Chinese continued to dominate the sale and distribution of consumer goods. The state was their competitor through cooperatives it formed and used to import items to sell to the public. But the coops never had stocks large enough or sufficiently varied in style and quality to satisfy the public. As a result, the private sector remained dominant.

By 1957, Prime Minister Nu called for a change from socialism to a mixed economy to hasten the nation's recovery. He encouraged more involvement by cooperatives and the private sector in the economy. This was a temporary measure to create the economic basis for a future socialist state. When the military seized power in 1962, the economy was well on its way to achieving the levels of 1939, and rice exports had risen to almost 1.5 million tons annually, nearly equal to those of 1939. The harvest was completed, and the economy was moving forward.

## B. THE ECONOMY UNDER THE MILITARY: 1962-1988

Following the March 2, 1962 coup, military rulers imposed economic changes. They issued their ideology in a statement, *Burmese Way to Socialism* (see below in the chapter on Politics). The basis of the new society was said to be equalitarian; the state would work to reduce the gap in wealth and power between individuals. In January 1963, the coup leader, General Ne Win, announced that the functions of production, distribution, import and export would be taken over by the state. The next month the rulers nationalized all banks.

In contrast to its haste to socialize the urban economy, the military regime moved more slowly to reform the agricultural sector. While the state owned all the land, the farmers worked it and made the planting and harvesting decisions. The state returned to purchase the product at prices it set. The rulers sought to make the farmer more secure through elimination of rent on farmlands. Also in January, the state ended joint ventures with foreign companies and nationalized large foreign firms.

But the new system did not succeed. The bureaucracy was incompetent, inexperienced, and corrupt. In May 1964, the state circulated a new currency in an effort to break the black markets. Since the public and small businessmen did business in cash, the state action fell hardest upon the Indian merchants. As noted earlier, this led to a large exodus of those who believed that they were the real targets of the new laws. As a result of these and other actions, the economy faltered, provoking public discontent in all sectors of society. The government withdrew some of its more drastic decrees and allowed a return of a small portion of private economy activity. For the next several years, agriculture production rose and fell in response to whether or not the weather was good or bad.

In 1971, the state wrote a 20-year economic plan. During the first three years, the improvement barely kept pace with the natural increase of the population. The political changes

of 1974 did not bring improvement. Two years later, the rulers turned to the World Bank and Western nations to help improve the economy. The introduction of “miracle” rice, developed in the Philippines, brought real improvement in output. But it required good soil, fertilizer, insecticide, and tractors that had to be imported. With limited funds, Burma could not raise production to levels needed to make significant improvement in the economy. By 1987, the country was deeply in debt and faced with ever more needs and no real improvement in its income. The rulers turned to the UN and asked to be declared a “least developed country”.

### C. THE ECONOMY UNDER THE MILITARY: 1988-The Present

With the overthrow of the constitutional dictatorship and the restoration of a military rule, the economy again went through change. The new military leaders sought to woo the world with promises for an open economy. Having first created the Myanmar Holdings Corporation and the Myanmar Economic Corporation to handle the business of the state, the rulers became partners with foreign firms to develop industry and trade, and to exploit natural resources. Foreign firms rushed in to exploit the minerals, forests, and fishing resources, to develop tourism, and to improve transportation. The initial investors seeking oil onshore in Burma dropped out following their failure to locate commercial deposits. But those who sought natural gas offshore were more successful, and two pipelines later were built to bring the gas ashore from beneath the Andaman Sea to the market in Thailand.

In the early 1990s, investors from Singapore, Malaysia, and Hong Kong built hotels and created a tourism industry. They also invested in the construction of modern shopping centers. However, Japan, Germany and other European states, which in the past had helped Burma most, stayed away because of the military’s human rights record since seizing power. During the first few years, the new investments stimulated business, constructed new buildings in Rangoon and Mandalay, improved roads, and established new businesses and banks. But by the end of the decade, many investors left, either because of the difficulty of doing business or because of consumer boycotts in several countries.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Burma is a country rich in natural resources with a strong agricultural base. It has vast timber and fishery reserves and is a leading source of gems and jade. Tourist potential is great, but remains undeveloped because of weak infrastructure and Burma’s damaged international image caused by the junta’s human rights abuses and oppression of the democratic opposition. The economy has been further affected by U.S. sanctions, which include bans since 2003 on the importation of Burmese products into the U.S. and the export of financial services from the U.S. to Burma. A number of other countries, including member states of the European Union, Canada, Australia, Japan, and Korea, have joined the U.S. in applying some form of sanctions against the regime.

The regime’s mismanagement of the economy has created a downward economic spiral. The vast majority of Burmese citizens now subsist on an average income that equates, as of 2005, to about \$225 per capita. Inflation, caused primarily by public sector deficit spending,

stagnant wages, and the eroding value of the local currency (the kyat), has undermined living standards. The limited moves toward a market economy begun in the late 1980s and early 1990s have been accompanied by a significant rise in crony capitalism. A handful of companies loyal to the regime has benefited from policies that promote monopoly and privilege.

Agriculture, light industry, and transport dominate the private sector of Burma's economy. State-controlled activities predominate in energy, heavy industry, and the rice trade. The military, through its commercial holdings, also plays a major role in the economy.

Burma remains primarily an agricultural economy with about 54% of its GDP derived from agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and forestry. Manufacturing constitutes only about 9% of recorded economy activity, and state industries continue to play a large role in that sector. Services constitute only 8% of GDP.

Government economic statistics are unavailable or very unreliable. According to official figures, GDP growth has been over 10% annually since FY 1999-2000. But the real numbers are likely much smaller. Burma's top export markets include: Thailand, India, China, and Singapore. Burma's top export commodities include: clothing, natural gas, wood and wood products, and fish and fish products.

Burma remains the world's second largest producer of illicit opium, although production has generally declined in recent years. Burma also has been the primary source of synthetic, methamphetamines in Asia, producing hundreds of millions of tablets annually. The Burmese Government has publicly committed itself in recent years to expanded counter-narcotics measures.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why was Burma the first and only country to return unused foreign aid to the U.S.?
2. Why did the "Burmese Way to Socialism" and the command economy the soldier-rulers put in place fail to improve the lives and well being of the people?
3. It often is argued that international embargoes fail in their objective to reform internal policies of the target nation. Using Burma since 1988 as a test, is the proposition valid or invalid? Discuss.
4. How important is national unity to the development of both natural and human resources? Can it be imposed by military force or must there be a real political solution to the problems in Burma before there can be unity, sustained economic growth and development?

### *Suggested Readings*

A good place to begin is with Bibliographic Item 1; which can be examined together with Bibliographic Item 5, especially Parts I and II. The best study of the economy during the democratic period is Bibliographic Item 51, especially Parts II and III. Finally, for the current period, see Bibliographic Item 39, in which opium is examined along with the normally standard topics of economics.

# POLITICS

## A. TWO CONSTITUTIONS: LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC AND AUTHORITARIAN

Burma became independent in 1948 under the authority of a liberal-democratic constitution that guaranteed civil, political, and human rights for all. The document further established freedom for all people from traffic in human beings, forced labor and restrictions on religion. The state recognized the special position of Buddhism as the faith of a majority of Burma's citizens. The constitution recognized the right of private property and economic initiative; at the same time, it declared that all land belonged to the state and that the economy be managed through government intervention. The dialectic of socialism and liberalism remained and divided the leaders and the general population during the life of the first constitution.

The political system was modeled on the British. All power emanated from the people and was exercised by parliament and the state councils. The president became the head of state and the Prime Minister was established as the political leader, responsible to parliament. The members of the original parliament were the representatives elected to the constituent assembly who served until 1952, when a new elected government was installed.

The legislature was bicameral; the division of seats in the Lower House was based on population and in the upper house, the number of seats each state received was established in the constitution. As a result, the Burmans had a majority of seats in the Lower House and the ethnic minorities together had a majority of seats in the upper house. When important issues called for a joint meeting and decision by parliament, the number of Burmans from the Lower House was so great, they were assured of victory. The constitution included legislative lists that determined which topics were given to parliament and which were granted to the states.

The constitution created a unique federal union. The head of each state was the person chosen by the Prime Minister from the state's delegation to parliament to serve as Minister of State in his cabinet. Members of the state councils obtained their seats through election or appointment by parliament. There was no separate Burma state, as there were states for the minorities; instead, the parliament dealt with the affairs of Burma proper as national affairs in the national assembly and the peoples of Burma proper were governed by the Prime Minister. There was an independent national judiciary and a hierarchy of courts. There were no state courts and justices. Two of the states, the Shan and Karenni, had the right to secede from the Union, while the other states and the Special Division of Chins did not.

The fundamental law was flawed, but workable. There was a party system in Burma. Similar to the U.S. Constitution, it was not mentioned or recognized in the basic law. Nevertheless, the parties were the key institution which made the political system work by finding and choosing candidates to run for office, selecting leaders, developing the program to be pursued in parliament and acting as the link between the people and the government. Until 1956, the governing party, the AFPFL, was so strong that it could ignore the small, divided



opposition in parliament and govern as if it did not exist. In that election, an opposition played a responsible role in parliament. In 1958, the AFPFL monopoly of power ended when the party divided. Following the election of 1960, the two rivals continued as separate parties.

The strongest opposition parties in Burma included the Burma Communist Party (BCP) (which, after the constituent assembly, never took part in the legal political system) and the Karen National Union (KNU) (which also never participated at the legal level after 1949). The first and only parliamentary opposition of significance was the coalition of small left and right parties, the National Democratic Front (NDF), which emerged during the 1956 election. It won 30% of the vote and 48% of the seats in parliament. It had sufficient seats to force a vote of confidence and challenge the ruling party on issues of governance.

The 1958 AFPFL split made the parliament unworkable. U Nu's faction, the Clean AFPFL (later renamed the Pyidaungsu or Union Party), had a slim majority that depended on continued support from the minorities and the NDF. However, the Burman members gave overwhelming support to the rival Stable AFPFL, led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein. In the November 1958 budget session, Nu resigned over uncertainty that his majority would hold. Nu asked parliament to replace him with the unelected army head, General Ne Win—an act permissible under the constitution—to form a Caretaker Government to restore internal peace and to hold a new national election.

The Caretaker Government lasted until April 1960. It was a non-party government whose members included civil servants and military leaders. It provided strong leadership, improved and diversified the economy, and held free and fair elections. Under its strict rule, the government was intolerant of law infractions and dealt harsh punishments to offenders. It pressured the Shan and Karenni chiefs to surrender their hereditary administrative power to popularly chosen leaders. In the 1960 election, the Stable AFPFL, the faction the Caretaker Government favored, was defeated overwhelmingly; it only won 30% of the vote and 42 seats. The Clean AFPFL won 53% of the vote and 157 seats. The NDF proved no match for either party and only gained 5% of the vote and 4 seats. During the election campaign, Nu declared that if his party were elected, he would make Buddhism the state religion. He also promised to allow the Arakanese and Mons to form states of their own.

Throughout the first decade of democratic rule, the government and people engaged in multiple wars with political and ethnic groups who sought different goals. One such group desired to obtain total power, while another preferred to secede and a third group wanted to remain in the union although with greater autonomy and the right of self-determination. From 1948 through 1952, the BCP sought to overthrow the government and replace it with a communist state. During this same period, the Karens revolted and sought to take their people out of the union, form an independent state and win British support and protection. Other ethnic and political wars erupted and the Burma government authority was temporarily reduced to control of Rangoon and several cities scattered about the state. The Union of Burma survived because the minorities fought one another as well as the Burma army. The internal wars continued throughout the 1950s, although the Burma army gradually gained control of the Burma

heartland and drove the forces in revolt into the hills and delta. During the Caretaker Period, new ethnic opposition forces in several states rose to fight the army as in an effort to obtain the autonomy which they were promised at independence. These groups gained large areas, but no complete victories. At the same time, the government was unable to defeat them.

The last government under the constitution took office on April 4, 1960. Its political goals were to establish unity and democratic governance in Burma. The split in the Prime Minister's party in 1961 overshadowed other problems of his administration. He made good on his promise to make Buddhism the state religion. But, this widened rather than healed the divisions in society, as non-Buddhists feared the effects this change might have on their religious freedom. On the question of creating new states, Nu delayed the fulfillment of his promise of statehood for Arakan. This eroded support for his leadership as it was seen as retreating from an important campaign promise. Finally, in his effort to end national disunity by peaceful means, he met with leaders of the ethnic minorities and agreed to hold a conference in February 1962 to discuss divisive issues. This frightened the military, which feared he might allow one or more groups to secede. While the promised meeting was in session on March 2, the military overthrew the government, arrested Burman and ethnic minority leaders who were in Rangoon, set the constitution aside, and ended democracy and freedom in Burma. The new military rulers said that they had to act to save the union, which was on the verge of disintegration.

The politics of this period were marked by several factors. First, Burma was governed by authoritarian rule, even under the Caretaker Government. It possessed a strong judiciary that upheld the rule of law. It had three national, democratic elections. Finally, it showed that emotionally charged political issues, such as constitutional amendments to make Buddhism the state religion, were as dangerous to the constitutional government as an actual revolution. Liberal democracy ended when the military leaders violated their oath to defend the constitution and destroyed it.

Authoritarianism replaced democracy. Between 1962 and the present, it went through three distinct forms. Initially, a small group of senior military officers formed the Revolutionary Council (RC) and governed by selective laws. Until 1974, there was no constitution and no parliament or independent court to challenge its actions.

In place of the federal system, the RC established a national centralized hierarchy of Security Administrative Committees (SACs) composed of representatives of the military, police and the bureaucracy. Although there were no civilians at the outset, they were added later. The soldier-rulers anticipated a long stay in office and issued two documents during their first year in office, "The Burmese Way to Socialism" and "The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment", which declared the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the new ideology that would guide their actions and identify their goals.

The immediate goal of the government was to transform the mixed economy and elected political system into a socialist command economy and a dictatorial political system. The government closed the country to foreign tourists, aid groups, and others as it sought to make the

transformation without outside help or interference. It took away freedom of speech, press, and other rights that were guaranteed in the initial constitution. The soldier/rulers shut down the political parties and mobilized the people in new and different ways. First, the government laid the foundation for a cadre political party that reflected their beliefs, views, and objectives. Second, they created two mass organizations of workers and peasant organizations with branches everywhere in the country. Their stated purpose was both to listen to and inform the people. Third, the government reduced their contacts with Western nations and encouraged connections with Eastern European countries.

The first authoritarian government ended with the promulgation of a new constitution in 1974. In place of unbridled dictatorship, Burma came under a constitutional dictatorship. The transition began in 1971, when the RC initiated the process of writing Burma's second constitution. It differed with the original in many ways. The original was authored by a national constituent assembly; a small committee of party members wrote the second constitution. Unlike the original document, which was developed in parts by several committees of the assembly and then compiled into a final draft, the second went through three drafts, each of which was submitted to public meetings for comments and criticism. Unlike the original constitution, which never was adopted by the public, the final version of the second constitution was adopted in a national referendum.

The new constitution departed from its predecessor in several important ways. The new basic law declared that the BSPP was the author and leader of the nation. It also declared that Burma was a one party state, and the BSPP was the only party. The constitution declared that it was the supreme law of the land and that only the *Pyithu Hluttaw* (People's Assembly) could interpret its meaning. Unlike the first constitution, where anyone— independent or party member—could contest for a seat in parliament, the second directed the party to draw up a list of candidates for seats and only one candidate could stand for election. The constitution empowered the BSPP to give advice to the government at all levels on most subjects.

The original federal union differed from its successor in structure; while the original was divided into four states, one special division, and a combined national government and Burma state, the new federation was divided into seven divisions and seven states. The states included the originals together with three new ones carved out of the former Burma proper, and all were given ethnic names reflecting the majority group in each.

In reality, Burma became a unitary state. There were four levels of government— national, states/divisions, townships, plus wards and villages. All were united under the principles of democratic centralism and collective leadership.

Another important difference between the two constitutions is found in the area of rights. Unlike the original document, where the rights of individuals were set forth near the beginning of the document, in the second constitution they were discussed near the end. The new constitution established no absolute rights; all were conditioned on the goals of the state. No right could be invoked if it undermined the unity and solidarity of the national groups, security of the state, or

the socialist social order. Only citizens, regardless of race or gender, were equal before the law, enjoyed equality of opportunity, had the right of inheritance, and could enjoy the benefits of their labor in proportion to their contribution.

The new law did not bring order and stability. During the next fourteen years, there was widespread unrest. Within three months of establishing the new regime, riots occurred in Rangoon and elsewhere over food shortages, mal-distribution, and other issues. At year's end, the university students clashed with the police and military over a proper burial for the late U Thant, who had been the 3<sup>rd</sup> Secretary General of the UN. In 1976, there were two attempts on the life of General Ne Win and an effort by young military officers to overthrow the government and reestablish democratic rule.

In 1987, Ne Win admitted publicly to “faults and failures” in the past management of the economy. The government moved away from state control to free the purchase, sale, transport and storage of basic foodstuffs, in the hope that this would be an incentive to farmers to release their crops for trading in the local markets. To combat the growing black market, it demonetized much of the currency without replacing it with new—in effect it confiscated the money in the hands of the people. In early 1988, the government ended its 25-year monopoly of rice exports.

With no outlets for the people to criticize government policies and actions, rioting and demonstrations began in early 1988 and turned into mass peaceful demonstrations in Rangoon and elsewhere calling for an end to one party rule. As the number of demonstrators grew and included members of the military in their marching ranks, the army violated the constitution it put in place, overthrew the government, seized power and created a second military dictatorship, which it called the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In doing so, it used extreme violence against the people to insure the success of its actions.

Since September 18, 1988, there has been no constitution. The SLORC rules by martial law, the laws and decrees of the past that it chooses to honor and uphold, plus new decrees and declarations it announces. One of the most important was Declaration 1/90 (July 27, 1990), which briefly outlined SLORC's claim to rule. It said that: (1) the SLORC “is not bound by any constitution;” (2) it rules by martial law; and (3) it is a military government.

When the SLORC seized power, it promised to hold new elections and transfer power back to the people. It took two years for it to develop the rules and conditions for an election. Parties began to form almost immediately, but it was not until March 1989, that SLORC issued a new election law. By the time of the election, 234 parties had formed throughout the nation. Campaigning was permitted to begin in 1990 under strong and restrictive laws. The election was held on March 27, 1990; 93 parties contested, but only a few had widespread support. The junta backed the renamed and reformed BSPP, which now was called the National Unity Party. The party with most popular backing was the National Democratic League (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi and several former military officers, including Aung Shwe, Tin U and Aung Gyi. The voting was free and fair, and the NLD won an overwhelming victory; it gained 392 of the 485

seats contested and 69% of the vote. The Shan National Democratic League won 23 seats and was the second largest party elected. The NUP won 10 seats.

At the time of this writing (March 2006), the military rulers have not transferred power to the people, arguing that there must be a new constitution in place to assure peace, unity and stability. During most of the 1990s, there were no talks between SLORC and NLD leaders. In October 2000, with the aid of the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Ambassador Razali Ismail, talks began. But after several years of sporadic, private talks, there were no announced results, and with the exception of the release of a small number of political prisoners, no real movement toward political change.

Throughout the period of military rule, the leadership group remained at nineteen. In 1992, the original leader, General Saw Maung, was replaced by General Than Shwe, who added General Maung Aye as head of the Armed Forces. General Khin Nyunt, the head of the Directorate of Defense Services and Intelligence, who was an original member of SLORC, was the third ranking in the ruling junta. In 1997, SLORC changed its name to the State Peace and Restoration Council (SPDC) and reorganized its membership to add all the Regional Commanders and replaced a few of the original members at the top. Military generals continue to lead the SPDC.

During the past fifty years, political parties have existed and taken important part in the politics of their day. Parties, other than those associated with the military, tended to be loose coalitions of groups and individuals leading both to splits and individual defections. These parties placed heavy reliance upon their leaders and when one resigned or died, there usually was no known successor; as a result, the parties tended to split and lose their political significance.

The BSPP and the BCP were ideological parties based on strong organization and leadership. The BSPP looked to the army as a source from which to recruit both active and retired soldiers to serve in its ranks. It never inspired the people to freely join its ranks. Since its direct connection with the government was broken in 1988, it has lost its status, and as demonstrated in the 1990 election, had a small following among the people. The BCP was formed during the Second World War and recruited young intellectuals as well as ordinary citizens whom it indoctrinated with its ideology and how to lead at all levels; it relied upon them to serve its cause whether or not the party was above or below ground. Both parties exercised control from the top down, ran schools to train members, and emphasized loyalty and willingness to carry out orders without question. Since 1989, when the BCP imploded and the cadres broke away, it has moved to the underground and has played no visible part in contemporary politics. The NUP continues even though it was routed in the 1990 election. The NLD is based on open recruitment and organization with all power concentrated in the leadership. Leadership domination is necessary because of constant harassment to the party and its leaders by the military. When and where possible, it practices democracy. Ideas come from the top and, while it is possible for members in the lower levels to offer suggestions, there appear to be few ideological or strategic recommendations to the leaders. Despite the efforts of the military to

demean its leaders and break up its organization, it appears to remain the party of the people who are ready to support it if given the chance.

In the last fifty years, Burma has experienced both liberal-democratic and authoritarian forms of government. In the former case, members enjoyed relative liberty and freedom. In the latter case, they enjoyed neither and received nothing in substitution. Both constitutions were drawn up and implemented without first solving the problems of national unity so that a political society might develop and hold together in times of stress and conflict. Whenever the Burmese people have a chance to speak out, they call for the return of liberal democracy, an end to authoritarianism, and unity and equality among the people. But until national unity is achieved, no free and democratic, peaceful and united society can evolve.

## B. DRAFTING A NEW CONSTITUTION

Burma has been operating without a constitution since 1988, when the junta suspended the 1974 Constitution and abolished all state institutions, including parliament and the civilian courts. The junta claimed (after the conclusion of the 1990 election) that the 1990 election had been held only to elect representatives to a National Convention, which would draw up a new constitution. The National Convention was convened on January 9, 1993, although only 99 (14 percent) of its 702 members were elected representatives, with the rest appointed by the junta. The Convention was suspended in March 1996 shortly after the NLD members were expelled after protesting the lack of free debate and the harassment of delegates by the military.

In August 2003, the SPDC, under intense international pressure following the renewed detention of Aung San Suu Kyi in May of that year, announced a new road map for political reform, which included reconvening the National Convention to draft a new constitution, arranging a national referendum to approve the new constitution, holding parliamentary elections, and then forming a new government based on those elections. In May 2004, the junta reconvened the National Convention without the participation of any delegates from the NLD or from the largest of the ethnic-based political parties. Some NLD officials were invited to attend, but they chose not to take part after the junta refused to meet their demands, one of which was the release from house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and Tin O.

More than 1,000 delegates, largely hand-picked and approved by the junta, attended the opening session in May 2004. The junta placed tight restrictions on debate, with delegates not permitted to question the government's objectives or to challenge the military in any way. Convention rules stated that delegates could not protest by walking out of any meeting or make "anti-national" comments. Any criticism of the convention risked attracting a prison term of up to 20 years. UN officials and numerous national governments, including the U.S., stated that the convention could not be regarded as a credible step towards democracy unless these restrictions on debate are lifted and all political parties are fully involved.

This reconvened Convention was recessed in July 2004. Another session was held from February to March 2005. A third session, convened on December 5, 2005, was suspended on January 31, 2006. Press reports indicated that the Convention would not be convened again until an unspecified time after the October/November 2006 harvest season.

The junta has given no timetable for the completion of the Convention or the road map itself. Until the constitution is complete, no other activities under the road map, including a new election, can be considered.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Why did liberal-democracy fail in Burma?
2. What role did political parties play in Burma under the military?  
What role did political parties play in Burma under democratic rule?  
What role did political parties play in Burma under the present regime?
3. Can a true federal system solve Burma's political problems?
4. Can a unitary system solve Burma's political problems?
5. Is it vital for Burma to have a written constitution in order to be a well-ordered democratic society?

### ***Suggested Readings***

- See Bibliographic Item 40 for a short background to Burmese politics up to World War II.
- Also see Bibliographic Item 30 and Silverstein, J., "The Idea of Freedom in Burma and the Political Thought of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi", in Kelly, D. and Reid, A. (eds.), *Asian Freedom*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 187-203, and Bibliographic Item 2 for discussion of political ideas and systems in Burma.
- For the early history of parties and political movements, see Bibliographic Item 33.
- For the politics of the ethnic minorities, see Bibliographic Items 41 and 44.

# FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## A. PRINCIPLES OF BURMA'S FOREIGN POLICY.

Over the past half-century, the Burma governments generally have followed several principles in developing and executing foreign affairs. The founding fathers set the original direction in the 1947 constitution, by including a section on International Relations. There were three key provisions. The first renounced war as an instrument of policy. The second accepted the generally recognized principles of international law. The third declared that all international agreements must be referred to parliament before implementation. The 1974 constitution eliminated this chapter and any discussion of international relations.

By 1949, Burma adopted a new principle to follow a nonaligned and neutralist approach to foreign policy. Although it was not added to the constitution, it nevertheless served as a guide for the next half century. In 1954, Burma and China agreed to abide by the Five Peoples' Principles, which included the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states. This principle had been accepted earlier when Burma adopted the UN Charter (Art.2.7).

## B. BURMA'S FOREIGN RELATION WITH SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

When Burma recovered its independence in 1948, it began its foreign relations in a modest way. Although it recognized all nations, over the past half century its relations with China, Thailand, India, the U.S., and international organizations are among the most frequent or important in its foreign affairs.

One of Burma's first international acts was to join the United Nations; the Chinese Nationalists, who then formed the government of China, sponsored its membership. When, a year later in 1949, the Communists came to power in China, Burma was the first non-communist Asian state to extend recognition to it. But, from the very beginning of their relations, all did not go well between the two nations. In 1948, Burma-China relations encountered difficulties over disputed borders, which had not been settled between Britain and China before power was transferred to the new government of Burma. This remained a problem until 1960 when, after four years of negotiations, it was resolved. The borders were demarcated with both nations agreeing to surrender territory to each other and signing two treaties: a border agreement and a treaty of friendship and non-aggression.

In 1949, the civil war in China between the Nationalist and Communist forces led some Nationalist troops to take refuge in northern Burma. They refused to surrender their weapons and accept Burma authority in the territory they occupied. After four years of warfare with the invaders, Burma took the question of their presence in Burma to the UN and asked for help to remove them. The result was not fully satisfactory to the Burmese because the UN agreed upon a voluntary Chinese withdrawal, which the Burmese saw as not comparable to the strong stand



the world body took against “aggression” earlier in Korea. A large number of Nationalist forces remained in Burma and threatened both its sovereignty and relations with the PRC. The Burma army continued to fight on alone, neither fully defeating nor expelling the intruders from their country.

In 1954, the leaders of China and Burma, Chou En-lai and U Nu respectively, took a major step to improve the relations between their countries. They signed a treaty that established the Five People’s Principles of International Relations which were: mutual respect for each other territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-aggression; noninterference in each other’s internal affairs; equal and mutual benefits; and peaceful coexistence. This treaty was followed two years later by negotiations to resolve the border questions. During this period, Burma played a key role in cosponsoring the Bandung Conference of Asian and African states in Indonesia and extended an invitation to China to participate. China’s presence at the conference gave it a means to meet all participants and break out of the isolation the U.S. had encouraged states to follow. By entering into agreements with a few and talking to all, China reached states it previously had not been able to engage. During this period, Burma supported the PRC’s efforts to obtain membership in the UN, which the U.S was blocking; in response, China gave Burma economic and technical assistance and made large purchases of rice when the Burmese found no immediate market for their product.

All this changed in 1967 when the Chinese Cultural Revolution demonstrations came to Rangoon and local Chinese rallied at their Embassy’s prompting, leading to fighting between Burmese and local Chinese, an invasion of the Embassy, and a rupture on Burma-China relations. The Chinese government responded by giving large-scale aid to the Burma Communist Party and called for the overthrow of the Ne Win government. Tensions between the two lasted for three years, while Burma-China trade dropped nearly to nothing. In 1970, the Pakistan Prime Minister brought the leaders of the two nations together, and the impasse ended. But, if state to state relations improved, party to party connections continued and the Chinese government gave military aid to the BCP in its war against the Burma government. As the decade drew to a close, China’s policy changed, and it stopped helping the BCP; instead, it used its good offices to try and heal the internal conflicts in Burma between the BCP and ethnic groups and the state. From this point on, China’s aid to Burma grew and official visits between the leaders of the two nations restored their unity.

The 1988-89 period marked a new milestone in Burma-China relations. Against a background of internal struggle between the Burma government and the people, Burma leaders met with the Vice-Governor of Yunnan, and the two nations signed an agreement on August 1988 that opened their common border to trade. A state visit to China by Burma’s new military rulers a year later produced an agreement whereby China sold over a billion U.S. dollars in new weapons to Burma. Later, China was reported to have helped rebuild Burma defenses in the Andaman Sea and to construct new roads between the two countries which could provide China with access to the Indian Ocean. This was followed by Chinese investment in Burma and the settling of Chinese immigrants in the Mandalay area, where they engaged in trade, commerce,

and real estate construction. The increasing friendliness between the two nations disturbed Burma's neighbors in Southeast Asia and India.

Relations between Burma and Thailand have a long and often strained history, with memories on both sides of bitter wars and unresolved enmity. Following the end of the Second World War, Thailand returned to Burma the two Shan States that Japan had given to it for aiding their war effort. After Burma regained its independence, it established formal bilateral relations in August 1948; one year later, it invited Thailand and other Theravada Buddhist nations to participate in the Sixth Buddhist Council which the Burmese planned to hold between 1954 and 1956. Burma also waived its wartime claims for reparations from the Thais and apologized for the sacking of Ayuthia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The two exchanged high-level state visits between their leaders.

But there were other sides to their relations. The communist parties in Thailand and Burma threatened their national governments. Burma stood alone in its war against the two Communist parties that were fighting to overthrow its government, while the Thais looked for international help to defend the Bangkok government. In 1954, Thailand supported the US-supported, anti-communist, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), headquartered in Bangkok. Although invited, the Burmese refused to join as it was contrary to Burma's policy of nonalignment and neutrality.

Also during this period, Thailand gave secret military and financial aid to Burmese ethnic minorities to help create a buffer between the two states in an effort to keep the Communist parties of the two countries from joining together. Beginning in the late 1950s, the Chinese Nationalists who left Burma established themselves in northern Thailand, and there they organized the international trade in opium which, grown in Burma, was smuggled across the Thai border and sold abroad. This trade involved Thai businessmen who also were involved in smuggling consumer goods into Burma for distribution through its growing black-markets. The Burmese were unable to control their side of the border to stop the illegal trade.

In November 1988, Burma announced a new law that allowed foreign investment. Thailand's General Chaovalit was the first important foreign visitor after the policy announcement and its first beneficiary. In response to his visit, Burma allowed Thai businessmen and military associates to invest in the cutting and export of teak wood as well as in the exploitation its mineral resources and to fish in Burma waters. In exchange, General Chaovalit promised to "persuade" Burma students, who had taken refuge in Thailand after the military seized power, to return home.

As the newly armed and expanded Burma army grew in the early 1990s and gained control of the Burma heartland, it turned its full attention to the defeat of the ethnic minorities in the border regions. By 1993, it recovered control of significant portions of the Burma-Thai border and cutoff most of the illegal trade in and out of Thailand. At the same time, it encouraged legitimate trade across the China frontier, and China became the chief source of imported consumer goods to Burma. Thailand, in its eagerness to recover lost business, agreed

in 1994 to help SLORC by: (1) closing its borders to Burman leaders and ethnic minorities who sought to escape from Burma or to travel abroad by way of Thailand; (2) stopping arms from getting into the hands of Burma's opposition; and (3) building a "friendship bridge" across the Moei River to encourage legal trade between the countries.

In 1997-98, two events poisoned Burma-Thai relations. First, a group of Burmese students seized Burma's Embassy in Bangkok and held its employees hostage. While the world applauded the Thai government's peaceful resolution of the issue, the Burmese government was outraged that the Thai Deputy Foreign Minister negotiated with the students and allowed them to leave with impunity; it retaliated by stopping trade between the two countries. Shortly afterwards, another group of Burmese dissidents crossed the border, seized a Thai hospital, and held its doctors and patients hostage. The Thai military intervened, attacked, and killed the Karen invaders. This time, several governments and human rights groups criticized Thailand's forceful response. Many in Thailand looked favorably upon the military action and hoped it would improve relations and trade between the two countries. But it did not satisfy the Burma government which stopped all Thai fishing in Burmese waters and the exploitation of its resources. Since then, Thai fishermen have still not regained full access to Burmese waters.

In recent years, a new obstacle in Burma-Thai relations developed. In the late 1990s, methamphetamines burst upon the drug scene. Manufactured by the ethnic Wa in the Shan State and marketed in Thailand, these drugs spread rapidly in the cities and nearby countryside. Despite complaints by the Thai government to Burma and demands for an end to the trade, it continued and grew. In 2001, armed clashes between Thai and Burma armed forces erupted. Civilians were killed and, as the nations neared a state of war, the two countries turned to dialogue between leaders who visited each other's country as a way to try and defuse the explosive situation.

Burma has never developed close relations with any non-Asian state. Among Western nations, its strongest involvement was with the United States. American interest in Burma stemmed from its own close relationship with its neighbor states, Thailand and Laos, Vietnam and China

In 1948, Burma and the U.S. established formal relations. During the first few years afterward, the relations between the two were friendly. The Korean War provided the first important opportunity for Burma and the United States to be involved together in an international issue. While the U.S. took a leading role to organize collective security at the UN in behalf of South Korea, Burma supported this UN effort by sending a gift of rice to the South Koreans. Later, when the UN army crossed the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and encountered Chinese troops, the U.S. called on the world body to name China an aggressor nation. This time, Burma refused to support the UN resolution. Later, when the U.S. blocked the PRC from occupying the China seat in the UN, Burma refused to go along and became a leading supporter of the PRC for a place at the UN. Despite these differences, the two re-established good relations. High-level meetings between the two countries occurred in 1953 and 1955.

The decade of the 1950s saw the Burmese accept U.S. economic and technical assistance as they sought to restore their economy to modernize the state. As the decade opened, the U.S. and Burma signed several agreements which did not call for any political commitment by the recipient. It was the first Asian nation to do so. This only lasted until 1953 when Burma halted the program so that it could go to the UN and lodge a complaint against the Chinese Nationalists. Three years later, the U.S. resumed economic assistance; in 1958, it began to sell small amounts of military equipment to Burma on very favorable terms.

Throughout the Vietnam War, the U.S. and Burma followed different policies. In 1955, Burma offered its country as a neutral venue for confidential meetings between the U.S. and North Vietnam. Although the offer was refused, it can be seen as consistent with Burma's basic principles of pursuing nonalignment and promoting efforts to help achieve peace in world affairs. Throughout the war and afterwards, the U.S. and Burma continued their relations on the same terms.

Only after the Burma army seized power in 1988, did their relations change. In response to the violence with which the Burma army put down the unarmed civilians, the U.S. halted all aid programs and denounced the Burma army's behavior. While the Burmese continued to argue that no nation had a right to interfere in its internal affairs, the U.S. saw Burma's behavior as a violation of many articles of the UN Charter and the Human Rights Declaration it had pledged to uphold. When the U.S. Ambassador to Burma resigned in 1991, the U.S. Senate refused to confirm a successor. The U.S. downgraded its level of representation in Burma from Ambassador to Charge d' Affaires; the position of Ambassador remains empty to this day. The relations between the two are unlikely to change until there is real political reform in Burma.

The U.S. has imposed broad sanctions against Burma since 1988. Since May 1997, the U.S. government has prohibited new investment in Burma by U.S. persons or entities. In 2003, the U.S. Congress adopted, and the President signed, a law which includes a ban on imports from Burma, a ban on the export of financial services to Burma, a freeze on the assets of certain Burmese financial institutions, and extended visa restrictions on Burmese officials. Congress renewed this law in July 2004 and again in July 2005.

In 1947, Burma and India had very close relations. This was the result of early contact between Aung San and Nehru in 1939. The closeness between Burma and Indian leaders after Aung San's death continued. Burma leaders frequently consulted their Indian counterparts on regional and world affairs. Both countries were leading nonaligned nations and took similar positions at the UN and in their individual foreign affairs. The two also had differences from time to time, but never strong enough to rupture their bilateral relations. One originated from a map attached to the 1960 Sino-Burma border treaty. The Indians complained that the map was erroneous and prejudiced against Indian interests. The Burmese responded by declaring that they did not accept the map as binding and when India and China settled their own boundary disputes, a new map would be drawn and replace the one attached to the Burma-China treaty.

After the Burma army overthrew U Nu's government, the closeness weakened following Rangoon's new policy on currency changes, which Indians in Burma felt were intended to affect them most of all. The press in India and many of the nation's leaders interpreted the law as anti-Indian, anti-Muslim, and anti-Hindu. After leaders of the two nations met and discussed the matter, India agreed that it was an internal Burma affair and halted the discussion by welcoming back Indians from Burma who wanted to return. But India never re-established the same closeness with Burma as had previously existed. Indo-Burma relations remained friendly and correct as each went its own way in international relations.

In 1988, India was the only Asian government to speak out strongly against the military seizure of power and its treatment of the peoples of Burma. India openly supported Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD. By 1994, its policy toward Burma began to change as it became alarmed at the extent of China's involvement in Burma. Through visits to Burma by high-ranking administrators and later by an exchange of visits by leaders, the two began to draw together. Beginning in 2000, India made clear that it stood ready to counter China as a major source of aid to Burma by offering aid and loans, sales of arms, involvement in helping to improve Burma's defenses, and agreeing to construct roads between the two countries as well as within Burma. These Indian initiatives to Burma were welcomed by the members of ASEAN, who, since the mid-1990s, had become concerned about the extent of China's presence in Burma.

Burma has also been involved in world affairs through membership and activities in both the United Nations and the nonaligned movement. As noted above, it joined the UN immediately after regaining its independence. In 1961, it was a founding member of the nonaligned movement. In that same year, the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjold, the second UN Secretary General, saw Burma's representative, U Thant, succeed him. As a representative of a truly nonaligned nation in a period when the world was divided between East and West, he proved to be an ideal candidate, and his ten years as Secretary General brought credit to him and to Burma.

In recent years, Burma's relations with the UN have become more problematic. The UN General Assembly has often criticized the Burmese military government for its abusive human rights and labor practices. Since 2004, the junta has refused requests by the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy and the UN Commission on Human Rights Special Rapporteur for Human Rights to visit the country.

During the Cold War period, Burmese foreign policy was grounded in principles of neutrality, often tending toward xenophobic isolation. Since 1988, however, Burma has been less xenophobic and has sought to build regional ties. In 1997, it became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and has since then participated actively in that regional forum, even hosting a number of seminars, conferences, and ministerial meetings. Burma became a member of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1952 and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1973. Since July 1987, however, the World Bank has not made any loans to Burma. The IMF performs its mandated annual Article IV

consultations, but there are no IMF assistance programs. The ADB has not extended loans to Burma since 1986, and ADB technical assistance ended in 1988.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Does the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a nation supercede Burma's obligations to its fellow members under the UN Charter (e.g., Article 1, Article 55, Article 56)?
2. What are the issues which divide Burma and Thailand; how can they be resolved?
3. What are the advantages to Burma of being physically so close to China? What are the disadvantages?
4. Why did India change its policies toward Burma after 1994; does it seem to be paying off?
5. What role does trade play in Burma-U.S. relations?

### ***Suggested Readings***

- A good place to begin is with Bibliographic Item 35 and Silverstein, J., "Burma and the World: A Decade of Foreign Policy Under the State Law and Order Restoration Council" in Taylor, R. (ed.), *Burma: Political Economy Under Military Rule*, London, Hurst and Com. Ltd., 2001, pp. 119-136.
- For a study of the military in Burma, see Bibliographic Item 45.
- For a response to question No. 1 above, consult a good text on international law, such as Sломanson, W.R., *Fundamental Perspectives on International Law* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Minneapolis, West Publishing, 1995..

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## Notes

Notes on the legacy of Burma's past.  
Josef Silverstein

I. Traditional Burma before colonial rule.



1. Centralism under King in Burma area; local rule in hill areas under traditional systems of the peoples who acknowledge the suzerainty of the Burma King.
2. Economy: agricultural, with King monopolizing foreign trade; village economy was subsistence with very small local trade between close by villages.
3. Social system: form of patron-client. two classes: Ahmudan—based on service in military or some other service. Athi—paid taxes in lieu of service.
4. No business class.

## II. British rule.

1. Institutionalized Burmese pattern of authoritarian rule; differed in that now it is strong enough to enforce it continuously. Burma King and court removed when British took power and filled by British administrative system. No connection between church and state; weakened the religious order and left it with no central head. Buddhism never was a hierarchical and centralized religion.
2. From 1921, followed the political developments in India. Partially elected legislative council introduced. 1937 self government under a constitution introduced. Burma separated from India. Reflected the ideal of rule of law, self government, western education. Lawyers and courts as well as medicine and hospitals were open to Burmese who qualified.
3. Rise of nationalism. YMBA ; university strike; Thakin movement; responsible government and elections.
4. Indian-Burman conflict. British, Indians and Chinese dominated the emerging commercial life in the new cities and towns.

## III. World War II.

1. Japanese victory and displacement of British rule.
2. Japan helped form a Burman army, the Burma Independence Army; its leader: Aung San; participations during the War.
3. Japan gave Burma nominal independence in 1943. Dr. Ba Maw, the head.
4. March 27, 1945, Burma army changed sides and joined Allies in the final battles against the Japanese.
5. Secretly, Burma army and civilians formed secret political movement, the Antifascist Peoples Freedom League. After war, emerged to lead the nation.

## IV. Transition.

1. AFPFL, under leadership of Aung San, rejected British plans for rebuilding Burma; did not want economics before politics and wanted to be in charge.
2. General Strike in Burma. Governor Dorman-Smith replaced by Hubert Rance in August and implemented new British policy.

3. British created a new Burma army, composed half from PBF recruits and half from ethnic minorities in the British Colonial Army.
4. Aung San invited to London to discuss Burma's future with British PM Attlee.
5. Panglong Agreement between Burmans and ethnic minorities on political future of Burma.
6. Constituent Assembly elections in April 1947.
7. Murder of Aung San and members of his Cabinet; Thakin (U) Nu succeeds him as Burma's leader.
8. Burma becomes an independent state on January 4, 1948.

#### V. Constitutional Government.

1. Liberal-democratic system with goal of becoming a socialist state. Unique federal system; two states had the right to secede and three did not.
2. Leaders: U Nu, PM; Smith-Dun (Karen), head of army.
3. Civil war begins in March 1948; first against the Burma Communist Party, followed by Karen National Defense Force and later, several other ethnic groups. Smith-Dun replaced by Gen. Ne Win in 1949.
4. Faced foreign invasion from Chinese Nationalist Forces and aid to the ethnic minorities in revolt from Thailand. Government received aid from India.
5. Economy: mixed. Land was the property of the state with private use allowed. Business in private hands, large-scale industry under the state.
6. After 1950, gradually able to begin repairing war damage and expanding the economy. By 1962, Burma exported over 1 million tons of rice.
7. Politics: 3 elections; all free and relatively fair. AFPFL won the first two in 1951-2 and 1956. After second one, opposition was large enough to introduce a vote of no confidence.
8. AFPFL split in 1958; U Nu's faction won in vote in parliament with backing of ethnic and leftist parties. His opponents had the backing of the Burman members.
9. Caretaker Government formed with Gen. Ne Win as PM and no parties represented.
10. New election held in 1960; Nu's faction (now called Pyidaungsu) won on a platform to make Buddhism the state religion and resumed power.
11. Pyidaungsu lost backing as members fought to become Nu's successor as leader.
12. Nu tried to strengthen democracy in the nation and began negotiations with ethnic minorities to permanently end civil war and national disunity.
13. March 2, 1962, military overthrew the government, swept the constitution and parliament aside and created a dictatorship to replace them.

#### VI. Military Dictatorship, 1962-88.

1. A small ruling council of senior military officers under Gen. Ne Win created the Revolutionary Council to rule.
2. In 1972, the military rulers resigned from the service, changed the name of the government and continued to rule as civilians in the Government of the Union of Burma.

3. Military formed political party in 1962, called Burma Socialist Program Party and recruited members from the armed forces.
4. 1971, party given task to change into a mass organization and write a new constitution. It completed its work in 1973.
5. Revolutionary Council ruled by decree and established a police state, with no rights guaranteed or protected.
6. Burma was closed to tourists and limited in the state's international contacts.
7. Burma's private sector of the economy was nationalized in 1963 as the first step in transforming it into a socialist state.
8. Distribution system broke down, as military appointees with no economic training and experience could not operate it. Black markets rose to fill the gap in wanted and needed consumer goods.
9. Relations with China were suspended following riots and Burmese invasion of Chinese Embassy in Rangoon in June 1967. China began to give open aid to the Burma Communist Party and indirectly to a number of ethnic minorities in revolt. Relations were restored in 1970.
10. The BSPP constitution was ratified by the people in a national referendum in December 1973 and came into effect on March 2, 1974.
11. The BSPP constitution differed with its predecessor in many ways. As the authors of the law, the party stood outside and above the constitution. It chose the candidates who stood for election in parliament. As the only party allowed, no opposition could compete for power.
12. Although the name of the state still included the word union, it was a unitary state, with all power in parliament. There were four levels of government with the lower responsible to the level above.
13. The Council of State was the highest executive organ and its members were elected by the parliament. It elected its own chairman who was named President. Gen. Ne Win was the first to hold the office.
14. Unlike the first constitution, rights were not guaranteed and they were coupled with duties.
15. The government faced an economic strike and violence in 1974; it also faced the students, at the end of the year following their seizure of the remains of U Thant, who was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sec. Gen. of the UN, because they believed that the government would not bury his remains appropriately.
16. Unrest, both in society and the military continued as there were no improvement in the economy and no legitimate outlets for protest.
17. Finally, in 1987, the government moved to free up part of the economy in order to improve conditions. But fear of helping the black market, the government demonetized several units of currency and gave the people no substitutes. This led to student demonstrations.
18. In February 1988, a student fight with civilians led to the government using force and leading to violence, the death of students, and a demonstration in Rangoon and the closing of the university.

19. The summer of 1988 was taken with a growing peaceful demonstration by the people for an end to one party rule and the restoration of democracy.
20. On August 8, the police and military killed an unknown number of demonstrators who believed that the military was about to give up power.
21. On August 26, at a mass rally at Shwedagon pagoda, a new voice spoke out; Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (Aung San's daughter) immediately was seen as the new leader of the people.
22. As the demonstrations continued and grew with additions coming from the military, the army, on September 18, seized power, displaced the constitution the government and all its institutions and replaced them with a new military junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council.

# *Cambodia*

## **A Self-Study Guide**

NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Cambodia* is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Cambodian issues related to history, geography, culture, economics, government and politics, international relations and defense. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Cambodian history and its relations with the United States are far too complex to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the bibliography. All of the bibliographic material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or the Library of Congress.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide: Cambodia* was prepared by Dr. Craig Etcheson, a Visiting Scholar at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C. He was formerly an Associate Research Scientist with the Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University. He has been carrying out research on and in Cambodia since 1979. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

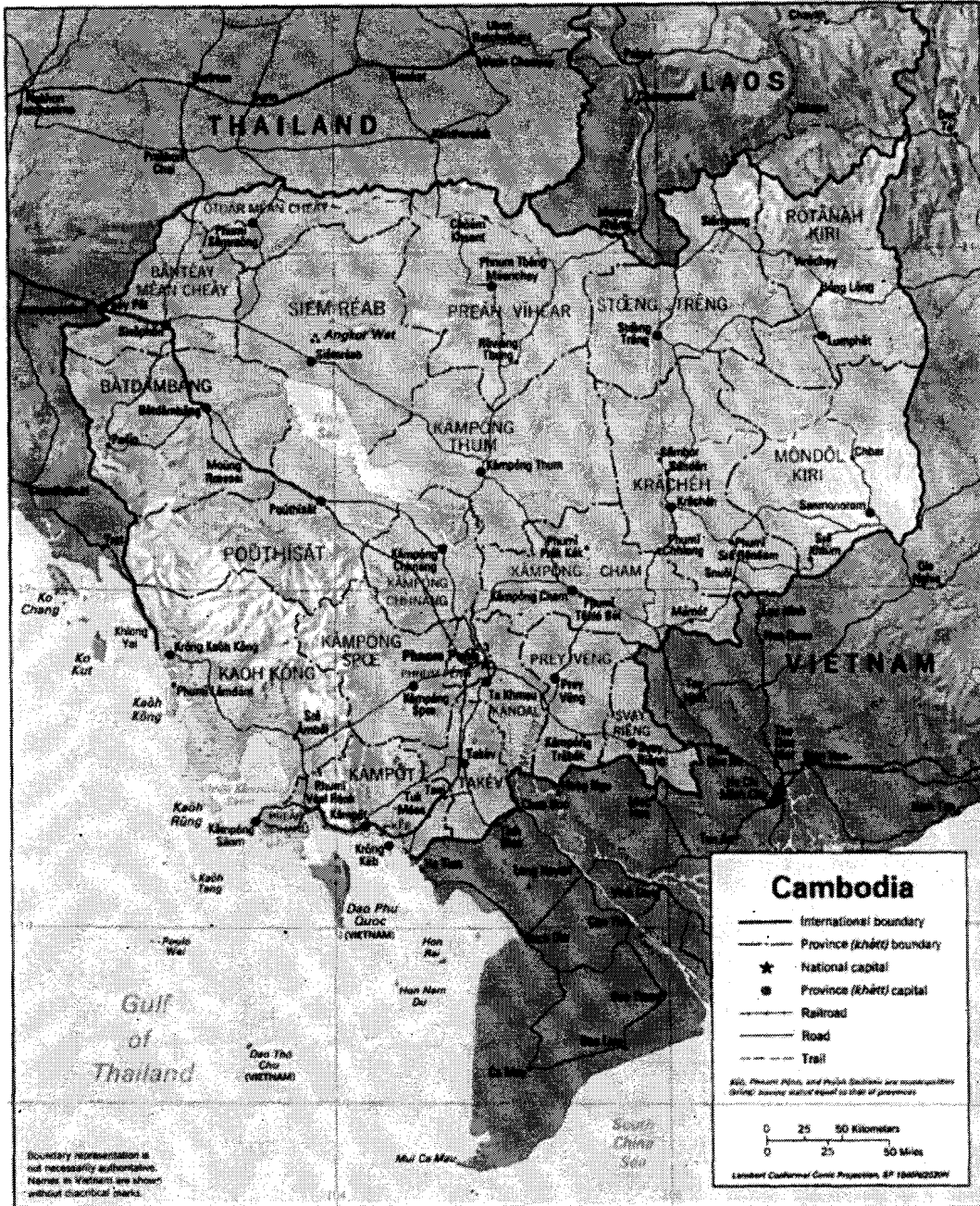
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First Edition, July 2004

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# Map of Cambodia





## Internet Resources on Maps

Historical Maps of Cambodia from Border Camps:

<http://www.websitesreg.com/border/maps.html>

Maps of Cambodia from Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program:

<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/maps.html>

Maps of Angkor from NASA's Spaceborne Imaging Radar:

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/radar/sircxsar/angkor.html>

Provincial, City, Road and Other Maps from Canby Publications:

<http://www.canbypublications.com/maps/maphome.htm>

Maps of Environmentally Protected Areas from the World Parks Congress:

<http://www.mekong-protected-areas.org/cambodia/pa-map.htm>

Cambodia Map Directory from Embassy World:

[http://www.embassyworld.com/maps/Maps\\_Of\\_Cambodia.html](http://www.embassyworld.com/maps/Maps_Of_Cambodia.html)

## THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

This chapter of the study guide provides an introduction to the land and the people of Cambodia. We will review the physical and political geography of the country, and briefly introduce the various ethnic and national groupings that can be found there.

### Physical Geography

Cambodia is situated in mainland Southeast Asia, 13 degrees latitude north of the equator, at 105 degrees east longitude. The country has a total area of 181,040 km<sup>2</sup>, of which some 4,500 km<sup>2</sup> consists of bodies of water, with the remaining area comprising land surface. It is approximately the same size as the U.S. state of Missouri. Cambodia has a deep-water port on the Gulf of Thailand at Kampong Som, providing the country with direct access to the Pacific Ocean.

The terrain of the country is shaped roughly like a shallow saucer, with a depressed lip in the south. The rim of the saucer is formed by modest mountains in the west, north and northeast, none of which exceeds about 1,800 meters (5,900 feet) in altitude. The basin of the saucer covers most of the country, and is essentially a large watershed draining into the Mekong River. The basin is dotted here and there with small prominences, known as *phnoms*, or "mountains."

The Mekong is Cambodia's principal river. It enters Cambodia from Laos in the north, flows in a generally southerly direction for approximately 200 kilometers (125 miles), and then jogs southwest for another 150 kilometers (95 miles) to the capital, Phnom Penh, before resuming a generally southerly flow on into Vietnam. The intricate branching of rivers and streams found in Vietnam's Mekong Delta actually begins at Phnom Penh, where the Mekong River splits off into another major waterway, the Bassac River.

In the middle of Cambodia, just slightly off-center to the west, lays a large, hourglass-shaped body of water called the *Tonle Sap*, or Great Lake. This lake is remarkable for a number of reasons. The Great Lake provides the majority of animal protein consumed in the Cambodian diet, by virtue of the bountiful fish harvests gathered from the lake and its tributaries. But how these harvests have been sustained over the centuries is even more fascinating. The Great Lake drains southward into the Mekong River though a tributary that is also called the *Tonle Sap*. During each rainy season, as the Mekong swells from run-off, it rises above the dry-season surface level of the Great Lake, and then the Tonle Sap River reverses direction and begins to flow north into the lake. In the process, the surface area of the Great Lake expands by a factor of ten, and enormous loads of silt are deposited in its bed and upon the surrounding inundated land. This unusual phenomenon provides a fertile spawning ground for fish, and annually renews the soil over large areas of central Cambodia. Thus the Tonle Sap functions as an enormous natural flood control bladder for the lower Mekong River Basin.



Viewed from the Tonle Sap River, the old imperial capital, Oudong, rises on hills in the distance; the tallest spire is King Sihanouk's funeral stupa, under construction in 2000.  
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

The Tonle Sap River reverses its southerly course towards the sea and begins to flow north early in the wet monsoon, which typically commences in May and lasts through November. In the rainy season, it is common for there to be a brief, intense shower late in the afternoon, particularly around Phnom Penh. The dry monsoon is from December through April, during which there is rarely any precipitation. Temperatures vary little through the year, with the hottest time being in April, when the mercury often exceeds 100° Fahrenheit. The coolest period comes in December, when nighttime temperatures can fall into the 70s or below. The average total annual precipitation in Cambodia is approximately 100 to 150 centimeters (40 to 60 inches), though this varies considerably depending upon the terrain. For example, the coastal mountains in the southwest often receive up to 500 centimeters (200 inches) of rain, squeezed from the clouds as the moisture-laden monsoon air coming off the Gulf of Thailand rises over the mountains.

#### Political Geography

The previous section began by asserting a size for the land area of Cambodia; among many Cambodians, this assertion would be considered highly controversial, to say

the least. Part of the reason for this is that many of Cambodia's boundaries are not clearly demarcated. Moreover, some areas of Cambodia's land and maritime border regions are still the subject of on-going territorial disputes with neighboring countries. The issue of alleged land and maritime encroachment on Cambodian territory by Thailand and Vietnam remains a potent issue in contemporary political debate.

Over the previous several centuries, Cambodia has lost a great deal of its land and maritime area to these neighbors, including significant losses when France withdrew from the region in the 1950s. Successive Cambodian governments have never fully accepted the administrative demarcation lines drawn by French colonial authorities, but those lines became permanent international borders in the wake of the French retreat from Southeast Asia. Similarly, some Thais do not really accept their current borders with Cambodia, believing that some lands presently under Cambodian sovereignty rightfully belong to Thailand. The current government of the Second Kingdom of Cambodia remains vulnerable to criticism from domestic opponents over its relatively accommodating policy toward Vietnam on the border question. Territorial issues with Thailand also lurk just under the surface of Cambodian public opinion, and played a key role in a serious anti-Thai riot in Phnom Penh during January 2003. Those riots resulted in some \$50 million in property damage, and caused a temporary break in diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Thailand.

Cambodia's border with Thailand stretches from the western coast to the northern escarpment for a distance of some 800 kilometers (500 miles). In the northeastern mountainous region, Cambodia shares a 540 kilometer (335 miles) border with Laos. Cambodia's longest shared border is with Vietnam, in the east and the south, running some 1,220 kilometers (760 miles). To the Southwest, Cambodia borders the Gulf of Thailand. Cambodia claims a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone in the gulf, but much of this area is disputed with Vietnam and Thailand.

The name of the country derives from the archaic term, *Kambuja*, which may have originated with early Indian settlers to the region who came from the northwestern area of India called *Kamboja*, much as many place names in North America can be traced to European origins. The French transliterated *Kambuja* as *Cambodge*, and it entered the English language as Cambodia. Contemporary Cambodians sometimes refer to their country as *Kampuchea*, though this usage has fallen out of favor in recent years due to its association with the communist governments of the 1970s and 80s. The people of Cambodia are usually called Cambodians, although some also use the term *Khmers*, a practice that can be disconcerting to Cambodian citizens who do not happen to be of Khmer ethnicity.

### Ethnology

Cambodia's majority ethnic group is the Mon-Khmer, or Khmer, who comprised some 90% of the country's approximately thirteen million people as of 2004. In pre-historical times, the region encompassing today's Cambodia was inhabited by peoples about whom little is known. The Mon-Khmer people are believed to have migrated to the

area in the few centuries prior to the beginning of the Christian era, perhaps from southern China. Recent archaeological studies have begun to reveal more about the culture and social organization of these early inhabitants, but a reliable historical record does not begin until around the sixth century AD. According to Cambodian mythology, an Indian prince named Kundrya founded the nation, and this mythology may be rooted in the early migration of peoples from India.

Cambodia's history of repeated catastrophic wars over the centuries has caused numerous episodes of dramatic depopulation. The long slow recovery from the demographic disaster of the 1970s means that the population today is young, with a median age of about 19, and a relatively robust growth rate of 1.8%. Another lingering result from thirty years of war is the fact that according to the 1998 census, there are 93 males for every 100 females, though this effect is more pronounced in the older age cohorts of the population.

The remaining 10% of Cambodia's population is composed of ethnic Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese, Muslim Cham, and a mix of other groups (primarily Lao, Thai, and a number of traditional hill-dwelling tribes such as the Montagnard, Brao, Por, Taupou, Stieng and Jarais). The precise size of these various groups is the subject of some ongoing uncertainty because the 1998 census did not record ethnic identities. Nonetheless, the Vietnamese, Chinese and Cham groups make up the largest of the ethnic minorities. Inter-marriage between the Khmer majority and many of the minority groups has reduced ethnic distinctions, but significant cultural differences continue to exist between the various minorities and the Khmer.

The primary language spoken in Cambodia is called Khmer, and is one branch of the Mon-Khmer family of Austroasiatic languages. Unlike the Vietnamese and Thai languages, Khmer is non-tonal. Numerous dialects of Khmer are found in different regions, and native speakers can identify a person's place of origin based on the dialect. The Khmer script is derived from south Asian languages, and the language has borrowed many words from Pali and Sanskrit. In addition to Khmer, Cambodian minorities also speak various dialects of Chinese, along with Cham, Thai, Vietnamese and Lao. Many of the hill tribes of the northeast have their own languages, and do not speak Khmer.

Cambodia has a relatively poor and uneducated population. The adult illiteracy rate is around 30%, rising to 40% for females. According to the World Bank, per capita income in Cambodia hovers well below one dollar per day. As one might expect, there is a striking difference in the standards of living of Cambodia's urban and rural residents. Most rural residents engage primarily in subsistence agriculture, while many of the country's city-dwellers are interconnected with the global economy and have a correspondingly much higher level of income and standard of living.

The **general health status of Cambodia's population is also poor.** There are **numerous endemic diseases**, including **several strains of malaria, tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis, and Dengue Fever.** Cambodia also has a high **prevalence rate** for HIV/AIDS, estimated at 2.8% in 2002. The child **mortality rate** is high and rising, with

138 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003; the material mortality rate is also one of the highest in Asia, estimated to be 473 per 100,000 live births. The health care system remains rudimentary and insufficient to address these health care challenges, especially in rural areas. Per capita health care expenditure is estimated at only \$19. As a result, according to the World Health Organization, life expectancy in Cambodia is low, at 56 years, with a healthy life expectancy of only 46 years.

In geographic terms, Cambodia's population is unevenly distributed. The central lowland provinces such as Kampong Cham, Kandal, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Kampong Chhnang and Battambang are densely populated, with villages situated primarily along rivers and lakes. The more remote highland provinces like Monduliri, Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Preah Vihear and Koh Kong are very sparsely populated. The following table illustrates this distribution, as well as the imbalance in the sex ratio.

#### HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION OF CAMBODIA (1998 CENSUS)

Province	Total Household	Total Population	Males	Females
Banteay Meanchey	111,856	577,772	283,358	294,414
Battambang	148,356	793,129	388,599	404,530
Kampong Cham	312,841	1,608,914	775,796	833,118
Kampong Chhnang	82,638	417,693	197,691	220,002
Kampong Speu	115,728	598,882	287,392	311,490
Kampong Thom	106,908	569,060	272,844	296,216
Kampot	104,993	528,405	253,085	275,320
Kandal	206,189	1,075,125	515,996	559,129
Koh Kong	24,964	132,106	67,700	64,406
Kratie	49,326	263,175	130,254	132,921
Monduliri	5,657	32,407	16,380	16,027
Phnom Penh	173,678	999,804	481,911	517,893
Preah Vihear	21,491	119,261	59,333	59,928
Prey Veng	194,185	946,042	445,140	500,902
Pursat	68,235	360,445	172,890	187,555
Ratanakiri	16,758	94,243	46,396	47,847
Siem Reap	127,215	696,164	336,685	359,479
Krong Preah Sihanouk	28,015	155,690	76,940	78,750
Stung Trang	14,323	81,074	40,124	40,950
Svay Rieng	98,244	478,252	225,105	253,147
Takeo	155,030	790,168	376,911	413,257
Oddar Meanchey	12,531	68,279	34,472	33,807
Krong Kep	5,369	28,660	14,014	14,646
Krong Pailin	4,133	22,906	12,392	10,514
<b>Cambodia</b>	<b>2,188,663</b>	<b>11,437,656</b>	<b>5,511,408</b>	<b>5,926,248</b>

## **Issues and Questions**

1. Geopolitical strategists suggest that Cambodia is of minimal significance because it does not sit astride any important lines of global communication or transportation. But China recently launched a project to make the upper reaches of the Mekong River navigable by clearing a series of rapids in southern Laos, which would allow some ocean-going traffic to reach China via the Mekong, through Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. What impact is this development likely to have on geo-strategic assessments?
2. Cambodia's population is relatively homogenous from an ethnic perspective, but lax regulation of immigration from Vietnam over the last twenty years has fueled fears among many Cambodians that the Khmer will gradually be overwhelmed by Vietnamese. These fears are reinforced by historical memory; a case in point is the formerly Khmer town of Prey Nokor, which today is known as Ho Chi Minh City. In the 1970s, such fears led to anti-Vietnamese pogroms during the Lon Nol regime, and genocide against ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians during the Pol Pot regime. What are the prospects for a repeat of such atrocities in the future?

## **Internet Resources on the Land and the People**

An excellent, albeit dated, Library of Congress Country Study of Cambodia:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/khtoc.html>

CIA World Fact Book on Cambodia:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html>

Data from the World Bank on Cambodia:

<http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/countrydata.html>

Cambodian health care data from the World Health Organization:

<http://www.who.int/country/khm/en/>

Some results from the 1998 census of Cambodia:

<http://www.nis.gov.kh/CENSUSES/Census1998/statistics.htm>

Statistics on Cambodia from Nationmaster:

<http://www.nationmaster.com/country/cb>

A detailed 1996 study of maternal mortality in Cambodia:

<http://rc.racha.org.kh/docDetails.asp?resourceID=69&categoryID=28>

## HISTORY

This section of the study guide provides a brief history of Cambodia. We will begin with an overview of the historical development of the country from early times through the colonial period to independence. We will then focus in somewhat more detail on the major periods since independence, which can be divided according to the regime in power.

### The Rise of the Angkor Empire

As noted above, Cambodia's pre-history is shrouded in obscurity. It is only in the last decade that new archeological research has begun to reveal a few tantalizing tidbits about what came before the rise of the Angkor Empire. The oldest surviving inscriptions date to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but other evidence suggests that the Mekong Basin had well-developed social and economic structures many centuries prior to that time. It appears likely that the region was dotted with small principalities or kingdoms, and that these smaller socio-political units gradually coalesced into larger political entities. For many years, historians described the emergence of the Angkor Empire as a result of the union of two kingdoms, Funan and Chen-la, the first centered on the lower Mekong Delta in present-day Vietnam, and the second to the north of the Great Lake. Recent research has raised some questions about the validity of this historical scenario, but some similar sequence of events probably did occur.

The origin of the Angkor Empire is usually dated to 802 AD, when Jayavarman II declared himself to be a *devaraja*, or "God-King," in the Kulen Mountains north of the present-day Angkor area. He thus founded a reign which would become a great empire, dominating much of mainland Southeast Asia for more than half a millennium. Through conquest and alliances, Jayavarman II quickly grew his kingdom until its borders were said to be contiguous with "China, Champa, the ocean and the land of cardamoms and mangoes," quite an expansive claim of sovereignty, indeed. He later moved his capital to Ruluos, just east of present-day Angkor. A string of successors followed, and toward the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the God-King Indravarman embarked on a program of temple-building that was to pre-figure the greatest accomplishments of the Angkor Empire. Sometime around the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Indravarman's son, Yasovarman, moved the capital to the area that is today known as the Angkor complex. Here the empire was to grow great and rich, rivaling all other civilizations before and since in the scope of its artistic and spiritual achievements.

The rise of Suryavarman I to the throne of the God-King in the early years of the 11<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of a distinct centralization and intensification of the power of the Angkor Empire. After a period of dynastic turmoil at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a God-King taking the name Suryavarman II accomplished the single most enduring feat of the six centuries of the Angkor Empire by constructing the temple mountain of Angkor Wat. This monument is probably the largest religious structure ever built, and it stands in testimony of the greatness of the God-King's vision.





Inner Sanctuary of Angkor Wat, the "Temple City," Towers Above Surrounding Jungle  
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

Angkor Wat was completed in 1150 AD, shortly after the death of Suryavarman II, about a decade before the construction of the Notre Dame Cathedral began in Paris. The astounding scope of this temple still takes the breath away from visitors today. Covering an area of five hundred acres and rising to a height of 699 feet, it was designed to mimic the five peaks of Mount Meru, the sacred mountains of Hindu cosmology. The entire temple is laid out in precise dimensions reflecting Hindu understandings of cosmic time and space, from the beginning of time-until the end of time. This temple complex is adorned with thousands of stone carvings. For example, the outer gallery surrounding the central temple is adorned with more than a mile of bas relief carvings depicting scenes from Hindu mythology, and the exploits of the Angkor God-Kings.

Jayavarman VII was undoubtedly the greatest of all the Cambodian God-Kings. The details of his early history are somewhat mysterious, but he arose in a time of crisis for the Angkor Empire. In 1177, the Kingdom of Champa invaded Angkor by land, and the next year they returned by water and overwhelmed the empire, sacking the capital and putting the king to death. Jayavarman rallied an army, and in an epic naval battle on the Tonle Sap in 1178, defeated the Chams. If we are to believe his own accolades, he was ferocious in war, but magnanimous in victory. According to an inscription in the Preah Khan temple written in 1191, "to prisoners of war" Jayavarman VII "gave his own forests, thus manifesting generosity and justice." Considering that he captured the Cham capital in 1191, this "generosity" may account for the substantial population of ethnic Cham people that has lived in Cambodia for centuries.

Jayavarman VII was crowned God-King in 1181, and spent the next three decades transforming the empire. He built a system of roads throughout the land, along with rest houses, hospitals, reservoirs and other public works. Most of all, however, he built temples. Though art historians judge that the quality of some of his temples is marred by haste and haphazard design, today his many remaining monuments suggest a grandeur bordering on the megalomaniacal. Ta Prohm ("Ancestor Brahma") and Preah Kahn (the "Sacred Sword") were built to honor his mother and father, respectively. Both housed thousands of people, and perhaps one hundred thousand additional people were dedicated to the maintenance of each of these two temples. He built other new temples and embellished many older temples, but there is little doubt that his greatest artistic achievement was the Bayon. At the center of Angkor Thom, the immense "Big City," he constructed a monument with 54 gigantic towers, each of which is crowned with four faces oriented in the cardinal directions. Each of these more than two hundred faces is believed to be a representation of Jayavarman VII as the Buddha, deep in meditation, with closed eyes and an enigmatic smile on his lips. The inner and outer galleries of the central temple are decorated with bas relief carvings depicting many contemporary scenes, ranging from a pictorial account of Jayavarman VII's victory over the Kingdom of Champa, to scenes of everyday domestic life.

The only independent contemporary account of the Angkor Empire comes down to us from a Chinese envoy to Angkor, Chou Ta-Kuan, who spent a year at the court of the God-King Indravarman III from 1296-1297. His subsequent report about the Angkor Empire was translated into French in 1902, and since then successive English editions have appeared under the title, *The Customs of Cambodia*. Chou Ta-Kuan's text is wide-ranging, covering architecture, language, religion, customs, holidays, health and hygiene, commerce, food, and many other topics. He also reported on the comportment of the God-King, and it is worth quoting at length from his observations:

When the King leaves his palace, the procession is headed by the soldiery; then come the flags, the banners, the music. Girls of the palace, three or five hundred in number, gaily dressed, with flowers in their hair and tapers in their hands, are massed together in a separate column. The tapers are lighted even in broad daylight. Then came other girls carrying gold and silver vessels from the palace and a whole galaxy of ornaments, of very special design, the uses of which were strange to me. Then came still more girls, the bodyguard of the palace, holding shields and lances. These, too, were separately aligned. Following them came chariots drawn by goats and horses, all adorned with gold, ministers and princes, mounted on elephants, were preceded by bearers of scarlet parasols, without number. Close behind came the royal wives and concubines, in palanquins and chariots, or mounted on horses and elephants, to whom were assigned at least a hundred parasols mottled with gold. Finally the Sovereign appeared, standing erect on an elephant and holding in his hand the sacred sword. This elephant, his tusks sheathed in gold, was accompanied by bearers of twenty white parasols with golden shafts. All around was a bodyguard of elephants, drawn close together, and still more soldiers for complete protection, marching in close order.

[*The Customs of Cambodia*, p. 72]

The pageantry and splendor reflected in this description convey some sense of the wealth and power at the command of the Angkor Empire at its zenith.

### The Decline of Angkor

There is not a firm consensus among historians on causes of the decline of the Angkor Empire. There are several schools of thought, none of which has yet unambiguously won the day. One theory suggests that disease – the rise of malaria and the infiltration of the bubonic plague that had swept across Europe – combined with a series of Mongol invasions to sap the vitality of the empire, and open the way for its destruction. Another theory suggests that the Angkor Empire was simply outpaced by the rapid expansion of two more vital neighboring empires, the Siamese (or Thai) to the west and the Vietnamese to the east. It is perhaps more likely that both of these factors played at least some role in the eclipse of the Angkor Empire.

However, the most popular explanation for the decline of the empire is known as the Hydraulic Theory. Angkor's glory was based on the ability to control water through a vast system of dykes, canals, and reservoirs. This control enabled the empire to extract multiple rice crops from the land each year, and in turn, this surplus production allowed the Angkor to support a vast population of non-agricultural workers, including priests, soldiers, and other public servants. But as investment in imperial projects like temples and wars increased in proportion to productive work such as growing food and maintaining the hydraulic network, floods and silt gradually depleted the ability of the system to sustain the empire. In fact, historians believe that this decline had actually begun during the reign of Suryavarman II, with his extraordinary expenditure of resources to build Angkor Wat, and that the decline accelerated thereafter. These conditions could have weakened the empire, making it vulnerable to other threats, such as disease and invasion by growing neighbors.

A series of invasions from Thailand in the first third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century culminated with a catastrophic attack in 1431, during which the Thai sacked Angkor. Shortly thereafter, Angkor was abandoned, and the capital was moved south, further from the marauding Thai armies, eventually settling on the present-day site of Phnom Penh. But this move, as Cambodians say, only brought them closer to being caught between the "Tiger" and the "Crocodile," because the Vietnamese people were steadily expanding down the coast of the South China Sea towards the Mekong Delta. In the 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Cambodia was gradually squeezed between the Thai and the Vietnamese, losing territory and autonomy. The fractious nature of Cambodia's royals, with frequent usurpations and repeated dynastic succession struggles, made it only that much easier for Cambodia's neighbors to manipulate the country. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cambodia was on the verge of extinction, with large sections of the empire having been annexed by their neighbors. There were long periods when the entire country was occupied by either Thai or Vietnamese troops, or more often, both. But the world was beginning to shrink, and new imperial players were starting the territories of the Angkor Empire.

## Cambodia Becomes a French Colony

In 1863, the Cambodian royal court was under the patronage of Thailand, and some Cambodian officials of the court were chafing at Thai influence. France offered King Norodom a treaty of protection, promising to balance Thai influence in exchange for rights to extract natural resources from Cambodia. The King accepted, and although the Thai resisted, the next twenty years saw a gradual extension of French influence at the court, wresting control over economic life in the capital, and eventually, installing French *résidents* in provincial towns. A rebellion against the increasing foreign influence flared in 1884, and after putting this down, the French briefly slowed the expansion of their control, but the growth of their power over Cambodian affairs was inexorable. With the installation of King Sisowath in 1906, French domination of the affairs of state in Cambodia became complete, and thenceforth, Cambodia was a colony of France.

While the French were principally interested in extracting natural resources from their colony, French officials justified their control of Cambodia at home, to international audiences, and perhaps even to themselves, by proclaiming a *mission civilisatrice*. And indeed, France did do much to modernize traditional ways of life in Cambodia's towns. They abolished slavery, rationalized tax collection, and instituted a system of land titles, in the process utterly overturning the way that Cambodia had been governed for centuries. They brought modern technology to Cambodia, providing electrification and running water first in Phnom Penh, and then elsewhere in the provinces. The French created a network of paved roads through-out the territory, and developed a plantation economy. And they also brought additional foreign influences in the form of Chinese traders and merchants, and Vietnamese workers and supervisors. The growing population of Chinese and Vietnamese was a key impetus in the gradual emergence of nationalist sentiments among the Cambodian elite.

By 1940, Europe was at war. In June of that year, the Vichy government took power in France, which had been overwhelmed by Germany. In Southeast Asia, French colonial officials attempted to maintain their authority, but the weakness of a conquered France made this a difficult challenge. Japan was expanding its influence and control across Southeast Asia. The Thai, for their part, took advantage of the opportunity to seize large swaths of Cambodian territory. Amidst this turmoil, Cambodia's King Monivong died, and a succession crisis ensued. In a bid to increase French control over spiraling events in Cambodia, French Governor-General Jean Decoux chose a teenage prince named Norodom Sihanouk to be installed on the throne. Decoux judged that this young man would be a more pliable puppet than the heir apparent, King Monivong's son, Prince Monireth. This would prove to be a miscalculation.

## The Twilight of French Colonial Power

In asserting control over Cambodia, the Japanese had faced two problems: how to undermine the French colonial administrative apparatus, and how to circumvent the considerable symbolic power held by the Cambodian God-King, Norodom Sihanouk. Their solution to these problems was devilishly modern; they encouraged the small

liberal Cambodian elite to form a republic. This plan was enthusiastically grasped by Cambodian urban elites who saw it as a solution to their own problems of colonial oppression and feudal backwardness.

This short-lived republican scheme was summarily crushed by the French when they swept back into Indochina after the war, with the help of King Norodom Sihanouk, who understood very well how pressure for democratization was a threat to his own power. But the republican interlude during World War II had unleashed forces – and similar forces were also brewing in Laos and Vietnam – which would bring down the curtain on the French Empire in Southeast Asia in less than a decade.

Recall that in the wake of World War II, the United States was leading a drive for decolonization of European imperial possessions around the world – though this drive was not pursued in French Indochina. Thus, to appease the nationalist sentiments that had been awakened in the Cambodian body politic, King Sihanouk was forced to become more nationalist than the nationalists, so to speak. He launched a “Royal Crusade for Independence” from France, and alternately allied himself with forces on the left who sought a socialist republic, and forces on the right who sought a liberal republic, squarely retaining command of the center.

By the early 1950s, the French were beleaguered by guerilla attacks all across Indochina – in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – as well as peaceful political resistance. By 1954, they realized that the game was up, and sued for peace. Cambodia became an independent nation.

#### The Sangkum Period: Kingdom of Cambodia

After all that has come since, Cambodians old enough to remember the period look back on Norodom Sihanouk’s post-independence government as a Golden Age. Though no doubt it is all relative, in truth, there were many things about this period which were not so golden. The Geneva Conference of 1954 mandated elections in Cambodia and Vietnam. The United States worked with the emerging military dictatorship of Ngo Dinh Diem in southern Vietnam to thwart the holding of democratic elections there, but in Cambodia, elections went forward, though exactly how democratic they really were is another matter.

King Norodom Sihanouk abdicated the throne in favor of his father, and in the pose of “ordinary prince” – a pose no one really believed – he moved to rapidly assemble a political party to contest the elections. He named his political vehicle the “Sangkum Reastr Niyum,” or Popular Socialist Community. Cambodia’s heretofore dominant political party of the right, known as the Democratic Party, and a hastily organized party of the left, known as the Pracheachon, or People’s Party, never stood a chance against Sihanouk’s charisma – or against his aggressive security apparatus.

Claiming to have single-handedly brought Cambodia to independence from France, Sihanouk was able to reinforce the respect he already commanded among the

population from fifteen years as the nation's monarch. Among some in the peasantry, Cambodian kings were still revered as something like gods, custodians of a mystical link between heaven and earth, bringers of life-giving water, and of course, terrible in their wrath, with the power of life and death over mere mortals. The last part, at least, was all too true.

Using his control over the country's security forces, Sihanouk ruthlessly eliminated all rivals for power. Those among the Democratic Party who could not be co-opted into joining Sihanouk's party would suddenly find themselves in all manner of difficulties. Those among the Pracheachon Party who attempted to resist the charms of the Prince more often found themselves dead. So effective were Sihanouk's secret police in rooting out potential opposition that many Cambodian leftists fled for Hanoi. Those who stayed were decimated. The urban communist organization was virtually annihilated, and the rural communist infrastructure was reduced to isolated pockets.

It was in this period, in fact, that Sihanouk coined the phrase, "Khmer Vietminh," simultaneously impugning the integrity of Cambodia's left wing by associating them with the reviled Vietnamese communists, while also casting suspicion on their patriotism. Soon he shortened this epithet to "Khmer Rouge," or Red Khmer. Twenty years later, that label would come back to haunt Sihanouk and the entire world.

In 1954, the US organized the Manila Conference, out of which came the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, or SEATO. SEATO was intended as a bulwark against the expansion of communist influence in Southeast Asia. Sihanouk refused to join, and henceforth Cambodia's relationship with the US was fraught with difficulty. Sihanouk's neutral line in the Cold War did not please the US. Nonetheless, through the 1950s and early 1960s, the US assiduously courted Cambodia with aid totaling some \$300 million, winning support among Sihanouk's military and police forces. They were unhappy when Sihanouk renounced US assistance in 1963, and two years later cut diplomatic relations with the US, on suspicion that the Americans were fomenting insurrection against him.

Sihanouk gave his security forces free reign to suppress domestic dissent from the left. But faced with growing infiltration of Vietnamese communist forces along the eastern border, he decided to turn a blind eye to these violations of Cambodian sovereignty. That would be his undoing. By 1970, a growing economic crisis and a rising nationalist resentment of Vietnamese encroachment led to a decision among the Cambodian elite to oust Sihanouk and declare a republic. The flames of the war in Vietnam were about to engulf Cambodia.

#### The Lon Nol Regime: Khmer Republic

It is an article of conventional wisdom among many in the United States – not to mention worldwide – that the coup d'état executed against Sihanouk by Lon Nol and Sirik Matak in 1970 was a CIA operation. There is no evidence to support that conclusion, though it is true that US intelligence was aware of the plot and did nothing to

discourage it. The tensions within Cambodia's political elite were sufficient to explain the origins of the coup. Sihanouk's Kingdom of Cambodia was declared defunct, and Lon Nol's Khmer Republic was born.

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, however, the United States moved quickly to support the new regime. Battalions of ethnic Khmer commandoes who had been recruited and trained by US Special Forces in Vietnam were quickly airlifted from their bases there to provide support to the new military junta in Phnom Penh. The Nixon administration was soon providing arms and other forms of support to the Lon Nol regime, and before long, the US Ambassador in Cambodia began to function as something like a proconsul. Before the end of the Khmer Republic five years later, US assistance would account for more than 95% of the Khmer Republic's total annual revenue. Cambodia became a US client regime in every sense of the term.

The coup against Sihanouk was a watershed for Cambodia's communists. Though the Cambodian communists had been waging an ineffective low-level insurgency for several years, the Soviets, the Chinese and the North Vietnamese had been content with Sihanouk's policy of neutralism, and offered no support to Cambodia's would-be revolutionaries. But when Sihanouk was overthrown and Lon Nol's regime turned against Vietnamese forces that had been using Cambodian territory to infiltrate southern Vietnam, everything changed. Suddenly Cambodia's heretofore inept communists had big-time allies.

Seeking to avenge his overthrow, Sihanouk took the fateful step of allying himself with the "Khmer Rouge," who until then had been his foremost domestic enemies. With military, economic and diplomatic support from the communist world, there began a vicious five-year civil war which would ultimately lead to the utter destruction of the entire country.

The North Vietnamese Army overran much of the Cambodia countryside in a matter of weeks, turning "liberated" areas over to the rapidly growing Cambodian revolutionary forces. Despite massive US assistance, Lon Nol's army fared poorly against the communists. Soon the Khmer Republic existed as little more than garrisons of a few major cities, with the rural areas in the hands of the revolution. Widespread strategic area bombing of the countryside by the US Air Force between 1969 and 1973 generated a terrible legacy, and a high civilian death toll.

US intelligence believed that the Cambodian communists were a wholly-owned subsidiary of the North Vietnamese. Little was known about them. Few were prepared for the degree of enmity which would develop between the Cambodian and Vietnamese communists, and fewer yet foresaw the unprecedented radicalism that the Cambodian communists would display upon victory. On April 17, 1975, the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh and began what has been called "Year Zero," an effort to totally remake Cambodia from the ground up.

## The Pol Pot Regime: Democratic Kampuchea

It is difficult to imagine, and more difficult to describe, how horrible life was in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime. As with all utopian projects, the objective of the Khmer Rouge leadership was to transform not merely society, but to transform human nature itself. And if the nature of any particular human should prove resistant to change, there was an easy solution: death. As a result, approximately one third of the Cambodian population died in the three years, eight months and twenty days that the Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge state of Democratic Kampuchea may well have been the most totalitarian regime in the history of mankind. The Khmer Rouge envisioned something that would make Marx spin in his grave: they were going to accomplish a super-great leap forward from a feudally organized, peasant-based subsistence economy directly into full-fledged communism, skipping the intermediate stages of petty bourgeois dominance, national revolution, industrial development, capital accumulation, and socialist revolution. Robust theorists they were not.

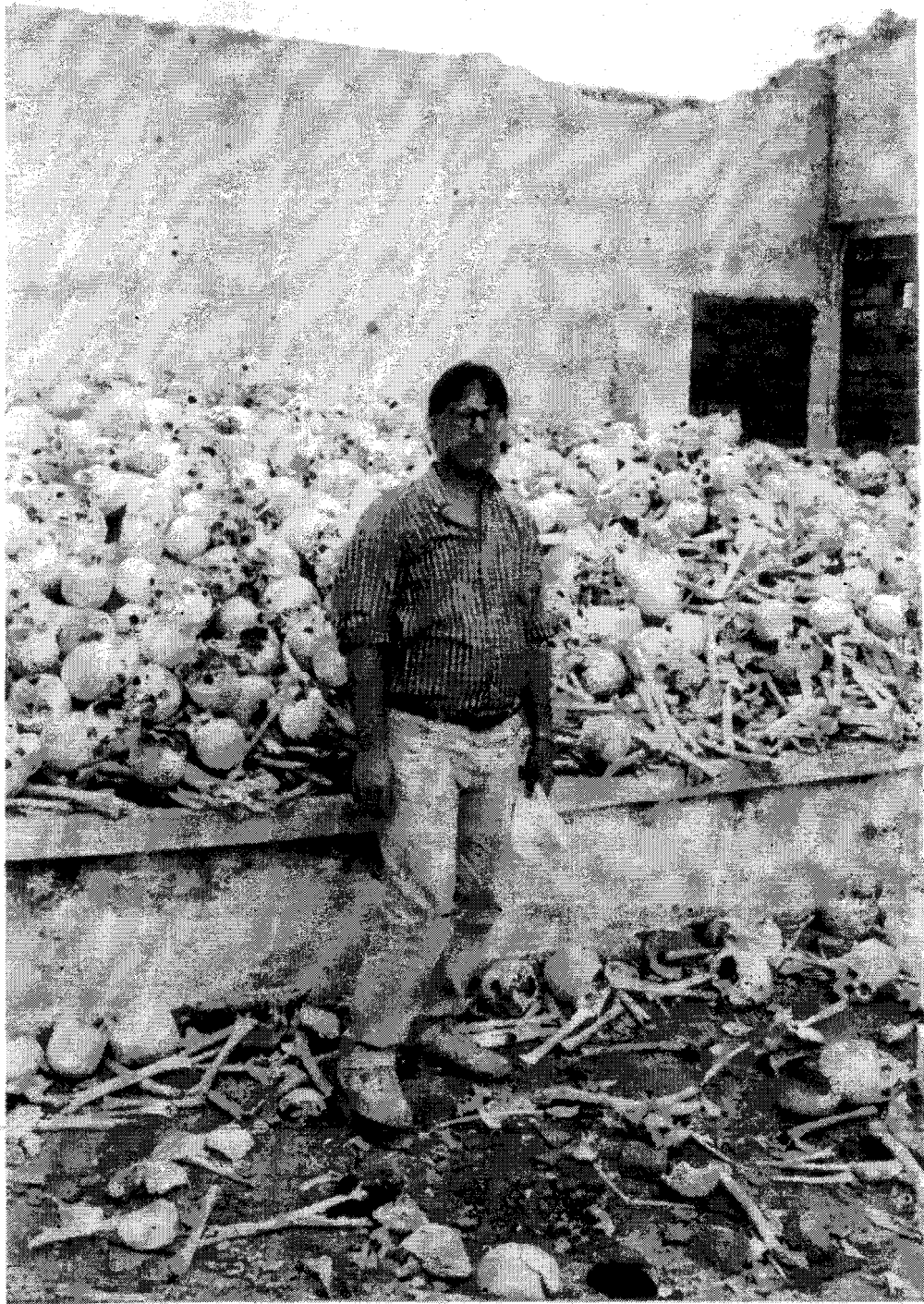
In order to accomplish this dream, their design penetrated far beyond the transformation of economic relations and social institutions into the very seat of human consciousness itself. They aimed to forge a new type of person who could realize their communist ideals. They aimed to change the very way people think.

It began with abolishing cities, emptying all urban centers of all inhabitants and relocating everyone to the wilderness where they were to hack new settlements from the jungle. The Khmer Rouge abolished money, and along with it, both the modern and traditional economies. Markets and all forms of trade or accumulation were forbidden, even barter and foraging, except by state organizations. They abolished religion, focusing primarily on the dominant Buddhists, but also utterly obliterating the minority Muslim sect and the small Christian community. They abolished modern medicine. They abolished families, dispersing spouses to different work camps, taking children from their mothers at age five for training in party military schools. Any expressions of love or affection which were not directed to the party organization were prohibited, and the selection of marriage partners became a function of the state. Every aspect of life was totally collectivized, and all private property – right down to personal eating utensils and even such things as female sanitary supplies – was forbidden. The only permitted activity was grueling manual labor. Failure to work hard and enthusiastically twelve to fourteen hours a day, seven days a week, was punishable by summary execution.

One measure of the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime comes out of a project being conducted by the Documentation Center of Cambodia, a non-governmental organization that has been collecting information about atrocities during the reign of the Khmer Rouge. For the last decade, this organization has been conducting a systematic survey of mass graves all across Cambodia. With approximately 80% of the countryside



carefully examined, the Documentation Center has located more than 20,000 mass graves dating to the Khmer Rouge regime, containing the remains of an estimated 1.1 million



Dr. Etcheson at Sang Prison in Kandal Province  
(Photo from Craig Etcheson Archives)

victims of execution. This was from a population of approximately seven million at the time. Perhaps an equal number died from starvation, disease, and exhaustion. Two to three of every seven people in the entire country died in less than four years. The following table illustrates the distribution of the executions.

### Mass Grave Surveys in Cambodia, 1995-1999\*

Province	Total # of Sites	Estimated # of Pits	Wells/Other Used as Graves	Prison Sites	Memorial Sites	Estimated # of Victims
Banteay Meanchey	17	567	0	4	3	40,782
Battambang	22	1,070	0	8	6	37,195
Kampong Cham	61	3,035	11	13	9	176,423
Kampong Chhnang	30	3,143	1	6	3	253,154
Kampong Speu	20	1,549	1	4	2	24,332
Kampong Thom	18	1,427	5	6	5	123,808
Kampot	22	2,761	0	7	3	55,625
Kandal	43	504	4	13	9	102,804
Koh Kong	1	0	0	1	0	17,349
Kratie	9	7	1	1	4	13,339
Mondulkiri	2	1	0	1	0	0
Phnom Penh	7	0	0	3	2	0
Preah Vihear	Not Yet Surveyed					
Prey Veng	43	1,804	12	8	3	89,406
Pursat	21	2,167	10	13	3	53,050
Ratanakiri	4	33	0	1	0	2,300
Siem Reap	29	715	5	9	2	77,873
Krong Preah Sihanouk	15	570	0	6	0	2,600
Stung Treng	8	61	0	4	1	4,000
Svay Rieng	35	166	0	9	11	5,107
Takeo	25	862	0	8	5	33,682
Totals	432	20,442	50	125	71	1,112,829

\* Data from the Documentation Center of Cambodia Mass Grave Mapping Project; adapted from Craig Etcheson, *Quantifying Crimes Against Humanity in Cambodia*, Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2000.

The Khmer Rouge were also bad neighbors. They launched military attacks against all three neighboring countries, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. After several years of punishing attacks in their border provinces, and failed attempts to negotiate a diplomatic solution, the Vietnamese finally decided they could no longer tolerate their former allies. They assembled a liberation force from among Khmer Rouge elements that had fled Pol Pot's purges, and on Christmas Day, 1978, launched a full-scale invasion of

Cambodia. Two weeks later, they had secured the capital, and the Pol Pot regime was ended. Pol Pot fled to the Thai border in the west with the rump of his army, and proceeded to rebuild a military machine to oppose the Vietnamese occupation, and the regime the Vietnamese had put into place.

#### The Heng Samrin Regime: People's Republic of Kampuchea/State of Cambodia

The new regime in Cambodia was dubbed the People's Republic of Kampuchea, and it consisted primarily of Cambodian communists who had fled the terrible purges of the Khmer Rouge regime. Though many among the newly appointed leadership had intensely nationalistic feelings, they labored under the reality of a Vietnamese military occupation of the country. Considering the level of destruction left in the wake of the Khmer Rouge regime, including the annihilation of the intelligentsia, the new regime had little choice but to rely on Vietnam for material support, technical advice and most of all, protection from the defeated but still dangerous forces of Pol Pot.

The Vietnamese invasion also stoked nationalist feelings in other segments of the Cambodian Diaspora. Soon the Khmer Rouge had rivals for the honor of expelling the Vietnamese from Cambodian soil. Remnants of Lon Nol's Khmer Republic regime, who for years had lived in exile along the Thai border, in France, the US and elsewhere, organized the Khmer People's National Liberation Front to contest the new Cambodian regime. Prince Sihanouk, now freed from the house arrest he had endured under Pol Pot, also organized a royalist revolutionary force, and began to build military camps along the Thai border.

Thailand, suddenly finding its historic regional Vietnamese rival bumping up against its border, actively encouraged and supported all three resistance forces. Within a couple of years, international pressure led to the founding of the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, dominated by the Khmer Rouge, but including the republican and royalist resistance forces. That provided the political cover under which China, the US, the Association of Southeast Asian nations and many European countries would provide assistance to the combined resistance. Geopolitical calculations thus dictated a moral choice which haunts the US to this day: a great deal of US assistance made its way to the Khmer Rouge, who by now were widely suspected of having committed genocide.

In the event, however, neither the new Cambodian government nor the resistance was strong enough to prevail in battle, and so Cambodia sunk into what would become a twenty year long war of attrition. It was brutal, grinding, and bloody. Vietnamese forces, in particular, took an enormous number of casualties, and some came to call the war, "Vietnam's Vietnam." Vietnam still had plenty of its own domestic problems to deal with flowing from their revolutionary victory in 1975, and thus they put in place a program to achieve self-sufficiency on the part of their client regime in Cambodia so that they could eventually withdraw and focus on their own development.

But that program required years of effort, and enormous cost. A great deal of this cost was borne by Vietnam's Soviet ally. Thus when the Soviet Union lurched towards collapse in 1989 and began to reduce support for its own Third World clients, it was fortunate for Vietnam that its program to stabilize the People's Republic of Kampuchea had progressed far enough to allow the withdrawal of Vietnamese combat units from Cambodia.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also transformed the international geopolitical environment in such a way that the principal supporters of the war in Cambodia – the Russians, the Chinese and the Americans – began to seek a way to end the conflict. The resulting negotiations culminated in a framework document in 1990, and the Paris Peace Conference in 1991. The settlement called for a quadripartite solution, with the Phnom Penh regime, the Khmer Rouge, the royalists and the republicans all agreeing to cease hostilities and commit to elections under the guidance of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The UN force would be known as:

#### UNTAC: The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

The Paris treaty on Cambodia in October 1991 committed the United Nations to the largest, most expensive and most interventionist peacekeeping operation in history, with the possible exception of the Congo. Idealists argued that the goal of the accords was to bring peace to a land that had known a quarter century of war and genocide. Realists argue the purpose was merely to remove the "Cambodian Problem" from the international agenda. In either case, the "Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict" were touted as a model for collective security in the post-Cold War world order. Consequently, it is important to have a clear understanding of exactly what these agreements did – and did not – accomplish.

The Comprehensive Settlement achieved numerous significant objectives. The Cambodian conflict was decoupled from Great Power geopolitical conflict. Chinese military aid to the Khmer Rouge was terminated. Cambodia's two decades of international isolation was ended. About 362,000 refugees left the camps in Thailand and returned to Cambodia. The three-faction, rebel coalition challenging the Cambodian government was reduced to a single recalcitrant faction. The fragile beginnings of political pluralism were put in place. A free press began flowering in Cambodia as never before. Indigenous human rights groups and other civil society organizations were founded and began rapid growth. Approximately 90% of eligible Cambodians registered to vote, and 89% of those voted in 1993's free and fair elections, despite Khmer Rouge threats to kill anyone who participated. A liberal constitutional monarchy was promulgated, and a coalition government began functioning, more or less. These were huge accomplishments, a tribute to the skill and dedication of the international civil servants who risked (and in some cases sacrificed) their lives in Cambodia. It was \$3 billion well spent.

At the same time, one must be clear-headed in assessing the impact of the UN in Cambodia. The Comprehensive Settlement had laid out numerous central objectives

above and beyond the elections, all of which considered to be essential preconditions for a successful mission. First, the ceasefire was to be implemented and maintained. Second, all outside assistance to the warring factions was to be terminated. Third, the warring armies were to be cantoned, disarmed and demobilized. Fourth, the utterly destroyed Cambodian economy was to be rehabilitated. Fifth, the demobilized soldiers, internally displaced persons, and repatriated refugees were to be reintegrated into civil society. And sixth, a neutral political environment was to be established; which is to say, state institutions had to be decoupled from party organs. Not a single one of these central objectives of the UN peace plan in Cambodia was achieved.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher called the Cambodia's UN-administered elections "the triumph of democracy." Rhetorical flourishes aside, he probably realized that one UN-administered election does not make a democracy. In fact, if one examines the transition to stable, liberal democratic systems in western, northern and southern Europe, in central and southern Latin America, and in the emerging democracies of East Asia, it is clear that this process has depended in part on the existence of strong labor movements and a powerful middle class, capable of bargaining with military, landed and financial elites. These conditions did not remotely exist in Cambodia at the time of the UN withdrawal, and they still do not. Thus one can confidently conclude that it is premature to predict the consolidation of democratic rule in Cambodia. To be completely fair, critics of the UN operation in Cambodia should not ascribe such a goal to the operation. Partisans of the UN operation should avoid dreaming that the mission could have achieved that goal in just eighteen months.

The Khmer Rouge reneged on the peace agreements, and their defiance of the UN forces in Cambodia quickly showed the Phnom Penh regime that there was no penalty for refusing to play by the rules of the peace treaty – not that they ever intended to do so. Combat continued, and the UN's peacekeeping mission was by turns transmuted into an election-holding mission. Even so, the UN carried out this rump goal very effectively. The May 1993 election produced a constituent assembly, which wrote a new constitution for the country, and in September, a new government was promulgated.

#### The "Royal" Government: Second Kingdom of Cambodia

Thus, one goal that the UN intervention in Cambodia indisputably did achieve was to leave in place a new, legitimate government. Events would soon prove, however, that this government was far from a marvel of efficiency or stability. The new Royal Government of Cambodia was menaced from birth by a continuing Khmer Rouge insurgency, and by an unwieldy political arrangement.

Though the royalist political party had won the election, it faced an unenviable challenge in attempting to govern. For one thing, the second-place Cambodian People's Party controlled the entire administrative apparatus of the state, including the police, the secret police, and the military. For another thing, as is the nature of one-party states, the People's Party and the administrative organs of the state were totally intertwined, two sides of the same coin. Wresting control of such an apparatus is virtually impossible.

Moreover, active cadres of the People's Party numbered in the tens of thousands, and those cadres were spread across every village in the country, where they had been close to the people for the previous fifteen years.

In contrast, the royalist party was very much an elite organization, with little more than a hundred or so experienced political operatives. Moreover, virtually all of their senior operatives had spent the previous quarter century in exile abroad, and thus had little sense of what was really happening on the streets of Phnom Penh, much less in the villages of the countryside. Even after they returned with the UN intervention, royalist officials had little contact with ordinary Cambodians. This was particularly true in the case of their top political officers, many of whom were members of the royal family, and had no desire to mingle with mere commoners.

All of this was a recipe for disaster. The People's Party had refused to accept the election outcome, alleging a variety of irregularities in the UN's conduct of the polling. One faction of the People's Party went so far as to threaten armed succession, terrorizing royalist operatives in several eastern provinces. Realizing their weak position, the royalists agreed to form a coalition government with the People's Party, with power theoretically shared on the basis of co-ministers from each party at the top levels in the organizational hierarchy of the government.

The system of co-ministers was bound to yield nothing but frustration for the royalists. It was clear to all that real power continued to lay in the hands of the People's Party, despite the title of "First Prime Minister" bestowed upon the royalist leader, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. Still, at first, the arrangement appeared to many to be a miracle of national reconciliation, and the country set about rebuilding following many years of war. As tensions between the main coalition partners in the government grew over the first years of the new Royal Government, however, the business of governing gradually ground to a halt, and bickering set in. Many royalists grew increasingly bitter over their lack of access to the levers of power, and the continuing dominance of the People's Party.

In late 1996, royalist military and intelligence officials conceived a plan they hoped would reverse their fortunes. They began to negotiate with the Khmer Rouge, aiming to recreate the alliance of the 1980s and alter the internal balance of power in the government. Intelligence services controlled by the People's Party quickly detected these maneuverings, and Second Prime Minister Hun Sen bitterly denounced the moves, threatening that it would mean war. The international diplomatic community in Phnom Penh urgently called on the royalists to cease and desist from this provocative plan, but hubris carried the day. On July 4, 1997, as the royalists moved to formalize their alliance with the Khmer Rouge, the coalition government exploded into combat on the streets of Phnom Penh. The royalist military was quickly routed, and a number of their key senior intelligence officials were rounded up by People's Party loyalists and summarily executed. First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh fled the country just ahead of the fighting.

Though it was quite brutal, one significant result of the coup d'état was that the three competing military factions within the Cambodian government – those loyal to the People's Party, the republicans and the royalists – were reduced to one. After much posturing and international pressure, the People's Party agreed to new elections and the royalists returned from exile. In 1998, the elections were held, eventually yielding a new government dominated by the People's Party. Norodom Ranariddh, Sihanouk's son and the former First Prime Minister, settled for a largely ceremonial role as President of the National Assembly.

At the same time, using a combination of military pressure and negotiations offering various forms of amnesty, the Khmer Rouge military and political organizations were gradually divided and conquered by the People's Party's Hun Sen. At the end of 1998, the last remaining Khmer Rouge political leaders surrendered to the government, and early in 1999, the last remaining Khmer Rouge military chieftain was captured. The Khmer Rouge had finally been defeated.

Since then, Cambodia has struggled to adjust to an unaccustomed life as a peaceful society, to rebuild an economy shattered by decades of war, and to find some way to achieve national reconciliation in a nation where the majority of the population alive today has known nothing but conflict for their entire lives. It will take generations to achieve these goals.

### **Issues and Questions**

1. For the last six hundred years, Thailand and Vietnam have fought each other in repeated wars on Cambodian territory. Cambodia can thus be seen as a buffer zone between two rival regional powers. But in the course of these wars, Thailand and Vietnam have annexed much of what was the Angkor Empire. The most recent of these wars ended in 1991 with the Paris Peace Accords. Many Cambodian intellectuals say they fear that the Mekong River one day soon will become the border between Thailand and Vietnam. Does Vietnam's admission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations mark a breakpoint in this long history of rivalry between the two nations, or is it more likely a strategic pause before the next round of conflict?

2. Many a Cambodian ruler has seen power slip from his grasp under the pressure of peasant rebellions. The Khmer Rouge attempted to exploit the power of the peasantry by ruling in the name of the peasants, but their oppression was so extreme that the people welcomed the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime by foreign forces. We can conclude from this that Cambodia cannot be ruled without at least the acquiescence, if not the active support, of Cambodia's peasantry. Given that many observers say the conditions of life for rural Cambodians have been growing steadily worse over the last fifteen years, what are the prospects for internal stability in Cambodia should this trend continue?

### **Internet Resources on History**

The Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict:

[http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cambodia/agree\\_comppol\\_10231991\\_toc.html](http://www.usip.org/library/pa/cambodia/agree_comppol_10231991_toc.html)

Links to many sources of historical information about Cambodia:

<http://www.asiasource.org/cambodia/links.htm>

Current issue and searchable database of past articles from the *Phnom Penh Post*:

<http://www.phnompenhpost.com/>



## CULTURE AND SOCIETY

This section of the study guide provides the sparsest of introductions to Cambodian culture and society. In particular, we will examine the growing divergence between urban and rural lifestyles, social structure, religion, and national holidays. Each of these topics reveals some important things about what it means to be a Cambodian.

It is sometimes said that Cambodia is not one, but rather two countries – Phnom Penh and “not-Phnom Penh.” Remarkable progress has been made over the last decade in restoring the charm and luster that Phnom Penh lost during the war years. In the capital today, one finds five-star hotels, pizza parlors, fine French restaurants, Internet cafes, satellite dishes, and many other appurtenances of contemporary cosmopolitan life. Streets, sidewalks, storm sewers, parks and other public amenities are being gradually rehabilitated throughout the city. These factors make Phnom Penh a comfortable posting for expatriates, diplomats and other foreigners – notwithstanding the occasional outbreaks of armed violence. A surprising proportion of Cambodians in Phnom Penh speak at least some English, ranging from civil servants to service sector employees to taxi drivers. But for foreigners who never venture outside of Phnom Penh, the glitz of the capital masks what many consider to be the “real Cambodia.”

Outside this urban center, the 80% of the Cambodian people who live in the countryside still exist in a largely traditional peasant environment, with few modern conveniences. In some remote rural villages, it appears as if life has changed very little over the centuries. The vast majority of Cambodians continue to eke out a meager existence through subsistence agriculture, never more than one crop failure away from catastrophe. Their social lives revolve around extended family ties, the village, and Buddhism. Many of them have never traveled more than a few miles beyond their home village. At the same time, and in contrast to some of their city cousins, Cambodia’s rural population hews to a set of core values that are in some ways strikingly similar to those of farmers in the US heartland: they tend to be honest, hard-working, conservative, and generously hospitable. These values are anchored by a traditional social structure in which every person knows his or her place in the scheme of things.

### Social Structure

The Cambodian language contains an intricate vocabulary that is designed to indicate differences in the status of individuals, and this reflects the country’s highly hierarchical social structure. Beginning with the King, there is a complex set of linguistic constructs (“the royal language”) that is used at court when addressing the sovereign, depending upon whom is speaking to whom (the King, the Queen, consorts, concubines, siblings and children of the King and the Queen, court officials, younger and older princes of another royal line, younger and older princesses, religious officials, secular officials, commoners, and so on). Though somewhat less elaborate, there are similar forms of speech that are used in everyday verbal intercourse to indicate relative social status, encompassing senior government officials, individuals of royal title, rankings by age, wealth, military office, and other indicators of social standing. Within a family, for

example, different forms of speech are used to address older and younger siblings of each gender, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, in-laws, cousins and other relations. The Khmer Rouge attempted, but failed, to eradicate these linguistic signs of social status, although their assault on these traditional forms of speech does appear to have slightly attenuated the historically sacrosanct nature of this practice.

Casual observation of these forms of speech in everyday life can lead one to conclude that women are valued less than men in Cambodian society. While this is true in some respects, anthropologists have concluded that traditions of gender relations in Cambodia are rather more complex than that. For example, women are expected to be virtuous, particularly with respect to sexual matters, while men are not. It is common for young males to be initiated into sexual activity by prostitutes, but females are expected to remain chaste until marriage, and to remain faithful thereafter. Men, on the other hand, commonly employ the services of prostitutes. This duality is reflected in the fact that many Cambodian men insist on the truth of the myth that there is no such thing as a Khmer prostitute, only Vietnamese prostitutes. Nonetheless, the role of women in family life is in many ways dominant. The wife traditionally manages the household finances, and often assists her husband in functioning effectively as the family breadwinner.

The ambiguous duality of gender roles in Cambodia becomes slightly clearer when we observe educational attainment. As of 2000, for example, 80% of adult males were literate, but only 57% of adult females were literate. While 66% and 65% of males and females respectively were enrolled in primary school, by secondary school those figures fall to 24% and 14% respectively. A large part of the reason for the dramatic decline in secondary attendance is economic, insofar as many families are unable to afford the costs of education. But if a family must choose, often they choose to educate their male children, while the females stay home to help with chores and farming.



A woman plants the rainy season rice crop in Kandal Province, July 1995.  
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

## Religion

The dominant religion in Cambodia is Buddhism, and there is a minority but still substantial following of Islam. Despite the years of communist control, religion remains a crucial influence in the lives of most Cambodians. When asked what it means to be a "Cambodian," many people will answer, 'a Cambodian is a Buddhist.' Cambodia's version of Buddhism is syncretic, which is to say, it combines mainstream Buddhist doctrine with elements of Hinduism, animism, and other indigenous traditional spiritual beliefs. As a result, the spirit world suffuses Cambodian Buddhism. Ancestor spirits are held to be particularly potent, and spirits are also associated with many other aspects of the world, such as particular places and things. For example, there are "spirit forests" in many places in Cambodia, where large, old trees, are believed to be inhabited by guardian spirits; this has led to serious conflict with loggers in some cases. Mainline Buddhist practice has been slow to regenerate after the religious devastation of the Khmer Rouge period, when the Sangha was utterly annihilated. During the People's Republic of Kampuchea period in the 1980s, the government permitted a limited practice of Buddhism, but did not actively encourage it, preferring that it be restricted primarily to the few surviving monks and the elderly. But after the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops in 1989, Buddhism was again declared the state religion. The once-respected Buddhist Institute in Phnom Penh began to be regenerated only during the period of UN intervention, and has grown, albeit slowly, since then. Well-trained monks are still few and far between today, and this has resulted in many scandalous incidents of devotees who fail to uphold the precepts of the religion by drinking alcohol, consorting with women, and engaging in other prohibited activities.

The form of Islam practiced by Cambodia's Cham population is, like Cambodian Buddhism, also syncretic. Many Cambodian Muslims profess to believe not only in the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed, but also in the teachings of the Buddha. Like Buddhism, Islam in Cambodia was nearly destroyed under the Khmer Rouge, with virtually all of the religious leaders exterminated, and much of the physical apparatus of the religion laid waste. In the years since, Islam has been revived in the Cham community in large part thanks to the efforts of foreign missionaries, at first primarily from Malaysia, but in recent years increasingly from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf States. Some of these missionaries have attempted to introduce fundamentalist forms of Islam into the Cham community, particularly from the Sufi, Wahhabi and Salafist sects. These proselytizers have not, however, found particularly fertile ground among the Cham, who regard these more austere and militant versions of Islam as inimical to their traditional beliefs and lifestyles. Even so, these forms have had some influence; for example, it is now more common than it has been to see Cham veiled from head to toe, with only their faces visible.

## Holidays

Cambodia is notable for its many national holidays. The Cambodian people love a good party, and this shows in the profusion of events that are officially celebrated. Perhaps nothing exemplifies this more clearly than the fact that Cambodia celebrates not

one, but three different New Year holidays, including the international new year, Chinese New Year (late January/early February, varying according to the lunar calendar), and the Cambodian New Year (March 17). Another key national holiday is Pchum Ben, or Ancestor Day (September), which is actually observed for nearly a week, a time when many people travel to their ancestral villages to honor the spirits of their ancestors. Vesak Buchea Day (late May) marks the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.

There are also several important royal holidays. One of the most notable of these is the "Plowing of the Furrow" ceremony (late May), during which oxen are brought to the Royal Palace and presented with several different bowls containing grains, water, legumes, and other items; by observing which items are of most interest to the oxen, astrologers are believed to be able to predict the course of the coming agricultural season. The Water Festival (usually early November, but set by the royal astrologer) is another important national holiday, nominally marking the victory of Jayavarman VII in an epic naval battle against the Kingdom of Champa in 1178; the parades, floats, boat races, and other amusements of the Water Festival today bring millions of people from the provinces to Phnom Penh for several days of celebrations. The King's Birthday (October 31) has been observed solemnly each year since the restoration of the monarchy in 1993, with the exception of 1997, when all concerned were distracted by combat between the royalist party and the ruling party. Finally, Independence Day (November 9) marks the end of French colonialism, and is celebrated with a ceremony at Independence Monument which is located, not coincidentally, at the intersection of Norodom Boulevard and Sihanouk Boulevard.

Since the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, multiple international holidays have been observed, and these seem to have proliferated over the years. They include International Women's Day (March 8), International Labor Day (May 1), International Human Rights Day (December 10), and Paris Peace Accords Day (October 23). There are also several controversial holidays that are freighted with political baggage, including "Liberation Day" (January 7), and the "Day of Hate" (May 20). "Liberation Day" nominally marks the day that the Khmer Rouge were expelled from Phnom Penh in 1979; however, for many who are not partisans of the ruling party, this observance is acidly referred to as "Vietnamese Invasion Day." Similarly, the "Day of Hate" was instituted in 1983 as a means of promoting solidarity in the struggle against Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge; this particular holiday has been in the process of transition in recent years. It was suppressed at the demand of the royalists in the early years of the first post-UNTAC government, then revived after 1997 by the ruling party, and in the last few years has begun to be referred to as a "Day of Commemoration" or a "Day of Remembrance," out of consideration for national reconciliation.

## Art

Those who are unfamiliar with Cambodia might be forgiven for thinking that the Cambodian arts consist primarily of the multitude of ancient Hindu and Buddhist carvings that decorate the monuments at Angkor. But in fact, Cambodia boasts a wide variety of artistic forms, traversing the performing arts, plastic and design arts, literature,

and architecture. Within each of these categories, there is a rich diversity of styles ranging from the traditional to the modern. Contemporary artistic forms in Cambodia include classical dance by the royal ballet, folk dances from the provinces, shadow puppet theater, modern theater, story-telling, music such as pinpeat orchestra, rock and roll, rap, design arts like weaving and jewelry design, a profusion of painting styles in watercolor, oil and other media drawing on traditional and modern influences, with a vibrant school of impressionism, sculpture, and a wide range of literature styles in poetry and prose – all of these artistic endeavor and more are flowering in Cambodia.

In a very real sense, this flowering of artistic creativity also amounts to a resurrection, both in the traditional and modern arts, because virtually all art forms were driven to the edge of extinction by the Khmer Rouge drive to eliminate perceived foreign, bourgeois and monarchical influences from Cambodia. By some estimates, nine out of ten of Cambodia's artists perished under the Khmer Rouge. But perhaps no art form more uniquely identifies Cambodia than the royal ballet. The restoration of classical dance has helped to restore a sense of national unity and pride, distancing the Cambodian people from their recent years of turmoil, appealing to enduring values embedded in Cambodian culture. As Julie Mehta has written, "Cambodian classical dance is the single most lively connection the modern Khmer have with their glorious ancestors." [Mehta 2001]

Cambodian classical dance was once the exclusive preserve of the Cambodian king, an entertainment of the court which served to symbolize the mystical connection between the king and the divinities. During the colonial period, the French were taken with the royal dance company and made it available to French and colonial audiences. At independence, King Sihanouk took measures to re-appropriate the court dance troupe and eliminate what he regarded as foreign influences that had seeped in during the years of French dominance. With these changes and the climate of nationalistic ferment in the 1950s, Cambodia's classical dance evolved into a popular medium. As a symbol of the monarchy, however, it was virtually destroyed during the Khmer Rouge era, when nearly all of Cambodia's classical dancers were killed. In recent years, this art form has been undergoing a revival, and has now been harnessed as a means to bind the nation together again. With its spare style and elegant forms, classical dance transports the audience to another time and space, far from the turmoil of recent years.

The evocation of the glory of the Angkor Empire present in every performance of the royal ballet is the key to the way Cambodian classical dance contributes to regenerating a sense of cultural unity and nationhood. A standard in the classical dance repertoire is the *Reamker*, Cambodia's adaptation of the Indian classic, *Ramayana*. This tale is the story of Ream (named "Rama" in the Indian version), an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, tracing his exploits and woe across his lifetime. At the center of the story is an epic battle involving legions of monkey-warriors and demons in a struggle to rescue Ream's kidnapped wife, Seda (or "Sita" in the Indian version). An indication of how intimately this legend is tied to Cambodia's identity as a nation can be found in the fact that many of the bas reliefs in Angkor Wat and other Angkor Empire-era temples depict scenes based on the *Ramayana*. In this respect, this story and its enactment in

classical dance provides a potentially potent symbolic rallying point for the shattered nation.

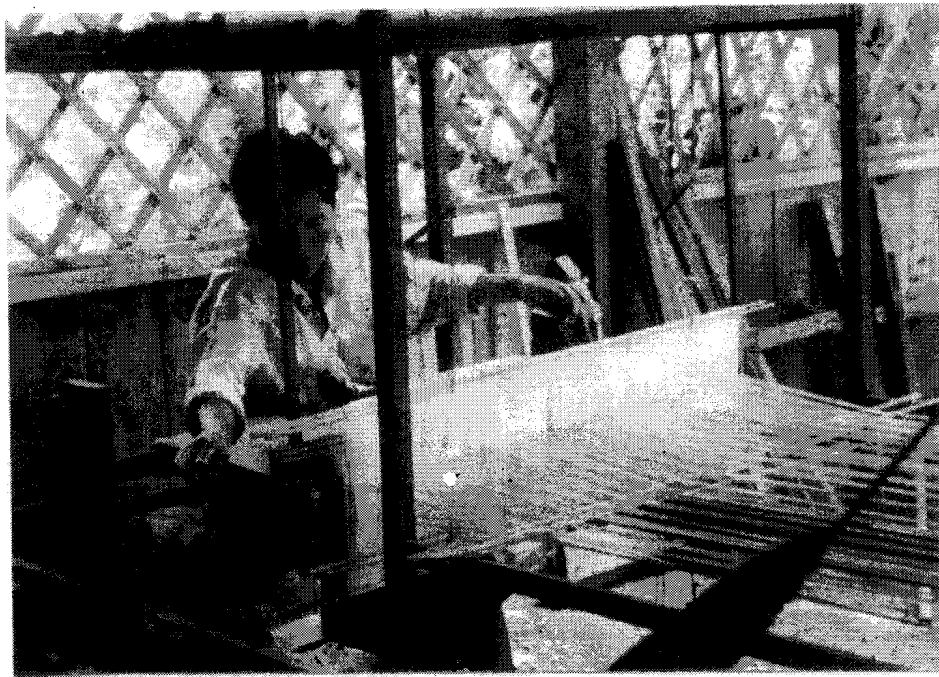


Classical dancers are cultivated from a tender age at the Dance School in Phnom Penh  
(Photo from Craig Etcheson Archives, courtesy of Janet Gardner, The Gardner Group, Inc.)

### **Issues and Questions**

1. A prime tenet of Buddhism is compassion, which promotes the corollary value of tolerance. Consequently, Cambodians tend to be remarkably tolerant of other religions, including not only Islam, but also Christianity, Hinduism, and many other faith traditions. In Cambodia one therefore finds a vast range of missionaries attempting to convert Buddhists – who seen by some as adherents to a “godless” religion – to another faith, including Mormons, Catholics, various Protestant sects, various Muslim sects, and many others. Interestingly, the growth of Christian churches in former Khmer Rouge zones has been particularly strong in recent years. What impact might the progressive proliferation

Association of Cambodia, only 16 are entirely Cambodian-owned; the majority of the textile factories that produce products for export are Chinese-owned, with the remainder owned by Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Europe and US. The largest market for Cambodian textile exports is the US, which buys approximately two-thirds of Cambodia's exports. Europe accounts for most of the other third. However, Cambodian textile the exports to the US have been made possible by virtue of the Multi-Fiber Agreement quota system, and under World Trade Organization rules, that quota system is scheduled to end on December 31, 2004. (Cambodia was admitted to the WTO in September 2003, along with Nepal becoming the first 'least developed countries' to join the organization.) There is a widespread expectation that with the elimination of the advantages conferred by the quota system, foreign factory owners are likely to move these textile and garment enterprises to other countries that offer comparable labor costs, and stronger infrastructures and legal regimes. Should this occur to any great extent, it will have a dramatic impact on Cambodia's economic performance.



In contrast to the modern factories that serve the export market, many textiles produced for Cambodia's domestic market are still made the old fashioned way.  
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

This would be an unfortunate development, indeed, because at present Cambodia is already the poorest country in Southeast Asia. As of 2003, 78% of its population lived on less than \$2 per day, and 45% were below the poverty line at less than \$1 per day. The bulk of these impoverished people are rural agricultural small-holders. Moreover, recent studies have shown that the practice of "land-grabbing" by rapacious units of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces is increasing in many provinces, and as a result, more and more displaced rural residents are becoming landless and utterly destitute. This is a significant part of the reason why poverty rates in Cambodia continue to rise, despite the steady growth of GDP. In addition, the fact that some 60% of Cambodia's population is

under twenty years of age means that a huge demographic bulge is preparing to enter the workforce, and at present it is difficult to foresee how the economy can possibly create enough jobs to absorb this supply of labor. That is a formula for serious social unrest, and it looms in the immediate future.

The government's budget for 2003 was projected at slightly more than \$700 million. Approximately half of Cambodia's national budget is financed by foreign aid, with much of that aid focused on capital investment. Over the last decade, the international community has pumped billions of dollars into Cambodia's economy, fulfilling a commitment made in the Paris Peace Accords of 1991. How long this level of donor generosity can be sustained is a critical question for Cambodia's leaders. Given the limited appeal of the Cambodian economy to foreign direct investors, without this high level of charity, that economy would face dramatic problems. It is for these reasons that King Sihanouk has frequently lamented that his country has become a "beggar nation."

In standard analyses of Cambodia's national accounts, and in the data produced by international financial institutions on the performance of Cambodia's economy, a central aspect of the economic realities of Cambodia is typically neglected: there is reason to believe that a very significant proportion – perhaps a majority – of economic activity in Cambodia occurs "off the books." For example, most of Cambodia's civil servants earn a salary averaging \$20 per month, which is only a fraction of the amount required for a single person to survive in urban Cambodia. And yet, most of these civil servants own a home, an automobile or motorcycle, a cell phone and so on. How is this possible? The answer is that additional resources flow to each employee through a system of clan support. It works like this: even though primary and secondary education is nominally free, each teacher demands a small payment of 100-200 Riel (2.5-5 cents) from each student, each day. The teacher retains a small amount of this income, but most of it is handed over to the principal, who in turn retains a small amount and gives the balance to the superintendent, and so on, as the cash flows up the clan hierarchy to the top, ending up in the hands of, say, Hun Sun. This process occurs in each and every aspect of life in Cambodia, and the result is a very large cash flow. The substantial resources thus garnered are allocated by the clan leader to support his "extended family," thereby earning and retaining their loyalty.

The cash flow that is generated through this hierarchical system of payments is significantly augmented through the black market economy. Gambling, drug-smuggling, money laundering, human trafficking, illegal logging, the gem trade and other illicit activities produce huge revenue streams that are similarly allocated through the clan system. For example, one recent analysis of the human trafficking industry in Cambodia calculated that the cash flow from the sale of human beings and the associated prostitution industry generates upwards of \$250 million dollars annually. That revenue alone would amount to one-sixteenth of the nominal GDP, and none of it appears on national accounts. If we extrapolate the revenue streams from this single area of the black economy across the entire range of illicit economic activities in the country, the



conclusion is inescapable that standard economic analyses of the country do not describe totally the true nature of Cambodia's economy.

### **Issues and Questions**

1. Demographers project that given current trends in fertility and mortality, Cambodia's population will nearly double in size by 2025, to some 22 million. Taking into account the declining availability of arable land in Cambodia, as well as the limited growth prospects for Cambodian industry, what impact is this development likely to have on the overall standard of living in the country in coming years?

2. Off-shore exploration of potential hydrocarbon deposits in the Gulf of Thailand by international oil companies has indicated that there may be very large, albeit as-yet unproven, deposits of natural gas and petroleum within the exclusive economic zone claimed by Cambodia. However, the most promising areas for hydrocarbon exploitation are the subject of territorial disputes with Thailand. Explore the implications of this situation for a) the development of Cambodia's domestic economy; b) Cambodia's relations with Thailand; and c) Cambodia's integration into the international economic system.

### **Internet Resources on the Economy**

CIA statistics on the Cambodian economy:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/cb.html#Econ>

World Bank statistics on the Cambodian economy:

<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=KHM&CCODE=KHM&CNAME=Cambodia&PTYPE=CP>

International Monetary Fund information on Cambodia:

<http://www.imf.org/external/country/khm/index.htm>

A variety of economic data from the Cambodian Development Resources Institute:

<http://www.cdri.org.kh/>

A regional investment bank's view of the Cambodian economy:

<http://www.mekongcapital.com/html/cambodia.htm>

The German government's view of the Cambodian economy:

[http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos/laender/laender\\_ausgabe\\_html?type\\_id=12&land\\_id=73](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/en/laenderinfos/laender/laender_ausgabe_html?type_id=12&land_id=73)

Global Witness reports on resources, conflict and corruption in the forest industry:

<http://www.globalwitness.org/projects/cambodia/>

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

This section of the study guide provides an overview of Cambodia's system of government and politics. It will review the branches of the government – the executive, legislative and judiciary – and provide snapshots of the major political parties, as well as a brief insight into the functioning of the country's political processes.

Cambodia's government, as defined by the Constitution of 1993, is a multi-party liberal constitutional monarchy, with a monarch who "reigns but does not rule." The three branches of government – the executive, legislative and judicial – are co-equal and independent only in theory, as practice has not yet come fully into conformity with the constitutional design. The reality in Cambodia today is that the executive drives the process of governance, with the other two branches playing subsidiary roles.

### Hun Sen and the Cambodian People's Party

For all intents and purposes, Cambodia's Executive branch is now, and for twenty years has been, a man named Hun Sen. Prime Minister Hun Sen has displayed a remarkable ability to out-manuever his opponents for more than two decades. Born in 1952, he has achieved extraordinary accomplishments for a peasant boy with a limited formal education. But he did attend a Phnom Penh high school, and learned to read and write. These skills served him well when he joined the Khmer Rouge guerillas in 1970. Respected by his largely illiterate peers as a relatively intellectual figure, he quickly assumed leadership positions. Hun Sen was soon selected by the Khmer Rouge for advanced leadership training. His bravery in combat further impressed his communist superiors. He was one to be watched, and groomed.

Over the course of the 1970-75 civil war, however, Hun Sen came to see the wanton brutality of the organization he had joined. As the Khmer Rouge regime took shape after 1975, he was ordered to lead his troops against domestic "enemies" of the regime. Hun Sen says that he evaded a command to attack an ethnic Cham village in Kroch Chhmar District of Kampong Cham Province around the end of September 1975 by claiming that he and 70% of his men were sick with malaria. He also began to see increasing numbers of his revolutionary comrades being called away by the Khmer Rouge for "meetings," never to be seen again. Before long it was his turn to be called away for a meeting, and it was then, in June 1977, that he made the fateful decision to flee the Khmer Rouge purges for Vietnam. Like the Khmer Rouge before, the Vietnamese also soon recognized his leadership potential, and began grooming him to lead forces back into Cambodia to fight and topple the Khmer Rouge regime.

After the Khmer Rouge regime was overthrown, the Vietnamese selected Hun Sen as Foreign Minister of the new regime. He performed well in that role, gaining stature among his colleagues, trust from the Vietnamese whose troops occupied the country, and experience with the international community, in general, and the United Nations, in particular. Within a few years he was appointed as Prime Minister, a post to which he has clung through the following tumultuous two decades. His survival in such a

lethal environment demonstrated Hun Sen's ferocious competitive drive. He is a natural, an instinctive political animal.

Despite his self-declared image as "Strongman," and the perception many of his opponents have of him as a dictatorial tyrant, Hun Sen does not rule entirely at his own whim. Most important policy decisions are first hashed out in the Standing Committee of the Cambodian People's Party, and then submitted to the Council of Ministers for consideration. In the ruling party's politburo, Hun Sen is not even first among equals, ranking second after Chairman Chea Sim. Reflecting its roots as a communist organization, the ruling party still operates according to a slightly fractured version of democratic centralism. Policy issues are debated, and a consensus is forged among the representatives of the various clans that carry weight in the upper reaches of the party. Hun Sen's occasional tendency to present his colleagues with *faites accompli* has given rise to many tensions over the years, and has earned him a significant degree of enmity among his rivals within the party. Thus it is not for nothing that he maintains a large, private security contingent.



Hun Sen with US Ambassador Charles Twining, May 1994  
(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

And indeed, Hun Sen does have rivals within the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), despite the fact that the CPP endeavors to project an image of unity and solidarity. Analysts have long identified People's Party Chairman Chea Sim as the head of a clan that is considered a rival center of power to Hun Sen. Chea Sim has a long background in senior leadership positions, first as a Khmer Rouge district chief in Kampong Cham during the Democratic Kampuchea regime, then as Interior Minister and a key member of the Council of State during the crucial formative phases of the People's Republic of

Kampuchea, longtime President of the National Assembly, and more recently, President of the Senate during the Second Kingdom of Cambodia, and Chairman of the ruling party since 1991. Over the course of these thirty years in leadership posts, he has assembled a large following in the party and government who owe their positions to his patronage. In the last few years, one of Sim's protégées, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sar Kheng, has himself developed a clan structure that appears to be breaking off from Chea Sim's and forming a center of power in his own right.

### Norodom Ranariddh and FUNCINPEC

Prince Norodom Ranariddh leads the "National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia," more commonly known as FUNCINPEC (for the French acronym of the official name), or simply the "royalist" party. The first mandate of the then-new Royal Government was given in the UN-sponsored election in 1993, and the royalist party took the largest number of seats in parliament in that election. The second mandate came out of the 1998 election, when the Cambodian People's Party claimed the largest block of seats in parliament, and joined in a coalition with the second-place royalists to form a governing majority. A minority of seats in 1998 went to the third-place opposition group, the Sam Rainsy Party.

In the July 2003 national election, the royalist party took a big hit. The CPP increased its seats in the Assembly from 64 in the outgoing parliament to 73 in the third mandate. The opposition party made strong gains, increasing its seat holdings by 60%, from 15 in the outgoing Assembly to 24 in the coming Assembly. All these gains were at the expense of the royalists, whose share of seats in the Assembly will decline from 43 to 26, a loss of nearly half their Members of Parliament. Moreover, in terms of the popular vote, the opposition party edged out the royalists with 22% of the votes compared to 21% for the royalists.

Why are the royalists losing seats? They have seen a steady decline in their popularity, from 58 seats in 1993's election, to 43 in the 1998, to 26 in the 2003. Part of the reason for this slide in public support is due to perceptions of corruption on the part of some senior royalist leaders. Partly it is due to perceptions that the royalist party is poorly led, and politically inept. And without question, partly it is due to the perception among some of their erstwhile supporters that the royalists sold out to the ruling People's Party during the 1998 mandate, functioning as a weak junior coalition partner in government, unable to articulate significant policy differences between itself and the ruling party. Another significant element may be regular statements from King Norodom Sihanouk, expressing contempt for his son, Norodom Ranariddh.

As has usually been the case over the centuries, Cambodia's royal families today engage in internecine competition for power, patronage, influence and money. Though Ranariddh has been the undisputed leader of the royalist organization since his father turned the reins over to him in the early 1980s, he is not without rivals. Chief among these are his uncle, Prince Norodom Sirivuth, whose intelligence and political acumen are widely regarded to be far superior to Ranariddh. Since the turn of the century, Sirivuth

has served as the Secretary-General of the royalist party. Members of the other principal royal family, the Sisowath royal line, also compete for position.

### The Sam Rainsy Party

Sam Rainsy was born in 1949 to an old Cambodian political family; his father, Sam Sary, was a Deputy Prime Minister in the 1950s. There has long been speculation that Sihanouk's secret police did in Sary. Rainsy was raised and trained in France, and waited out much of the war years working as a financier in Paris, but maintained close connections with the royalist party. He returned to Cambodia to stand for a seat in the National Assembly during the 1993 election, and was subsequently appointed as Minister of Finance in the first coalition government. Rainsy received high marks from his international interlocutors for his honesty, integrity and effectiveness in that position. But his vocal denunciations of government corruption soon bought him trouble with his colleagues in the royalist party and the government at large. After publicly criticizing Ranariddh for corruption, Rainsy was expelled from the party, dismissed as Finance Minister and stripped of his seat in the National Assembly.

Rainsy promptly formed a new political vehicle, the Khmer Nation Party, and began to attract a following that responded to his appeals for good government, his bitter criticism of the People's Party, and his very harsh rhetorical line against Vietnam and Vietnamese. The CPP soon engineered the emergence of a rival political party that took the same name – the Khmer Nation Party – and in the subsequent lawsuit, Rainsy lost the right to use that name. At that point, he renamed his party after himself, as the Sam Rainsy Party, or SRP. Sharing leadership in the SRP is Rainsy's wife, Tioulong Samura, who, like Rainsy, also comes from an old Cambodian political family. It is often speculated that Samura is the real brains behind the SRP operation, and no one doubts her abilities. As a team, they transformed the face of Cambodian politics in a very brief period of time. The SRP appears to be on the verge of eclipsing the royalists as the second largest political party in Cambodia, but then, that assessment depends in part on what one thinks of Cambodian elections as a barometer of public opinion.

### Elections in Cambodia since 1993

The idea of genuinely representative elections in Cambodia is a very new thing – so new, in fact, it may not have happened yet. The election staged by the United Nations in 1993 was widely regarded as having been free and fair, by everyone except the incumbent Cambodian People's Party, which denounced its loss to the royalists as fraudulent, and mounted a short-lived succession threat in eastern Cambodia. The pressure of CPP opposition to the vote led to a power-sharing arrangement with the royalists, an arrangement that contained the seeds of its own destruction. That coalition government eventually erupted into factional fighting in 1997.

The 1998 election took place amidst an environment of serious political turmoil, and as the first election to be managed by the Cambodians themselves, it exhibited more than a few flaws, and left many questions in its wake. Both the royalists and the

opposition party rejected the results of that election, taking to the streets in protests that eventually turned violent, provoking an even more violent government response. But the losers may have had a point about the fairness of that election. For example, a random survey of 100 likely voters was taken just days prior to the election among recently-defected former Khmer Rouge rebels in the foothills of Kampong Speu Province's Kamchay Mountains. Of the 100 persons questioned, not a single individual voiced any support for the CPP; most bitterly denounced the ruling party. And yet, when the votes were tallied, this particular constituency – Taing Syar Commune in Phnom Srouch District – came in with 55% of the vote for the CPP. Was it a silent majority speaking? Or was it manipulation of the vote? Perhaps we will never know, but that result was far from the only suspicion raised in the 1998 election.

Were the July 2003 elections “free and fair”? Most international and domestic observers have declared that July's election may have been the cleanest in the history of Cambodia, but others – such as the International Republican Institute – note that this still left room for a lot of shenanigans. One of the most significant manipulations of the process occurred prior to the actual vote, during voter registration, when there were repeated difficulties of various kinds in certain constituencies that are strongholds of the opposition and royalist parties. According to one estimate, up to half a million voters were unable to register in those constituencies. Even so, election day itself played out fairly cleanly. Moreover, the year-long political stand-off in the wake of the election proceeded without any outbreaks of mass violence. Although the absurdly long negotiation to form the Third Mandate of the Royal Government caused untold damage to the public interest, at the same time, it marks a new level of maturity in Cambodia's political dialogue. In that sense, the 2003 elections turned out to be a victory for the Cambodian people.

### The Legislative Branch

Cambodia has a 122-member National Assembly that functions as little more than a rubber stamp for legislation that is introduced by the executive. As part of the political deal to resolve the political stand-off after the 1998 election, Cambodia also created a 61-member “upper chamber” called the Senate. The function of the Senate appears to be largely to give incomes and official titles to senior political functionaries who could not be accommodated within the confines of the National Assembly or Royal Government. Legislation must be approved by both houses of parliament, and it almost invariably is, typically with no amendments – although there is often sharp debate.

A great deal of time, manpower and money has been injected into the National Assembly by the international donor community over the last decade in an effort to increase the capacity and professionalism of that legislative body. Among other things, a large new National Assembly building is being constructed adjacent to the Buddhist Institute. But the fact that the contract for building this new palace of law went to a close relative of the chairman of the Assembly's construction committee says a lot about how things continue to be done at the Assembly.

## The Judiciary

Like so much of the country, the Cambodian judiciary was annihilated during the Khmer Rouge regime. In the decade following the Khmer Rouge, little was done to rehabilitate a professional judiciary, with only a handful of lawyers having been trained at Kiev and in other Soviet law schools. Most judicial posts were staffed by political hacks who in many cases had not even graduated from high school, much less law school. The criminal code adopted by the People's Republic of Kampuchea was called "Decree Law Number 2," and was drafted by Sin Song, a communist functionary with no legal training. As Evan Gottesman has observed, Decree Law Number 2 "served to reveal the fundamental tautology that underlay the PRK's criminal justice system: anyone guilty of 'betraying the revolution' was 'Pol Pot,' and 'Pol Pot' was anyone 'betraying the revolution.'" [Gottesman 2003: 241]

The situation today is only marginally better, despite a decade of efforts to reform the judiciary. Cambodian jurists now draw randomly on multiple contradictory legal codes, including the 1956 French-derived penal code, People's Republic of Kampuchea-era decree law, hastily drafted State of Cambodia legal codes enacted in 1992, legal codes that were promulgated under the authority of UNTAC, and fragmentary legal instruments that have been promulgated since 1993. The result is legal anarchy. For example, in 1994, a newspaper published a headline that read, "Ranariddh is More Stupid than Hun Sen Three Times a Day." Second Prime Minister Hun Sen took offense, and filed a civil suit against the publisher for monetary damages under the State of Cambodia-era defamation law. When the case came to court, the judge promptly threw out Hun Sen's civil suit, and slapped the publisher with criminal charges using UNTAC's criminal defamation statute. The publisher was convicted, and sentenced to a hefty fine and a lengthy prison term, whereupon King Sihanouk exercised His royal prerogative to pardon the convict, a power granted to His Majesty under the 1993 Constitution. So here we had one case, using three separate legal codes.

The professionalism of the judiciary has been gradually improving, but has a long way to go. The ruling party has been reluctant to promote to the bench the several hundred young lawyers who have been graduated since 1993, but has been active in encouraging sitting judges to undertake remedial professional training. According to sources at the Council of Ministers, Cambodia currently has approximately 200 practicing judges. However, according to Ministry of Justice records, there are only 120 sitting judges in Cambodia. In addition, the country has about 55 prosecutors, of whom fewer than ten have attended law school; more than half of the prosecutors did not graduate from high school. Of the judges, the Council of Ministers asserts that approximately forty have either bachelors or masters degrees at law; Ministry of Justice records suggest that only fifteen Cambodian judges have law degrees. Whether the real number is closer to 15 or to 40, most of these law degrees are of Soviet vintage. Of the remaining roster of sitting judges, the overwhelming majority have no formal legal training whatsoever, beyond perhaps a few seminars and workshops over the last decade or so. More than half of Cambodia's judges did not even graduate from high school.

## His Majesty the King

As noted earlier, King Norodom Sihanouk was restored to the throne of Cambodia in 1993. Under the constitution, Sihanouk is Head of State, but is a monarch who “reigns but does not rule.” Having survived six tumultuous decades at the center of Southeast Asian politics, Sihanouk is one the most senior and experienced statesmen in the world today. It is worth recalling that when He came to power, the world’s dominant political leaders included Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, and Mao Tse-tung. Those men are all long dead, and Sihanouk is Head of State. But the incredible trauma that Cambodia and her people have suffered during His years on the political scene will certainly color the epitaph that marks His grave. And in fact, that grave has already been dug, as it were. At the ancient imperial capital of Oudong, the construction of Sihanouk’s burial stupa was completed in 2002, along with a royal crematorium at the base of the Phnom from which the stupa rises. It is a magnificent monument – derided by wags as costing one billion bowls of rice – but it is a resting place befitting a God-King who stood astride Cambodia as no other has since the glory days of the Angkor Empire. The King’s wife, Queen Monique – who has a mixture of Khmer, Vietnamese, French, and Italian blood – is said to favor her only son, Prince Sihamoni, to succeed her husband on the throne. There has also been speculation that the Throne Council could select her either as Queen or as Regent to reign following King Sihanouk’s demise.



Their Royal Majesties, King Norodom Sihanouk and Queen Monique of Cambodia  
(Photo courtesy of the Royal Palace, Phnom Penh)



## **Issues and Questions**

1. October 2004 marks the 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday of King Norodom Sihanouk. As His health has deteriorated in recent years, the King has expressed increasing worries about the future of Cambodia's monarchy. Royal succession is controlled by the Throne Council, and that body is dominated by the ruling Cambodian People's Party. Some in the ruling party believe that the death of Sihanouk would provide a golden opportunity to destroy the troublesome royalist party, by abolishing the monarchy and declaring a republic. Others in the ruling party believe that it would be wise to maintain the monarchy, in order to split the votes of those who oppose continued ruling party control between the royalists and the Sam Rainsy Party. Which course would you choose upon Sihanouk's death?

2. The Cambodian People's Party has dominated Cambodia's political scene since 1979. This extended tenure has the advantages of providing stability and cadre with long experience, but also has all the disadvantages that flow from Lord Acton's dictum. CPP power is deeply entrenched. After all, despite 20,000 peacekeeping troops and an international mandate for a UN-controlled poll, the CPP lost the 1993 election but still managed to retain power. Given the CPP's pervasive political control, even if it were possible for the royalists or the opposition to seize the organs of the state, would it be desirable? Could either of these parties – or perhaps more to the point – would either of these parties be willing and able to rule without having to resort to extreme repression in order to overcome the ubiquitous tendrils of the CPP's political control?

## **Internet Resources on Government and Politics**

Website of the ruling Cambodian People's Party:

<http://www.camnet.com.kh/cpp/>

Website of the royalist FUNCINPEC party:

<http://www.funcinpec.org/>

Website of the opposition Sam Rainsy Party:

<http://www.samrainsyparty.org/>

The Cambodian government's primary website (English version):

<http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/unisql1/egov/english/home.view.html>

Links to a range of political information about Cambodia:

<http://www.politicalresources.net/cambodia.htm>

Reports on Cambodia from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs:

<http://www.ndi.org/worldwide/asia/cambodia/cambodia.asp>

Reports on Cambodia from the International Republican Institute:  
[www.iri.org/countries.asp?id=8392062734](http://www.iri.org/countries.asp?id=8392062734)

## FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE

This section of the study guide will highlight some issues of concern to Cambodia's foreign affairs and defense. Most of Cambodia's principal foreign affairs issues were touched upon under the heading of History, but here we will consider some of those matters in a bit more depth, and introduce a few additional current foreign affairs issues. This final narrative section of the study guide also provides a brief overview of Cambodia's military posture and defense situation.

### Foreign Policy Issues

There are several foreign policy issues that warrant additional attention in this study guide, including terrorism, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, and Cambodia's role in the regional balance of power. There is also one issue in US-Cambodia bilateral relations that warrants a brief discussion – the deportation of alien residents from the United States to Cambodia – because it is likely to be a source of mutual grief for years to come.

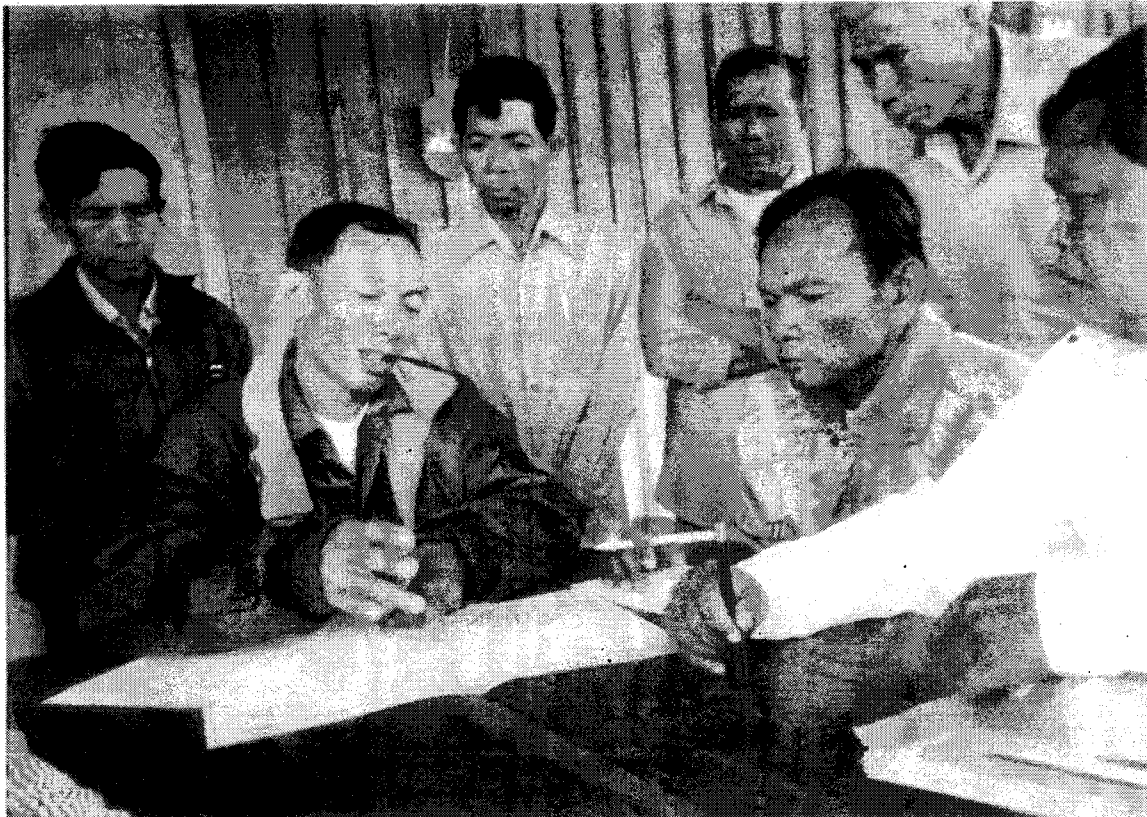
#### Terrorism

Within days after the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, Prime Minister Hun Sen wrote to President Bush offering his unqualified assistance in the fight against terrorism. He has followed up on that commitment in several concrete ways, including using his tenure as chair of ASEAN in 2003 to urge his fellow Southeast Asian leaders to cooperate with the US in the war on terrorism. At home, Hun Sen initiated an intense investigation of Cambodia's Islamic religious schools, resulting in the arrest of three alleged operatives of the al-Qaeda affiliated organization Jemaah Islamiya, two Thai nationals and an Egyptian, at two Cham schools. During the same crackdown, fifty other Islamic teachers from Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were expelled from Cambodia, and the schools where they had been teaching were shuttered. More recently, after reports that shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons had been smuggled from Cambodia to Thailand by militants, the government agreed to cooperate with the United States in destroying Cambodia's entire stock of anti-aircraft missiles. Additional cooperative activities such as intelligence sharing are also taking place. The close cooperation with Cambodia in the war on terrorism has irked some in the US Congress such as Senator Mitch McConnell, who has been known to suggest that Prime Minister Hun Sen is himself a terrorist.

#### The Khmer Rouge Tribunal

No single Cambodian issue has engaged more sustained and intense attention from the international community since 1997 than question of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal. At the opening session of the Paris Peace talks in 1989, Prime Minister Hun Sen called on the international community to prosecute the leadership of the Khmer Rouge for genocide and other crimes against humanity, and he regularly repeated this rhetoric in subsequent years. In June 1997, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia, Ambassador Thomas Hammarberg, persuaded Hun Sen

and his Co-Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh to write to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, formally requesting UN assistance to establish such a tribunal. Annan responded by appointing a three-member Group of Experts to study the issue, and in January 1999, they produced a report recommending that the UN clone the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, adding a new chamber for Cambodia. However, by this time, Khmer Rouge supreme leader Pol Pot had died, and the remaining senior Khmer Rouge political leadership had surrendered to the Cambodian government. Consequently, Hun Sen rejected the recommendations of the UN Group of Experts.



Former Khmer Rouge officials study a plan for development of an eco-tourism nature preserve in a remote region of Banteay Meanchey Province during December 1999.

(Photo by Craig Etcheson)

But the momentum of the tribunal idea inside the UN bureaucracy had gained a head of steam, and the Secretariat was not prepared to take no for an answer. Moreover, spurred by the 1994 Cambodian Genocide Justice Act, US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes David Scheffer explored numerous potential avenues for bringing the surviving Khmer Rouge leadership to justice. With these elements as the principal motive force, there ensued a torturous and twisting five year long process of negotiations which ultimately yielded two key documents, Cambodia's 2001 "Law on the Establishment of Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed During the Period of Democratic Kampuchea," and the 2003 "Agreement

Between the United Nations and the Royal Government of Cambodia Concerning the Prosecution under Cambodian Law of Crimes Committed During the Period of Democratic Kampuchea.” These documents specify the modalities for international cooperation with Cambodia in a mixed national-international criminal tribunal that will judge a handful of Khmer Rouge leaders on charges of war crimes, genocide, other crimes against humanity, and violations of other Cambodian and international laws.

The UN-Cambodia agreement was adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2003. However, the prolonged political stalemate following the July 2003 Cambodian elections prevented consideration of the agreement by Cambodia’s National Assembly, at least through mid-July 2004. The political stalemate did not, however, prevent the UN and the Cambodian government from proceeding with technical preparations, and the UN projects that the Khmer Rouge Tribunal could be established within six months of parliamentary ratification by the National Assembly.

If and when it is established, the tribunal will be composed of two chambers, a trial chamber with three Cambodian judges and two international judges, and an appeals chamber with four Cambodian judges and three international judges. Decisions will be taken by a “supermajority” principle, in which a majority plus at least one international judge will be required to agree in order for the court to hand down a judgment. Cambodian and international co-investigating magistrates and co-prosecutors are to work together to prepare indictments and prosecute those “senior leaders of Democratic Kampuchea and those who were most responsible” for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime. The court will be seated in Phnom Penh, and is to be financed primarily by voluntary contributions to a UN Trust Fund.

**Polling Data on Cambodian Public Attitudes toward Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT)**

Source	Date	N	Sample	Question	Yes
KJA	Feb 95	794	5 provinces	Pol Pot trial?	79%
DC-Cam	May 97	22	political elite	KRT?	85%
IFFASSORC	Jan 99	1503	Urban/rural	KRT/leaders?	81%
McGrew	Dec 99	48	urban elite	KRT?	87%
Cam Daily	Jan 00	24	rural	KRT/leaders?	100%
CSD	Jan 00	632	urban	KRT good?	82%
DC-Cam	Jun 02	873	Urban/rural	KRT?	78%
IRI	Feb 04	1200	Urban/rural	KRT good?	84%

Public opinion data indicates that the Cambodian people are strongly in favor of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal, with more than four-fifths of respondents showing support for

the convening of a tribunal. The data suggest that this support has been consistent over time for the last decade, and consistent across varying cohorts of the population. Urban, rural, elite, and mass respondents in all sections of the country, all appear to want a Khmer Rouge trial to be established, and they have wanted it for quite some time. This is the case despite the fact that the Cambodian public is all too familiar with the shortcomings of the Cambodian justice system. Cambodian politicians seem to be keenly aware of this sentiment, because they regularly and loudly insist that this must be done, and will be done soon. Yet, a variety of factors have thus far prevented the establishment of the tribunal.

The plan for the Khmer Rouge tribunal has been highly controversial both among the Cambodian intelligentsia and internationally because, as noted in the section on Government and Politics, the Cambodian judiciary has a reputation for corruption, weak technical capacity, and a habit of answering to the executive, particularly in sensitive cases with political implications. Critics thus argue that the plan for the tribunal gives too much control to the Cambodian government, and that the deliberations of the court are liable to lack an adequate degree of judicial independence and be contaminated by political interference from Cambodia's executive. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been harshly critical of the plan, but a 27-member "Group of Interested States" has continued to promote the process and assist the UN and the Cambodian government in coming to terms on the issue. During the Clinton Administration, the United States was the primary driving force behind the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, while since the advent of the Bush Administration, the process has been driven primarily by France and Japan, with the US playing a subsidiary role.

The proposed Khmer Rouge Tribunal would constitute a significant precedent in international jurisprudence. Unlike any internationalized criminal tribunal devised to date, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal will give an unprecedented degree of influence to nationals of the country where the violations were committed. Some justice advocates worry that this precedent will create future opportunities for countries who might otherwise be subject to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – which is a purely international body, and presumably less vulnerable to the intense political pressures that are always involved with war crimes prosecutions – to reject the jurisdiction of the ICC and demand the "Cambodia model," thus retaining significant domestic control over any judicial proceedings.

Proponents of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal argue that this precedent might not be such a bad thing. The Bush Administration's Ambassador for War Crimes, Pierre Prosper, has stated that it is US policy to seek the prosecution of war criminals in a domestic, national context whenever that appears to be feasible. For victims of war crimes, genocide, and other crimes against humanity, it is likely to be much more satisfying to see those who persecuted them being prosecuted locally, rather than in far away places like The Hague, where judicial proceedings are conducted in unfamiliar foreign languages, and where – not incidentally from the perspective of the donor community – the cost of justice is exceptionally high.

This practice conforms to the principle of "complementarity," which is embodied in Article 17 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. This principle holds that war crimes prosecutions should in the first instance be undertaken in the country where the violations occurred, unless the government in question is either unable or unwilling to do so. It remains to be seen if the Cambodian government is in fact willing and able to hold these trials. But should the Khmer Rouge Tribunal eventually be convened as it has been envisioned, this new precedent will become firmly established in international jurisprudence. More importantly, perhaps, twenty-five years after they were subjected to crimes against humanity on an unimaginable scale, the people of Cambodia may finally see a measure of justice meted out against the architects of the Cambodian genocide.

### The Regional Balance of Power

As a tiny country with a pitifully weak state apparatus, Cambodia faces enormous challenges in its foreign relations with its two much stronger neighbors, Vietnam and Thailand, as well as with the two global powers that have the most abiding interest in the region, China and the United States. All four of these countries share long and complicated histories with Cambodia, including having been directly involved in armed conflict in Cambodia as recently as the early 1990s. Moreover, all four were guarantors of the Paris Accords of 1991, and thus have a shared and continuing responsibility to ensure the peace in Cambodia.

It was noted at some length in previous sections of the study guide that Cambodia has been whip-sawed between Thailand and Vietnam for centuries. Vietnam essentially created the current ruling dynasty in Cambodia, and that ruling party continues to nurture close relations with the Vietnamese. Thus there are many channels, both formal and informal, through which the Cambodian and Vietnamese governments can discuss issues of mutual concern. Vietnam's interests in Cambodia today are far more complex than the primarily security-related concerns that predominated two decades ago. Vietnam is the second largest investor in Cambodia's economy, and cross-border trade is substantial, including a great deal of exchange that takes place beyond regular trade channels. It can thus be said that the complex web of ties with Vietnam probably constitute Cambodia's single most important bilateral relationship. But it could not be Cambodia's only important regional relationship.

Historically, it has been unhealthy for Cambodian rulers to hew too closely to one or the other side of the Thai-Vietnam rivalry. The Cambodian government has been responding to this historical imperative for more than a decade, a transition in many ways made easier by the integration of first the royalist and republican factions into the national community, and more recently the Khmer Rouge. All three of those former adversaries with the central government had close relations with Thailand, and those connections are now being exploited to the benefit of the country as a whole. For its part, too, Thailand has dramatically accelerated its courting of the Cambodian government in the years since the final collapse of the Khmer Rouge, particularly under the leadership of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. This has yielded new cooperation across a broad

spectrum of issues, including trade, border crossings, security and terrorism, cultural exchange and other areas.

Yet, the process of balancing a stronger neighbor sometimes requires that clear signals be sent. Since 1993, Thailand had come to dominate several key sectors of the Cambodian economy, including pharmaceuticals, tourism, hotels, construction materials, telecommunications, and airlines. Cambodia's ruling party evidently decided by late 2002 that the imperatives of economic sovereignty dictated that this imbalance must be redressed. On January 29, 2003, the government orchestrated an anti-Thai riot in Phnom Penh, striking a decisive blow against precisely these Thai economic interests. Since then, negotiations have been in train that will eventuate in new business arrangements. Henceforth, most Thai investments in Cambodia will include partnerships with key members of the Cambodia's ruling party.

As the principal patron of the Khmer Rouge, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was an avowed enemy of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), and was bitterly denounced by PRK state propaganda organs. In the years immediately following the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime, the PRK engaged in periodic bouts of repression against Cambodia's Sino-Khmer community, spurred by fears of a fifth column controlled from Beijing. But the ruling party soon realized that it was not capable of suppressing the energy and discipline of the Cambodia's Chinese business community, and moreover, that it was unwise to do so, in view of the extent to which that community was driving the economic recovery. So, beginning in the mid-to-late 1980's, the CPP instead sought to harness Sino-Khmer entrepreneurial instincts, a policy that has matured in subsequent years. Along with that change of domestic policy, Cambodia also began to court the PRC, a policy initiative that has been vigorously reciprocated. This policy has advanced rapidly since the UN peace process.

The growth of Chinese influence in Cambodia has been substantial at the cultural, political and economic levels. The development of party-to-party and state-to-state relations between Cambodia and the PRC since the early 1990's has dovetailed with the growing influence of the "overseas Chinese" in Cambodia to create a new dynamic. According to figures from the Cambodian Development Council, in 2002 China became Cambodia's third largest investor (\$23 million), trailing South Korea (\$72.6 million) and Vietnam (\$24.2 million) out total FY02 foreign direct investment of \$139 million. The attention lavished on Cambodia by Chinese leaders has been extraordinary, with repeated visits in recent years by the PRC President, Prime Minister, and a seemingly endless parade of senior ministers bearing gifts. A particularly notable recent high-level expression of this interest came in November 2002, when Premier Zhu Rongji visited Phnom Penh and forgave the state debts accrued by the Khmer Rouge, reportedly amounting to as much as \$2 billion.

The reasons for China's intense interest in Cambodia span the spectrum of economic, political and security interests. Particularly important motivations for Chinese foreign policy behavior in Cambodia include driving a strategic wedge into ASEAN, and challenging US, Indian, Japanese and other great power influence in the region at large.



Establishing beachheads from which to exploit the region's natural resources and enhance trade and investment opportunities is another factor. And another consideration is to ensure that any Khmer Rouge Tribunal inflicts minimum damage on the PRC's interests.

In contrast, US attention to Cambodia has been relatively muted. US foreign assistance to Cambodia is been limited by Congressional restrictions, and has been hovering around \$30-40 million annually for the last decade or so. Most of this assistance is distributed to non-governmental organizations in Cambodia, with direct assistance to the government restricted to a few humanitarian areas such as mine clearance, AIDS, and maternal health care. The sole high-profile visit by a senior US official in many years was the brief appearance of Secretary of State Colin Powell in Phnom Penh during the June 2003 ASEAN Regional Forum. Nonetheless, the Cambodian government has assiduously courted the attentions of the US government, mindful of the potency of the "sole superpower" in regional and global affairs. Rather than allow China's influence to become too dominant, Hun Sen has worked hard to maintain and improve his relations with the US as well.

Hun Sen's management of both his regional and global foreign policy challenges illustrates an important technique of weak power diplomacy. Hun Sen has a tendency to tell everyone what they want to hear, and then he wobbles a bit to keep everyone off-balance and continuing to beat a path to his door with additional inducements. It is a technique he learned from his greatest teacher, Norodom Sihanouk. To Chinese audiences, Hun Sen repeats the same mantra: Cambodia is following the "Two Victories" policy, which is to forget the past and concentrate only on the future – forgetting the past being the key phrase the Chinese want to hear, and that Cambodia adheres resolutely to the "One China Policy." To American audiences, Hun Sen demands that a Khmer Rouge tribunal be convened before the end of this year – no matter what year one might be talking about – arguing that the Cambodian people deserve justice for the crimes of the Khmer Rouge regime, and that regional leaders should cooperate with the US in the war on terrorism, just as Cambodia has. Hun Sen is a superb tactician, and is reputed to be a master-level chess player. It shows in the way he manages his foreign policy challenges.

#### Deportation of Alien Residents

In March 2002 under the authority of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, the US concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cambodian government for the deportation of US alien residents of Cambodian extraction who have been convicted of an "aggravated felony." As of June 2004, 67 such individuals had been deported to Cambodia in nine transfers (one of whom subsequently died of natural causes). The pool of alien residents who have been deemed eligible for deportation to Cambodia is slightly more than 1,400. Virtually all of the affected individuals came to the US as legal refugees, and most of them arrived in the US as very young children. However, they subsequently failed to obtain US citizenship, rendering them eligible for deportation. Hence, most of these individuals have been raised as Americans. Many of them have no memories of Cambodia, and do not speak or write the

Khmer language. Some of them, born in Thai refugee camps during the 1970s and 1980s, have never set foot on Cambodian soil.

In practice, an "aggravated felony" can include such offenses as shoplifting, driving while intoxicated, and possession of personal-use quantities of marijuana. One deportee became an aggravated felon when, after having been convicted of relieving himself against a wall in public, that offense was subsequently reclassified as a "sex crime." He had been gainfully employed in a steady job for nearly a decade, owned a home, and was married with four children. Perhaps understandably, his wife refused to relocate to Cambodia with the children, and sued for divorce. Thus it is the case that some of the deportees do not conform to one's typical image of "hardened criminals."

Nonetheless, a significant proportion of those scheduled for deportation, and some of those already deported, have been convicted of serious crimes such as multiple homicide, many of which were committed in connection with membership in violent Southern California street gangs. In a similar situation under the 1996 legislation, hundreds of members of Los Angeles' "El Mara" street gang have been deported to Central America, where the deportees have reconstituted the gang as a transnational criminal enterprise. In Honduras, authorities have reacted harshly to criminal activity by El Mara members; nearly two hundred of them have been killed in various prison incidents. There are concerns that a similar dynamic might develop in Cambodia, and there are signs that this could occur. While some of the deportees have adapted well and are integrating themselves into Cambodian society as productive citizens, others have already had multiple encounters with Cambodian law enforcement authorities, and may eventually be tempted to band together for self-protection against existing Cambodian street gangs, or simply because that is all they know how to do.

In an attempt to ease the entry of the deportees into Cambodian society, an NGO called the Returnee Assistance Project ("RAP") was founded in 2002 by an American minister, Bill Herod. RAP provides orientation, language literacy classes, employment counseling, housing assistance, substance abuse treatment and other services to the deportees. As of June 2004, RAP was operating two half-way houses for the deportees, and was preparing to open a third in anticipation of an increase in the rate of deportations. A few of the returnees require full-time care due to physical or mental health problems, or advanced age. Since mid-2003, the US Department of State has been the largest single source of funding for RAP. US Foreign Service Officers who are posted to Phnom Penh are likely to encounter various aspects of the deportee situation for years to come.

### Defense

The Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) is organized into the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Annual budgeted military expenditures are currently running slightly below US\$100 million, which is about 3% of gross domestic product. Beyond that, it is difficult to be very precise about Cambodia's military posture and order of battle.

Estimates of the size of Cambodia's Army, for example, range from 20,000 to 140,000. It is likely that total military manpower is much closer to the lower end of this range, but it is difficult to know. We do know, however, that more than 400 officers hold the rank of general. The reason for the wide variance in manpower estimates is corruption; "ghost soldiers" permit commanders to pocket pay, and to sign up non-existent conscripts for the World Bank's well-intended but chronically troubled demobilization program. Human rights campaigner Brad Adams has argued,

Collecting the salaries of ghosts is only part of the incentive for inflating the numbers. Soldiers are issued with a wide variety of supplies each year, from rice and shoes to shirts and underwear - and guns. But ghost soldiers don't eat and don't wear clothes. Senior military and government officials profit gloriously from this con. Companies close to senior military and political figures sell these goods to the army at inflated prices. As one of Cambodia's most powerful businessmen says, "For instance, a shirt costs \$8 but the army pays \$21. Shoes cost \$2-\$3 but they pay \$8-\$10. By law they are supposed to bid but they rarely do it." [*Phnom Penh Post*, November 23, 2001]

The level of readiness of the army, whatever size it may actually be, is generally abysmal. Training resources are highly limited. As a result, many officers employ those under their command in private extracurricular revenue-generating activities, such as illegal logging and other aspects of the illicit economy. These income-generating activities are in fact necessary for the military, as the average pay for those soldiers who do actually exist is \$20 per month plus an allowance of 20 kilograms (44 pounds) of rice, which is not nearly enough to support the soldier alone, much less his family.

Consulting standard open-source military references such as SIPRI, IISS, and CSIS will indicate that the RCAF has a modest stock of hardware. One source suggests that Cambodia has 24 combat aircraft, but it is best to take such numbers with a grain of salt. For example, twenty of these erstwhile combat aircraft are MIG-21 fighter-bombers, none of which have been airworthy during the last decade. Four of the MIGs were sent to Israel some years ago for retrofitting, but the Royal Government has not been able to pay the bill, and so the aircraft remain in Israel. Even if one of the MIGs were to suddenly become airworthy, there would be no pilot to fly it, as the Russian- and Vietnamese-trained pilots have long since abandoned the military for more lucrative commercial work. As for the Army's heavy weaponry, a similar discounting should be made. The RCAF claims a force of 150 main battle tanks and 400 pieces of towed artillery, but that is most likely a gross exaggeration. However, it is true that a higher proportion of the Army's assets are likely to be functional at any given time than is the case with the Air Force.

An anecdote regarding Cambodia's Air Force will serve to illuminate RCAF air doctrine, and provides an indication of the overall capability of the RCAF. In April 1994, RCAF Air Force Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Norodom Vatvani was ordered to launch air attacks against civilian gem miners in the Khmer Rouge zone near Pailin. At that time, his entire functional fixed-wing fleet consisted of two old AN-24 cargo aircraft, and so he

pressed these platforms into service for the combat mission. Fearful of flying low enough to come under anti-aircraft fire in the Khmer Rouge zone, the pilots first attempted the attack by hurling satchel charges out of the aircraft from altitude, but this proved ineffective. Finally, they resorted to dropping mortar bombs from the rear of the aircraft, though it is not clear if they were able to actually inflict any casualties on the hapless gem miners laboring in pits far below.

The RCAF Navy does not fare much better than the Army and the Air Force. Cambodia has no major surface combatants, no submarines, and no naval aircraft. They have fewer than half-a-dozen coastal and river patrol craft, and some 1,500 marines. The Navy recently acquired a pair of twin Evinrude outboard-powered launches, which are proudly deployed each year at Phnom Penh's Water Festival. Along banks of the Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers near Phnom Penh, one can observe several derelict US vessels rotting at anchor, and these serve to house much of Cambodia's marine force.

In view of the general lack of capability of the RCAF, Cambodia is fortunate in that at present it faces no strategic threats. It used to be said of Thailand that 'the business of the Thai military is business.' The Cambodian military seems to be copying that page from the Thai playbook. But Cambodia's military also seems to follow the ancient Hindu warrant for provincial political potentates, which is to "consume" the land and the people under their control. In view of the military's alleged involvement in such activities as human trafficking, illegal logging, and "land-grabbing," they evidently take that injunction quite literally. In this respect, the Cambodian military does not so much defend the Cambodian people from threats, but rather the corrupt, bloated, top-heavy and ineffective Cambodian military is in fact itself one of the principal threats facing the Cambodian people today.

### **Issues and Questions**

1. The proposed Khmer Rouge Tribunal is structured in such a way as to ensure that the Cambodian government can exercise effective control over the proceedings, despite the participation of international jurists in the court. For example, Dith Munty, who is a member of the CPP Politburo, is slated to preside over the tribunal's appeals chamber. Judicial independence is the *sine qua non* of "international standards of justice," but who is to say what constitutes "independence" in the context of a given country's judicial system? The UN General Assembly, for one, overwhelmingly affirmed its confidence in Cambodia's ability to conduct this legal procedure. In this light, evaluate the consequences of the principle of "complementarity" for the future of international justice in the wake of a Khmer Rouge Tribunal.

2. The People's Republic of China has provided generous levels of aid to the Royal Government of Cambodia over the last decade. Much of this aid has been in the form of security assistance, including such things as land mine removal, military procurement, military training, military re-organization, and so on. In contrast, the US security-related presence in Cambodia has been largely limited to a military attaché at the embassy, and

periodic missions by the Joint Task Force/Full Accounting, working on the repatriation of the remains of US service members lost during the war. Is it wise for the United States to take such a casual approach toward Chinese cultivation of favor among Cambodia's armed forces, or is it irrelevant due to Cambodia's debatable strategic significance?

### **Internet Resources on Foreign Policy and Defense**

The Report of the UN Experts on a Khmer Rouge Tribunal:

<http://www.khmerinstitute.org/docs/UNKRreport.htm>

Law on the Establishment of Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia:

<http://www.cambodia.gov.kh/krt/english/index.htm>

Data from SIPRI on Cambodian military expenditures (registration required):

[http://web.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex\\_database1.html](http://web.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_database1.html)

## CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE

700-800 AD	Java dominates the region.
806 AD	Jayavarman II casts off Javanese domination and founds Angkor Empire
895	Yasovarman I founds the new capital at Angkor.
10 <sup>th</sup> c.	Buddhism is introduced; Angkor Thom is built.
11 <sup>th</sup> c.	Angkor Thom ("Great City") is embellished.
12th c.	Angkor Wat ("Temple City") is built by Suryavarman II; Kingdom of Champa (present day Cochinchina or Central Highlands of former South Vietnam) taken by Angkor in series of wars.
1178 AD	Vengeful Chams sack Angkor.
1181	Jayavarman VII expells Chams; embellishes Angkor Thom.
1220	Khmers evacuate Champa on death of Jayavarman VII.
1282	Jayavarman VIII defeats Mongol invasion.
1394	Siamese capture Angkor; 100-year war follows.
1431	Capital is moved to Longvek, then to Oudong; Thai annex northern regions.
1626	Vietnamese annex Cochinchina.
1834	On death of Ang Chan, Vietnamese seize control of Kingdom of Angkor.
1840-1846	Territory of Angkor Empire is battlefield for Vietnamese-Thai war.
1848	Ang Duong crowned King of Angkor by joint Vietnamese-Siamese agreement; he agrees to pay tribute to both.
1863	New monarch, King Norodom, accepts a French protectorate; "Cambodge" (Cambodia) emerges.
1884-1886	French governor provokes peasant uprisings.
1907	King Sisowath of Cambodia recovers with French help the provinces of Battambang, Siem Riep, and Sisophon, previously annexed by Thai.
3 Feb 1930	In Hong Kong, Ho Chi Minh founds the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP).
27 July 1931	Khieu Samphan is born in Cambodia.
25 Apr 1941	Norodom Sihanouk, age eighteen, crowned king by French.
12 Mar 1945	Under Japanese occupation, Sihanouk proclaims independence from France.
May 1945	Son Ngoc Thanh returns from refuge in Japan.
Aug 1945	Son Ngoc Thanh becomes prime minister.
Oct 1945	British, Indian, and Free French forces occupy Cambodia; Son Ngoc Thanh arrested, later deported; "Cambodian Liberation Front" formed.
11 Nov 1945	ICP dissolves itself.
8 Nov 1949	French grant limited independence to Cambodia with Franco-Cambodian Treaty; Cambodia becomes an Associate State in the French Union.
Feb 1951	Vietnamese communists reorganize into Lao Dong or Worker's Party.
3 Mar 1951	Lao Dong and CLF ally against French colonialism.
30 Sep 1951	Vietnamese reorganize remnants of ICP into three national parties, forming and dominating the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP).
Mid-1953	King Norodom Sihanouk launches "royal crusade for independence" from France.

- 9 Nov 1953 French grant complete independence to Cambodia.
- 7 May 1954 French garrison at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam, falls to Viet Minh; next day Geneva Conference convenes.
- 21 Jul 1954 Geneva ends, orders free elections for Cambodia and Vietnam, plus a pullout of Viet Minh forces in Cambodia; much KPRP retreats to Hanoi; a few KPRP cadres stay to fight, some to form Pracheachon or "People's Party" to contest elections.
- 8 Sept 1954 SEATO Treaty promulgated in Manila, Philippines.
- Dec 1954 Sihanouk declares neutralism after meeting India's Nehru.
- 31 Dec 1954 United States announces aid to Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Laos, effective January 1, 1955, to combat communism.
- 2 Mar 1955 Sihanouk abdicates to father (Norodom Suramarit) and forms Sangkum Reastr Niyum; he will control this central political institution until 1970.
- Apr 1955 Sihanouk meets with Vietnamese, Laotian, and Chinese communists at Bandung Conference of Nonaligned Nations.
- May 1955 Sihanouk signs agreement to admit US Military Assistance Advisory Group to assess Cambodian military hardware needs.
- 11 Sep 1955 National election returns 83% for Sihanouk's Sangkum, 13% for Democratic Party, and 3% for Pracheachon Party.
- 13 Feb 1956 Sihanouk to Peking, signs Sino-Cambodian Friendship Treaty.
- Feb 1956 Sihanouk refuses over-flight privileges to SEATO for joint military exercises.
- 22 June 1956 People's Republic of China (PRC) gives \$22.3 million to Cambodia, first PRC aid ever to a noncommunist state.
- Spring 1956 Sihanouk rejects SEATO membership, Thailand and South Vietnam impose economic blockade; CIA begins funding anti-Sihanouk rightist group, Khmer Serei, led by Son Ngoc Thanh; Thailand occupies northern frontier of Cambodia.
- June 1958 South Vietnamese army occupies parts of Stung Treng province.
- 13 July 1958 Sihanouk extends diplomatic recognition to PRC.
- Jan 1959 Sihanouk alleges "Bangkok Plot" against him.
- 21 Feb 1959 Cambodian General Dap Chhuon secessionist attempt with Thai, South Vietnamese, Laotian, and U.S. involvement is discovered and crushed by Sihanouk.
- 31 Aug 1959 Assassination attempt on King, Queen, and Prince.
- 3 Apr 1960 King Suramarit dies, succession crisis follows.
- 14 June 1960 National Assembly revises Constitution, elects Norodom Sihanouk head of state.
- 20 June 1960 Prince Norodom Sihanouk becomes head of state.
- 30 Sep 1960 Second KPRP National Congress convenes, later to be referred to as First Congress of the Communist Party of Kampuchea; twenty-one delegates opt for continued political struggle, "preparation" for armed struggle; Touch Samouth elected chairman, Nuon Chea is number two, and Saloth Sar is number three in party organization; KPRP changes party name to Khmer Worker's Party (KWP).

- Jan 1962 Pracheachon General Secretary Non Suon plus thirteen associates arrested, imprisoned for life.
- 20 Jul 1962 KWP Party Secretary Touch Samouth disappears, presumed victim of Sihanouk, opening way for rise of Saloth Sar to party leadership.
- Jan 1963 Sihanouk nationalizes banking and foreign trade.
- 1 May 1963 Liu-Chi state visit to Cambodia; Sihanouk alleges CIA-Kuomintang attempt on Liu's life and his own.
- May 1963 KWP sends 90 percent of leadership personnel underground; Saloth Sar confirmed as general secretary; he and Ieng Sary go to northeast, and later visit China.
- Aug 1963 Sihanouk severs relations with South Vietnam, renounces U.S. military assistance.
- Dec 1963 PRC begins delivery of military aid to Sihanouk's government.
- Sep 1964 Sihanouk meets with representatives of South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) and North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong in Peking.
- 27 Oct 1964 Cambodian National Assembly threatens to break relations with United States if there are any further U.S. violations of Cambodia by U.S. Air Force.
- Nov. 1964 Sihanouk appeals to Vietnamese and Laotians for anti-U.S. summit conference.
- 7 Feb 1965 With Operation ROLLING THUNDER, United States begins bombing North Vietnam.
- 28 Feb 1965 U.S. announces "continuous limited air strikes" on North Vietnam.
- 1 Mar 1965 Sihanouk sponsors Indochinese People's Conference in Phnom Penh; Pathet Lao and NLF attend.
- 8 Mar 1965 U.S. Marines land at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- 1 May 1965 U.S. air strikes in Cambodia's Parrot's Beak.
- 3 May 1965 Sihanouk breaks diplomatic relations with United States.
- June 1965 PRC agrees in principle to provide technicians and more arms to Cambodia.
- Sep 1965 Khieu Thirith and Khieu Ponnary (sisters who are wives of Ieng Sary and Saloth Sar) go underground.
- Nov 1965 Sihanouk sends General Lon Nol on aid-seeking mission to Peking; he returns with arms for 20,000.
- Mid-1965 North Vietnamese begin using port of Sihanoukville as a supply route to South Vietnam.
- 11 Sept 1966 First election is held in Cambodia without pre-selection of candidates by Sihanouk.
- 22 Oct 1966 Rightist-dominated government emerges; Lon Nol is elected premier.
- Mar 1967 CPK cadres organize student demonstrations.
- Apr 1967 Massive peasant revolt in Samlaut district of Battambang Province over land expropriation and forced rice collection policy; Lon Nol sends in paratroopers, cracks down on dissent in capital.
- 22 Apr 1967 Sihanouk charges Khieu Samphan, Hou Yuon, and Hu Nim with responsibility for Samlaut rebellion.



- 24 Apr 1967 Samphan and Yuon go underground; Hu Nim stays in Phnom Penh.
- 30 Apr 1967 Sihanouk removes Lon Nol for failure of Samlaut pacification; Son Sann appointed as new prime minister.
- 2 May 1967 15,000 students demonstrate in Phnom Penh over assumed liquidation of Khieu Samphan and Hou Yuon by Sihanouk security forces.
- 9 May 1967 Sihanouk demands international recognition for the borders of Cambodia.
- 13 May 1967 NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam issue statement recognizing Cambodian border claims.
- May 1967 United States begins Operation SALEM HOUSE, cross-border armed reconnaissance inside Cambodia.
- 6 June 1967 Sihanouk extends de jure diplomatic recognition to NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).
- Aug 1967 Samlaut rebellion stamped out by mass executions.
- 4 Sep 1967 Lon Nol accuses leftist Sihanouk aide, Chau Seng, of coup d'etat plan, latter is exiled; Hu Nim goes underground.
- 4 Jan 1968 PRC sends new military equipment to Lon Nol, including MIG jets and artillery.
- 12 Jan 1968 U.S. Ambassador to India Chester Bowles visits Cambodia to explore resumption of relations with United States and limitation of Vietnamese border use.
- 17 Jan 1968 CPK's newly founded Revolutionary Army of Kampuchea (RAK) begins guerrilla operations in seventeen of nineteen provinces.
- 27 Jan 1968 Sihanouk declares "war" on Khmer Rouge (KCP); United States announces policy of "hot pursuit" into Cambodia.
- 30 Jan 1968 Sihanouk names "Government of the Last Chance"; Penn Nouth is prime minister, Son Sann his deputy; Tet Offensive begins in Vietnam.
- 20 Jan 1969 Richard Nixon is sworn in as thirty-seventh U.S. President.
- 9 Feb 1969 General Abrams, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, requests air strikes against Vietnamese bases in Cambodia.
- 17 Mar 1969 Nixon approves request for air strikes in Cambodia.
- 18 Mar 1969 "Breakfast" air strike in Fishhook area of Cambodia, commencing U.S. bomb attacks designated "MENU" series.
- Apr 1969 United States agrees to respect Cambodian "sovereignty and neutrality."
- 21 Apr 1969 The CPK claims to have captured three provinces and partly captured three more.
- 24 Apr 1969 Summit Conference in Peking; DRV, newly founded Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam (PRG), CLF, and Laotian Front explore possibilities for unity against United States.
- 26 Apr 1969 Sihanouk announces "offensive" against Vietnamese Army in Ratanakiri Province, but his army actually attacks CPK positions.
- 2 May 1969 South Vietnamese communists open embassy in Phnom Penh.
- 9 May 1969 New York Times reporter William Beecher writes story on U.S. air strikes in Cambodia; nobody notices but Nixon.
- 10 May 1969 Al Haig transmits Nixon orders for wiretaps to find who leaked bombing story to Beecher.

- 25 May 1969 Royal Cambodian Air Force uses MIG fighters for first time against Communist positions.
- 11 Jun 1969 U.S.-Cambodian relations reestablished with exchange of embassies.
- 25 Jun 1969 Nixon proclaims "Nixon Doctrine."
- 1 Aug 1969 Penn Nouth resigns as prime minister.
- 12 Aug 1969 Lon Nol regains post as prime minister.
- 1 Sep 1969 Ho Chi Minh dies, Sihanouk attends funeral.
- Sep 1969 Lon Nol returns banking and foreign trade to private sector, then goes to Paris for "medical treatments"; Sirik Matak becomes acting prime minister.
- 29 Dec 1969 National Assembly sustains Sihanouk's rejection of banking and foreign trade denationalization.
- 27 Feb 1970 Sihanouk in Paris announces intent to travel to "great and friendly nations" of PRC and USSR to complain of Vietnamese occupation.
- 8 Mar 1970 Villagers in Svay Rieng Province demonstrate against Vietnamese occupation under direction of Lon Nol at order of Sihanouk in France.
- 11 Mar 1970 20,000, led by government-orchestrated troops, sack the NLF and DRV embassies in Phnom Penh.
- 12 Mar 1970 Sihanouk, in eyes-only cable, threatens heads will roll for overreaction to his anti-Vietnamese demonstration orders.
- 13 Mar 1970 Sihanouk leaves Paris for Moscow; more anti-Vietnamese riots in Cambodia; Acting Prime Minister Sirik Matak suspends government trade with PRG, announces army increase of 10,000 men; Cambodian Foreign Ministry notifies the PRG and DRV that all Vietnamese military forces must be withdrawn from Cambodian territory by March 15.
- 15 Mar 1970 Deadline for NVA pullout passes; Cambodia requests emergency meeting with DRV and PRG.
- 16 Mar 1970 At last official meeting between Cambodia and DRV / PRG, communists refuse to accede to troop removal; Chief of National Police Dum Manorine (Sihanouk's brother-in-law) attempts to arrest Lon Nol, but is blocked by troops loyal to Lon Nol.
- 17 Mar 1970 Dum's resignation is forced in the National Assembly.
- 18 Mar 1970 Cambodian National Assembly, voting with color-coded ballots under the watchful eye of General In Tam, deposes Sihanouk; Sihanouk leaves Moscow for Peking, informed of deposition at airport by USSR Prime Minister Kosygin.
- 19 Mar 1970 U.S. government states that Sihanouk was legally deposed, no need for new recognition of regime.
- 20 Mar 1970 Sihanouk in Peking announces intent to resist his deposition; Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops cross into Cambodia to harass NVA and PRG.
- 22 Mar 1970 Hanoi Party newspaper Nhan Dan supports Sihanouk.
- 23 Mar 1970 Sihanouk announces formation of Khmer National United Front (FUNK); Khmer People's National Liberation Armed Forces (PFLANK) formed; Sihanouk also announces intent to form united front with Laos and

- Vietnam; Kratie FANK (newly renamed Force Armee Nationale Khmer) garrison dissolves along with numerous others.
- 25 Mar 1970 PRC's Chou En-lai endorses the "United Front of Three Indochinese Peoples"; Polish embassy in Phnom Penh offers to evacuate DRV and PRG embassy staffs.
- 26 Mar 1970 Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, and Hou Yuon join FUNK, Khieu as vice-chairman; nonviolent pro-Sihanouk demonstrations break out in Kampong Cham.
- 27 Mar 1970 DRV and PRG evacuate embassies, break relations; FANK fires on peasant demonstrators in Kampong Cham and Takeo.
- 28 Mar 1970 Mass insurrection: 40,000 pro-Sihanouk peasants march on Phnom Penh.
- 29 Mar 1970 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) initiates attacks on FANK in four of six military regions; FANK falls on column of peasants approaching Phnom Penh.
- 2 Apr 1970 In Peking, Sihanouk denounces United States as "sole culprit" in Indochina.
- 3 Apr 1970 North Vietnamese forces overrun Cambodian positions in Svay Rieng.
- 4 Apr 1970 PRC's Chou En-lai endorses Sihanouk's new front organization.
- 13 Apr 1970 Lon Nol troops launch widespread pogrom against ethnic Vietnamese Cambodians.
- 14 Apr 1970 Lon Nol appeals for international aid, US decides to send 3,000 weapons.
- 15 Apr 1970 US adds \$5 million in cash to Cambodia aid package.
- 19 Apr 1970 Nixon ups aid to \$10 million, and adds a CIA weapons cache to the mix
- 24 Apr 1970 Summit Conference of the Three Indochinese People's convenes in Peking, with Sihanouk and Chou En-lai presiding, DRV Premier Pham Van Dong attends.
- 26 Apr 1970 Nixon says he "reached my decision ... to go for broke" in Cambodia.
- 28 Apr 1970 US-South Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia begins, over objectives of the US Secretaries of State and Defense.
- 1 May 1970 Mao Tse-tung personally endorses Sihanouk's front organization.
- 4 May 1970 Sihanouk forms the exile Royal Government of National Unification of Kampuchea; the PRC breaks diplomatic relations with the Lon Nol regime.
- 11 May 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment, prohibiting US military action in Cambodia, is introduced in the Senate.
- 13 May 1970 Lon Nol re-establishes relations with Thailand, broken since 1961.
- 19 May 1970 Cambodia restores relations with South Vietnam, broken since 1963.
- 29 Jun 1970. US withdraws from Cambodia incursion, but South Vietnamese troops stay.
- 5 Jul 1970 Cambodia military tribunal sentences Sihanouk to death, in absentia.
- 10 Aug 1970 Rebels claim that half of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 12 Sep 1970 Emory Swank arrives in Phnom Penh, first US Ambassador since 1965.
- 9 Oct 1970 Lon Nol proclaims a republic, and the Khmer Republic is born.
- 22 Dec 1970 Cooper-Church Amendment becomes law, prohibiting US funds for military use in Cambodia.

- 31 Dec 1970 Rebels claim 70% of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 10 Jan 1971 US Military Equipment Delivery Team is formed for Cambodia.
- Mar 1971 Rebels claim 80% of Cambodia has been "liberated."
- 20 Aug 1971 Lon Nol troops launch Chenla-II offensive to open road to Battambang province.
- 18 Oct 1971 Lon Nol dissolves National Assembly.
- 20 Oct 1971 Lon Nol declares state of emergency, says he will no longer "play the game of democracy and freedom."
- 26 Oct 1971 Vietnamese launch counter-attack on Chenla-II offensive.
- 1 Dec 1971 Majority of Lon Nol army destroyed in Chenla-II counter-attack.
- 17 Dec 1971 Lon Nol revokes civil liberties and political rights in Khmer Republic.
- 11 Mar 1972 Lon Nol declares himself president and commander-in-chief.
- 4 June 1972 Lon Nol elected President of the Republic in questionable balloting.
- 11 Nov 1972 Sihanouk rejects Lon Nol cease fire offer.
- 27 Jan 1973 Paris Peace Accords signed; Article 20 states that all foreign troops will withdraw from Cambodia, but none do so; temporary US bombing halt in Cambodia.
- 6 Feb 1973 North Vietnam demands US end interference in Cambodia.
- 8 Feb 1973 US resumes bombing of Cambodia.
- 31 Mar 1973 Cambodian communist forces deploy armored units for the first time.
- Apr 1973 Cambodian communists begin a systematic program of "de-Sihanoukization."
- 22 Apr 1973 Communist forces advance on Phnom Penh.
- 27 Apr 1973 Communists penetrate to within 3 km of Phnom Penh, amid intense US air strikes.
- 10 May 1973 US House attempts to block funds for US air strikes in Cambodia.
- 21 May 1973 Intense US tactical air strikes begin to blunt communist offensive on Phnom Penh.
- 31 May 1973 US Senate votes 63-17 for an end to air strikes in Cambodia.
- 18 Jun 1973 Communists cut all six major roads linking Phnom Penh with provinces.
- 30 Jun 1973 Congress compromises with Nixon, allows bombing to continue until August 15.
- 9 Aug 1973 Communist forces overrun Phnom Penh international airport, cut communications links with outside world.
- 15 Aug 1973 US air strikes on Cambodia are ended.
- 29 Aug 1973 Lon Nol declares that negotiations are impossible, and that the war will be decided by arms.
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- 13 Nov 1973 US grants Lon Nol \$700 million in aid.
- 21 Nov 1973 Nixon pledges "all-out support" for Lon Nol.
- 5 Dec 1973 By a 2-vote margin, UN upholds Khmer Republic credentials in challenge by Sihanouk's government-in-exile.
- 2 Apr 1974 Mao Tse-tung is photographed with Khieu Samphan at his right hand, and Sihanouk at his left.
- 3 Apr 1974 John Gunther Dean arrives in Phnom Penh as first US Ambassador since Emory Swank departed seven months ago.

- 30 Jul 1974 Senate Judiciary Committee rejects Article IV (illegal war in Cambodia) of Articles of Impeachment against Nixon.
- 9 Aug 1974 Nixon resigns presidency in face of certain conviction by Senate.
- 16 Dec 1974 President Ford, with French president, issue communique expressing hope for peaceful negotiations among parties to Cambodia conflict.
- 1 Jan 1975 Communists launch final offensive against Phnom Penh.
- 5 Feb 1975 Communists cut Mekong River traffic, Phnom Penh is isolated except by air.
- 27 Mar 1975 USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Lon Nol regime.
- 1 Apr 1975 Lon Nol flees Cambodia for Hawaii.
- 12 Apr 1975 US Embassy in Phnom Penh is evacuated by air.
- 13 Apr 1975 Khmer New Year, ends Year of the Tiger, begins Year of the Hare.
- 14 Apr 1975 Khmer Republic military HQ bombed by air; 24-hour curfew in Phnom Penh.
- 15 Apr 1975 Khmer Republic main air base falls, Phnom Penh's defense perimeter collapses.
- 16 Apr 1975 Government imposes 48 hour curfew, Khmer Republic troops abandon outer defense line around capital.
- 17 Apr 1975 Phnom Penh falls with only sporadic resistance; evacuation of civilian population begins.
- 19 Apr 1975 Systematic murder of Khmer Republic military and civilian personnel begins.
- 20 Apr 1975 All Khmer nationals, including Vietnamese and Chinese, are forced out of French Embassy.
- 24 Apr 1975 Evacuation of Battambang, Poipet, and other cities begins.
- 30 Apr 1975 All foreigners deported from Cambodia; Saigon falls, "Vietnam War" ends.
- 3 May 1975 Cambodian-Vietnamese fighting begins on contested coastal islands.
- 12 May 1975 U.S. container ship Mayaguez seized in Cambodian territorial waters; Ford orders air strikes on Cambodia's only oil refinery, sends Marines to rescue crew.
- 21 June 1975 Le Monde reports fighting over Poulo Wai islands and in Ratanakiri mountains between Vietnamese and Cambodian communists.
- June 1975 Saloth Sar to Hanoi for border talks; border liaison group established.
- 18 July 1975 Khmer Rouge envoys ask Sihanouk to return to Cambodia, he refuses.
- Aug 1975 Khmer Rouge incursions into Vietnam increase; Vietnam's Le Duan to Phnom Penh for talks; Hou Yuon resigns in protest and then disappears.
- 19 Aug 1975 Penn Nouth and Khieu Samphan go to North Korea, offer Sihanouk position as head of state for life, he agrees.
- 9 Sep 1975 Sihanouk returns to Phnom Penh.
- Sep 1975 Second round of population relocation begins.
- 5 Jan 1976 Constitution of Democratic Kampuchea is promulgated.
- 20 Mar 1976 People's Representative Assembly chooses 250 delegates, including a previously unknown "rubber plantation worker" named Pol Pot.
- 4 Apr 1976 Sihanouk resigns as Head of State, replaced by Khieu Samphan.
- 14 Apr 1976 Pol Pot becomes Prime Minister.

- 25 Dec 1976 Trade agreements signed with China.
- 10 Apr 1977 Hu Nim is arrested.
- 30 Apr 1977 Vietnam says division-sized Cambodian force attacks Ha Tien and Chau Doc.
- May 1977 Fierce Vietnam-Cambodia border battles.
- Sep 1977 Vietnam launches a major incursion into Cambodia, penetrating up to 10 miles.
- 28 Sep 1977 Pol Pot, Ieng Sary, Son Sen and Vorn Veth visit PRC.
- 25 Dec 1977 Cambodia decides that it is "all-out war" with Vietnam.
- 6 Jan 1978 Vietnam begins withdrawal from Cambodia.
- 5 Feb 1978 Vietnam offer cease fire, Cambodia rejects the offer.
- 15 May 1978 Cambodian Foreign Minister Ieng Sary proposes 7 month "cooling-off" period before begin border talks with Vietnam.
- 4 Jun 1978 In Tokyo, Ieng Sary alleges Vietnam-CIA plot to destroy Democratic Kampuchea.
- 27 Jun 1978 Radio Hanoi responds to Ieng Sary charge of CIA plot: "Have the Kampuchea authorities gone crazy?"
- 21 Aug 1978 Before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, George McGovern calls for an international peacekeeping force to destroy the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 3 Nov 1978 Vietnam and the USSR sign a 25-year friendship treaty.
- 2 Dec 1978 Khmer Rouge defectors in Vietnam declare the "Khmer National United Front for National Salvation" to overthrow the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 28 Dec 1978 Vietnam launches a large-scale invasion of Cambodia.
- 5 Jan 1979 Pol Pot predicts "certain victory" over the Vietnamese invaders.
- 7 Jan 1979 Phnom Penh falls to the Vietnamese, Pol Pot retreats to the Thai border.
- Feb 1979 PRC launches an incursion in northern Vietnam to "teach a lesson."
- 19 Aug 1979 The "People's Revolutionary Tribunal" in Phnom Penh finds Pol Pot and Ieng Sary guilty of genocide, sentences them to death in absentia.
- 9 Oct 1979 Son Sann founds the "Khmer People's National Liberation Front."
- 7 Mar 1980 PRC withdraws from northern Vietnam after sustaining at least 20,000 casualties.
- 11 Mar 1980 Khieu Samphan calls on "all peace-loving, justice-loving countries" to oppose Soviet and Vietnamese "expansionism."
- 19 May 1980 Vietnam tells Thailand that the situation in Cambodia is "irreversible."
- 9 Feb 1981 Sihanouk rebuffs Khieu Samphan offer to form a united front.
- 23 Apr 1981 PRC openly gives weapons to non-communist resistance in Thailand.
- 8 Jul 1981 At UN in New York, Ieng Sary denies that the Khmer Rouge are communists.
- 18 Sep 1981 US representative votes for Khmer Rouge to retain Cambodia's seat at UN.
- 7 Dec 1981 Communist Party of Kampuchea asserts that it has dissolved itself, but that the same individuals will continue to constitute the Government of Democratic Kampuchea.
- 22 Jun 1982 Sihanouk, Khieu Samphan and Son Sann sign an agreement to form the exile "Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea."

- 4 Feb 1983 US Secretary of State George Shultz meets Sihanouk in Beijing.
- 24 Apr 1983 Sihanouk meets with French President Mitterrand.
- 25 Jul 1983 The Phnom Penh government's "Research Committee on Pol Pot's Genocidal Regime" publishes the results of a multi-year study concluding that 3,314,768 persons died during the Khmer Rouge regime.
- 2 Jul 1985 UN Special Rapporteur on Genocide declares that the Khmer Rouge government of Democratic Kampuchea was guilty of genocide "even under the most restricted definition."
- 28 Jun 1988 US Congressional Joint Resolution 602 calls for the "non-return to power by genocidal Khmer Rouge."
- 18 Oct 1988 President Reagan signs Joint Resolution 602 into law.
- 24 Jul 1989 Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen dines with Sihanouk in Paris on the eve of an international peace conference.
- 30 Jul 1989 A month-long international peace conference on Cambodia convenes in Paris.
- 17 Nov 1989 Representative Steven Solarz asks the Department of State what the US is doing to "bring Pol Pot to trial." The State Department submits a document to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, stating that the department believes "evidence exists that the Khmer Rouge committed genocide..."
- 28 Aug 1990 In New York, the Perm 5 on the UN Security Council forge a framework document for a "comprehensive political settlement of the Cambodia conflict" that outlines a quadripartite solution, in which the four principal factions will disarm under UN auspices and peacefully compete for power in a UN-organized election.
- 23 Oct 1991 The Paris Conference on Cambodia adopts the "Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodian Conflict," giving the Khmer Rouge equal legitimacy alongside the Phnom Penh government, and the royalist and republican factions, to compete in UN-sponsored elections. US Secretary of State James Baker tells the conference that the US "will support efforts to bring to justice those responsible for the mass murders of the 1970s if the new Cambodian Government chooses this path."
- 15 Mar 1992 Japanese diplomat Yasushi Akashi, head of the UN Transitional Authority for Cambodia, establishes himself in Phnom Penh.
- 10 Apr 1992 US Senator Charles Robb introduces S.2622, the "Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act." It dies in committee, opposed by the Bush Administration.
- 22 Jun 1992 Thirty-three nations meeting in Tokyo pledge \$880 million to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Cambodia.
- 5 Apr 1993 Khmer Rouge radio denounces the UN elections as "a theatrical farce to hand over Cambodia to Vietnam." They have not cooperated with the UN mission.
- 28 May 1993 UN-organized elections result in victory for Prince Norodom Ranariddh's royalist party, which takes 58 of 120 seats in the National Assembly. The incumbent Cambodian People's Party challenges the results, and a crisis

- ensues, which is eventually resolved by an agreement to form a coalition government.
- 24 Sep 1993 Constituent Assembly declares a constitutional monarchy, and restores Norodom Sihanouk to the throne; the Second Kingdom of Cambodia is born.
- 30 Jun 1993 Senator Robb reintroduces the "Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act" as Title VI of S.1281, and the bill becomes subject of an extended struggle, with fierce opposition from the Clinton Administration.
- 13 Apr 1994 At his Senate confirmation hearing, Charles Twining, US Ambassador-designate to Cambodia, proposes a compromise on the Khmer Rouge Prosecution and Exclusion Act whereby the investigations would be carried out by a private organization rather than by the US government.
- 29 Apr 1994 US Congress adopts the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act.
- 30 Apr 1994 President Clinton signs the Cambodian Genocide Justice Act, and it comes into force as part of Public Law 103-236.
- July 1994 The Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations is established in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, US Department of State.
- 17 Jan 1995 State Department announces a cooperative agreement between Office of Cambodian Genocide Investigations and Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program.
- Aug 1996 Ieng Sary defects to government with a large proportion of Khmer Rouge forces.
- 15 Sep 1996 King Sihanouk grants a royal amnesty to Ieng Sary, overturning his 1979 conviction on charges of genocide by the People's Revolutionary Tribunal.
- 4 Jun 1997 General Nhiek Bun Chhay, an aide to First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh, tells reporters that negotiators are near to sealing a deal for Pol Pot, Ta Mok and Son Sen to go into exile, while Khieu Samphan would be permitted to take up a political role in Cambodia.
- 9 Jun 1997 Khmer Rouge leaders Son Sen and Yun Yat are assassinated on orders from Pol Pot, and the remaining Khmer Rouge leadership falls into armed turmoil.
- 19 Jun 1997 Pol Pot surrenders to Khmer Rouge forces loyal to General Ta Mok.
- 4 Jul 1997 Fighting erupts in Phnom Penh between military forces loyal to the CPP and the royalists, and the coalition government collapses into civil war; Second Prime Minister Hun Sen ousts First Prime Minister Ranariddh.
- 25 Jul 1997 Pol Pot is judged by a summary Khmer Rouge court and sentenced to house arrest for the murders of Khmer Rouge leaders Son Sen and Yun Yat.
- 18 Mar 1998 A Phnom Penh military court tries deposed First Prime Minister Ranariddh in absentia, finds him guilty of collusion with the Khmer Rouge and other offenses, sentences him to 30 years imprisonment.
- 30 Mar 1998 Ranariddh returns to Phnom Penh after being pardoned by his father, King Sihanouk; US Ambassador Kenneth Quinn comments, "Cambodia is a better country today than it was yesterday because it has taken one step in the direction of reconciliation."



- 6 Apr 1998 US President Clinton reportedly issues an order for Pol Pot to be taken into custody by US officials in Thailand.
- 15 Apr 1998 Pol Pot learns through a Voice of America broadcast that the Khmer Rouge are considering surrendering him to the US; he dies later that night in Anlong Veng.
- 30 Apr 1998 US tables draft statute at the UN Security Council for an ad hoc international Khmer Rouge tribunal, but the other four members of the P5 are not enthusiastic.
- 26 Jul 1998 Cambodian elections yield 64 National Assembly seats for the People's Party, 43 for the royalist party, and 15 for the opposition Sam Rainsy Party. The royalists and the opposition contest the result and take to the streets in violent protests.
- 11 Sep 1998 Congressman Dana Rohrabacher introduces HR533 in the US House of Representatives, calling for Prime Minister Hun Sen to be prosecuted for genocide.
- 10 Oct 1998 HR533 is adopted, expressing the sense of the US House of Representatives that the United States should work to bring about the indictment of Hun Sen for violations of international humanitarian law after 1978.
- 30 Nov 1998 After months of violent street protests over the election results, the People's Party and the royalist party form a coalition government, with Hun Sen as Prime Minister and Norodom Ranariddh as President of the National Assembly.
- 25 Dec 1998 The last Khmer Rouge political leaders in active resistance, Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan, surrender to the Cambodian Government.
- 22 Feb 1999 A UN Group of Experts recommends the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the Khmer Rouge for genocide and other serious crimes.
- 12 Mar 1999 The Cambodian government delivers an aide-memoire to the UN Secretary-General, formally rejecting the proposal for an international tribunal.
- 30 Apr 1999 Cambodia becomes a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- 17 Jun 1999 Cambodia requests UN assistance in drafting legislation to allow foreign judges and prosecutors to participate in a domestic Khmer Rouge tribunal.
- 30 Jun 1999 Russia and China tell the US that they formally reject the concept of a Chapter VII Security Council mandate for a Khmer Rouge tribunal, and the US then turns its attention to other potential approaches.
- 4 Aug 1999 With HR 2606, the US Congress conditions foreign assistance to Cambodia on a formal finding that "the Government of Cambodia has established a tribunal consistent with the requirements of international law and justice and including the participation of international jurists and prosecutors for the trial of those who committed genocide or crimes against humanity."

- 23 Oct 1999 US Ambassador at Large for War Crimes David Scheffer meets with Cambodian officials in Phnom Penh, seeks agreement on a compromise for the tribunal.
- 6 Jan 2000 Cambodia's Council of Ministers approves the draft Khmer Rouge tribunal law.
- 29 Dec 2000 The Khmer Rouge tribunal law goes before the National Assembly for debate.
- 2 Jan 2001 The National Assembly adopts the tribunal law.
- 30 May 2001 US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms and Senate Appropriations Committee Foreign Operations Subcommittee Chairman Mitch McConnell write to Secretary of State Colin Powell, saying they have "little faith" in the proposed Khmer Rouge genocide tribunal.
- 7 Aug 2001 Cambodia's Constitutional Council approves the tribunal law.
- 10 Aug 2001 King Sihanouk promulgates the tribunal law.
- 3 Feb 2002 Cambodia holds commune council elections, and the ruling party sweeps the vote, with the CPP dominating in 1,597 communes, compared to 13 for the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, and 10 for the royalist FUNCINPEC party.
- 8 Feb 2002 The UN rejects Cambodia's tribunal law, and withdraws from negotiations.
- 9 Feb 2002 US Ambassador to Cambodia, Kent Wiedemann, urges Cambodian government to remain open to negotiations with UN on the tribunal.
- 26 Mar 2002 US offers asylum to 1,000 Montagnard refugees who had fled Vietnam into Cambodian territory.
- 11 Apr 2002 Cambodia is one of ten countries depositing notice of ratification of the Treaty on the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the United Nations, bringing the total number of ratifications of the ICC to more than sixty and thus triggering the formal establishment of the court.
- 1 Oct 2002 Senate confirmation hearing is held for Charles A. Ray, US Ambassador-Designate to Cambodia.
- 18 Dec 2002 The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution instructing the Secretary-General to resume tribunal negotiations with the Cambodian government.
- 18 Mar 2003 Secretary-General Annan reports to the General Assembly that his team has reached agreement with the Cambodian government on a Khmer Rouge tribunal.
- 6 Jun 2003 Cambodia and the UN sign the Khmer Rouge tribunal agreement.
- 27 Jul 2003 National election returns a majority of 73 National Assembly seats for the ruling party, with 26 seats for the royalists and 24 for the opposition, but the CPP falls short of the two-thirds majority required to form a government. The resulting political stand-off delays formation of the next government for nearly a year, but unlike 1998, the minority parties do not call their partisans into the streets.
- 12 Sep 2003 The World Trade Organization agrees to admit Cambodia as a member.
- 30 Jun 2004 Leaders of the ruling party and royalist party sign an agreement on power sharing, clearing the way for the formation of a new government.

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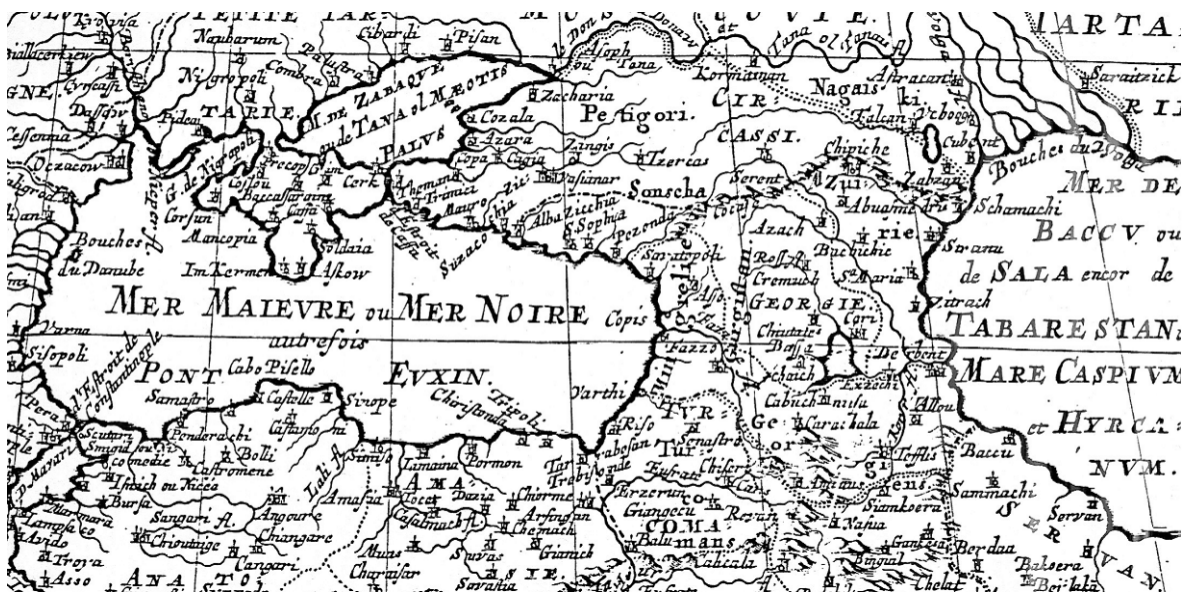
**CAUCASUS  
SELF-STUDY GUIDE**







## CAUCASUS SELF-STUDY GUIDE



Map published by N. Sanson, 1795, Amsterdam

## **SELF-STUDY GUIDE TO THE CAUCASUS**

The Self-Study Guide to the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and certain aspects of the North Caucasus, Russia) is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Caucasus history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations.

The Caucasus is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute, Main State, or District of Columbia public libraries.

The first edition of the Guide was prepared and illustrated by Alex van Oss, Chair, Caucasus Studies, Area Studies Division, Foreign Service Institute. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by the author. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are from the public domain, from sites that explicitly say “can be used for non-profit or educational use,” or are from the author’s own materials. This publication is for official educational and non-profit use only.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The purpose of this Guide is not merely to inform, but to stimulate the reader’s interest in the Caucasus, which is one of the most fascinating places in the world. To that end, I have taken the liberty of occasionally using my own illustrations and personal anecdotes.

Caucasus history is intricate, deeply felt, and open to many interpretations. It cannot easily be squeezed into a few dozen pages. This humble guide offers certain “glimpses” of the region, focusing especially on history and culture--or rather, histories and cultures. Parts of the North Caucasus, in Russia, have been included because events there affect the South Caucasus directly and in major ways.

My heartfelt thanks go to Carl Lankowski and Ambassador Harry Gilmore for their encouragement in this project; to Marie Gardner and Dara Hourdajian for copy-editing assistance; and to Melody Crallie for graphics design. My father, Hendrik van Oss, a Foreign Service Officer, and my brother, Hendrik G. van Oss, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, also made many useful comments pertaining to history, geography, petroleum, grammar

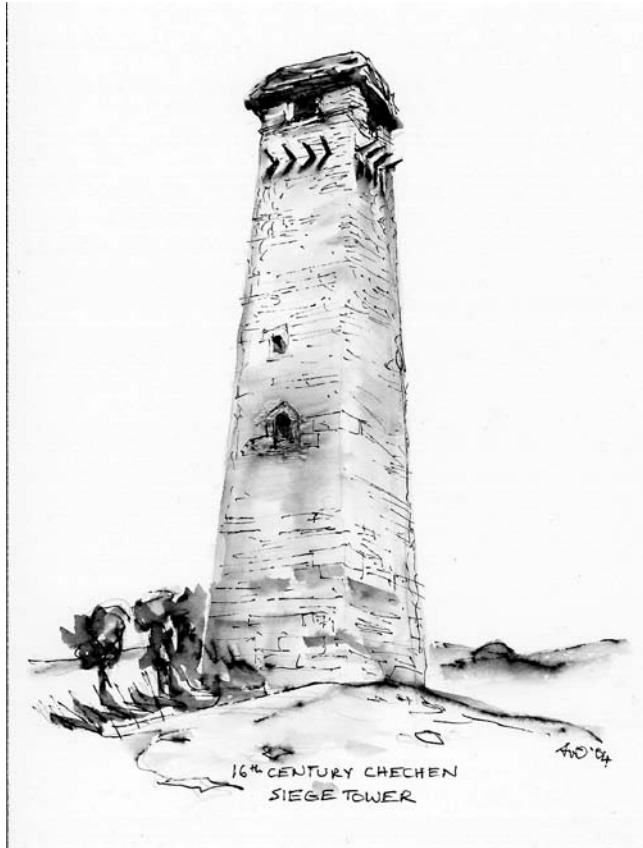
and nuance. The cover illustration, kindly provided by Charles Maynes, is taken from Sergei Anisimov's Caucasus Region Travel Guide (Government Press, Moscow/Leningrad, 1927).

Alex van Oss  
July 6, 2004

Five years have sped by since this *Self-Study Guide* first appeared, during which time three events have rocked the Caucasus: Georgia's "Rose Revolution" (2003), the Russian-Georgian conflict (2008), and the worldwide economic crisis. A fourth and more positive surprise--the warming in relations between Armenia and Turkey--could potentially augur, if not an untying, at least a loosening of several of the Caucasus's intractable geopolitical knots. All this serves to remind us that events in the Caucasus do not remain local, but ripple throughout Europe, Central Asia, and further, within hours. [AvO April 2009]

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## THE CAUCASUS

### INTRODUCTION

*“The Caucasus was always a powder keg—and now it is a nuclear powder keg!”*

Murat Yagan, Abkhazian elder,  
interview with the author, 2002

*“All Caucasians are great liars.”*  
(quoted in Griffin, Nicholas. p.3.  
Caucasus: Mountain Men and Holy Wars.  
St. Martin’s Press. 2001.)

The word Caucasus derives from *Kaf*, a legendary mountain. The conventional, and quaint, connotation of the word Caucasian as meaning “white” may be traced to the theories of German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach who, in his treatise *On the Natural Variety of Mankind* (1775) used skull measurements, lightness of skin color, and beauty of features to define Caucasians as the world’s most ancient peoples, and the Caucasus as humanity’s cradle.

The Caucasus figures in Greek mythology as the lofty prison of Prometheus, chained to a rock (located, depending on the myth, on Mount Elbruz or Mount Kazbek). In addition, Jason and the Argonauts sailed to the valley of the Rioni Rivier, Imeretia, south of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, and there found the Golden Fleece--and later the sorceress Medea, who seduced Jason with an herbal potion. This legendary rendezvous reputedly occurred in the fields at Ushgul, possibly the highest site inhabited all year round in the Caucasus, near the castle of the renowned Queen Tamara, under whom the country prospered in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently, Tamara’s great beauty attracted lover upon lover; each stayed for one night in the castle and was hurled from the battlements the next morning. (In another version of the story, there was only one suitor, who tricked his way into the virtuous royal bedchamber—and became impotent.).

Setting legends aside, there is one rock-solid fact about the Caucasus: its strategic nature. Empires, nations, and hordes have long sought to control the Caucasus, generally for access to other regions. Narrow passes through the mountain gorges, or along coastal zones at either end of the peaks, allowed armies, pilgrims, and nomads to move from Asia into the Middle East and Southern Europe, and from Persia north into Russia. Throughout history the Caucasus afforded access to the Black Sea and the Silk Road in Central Asia, to Arabia and Mecca, and to India. Today the Caucasus beckons not so much as a passage, but as a conduit of Caspian oil and gas.

Caucasus politics are as unpredictable and potentially turbulent as the region’s seismic terrain. Unlike earthquakes, which tend to be local in focus, human upheavals in the Caucasus—pitting old regimes against new, democracy against autocracy, and all too often Christians against Muslims—threaten potentially to spread to the Middle East or otherwise entangle major powers. The Caucasus is a demographer’s delight (and nightmare) in that it presents a crazy-quilt of interspersed peoples and nationalities. Georgia and Azerbaijan historically have been home to sizeable and influential Armenian populations. Yerevan (Armenia), from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century until 1834, belonged first to an Azerbaijani khanate and then to Persia--which in turn, as Iran, has a large Azeri population. For centuries, Caucasus peoples have shared history and, at times, rulers. These sundry ethnic groups—Abkhazians, Georgians, Armenians, Azeris, and dozens of others—have mingled in the street, conducted business, and intermarried, making the recent slew of civil wars, ethnic cleansings, and secessions all the more bitter. Turmoil in the Caucasus can be blamed on one or more of the following factors: outside interventions (by Tamerlane, for example, or the Ottomans, or the Tsar), Caucasus obduracy, Caucasus tempers, Caucasian traditions of vendetta, and the machinations of Stalin.

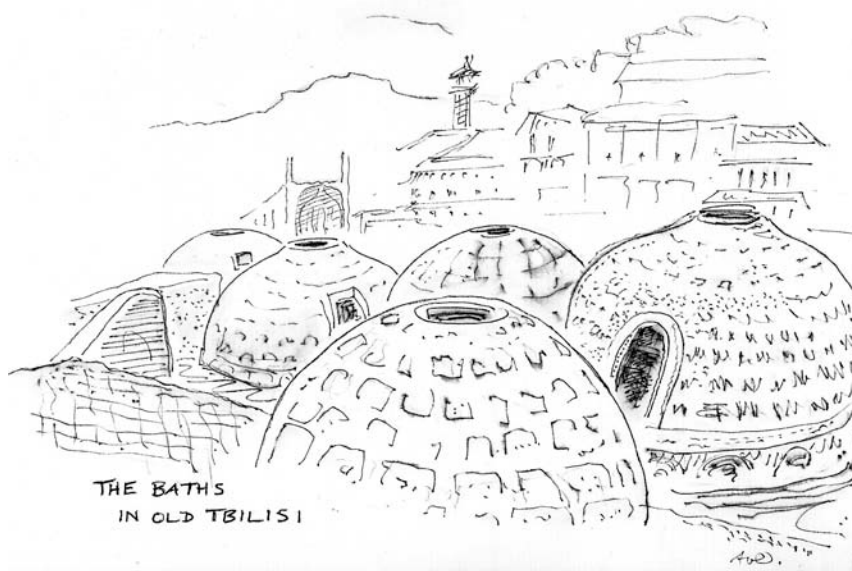
Stalin's dark Georgian genius forged the Soviet Union, but it also scorched and branded its peoples. While Stalin criticized nationalism as a threat to the Communist state, he also used it, when convenient, as a tool and devised borders in the Caucasus of exquisite complexity that served to isolate (at least on a map, if not in day to day intercourse) ethnic minorities within majorities, or cut across ethnic divides. With such boundaries, and with mass deportations of entire peoples, Stalin divided and conquered the lands and peoples of the USSR. The result—a jiggled, displaced, cultural hodge-podge—almost guarantees periodic instability throughout the Caucasus.

These tragic events, sometimes covered in the press, but more often hidden from the world, have occurred against a background of national wars and imperial expansions, not to mention today's energy resource exploration and development, regime changes, economic embargoes, arms, narcotics, and human trafficking, and anti-terrorist campaigns. And all in an area the size of North Dakota.

The Caucasus is a land consisting of "knots and 'nots'" that are at once geopolitical and conceptual, as follows:

- The Caucasus is not Russia.
- Russia is not the Caucasus.
- Even the Caucasus is not the Caucasus!

In essence what this means is that foreigners throughout the ages have been seduced into projecting their own fantasies (religious, Romantic, Imperialistic, post-Cold War, Eurasianist, Turanist, Democratic, and so forth) upon this ancient, variegated, and elusive region. During the 19th and 20th centuries, British and Russian diplomats, along with secret agents and adventurers, devoted a good deal of their lives to studying the Caucasus, learning its languages and customs, and even sometimes "going native." This is obviously not an option for the average United States diplomat. However, the Caucasus does offer a fascinating and potentially rewarding career path to anyone attracted by its cultural richness, and who understands the importance of its pivotal location and resources. Today a student of the Caucasus can refer to the work of many fine analysts, anthropologists, political scientists, journalists, and NGOs. Nevertheless, it remains the case that, while artists and poets turn to the Caucasus for inspiration, and tourists for rest and recreation, soldiers and diplomats will always find in this locale—the home of Narts and the proverbial Kaf Mountains—that their work is cut out for them...



## **GEOGRAPHY: A Land of Contrasts**

*In Tbilisi, situated in the Kura River valley, tourists may visit a synagogue, an Armenian Gregorian church, and a Georgian Orthodox church all on the same street— an indication of religious tolerance and the close mixing of peoples in Georgia. A Circassian elder, unimpressed by this story, scoffed and said: “Close? That’s nothing! Where I come from, high up in the mountains, the next village may be so close you can call out: ‘Hello...good morning!’ and they will hear you. But to get to that village on horseback takes a whole week.” (As recounted to the author.)*

Maps tell fascinating stories: ancient and medieval cartographers, referring to the Bible, often drew the Caucasus Mountains (labeled as 'Armenia,' 'Abkhazia,' or 'Circassia') in a central location--next to Jerusalem--and marked it with a helpful diagram of Noah's Ark on top of Mount Ararat. In these old curiosities, much of today's European Union ('Europa') would be squeezed towards the top of the map, towards the frozen northern periphery ('Ultima Thule'). Centuries later, newer atlases left out Noah and drew attention to Byzantium, Russia, and Persia--but, alas, these maps tended to shove the mighty Caucasus off to the left or right margin, or stuff it out of sight entirely, down into the central binding where the atlas pages join together. Fortunately for all, by the 19th century the Caucasus bobbed to the surface once again as the industrial world developed a thirst for oil, and British and German mapmakers traced out, in obsessive detail, every peak and valley between the Black Sea and the Caspian. Maps are indeed marvelous, but of course "maps are not the terrain"...

The terrain of the Caucasus happens to be extraordinarily varied, with numerous microclimate zones; its weather can be mild in one place and severe a short distance away. In some Black Sea



regions the mountains plunge directly to the shore and travelers may descend from alpine regions to lush sub-tropical strands in an hour. Ancient and dense forests in certain areas have been depleted and replaced by scrubland. In the Greater Caucasus mountain range, Elbruz (elev. 18,480 feet) is the highest peak in Europe, whereas parts of Azerbaijan, along the Caspian, are below sea level. Azerbaijan's natural gas vents, eternally burning, have been known and even worshiped since antiquity, along with oil deposits oozing from the earth. The Tabriz region, formerly Azeri, now in Iran, has been called the original Garden of Eden (an honor claimed by sundry other Caucasus nations as well), whereas Armenia is largely arid plateaus and plains, hot or snowbound, according to season, and with stark mountains. A short bird-flight away, Georgia's climate ranges from alpine and temperate to hot and humid—perfect for viniculture, which Georgians say began in their homeland.

With mountains to their back, South Caucasus peoples throughout history focused their attention more towards the south and west—Persia and Anatolia—and less to the north or east, whence the occasional “uninvited guest” would swoop in from the steppes or the deserts of Central Asia. By contrast, the North Caucasus peoples, backed by those same mountains, have had to contend with a series of eastern raiders—Huns, Mongols, Tatars—and northern foes ranging from Varegs (Varyagi, Vikings) and Khazars, to Russians, Cossacks, and Germans. In a sense, the Caucasus Mountains provide a false sense of security because, though rugged and steep, they are not impassable. As a result, powerful and often violent currents and influences find refuge within those vastnesses and periodically cross back and forth between north and south. Today the North Caucasus (and parts of the South) remains under the sway of Russia, whereas Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, eternally wary of their large neighbor over the peaks, once again look to Iran and to the west—to Turkey, the European Union, and the United States—for their future. They look east as well: to China, for the Caucasus produces oil and gas, the life-blood of Western life and the western lifestyle worldwide. In all these matters, terrain, geography, and good maps, remain of paramount importance.

## **Armenia**

As the Finns say, “You just can't get around geography.” Terrain often determines destiny and certainly does so in Armenia. “Historical Armenia” occupied considerable portions of the Anatolian Plateau in today's Turkey. This is the highest landlocked plateau in the Middle East, with an average elevation of 3000 feet (and up to 7000 feet). The volcanic Mount Ararat (also situated in Turkey) is a nostalgic symbol for Armenians and rises to 17,000 feet. This plateau, with limited points of entry, enabled occupants of historical Armenia to dominate surrounding areas of the Middle East.

Viewed more closely, historical Armenia consisted of a series of small plateaus, valleys, and gorges crossed by some 34 greater and lesser mountain ranges of complex geology, dominated by limestone and igneous rock, and with little rainfall or forests. Today's Armenia, much reduced in territory, is landlocked, with mountain steppes and meadows, and patches of forests. The

Republic (29,793 square kilometers) is about the size of Maryland—less than a tenth of the territory of historical Armenia (which was comparable in area to Great Britain).

The Araks River ('Mother Araxes'), though un-navigable, is another Armenian national symbol. It flows by many of her ancient cities, descending from the plateau in cascades and gorges 5,000 feet to the fertile plain of Ararat, where it becomes the border with Turkey and Iran before emptying into the Caspian. Prominent lakes in historical Armenia include Van and Sevan. The latter is modern Armenia's largest body of water, at an altitude of 6,279 feet. Sevan originally covered 550 square miles, but Soviet hydroelectric projects reduced its level by 50 feet, and diversions of streams to replenish the lake have instead brought pollution and destroyed much of Sevan's marine life.

Armenia's climate is continental, dry, and often harsh, with summer temperatures of up to 110° F and winters sometimes colder than Moscow's. Armenia is essentially an extension of the Central Asian deserts, with rich volcanic soil that is largely un-tillable unless irrigated. Though little rain falls, abundant water flows from the mountains and mineral springs and is harnessed for hydroelectric power. The land is highly seismic, and earthquakes have swallowed up churches and destroyed cities time and again. For example, in 1988, a devastating earthquake at Gumri killed 25,000-50,000 people and left 200,000 homeless. As a result, Armenia is a land of picturesque and plentiful ruins.

## **Azerbaijan**

Some areas of Azerbaijan are steppe, whereas the "separate bit" of Azerbaijan, Nakhichevan, consists of arid plains and dramatic mountains. Azerbaijan's terrain varies from semi-desert regions below sea level, to the wet, muggy, forested mountains with tea plantations in the Talysh region. The capital, Baku, sits on the Absheron Peninsula, which juts into the Caspian Sea. In ancient times, the prophet Zarathustra resided in Apsheron. Today Apsheron offers a virtual cornucopia of crude oil and petroleum products--and also enjoys the distinction of being one of the most polluted regions on the globe thanks to oil spills, toxic defoliants and DDT used in the cotton industry.

## **Georgia**

Slightly bigger than South Carolina, Georgia is largely mountainous and rugged with a mild climate on the Black Sea coast and cold winters in the highlands. Its scenery can change quickly from forest to scrub to semi-desert to alpine meadow. Rivers course through dramatic and often romantically gloomy mountain gorges. The Kura (Mtkvari) River originates in Turkey and flows through the ancient capital, Mtskheta, and then Tbilisi, before continuing through Azerbaijan to the Caspian Sea.

## **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 How many trade and travel routes exist across the Caucasus Mountains?
- 2 Where are the region's highest and lowest points?
- 3 Read the first chapter of Lermontov's A Hero of Our Time. Where was the narrator going and what mountains did he see en route?
- 4 Whence do the major Caucasus rivers originate, and where do they flow?

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[INSERT: "Poor little Caucasus, getting it in the neck!" diagram.]

### CHRONOLOGY

100 BC

### ARMENIA

**TIGRAN THE GREAT**, expanded the Armenian

Empire to its greatest size (95-55 BC)

**ROMANS** conquer the Caucasus and Kartli-Iberia (66)

Then they conquer Armenian Empire (30 BC)

100 AD	And then they annex Azerbaijan ('Albania') 100-300AD
300	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b> accepted by Tiridates III (301 AD? 314 AD? debated)
400-600	<b>FIRST GOLDEN AGE OF ARMENIAN CULTURE</b> <b>Byzantine Empire</b> cedes Armenia to <b>Arabs</b> (653)
800	<b>BAGRATID</b> family (installed by Arabs, 806) governs Armenia. Armenian prince Ashot I (813) begins <b>1,000 years of Bagratid rule</b> in Georgia.
900	<b>SECOND GOLDEN AGE OF ARMENIAN CULTURE</b> (862-977) ( Ashot III)
1000 centuries)	<b>BYZANTINE GREEK</b> invasions of Armenia (continue into the 11th-14th centuries)
1000s-1300s	<b>SELJUK TURK</b> invasions of Armenia <b>CRUSADES.</b> Cilician Armenian and Georgian armies help European armies to control Holy Land. <b>MAMELUKE TURKS</b> conquer Cilician Armenia (1375)
1400s	<b>OTTOMAN Empire</b> absorbs most of modern Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
1800	Treaty of Turkmanchay (1828) awards Nakhichevan and Erevan area to Russia "Armenian question" arises at Congress of Berlin (1878) and becomes an ongoing European issue. First Armenian revolutionary party formed (1881) <b>Massacre of 200,000-300,000(?) Armenian subjects by Ottoman Turks</b> (1894-
96)	
1900	Young Turks take over Ottoman government (1908). Reform agenda supported by Armenian population. <b>Young Turks order massacres of 600,000-- 2 million(?) Armenians, driving others from eastern Anatolia.</b> (1915-22) Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia form independent <b>TRANSCAUCASIAN FEDERATION</b> (1917). Tsar Nicholas II abdicates Russian throne; Bolsheviks take power in Russia. (1918) <b>Independent Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian states</b> emerge from defeat of Ottoman Empire in World War, become republics in the <b>USSR</b> for seven decades.
1920-30s	Industrialization, collectivization, purges, Russification.
1991	<b>Independence</b> from the Soviet Union. Ongoing Nagorno-Karabagh dispute.
<b>CHRONOLOGY                      AZERBAIJAN</b> <b>Persian fire worship</b>	

300 BC	GREEK influence
200	Parthian Empire
100	
	<b>ROMAN</b> influences in Caucasian “Albania”
100 AD	
200	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b> advances
300	
500	Attack by <b>Turkic</b> “Sabirs”
600	<b>Christian Albania</b> (Mikhranides) First big <b>Arab</b> attack (664)
700	
	<b>ARAB CONTROL</b>
800	
	Babek's Rebellion (816-837)
900	More autonomy in "Aran" and "Shirvan"
1000	
	<b>OGUZ/SELJUK TURKS</b>
1100	
	<b>GEORGIAN</b> suzerainty
	<b>GOLDEN AGE</b> ATABEKS (Attabeys) in Ganja/ <b>Nakhchivan</b>
1200	
	<b>MONGOL RAIDS</b> (1221,1235)
1300	
	<b>MONGOL EMPIRES</b>
	<b>TIMUR's RAMPAGES</b> (1380)
1400	<b>Turkic</b> Overlords (Gara-Goyonlu, Aq-Goyonlu)
1500	<b>SHI'ITE ISLAM</b> adopted (1501) "GREAT AZERI EMPIRE" (Persian Safayid Dynasty)
1600	<b>Ottoman</b> Turks, then <b>PERSIAN CONTROL</b>
1700	Nadir Shah Attacks 1735-47 <b>Small Khanates</b>
1800	<b>RUSSIAN COLONY</b>
	<b>OIL BOOM</b> 1860s-1915
1900	<b>Independence</b> 1918-20 Democratic Republic <b>USSR period</b>
1991	<b>Independence</b> again <b>Nagorno-Karabagh</b> dispute 1988-present
2003/2005	<b>Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan</b> oil pipeline

## CHRONOLOGY

5000 BC

## GEORGIA

**Neolithic** Culture, dwelling & burial sites in Tbilisi

2000

**INDO-EUROPEANS** enter Georgia

1000

Late Georgia Bronze Age

900

Capture of King Asia of the Daiaeni (845)

800

Sarduri II of **Urartu** invades Colchis (750)

**SCYTHIANS & CIMMERIANS** invade Georgia (730)

600

**GREEK** colonies

500

Xenophon and his Ten Thousand cross Southwest Georgia

400

**IBERIAN KINGDOM**, Tbilisi founded (458)

200

Mithridates Empator of Pontus (163-120)

100

**ROMANS**: Pompey's Caucasian Campaign (66-55)

0

Vespasian fortifies Mtskheta Castle (75 AD)

100 AD

Georgian ambassadors go to Hadrian

300

St. Nino "brings" **CHRISTIANITY** (330)

400

Peter the Iberian (409-88)

King **Vakhtan Gorgaslan** (446-510)

500

Armeno-Georgian monophysite synod of Dvin (506)

**JVARI CHURCH, Mtskheta** (590-607)

600

**GREEKS & KHAZARS** capture Tbilisi (627)

**ARABS** occupy east Georgia (655)

700

**CALIPH**'s forces ravage Georgia (636-38)

Prince Ashot the Great (from Armenia)

800

Adarnasse IV, King of the Georgians

900

**BAGRATID DYNASTY (lasts approx. 1000 years)**

Bagrat III, King of Kartli (975)

1000

**TVETISKHOVELI CATHEDRAL, Mtskheta** (1029)

**SELJUK TURKS** invade (1065)

**KING DAVID THE BUILDER** (1089-1125)

Georgia occupies part of Armenia (1123)

Georgia captures Tbilisi from Muslim emirs (1121)

Georgia occupies Derbent (1167)

The Bard **SHOTA RUSTAVELI** (1188)

**QUEEN TAMAR** (1184-1212)

1200

**GEORGIAN/GREEK Empire of Trebizond**

Georgia captures Kars (1206)

Georgia invades Iran (1208-1210)

**MONGOLS** invade (1236)

Georgia becomes principalities with nobles and kings, and is often vassal to the Mongol khan.

1300

**THE BLACK DEATH**

**TAMERLANE** invades (1386-88), sacks Tbilisi

Georgian **CLANS** evolve, country splits into three kingdoms + principalities (for 400 years)

**JEWISH, ARMENIAN, PERSIAN** merchants, Silk Road

access

1500 **TURKS** "invade" West Georgia (for 400 years)  
**SAFAVIDS** "invade" (1549)  
 FEUDAL lords and princes, Georgia divided into  
 Ottoman and Safavid spheres of interest (for 200 years)

1700 **RUSSIAN** contact begins (1554)  
 Herekle II (1744-98) unites Kartli and Kakheti  
**Georgia allies with CATHERINE THE GREAT (1783)**  
**SHAH AGHA MOHAMMAD KHAN** burns Tbilisi (1798)

1800 **Georgia annexed by RUSSIA (1801)**  
 Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti abolished (1801)  
 Russia consolidates rule over Georgia (for 117 years)  
 RUSSIFICATION of feudal system  
 Military governors, Conspiracy of 1832  
**RUSSIA fights SHAMYL**  
 Georgian Socialist Democrats  
 Stalin born (1878)

1900 **RUSSIAN REVOLUTION (1917)**  
 Mensheviks seize control in Georgia

1918-20 **GEORGIAN INDEPENDENT STATE**  
 Land reforms  
 Red Army invades Georgia (1920)  
 Georgia becomes a Soviet Socialist Republic

1922-26 Georgia joins the **TRANSCAUCASIAN SOVIET  
 FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC**  
 Farm collectivization (1930s)

1936 Georgia becomes a **REPUBLIC of the USSR**  
 Purges (1936-37)

1989 Georgia/South Ossetia clashes

1990 Elections

1991 **GEORGIAN INDEPENDENCE** declared  
 Zviad GAMSAKHURDIA elected president

1991-2 **WAR WITH ABKHAZIA**  
 Gamsakhurdia deposed, Eduard SHEVARDNADZE returns  
 from Russia (1992)  
 Georgians repelled from Abkhazia  
 Abkhaz ceasefire (1994)

1995 SHEVARDNADZE becomes president.

2002 **UNITED STATES** forces enter Georgia to "train-and-equip"  
 Georgians for anti-terrorist operations

2003-5(?) **BAKU-TBILISI-CEYHAN OIL PIPELINE**  
 "ROSE REVOLUTION" (2003) Shevardnadze resigns

2004 Mikheil SAAKASHVILI inaugurated  
 Ajarian separatist leader Alan Abashidze toppled

2008

Clashes with S. Ossetia  
Abkhazian elections  
Russian-Georgian-S. Ossetian Conflict



## Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



## PEOPLES

The Caucasus has been called the “museum of mankind” due to its varied and ancient cultures, as well as the “mountain of languages” (at least 40 being spoken, some by only a few thousand people, with more than two dozen languages in Daghestan alone). The Caucasus, like its neighbors, Turkey and Iran, is a cultural crossroads that has always boasted a mix of autochthonous “host” peoples (e.g. Georgians, Circassians) and various “guests”: Greeks, Mongols, Byzantines, Romans, Persians, Turks, Slavs, and many others. Few areas of the Caucasus can claim ethnic purity; indeed, the region resembles a crazy-quilt of interspersed peoples: there are Georgian Armenians, Turkish Georgians, Georgian Azeris, and every other

combination. For generations, even centuries, groups have lived in close proximity (such as the Armenians and Azeris in Nagorno-Karabagh, at least until recently), or mingled and intermarried (e.g. Abkhaz and Circassians with Georgians and Mingrelians), making current civil wars and the creation of breakaway regions all the more bitter.

Caucasus demography changes over time. Indeed, only its mountains endure, and the paths across them, while maps and political borders mean little to itinerant merchants or to displaced persons caught in a blizzard (or to fighters on sortie). In the Caucasus, anthropology and ethnography can prove to be poor guides and false friends, and books often give legitimacy to facts based on legend and hearsay. Such terms such as Caucasian, Circassian, Adyghe, and so forth, while convenient ethnographic designations, sometimes are inevitably colored by imperialistic or nationalist policies (or may even be tainted by dubious 'Aryan' race theory). Let the labeler beware! The distinctions implied by names in the Caucasus sometimes turn out to be chimera, divisive elements which distract from important commonalities.

# HISTORIES:



# ARMENIA

The first major state on the Anatolian plateau was Urartia, and Armenia's capital, Yerevan, stands near the Urartian citadel of Erebuni (782 BC). According to one theory, in ancient times, "Armens" arrived from the west (possibly Thrace), and slowly joined with the Urartians to form the Armenians. Other classical plateau dwellers included Kurds, Persians, Turkmens, and Turks.

Under Tigran II (the Great, 95-55 BC), Armenia stretched from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea, but its borders shrank dramatically in the 4th century AD. Though Armenia is the world's first Christian nation (314 AD), many Armenians over the centuries by necessity converted to Islam. In addition, for over a millennium Armenians have left their homeland to pursue commerce, or have been driven away by Byzantine transfers of populations and most recently by the massive uprooting and Ottoman massacres of 1915-22.



Geghard Monastery-13<sup>th</sup> Century

Armenia, though resilient, fell to the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Sassanid Persians, Mongols, the Seljuk Turks, Ottomans, and Russians. It re-emerged, briefly, as an independent country in 1918—before being forced into Soviet Russia in 1920.

During the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Armenia was partitioned into halves controlled by Turkey and Persia. Of the western half of Armenia, Russia took control of its eastern portions during the 1800s: a prelude to the turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century in which the great Ottoman and Russian empires gave way to Turkish and Soviet nation states—with Armenians caught in the middle.



Armenians traditionally comprised two groups: the educated urban Armenian populations in the great Ottoman cities, as well as in Baku and Tbilisi, and, secondly, rural Armenian peasants. There were also diaspora communities. In 1894-96, rising and even revolutionary feelings of Armenian individuality and nationalism provoked harsh repressions and massacres by the Ottoman sultan. The promise of a progressive “Young Turk” regime, which toppled the sultanate, turned sour during the First World War as the authorities turned on its Armenian citizenry and scourged them out of Anatolia (1915-23). Armenians fled to Russian controlled regions and formed an impoverished, fragile nation in the area surrounding Erevan.

It is difficult to imagine the chaos in the Caucasus after the Bolshevik Revolution. While Georgia and Azerbaijan for a time had “protector” states (Germany and Britain, respectively), Armenia was on its own. Threatened by Turkish expansionist forces, Armenia cast its lot with the Bolsheviks, becoming first an Independent Socialist Republic, then joining Georgia and Azerbaijan to make up a weak Transcaucasus Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, and finally perforce entering Soviet Russia. Until this time, Erevan had been but a tsarist backwater, a provincial center with insufficient resources or expertise to administer a country.

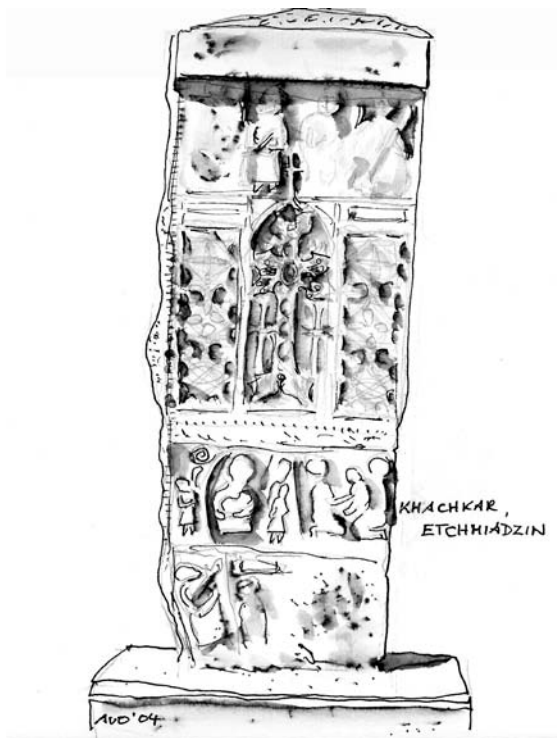
Even into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of Erevan’s population (30,000) were Azeris, not Armenians. By contrast, Armenians at this time formed an influential majority in Tbilisi and a large component of the populace of Baku, two cities with ten times the population and wealth of Erevan. However, Erevan’s population increased rapidly, in late tsarist, early Bolshevik years, due mainly to the influx of 300,000 indigent refugees from Turkey. The fledgling nation was in dire condition and an estimated 20% of its population died of privations in the first year and a half of Armenia’s existence.

The 1920s introduced an era of intense land cultivation and industrial development in

Armenia, as Yerevan expanded, and planners built hydroelectric plants, canals, and irrigation projects. Then came “Stalin’s Revolution” which brought waves of purges and forced farm collectivization. This was firmly resisted by peasants who slaughtered 300,000 head of cattle (1928-33). For a short period Stalin backpedaled, declaring the USSR to be “dizzy with success” from Moscow’s disastrous economic edicts—but collectivization began anew in 1930. This was a major assault on Armenian (and Georgian) society, the peasantry, and Armenian’s traditional merchant and commercial classes.

At great human cost, forced industrialization virtually eradicated Armenia’s unemployment by 1931. However, the abundance of jobs was due substantially to a labor shortage, low pay, poor working conditions, and absenteeism. On the positive side, industrialization also brought with it increased literacy, social mobilization, and independence of women. For a time, Soviet authorities encouraged the use of local languages—e.g. Armenian—but imposed Russian as a Soviet *lingua franca* after 1934. Nationalism was discouraged in favor of Soviet patriotism, followed shortly by harsh suppression of artists and writers. The Great Purges of 1936-38 culled the ranks of the Armenian Communist Party, replacing old elites with more compliant new members. Agnasi Khanjian, Armenia’s leader, an ardent Marxist, died during a visit to Lavrenti Beria, Stalin’s ruthless henchman, in Tbilisi in July 1936. (Officially Khanjian ‘committed suicide.’ Curiously, in December of the same year, Nestor Lakhoba, the Abkhazian leader who had resisted Stalin’s mandate that Abkhazia be collectivized and enter Georgia as an ‘autonomous republic’ --also expired after meeting with Beria. Lakhoba’s death was ruled a ‘heart attack,’ but many people suspected poisoning.)

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Armenia declared its (second) independence in 1991. The country is small (29,800 sq km), about the size of Maryland. The major international issue facing Armenia today is the “frozen conflict” (dating from 1988, with a ceasefire declared in 1994) with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. Called “Artsakh” by Armenians, Karabagh is a primarily an Armenian-populated region assigned to Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1920s by Moscow. Armenians presently hold not only Nagorno-Karabakh but a sizeable portion of Azerbaijan proper. The stalemate hampers the economies of both Armenia and Azerbaijan.



After independence, Armenians faced dire hardships (50% of Armenians live below the poverty line), including a major earthquake and turbulent politics. In 1999, Armenian Prime Minister Sarkisian was assassinated in Parliament. President, Robert Kocharian (elected 1998) cracked down on opposition groups, and the 2008 election of his successor, former defense minister Serzh Sargsyan, was marred by violent protests, fatalities, and opposition purges. Sargsyan has yet to consolidate legitimacy--as opposed to power; indeed, some critics suggest that Armenia's cautious overtures to Turkey in recent months, with an eye to opening Armenia's borders, is intended to distract from Sargsian's considerable domestic problems. His opponent during the elections, Levon Ter-Petrossian (Armenia's first president, 1991-1998, after independence from the Soviet Union) remains a significant adversary. In part Armenia's political drama reflects tensions between Armenians from within the country itself, and those from Nagorno-Karabagh (who include Robert Kocharian, Armenia's president from 1998 to 2008 and a former leader in the Karabagh movement, and Serzh Sargsyan, former chairman of the NK Republic Self-Defense Forces Committee).

Armenia's population (8.6 million worldwide) has declined from 3.3 million (1989) to 2.6 million today, due to emigration. Long an ethnic minority even in historical Armenia, today's Armenians make up 96% of the nation's population. By the end of 1993, virtually all Azeris--i.e. Muslims--had emigrated from Armenia. Armenia's natural resources include deposits of copper, gold, molybdenum, zinc, and alumina. During Soviet times--the era of central planning--Armenia operated large agro-industrial complexes and its industrial sector supplied machine tools, textiles, and many other manufactured goods to other republics in the USSR, receiving raw materials and energy in exchange. In those days Armenia produced top physicists and astronomers, chemicals, machine tools and textiles, and was considered the USSR's "Silicon Valley" because of its industrial and computer capability. Now all that is gone and educated Armenians have difficulty finding jobs to match their skills (which anecdotally are considerable

in trade, science and the arts, but less stellar in management and public administration). In Soviet times, agriculture accounted for only 20% of Armenia's total employment; today, however, agriculture (much of it subsistence farming, occupying approximately half the labor force) and construction form the most significant basis of its economy. Endemic corruption in customs and tax collection reflects more a systemic, rather than a personal or moral problem.

IMF-sponsored programs have resulted in positive economic growth rates; and--until the worldwide economic crisis in 2008--Armenia cut inflation, stabilized its currency, and privatized many small- and medium-sized enterprises. Chronic energy shortages of the 1990s have been mitigated by energy from the Metsamor nuclear power plant (situated, unfortunately, in a seismically active zone). Armenia maintains close economic ties with Russia; Armenia's **electricity sector, privatized in 2002, is now owned by Russia's RAO-UES**. Armenia's industries included metal-cutting machine tools, forging-pressing machines, electric motors, tires, knitted wear, hosiery, shoes, silk fabric, chemicals, trucks, instruments, microelectronics, gem cutting, jewelry manufacturing, software development, food processing, and brandy. With the unique exception of northern Armenia and Karabagh, much of the region appears barren, especially since the years of energy privation in the early 1990s when forests were cut for fuel. Nevertheless, Armenia has fruit trees and vineyards, flowers and melons aplenty. Birds abound, including the eponymous crane called the *grunk*, or *groong* (see Websites section below). Armenia's fauna include boars and bears, leopard, ibex, wolf and mouflon (a wild sheep)—as well as such insects as the tarantula, mosquito, three species of scorpion, and the fly.

### A Turkish/Armenian "Thaw"?

Important to note is that, despite the massacres and expulsions of Armenians from Anatolia nearly a century ago, today some 50,000 Turkish Armenians live in Istanbul and an estimated one million in eastern Turkey. Though the borders remain closed, Armenians and Turks work in each others countries without incident. Armenians can be found vacationing in the seaside Turkish resort of Antalya, and Turkish goods are widespread in Armenia, though imported through a third country, Georgia. This shows subtle conditions can be "on the ground," as opposed to analyses published in foreign affairs journals--and just how intertwined the fortunes are of the three South Caucasus nations. If, for example, Georgia experiences Russian border closures or fuel interruptions, Armenia immediately feels the pinch. And any threat or interruption in flow through the Baku-Tbilisi-Cheyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipelines causes instant concern in Azerbaijan.

It has become fashionable in some academic circles to argue that Armenia's closed borders render it irrelevant to a Caucasus that envisions itself a crucial link between north and south, and east and west. Others maintain that, *au contraire*, Armenia is not isolated, that it has valuable mineral resources (e.g. copper, molybdenum, iron) and it trades extensively with Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Israel (diamonds); and it maintains close ties with Russia (indeed, Russian troops can be observed patrolling Yerevan airport and at the Turkish borde). Another argument maintains that between Yerevan and Baku, two major population centers, there is "nothing"--an economic vacuum--hence< Armenia's future lies in the west, with Europe and Turkey, not in the east.



Of Armenia's budget, almost 25% goes to defense, public order and security. By contrast, Azerbaijan spends more than \$2 billion on defense--equivalent to Armenia's *entire annual budget*. Obviously, even partial resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict would improve the situation considerably, and opening the border between Armenia and Turkey would result in decreased military spending on both sides and increased trade and transportation to Anatolia and the Middle East. For more on the "thaw," see below in the following section.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 Why is Armenia considered at once outside, alongside, and “inside” Azerbaijan?
- 2 What is Armenia’s most prevalent and ancient building material?
- 3 What makes the *grunk*, or *groong*, an eponymous Armenian crane?
- 4 Where is “Noah’s Ark” and why is the question of current interest?
- 5 Which nation has the largest diaspora community: Armenia or Azerbaijan—and why?
- 6 Where and what is Cilicia?
- 7 For what were Armenians renowned in Byzantine and Ottoman times?
- 8 Which Armenian family ruled as Georgia’s longest dynasty?
- 9 How are Armenian and Georgian churches similar, and how do they differ?
- 10 Which nation accepted Christianity first, and by how many years?
- 11 Who created the Armenian alphabet?
- 12 By what strategies did the Armenian SSR survive and prosper in the Soviet Union?
- 13 What are Armenia’s strengths and weaknesses today?

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## Web sites

- 1 [www.groong.com](http://www.groong.com) (premiere e-news service)
- 2 [www.armenpress.am](http://www.armenpress.am) (Armenpress official news agency)
- 3 [www.virtualarmenia.am](http://www.virtualarmenia.am) (a tourist guide originally drafted by j. Brady Kiesling, with material from Michael Gfoeller and the Gfoeller Foundation)
- 4 [www.cilicia.com](http://www.cilicia.com) (contains Armenian tourism and culture-related material)
- 5 [www.ameniainfor.am](http://www.ameniainfor.am) (Guide to Armenia)
- 6 [www.armeniaemb.org](http://www.armeniaemb.org) (Armenian Embassy in Washington)
- 7 [www.gov.am](http://www.gov.am) (Government of Armenia)
- 8 [www.armeniaforeignministry.am](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am) (Armenian Foreign Ministry)
- 9 [www.arka.am](http://www.arka.am) Arka business news agency
- 10 [www.yerkir.am](http://www.yerkir.am) Yerkir weekly, news section updated daily
- 11 [www.virtualarmenia](http://www.virtualarmenia) Tourist guide
- 12 [www.cilicia.com](http://www.cilicia.com) Tourism and culture
- 13 [www.armeniainfo.am](http://www.armeniainfo.am) Guide to Armenia
- 14 [www.eruasianet.com](http://www.eruasianet.com) Open Society Institute, Caucasus/Central Asia news
- 15 [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org) Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty news and reports
- 16 [www.cacianalyst.org](http://www.cacianalyst.org) Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University
- 9 [www.transcaspian.ru](http://www.transcaspian.ru) Russian site with English option
- 10 [www.eurasia.org.ru](http://www.eurasia.org.ru) Russian site with English option
- 11 [lcweb2.loc.gov](http://lcweb2.loc.gov) Library of Congress site
- 12 <http://www.acnis.am/main/> **Politics and policy**

## Deportations, Massacres, and the Question of Genocide

A large portion of the Armenian diaspora stems from Ottoman oppressions, massacres, and

deportations in the period 1915-23. Until then, Armenian citizens of the Empire formed two general groups: educated urban residents, and peasants or villagers in Eastern Anatolia, all organized into a *millet* community under the leadership of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. (The millet served both a religious and secular, or administrative function, it being the means by which the Sultan collected Poll Taxes from Armenians. Additional millets formed later for Armenian Catholics and Evangelicals/Protestants.)

During the 19th century, nationalistic political aspirations spread among Armenians, especially those studying abroad or in contact with Christian missionaries. After long suffering from Ottoman and Kurdish raids, double taxation, expropriations and brutality, Armenians in Anatolia and Russia, as well as the Czar's representatives in Constantinople, pressured the Sultan's government for reforms. Other nationalistic groups called for a free "Turkish Armenia."

In the 1890s, Ottoman authorities cracked down on revolutionary nationalists, killing 100,000-300,000 Armenians. The reformist Young Turk movement overthrew the Sultan in 1909, but later turned against Armenian citizens as well. When Turkey and Russia became opponents in the First World War, Anatolian and Russian Armenian communities found themselves caught in between. Some joined the Ottoman forces, others the Czar's.

In 1915, Ottoman officials seized hundreds of Armenian leaders in the capital--politicians, priests, scholars, and professionals--and deported them to the interior, along with virtually the entire East Anatolian Armenian population. (This region, 'historical Armenia,' also contained ancient populations of Kurds and Turkic groups). Eyewitness and official accounts of the highest caliber--from American and British diplomats, missionaries, and from German military and railroad personnel in Turkey--attest to the scope and brutality of the Ottomans' actions. Armenian males were either killed immediately or, if in the military, disarmed and worked to death as slave laborers, or executed. The remaining Armenians, mostly women and children, trekked hundreds of miles into the desert. Many died of hardships or were killed by hired Kurds and other irregulars. Few arrived at their destination, near Aleppo; some survived by converting to Islam and finding shelter with Turkish families.

Thousands of Armenian civilians perished during Ottoman incursions into the Russian South Caucasus and during the Turkish national revolution (1919-23). Casualty estimates range from hundreds of thousands to over a million and a half Armenians dead.

The Armenian government today supports lobbying efforts by Caucasus Diaspora communities in Russia, Europe, the United States and the Middle East to have the above doleful events recognized as genocide--a claim rejected categorically by the Turkish government. Turkey's official position is that the desperate Ottoman government sought to isolate, neutralize, and remove during World War One what it perceived to be a dangerous element posed by its own Armenian citizens. The action they chose was to force-march entire Armenian communities away from the eastern war front with Russia. Turkish authorities and most Turkish scholars maintain that the context of these, admittedly harsh, deportations was a deplorable civil war in which both Armenians and Muslim Turks lost many lives.

Governments of several countries (but not all, and not the United States), along with many

scholars, consider the Armenian deportations and killings to be genocide--a term coined in 1944 by a Polish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin, which means, essentially, the *intentional* harm or destruction of a national, ethnic, religious, or racial group.

The controversy continues. In 2001, Turks and Armenians (albeit none in government positions) formed a Reconciliation Commission--reaction to which has been mixed. In 2004, *Ararat*, an award-winning film by Canadian director Atom Egoyan about the Armenian massacres, received permission to be shown in Turkey. The Cultural Ministry later rescinded its permit after nationalist Turkish political parties strongly objected to the film's release, *but Ararat has since been shown*. Following statements by writer Orhan Pamuk and the assassination of Turkish-Armenian editor Hrant Dink, in 2007, there are signs of a rethinking about Turkey's history and a desire to explore chapters inaccessible to Turkish citizens, either because these topics are not covered in their education, or because of the difficulty--indeed, impossibility--of non-specialists today reading Ottoman Turkish, which was written in Arabic. In Turkey today there is both intense nationalism, as well as more thoughtful responses to the "Armenian question," such as a recent on-line campaign to inquire into the subject of the Armenian massacres, and even to apologize for them.

Few words are as charged as "genocide," created by Lemkin and ratified by the United Nations in 1948. Over the more than six decades of its existence, "genocide" has entered common parlance and possesses now not only its original, legal meaning, but an emotionally charged conversational sense as well. To be sure, Lemkin wanted the emotional element: he wanted his new word to conjure up the odious nature and the enormity of a "crime against humanity." But he also wanted clarity about the matter and realized the need for a new legal concept that would deprive genocide perpetrators of the shield of national sovereignty. Preoccupied by the atrocities and exterminations visited upon Armenians and Jews, but he was also aware of the sufferings of many other groups as well. Today, occasionally, the charge of genocide can bring a guilty party to justice, as Lemkin hoped, but there is no guarantee. Furthermore, the legal definition of genocide can be interpreted in many ways, and this inherent ambiguity has had a major unintended consequence: it can sometimes impede dialogue between nations and communities. (See THE OTHER DIPLOMACY section, p. )

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 How did Armenian nationalism arise?
- 2 How is genocide defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide?
- 3 During the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, what position did the United States take

officially, and Americans popularly, with regard to Armenians and the Ottoman government?

- 4 What must an American diplomat today say (or not say) when confronted with the “Armenian question”?

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## **AZERBAIJAN**



The word “Azerbaijan” derives from the Greek “Atropatena” and Persian “Aturpatan”: meaning, protected by fire. Today’s Azerbaijan (86,600 sq km, slightly smaller than Maine) has long been a desired corner of the world, both as a low-lying, north-south route, and as a source of wonder due to the eternal flames and oozes emanating from the region’s oil and natural gas vents. Though often home to large Armenian communities (as Armenia has been to Azeris), more than a decade and a half of strife over the Nagorno-Karabagh enclave leaves Azerbaijan with a majority Turkic and Muslim population—the reverse situation pertaining in Nagorno-Karabagh and Armenia, which is now totally Armenian and Christian.

Bordering the Caspian Sea and pierced by the Great Caucasus mountain range, Azerbaijan (86,600 sq km), about the size of Maine, exists in three portions: the Caspian part; Nagorno-Karabagh; and a crucial “extra” bit, or enclave, the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic wedged

between Armenia, Iran, and Turkey. Owing to these geopolitical complexities, Azerbaijan shares boundaries with Armenia, Georgia, Iran, Russia, and also Turkey.



Greater Azerbaijan comprised a northern region—today’s Azerbaijan—and a southern half, now in Iran, whose capital is Tabriz. In South Azerbaijan, Medians were followed by an Aechemenid state. In the north, by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, a Caucasian “Albanian” kingdom appeared which became Christian. At the same time, Turkic-language groups settled in the area, leaving a linguistic imprint. By the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab caliphates ruled and Islam predominated, though Christianity remained in some areas. Islamic cultural centers flourished as did literature and music. Various independent Shirvan states resisted Seljuk Turk and Mongol invasions. Later Safavids united Azerbaijan, which however again split into numerous feudal states under the aegis of Persia. Thus, the Azerbaijan region, Christianized early and exposed to centuries of Islamic influence, had seen by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century a round-robin of power struggles between Persia, the Ottomans, and local khanates.

Now came the Great Game. Russia’s conquest of the Caucasus turned Azerbaijan into an arena of diplomacy, espionage, and military adventures between Russia, Britain, and other nations over control of Central Asia and access to India. After the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) and the Treaty of Turkmanchay (1828), North Azerbaijan became a part of the Russian Empire and began rapidly to Europeanize and industrialize as it exported oil to Europe. Azerbaijan also became a thriving center of modern Muslim culture, boasting an opera house, a grammar school for Azeri girls, numerous newspapers, and a growing literary scene. The oil boom enriched Russians, Armenians, Europeans—and some Azerbaijani Turks. With increased education and contact with intellectual circles in Kazan, Istanbul, Tabriz, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris, feelings of Azerbaijani nationalism grew, hand in hand with pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic sentiments. During this period, Azerbaijan became increasingly ethnically mixed—and divided into sectarian factions of Armenians and other groups who had entered the region as part of Russian colonization.

At the time of the Russian Revolution, Czarist forces, Bolsheviks, Turkey, England, Germany, and Persia all jostled for influence and access to Azeri oil fields which produced half of the world's oil. With the collapse of the tsarist government in 1917, Bolshevik recruiters and Turkic activists maneuvered for control of Baku. Two massacres occurred in 1918, the first inflicted by Armenians upon Azeris, and the second by Azeris on Armenians. A Bolshevik "Baku Commune," made up mainly of Armenians, was put to flight and later executed. A benevolent, politically diverse, and all too brief period of independence ensued (1918-19), which was cut short by the entry into Baku of the Soviet army in 1920. All this resulted in huge loss of life in conflicts often instigated by such revolutionary agent provocateurs as 'Gayoz Nisharadze'—later to be known by another pseudonym, Stalin.

During the Soviet era, Lenin and Stalin (as Commissar of Nationalities and later as the state leader), purged Azerbaijan's elite, cracked down on religion, and jiggered the country's borders, rendering it into two regions separated by Armenia, and leaving Azerbaijan an amalgam of Azeri and Armenian populated enclaves and exclaves. Under Soviet rule the Azerbaijani alphabet changed from Arabic, to Latin, to Cyrillic (it is now back to a Latin alphabet). More than the other two South Caucasus republics, the Azerbaijan SSR adopted Russian as a language of intellectual discourse. A kind of inter-ethnic *pax sovieticus* prevailed, laced with corruption and privileges for the elite, which suppressed dissident nationalism and fostered a relatively peaceful status quo. At the same time, as part of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan became more isolated as the republic's borders with Iran were closed and Azerbaijanis with Iranian passports were forced to leave. Whereas before the Russian Revolution, Azeris made up 43% of the population of Erevan, in 1948, Soviet authorities separated the peoples and deported some 100,000 Azeris out of Armenia.

The Baku oil boom, which had begun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, declined after World War Two as Soviet planners decided to develop oil resources at more politically secure locations, in Siberia. After independence (1991), Azerbaijan's economy suffered anew due to the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Azerbaijan today is ethnically Azeri 90%, Dagestani 3.2%, Russian 2.5%, Armenian 2% (almost all in Nagorno-Karabagh), and other 2.3% (1998 est.). Language and religious affiliation follow the same percentage profile, though in fact most Azerbaijanis are nominal rather than actual practicing adherents of any religion. Independent since 1991, Azerbaijan is slowly engaging in economic reforms and turning from a command to a market economy.

Azerbaijan's economy collapsed nearly 60% in 1990-95 after the country's independence from the Soviet Union. Estimates vary of Azerbaijan's oil and gas reserves, but they are large and almost certainly guarantee a measure of future economic growth. Azerbaijan has one of the world's largest natural gas fields discovered in the past two decades. Nevertheless, its oil and gas reserves are most emphatically not infinite, and its economic well-being depends upon world oil prices, the security of new pipelines in the region, careful management of resources, and control of incipient "Dutch Disease" (i.e. distortions to the economy and currency due to over-reliance upon a single export, such as oil and gas). Meanwhile, Azerbaijan remains locked in a "frozen" dispute with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabagh, which severely limits its present economic development. As with Armenians in Armenia, close to 50% of Azerbaijanis live in poverty.



Azerbaijan trades less with Russia and other former Soviet republics these days, and more with Turkey and Europe. Its industries include petroleum and natural gas, petroleum products, oilfield equipment; steel, iron ore, cement, chemicals and petrochemicals, and textiles. Its agriculture produces cotton, grain, rice, grapes, fruit, vegetables, tea, tobacco; cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats. Azerbaijan exports mostly oil and gas (90% of Azerbaijan's total exports value), as well as machinery, cotton, and foodstuffs (e.g. pomegranate juice and in the future, hopefully, water buffalo mozzarella cheese).

Azerbaijan is strategically important for its oil and gas reserves, and also for its ability to provide air access to Central Asia and Afghanistan. Aspects of its government and business community are notoriously corrupt and unhesitant about silencing dissent. Journalists, upon occasion meet a sorry fate, while others report freely; in 2009 Azerbaijan curtailed foreign news broadcasting. Its current, Ilham Aliyev (the son of Azerbaijan's late president, KGB-trained Geydar Aliyev), may be in power for a long time, as, according the wishes of a "majority" of Azerbaijani voters in 2009, presidential term limits have been removed. That said, Aliyev has shown himself to be a capable leader, able to maneuver between competing clans and "strong" families, while at the same time consolidating power and, in effect, "branding" the Aliyev family name through a wide range of philanthropic ventures funded by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation (headed by the president's wife, Mehriban Aliyev, who was elected to the Azerbaijan National Assembly in 2005). Azerbaijan has enthusiastically sponsored a new academy of diplomacy in order to train a new generation of government professionals; and Azerbaijani journalists participate in international training programs (some hosted in Baku). In a new program, qualified young students who gain admissions into top international educational institutions receive bursaries from the government, in exchange for a promise to devote five years afterwards to working in Azerbaijan before, if they so choose, seeking their fortunes abroad. Internationally, Ilham Aliyev has successfully handled competing demands by Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the United States, keeping his Azerbaijan's and his own options open.

Anti-Armenian rhetoric waxes and wanes in Azerbaijan, and particularly worrisome is the growth of Azerbaijan's military budget (\$2.46 billion in 2009). While Azerbaijani may believe that time is on their side and that Nagorno-Karabagh can be retaken militarily, outside analysts consider Armenian-supported troops to be in an advantageous position due to superior fighting capability and their occupation of the high ground in Nagorno-Karabagh.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 Who were/are Azeris, versus Azerbaijanis, versus Azerbaijanians, versus Azerbaijani Turks, etc.?
- 2 Why is a Selucid not a Seljuk or a Safavid?
- 3 Why is Azerbaijan in two pieces?
- 4 Where, for the most part, is the Azeri diaspora?
- 5 Where is Tabriz, and what was it, historically?

- 6 Why has Azerbaijan, though Muslim, been called the most “European” of Caucasus nations?

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## Nagorno-Karabagh



The 'autonomous region' of Nagorno-Karabagh ('Mountainous Black Garden') has harbored Azeri as well as Armenian communities. Conflict, ethnic cleansing, and atrocities committed by both groups over the last 20 years (and counting) leave the region currently with an Armenian majority and under Karabagh-Armenian control--and with annual sniper fatalities.

While sharing many customs, Azerbaijanis and Armenians differ in their racial, religious, and socio-cultural backgrounds—and also in their historical memory. The 20<sup>th</sup> century rise in

Azerbaijan's national consciousness (and Armenia's somewhat earlier) played a part in these divisions, as did economics and class: many Armenians came to Baku in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries to work in the oil industry and, as an "exploited proletariat" class, served as prime fuel for revolution makers. The "Armeno-Tatar War" of 1905-07 resulted in regional Turkish populations relying less on Christian and Jewish inhabitants for goods and services, and it boosted Armenian political aspirations. **The Turkic Azeris regarded Ottomans as kin and allies, and they supported Turkey when it invaded the Caucasus in 1918, desiring to expand and unite Anatolia with the Turks 'ancestral' regions in Central Asia. During this military thrust, Turks victimized "Russian," or "Eastern" Armenians and helped establish the Republic of Azerbaijan. In 1920, clashes occurred in Azerbaijan between pro-Turkish, pro-Soviet, and multinational factions--hostilities which later, during the Soviet era, led to much historical revision: Azerbaijanis were forced to paint their fellow-Turks as villains and reactionaries, while glorifying an Armenian and Bolshevik martyr, Stepan Shaumian. After the USSR fell, Azerbaijan revised its history once again and rapidly 'anti-Shaumianized' and 'de-Armenianized' itself in the process.** Nagorno-Karabagh became an autonomous region in Soviet times, and over a span of 65 years Azerbaijan authorities cut Karabagh Armenians' ties to Armenia and downplayed Armenian culture. They encouraged Azeri settlement into the region, and bolstered Turkic census populations by listing Kurds and Talysh (who are of Iranian stock) as ethnic Azeris.

In 1988, after Nagorno-Karabagh voted to secede from Azerbaijan, thousands of Azerbaijanis fled from southern Armenia to Baku. Meanwhile, in an effort to prevent Azeri-Armenian hostilities, Communist Party officials closed Baku to thousands of Karabagh-Armenian workers and commuters from the nearby city of Sumgait, on the Caspian. They also settled Azeri refugees from Armenia into two villages near Sumgait. In February, Azerbaijani gangs rioted against Armenians in Sumgait, killing dozens and wounding hundreds. Some 14,500 Armenians fled the city; many went to Nagorno-Karabagh. In September 1988 all Armenians in Susha, Nagorno-Karabagh, had been driven from the city; and, correspondingly, all Azerbaijanis were forced to flee from Stepanakert, five miles north of Susha. Later, Armenian forces would burn Susha to the ground. In 1989 Azerbaijan imposed a rail blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. By January 1990, there were anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku and subsequent killings of Azeri protestors by Soviet troops.

The late 1980s saw mass exoduses and "sorting out" of populations: some 200,000 Armenians left Azerbaijan in two weeks, and Azeris claim that the Armenians expelled 165,000 Azeris from Armenia (the Armenians dispute these figures). It has been argued that the resurgence of violence in and concerning Nagorno-Karabagh precipitated the collapse of the Soviet Union. Certainly the Kremlin could not contain the problem or the disruptions caused by the movements of peoples, and it is sobering to think how much misery has been generated by Nagorno-Karabagh (whose area is only 1,700 square miles, approximately the size of Rhode Island and Martha's Vineyard combined).

In the Karabagh dispute, it is not just two ethnic groups but two entire concepts of international law that collide: one principle affirms the territorial integrity of internationally recognized states, while the other insists upon the self-determination of peoples. Both Armenians and Azerbaijanis accuse the other party of aggression, and uphold distinct and divergent

demographic, historical, cultural, and economic arguments. For example:

Armenians point out the lack of ancient Azeri artifacts in a land abounding with *khachkars* (Armenian cross-stones) and churches. Azeris, who are Muslim, say: no matter, many famous Azeri poets and composers came from the region. Azeris stress their Turkic past and kinship with ancient “Caucasian Albanians,” (see map, circa 1540, below) who they claim were victimized by Armenian imperialism. Some Azeris claim that the native Karabagh population, even if self-identified as Armenian, are the progeny of these same Caucasus Albanians—and therefore they cannot be *genuine* Armenians. As for the ancient *khachkars*, they are not Armenian “cross-stones,” but are actually Turko-Azerbaijani, for the Caucasus Albanians adapted Christianity before the Armenians did...and so forth and so on.

Meanwhile, Armenia argues that Azerbaijan has no right to Nagorno-Karabagh because the region was assigned to Soviet Azerbaijan by the Russian Communist Party at a time when that body lacked juridical standing under international law. During the 1920s (as well as seven decades later), Azerbaijan officials responded to Karabagh Armenian resistance with threats, forced disarmament, economic blockade, and even military action. In 1991, the “Republic of Mountainous Karabagh” (Armenian *Artsakh*) unilaterally seceded, whereupon the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet, in a tit for tat, dissolved Karabagh’s autonomous status—and the region declared independence (as yet unrecognized) in 1992. In that year the United States imposed aid restrictions on Azerbaijan as punishment for its blockade and use of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. In addition, as a matter of policy—though not law—the United States refrained from providing military aid to either Azerbaijan or Armenia so long as the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict was underway. These restrictions were suspended post-9/11, 2001, as America made new, anti-terrorist, alliances.



Woodcut map of the Caucasus and Historical Armenia published about 1540 by Sebastian Munster in his edition of Ptolemy's *Geographica*.

Azeri militia began continuous bombardment of Karabagh's capital, Stepanakert, from surrounding heights (much as Serbs bombed helpless Sarajevo in that same decade). Armenian forces prevailed; Azerbaijan's Communist government fell; the conflict proceeded, and once again Armenians seized additional Azerbaijani territory. Until 1993, Armenia denied its active engagement in the war and for a period even refused to recognize the Karabagh Republic, fearing "complications." This posture shifted as Armenia grew increasingly assertive about the right of Karabagh Armenians to self-defense. Armenia's president (until 2008), Robert Kocharian, formerly served as Karabagh's president and prime minister.

The two sides reached a cease-fire in 1994. Azerbaijan lost considerable territory in the war (estimates range from 13-20% of its area) and must care for some 800,000 refugees and internally displaced persons. Potential resolutions of the crisis include land-swaps (however the 1992 'Goble Plan,' which proposed connecting Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, and Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan, was quickly dropped as a concept) and economic inducements, including oil pipeline proposals (Armenia does not benefit from any Caspian-to-Turkey oil routing plans). Unfortunately, both Armenia and Azerbaijan appear to favor a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict later rather than sooner.

The following Nagorno-Karabagh chart may be of help:

### **NABORNO-KARABAGH: Differing points of view**

AZERBAIJANI vs KARABAGH-ARMENIAN and ARMENIAN

Azerbaijan is the aggrieved party-- its territorial integrity violated and its land occupied by Armenia.

Armenia is not a party to the conflict and will not accept Turkish peace-keepers in the region.

Karabagh is historically Azeri. Armenians came into the region in large numbers *after* the Russian conquest (in 1813 and 1828) of the area of present-day Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"Artsakh" is the ancient cultural and religious center of Armenians. "Nagorno-Karabagh" is a mongrel Russian-Turkic imposed name. The "Bagh" were actually Balayi, an ancient tribe of *Armenians*.

Armenians in Karabagh during USSR times did *not* suffer discrimination. Indeed,

The 60 years in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was, for Karabagh-Armenians, a period of cultural *repression* and economic *underdevelopment*.

most economic indicators in Nagorno-Karabagh were *higher* than in the rest of Azerbaijan

The USSR government was pro-Armenian (Gorbachev had Armenian advisors). World opinion favors Armenians & Armenia as 'eternal victims' though 20% of Azerbaijan is occupied by Armenian forces and approximately 1 million Azeris have been displaced.

Azerbaijan is trying to restore its *sovereignty*.

*Armenia* is Azerbaijan's main negotiating partner, not representatives of the so-called "Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh"

Demands withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied Azerbaijan., as a precondition for negotiations.

Approx. 13 % of Azerbaijan is under Armenian control.

Nagorno-Karabagh declared independence in 1992 (though this status remains unrecognized). It seeks *self-determination* against outside repressive powers.

As an "independent" country, Azerbaijan should negotiate directly with *Karabagh-Armenians* (i.e. not with Armenia).

Insists on self-determination for Nagorno-Karabagh; Demands security and "special status" for Azerbaijan territories neighboring Nagorno-Karabagh; and guaranteed access to Armenia.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 Play the "Game of Hats": How would an Armenian explain events in Nagorno-Karabagh?
- 2 How would an Azerbaijani?
- 3 How would a Russian, or a Turk?

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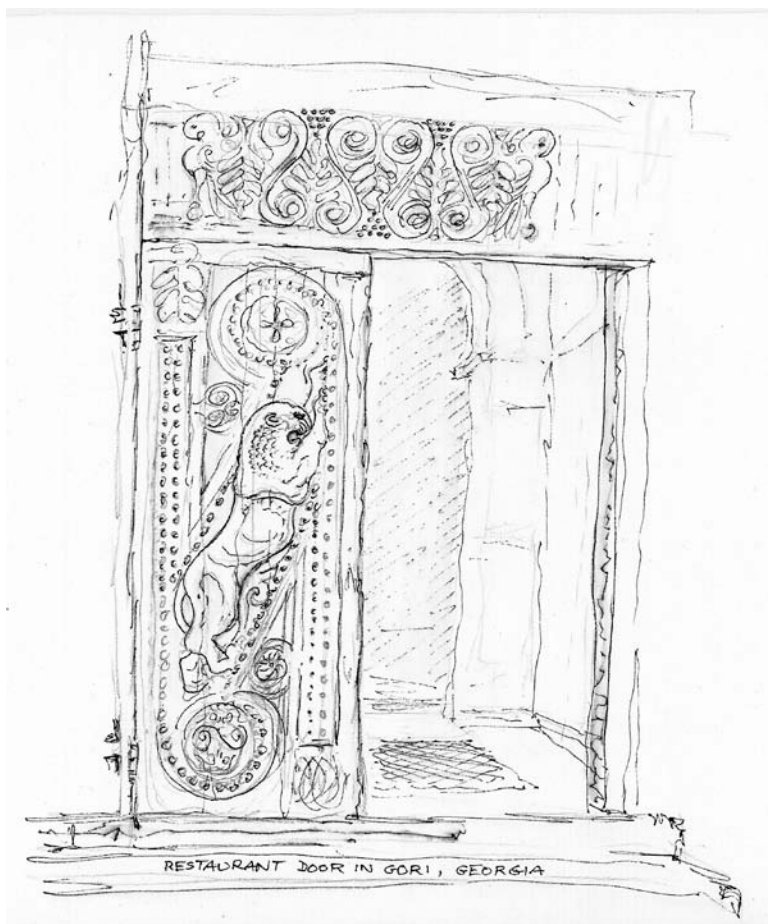
## GEORGIA

Georgia's recorded history extends back more than 2500 years; it has prehistoric dolmens (stone monuments), the earliest known remains of humans who walked upright, and the most ancient evidence of winemaking. The Georgian language is one of the world's distinct and oldest; and it is said that songs sung in the polyphonic style of the sixth century BC can still be heard at many a Georgian feast table today! Many Georgian church frescos predate the ecclesiastical glories of Byzantium and Rome.

Tbilisi (founded in 458 AD, pop. 1,066,000<sup>4</sup>--2004 figures) stands on sites of dwellings and burial grounds dating to 5000 BC and has been destroyed and rebuilt many times over the

centuries. Georgians officially adopted Christianity in the early 4th century (though almost certainly Christianity existed in Georgia earlier), and the Georgian Orthodox Church, along with the unique Georgian alphabet and language, helped preserve the country's sense of identity through the ages. Sometimes unified, at other times broken into principalities, Georgia suffered incursions from Persian, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Mongol, and Turkish armies from at least the First century B.C. through the 18th century—and from Russians, British, and German forces in more recent times.

The most celebrated rulers of Georgia as an independent kingdom were King David the Builder in the 11<sup>th</sup> and Queen Tamara in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Georgia appealed to the Russia's Catherine the Great for protection from the Persians, and signed a treaty by which Russia agreed to make Kartli, the kingdom of eastern Georgia, a protectorate. This turned out to be the first squeeze by which the Russian empire began, in 1801, to disenfranchise Georgia's aristocracy and ancient Bagrationi dynasty and to absorb, annex, unify, and rule the entire region. This relationship prevailed in one form or another until 1991 and the fall of the Soviet Union.



Despite a major Georgian uprising attempt (1832) and 25 years of war against various tribes in Daghestan and Chechnya, Russia's domination of the Caucasus caused one of the world's largest diasporas when hundreds of thousands of Abkhaz, Chechens and other Circassians moved

to the Balkans, Anatolia, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Under Russia, Georgians absorbed modern European ideas of nationalism and self-determination. During the chaos of the Russian Revolution, Georgia declared independence under a Menshevik government in 1918, prompting the Red Army to invade in 1921. From 1922-36, Georgia belonged to the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. After the federation dissolved, Georgia became a full republic of the Soviet Union.

Georgia's most famous son, Joseph Stalin, imposed forced land reforms, collectivization and Russification campaigns on the Caucasus, along with political repressions and purges. Nevertheless, for Soviets in general, especially artists and writers, Georgia remained a verdant "Riviera"—a place for rest, recuperation, and inspiration—and after World War Two Georgia became known as the wealthiest of the Soviet republics, with flourishing industry (manganese, coal), agriculture (tea, citrus fruit, wine, and tobacco), and high education standards.

In the waning years of the Soviet Union, ethnic tensions resurfaced in the Georgian autonomous regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which led to clashes. During anti-Abkhazian protests in Tbilisi, Soviet forces killed 19 demonstrators, mostly women. Georgia held elections in 1990 and seceded from the Soviet Union in 1991, installing ultra-nationalist writer and former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia as president, who was deposed in January of the following year. Eduard Shevardnadze, former head of the Georgian Communist Party and USSR Politburo member, returned from Moscow to assume leadership.

Georgia signed a cease-fire with Ossetian separatists in 1992, but that same year, during a period of ongoing confrontation between the government and opposition militias, Georgia also battled Abkhazian forces and invaded Sukhumi. Russia, ever keen to keep the Caucasus off-kilter, helped Georgia put down an insurrection by Gamsakhurdia supporters in western Georgia—while it also extended military aid to Abkhazian separatists, who drove Georgians out of the region in September, 1993. Georgia then signed a ceasefire with Abkhazia in 1994. This ongoing "frozen conflict," costing some 10,000 lives and resulting in almost 200,000 internally displaced persons (mostly ethnic Georgians and Mingrelians), was monitored by Russian "peacekeepers", the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Shevardnadze was re-elected in 1995 and 2000. Russian troops departed from the Vaziani military base in Georgia, but remained at bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki, which celebrated the 175 years of Russian presence. (Russia subsequently withdrew even from these positions and moved its troops to Armenia; however, after the Russian-Georgian conflict of 2008, Russia again enlarged its military footprint Georgia by establishing new bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.)

Strife with Abkhazia resumed in 2001. Fighters from the North Caucasus joined the Abkhazian cause and also entered Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, sparking Russian accusations that Georgia was intentionally harboring Chechen rebels (which, true or false, Georgia denied). Plagued by severe infrastructure breakdown and rampant government corruption, the Georgian populace demonstrated against Shevardnadze. In the wake of 9/11, 2001, United States Special Forces arrived to "train-and-equip" Georgian military to oppose terrorist groups (2002), and Moscow

continued its threat of taking military action if Chechen fighters remained in the Pankisi region. Georgian forces killed or captured dozens of Chechens and guerillas in the Pankisi Gorge and extradited a few to Russia. (See *Kisti*, in the North Caucasus: Panoply of Peoples section below.)

It is difficult for the outsider to "read" Georgia's boisterous political scene, due to its heightened rhetoric and the paucity of objective local media. Georgian politics reached an almost operatic climax in 2003 when President Shevardnadze, after highly irregular parliamentary elections, was ousted in a "Rose Revolution" and replaced by a 36-year old American-educated lawyer and Georgian parliamentarian, Mikheil Saakashvili, who vowed to crack down on corruption and to restore Georgia's territorial integrity. After this peaceful, though illegal, "regime change," Saakashvili was duly elected without opposition and with an overwhelming 96% mandate. In May, 2004, he confronted the rebellious leader of the autonomous region of Adjara, Aslan Abashidze, who fled to Moscow. Over the years, Saakashvili instituted many reforms, but his popularity has waned due to high inflation and the lack of "trickle down" economic benefits to many sectors of Georgian society. While enjoying the strong financial and moral support of the United States (and the personal enthusiasm of the the Bush administration), Saakashvili has faced growing disaffection within Georgia, manifested by frequent street demonstrations--which the Georgian government has at times put down by force--and calls for resignation and new elections. Even former allies from the Rose Revolution now criticize Saakashvili, who in the meantime has continually replaced and reshuffled top government and military figures in recent years. It must be said, however, that President Saakashvili--a dynamic and extroverted personality, and a cunning politician--remains popular in many parts of Georgia. Many of his political troubles stem largely from Georgia's failure to improve relations with Russia, which imposed boycotts of Georgian wine and bottled water, cut off transportation links, and expelled Georgian workers (resulting in severe declines in remittance payments to Georgia). This sorry situation culminated in out-and-out military conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 (see below).

**Georgia's People and Economy:** Georgia's population (4.4 million by the 2002 census, excluding Abkhazia or South Ossetia) comprises ethnic Georgians 70.1%, Armenians 8.1%, Russians 6.3%, Azeris 5.7%, Ossetians 3%, Abkhazians 1.8%, other 5%. (1989 figures). The official languages are Georgian and Abkhazian (in Abkhazia); and major religions include Georgian Orthodox 65%, Muslim 11%, Russian Orthodox 10%, Armenian Apostolic 8%, other 6%.

Georgia's natural resources include forests, hydropower, nonferrous metals, manganese, iron ore, copper, citrus fruits, tea, and wine. While much of its industry remains stagnant, Georgia in the past produced steel, aircraft, machine tools, foundry equipment (automobiles, trucks, and tractors), tower cranes, electric welding equipment, fuel re-exports, machinery for food packing, electric motors, textiles, shoes, chemicals, wood products, bottled water, legendary semi-sweet and dry wines, and excellent brandy.

Georgia's modest increases in GDP growth and foreign investment during the mid-1990s slowed dramatically with the Russian financial crisis of 1998, its woes compounded by drought

and tax collection failures. Georgia completed during this period the Baku-Supsa “early oil” pipeline, and, and in 2003, work began on Georgia’s section of the new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (Turkey) oil pipeline (scheduled to open in 2005). Georgia is a member of the World Trade Organization, though its progress is hindered by corruption—a state of affairs that Georgian President Saakashvili has vowed to change.

Georgians have suffered recurring electricity shortages. In 1998, Georgia began, unsuccessfully, to privatize its energy distribution system in order to generate income. The 2004 award-winning documentary, *Power Trip*, directed by Robert Devlin, vividly portrays the attempt of an American firm, AES, to rebuild Georgia’s electricity distribution sector. After AES’s departure from Georgia—a major economic setback—electricity distribution fell under Russian control.

Georgia’s transportation and communications infrastructure remains in poor condition. Up until the 2004 elections, rampant government corruption hampered domestic and foreign investment, economic development and growth, and undermined the government’s credibility.

The United States is Georgia’s largest foreign investor. Major investor projects include the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and the Shah Deniz gas pipeline. Georgia markets its natural spring water, of which one source is in the Borzhomi national parkland region—directly in the path of the BTC pipeline—prompting environmental concerns.

The United States, Canada, China, Britain, and Switzerland have each explored for oil and natural gas in Georgia. New “lateral” drilling techniques indicate potentially promising oil deposits, as does the discovery by oil companies of Georgia’s remarkable “burning water” springs, bubbling with methane. Locals light these with a match and use them for cooking as a natural “stove.”

Though small in size, Georgia’s strategic location between the Black Sea, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey, gives it hope of becoming a “gateway” to the Caucasus and Caspian. Georgia, since the dramatic political changes of 2003-4, encourages the world to view it as part of “wider Europe.” Georgia signed a partnership and cooperation agreement with the European Union and participates in NATO's Partnership for Peace program. United States humanitarian and military assistance has helped Georgia to recover from civil war and post-independence hard times and to better patrol its borders. In addition, the United States provides assistance to humanitarian, technical, and institution-building programs, such as training opportunities for government and law enforcement officials and economic advisers—in addition to educational exchange programs. **United States spending-per-capita in Georgia is high, and \$1billion has been pledged to help pay for damage during the 2008 Georgian-Russian conflict.**

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 Who was Shota Rustaveli?
- 2 When was Gori founded, and who is memorialized there?

- 3 What is the *Dede Ena* and why is it an important Georgian book?
- 4 To whom do the Georgian and Armenian churches owe allegiance?
- 5 When was Stalin born, who was his father, and how did he die? (Attempt to confirm your answers.)
- 6 Did Georgia suffer during Stalin's time? How so (or how not)?
- 7 Georgia's first flag after independence had three colors: what were they and what did they symbolize? Its current flag (actually, a 14<sup>th</sup> century one) has five crosses—what do they symbolize?
- 8 What positions did Eduard Shevardnadze hold during long his political career?
- 9 Where are the “breakaway” regions and other potential hot-spots of Georgia?
- 10 Where, precisely, is the infamous Pankisi Gorge? **And the Khodori Pass? (Find them on a map.)**

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- 13 [www.bsj.ge](http://www.bsj.ge) The Brosse Street Journal is a lively and interesting website published by the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management, in Tbilisi. The Center, with trainees from throughout the Caucasus, is organized by the International Center for

Foreign Journalists (based in Washington, D.C.).

- 14 [www.eruasianet.com](http://www.eruasianet.com) Open Society Institute, Caucasus/Central Asia news
- 15 [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org) Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty news and reports
- 16 [www.cacianalyst.org](http://www.cacianalyst.org) Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University
- 17 [www.transcaspian.ru](http://www.transcaspian.ru) Russian site with English option
- 18 [www.eurasia.org.ru](http://www.eurasia.org.ru) Russian site with English option
- 19 [lcweb2.loc.gov](http://lcweb2.loc.gov) Library of Congress site
- 20 [www.agbdc.com](http://www.agbdc.com) Georgia America-Georgia Business Dev. Council
- 21 [www.georgiaemb.org](http://www.georgiaemb.org) Georgian Embassy in Washington
- 22 [web.sanet.ge/usembassy](http://web.sanet.ge/usembassy) U.S. Embassy Tbilisi

## STALIN

Recent biographies of Stalin, based on archival research until now impossible, shed new light on his early life. These views of the young "Soso" Djugashvili, later known as Koba, offer clues to Stalin's character and actions. Even as an adolescent this "Georgian" Stalin was ruthless, complex, and never to be underestimated. A prolific reader and "culture vulture," Stalin was a poet with a fine singing voice who, throughout his life, made perceptive editorial comments about the press, theater, music, and public relations. (He was, if you will, a kind of dedicated 'editor' of Soviet society who would defend his views and editorial choices to the death--yours!)

The question often arises as to whether Stalin favored his native Georgia after becoming USSR dictator. The answer is complex: basically, Stalin promoted the concept of the Soviet Man (and Soviet Mother) over ethnicity, and in fact came into conflict with Lenin, who warned against antagonizing Georgians unnecessarily by promoting "Great Russian Chauvinism." But Stalin played a cunning and ruthless game and dealt the ethnic cards as he as he saw fit--so long as his face was each and every one. Stalin knew all about the ethnic intricacies of the Russian empire; for a time he served as Commissar of Nationalities, negotiating and delineating the borders of the new union republics and autonomous entities of the Soviet Union. He promoted Georgian emigration into other parts of the Caucasus and also enjoyed drinking Georgian Khvanchkara red wine and singing Georgian songs. Many of his close associates and drinking companions were Georgian family members or comrades from early revolutionary days. However, close relationship or Georgian origin was no guarantee of security, and Stalin had many of these nearest and dearest imprisoned or executed. Thus, Stalin favored Georgia when it suited his purposes; otherwise, Georgians suffered along with the rest of the Soviet Union during periods of collectivization and ideological purging. Ironically, Stalin's ruthless henchman in these matters, Lavrenty Beria, was also a Georgian (actually a Mingrelian, born in Abkhazia).

Much remains enigmatic, however, including the exact nature of Stalin's relations with the Tsarist secret police. Was he a double agent? More cautious historians point to the lack of hard evidence; however, there are considerable circumstantial indications of this possibility. For example, after expulsion from the seminary where he trained for the priesthood, Stalin held but one steady job: with the Tiflis Meteorological Observatory where, for a few hours, three times a week, he read thermometers and barometers. This was Stalin's *only* salaried job until he joined

the revolutionary government in 1918, and he held this position for only two years (1899-1901). Furthermore, a timeline of Stalin's life reveals a startling phenomenon: for his first two decades years Stalin remains, essentially, a local Georgian lad. Then, for a decade and a half (again, with no apparent source of income), Stalin suddenly starts to travel abroad to Scandinavia, England, and Western Europe (attending Bolshevik gatherings and meeting Lenin); and domestically, throughout the Caucasus (doing agitation work from Baku to Batumi); to St. Petersburg and Moscow, and to sundry far northern and eastern Siberian villages as an exile (venues from most of which he soon 'escapes'). It is a most curious pattern, indeed. How did Stalin manage to do it? Who helped him? Who paid?

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## **ABKHAZIANS, SOUTH OSSETIANS, AND OTHER GROUPS IN GEORGIA**

Just as one may learn much about a book from its footnotes and marginalia, so too with history: time and again seemingly marginal regions of the world turn out to have a major effect upon nations. The Caucasus is a prime example and, for this reason, its various autonomous regions and ethnic groups bear close scrutiny. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are diminutive territories, in a small nation, in a compact part of the world, but should not therefore be underestimated. Though seemingly peripheral to world events, the frequently intractable interactions of these and other Caucasus peoples repeatedly have wide ripple effects.

**Abkhazians and Ossetians:** As the Soviet Union crumbled and disintegrated (1991), Abkhazians and South Ossetians formed their own parties and the Kremlin, seeking to constrain Georgia's independence, supported both. Georgia declared independence in April 1991 and elected a strongly nationalistic president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who, along with the Georgian Parliament, abolished South Ossetia's autonomy and renamed the territory as the "District of



Samachablo" (the *Georgian* word for the land). This set off a devastating war of several months duration.

At the same time, tensions arose in Adjara—another autonomous region of Georgia—and in Abkhazia. Abkhazia and Georgia had a long history of ill-will. Abkhazians, at only 17% of the population (1989 census) were a minority in their own homeland and bitterly resented periodic colonization efforts by Georgians (45% of the population). On the other hand, Georgians protested the disproportionate allotment of political and administrative positions 67% of which went to the Abkhazian minority.

The Abkhazian parliament, with its slim majority of Abkhazians over Georgians, debated whether to secede from Georgia. Gamsakhurdia, ousted in a "democratic coup" in Tbilisi, was replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze, who had returned from Moscow. In August, 1992, Georgian forces entered Abkhazian territory—ostensibly to protect Georgia's rail and road supply lines—and, without notifying Shevardnadze, occupied the Abkhazian Parliament.

The ensuing war continued until October, 1993. Abkhazians, aided by North Caucasian militaries (primarily Chechens) and also by Russians, proved victorious. Some 250,000 Georgian residents of Abkhazia (Georgians, at 45% of the population, made up the Republic's majority, compared to Abkhazians, who were only 17%) fled east across the mountains to Georgia. Abkhazians declared independence in 1992, but to this day it remains unrecognized as a nation.

During the conflict, Georgian forces burned the Abkhazian State Archives and the Institute of History, Language and Literature, destroying irreplaceable documents and manuscripts—an attack, say Abkhazians, on their very identity and historic memory. (These archives are presently being replenished, slowly and in increments, from outside sources, in the 'Idica' project.)

Kept apart by Russian "peace-keepers," a tense status quo prevails between the two sides. Georgia demands the return of refugees to their homes and restoration of Abkhazia to its former status with "the highest level of autonomy." Abkhazians, however, refuse the return of refugees, for fear of becoming once again a minority in the Republic with subsequent ethnic cleansing by Georgians or forced emigration.

Abkhazia, caught in an ongoing economic blockade enforced by Georgia and Russia, exports hydroelectricity and fruit to Russia, along with illicit goods (e.g. timber) to Turkey and Europe. The blockade also interrupts an important railroad link between Russia and Armenia. In the last couple of years, Abkhazia has begun to attract several hundred thousand Russian tourists, lured by cheap hotel rates, no visa restrictions, and beautiful beaches. Still, Russia withholds full endorsement of Abkhazia's secession so as not to set a precedent for giving up Chechnya. Russian (and American) official policy is to support Georgia's territorial integrity.

Tensions remain high between Georgia and Abkhazia to this day as both sides consider Abkhazia to be homeland. The current ceasefire and "frozen conflict" threatens at any time to thaw and re-ignite. Meanwhile, politicians and historians debate the various and complex Georgian and Abkhazian claims of being autochthonous. Others argue for an overall "objective" view of history—a difficult task at best. **After the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict, Abkhazia**

declared “independence,” but this status is recognized by only a handful of nations.

**Adjarians:** Ethnically Georgian, but nominally Muslim—the result of Turkish domination of this region on the Ottoman border. Until 2004, Adjaria was the “fiefdom” of Aslan Abashidze and palpably more affluent than the rest of Georgia.

**Kisti:** These ethnic Chechens settled in Georgia’s Pankisi Valley during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They speak and write in Georgian, have Georgianized names, but retain Chechen customs.

**Meskhetian Turks:** Also known as Ahiska Turks, these are either Turkified Georgians, or related to Turks or Azeris. They lived next to Javakheti, a western region of Georgia with a large Armenian population, and were deported en masse in 1943-44 to Krygyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. (Stalin deported Chechans, Ingush, Karachais, Balkars and Volga Germans as well, ostensibly fearing their support of the German military during the war; but the Ahiska/Meskhetians were never so charged). Unlike Chechens, Crimean Tatars, or other deported populations, the Meskhetian Turks have never been “rehabilitated” or repatriated. Some moved to Nagorno-Karabagh, but, as Muslims, were forced out during the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. Others live in Russia and a very few have returned to Georgia. Their plight remains unresolved.

**Mingrelians:** Ethnically related to Georgians and speaking a distinct, but Georgian-type language, the Mingrelians live in the western, sub-tropical region which is near the Black Sea, next to Abkhazia in the northwest and Adjaria to the south. Many prominent Georgians were Mingrelian, and there has been much intermarriage. The shift of Mingrelian populations into Abkhazia during the 1930s-40s helped spark ethnic conflict and violence half a century later during Georgia’s early independence.

**Khevsur:** Ethnic highland Georgians, the Khevsur, or Khevsuretians, live in near isolation. They are neither Muslim nor manifestly Christian. Traditionally chosen as elite guards of the kings of old Kartli, the Khevsur were known to wear chain mail armor, leading to speculation that their ancestors included lost Crusaders (!).

**Svans:** Traditionally “wild” in character (and reputedly most like the original Georgians), the Svans live in the western Caucasus highlands near Mount Ushba and Shkhara. Villages have ancient stone towers, used for protection against raids and avalanches. The Svans have no churches, but harbor precious and old crucifixes and icons. Their region has never been invaded.

## **Georgians and Abkhazians: Some more history**

The Georgian/Abkhazian conflict arises, paradoxically, out of both something and nothing: that is to say, out of actual historical events and also out of ideas or interpretations of those events dating back two hundred years--or two thousand! It's a question of focus: Abkhazians tend to concentrate on the Middle Ages and on brief periods of the Soviet era as times when they enjoyed a measure of autonomy. Georgians, however, point to other decades in the Middle Ages and to periods in antiquity when the two regions were one.

In ancient days the territory of modern Abkhazia belonged to the Kingdom of Colchis (6<sup>th</sup> to the 1st centuries BC). Later it adjoined and eventually became an integral part of the Western Georgian kingdom of Lazika (Egrisi). In the 8th century, with the weakening of the Byzantine Empire, the Abkhazian Kingdom arose and absorbed the whole territory of today's Western Georgia.

With the death of the last Abkhazian king, power shifted to the Georgian Bagrationi (Bagratid) dynasty, originally from Armenia, who ruled as "Kings of Abkhazians and Georgians." This arrangement lasted from the 12th to the early 14th century, until the Mongol invasion, whereupon the kingdom, including Abkhazia, broke up into principalities. Abkhazia became a rival of the neighboring Georgian principality of Megrelia (Mingrelia). North Caucasus tribes related to Abkhazians took part in these conflicts and settled in Abkhazia. Christianity declined in Abkhazia with the spread of Islam under the influence of the Ottoman Empire.

Russia began its conquest of the Caucasus region in the early 1800s and the Abkhazian principality joined the Russian Empire in 1810. As the Tsar came to dominate the eastern Georgian kingdoms of Kakheti and Imereti, along with Megrelia in the west, Abkhazians rebelled continually but fruitlessly. After the Russian-Turkish war (1878-79), Russia encouraged the massive emigration of some 30,000 Abkhazians to Turkey, of whom hundreds perished during the voyage over the Black Sea. The Georgian national movement strongly criticized this Tsarist policy, as well as the conscious resettling of Russians and other nationalities into the Caucasus. Georgian writers and pedagogues, educated in Russia, returned to encourage Georgians to use their own language and resist attempts at Russification. At this time, and later when the Caucasus was under Soviet control, many Georgians moved to Abkhazia, shifting the region's ethnic balance and leaving Abkhazians a minority in their own homeland.

During the Russian Revolution and Civil war period, Georgia proclaimed independence and its army entered Abkhazia to oppose the Bolshevik rulers there. Abkhazians today view this as an invasion. Although Abkhazians comprised only a minority of the population (and Georgians the majority), Georgia affirmed, in theory if not totally in practice, Abkhazia's full autonomy—but only if it remained within the borders of Georgia.

Members of the Abkhazian National Council conspired with the Russian Menshevik Army to oust Georgian forces from the region; but the Georgian government dissolved the ANC, called for new elections, and in March, 1919, decreed that Abkhazia was part of the Georgian Democratic Republic, with autonomous rights.

The Bolshevik occupation of Georgia in 1921 brought the region into the USSR as the Soviet Republic of Abkhazia united with the Soviet Republic of Georgia. Stalin reconfigured this ambiguous relationship a decade later, making Abkhazia an autonomous republic within, and essentially subservient to, the Soviet Republic of Georgia. Abkhazians claim that Stalin, who was of Georgian birth, favored the national interests of Georgia by this maneuver. Furthermore, they accuse Stalin's henchman, KGB head Lavrenty Beria (a Mingrelian born in Abkhazia) of purging nearly all the Abkhazian intelligentsia, suppressing the Abkhazian language, and further changing Abkhazia's demographic balance by encouraging Georgians to work in the region's new factories.

After Stalin and Beria's death in the 1950s, Abkhazians negotiated with the Kremlin over the possibility of separating from Georgia. They won the right to establish a national university in 1978 and set up daily television broadcasts in the Abkhazian language. Meanwhile, as always, Abkhazians and Georgians continued to live and work together, and even marry.

To this day Abkhazian and Georgian historians and linguists debate whether Abkhazians are in fact the territory's original people, and the Georgians late intruders. Georgia's first president, the ultra-nationalistic Zviad Gamsakhurdia, called Abkhazians latecomers from the North (that is, essentially, 'Chechens'). The question remains: Did an ethnically distinct people found the Kingdom of Abkhazia (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries)? If so, then Abkhazian statehood extends back 1200 years and secession from Georgia would have an "objective" justification. On the other hand, if the Georgian "radical" view is correct, that Abkhazians arrived only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century then Georgia's argument for territorial integrity gains legal merit.

Even language enters the debate. Radical Georgians point out that the Abkhazian words for "sea" and "boat" come from other languages, and that this "proves" that, instead of being autochthonous to the land, Abkhazians descended from the Caucasus Mountains to the shore as latecomers. Opposing historians, however, cite ancient Greek references to Abkhazians in the region and point to other linguistic traces supporting their claim.

Meanwhile, "arbitrator" scholars say that Abkhazians never occupied the territory exclusively. In ancient times it was part of the kingdom of Lazika (the Laz/Mingrelians being of Georgian ethnicity and still very much extant in Georgia and northeast Turkey), and even before the common era Lazika submitted to the kingdom of eastern Georgia to make a stronger political union so that they could face common enemies together.

Arbitrators argue that the 8<sup>th</sup> century Abkhazian kingdom was not founded on a purely ethnic basis, nor were there signs of Georgian/Abkhazian hostility as Abkhazia expanded to absorb the whole of Western Georgia (incidentally, at a time when the majority of Abkhazia's inhabitants were Georgians). Other evidence of harmony lies in the fact that, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Abkhazian church, formed on the Byzantine model and using Greek texts and liturgy, voluntarily moved under the authority of the Bishop of Mtskheta, in Eastern Georgia, and adopted the Georgian language. This is proved by ancient inscriptions to be found in Abkhazian churches. Georgian was also the language of state administration, as no Abkhazian alphabet existed until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When the Abkhazian Kingdom shifted to the aegis of the great Georgian Bagrationi royal dynasty (10<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century), "Abkhazia" had come to mean Western

Georgia. In short, Georgians and Abkhazians appear to have formed a single political unit, and the common language used during the height of the Bagrationi state administration and cultural flowering was Georgian.

To add to the puzzle, Georgian historical figures at this time were sometimes called “Abkhazian,” not because they were Abkhazian, but because the term referred to the western portion of Georgia, and indeed, sometimes to the whole of the Georgian-Abkhazian kingdom. Some modern Abkhazian historiographers deny the existence of a united medieval kingdom without ethnic autonomies or with a common culture. After the Mongol invasion, the region broke into feuding principalities; Georgian, however, remained the language of the church and administration.

Abkhazians claim that ethnically related mountain people from the North Caucasus aided them in opposing Megrelian (Georgian) intruders. This is countered by assertions that these highlanders, though noted good fighters, were actually mercenaries hired by both sides. Both interpretations have their modern counterparts. During the 1992 war between Georgia and Abkhazia, Chechen fighters did indeed cross the mountains to assist their Abkhazian “brothers” against Georgian forces. And throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (indeed, to this day) Circassian and Chechen descendents of the original diaspora from the Caucasus joined the military throughout Anatolia and the Middle East. There they served honorably, valiantly, and effectively—and not infrequently on both sides of those regions’ many conflicts.

The breakup of the kingdoms into principalities, along with the spread of Islam and the settlement of northern peoples into the region during the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, caused “alienation” from Georgia. These mountain tribes, though related to Abkhazians, felt little sense of being part of a larger Georgian-Abkhazian cultural whole. It is also claimed that many Georgians in Abkhazia “saved” themselves from the newcomers by adopting their customs and religious practices (and thus many modern Abkhazians are descendents of Georgians and bear Georgian names). Language divisions emerged, with the Abkhazian nobility retaining Georgian, while lower social classes spoke other languages. Some historians charge that Russian rulers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and later the Soviets, used ethnography and philology as tools of conquest to pit groups against one another and to widen or create divisions where none in fact existed.

Contemporary critics say that Georgia’s educational system has attributed the glories of Medieval Georgian culture only to ethnic Georgians, while at the same time marginalizing other groups—for example, Armenians, Jews, Ossetians, Persians, Kurds, Syrians, and others. They assert that this is a mistaken interpretation and an outgrowth of 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnocentric Russian historiography. Today’s call is for an objective yet inclusive reconsideration of past events so as to restore the universal sense of dignity and full citizenship guaranteed by the Georgian constitution.

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### **Webs sites:**

#### **ABKHAZIA**

Some of these are neglected and out-of-date, nevertheless they remain of interest for their historical details and photographs.

- 1 <http://www.abkhazia.org/georgia.html> Professor George Hewitt, Prof. of Caucasian Languages, Univ. of London, married to an Abkhazian.
- 2 <http://hypatia.ss.uci.edu/gpacs/abkhazia/> Interesting pictures and links.
- 3 <http://www.apsny.org/> Advocacy website of Abkhazia ('Apsny')
- 4 <http://www.abkhazia.com/> Abkhazia site (in Russian)
- 5 <http://www.qsl.net/yb0rmi/abkhazia.htm>
- 6 <http://fashion.hobby.ru/abkhazia/abkhazia.htm>
- 7 [http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/5CJJM6?OpenDocument&style=custo\\_final](http://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/5CJJM6?OpenDocument&style=custo_final) Red Cross site

**LAZ (Mingrelians, Megrelians):** In the Georgian family, yet with cultural distinctions:

- 1 <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9479/laz.html>
- 2 <http://www.scimitarmusic.com/pontos/laz.html>. About Laz and "Pontic" music and culture.

**LANGUAGES:** Philology, ever fraught with complexity and bias, remains fascinating:

- 1 <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Kartvelian%20language>
- 2 <http://social.iatp.org.ge/axal/history.htm> Interesting GEORGIAN SITE about regional history and culture, and antiquities

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## COLOR REVOLUTIONS

Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine, for all their differences, shared several characteristics in the years 199\_ to 200\_. Each underwent political and social turmoil and a change of government driven largely by peaceful, technically savvy youth movements bearing names like Otpor, Kmara, and Pora, meaning, basically, "Enough!" Conversant in English, often educated abroad, or at least exposed to contemporary American and European culture, these NGO-trained groups knew how to use computers and mobile phones, how to monitor elections and conduct exit polls among voters, and how to propagandize effectively, for example, by literally painting the town with the abovementioned slogans. The results were dramatic: three corrupt governments folded, quickly; three new governments arose with substantial, even overwhelming popular support, and all three immediately began to undergo the briefest of honeymoon periods. The aftermath of Serbia's elections, and Georgia and Ukraine's Rose and Orange Revolutions (later reinforced by election results), have had positive outcomes, including a boisterous, sometimes even chaotic political debate. There have also been neutral and negative consequences: exacerbated opposition rhetoric, lack of governmental transparency, confrontations in the international sphere, and even suspicious deaths.

All three countries have had to contend with Russia, which has viewed "color revolutions" on her border or among Slav brethren nations with horror and disdain. In official and media assessments, Russia calls these tidal shifts occasions of sinister influence and espionage, and has stringently curtailed NGO activity on home soil of such groups as the Open Society Institute and the British Council. Another influence on the Color Revolutionaries was the Albert Einstein Institution, in Boston, which has widely disseminated writings by American activist Gene Sharp (b.1928), such as *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973) and *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (1982??). These works discuss nearly 200 methods of nonviolent means; many of them, such as street campaigning, peaceful resistance, raising awareness (consciousness-building), agitation, network building, political marketing, debating skills, media relations, mobilization and recruiting--characterized efforts to effect change not only in the three countries above, but also in Byelarus, Albania, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Lebanon, and Venezuela.

Since 2004, the Saakashvili government has experienced notable successes and failures. Among the successes are:

- professionalization of the police force and a reduction in its corruption
- reduced corruption in education and electoral procedures
- attraction of foreign investment (e.g. from Kazakhstan and Israel)
- overall westernization, establishment of jury courts (partial)
- infrastructure improvement
- "placement" of Georgia on the world map

- increased "confidence-building" measures between Georgia and its break-away regions (see below)
- re-establishment of control over break-away Adjara and the Kodori region in Abkhazia
- solidification of relations with Europe and the United States

Negative outcomes include:

- cronyism (especially in the judiciary and television media, but not necessarily in print media)
- dramatic deterioration in relations with Russia (largely due to Putin's and Saakashvili's clashing personalities): boycott of Georgian bottled water, wine, produce; cutting of transportation links; expulsion of Georgian workers; decline of remittances; 2008 invasion by Russia, with bombings and seizure of Georgian territories.
- increased presidential control over the Georgian parliament
- little trickle-down benefit to ordinary citizens from foreign investment
- increased inflation
- poor relations with political opposition, heightened rhetoric, resulting in demonstrations and strong-arm government reactions
- strong-arm movements against S. Ossetia and Abkhazia resulting in probably long-term loss of these regions

## **August 8, 2008**

Matters have only deteriorated after Russia's invasion on this date. Several murky and conflicting chronologies exist concerning Georgian bombardment of Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, and Russia's occupation of the area and its subsequent bombings and seizure of areas beyond South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Generally speaking, Saakashvili gave orders to Georgian military to respond to Russian and S. Ossetian provocations in S. Ossetia. This set off disproportionate actions from a motley combination of Russian, North and South Ossetian, Abkhaz, and Chechen military units who seized roads and cities, bombed civilian areas, airports and military targets, killed indiscriminately among villages, and advanced to within 20 miles of Tbilisi. Russia claims to have saved S. Ossetians from "genocide." The United States's close ties with Georgia threatened to turn events into a test of will between major powers. Despite a withdrawal agreement brokered by the French president and international support for Georgia, whose army was routed, Russia remains in control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The latter have declared "independence," recognized so far only by Russia, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Belarus, Transnistria and Hamas. The aftermath:

- Fatalities and thousands of displaced Georgians from S. Ossetia (joining the multiple thousands of earlier IDP's from S. Ossetia and Abkhazia conflicts dating back to 1992).
- immediate plunge of foreign investment in Georgia
- immediate diminution of gas and oil flows through the BTC and Baku-Erzurum pipelines
- \$4-5 billion dollars in aid promised by the United States and Europe
- Georgian political destabilization with increased calls for Saakashvili's resignation and new



elections. Distancing from him by former Rose Revolution allies, who have joined the opposition.

Journalist Thomas Goltz, who was in Tbilisi at the time, facetiously refers to the whole affair as the "Russian-Georgian Sochi 2014 War," referring to Russia's desire to stage the Winter Olympics in Sochi, a few miles away from Abkhazia. Russia maintains that "regime change" in Georgia is needed before peace can prevail. Georgia fears renewal of hostilities during warmer weather as snow melts and movement becomes easier. United Nations peacekeepers and OSCE monitors are inadequate or hold no mandate to police border regions with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The United States continues to support Georgia's territorial integrity.

## GENERATIONS

In Georgia, a new generation rules. Its "Rose Revolution" president and his partners have barely entered their 40s, and most government officials are still in their 30s and even 20s. Georgia's small political arena lacks *eminences grises*, or low-profile functionaries, with experience and administrative skills. Meanwhile, citizens over 50 tend to be sidelined in the workforce, either because they have fewer computer and English-language skills, or because they seem tainted by their Soviet-era upbringing and outlook. In a country that traditionally reveres elders, this is an unnatural and unbalanced situation. In the rest of the Caucasus, governments may retain old "survivors" from previous eras; nevertheless, general change is still important. It may, for example, affect the rhetoric over "frozen" or "legacy" conflicts in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabagh. On the one hand, young people born during or after the expulsions and ethnic killings of the early 1990s do not have the same memories of these events as do their parents--but nor do they have personal acquaintances on the other side. Whereas in the past Armenians and Azerbaijanis may have attended the same school, or served together during military conscription, now the populations have separated. Similarly, young people in Abkhazia have no chance to get to know their counterparts in the rest of Georgia, or vice versa, should they even care to. The result is: heightened antagonism and receptive audiences for nationalistic rhetoric.

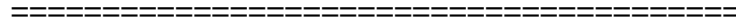
## QUESTIONS:

- Aside from headline news, what are relations between Georgians, Abkhaz, and South Ossetians actually like?
- When Caucasus hostilities flare, what weight should be given to "back-channel" diplomacy and efforts at conflict resolution? Are they moot or as important as before?

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## THE NORTH CAUCASUS: Panoply of Peoples

While U.S. diplomats serve only in the three nations of the South Caucasus, the north part-- Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, and Adyghea--in southern Russia, must also be factored into the overall "Caucasian equation." However one views the map, it is a fact that the North and South Caucasus are intertwined culturally, politically, and to a degree, economically (e.g. through smuggling). On the Black Sea coast, Sochi, too, was part of the Caucasus: it was the port from which much of the Caucasus Diaspora departed their homeland in 1964-1867. (Their descendants in Caucasus communities in Anatolia, Jordan, Syria, and Israel maintain ties with kin in Abkhazia and other regions.) Today Sochi is in the news primarily as the venue for the 2014 Winter Olympics.

The more than 40 North Caucasus peoples can be divided linguistically as follows:

- 1 **Northwest Caucasians:** the Circassians  
**Western or 'Adyghe':** Shapsughes, Bzhedugs, Temirgoys, Abzakhs, Ubykhs, Abkhaz-Abazinians;  
**Eastern:** Besleneys and Kabardians
- 2 **North Central Caucasians:** the Karachai and Balkars, who speak Tur and, though present since ancient times, are ethnically unrelated to other North Caucasus peoples.
- 3 **Northeast Caucasians/Daghestanians:** Ingush, Chechens, and the Dagestani (of which the Avars, Dargins, and Lezgins are the most important).
- 4 **Other** North Caucasus groups and subgroups, such as the Kumyks.

The Andi, Botlikh, Godoberi, Akhvakh, Bagulaal, Khvarsh, Kryz, Tskahur, and many others, can only be mentioned, for the sum of the Caucasus' ethnic parts can easily overwhelm the whole—and the reader. It is important to note that many of today's conflicts in the Caucasus can be traced back, not to ethnic differences or the tenets of religion, but to the impositions of foreign governments—that is, the movements of populations and the brutal deportations of some South and virtually all North Caucasus peoples by Stalin during the 1940s.

### **Some North Caucasus Peoples:**

**Balkars:** (see **Karachais**)

**Chechens:** Chechens fought the Russians for three decades in Daghestan and other regions during the Murid Wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of Imam Shamil (see Islam section, below). Deported by Stalin to Kazakhstan in 1944, thousands of Chechens died in exodus and exile, and returned to a russified Chechnya in the 1950s. (There is evidence that some of those too old or feeble to be deported were burned to death by the Soviets.) A former Soviet air force general, Jokhar Dudayev, declared Chechnya's independence in the early 1990s, whereupon Soviet leader Boris Yeltsin attempted to regain control of the region. The "First Chechen War" raged from 1994-96, during which time Russian forces first regained, then lost control of Grozny (an old Russian fort named 'awesome,' or 'dreaded'), which became the capital of Chechnya. Dudayev was killed in 1996; a short peace prevailed until 1999, when the new Russian president, Vladimir Putin, ordered a new assault on Grozny. During the resulting devastation, many inhabitants fled to neighboring Ingushetia, North Ossetia, and to Georgia. The war continued as a relentless series of ambushes, sabotages, assassinations, and exterminations little documented or noted by the world. **Today, Chechnya is ruled by Ramzan Kadyrov, who has been brutally effective at rebuilding Grozny and eliminating opposition (in recent years those falling out of favor with him have been assassinated, even abroad).**

**Circassians:** The Circassians comprise indigenous Adyghe, Kabardians, and Cherkess groups with distinct, but mutually intelligible, languages or dialects. Their numbers are considerably reduced after an extensive (estimates range from 600,000-2 million people) migration to Turkey, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Thousands died from hunger and shipwreck during the voyage over the Black Sea. Today, some groups (Ubykh) are extinct or nearly so. Circassians, loyal army fighters, served in the Balkans and the Middle East; the Ottomans settled them in the most unstable areas of the Empire—for example, in Syria, where local Beduin did not obey the central government. Circassians brought stability and founded a town on the relics of ancient Philadelphia—today's Amman.

**Dagestan peoples:** Comprising Avars, Dargins, Lezgins, Kumyks, Nogais, Laks, Tabasarans, Rutuls, Aguls, Tsakhurs, and many others.

**Kabardians:** Also called Kabardins, these people have always been considered the most pro-Russian of all the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus and actively assisted the Russian Czarist army.

In general, Islam is not as strong among Circassians as among Karachais or Balkars. Nevertheless—and because of Soviet policy to divide Moslem groups—Kabardians were

deported in large numbers in December, 1943, to Central Asia and Siberia. Diaspora Circassians today live mainly in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Germany, and the United States. During the 1990s, a Circassian national movement arose in diaspora communities and a few thousand Circassians re-emigrated to the Caucasus.

**Ingushetians:** Traditionally an indigenous mountain people, the Ingush resettled more recently in valleys and towns as part of Russia's policy to "civilize" the Caucasus. Their language is akin to Chechen and they are largely Sunni Moslems. Ingush—along with Chechens—were deported in February, 1944, to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Siberia in 190 trains and some 12,000 train carriages. They returned to the Caucasus in large numbers, starting in 1954.

**Karachai:** Of Turkic origin, moved in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the high valleys in the Central North Caucasus and were deported along with their cohabitants, the **Balkarians**, in 1944. The Karachai, Balkarians, Circassians, and the Kabardins inhabit roughly the same areas.

A geopolitical note: some argue that it would have made sense in the 1920s, to create a Karachai-Balkarian (i.e. a southern, Turkic, Moslem, mountainous) republic and a Kabardino-Cherkess (i.e. northern, pagan, indigenous, Christian) republic. But Soviet authorities, true to form, sought to divide and conquer: instead of drawing the boundary from east to west, they traced it north to south, thus cutting *across* ethnic divisions. As a result, instead of a theoretically sensible "Karachai-Balkaria" republic and a "Kabardino-Cherkessia" republic, we have today's heterogeneous and ethnically contentious Karachai-Cherkess and Kabardino-Balkar republics.)

**Ossetians:** The Ossetians Early 6<sup>th</sup> century AD "immigrants" to the Caucasus. Their communities straddled the mountains just west of the important Georgian Military Road and were divided between Georgia and Russia. Ossetians speak a distinct Indo-European language of the Persian group and call themselves Ir, Iron, or Os. The ancestors of the Ossetians are reputed to be the Alans, a nomadic people from the steppe northeast of the Black Sea whose specialty was warfare and horse breeding. Many fled the Huns in 370 AD and crossed into Gaul and Africa. **Research suggests that the Alans, wearing armor and bearing lances, were the origin of western knights, and that the Arthurian legends have both Celtic and Alanic roots, particularly when compared with the Caucasus Nart sagas. The Alans intermarried throughout Western Europe and left archaeological traces in Italy, France, Britain, Spain, and North Africa. It is tantalizing to think, as some scholars do, that Sir Lancelot might have been originally "Alanus [Latin for 'Alan'] à Lot [a river in western France]. Certain Alan, or Os, groups settled in the Caucasus. Largely Orthodox Christian, a northern Ossetian minority accepted Islam, and pagan traditions remain alive today in Ossetia (as they do in Abkhazia). Ossetians traditionally held the high passes of the Caucasus. South Ossetia has tried several times to merge with North Ossetia (in Russia). As an autonomous region of Georgia, they opposed Georgian nationalism during the 1990s and sealed themselves off and declared "independence" after the Russian-Georgian conflict in August 2008.**

**Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 Why are there Karchai/Balkar and Kabardin/Cherkess tensions—but no Kabardin/Karchai or Cherkess/Balkar tensions? (Or are there?)
- 2 Why and how did Stalin deport Caucasus peoples?
- 3 How do North Caucasus politics impinge upon the South Caucasus?
- 4 How can a region of the Caucasus be at once Christian, Muslim, and pagan?

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BRONZE (MIDDLE IRON AGE)  
FERTILITY FIGURINE  
DAGHESTAN (1870s)

## Why study the North Caucasus, or “little peoples”?

The regions of North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Adygheya, Karachai-Circassia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Krasnodar Krai lie north of the Greater Caucasus mountain range, in Russia, and hence beyond the scope of this (South) Caucasus self-study guide. Nevertheless, events in the north shape what happens afar and hence bear close monitoring.

For two centuries, the Caucasus served Russia much as India served Britain (and during the same period): as a testing ground and cultural “mirror.” Just as the Raj, the United Kingdom’s “Jewel in the Crown,” gave luster and meaning to the idea of empire and British-ness, so too the Caucasus enabled Imperial Russia, and later the Soviet Union, to conceive of itself as an empire and superpower.

But the Russians weren’t the only ones to dream powerful Caucasus dreams: in 19<sup>th</sup> century Daghestan and Chechnya, militant Sufi and Islamist movements proclaimed *jihad* and kept the Czar’s armies at bay for decades. During the height of the Caucasus wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Imam Shamyl (1797-1870) and his fighters raided fearlessly, even into the heart of Georgia, capturing hostages and scooping them back up into the mountains. For decades no army could defeat him, for the mountain passes were too narrow and precipitous to admit any but a single stream of soldiers on foot or horseback: easy prey for mountain warriors. Eventually, by cutting down acres of forest cover, by building bridges in impossible places, and through bribes, Russia managed to put down the mountain people—at least for a time.

These conflicts now rage anew in Putin’s Russia. Even today, among diaspora Caucasus groups in the Middle East and Anatolia, Caucasus culture clubs, with libraries of books in exotic and sometimes extinct languages, with dance classes and feasting halls, often prominently display on their walls the stern portrait of Shamyl. Brandishing a saber he rides his horse into battle, or sits tamely in a photograph taken in St. Petersburg, his curly red beard balanced by a tall sheepskin hat, his chest covered with bullet belts and sundry swords and daggers tucked into his belt. Shamyl’s two grown sons stand by his side, similarly garbed.

Imam Shamyl is worth careful study. He commanded (and among many people still commands) respect for his valor and ruthlessness, his toughness, shrewdness, and ultimately his pragmatism, for Shamyl surrendered and ended his days as an honored “guest” of the Czar.

Judging from events and history, the Czars are gone—while Shamyl endures.

**[INSERT: Shamyl  
portrait]**

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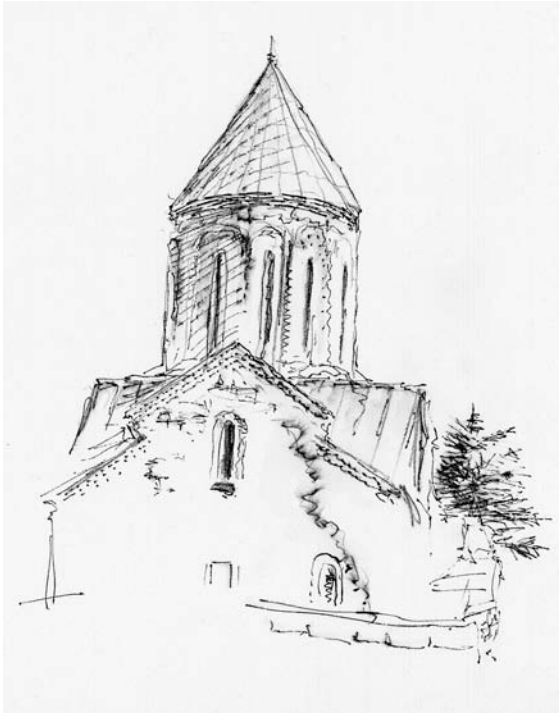
[INSERT above: Shamil portrait]

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 By what means did Russia fail, and then succeed, to conquer the Caucasus?
- 2 Which parts of the Caucasus aided Imam Shamil and which refused—and why?

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## **CHRISTIANITY**

It is a challenging to try to define the architectural differences between Georgian and Armenian churches yet they are distinct. Sometimes Armenian churches seem more faceted and angular, and Georgian more rounded (though not always). Some Armenian basilicas have separate chapels built in each direction off the nave; Georgian ones often have three parallel naves put together. Perhaps the main difference lies in their construction material: Georgian stone churches seem lighter, whiter, whereas Armenian churches, built from the local tuff, a porous volcanic rock, take on pink, ochre, or reddish hues.

Of extreme interest are the cave monasteries built at David-Garedzha (in Kakheti, eastern Georgia) and Vardzia (near Turkey and Armenia). David-Garedzha lies in a silent and rather inaccessible region which, ironically, could turn out to be a promising oil field. Vardzia is a vast complex of originally 3,000 man-made caves carved out of the tuff cliffs above the Kura (Mtkvari) River.

Armenia proudly claims to be the world's first Christian state (debated dates range from 301 to 314 AD), with Georgia coming in a close second (330 AD). However, Christians lived among Greek colonies along the Black Sea coast in the first and second centuries, and Armenian church history attests to conversions in Armenia by the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew (hence the Armenian 'Apostolic' Church). Certainly Christians lived in both Armenia and Georgia from the earliest times--and Jews long before.

Georgia's conversion to Christianity resulted in the suppression of the wealthy and powerful class of pagan priests and a cultural reorientation towards Rome, Byzantium and the west. A



church schism developed over the nature of Christ ('human and divine' vs. 'beyond human understanding'), resulting in the creation of the Monophysitic ('beyond human understanding') churches: most importantly the Armenian, as well as the Syrians, the Egyptian and Ethiopian Copts, the Indian church, and the Nestorians in Persia. The Armenian Apostolic Church belongs to the family of Oriental Orthodox Churches. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, missionaries in Anatolia ('Historical Armenia') established Protestant and Catholic Armenian churches.

With Constantinople's permission, in Georgia the Iberian Church established a bishop at Mtskheta and became autocephalous, which the Orthodox Church of Georgia remains to this day despite long periods of Persian and Arab domination.

Writing came to both Armenia through Biblical texts. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, St. Mesrop (Mashtots) invented an Armenian alphabet based possibly on Greek and Persian scripts. Some sources say St. Mesrop also devised the Georgian alphabet, while others maintain it appeared earlier, invented by King Parnavas in the third century, or else that it arose in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC from Aramaic with later Greek influences. The earliest known Georgian inscription is in the Judean desert, 433 AD. Georgia's ecclesiastical alphabet, Khutsuri, gave way in the 11 century to the secular Mkhedruli alphabet. Azerbaijani, a Turkish/Altaic language, first used Arabic, then the Latin alphabet (1928-38), then Cyrillic letters (1939-91), and after independence reverted to a Turkic Latin script.

Armenian and Georgian religious painting possesses its own inimitable style and predates much European church art. The homophonic Armenian and polyphonic Georgian liturgies are unforgettable and utterly different from Gregorian chant, or the Slavonic or Catholic service.

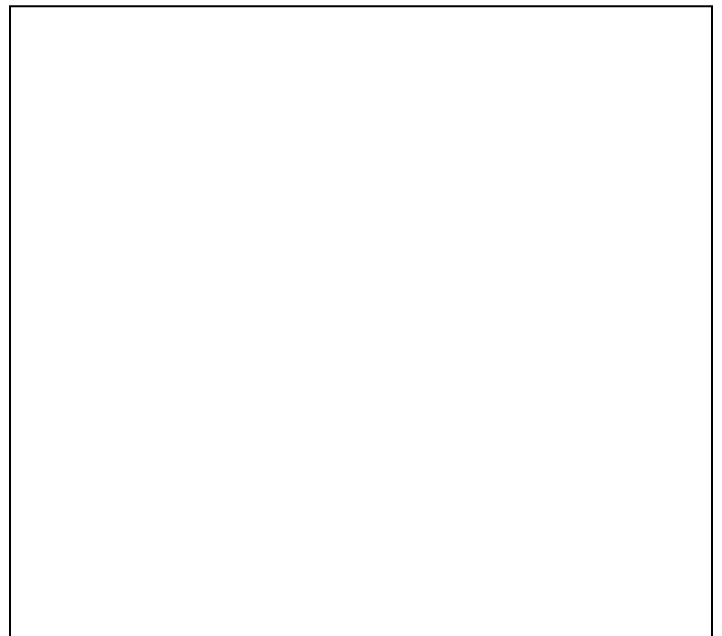


Often entwined with politics, the Church has played a significant role throughout Armenian and Georgian history. Two examples: During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, missionaries in Anatolia from England and the United States, hoping to win converts to Protestantism, offered Armenians travel and education opportunities. This catalyzed the idea of independence and nationalism among Armenian Ottomans receiving a western education. And more recently: in 1999, the Shevardnadze government arranged to send priceless ancient Georgian artifacts to the United States on a tour. When the Georgian Patriarch forbade the inclusion of icons or ecclesiastical chalices, the project turned into a virulent parliamentary election issue and the art tour foundered.

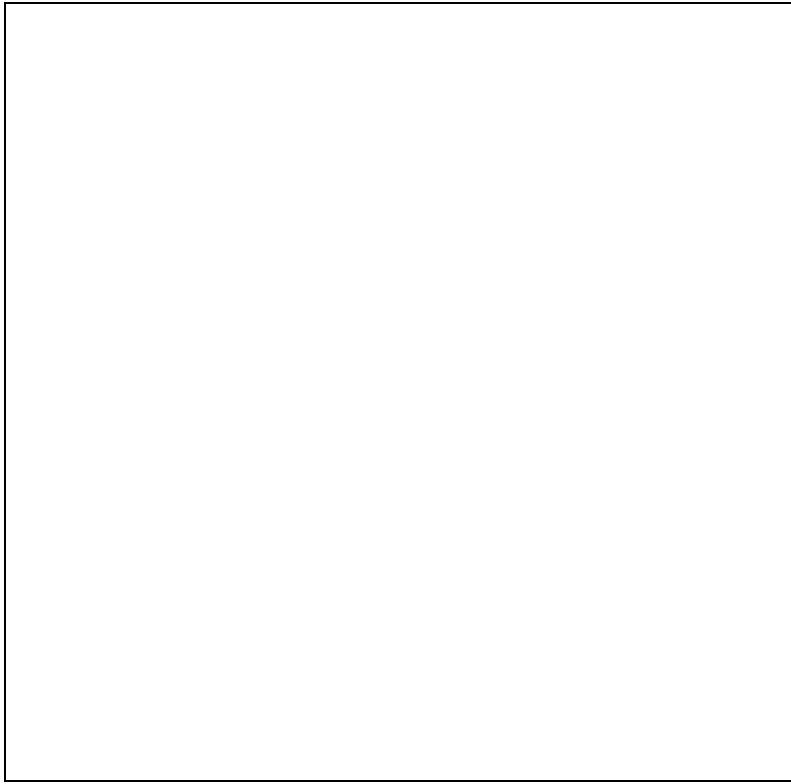
### **Spheres of interest in the Caucasus**



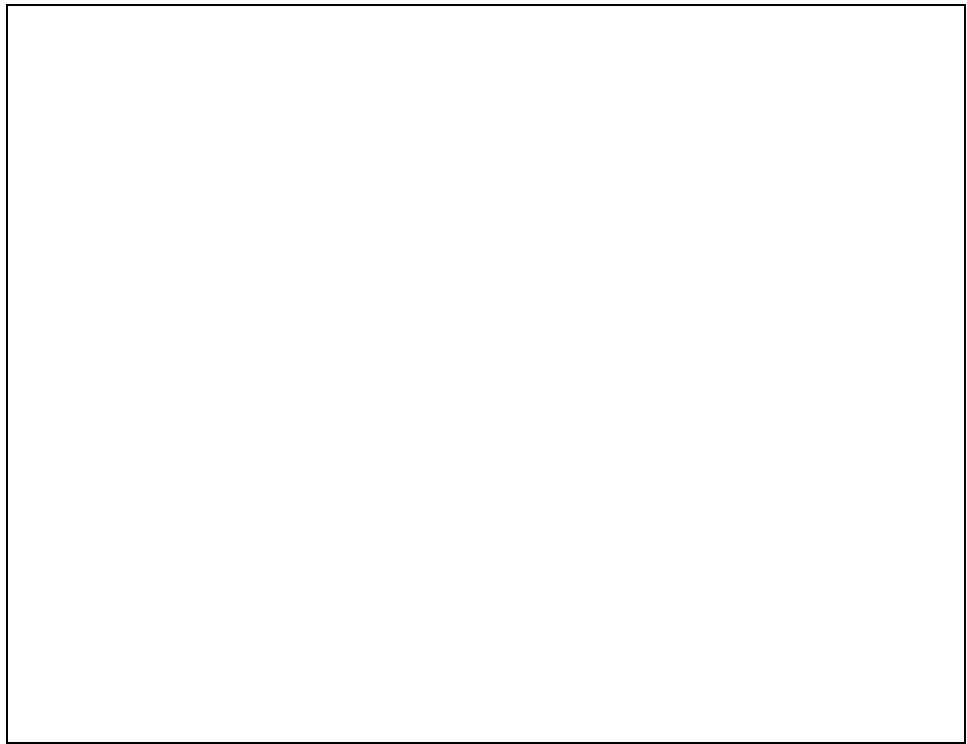
[INSERT: 'Way back when']



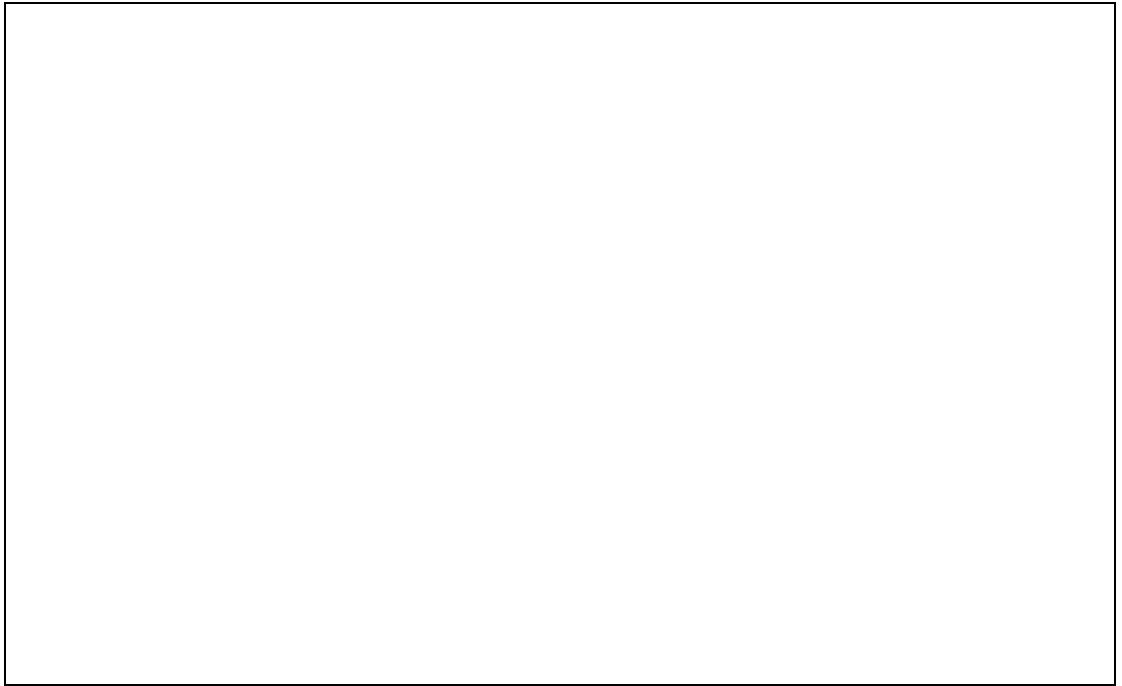
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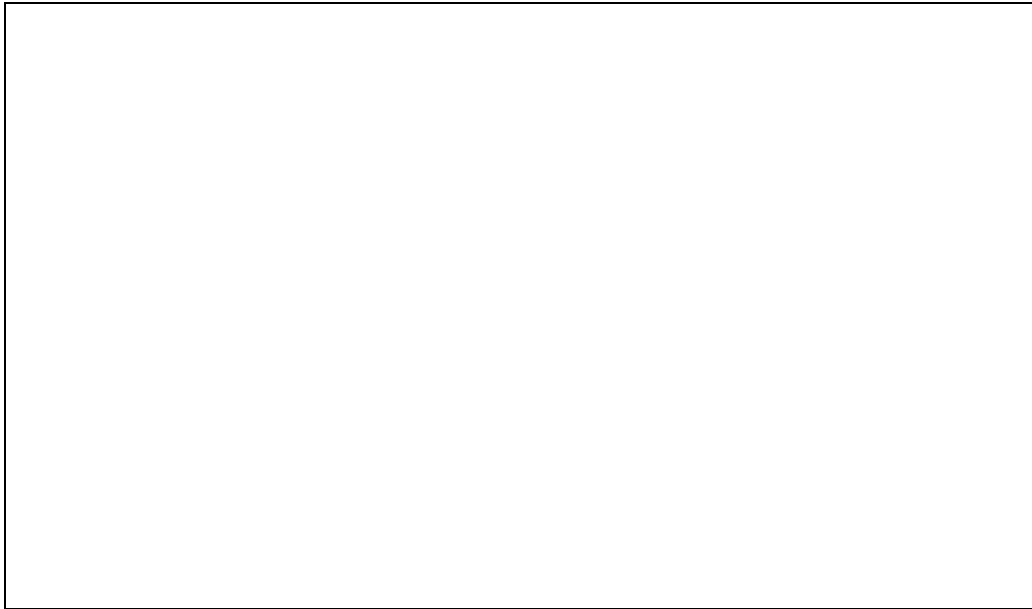
[INSERT: 'Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century']



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[INSERT: 'Now']

## **ISLAM**

Along with pagan traditions, Judaism, and Christianity, Islam has a long history in the

Caucasus. Islam came to the Caucasus in waves from the Ottoman Empire, and from Persia and the Arabs. Islamic culture is particularly old in Dagestan, where an Arab army occupied Derbent in 643 AD, just eleven years after the death of Mohammed. As the numbers of faithful grew, Moslem *murids* of Daghestan from 1830-59 obstructed Russian expansion into the Middle East and did so largely unaided by outside forces. Daghestan at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had hundreds of Moslem religious schools and thousands of mosques, and Dagestanis reputedly spoke the most beautiful Arabic in the entire Islamic world.

An interesting episode in Soviet cultural history occurred, in the 1920s, over the question of Dagestan's official language—aside from Russian. The choice was either Arabic or a Turkic dialect. However, the Soviet authorities dropped this simple option in favor of making *each* of Dagestan's 11 main indigenous languages official (out of 33 spoken in the region). This guaranteed the predominance of Russian, for the sake of convenience, as a “language of inter-ethnic communication.”



In “Caucasian Albania” (roughly, Azerbaijan), Arabs set up a satrapy in 705 AD. The aggressive anti-Christian Abbashid dynasty (750) provoked a series of rebellions through most of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Arab power waned and Azerbaijan divided into fiefdoms in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, until the arrival of Muslim Oguz and Slejuk Turks who established a decentralized rule with regional principalities. Conversions to Islam occurred more through the immigration of Turkic peoples than by force. Islam flourished even under periods of Georgian control. Mongol raids (1225-1386) pushed Turkic and Turkmen nomads into Anatolia and east, from Nakhichevan, into Azerbaijan. Sub-khanates fought the Ottomans, and among themselves, until the defeat of the Ardebil Khanate ushered in the Saffavid dynasty (which was Shi’ite Moslem).

Until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the North Caucasus was divided into a Christian west (Adyghe, plus some Kabardians and Ossetians); a Muslim east (Daghestan); and a pagan center (Chechens and Ingus). There were no serious conflicts. Relative calm prevailed from 1604-1783 as Cossacks moved into the East Caucasus and Islam pushed into the west. During this time, the Ottoman Sultan Ahmad III and the Crimean Khan campaigned against the Kabardians and defeated them. The Moslem conquerors appointed an imam for each highland *aoul* (village), killed all priests and monks, and took the princes’ and nobles’ sons to Crimea as hostages for conversion. These assaults ended in 1729 with the expulsion of the Khans, but some Kabardians remained Sunni Moslems thereafter. The defeat of the Crimean khans brought Russians ever closer to the North Caucasus peoples.

In 1783, terrified by the prospect of imminent Persian invasion, Georgia signed a treaty with Russia. In reaction, seeking to undermine the Czar’s growing influence in the Caucasus, the Ottoman Sultan sent a “caliph” to the Caucasus—a Chechen Naghshbandi (Sufi) mystic named Mansur who was known for his piety and hatred of non-Moslems. As Arabic language and culture spread west from Daghestan to Adyghe (Circassian) regions; many pagan *aouls* converted to Islam in the 1860s, and Sheikh Mansur galvanized Caucasus Moslems and briefly united them against the Russians. He became known as the “Mahdi,” the awaited leader of the Moslem jihad. Eventually Sheikh Mansur was captured and his movement (or mystical *tariqat*) vanished, but only for three decades: the *jihad*, or struggle unified around Islam, remained hidden and it evolved into the *murid* movement led by Shamyl.

Shamyl’s imamate (1824-59) was a Sufi-inspired military jihad mixed with a clannish mountain “democracy.” Though it ended in Shamyl’s defeat, his influence endured and stimulated recurrences of anti-Russian unrest in 1877 and 1920. Over the decades, Islamic law (*shariat*) quietly took its place alongside traditional mountain law (*adat*).

One tends to think of the Russians, and later the Soviets, as being in total control of the Caucasus. In actuality smaller or larger revolts and Holy Wars dragged off and on from 1824 to as late as 1922. During this period, North Caucasus feudalism gave way to clans and peasant societies, but even with an overlay of Soviet culture, the old Sufi order spread.

From 1922-92, sporadic rebellions occurred, which have been little documented, and Soviet authorities deported entire North Caucasus nations. Even in exile, the Chechens maintained their integrity, to a great extent through adherence to their Sufi orders (*tariqa*). Meanwhile, Russians and Cossacks resettled the Chechen homelands. (It is argued that one reason why deportations

from Chechnya would not work today is that the Russian birthrate is in severe decline, whereas Moslem populations throughout Russia are increasing dramatically, and hence Russians could not easily repopulate the deracinated areas).

Today most North Caucasus indigenous populations are Moslem. But such simplifications soon give way to fractal complexities. While it is true that Islam defines social life and ethnic identity in the *Northeast* Caucasus, it can only be considered a minor social factor in Northeast Ossetia and in the *Northwest* Caucasus, i.e. Abkhazia. However, one cannot stereotype the Abkhaz, for while those indigenous Abkhazians living in the Caucasus are predominantly Christian, *Diaspora* Abkhazians, in Turkey, are, with few exceptions, Moslem. This can be explained in at least two ways: either most Abkhazians converted to Islam prior to moving to Turkey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps as a precaution. Or, Islamic Abkhaz joined the Diaspora precisely *because* they were devout Moslems in the first place.

Several thousand diaspora (i.e. Moslem) Abkhazians returned to their homeland in the 1980s and discovered to their shock that their Caucasus relatives were, if religious at all, Orthodox Christians; and that—even more horrifying—other Caucasian peoples of the Northwest, though officially Moslem, were not interested in religious teaching. To its credit, the Abkhaz government constructed a mosque in order to satisfy the needs of the returning devout.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 How did Islam come to the Caucasus?
- 2 Is Caucasus Islam “pure” or mixed with other traditions?
- 3 How do the Georgian Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches differ, and in what regards are they related?
- 4 Describe, in detail, a Georgian and an Armenian church?
- 5 What is an Armenian *khachkar*?
- 6 How did the church and the Soviet state interact in Georgia and Armenia?

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[http://www.naqshbandi.net/haqqani/Islam/Shariah/muamalaat/jihad/roots\\_of\\_conflict.htm](http://www.naqshbandi.net/haqqani/Islam/Shariah/muamalaat/jihad/roots_of_conflict.htm)

## SECURITY ISSUES AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Under-funding and conflict continue to plague the military forces of all three South Caucasus nations. During the 1990s, Armenia and Azerbaijan established control over paramilitary groups; indeed, the war in Nagorno-Karabagh galvanized their respective armies. By contrast, Georgia until recently has suffered continual infighting between clan ('mafia') groups, gangs, and government forces.

Russia still maintains 8,000 troops in Georgia (Batumi and Akhalkalaki bases), and peacekeepers in Abkhazia (approx. 1,600) and South Ossetia (600). Separatist groups also maintain armed forces: in Abkhazia (300-5,000, with 45,000 on mobilization call); South Ossetia (2,000-6,000?); and Nagorno-Karabagh (20,000, with 40,000 on mobilization call). During the Soviet era, approximately 40,000 Armenians (including Karabagh-Armenians) served as officers in the Soviet forces. This in part explains why Armenia retains close military ties and alliances with Russia, while Georgia and Azerbaijan seek military and security assistance from the West.

In 1997, Moscow and Yerevan signed a "Friendship Treaty" which includes a mutual military assistance provision. Armenia receives from Russia military equipment and training, parts and supplies. By treaty, Russian troops may remain in Armenia until 2005, and the two nations have agreed to form a jointly run "counter-terrorism" brigade. Post 9/11 military assistance also comes from the United States. Armenian troops maintain economic and logistical ties with Karabagh forces, and Armenian personnel appear regularly in Nagorno-Karabagh.

Georgia receives material and advisory support from numerous international groups whose goal is to reform and restructure Georgia's security force. Assistance comes in the form of military education and training; instruction in resource management, peacekeeping activities, budgeting and planning; language training (English, French, German, Greek, Italian, and



Turkish)—all of which will facilitate communications with NATO, PSO and other programs; and other areas. Participating groups include the International Security Advisors Board (ISAB) and Americans in the US European Command (EUCOM) Joint Contract Team.

The 1994 Partnership for Peace Program (PFP) aims to foster trust and reduce the risk of conflict among its 30 members by establishing a working relationship between them and NATO. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia joined the PFP in 1994.

Turkey provides funds, training, as well as instructors for the Georgian Commando Battalion and at Marneuli Air Base. Turkey also advises in the reform of the Georgian Military Academy and provides support for the Georgian platoon in Kosovo. Greece assigns an advisor to the Georgian Navy and will supply a missile cruiser and train its crew. Germany offers logistics and NGO training; and an advisor from the UK assists the Georgian Procurement Policy Board. Georgia sends cadets, officers, and staff for training to Estonia, France, Italy, Germany, Greece, US, USA, and to Turkey.

The United States' \$64 million Train-and-Equip Program (2002-2004, May) boosted the Georgian army's counter-terrorist capabilities by providing special operations and tactical training, combat skills, land navigation, and human rights education. Additional US security assistance funding to Georgia increased from \$39.6 million (2001) to \$41.4 million (2003)—approximately double of what is given to Azerbaijan. These funds have helped Georgia monitor and patrol its borders after Russian guards departed in 1998. Supplies from the US range from uniforms, vehicles, communications and surveillance equipment, to computers. Georgia hopes one day to join NATO and is shifting from Soviet to Alliance military standards. However, Georgia's military faces ongoing problems: desertion, low morale, lack of planning, and ineptitude.

Unlike Armenians, few Azerbaijanis served as Soviet officers (the result of anti-Muslim discrimination in the Soviet military). Immediately after independence, Azerbaijan, with few trained personnel and little equipment, had to create a military to contend with Armenian separatists in Nagorno-Karabagh. Army morale and the chain of command collapsed in 1992 when a regional commander, Surat Husseinov, defected from the front line in a bid for power through an attempted coup.

From 1991, Azerbaijan's military could be described as Soviet in style, being still essentially a branch of the Soviet military rather than an effective national defense force. Azerbaijan's military still uses ageing Soviet equipment and faces manpower shortages, low morale, poor living conditions and training, and other problems. After the Husseinov episode, the government is reluctant to trust the military, which is prone to internal political feuding, lack of professionalism, and corruption. (Azerbaijan is not alone in this regard.) With increased revenues coming to Azerbaijan from foreign investment and oil sales, funding for the armed forces has increased since 2000. Azerbaijan has superior air power to Armenia, but spare parts and adequately trained pilots have come into short supply. Moreover, Armenia may actually have what has been described as a surrogate air force in the form of MiG aircraft transferred between Russian bases in Georgia to Armenia. Azerbaijan shows signs of improvement in performance of their armed forces and in peacekeeping troops in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and

Iraq. Training teams from Turkey are working to help Azerbaijan bring its techniques and procedures up to NATO standards.

In 1991, Azerbaijan cut off Armenia's supply of natural gas from Russia and continued a sporadic rail blockade. Transportation and communications links to Stepanakert were cut as well. Open warfare began in December. Responding to Armenian lobbying efforts, the United States restricted its military assistance to Azerbaijan (and to Erevan, according to some sources). This scenario changed radically after 9/11: to reward Azerbaijan for supporting the "US campaign against international terrorism," American military assistance has increased from \$2.3 million (2001) to more than \$20 million (2003). Assistance includes upgrading air-space control and air-traffic safety; training officers in the United States; training Azerbaijani peacekeeping units and border patrols; improving Azerbaijan's navy; as well as English language training. However, Azerbaijan, with its ageing Soviet equipment, still relies on Russia for replacement parts and assistance.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- 1 Why does the United States have a military assistance program with Georgia and other South Caucasus nations?
- 2 What is the Russian military presence in the Caucasus and what is its history?
- 3 Why does Armenia maintain closer military ties with Russia than do the other South Caucasus nations?

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## PETROLEUM

*"Oil was first found in the Caucasus thousands of years ago. Then it trickled down to Arabia-- and there has been trouble ever since!" (Abkhazian elder, in conversation with the author, 2002)*

The Caucasus Mountains arose as the result of a cataclysmic "train wreck" millions of years ago when continental plates collided, closing up the ancient east-west "Tethys Sea" and crumpling the landscape into huge ranges extending from the Alps to the Himalayas. Thus, proto-"Georgia," which once was coastal region before the African and South American tectonic plates crashed into Europe and Asia, now lay in the midst of mountains. This suturing of continents, which occurred ages before the appearance of humans, gave rise to the Caucasus region's earthquakes, scenery, volcanoes and hot springs—and to its petroleum geology.

Despite initial enthusiastic media claims about the Caspian Sea's oil capacity making it a "second Persian Gulf," in terms of crude petroleum or hydrocarbon reserves--it is not. Indeed, some analysts point out that the three major Caspian oil fields (Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli: ACG) combined produce five times *less* than Qatar, the smallest OPEC producer. However, for the next decade the Caspian may indeed be the world's largest growth area for non-OPEC oil. This makes oil a vital resource for the Caucasus, whether in the capacity of oil provider or as a conveyor and

terminus. The United States and other western nations, anxious to disengage themselves from dependence on Middle East oil, take keen interest in Caspian oil and natural gas reserves. (Less optimistic analysts maintain that the ACG fields will satisfy only a little over the 1% of the world's global oil demands in 2008. Still, the profits seem to be there.)

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Russia ratified treaties dividing up the Caspian Sea bed for oil exploration based on equidistance. By contrast, Iran (whose nearby Caspian seafloor is relatively oil poor) pushed for an even division of the Caspian, which would give it more sea-bed territory to explore. The dispute continues. In fact, Iran on July 2001 sent a jet plane and gun boat to chase off an Azerbaijani vessel operated by British Petroleum that had entered contested waters to test drill for oil. Meanwhile, Turkmenistan desires to move its sea border further west, closer to Baku, and hence improve its oil exploration opportunities.

The Caspian is not uniformly rich in oil treasures. Kashagan, in the north, is the fifth largest oil field ever discovered. But in Azerbaijan, whose primary export is petroleum and where commercial oil production began as early as the 1870s (adding considerably to the wealth of the Rothschild and Nobel families, and many others), no new oil field discoveries have been made since 1994. Such shifting tides in the affairs of oil result in intricate diplomacy and business negotiations over oil pipeline routes, oil "quality banks," shipping rates, access to current and projected markets, and environmental and human rights trade-offs.

Today's Caspian and Caucasus energy map is festooned with a network of current and proposed pipelines designed to move oil from on- or off-shore deposits to tankers plying the Black Sea; to Turkey; or to the Russian "Transneft" system to Europe; or through Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to India. There is even an as-yet unrealized vast pipeline destined to cross the Asian continent to China. Europe's need for oil will grow an estimated 20% by the year 2020 and China's by even more. China, hungry for petroleum to support its huge and growing economy, is an active player in the oil fields of Central Asia.

The new Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline eases certain "choke-points" or transportation bottlenecks that result from having to use Russia's existing Transneft and Gazprom system overland through the former USSR, or from shipping through the hazardous Bosphorus Straits. The BTC pipeline runs almost 1100 miles from Baku, on the Caspian, through Tbilisi to the Mediterranean; oilflow began in May, 2005 and took nearly a year to reach its destination at Ceyhan, Turkey. Partially following the BTC route, but only to Erzurum, Turkey, is the BTC natural gas pipeline (also called the Shah-Deniz or South Caucasus Pipeline). With an expected lifetime of 40 years, the BTC pipeline skirts Nagorno-Karabagh in Azerbaijan and Kurdish regions in Turkey, passing through Georgia rather than Armenia. On August 6, 2008, an explosion in eastern Turkey closed the pipeline temporarily; a few days later, Russian bombs in Georgia exploded pointedly close to the BTC pipeline. Both events forced delays and re-routing of Caspian oil, partially through Russian pipelines. BTC shipments restarted on August 25th. The BTE gas pipeline also closed temporarily due to security concerns during the South Ossetia conflict.

Development of onshore oil fields in Georgia, employing new "horizontal" drilling methods may, in time, give that country an extra economic boost, but so far, these are high-risk projects.

The most significant hurdle to oil transport and development is getting supplies safely and consistently to their export terminus.

For a long time, Armenia did not stand to gain from any current oil or gas negotiations--an isolation that threatened to continue so long as its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey remained closed. However, an Iran-Armenia Gas Pipeline has existed since 2006 (extending from Tabriz to Meghri, Armenia, but no further inland), and in March, 2009, construction on an Iran-Armenia oil pipeline began, intended to transfer diesel from Tabriz refineries to Eraskh, in Armenia.

The future, like fuel itself, is in flux: will older pipelines (e.g. the Baku-Supsa line): be mothballed or perhaps maintained at lower outputs? Where will new oil and gas markets emerge and for how long? Projections and risk assessments add to the giant puzzle of oil and gas projections. One plan is to connect the BTE gas pipeline with Nabucco, an as-yet unbuilt gas conduit through Eastern Europe to a distribution hub in Austria. The Caucasus's and Central Asia's central locus as energy provider means that Azerbaijan and its neighbors are in constant negotiations with the West, and with Russia, Iran, and China. Russia strongly desires to retain decisive control over natural gas shipments to Europe. Turkey, in the meantime, uses its status as a transit nation and way-station for the planned Nabucco gas pipeline project (from the Caspian to Austria) as leverage in its efforts to enter the European Union. The world economic crisis makes the Caucasus energy scenario all the more kinetic and fraught with surprise.

Any given energy deal can be viewed as sinister or advantageous, and presented in stark terms of ensuring or betraying Europe's and the Caspian's "independence" from Russian energy dominance. But there are subtleties: e.g. in the case of Russian control over Georgia's electricity grid: is this necessarily bad for Georgia's independence? Can it be viewed as a pragmatic arrangement? Does it leave Georgia with certain advantages, given that it is an electricity intermediate, or transit nation, between Russia and another highly desirable energy market (Turkey)?

Maneuvering over oil and gas transport makes for the creation of a new "Great Game": one affecting economies throughout Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. At any given moment there seem to be winners and losers in this game, yet they can change places in a matter of weeks and months as oil prices rise and fall, and market demand shifts. Other variables include the appearance of new transport choke-points, or instances of sabotage, conflict, or accident that close off one or another pipeline. Another complicating factor (and not a new one) is the lack of transparency in much energy wheeling and dealing: how is a reputable energy company, even if it wanted to, supposed to "partner" with a foreign corporate entity that has an obviously false address, fake staff, and murky accounting practices?

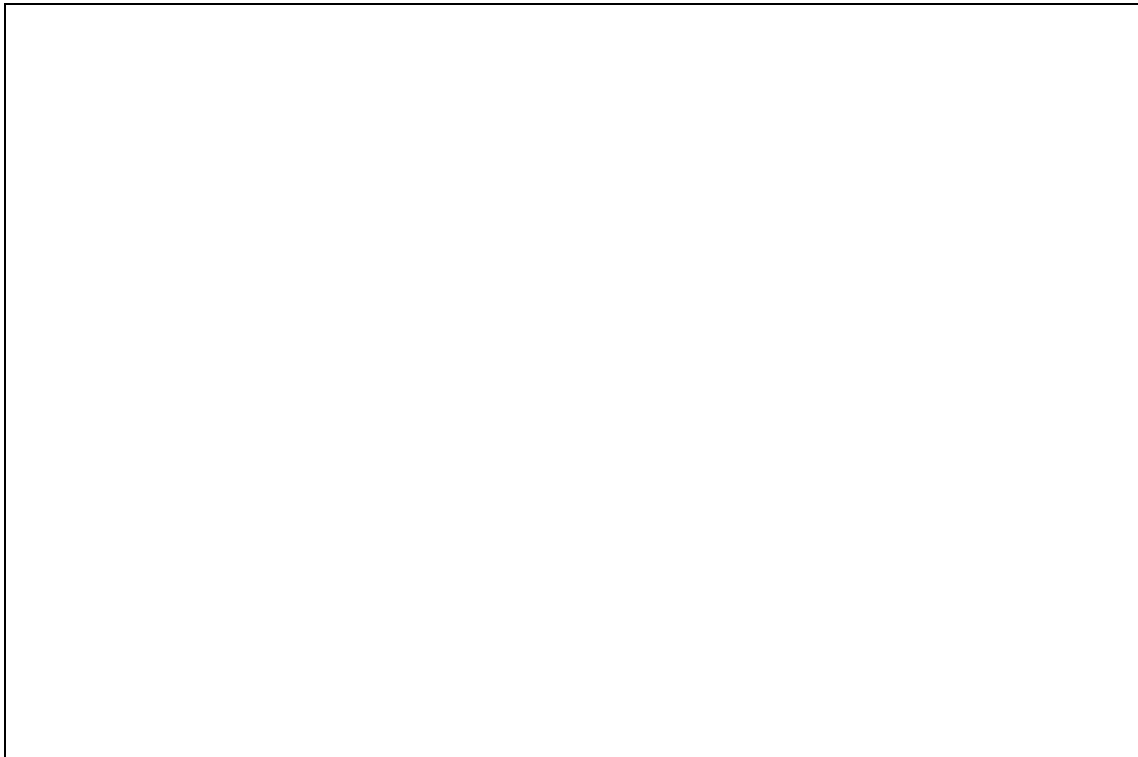
Crucial to US policy about Caspian oil and gas will be its evolving relations with Iran, which currently has energy ties with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.



## ISLAM

Along with pagan traditions, Judaism, and Christianity, Islam has a long history in the Caucasus. Islam came to the Caucasus in waves from the Ottoman Empire, and from Persia and the Arabs. Islamic culture is particularly old in Dagestan, where an Arab army occupied Derbent in 643 AD, just eleven years after the death of Mohammed. As the numbers of faithful grew, Moslem *murids* of Dagestan from 1830-59 obstructed Russian expansion into the Middle East and did so largely unaided by outside forces. Dagestan at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had hundreds of Moslem religious schools and thousands of mosques, and Dagestanis reputedly spoke the most beautiful Arabic in the entire Islamic world.

An interesting episode in Soviet cultural history occurred, in the 1920s, over the question of Dagestan's official language—aside from Russian. The choice was either Arabic or a Turkic dialect. However, the Soviet authorities dropped this simple option in favor of making *each* of Dagestan's 11 main indigenous languages official (out of 33 spoken in the region). This guaranteed the predominance of Russian, for the sake of convenience, as a “language of inter-ethnic communication.”



## Oil and Water:

These elements ordinarily do not mix--but in theory they should, at least in discussions about the Caucasus's resources and economic prosperity. Unfortunately, all too often water remains a "sleeper" issue, though the need for access to water has sparked conflicts often attributed to

other, more overtly political, motivations. What is more, maneuvering for oil and gas also, directly or indirectly, touches upon water concerns. For example, the planning for new pipeline projects is driven not merely by the desire to get fuel to market, but by the urgent necessity of protecting the Black Sea, and particularly its narrow outlet to the Mediterranean through the Bosphorous, from oil spills, explosions and fire. While water is less "sexy" and receives less attention in the press, it is in fact more vital than fuel. The imminent drying up and disappearance of the Aral Sea will cause huge health problems and demographic shifts in Central Asia and Russia; and these in turn will affect the economies of entire regions, including the Caucasus. Joint water (and forestry) conservation and monitoring projects offer important opportunities for cooperation between former adversaries in the Caucasus.

### **Environmental Concerns:**

Most existing or projected Caucasus pipelines run through regions that are seismically active, politically unstable, or environmentally fragile. Oil companies have therefore been forced to take extra precautions to ensure pipeline durability, resistance to attack and vandalism, and ease of maintenance. To encourage local cooperation, companies were advised set up training programs to give local governments and communities some stake in the oil venture: that is to say, a sense of responsibility (or, indeed, actual responsibility) for, say, an exploratory oil-rig or a pipeline running through a particular region. To this end, BP and consortium members paid some \$60 million to support community projects and village programs along the BTC route through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey—money considered well spent. The ideal was to prepare a safe social "bed" for the pipelines. This meant increasing the overall lawfulness of the countries involved by boosting the transparency and dependability of its businesses. However, oil resources per se do not guarantee continuing wealth, or economic growth and stability. For example, comparing the GDP of Norway with that of Middle Eastern nations over the past decades: Norway's GDP has climbed steadily, whereas Middle East economies peaked from oil, and then tended to fall and bump along. In theory, oil funds can help spread oil wealth throughout an entire society; but to do this such revenues must be harbored and protected from institutional and private corruption.

Environmental concerns include:

- 1 The BTC pipeline and oil development's impact on the already polluted Caspian Sea and its endangered sturgeon.
- 2 Its impact on two dense primary forests in Georgia, as well as the buffer zone of a protected natural park with several rare and endangered species. (The BTC pipeline requires a 500-meter wide clear-cut corridor crossing.)
- 3 In Turkey, the pipeline corridor contains more than 500 endemic plant species, and a third of the country's threatened vertebrates are found within 250 meters of it.
- 4 The route crosses two sites protected under national legislation, including habitats for the threatened Caucasian grouse, as well as two critically endangered plant species and 15

bird species with fewer than 500 numbered nesting pairs.

Other concerns focus on the potential vulnerability of the pipeline to vandalism and earthquakes. The pipeline passes close to the Borzhomi mineral water springs and to landslide zones in Georgia. Meanwhile, Turkey has experienced 17 major seismic shocks in the past 80 years; thus there is a high chance of a major earthquake occurring during the 40-year projected span of operation for the BTC line.

Pro-environment and human rights groups criticize British Petroleum's control over the BTC project, claiming that, through legal agreements, BP virtually governs the BTC corridor, stripping local people and workers of their civil rights. Recently, whistleblower critics of the project complained of incorrect materials being supplied, of BTC pipeline crews being forced to begin work before land surveys could be completed, and of pipeline installed before mandatory inspections could take place. In August 2004, Georgia called a temporary halt to construction to its portion of the BTC pipeline, ostensibly over environmental concerns. Additional concerns have been raised about Turkey and its ability to meet social, environmental, health, and safety commitments while maintaining construction on schedule.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 Look at a map of the Caucasus and Caspian region. With an eye to physical geography and political boundaries, where would *you* put a new pipeline?
- 2 On a map showing pipelines, choose one and trace it with your finger. Why does it follow the course shown? Over what terrain does it pass?
- 3 Which countries invest most in Caspian/Caucasus oil and gas exploration?

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## **DRUGS, TRAFFICKING, CONTRABAND:**

Major drug routes from Iran lead through the Caucasus to Europe and Turkey. In many regions corruption, instability, and separatist conflicts lead to an "ecology," or cycle, of dependency wherein contraband- and drug-running supports state agents (for example, in the 'break-away' regions of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabagh). Two (possibly cynical) points can be made: none of this is new, in the sense that the Caucasus has for centuries been a source of slaves, and opium and other drugs have deep cultural roots. Secondly, all this is but one piece of a much larger, international picture in which illegal gains from trafficking, narcotics, and contraband (even of the mundane, such as cigarettes) are soon to exceed even the astronomic income from arms sales worldwide. So far, however, these matters remain a "soft," though serious, security concern in the South Caucasus.

## **THE "OTHER" DIPLOMACY**

New methods exist to augment diplomacy in the Caucasus, especially in sensitive matters, such as planned ethnic killing. These include the establishment of "truth commissions" (where immunity is extended in exchange for truthful testimony), "confidence-building" measures and "conflict resolution" workshops. Other terms for these approaches include "second tier diplomacy," "people-to-people," "outreach," and "peace-building" ventures) play a modest but promising role in international affairs. Unfortunately, they tend to be underused and under-reported in the media, and all but ignored by think-tanks and foreign policy journals (which focus on more traditional considerations, such as national interests, 'carrots and sticks,' and 'signal sending').

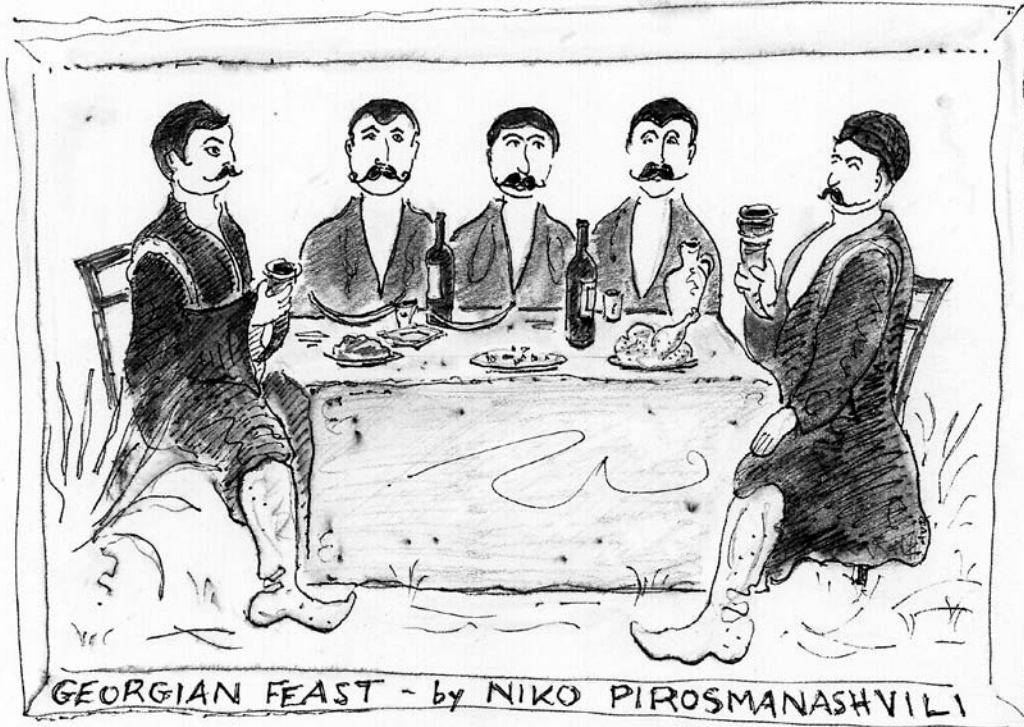
Nevertheless, educational exchange programs, joint cultural projects, and "trust enhancing" gatherings can have a considerable effect, dollar for dollar, over the long term. Incrementally, such "other" diplomacy works to strengthen civic society and develop ties between younger people in governments and NGOs who otherwise would not meet. Protocols for the Other Diplomacy (and its conceptual partner, the Other Journalism--for reporters and editors, too, can play a key role in these endeavors) are evolving in numerous university departments and through USAID-sponsored programs.

In popular literature, too, much valuable information can be gleaned about negotiation and reconciliation from individuals of recognized moral stature, such as the Dalai Lama and South Africa's Bishop Mandela. Particularly intriguing—and useful for diplomats-- is Ekhard Tolle's

concept of something he calls the "Pain Body," which refers to any memory, individual or collective, of past trauma. To a person (or a nation), the Pain Body, writes Tolle, no matter how excruciating, may also sometimes seem beneficial, like a protective shield or something integral to one's individual, group, or national identity. This is an illusion, for in reality the Pain Body is a "parasite" nurtured by negative headlines, nationalistic rhetoric, remembrance of ancient atrocities and vendettas-- and thus is concerned only with *its own* survival. Tolle suggests that humble recognition of the other party's experience of pain, as well as one's own, is a vital step to reconciliation.

#### **CAUCASUS CULTURES AND TRADITIONS: Some personal glimpses**

*"You are interested in Kebeh because you are an American. But I am not 'interested' in Kebzeh—because I am Abkhazian!"* (author interview with Turkish Abkhazian, Istanbul, 2002)



Pirosmanashvili was a self-taught, wandering artist who painted on tin, black oil-cloth, inn walls. This picture is in the Georgian Art Museum, which was a seminary when Stalin studied there (1894-1898).

In the long run, everything in the Caucasus—everything except the mountains themselves—arises out of its cultures. It is easy to romanticize the Caucasus. Indeed, it is irresistible, and most foreigners first encounter the region through the classics of Russian 19th century literature, particularly the verses and stories by Tolstoy, Lermontov, and Pushkin, who depict the interaction of Russians and mountain peoples. Lermontov, in particular, vividly conveys his Caucasus obsession in *The Hero of Our Times*, and also, as a painter, in his marvelously atmospheric landscape sketches, oils, and watercolors.



Lermontov: Mount Kazbek



Lermontov: The Maidan in Tbilisi

**Tradition:** For centuries, visitors have noticed something "different" about highland dwellers, especially those far removed from trade and invasion routes in the valleys and lowlands. Perhaps it was their physical beauty or nobleness of bearing; or an inexplicable tenaciousness, even ferocity; or, throughout the mountains and valleys, various permutations of generosity and obduracy.

This Caucasus "something" has been called a code of honor or courtesy system, typified by lavish hospitality shown to guests, in the veneration of elders, and in the intricacies of vendetta, war and peacemaking. Somehow this special quality of character—this ethical "backbone"—was

linked to *adat* (strict mountain law), or to something called “Kabsa,” “Khabsa,” “Kebzeh,” “Adyge habza,” the “Circassian code of law” or even “Caucasian yoga.” It was, in short, a system of education and edification, “laws, rules, etiquettes, and ethos” little known outside the region: the rules of behaviors and morals that in other parts of the world are handed down through religion. To an American it may seem akin to Southern Honor or to military honor; it is the fruit of inheritance, upbringing, discipline, and training. Its focus is to bind together the community by building up the character of each individual, instilling such virtues as forbearance, honesty, dignity, sensitivity, and guts.

Scholars have tried to pigeonhole the phenomenon: it is simply mysticism, they say, or paganism or Zoroastrianism—or else it is animism, Sufism, Islamic fundamentalism, fanaticism, asceticism, esotericism—or merely “good Middle Eastern manners.” Confusion occurs because it, whatever “it” may be, is more easily experienced than studied. Much of this cultural tradition vanished under the Soviet regime, though elements endure—again, more easily sensed than documented.

**Groups:** Traditional Caucasus societies are traditional and focused on family; that is, upon village, clan, and community allegiance rather than individual attainment or competition. Caucasus nations are small: in effect, big “villages” where gifts go a long way and personal contacts are important. The flip side of such hospitable, family-oriented, sensual cultures is that they also have traditions of violence and vendetta. Today’s “mafias” are often clan-based.

**Myths:** Circassians lived primarily in the highlands and North Caucasus, but also on the Black Sea. Ancient history books describe such groups as the Achins (Abzech), Zych (Kemirgey), Hemochs (Nat-Khuaj), Anychs (Bzedough, or Shapsug), and many others. The historical name of the Circassians is Nat, or And (Ant); the Nats became known as the Narts, who are also legendary gods and giants that gave rise to the fabulous Nart Epics of the Caucasus.

**Customs:** In Georgia, both the tourist and the diplomat soon encounter Caucasus feasting customs, especially the toasting rituals led by the appointed *tamada*, or master of ceremonies. Toasts are made to peace, to Georgia, to guests, to ancestors, to parents, to brothers and sisters, to the deceased, to the children, to friendship, and to the “feet”—i.e. to the workers who have crushed the grapes to make wine. (A personal anecdote: The author, as part of a delegation of American journalists, once witnessed a candle-lit feast, high in the Georgian mountains, during which the *tamada* exuberantly proposed a toast to ‘the eyes of the most beautiful women in the world—*who happen to be in this room!*’ This caused considerable alarm among some of the foreign guests, unaccustomed to having their eyes toasted, but they smiled and raised their glasses anyway. What else could be done?)

Circassian, or Cherkess, may be a corruption of *Kerket*, a Greek word. Circassians call themselves *Adighe*. The character of the ancient Adighes included chivalry, dignity, sagacity, bravery, and horsemanship. They lived an austere life and grew hardy and acetic as a result. They chose their war leaders from within the ranks, and developed the skill of fighting on great heights and on narrow necks of land. To the Circassians, guests came from God, and thus were to

be considered as honored members of the family and given the best food and drink, and, upon departure, escorted and protected from harm. Cooperation was common among neighbors, be it in raising a house or in agriculture; and it was no shame to ask for help from others. Brigandage and horse rustling, in moderation, was considered more of a virtue than a crime--as was the kidnapping of brides.

Modesty was admired, and husbands did not accompany brides directly home. Dancing, at times decorous, at others extraordinarily acrobatic (putting *Riverdance* to shame) was communal, reflecting the stages of life and involving all present, in turn. Though complicated and often sensual ('*Caucasus dancing is simple,*' said one Abkhazian elder, Murat Yagan, to the author: '*The man is the peacock, and the woman is the peahen!*'), dance serves as a discipline, a "harnessing of sexual energy," in which the partners never touch, merely gaze into each other's eyes.

In traditional Caucasus society, parents not infrequently "loaned" their children to other families from infancy to adolescence. This was a sign of respect and it created ties of kinship. Two unrelated children thus reared as "milk" brothers or sisters remained close throughout their lives and were forbidden to marry one another.

Other examples of "Tradition": Younger persons stood up when parents or elders entered the room, and refrained from smoking or drinking in their presence. This occurs today even in Circassian diaspora communities in Turkey that have been assimilated and absent from their homeland for nearly one and a half centuries. (It should be noted that such courtesies are performed naturally and gracefully. Spending several days in such a household, the author never failed to be astonished, and embarrassed, when his hosts, decades older, stood up whenever he came into the room—for he was the guest.)

In the past, Caucasus society had classes: princes, nobles, and commoners. (As one old joke puts it, '*He who is not a prince in Georgia—is a sheep!*') But princes, while owning land and exercising executive powers, were, in theory, humble and egalitarian. They took seriously their responsibilities of selfless public service. In legislative matters the leaders worked through consensus and submitted draft laws to a "Council of Elders," which passed on its approved proposals to a "Council of the Nobility"—and so the discussion passed back and forth. (This is similar to the working procedure of the centuries-old traditional Six-Nations, or Iroquois Confederacy in the United States.)

Other aspects of Tradition involved martial arts training, horse and swordsmanship, and certain physical and mental exercises. At its most refined level, the Tradition concerned itself with spiritual matters, with the order of the natural world and other realms. Unlike other religions, the Tradition had no texts or scriptures—for indeed it was not a religion: it was a way of life, akin to Japanese Bushido, or perhaps to the Native American "Good Red Road."

**Animism:** In ancient times, Caucasus peoples worshipped natural powers, the sun, and certain holy trees, gardens, and mountains, which were to be approached only with the greatest respect. Some climbed high trees in order to pray. Many gods and legends originating in the Caucasus are known today in their more familiar Greek mythology guise. Holy places—glades,

groves, rocks, trees, mountains—remain and are respected as such to this day.

**Carpets:** Carpets have been called the world’s oldest “furniture.” Certainly carpets—especially Caucasian carpets—are beautiful and addicting, and visitors would do well to refrain from buying too many (at least at one time). Carpets are, of course, far more than just carpets: they are cultural maps, works of art, and, as such, may be endowed with spiritual as well as aesthetic attributes.

**Painting:** Niko Pirosmani (Georgian) and Hakob Hakobian (Armenian) are but two painters who deserve to be better known in Europe and America. The main art museum in Yerevan houses a surprise for Americans: dozens of paintings by Rockwell Kent. The artist donated many works to Armenia. Partly this stemmed from Kent’s Marxist and Socialist sympathies, and also, almost certainly, it had something to do with his affinity for Armenia’s stark landscape: Kent, who was also a farmer, adventurer, and romantic, loved remote regions: Maine, Nova Scotia, Greenland—and Armenia.

**Film and Dance:** Suffice it to say the George Balanchine, one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s greatest choreographers, was born Balanchivadze in Georgia. Another Georgian, Paata Tsikurishvili, a world famous mime, currently resides in Washington, D.C. Dance plays a special role in the Caucasus: it bound the community together, with all generations dancing together; certain aspects of traditional dance refer to astronomical events. Partners do not touch, though there is strong eye contact. Typically the hands move, but the upper body is motionless; the feet perform intricate and rapid steps, difficult to learn. Each nation has its own spectacular traditions of drama, children’s theater, and puppetry. Filmmaking in Georgia and Azerbaijan dates back a century, and all three South Caucasus countries at one time had thriving studios. Now many of the great directors have died and younger counterparts work abroad. **During the Soviet period Georgians made more than 700 works (including, in 1957, Mikheil Kalatozov's *The Cranes are Flying*). Today the Georgian film industry is dormant and many of its best directors live abroad. Tengiz Abuladze's classic *Repentance* (1987)—a composite portrait of Stalin, Beria, Hitler, and Mussolini) signaled the beginning of Glasnost in Georgia; it could never have been made without the help of Eduard Shevardnadze. The living master of Georgian (and French) film, and one of the great directors of our time, is Otar Ioseliani, whose works (e.g. *Falling Leaves*, *There was a Singing Blackbird*, *Brigands-Chapter VII*, *Adieu, plancher les vaches!*) are lyrical and nostalgic, filled with whimsy and gentle humor—with surprising moments of violence—somewhat in the spirit of Jean Renoir. Ioseliani loves to use music, song, silence, and surrealistic juxtapositions in time and place. Recent feature films about Georgia and its culture include *Son of Gascogne* (1995, dir. Pascal Aubier), about the misadventures of a Georgian song troupe in France, and *After Otar Left* (2003, dir. Julie Bertucelli). the story of a family in Tbilisi whose son works abroad, and dies. Concerning Armenia, beautiful depictions of the land and its history come from Canadian director Atom Egoyan, and in particular his films *Ararat* (2003) and *Calendar*. Egoyan's work is about people in crisis; they explore a range of themes: acceptance, genocide, tradition and modernity; the meaning of home and connection; and particularly the importance of stories, and the question: Whose stories does one believe—and why? An evocative recent film about Armenia, with beautiful scenes of the land in winter, is *Vodka Lemon*. The late, great Sergei Parajhanov (painter, puppeteer, director of, among other films, *Sayat Nova*, *The Color of Pomegranates* (1969), *The Legend of Suram Fortress* (1984), and *Ashik Kerib*) has been**

compared to Fellini for the range and vividness of his artistic creations, which weave together legends, artifacts, architecture, and traditions from throughout the Caucasus. Azerbaijan film--which dates back to 1898--has yet to be promoted in this country; prominent scenarist Rustam Ibragimbekov wrote the screenplay for the award-winning Russian film *Burnt by the Sun* (1994, dir. Nikita Mikhalkov). From Russia, *Prisoner of the Mountains* (1997, dir. Sergei Bodrov) is a powerful contemporary rendering of Pushkin's poem and Tolstoy's story: the classic trope about the clash between Russian and Caucasus cultures. *Time of the Dancer* (1998 dir. Vadim Abdrashatov), is about a group Soviet veterans who try to establish a normal life for themselves in an unidentified Caucasus country (Chechnya?). *House of Fools*, (2002, dir. Andrei Kochalovsky) is about patients in a mental home in Chechnya and how they cope with the war at their doorstep. Alexei Balabanov's film *War (Voina)*, (2002), filmed in Dagestan and Chechnya, contains beautiful scenery, but is otherwise in all ways dreadful: the Chechens are uniformly barbaric, their English hostages foolish and effete, and the Russian soldiers valiant. In 2005, fire in the Georgian film archives in Tbilisi destroyed many reels and soundtracks; surviving copies in Moscow remain under the control of the Russian government. In some cases, Moscow has negotiated with Western promoters the rights to Soviet/Georgian films, with no proceeds going to Georgia. The Caucasus is waiting to be rediscovered as a venue for filmmaking.

**Music:** Hohvahness and Katchachurian are two of Armenia's greatest composers. Both Azerbaijan and Georgia have a long opera tradition, and there are many masters of folk instrument and bardic traditions throughout the South Caucasus.

**Georgian choirs:** Polyphonic singing in Georgian folk music and church chants, documented as far back as the 10th century AD, and is undoubtedly far more ancient, has many styles, ranging from one or two solo voices above a droning choir to homophonic singing with tempo increases. In a style called "Krimanchuli," a male voice yodels in high register. Singers tend to focus more upon the smooth blending of voices rather than on the lyrics. Church singing is more subdued, western regions being harsher and more dissonant than the chants of Eastern Georgia.

**Jazz in Baku:** Special mention should be made of contemporary "classical" art forms, such as the jazz. Baku supported a large European community during the 19th century when it produced more than 51 percent of the world's supply of oil. Jazz hit the scene early on, and despite Soviet prohibitions and subjugation of the arts to Communist ideology--so that even the saxophone solo in Ravel's "Bolero" had to be played on the bassoon--a new movement began in the 1950s that combined jazz with a traditional Azeri music form, the *mugam*. Its greatest proponent was jazzman, pianist, and composer, Vagif Mustafazade (1940-79), who secretly listened to jazz on the BBC and VOA. Mustafazade excelled at playing by ear improvisation of classical jazz, dance music, B-Bop, and *mugam*-fusion, with improvised rhythm and scales. Mustafazade gained worldwide recognition and organized music groups in Georgia. His daughters also became talented classical and jazz musicians. When American jazz pianist B.B. King heard Vagif Mustafazade perform at the famous Iveria Hotel in Tbilisi, he remarked, "Mr. Mustafazade, they call me the 'King of the Blues,' but I sure wish I could play the blues as well as you do."



**Old Things:** The Caucasus is full of archeological mysteries and treasures. No one really knows who erected the dolmens found in Georgia and Abkhazia, the prehistoric arrays of standing stones in Armenia, or the grooved stone “roads” on the Apsheron peninsula. Especially intriguing are the 6,000 petroglyphs discovered under boulders and in possibly manmade caves at Gobustan, on the Caspian Sea, 30 miles south of Baku. They date from the 12<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century BC and portray bulls, deer, predators, reptiles, insects—and curious engraved images of long (reed?) boats with many passengers and oars. The latter are virtually identical to boat engravings found in northernmost Norway. The late adventurer and history theorist Thor Heyerdahl expressed a “growing suspicion” that the ancestral Scandinavians came from the Caspian, which was once connected to the Black Sea in warmer climactic times (8,000-10,000 years ago). The region had many reed-filled waterways, and Heyerdahl speculated that Aser-Odin (a figure in old Norse sagas and legends) may have traveled up the Volga to the source of the Dvina River, and from there sailed to the Baltic and Nordic realms. Aser, said Heyerdahl, might have been related to the word Asov (Ashov), on the Black Sea—or to Azer.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- 1 What is the community benefit of the “veneration of elders”?
- 2 What is the disadvantage of the above?
- 3 When is the proper time to toast during a Georgian feast?
- 4 What is the correct technique of slicing a suspended apple in half using a Circassian sword while riding a horse at a gallop?
- 5 Is horse theft ever commendable? How about bride-kidnapping? (Argue it both ways, as if you lived in an isolated mountain community.)
- 6 What is the role of women in traditional Caucasus societies?
- 7 Is the reputation of Caucasus peoples for living long lives true or a myth?
- 8 Does yogurt prolong life?
- 9 What is *purpulgica* and how is it prepared?

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- 1 Svanidze, Batu. *My Uncle, Joseph Stalin*. Curious accounts of Stalin’s personal life and “Georgian” character. 1953.
- 2 Yagan, Murat. *I Come From Behind Kaf Mountain*. Threshold Books. 1984. Yagan, now a Canadian citizen, was born in Abkhazia and raised in Turkey. This spiritual memoir acquaints readers with Islam, mystical Christianity, Sufi practice, and the ancient Caucasus “Kebzeh” tradition—part animism, part martial art, as well as character and leadership training.

## Fiction

- 1 Iskander, Fazil. Sandro of Chegem. Vintage Books, 1983; The Gospel According to Chegem. Vintage Books, 1984. Iskander (b. 1929) has been likened to Sholom Aleichem, Mark Twain, and Gabriel García Márquez. He writes delightful yarns about villagers, wily brigands, Soviet bureaucrats--and Sandro, the inimitable 80-year old Abkhazian elder.
- 2 Lermontov, Mikhail. A Hero of Our Times. 1840..
- 3 Said, Kurban. Jenia Graman (Translator) Ali and Nino. Overlook Press.1999. One of the few Azerbaijani novels in English. The author is a mysterious figure, or possibly two, who assumed a double pen-name. "Said" (1905-42) many believe to be "Essad Bey," who in turn may have been Lev Nussimbaum, a Jewish convert to Islam born in Azerbaijan. His writing partner may have been the Austrian baroness, Elfriede Ehrenfels (ostensible author of The Girl from the Golden Horn). Essad/ "asad" (Arabic), and Lev all mean "lion." Others believe the author to be Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli (1887-1943), an Azeri writer and statesman. Ali and Nino has become the "Romeo and Juliet" of Azerbaijan and the action-packed plot takes the reader from Baku, Tbilisi, Nagorno-Karabagh, Tehran, to Daghestan.
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## A Final Word About Borders and Nationalities

T. H. White, in *The Once and Future King*, wrote about how inconsequential borders are to birds (who consequently ignore them). Humans, however, must contend with the boundaries they create, and in the Caucasus borders aggravate as many problems as they resolve. Armenia is landlocked; its closed border with Azerbaijan splits the latter in two. Contested borders drawn on water divide the Caspian and its petroleum treasures, while pipelines attempt to circumvent other borders by snaking over mountains and under seas. Georgia's internal borders create tensions in the face of government bankruptcy and corruption. Borders in the North Caucasus add to no one's security while the Chechen war rages on.

Yet despite borders, the news (or more often the distressing lack of news) about the region, and despite the Caucasus' complexities, certain patterns endure. People there are resilient and the landscapes remain as awesome as ever. Life goes on, nature prevails over human affairs, and, as always, the events of today in the Caucasus offer tantalizing glimpses of—its past.



# CENTRAL ASIA SELF-STUDY GUIDE



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

## SELF-STUDY GUIDE TO CENTRAL ASIA

**The Self-Study Guide:** Central Asia is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Central Asia's history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service

## Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by. Dr. Sergei Gretskey, Chair, Central Asian Studies, Area Studies Division, Foreign Service Institute.

The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr.Gretskey.

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First Edition  
August 2002





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*All photos courtesy of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United States*

## CHRONOLOGY

5 <sup>th</sup> century B.C.	Bactria and Sogd are major states in Central Asia. Bukhara and Maraqanda (Samarqand) emerge as important centers of trade on the Silk Road.
329 B.C.	Alexander the Great captures Maraqanda (Samarqand)
750 A.D.	Arabs complete conquest of Central Asia.
8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> centuries	Golden age of Central Asia. Bukhara becomes a cultural center of Muslim world.
1219-1225	Mongols conquer Central Asia, intensifying its Turkification and reducing Iranian influence.
1380-1405	Timur unifies Mongol holdings in Central Asia. Flowering of arts and sciences under the Timurids.
1501-1510	Uzbek nomadic tribes conquer Central Asia and establish Khanate (later Emirate) of Bukhara.
1511	Khan Qasym unites Kazakh tribes.
1700	Khanate of Quqon is established in the Ferghana Valley.
1726	Kazakh Khan Abul Khair seeks Russian protection from the Kalmyks, beginning Russian permanent presence in Central Asia.
1865-1868	Russian conquest of Central Asia and the establishment of the Turkestan Governorship-General with the capital in Tashkent. Emirate of Bukhara and Khannate of Khiva become Russian protectorates.
1917	Bolshevik revolution
1918-1920	Bolsheviks establish Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within Soviet Russia. They capture Bukhara and Khiva and proclaim them People's Republics. Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic is established (included modern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan).
1920s-1930s	Basmachi opposition movement.
1924-1925	National and territorial delimitation of Central Asia: Soviet Socialist Republics of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are established. Tajikistan becomes an autonomous republic within Uzbekistan.
1929	Tajikistan becomes a Soviet Socialist Republic.
1936	Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan become Soviet Socialist Republics.
1985-1991	Policy of perestroika under Soviet leader Gorbachev brings out national and Islamic revival in Central Asia.
1991	The breakup of the Soviet Union. Central Asian republics become independent states.
1992-1997	Civil war in Tajikistan.
Late 1990s-present	Rise of authoritarian regimes and Islamic extremism in Central Asia.

## GEOGRAPHY

Central Asia is a relatively recent geographical and political term. Historically, the region was known to the world as Russian (Western) Turkestan, Inner Asia, Mowarranahr, and Transoxania (Transoxus). After the national and territorial delimitation of 1924-25 it became known as Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Only since their independence in 1991 the five states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan became collectively known as Central Asia though a number of scholars argue that the geographical term should also include Afghanistan and Xinjiang province of the People's Republic of China (also known as Eastern Turkestan).

Central Asia borders on Russia, China, Afghanistan, Iran, and Azerbaijan (across the Caspian Sea). Its total area is 1,542,240 square miles, which is a little less than half of the area of the contiguous United States. Kazakhstan is by far the largest country in the region, its total area being 1,049,151 square miles (2,717,300 square kilometers). Next comes Turkmenistan (188,456 sq. mi. or 488,100 sq km), followed by Uzbekistan (172,741 sq. mi. or 447,400 sq km), Kyrgyzstan (76,641 sq. mi. or 198,500 sq km), and Tajikistan (55,251 sq. mi. or 143,100 sq km). All the five states are landlocked with Uzbekistan being a double-landlocked country.

The climate can be broadly described as continental with cold winters (temperatures range from - 42°F to -49° F) and hot summers (temperatures reach up to 104° F in the shade in the southernmost parts of the region). In the Ferghana Valley, shared by Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the climate is subtropical and in the Qaraqum desert it is subtropical desert. In the high Tien Shan Mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Pamir Mountains of Tajikistan it is polar.

The region is divided into four topographic zones – steppe, i.e., prairie, (northern Kazakhstan), semi-desert (roughly, the rest of Kazakhstan), desert (Turkmenistan, parts of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) and mountain (there are mountains in all the states, ranging from low in Turkmenistan to high in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The vast majority of the surface area is desert lowland. The two great sand deserts are the *Qaraqum* (black sand) desert, south of the Aral Sea between the Caspian and the Amu Darya, and the *Qyzylqum* (red sand) desert, stretching from the Aral Sea to the Tian Shan mountains in Kyrgyzstan. Deserts make 80 percent of Turkmenistan's and Uzbekistan's territory while 93 percent of Tajikistan's territory is mountaneous where the Pamir-Alay mountain system dominates the landscape. The highest point of the system is *Mount Ismail Somoni* (formerly Communism Peak) which at 7, 496 meters is the highest elevation in the former Soviet Union. The mountain ranges are nearly barren, but contain significant enormous and accessible water reserves. In certain areas it is possible to grow cereal grains on the lower slopes of the mountains without irrigation though fruit and vegetables and commodity crops like cotton require it.





### Mountain ranges of Central Asia

The two most important rivers of Central Asia are *Amu Darya* and *Syr Darya*. The name of the region in ancient (Transoxania or Transoxus) and medieval (Mowarranahr), which both mean “the other side of the river” in Latin and Arabic correspondingly, derives from Amu Darya which in antiquity was called *Oxus*. The total length of Amu Darya, which rises in the Pamir Mountains in Tajikistan and flows along the Tajik-Afghan border into Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, is 2,540 kilometers (1,580 miles). The total length of Syr Darya (ancient *Jaxartes*), which rises in Kyrgyzstan and flows into Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, is 2,200 kilometers (1,370 miles). The three largest bodies of water in the region are the Aral Sea, the Caspian Sea, and Lake Ysyk Köl. Aral and Caspian are saltwater lakes, or inland seas. The Caspian Sea is the world’s largest inland body of water with the territory of 371,000 square kilometers (143,000 square miles). The Aral Sea used to be the fourth largest but by 1993 had lost 60 percent of its 66,458 sq km (25,660 sq mi) territory in 1960 as the inflow from its two tributaries, Amu Darya and Syr Darya, stopped due to the increased irrigation and other reasons. It has subsequently broken into 3 unconnected segments and created huge environmental and health problems for the entire region. The water level in the Caspian Sea has been rising since the late 1970s, flooding lands in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. Major oil and gas fields are located off its shores in the Kazakh and Turkmen sectors.

Lake Ysyk Köl is one of the world’s largest mountain lakes located at altitude of 1,607

meters (5,273 ft) in the Tian Shan Mountains in northeastern Kyrgyzstan. It has an area of about 6,100 sq km (2,360 sq mi). Increased irrigation and other factors have caused a decline in the lake's level which has dropped about 10 meters (27 feet) since 1850. It is famous as a resort and a torpedo testing site in the Soviet era.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- What are the political and economic implications of the landlocked position of Central Asian states?
- In what extent has the desiccation of the Aral Sea affected lives of Central Asians?
- What are the prospects for further agricultural development in the region in light of the Aral Sea problem?

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## **POPULATION**

Ethnic composition of Central Asia reflects its rich history of lying at the crossroads of various conquerors who passed through the region from all directions, starting with Alexander the Great and ending with the Russians. The original population of ancient Central Asia belonged to the East Iranian tribes. During the sixth century A.D. they were largely dislodged by the nomadic Turks who came from the northwest. Small numbers of Arabs and Persians date back to the eighth century when they brought Islam into the region. Yet Turkic expansion into Central Asia continued in a number of waves resulting, by the eleventh century, in their domination of the region. Sedentary Central Asian Iranians remained, primarily in the cities, including the most important such as Bukhara and Samarqand. In the eighth century, they coalesced into a

single group known as the Tajiks which makes them the longest established ethnicity in the region.

The conquest of the region by Genghiz Khan in the thirteenth century added the Mongolian element to the ethnogenesis of modern Central Asians. In the fifteenth century, a split in the confederation of Uzbek tribes led to the emergence of two distinct ethnic groups – the Kazakhs and the Uzbeks. Around the same time the Turkmen appear as a separate entity. The Kyrgyz are the oldest Turkic ethnic group in the region, dating its origin back to the twelfth century.

Though the number of tribes, making each of the Turkic nations, varied reaching ninety-two with the Uzbeks, some of them were shared by at least two ethnicities. This applied primarily to the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz, and the Uzbeks which illustrates their common origins. Among the most important common tribes were *Barlas, Karluk, Kipchak, Kungrat, Mangyt, Naiman*, etc. The division of Central Asians into the current five major nationalities – Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Turkmen, and Uzbeks – is a relatively recent and arbitrary. It was a result of the Bolshevik nationalities policy and dates back to the national and territorial delimitation of the region in 1924-25. Prior to that self-identification was mostly related to tribal or regional affiliation as well as based on nomad versus sedentary status.

The influx of the Russians into the region began in the nineteenth century, though the first settlements of the Russian Cossaks in what is now Kazakhstan appeared in the eighteenth century. The Russian population increased during economic reforms of the beginning of the twentieth century with Russians settling mostly in the Kazakh and Kyrgyz lands. Mass immigration of Russians and other European nationalities began after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and continued through the Soviet period. It peaked during the 1950s-1960s *Virgin Lands* campaign of agricultural development in Kazakhstan and industrial development of the region in the 1960s and 1970s associated with importation of the needed labor from outside region. In late perestroika and first years of independence, there was a large outflow of Russians and other Europeans from the region, especially in the wake of the Tajik civil war.

The current ethnic composition and other vital population statistics are as follows for each country individually (as of July 2001 unless indicated otherwise):

**Kazakhstan.** *Population:* 16,731,303. *Ethnic groups:* Kazakh 53.4 percent, Russian 30

percent, Ukrainian 3.7 percent, Uzbek 2.5 percent, German 2.4 percent, Uighur percent, other 6.6 percent (1999 census). *Age structure: 0-14 years: 26.73 percent (male 2,271,866; female 2,200,078); 15-64 years: 66.03 percent (male 5,358,535; female 5,688,550); 65 years and over: 7.24 percent (male 412,761; female 799,513).* *Population growth rate: 0.03 percent. Net migration rate: -6.43 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Life expectancy: 63.29 years.*

**Kyrgyzstan.** *Population: 4,753,003. Ethnic groups: Kyrgyz 52.4 percent, Russian 18 percent, Uzbek 12.9 percent, Ukrainian 2.5 percent, German 2.4 percent, other 11.8 percent. Age structure: 0-14 years: 35.03 percent (male 841,029; female 823,723); 15-64 years: 58.83 percent (male 1,369,842; female 1,426,522); 65 years and over: 6.14 percent (male 110,340; female 181,547). Population growth rate: 1.44 percent. Net migration rate: -2.66 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Life expectancy: 63.46 years.*

**Tajikistan.** *Population: 6,578,681. Ethnic groups: Tajik 64.9 percent, Uzbek 25 percent, Russian 3.5 percent, other 6.6 percent. Age structure: 0-14 years: 41.18 percent (male 1,367,194; female 1,341,967); 15-64 years: 54.22 percent (male 1,773,605; female 1,793,345); 65 years and over: 4.6 percent (male 131,009; female 171,561). Population growth rate: 2.12 percent. Net migration rate: -3.49 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Life expectancy: 64.18 years.*

**Turkmenistan.** *Population: 4,603,244. Ethnic groups: Turkmen 77 percent, Uzbek 9.2 percent, Russian 6.7 percent, Kazakh 2 percent, other 5.1 percent (1995). Age structure: 0-14 years: 37.88 percent (male 891,758; female 852,104); 15-64 years: 58.09 percent (male 1,313,303; female 1,360,690); 65 years and over: 4.03 percent (male 70,800; female 114,589). Population growth rate: 1.85 percent. Net migration rate: -1.04 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Life expectancy: 61 years.*

**Uzbekistan.** *Population: 25,155,064. Ethnic groups: Uzbek 80 percent, Russian 5.5 percent, Tajik 5 percent, Kazakh 3 percent, Karakalpak 2.5 percent, Tatar 1.5 percent, other 2.5 percent (1996). Age structure: 0-14 years: 36.32 percent (male 4,646,341; female 4,489,265); 15-64 years: 59.06 percent (male 7,351,908; female 7,504,626); 65 years and over: 4.62 percent (male 466,029; female 696,895). Population growth rate: 1.6 percent. Net migration rate: -2.06 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Life expectancy: 63.81 years.*

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- What are the major ethnic elements that provided the foundation for modern Central Asian ethnic groups?
- How did Russian colonization and Soviet economic policy influence the ethnic composition of Central Asian states?

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## **HISTORY**

History of the region can be divided into five periods: ancient (ending in 8<sup>th</sup> century AD), medieval and early modern (8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries), Russian colonization (18<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), Soviet rule (1921-1991), independent (1991 – to present).

### **Ancient period**

Ancient history of the region was based on Iranian civilization and lasted from the rise of the first known oases to the Arab conquest in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. In this period, the fabled “Silk Road,” linking China to the Mediterranean cultures, began to prosper. The most civilized part was centered in Sogd or Sogdiana, corresponding roughly to the area between the two most important rivers of the region – Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Later, the Arabs called this area Mawarranahr (the land beyond the river) which became the name for the entire region. Transoxania is Latin translation of the name. The people of Sogd belonged to Eastern Iranian ethnicity and their capital of Sogdiana was the city of Maraqanda which stood in the place where modern Samarqand does.

One of the highlights of the early Central Asian history was the arrival of Alexander the Great in 330-327 B.C. It generated a fierce resistance on the part of the Sogdians who nonetheless named a lake after the conqueror: Lake Iskanderkul is located in modern Tajikistan. Alexander, who tried to fuse Greek and Asian cultures in part by marrying his officers to Asian wives, himself married Roxana, a daughter of a local nobleman. Later, in 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, southern Central Asia became part of the Kushan Empire with the center in modern Peshawar (Pakistan). The borders of the Kushan Empire stretched from Amu Darya to Ganges. By the time of the invasion of Turkic tribes in 6<sup>th</sup> century, ancient civilizations fall into decay.

The Turkic empire was divided into two parts – eastern and western. Central Asia was part of the western Turkic empire centered in Semirechye (territory between Chu and Talas rivers). The only exception was the territory of modern Turkmenistan which was part of the Sassanian Empire. The region was organized into a number of small states, the most powerful with the capital in Samarqand. The dominant religions of ancient Central Asia were Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism.



The head of Alexander the Great. 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

One of the most important developments that happened at the time of the Kushan Empire was the emergence of the Silk Road. Through the centuries economies of Central Asia became closely connected with the ancient Greece and Rome as well as with China, India, and other parts of Asia. So, it was only natural that Central Asia became the crossroads of transcontinental caravan routes connecting China with the ports of the eastern Mediterranean, and, by way of branch roads, with India in the south and the Urals and the Black Sea ports in the north. Central Asians became the principal agents in this commercial exchange which gave a distinctive mercantile character to their civilization. The goods that were traded included silk, gold and silver coins, glass, carved gems, iron, fabrics, etc.

### **Medieval and early modern period**

It is believed that the Arab conquest stopped the region from being colonized by the Chinese. The Arabs themselves looked on Central Asia as a province rested from the Chinese whose defeat in the battle at the Talas River in 751 put an effective end to their encroachments into the region.

The Arabs arrived in Central Asia in 704 and by 715 the region came under their rule. Despite the preservation of the existing dynasties as the vehicle of local administration the actual authority belonged to the *wali*, an official appointed by the Arabs. Resistance to the Arab conquest was fierce and ended only with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in 750. The Abbasids espoused the policy of racial equality of Muslims unlike their predecessors, the Umayyads, who treated non-Arabs as second-class Muslims despite the Quranic injunction of equality of all believers before God. It may be due to such perception of non-Arabs that Islam was not spread by the sword. Conversion proceeded peacefully and mainly through Muslim traders who propagated Islam primarily as a way of life, not as a dogmatic faith.



The nobles. Mural in a Afrasiyab (Samarqand) palace. 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The rise of the Abbasids led to the creation of the Samanid state with the capital in Bukhara. It was the last state headed by Central Asians of Iranian stock. In 999, the Samanid dynasty was overthrown by the Karakhanids, who were the first in a long line of various Turkic dynasties that with brief intervals ruled the region until the arrival of the Russians in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. One such interval was the Mongol conquest. Genghiz Khan's troops reached Central Asia in 1219 through the cleft between the Pamir proper and the Tian-Shan mountains at a height of over 13,000 feet.





Mausoleum of the Samanids. Bukhara. 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Contrary to popular perceptions, the Mongols did not destroy everything on their way though they usually slaughtered four-fifth of the population, leaving a civilian, usually a Persian or an Uighur, to administer the remainder. Yet their conquest changed the balance of power between the nomad and settled regions in favor of the former. Genghiz Khan introduced Yasa, a codified law based on the combination of Mongol tribal customary practice and Muslim precepts, which is lost to history. The Turkicization of the Mongols began long before they adopted Islam. In an interesting twist of history the literary Turkic language that developed at the time in the region was named after Genghiz's second son, Chagatai, who inherited part of Central Asia at his father's death, despite his hostility toward Islam and its culture.

In 1395, Amir Timur (Timurlane, 1336-1405) defeats Toktamys, khan of the Golden Horde, which marks the end of Mongol rule in Central Asia. Timur sought to combine the elements of the Turko-Mongol political and military system with the elements of Muslim, mainly Persian, culture. His son's rule is considered to be the golden age of Persian literature and art. Under his grandson, Ulugh Beg, who himself was a famous

astronomer, there was a genuine flourishing of the arts and sciences in Samarqand and Bukhara.

In the first two decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, two new confederations of nomadic Turkic tribes are formed in Central Asia: the Nogai Horde (a union of Kipchak tribes between the Ural and Volga rivers) and the Uzbek Khanate, also known as Dashti-Qipchaq, which controlled the steppe from the headwaters of the Syr Darya river basin to the Aral Sea and north to the Irtysh river. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Uzbeks, led by Shaibani Khan (1451- 1510), conquered the Timurid possessions and established the Uzbek Khannate (later Emirate) of Bukhara. Babur, the last Timurid ruler, was forced to flee to India where he founded the Mogul Empire in 1526. Shaibani Khan clashed with and ultimately was killed by Ismail Safavid, who changed Iranian denomination from Sunnism to Shiism. As a result, Central Asia became separated and effectively secluded from the Middle Eastern Muslim world until its independence in 1991. Another important reason was the decline of the Silk Road in wake of the development of maritime routes between the Far East and Europe.

Shaibani invasion and rivalry over succession within the Uzbek Khanate itself led to its disintegration into three groups – Siberian Uzbek, Uzbek -Shaibanid, Uzbek – Kazakh. Kazakhs went on to form their own state, Kazakh confederation under Khan Khaqq Nazar in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The confederation proved to be short-lived and soon split into three hordes or *zhuz* (hundred) which were more temporary military alliances than based on the principle of consanguinity. The Great zhuz controlled the territory of Semirechye, the Middle was based in what today is central Kazakhstan, and the Lesser zhuz in western Kazakhstan. Khan Teuke is said to have reunited the zhuzes under his control in 1680-1718. The union lasted until the submission of the Lesser zhuz to Russian rule in 1731 when Khan Abul Khair, unable to stop the Kalmyk invasion, swore allegiance to the Russian crown to escape defeat.

### **Russian colonization**

Modern history of Central Asia coincides by and large with the Russian conquest. Though the first encroachments into the Kazakh steppes began in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Russians did not develop plans of colonizing the region until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Peter the Great, who died in 1725, planned for having a defended line of communications rather than conquer the entire region.

Inclusion of the Lesser zhuz into the Empire did not stop the Russian Cossaks from advancing further into the Steppe which led to the Kazakhs' frequent raiding of Russian settlements. As a result, in the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55), the Kazakhs gradually found themselves enveloped in lines of Russian fortifications. Its advance across the Kazakh steppe brought Russia into direct contact with the Khannates of Khiva (established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) and Qoqand (established in 1700 in the Ferghana valley). The two khanates as well as the Emirate of Bukhara by then were weak states with ill-defined borders until the rise of the three tribes turned dynasties at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – Mangyt in Bukhara, Ming in Khiva, and Qungrad in Quqand – who revived and centralized them. The absence of recognized borders, which put the three states into constant conflicts with each other and their neighbors Afghanistan, China, and Persia, now became a problem Russia had to deal with as well.

Russian response – territorial conquest – was more a product of decision-making by the local military commanders and civilian officials than a policy formulated in St. Petersburg. In 1817 and 1839-40, the Russians attempted to conquer Khiva but were defeated. Another twenty-five years would pass before the Russian troops would capture Tashkent, an important commercial center and a convenient geographic location to launch further attacks deeper into the region. Armed resistance was negligible as local armies lacked experience and weaponry of modern warfare and unity to jointly fight the common enemy. The only significant battle the Russians fought in Central Asia was the battle of Geok Tepe in 1881 against the Tekke Turkmen who demonstrated fierce resistance.

In 1867, the Turkestani Governorship-General was established with the capital in Tashkent followed by the establishment of the Steppe Governorship-General with jurisdiction over the Kazakh territories. The distinct feature of the Turkestani Governoship-General was that unlike any other administrative unit of the Russian Empire it was administered by the Ministry of War, not Internal Affairs, which meant that administrators at all levels were the military. The Russians conquered Khannate of Qoqand by 1876 but stopped short of capturing Bukhara and Khiva, instead reducing them to protectorates.

St. Petersburg, lacking both personnel and the funds to governing its new possessions, largely delegated responsibility for local matters, such as, e.g., justice, taxation, irrigation, to native self-government. Central Asians were legally classified as *inorodtsi*

(aborigines) and had neither the full rights nor the same obligations as the tsar's other subjects. They were exempt from conscription and there were no native auxiliary units, though a small number of the elites received Russian titles and military ranks.

At the same time, Russian rule brought a number of important social changes. In sedentary areas, the warrior elites disappeared which led to the growing importance of the *ulama*, Muslim clergy and scholars, the formation of a new class of wealthy merchants, and monetized economy. The introduction of elections for administrative positions undermined traditional elites. In addition, the Statute of 1886 granted property rights in land to those who cultivated it which was a blow to the economic power of the tribal chiefs, though *waqf* (endowed) lands belonging to mosques were not touched. The Russians abolished slavery, the slave trade, torture, corporal and capital punishment.



Reception of Russian officers at the Bukhara Court. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Migration of the Russian population into Central Asia began with the adoption of Resettlement act of 1889 which offered land allotments, tax exemptions, and interest-

free loans to peasant colonists though it still required a permission to migrate. Colonists settled mostly in the Steppe Governorship-General which led to the reduction of acreage reserved for the use of Kazakhs. The construction of the Transcaspian railroad (1880-1), extended in 1885 to Bukhara and Samarqand, and of the Orenburg-Tashkent railroad in 1906 led to the growth in cotton production for the Russian market. St. Petersburg stimulated that development, which would give Central Asian agriculture a distinctively monoculture character later in the twentieth century, by imposing in 1887 a protective tariff on foreign cotton. By 1911, Central Asian cotton was supplying half the total needs of Russia's textile industry. The growth of local industry was limited: The ginning and spinning of cotton fiber and extraction of oil from cotton seed accounted for 85% of Turkestan's total industrial production in 1914. Native population was employed primarily as un- or semi-skilled workers.

Russification of Central Asians was limited as Russian officials believed that superiority of the Russian culture will naturally lead Central Asians to abandon their beliefs and traditions. Earlier on St. Petersburg made a distinction between the nomad and sedentary population, favoring the former as less "fanatic" due to their superficial adherence to Islam and hence more prone to Russian influence. In line with this policy, Russian schools were the only supported by the state, a very limited number of these schools was opened, and in the Steppe Governorship-General they outnumbered the ones in Turkestan: By 1913, there were 157 Russian schools in the Steppe Governorship-General with the native population of 3.3 mln and 89 schools in Turkistan with the native population of 5.1 mln. *Jadids*, Central Asian enlighteners cum modernizers of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>-beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, who sought to open modern secular schools and institute political and social reforms in the region, were equally persecuted and feared by the local elites and clergy and the Russians.

The end of the Russian colonial rule in Central Asia was marked by a chain of rebellions caused by the June 25, 1916 decree which ordered the mobilization of a half a million Central Asians for military service on the front lines of WWI. Tsarist authorities failed to explain the change in the draft policy. As a result of the unrest, many Russian civilians were killed and about 9,000 farmsteads were destroyed. Native losses far exceeded those of the Russians and large numbers of Central Asians were forced to flee Xinjiang, Persia, and Afghanistan. The new Governor-General of Turkestan proposed a host of measures: More administrators, greater responsibility for the welfare of the natives, greater protection for the land rights of nomads and peasants

who fell deeply into debt; subsidized grain imports but they were not implemented because of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

### Soviet period

The Bolshevik revolution did not bring independence to Central Asia, partly because there were no organized groups or movements which demanded it. A few that existed, e.g., Kazakh *Alash Orda*, demanded – and sometimes proclaimed (Alash Orda, May 1917; Qoqand, December 1917) – autonomy within the Russian Federation. Other demands included the end to planting cotton, which was viewed as a colonial crop, redistribution of the confiscated lands, etc. Soviet power was proclaimed in Tashkent a week before the Bolshevik revolution. The government which was formed after the revolution, Turkestani Council of People's Commissars, practically excluded Central Asians and ignored their demands. It moved to suppress any display of independence by the locals, including the sacking of Qoqand in February 1918. In 1920, the Bolsheviks moved even further: In their quest for the world revolution, they sent the Red Army to abolish the Emirate of Bukhara and Khannate of Khiva, proclaiming both People's republics. The same year, Kyrgyz (Kazakh) autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Russian Federation was established. On April 11, 1921, Soviet Turkestan, by the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, entered the RSFSR.

Excesses of Bolshevik rule and the “Red terror” tactics used to implement their policies led to the rise of an organized opposition known as the *Basmachi* movement. The movement was not coherent ideologically nor was it unified except for a brief period in 1921-1922 when Enver Pasha, son-in-law of the last Ottoman sultan, became its supreme commander. Yet it enjoyed popular support, especially among the peasantry who wanted a return to the old ways and thus were susceptible to the Islamist propaganda, eventually making dominant the conservative faction. Punitive raids against the Basmachis were not successful and only intensified the hostility toward the Bolsheviks. Only when Moscow changed its tactics and adopted conciliatory policies, which included restoration of Sharia courts, waqf property, inclusion of the natives in the government and the Red Army corps, etc., were the Bolsheviks able to achieve a turn around which was also helped by internal bickering within the Basmachi movement itself. Yet pockets of Basmachi resistance continued to exist into the 1930s.

After consolidating their power the Bolsheviks launched a campaign of modernization

and sweeping transformation known as industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and cultural revolution. It began with the administrative reconfiguration of the region following the creation of the Soviet Union in 1922 and known as national and territorial delimitation of 1924-1925. As a result of delimitation, Turkestan Autonomous Republic and nominally independent republics of Bukhara and Khwarezm (Khiva) were abolished. Instead, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) and Tajik Autonomous Republic within Uzbekistan were created. Kyrgyzstan became an autonomous republic within the Russian Federation. The status of Kazakhstan did not change. Tajikistan became a full SSR in 1929, followed by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1936. Delimitation and creation of new nations was done without too much regard for self-identification of the population, leaving substantial numbers of ethnic groups outside the borders of the newly created republics bearing their names.



Learning to read. 1920s.

Soviet policy toward Central Asia can best be described by Martin Spechler's term "welfare colonialism." In economic and social spheres, the aim was to achieve

equalization with the more developed European parts of the Soviet Union. This was achieved through capital transfers, return of the entire proceeds from the republics' turnover tax instead of the standard one-fourth, allowing more private initiative, especially in agriculture and housing), personnel appointments, affirmative action-style education policy when Central Asians had quotas in the best universities of the Soviet Union, etc. At the same time, economic development of the region remained skewed. Central Asian economy largely remained agricultural as well as a source of raw material for the Soviet economy. Cotton production was given even greater importance at the expense of grain and fruit, resulting in severe environmental (desiccation of the Aral Sea) and health problems. Before the Bolshevik revolution two-thirds of the sown irrigated area was given up to grain, the Soviets reduced it to about 10 %. About 90% of cotton was exported as raw fiber to the European part of the Soviet Union. The 1950s Virgin lands campaign in Kazakhstan to increase locally grown wheat through the increase of sown area was only partially successful as the yields were less than expected. Agricultural reforms of the 1920s-1930s, which abolished private property on land, had a dramatic effect on Central Asian nomads, primarily Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, who were forced to settle. As a result, a million of Kazakhs perished and thousands fled to Xinjiang. This was accompanied by a significant reduction of herds.

For a long time industrial development centered around cotton production and the main industries were cotton ginning, the production of cotton-picking machines, fertilizers, cottonseed oil, and textiles for local markets. Only when during WWII a large number of industrial enterprises were evacuated, primarily to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, did industrialization and urbanization of Central Asia began. Yet the evacuated enterprises came with the refugee manpower which had a number of important consequences: Central Asian cities became heavily Russified; skilled labor remained primarily European and the need for skilled labor was satisfied mainly through importation from outside the region; enterprises belonged to the Soviet military-industrial complex and fell into the "All-Union subordination" category which put them under Moscow's direct jurisdiction. Post-WWII industrial development also focused on natural resource extraction and their partial local processing, including oil, coal, gas, ores and others minerals (uranium for the first Soviet A-bomb came from Tajikistan), etc. Hydro-electric power production also became important.

Political structure of Soviet Central Asia reflected the structure of the communist party-state. Each of the republics had its own communist party, which was a branch of the



Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), its own parliament called the Supreme Soviet, and its government called the Council of Ministers. Despite nominal sovereignty of the constituent republics and the federal character of the Soviet state, all power belonged to Moscow and was concentrated in the hands of the Politburo of the CPSU. Yet Moscow always appointed natives into key local positions to give semblance of native rule. Before WWII, given the lack of educated native cadres the Bolsheviks had to rely on the Jadids and the members of Alash Orda, Young Bukharans and other pre-revolutionary political parties and groups. They were all purged by Joseph Stalin in the 1930s and replaced by the new elites who were the products of the Soviet system and CPSU training schools. That has not changed the level of trust in Moscow as it introduced the position of a second secretary of the local communist party, usually filled by a Russian or a fellow Slav, to watch over local leaders and the implementation of Moscow's policies. Heads of most important departments of central committees of local communist parties, legislatures, and governments were also usually non-local cadres. Throughout the Soviet period only two Central Asians were members of the Politburo. On their part, Central Asians viewed membership in the CPSU instrumentally, as an opportunity for social advancement.

Perestroika, reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985-1991, affected Central Asia in a number of ways. Republics were encouraged to take more initiative in matters of economic development as capital transfers from Moscow decreased. Political reforms led to the emergence of alternative political parties and groups against the backdrop of national and religious revival. These changes coupled with the diminishing central control over local politics allowed Central Asian elites to pursue politics that reflected traditional character of Central Asian politics beneath the veneer of Soviet-era institutions.

It became apparent that despite official policies aimed at egalitarianism hierarchical character of the social structure of Central Asian societies has persevered. As in other traditional societies, it was sustained by the system of patron-client relationships which had entrapped the majority of the population into submission and dependence on a patron in resolving all sorts of issues faced through the course of a lifetime. It perpetuated the kin/local/regional segmentation of a society and prevented the emergence of clearly delineated criteria of citizenship. Russian and Soviet attempts to change traditional patterns of social organization of Central Asian societies and with it

to uproot traditional loyalties and patron-client relationships not only failed but exacerbated regional and tribal rivalries, laying the foundation for politics based on regional affiliations rather than ideological, interest, or any other divisions.

Independence was not sought by Central Asian elites and caught them by surprise. They were generally in favor of the August 1991 anti-Gorbachev coup as they saw in his reforms, especially political, a threat to their power. Though in the aftermath of the coup Central Asian republics proclaimed their independence (Kazakhstan – December 16; Kyrgyzstan – August 30; Tajikistan – September 9; Turkmenistan – October 27; Uzbekistan – August 31), decades of disenfranchisement and dependence on Moscow explained why they lobbied for the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) after Presidents Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine, and Stanislav Shushkevich of Belarus dissolved the Soviet Union in December 1991.

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 accelerated the process of retraditionalization of Central Asian societies which started in perestroika. The process has been characterized by the partial replacement of Soviet-era institutions and mores with those Central Asians had prior to Sovietization and which they continued to practice despite official proscription. It was the process spawned from the top as much as from the bottom and was marked, in part, by validation of the primacy of kin-based relationships, legitimization of the patronage system, Islamic revival, and abandonment of affirmative action policy toward women as they were pressured to assume more traditional roles. Despite regularly held presidential and parliamentary elections there has been no turnover of political elites: The leaders that ruled the countries at independence are still in power. Only in Tajikistan there has been a limited change in 1992 when Imomali Rahmonov became president. Yet he has stayed in power since then. Faced with daunting tasks of state- and nation-building, Central Asian leaders opted for building authoritarian regimes and privatizing the gains of economic reforms into the hands of their families and close associates. Social dislocation and lack of prospects for a better future have resulted in the growth of political and religious extremism throughout the region.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- How does Central Asian history influence Central Asian political culture today?
- What are the major historic differences among Central Asians that affect their choice of developmental paths today?

- Can we speak about a history of statehood of the five eponymous Central Asian nations?
- In what ways have the Russian conquest and then the Communist regime transform Central Asia and its people?
- How did Central Asian republics and their elites respond to the breakup of the Soviet Union?

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## **ISLAM**

Islam is the predominant religion among Central Asians and has become an integral part of the Central Asian way of life and culture. Yet it is not observed equally dutifully by all Central Asians with the Tajiks and Uzbeks being the most devout.

Islam was brought to Central Asia by the Arabs in the seventh century. Its religious doctrine, Sharia (canon law), adat (customary law), and Islamic culture were spread by merchants, who penetrated Central Asia after the conquest. The Tajiks and Uzbeks were the first to convert, followed by the Turkmen (12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries), Kyrgyz (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries), and Kazakhs (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, though southern Kazakhs became

Muslims in the 9<sup>th</sup> century). The Kazakh case is the most interesting since they were Islamized by the decision of Catherine II. The majority of Central Asians are Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi school. There is also a number of Sufi (Muslim mysticism) orders and a few Shi'a groups, of whom the most notable are the Ismailis of Tajikistan.



One of the original copies of the Quran compiled under Caliph Uthman (644-656), now in Tashkent

The Hanafi school became dominant in Central Asia primarily for two reasons. First, its founder, Abu Hanifa (d.767), was a non-Arab of the Iranian origin which at the time was psychologically important for Central Asians who like other non-Arab Muslims fought for equal treatment. Second, unlike three other the Hanafi school was less literal in its doctrinal interpretation of the Quran and allowed for the incorporation of the pre-Islamic traditions. It has given Central Asian Islam a fairly tolerant and liberal character that excluded radicalism. Bukhara and Samarqand were traditional centers of Islamic learning. The former was the birthplace of a renowned Muslim scholar Ismail al-Bukhari (810-70) who compiled one of the two most authentic collections of the *hadith* (Prophet Muhammad's sayings).

Sufism in the region, which has similarly been liberal, is represented by the following orders: Naqshbandiya (Bukhara), Qadiriya (Ferghana), Yasawiya (southern Kazakhstan), and Qubraviya (Khorezm/Khiva). Naqshbandiya, the dominant order, was founded in Bukhara by Bahauddin Naqshband (1317-1389). Membership in the Sufi orders has been exclusive and secretive and the leadership has usually been maintained within one family. The Ismaili Shi'a in the GornoBadakhshan Autonomous Province of Tajikistan trace their origins to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Their spiritual leader is Prince Agha Khan who has been actively providing humanitarian aid to his followers during the Tajik civil war of 1992-1997.

Before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution there were around 26,300 mosques, 6,000 *maktabs* (primary Islamic schools), and 300 *madrassas* (Islamic schools) in Central Asia. Soviet policy toward Islam as to any other religion was its suppression as inimical to Marxist ideology. There were periods of respite in militant atheism in the 1920s, when the Soviets needed to win over Central Asians and consolidate their power, and during WWII, when in 1943 Joseph Stalin allowed the establishment of the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and reopening of some mosques to ensure Muslims' loyalty to the state amidst the uncertainty on the frontlines. Yet, by the time perestroika began in 1985, there were less than a hundred mosques in the entire region, one Islamic institute in Tashkent, and one madrassa in Bukhara.

Perestroika brought Islamic revival in Central Asia further backed by a liberal law on freedom of conscience passed on 1 October 1990. The most visible sign of the revival was the booming mosque construction: At independence, there were around 7,500 mosques in the region and 380 madrassas in Uzbekistan alone. Perestroika also allowed "parallel Islam," which existed alongside with the officially sanctioned Islamic institutions, to come into the open. It was a network of separate groups of young Central Asians influenced by the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Afghan *mujaheddin* (combatants against Soviet occupation) propaganda to work toward spiritual renewal and eventual establishment of an Islamic state in the region. In 1989, these young men came together to establish an All-Union Party of Islamic Renaissance whose Tajik and Uzbek branches were the most numerous and influential. In 1991, these branches became independent. Other Islamic groups included Islam Lashkari (Warriors of Islam) and Adalat (Justice). Islamists demanded greater role for Islam in political and social life of Central Asians, adoption of some aspects of Sharia

(especially those concerning family) into law, proclamation religious holidays official, making Friday a day-off, etc. Their eventual goal was the creation of an Islamic state in their respective republics.

There are communities of the followers of other religions, including Christianity, mostly Russian Orthodox Church, Judaism, Buddhism, etc.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- How has the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam shape the character of Central Asian Islam and Islamic practices?
- What role has Sufism play in the evolution of Central Asian Islam?
- What the causes of the growth of Islamic extremism in the region?

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## **CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

Being at the crossroads of various civilizations since the early stages of their history, Central Asians have a very rich culture in part influenced by the way of life. Though all the five nations are Muslim and have predominantly rural population, there is a divide between the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen whose nomadic way of life continued until the late 1920s and the Tajiks and Uzbeks who became sedentary much earlier. At the same time all Central Asians who reside in cities, especially capitals, have closely interacted with large Russian populations and thus are likely to demonstrate a mix of

native and Russian cultural influences. Central Asians take great pride in providing hospitality for guests. In accordance with tradition guests are offered the best of everything irrespective of the economic situation of the host. Central Asians maintain close family ties. In countryside members of an extended family often live in one household.

The former group continues to identify themselves with their nomadic ancestry who, while herding their livestock, used to live in *yurts*, portable felt-covered dwellings. This tradition continues among the shepherds of today. Also their traditional diet is distinctive from the Tajik and Uzbek as it includes *qazy* (horse meat), *qumyz* (fermented mare's milk), and *shabat* (fermented camel's milk). At the same time, all Central Asians share such dish as *osh-palou*, pilaf of rice, meat, vegetables, and sometimes spices and (dried) fruit, which originated among Tajiks and Uzbeks. Among other cultural characteristics shared by all Central Asians are a spring festival, *Nowruz* (ancient Iranian New Year celebrated on the day of spring Equinox) and a game, *buzkashi* (also known as *baiga*, *qoqpar*, and *ulaq*), in which players compete to drag a goat carcass into a goal and which dates back to the Genghis Khan period. In addition to *osh-palou*, other traditional Tajik and Uzbek dishes include *laghmon* (soup with long, thick noodles), *kabob* (barbecued kebabs), *non* (bread) of many varieties for different occasions, etc.

Nomadic way of life is associated primarily with folk arts, oral literary tradition, and vocal music. In Central Asia, all three are common throughout the region. Traditional folk arts include handmade textiles, silver jewelry, ceramics, wool and silk carpets, wood carving, wall painting, etc. The carpets were traditionally used to decorate the floors and walls of palaces, houses of nobility as well as *yurts* and were considered to be a sign of wealth.

Another ancient tradition is the performance of the epos (a partly historical and partly legendary series of poems) in the form of a song by an *aqyn* or *hafiz*, Central Asian minstrel, on a variety of string instruments. Though common to all Central Asians, it is mostly associated with the formerly nomadic nations who acquired written languages much later than Tajiks and Uzbeks: Turkmen in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (associated with poet *Magtumguli*), Kazakhs in the 1860s (associated with the name of poet *Abay Ibrahim Kunanbayev*), and Kyrgyz in 1923. One of the most well-known is the Kyrgyz epos called *Manas* about a legendary hero who battle foreign invaders to create a homeland

for his people. All but disappeared during the Soviet period, interest in both epos and aqyn tradition was revived as Central Asians sought to restore their national heritage.

As for Tajiks and Uzbeks, their oral traditions were largely displaced with the spread of Islam which brought the art of writing and education as well as influenced the development of architectural and musical styles and genres. Traditional Tajik and Uzbek music is similar to that of the Middle East and is characterized by complicated rhythms and meters that evoke a richly melodic sound. One of the famous music genres is *shashmaqom* which is infused with Sufi themes.

Architectural designs, which reflect common Islamic tradition, are distinguished by turquoise-colored mosque domes and the glazed tilework, usually forming abstract geometrical patterns, also found on many religious buildings.



Guri Amir Mausoleum. Samarqand. 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Tajiks share literary heritage with two other Persian-speaking nations of Iran and Afghanistan. Persian literature emerged from Bukhara under the Samanids during the



9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is associated with the name of *Abu Abdullohi Rudaki* who is considered to be the father of Persian poetry. Another important Bukharan name for Persian-speaking literature as well as Muslim and world philosophy and science is *Abu Ali ibn Sino* (980-1037) better known in the west as Avicenna, the author of the “*Canon of Medicine*.” In the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Bukhara was the center of Central Asian Jadidism whose leader, *Abdurrauf Fitrat*, wrote poems and scholarly books on Islam and social and political reforms in both the Tajik and Uzbek languages. He and hundreds of other Central Asian intellectuals perished during Stalin’s purges of the 1930s.

During the Soviet period new, European cultural forms and genres were introduced to the region, including novel, opera, ballet, symphony, etc. Their introduction and evolution were accompanied by the Communist party drive to create a new, proletarian culture which would have little connection to traditional culture deemed to be too Islamic for an atheistic society the communists aspired to create. Thus, the Arabic-based alphabets of Central Asian languages were first changed into Latin at the end of the 1920s and then, in the late 1930s, into Cyrillic. Possession of books with Arabic script became a criminal offense. Intellectually and linguistically Central Asians were subjected to Russification, albeit unofficial.

The contents of arts, literature, and music had to conform to the genre called *socialist realism*, which was a form of communist propaganda, though Central Asians were allowed to express it in the officially approved traditional forms. Such arrangement for national cultures of different Soviet ethnic groups was known as “*national in form, socialist in content*.” The Soviets were unable to completely eliminate traditional cultures and replace them with a new one. Late 1970s-early 1980s brought revival primarily associated with the name of Kyrgyz writer *Chingiz Aitmatov* who gained international renown for his novels such as *The Day Lasts More Than A Century* (English translation 1982) and collections of short stories such as *Tales of Mountains and Steppes* (English translation 1969).

One undisputed achievement of the Soviet period is the introduction of the modern education system which produced nearly 100 percent rate of literacy where it was virtually absent before. Free primary and secondary education became compulsory and largely remains the case in all five Central Asian states. At the same time the governments have been unable to maintain the Soviet-era levels of funding. There is

shortage of new textbooks and teachers who are poorly paid. The same problems face university-level education though a number of new private universities have been opened, including a number of joint Central Asian-American universities.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- In what ways have different lifestyles influence the development of different cultural forms among Central Asians?
- Can we talk about some common elements in the culture of Central Asians?
- How much has the Russian influence westernization of Central Asian cultures?

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## **KAZAKHSTAN**



**Government and politics.** The Republic of Kazakhstan, a country slightly less than four times the size of Texas, proclaimed its independence on 16 December 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. Since independence two constitutions were adopted. The 1993 constitution proclaimed the country a unitary state and introduced strong, French-style presidency. The 1995 constitution increased presidential power and instituted bicameral parliament while substantially limiting its authority. President is elected for seven years and has unlimited powers: He appoints the Prime Minister and the entire Council of Ministers, governors of the fourteen provinces and the cities of Astana and Almaty as well as executives of all lower level administrative units, and all judges. He can initiate constitutional amendments, dissolve parliament, call referenda at his discretion, override the decisions of the executive branch officials, etc.

Legislative branch is represented by a bicameral parliament consists of the Senate (upper house) and the *Mazhlis* (lower house). The Senate has 39 members, 32 of whom are elected by indirect vote at a joint session of the deputies of *maslihats* (local assemblies) and 7 are appointed by the president. Senators serve six-year terms. The Mazhlis consists of 77 deputies, 67 of whom are elected in single-mandate districts and 10 are appointed from a party list based on proportional representation with a 7% threshold. Under the 1995 constitution, it does not have much power as the legislative initiative is primarily president's prerogative as is the appointment of and or control

over the executive branch.

Judicial branch of the government is represented by the Supreme Court (44 members) and the Constitutional Council (7 members). Judges of all levels are appointed by the president and serve for an unspecified term. Despite steps taken to increase professionalism and independence of the judiciary, including substantial raise in judge's salaries, the system continues to be heavily politicized.

Since independence Nursultan Nazarbayev has been the president of Kazakhstan. He was first elected on 1 December 1991, then had his term extended by a 1995 referendum, and reelected on 10 January 1999. In 2000, the parliament passed a law "On the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan" which guarantees his lifelong powers and privileges as well as immunity. Nazarbayev's rule has been characterized by concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the president himself, his family, and trusted kin in a clear manifestation of zhuz-based patronage politics despite a semblance of balance in key appointments. Notwithstanding his earlier commitment to democratic reform, Nazarbayev has progressively moved toward a regime of personalistic dictatorship by manipulating electoral process, intimidating opposition, and limiting political liberties of citizens. Twice, in 1993 and 1995, he dissolved parliament and ruled by presidential decree. Liberal laws adopted in early independence have been revised to institute tougher control on political and civil society activity in the country. In July 2002, the new law on political parties was passed requiring a party to have 50,000 registered members up from the previously required 3,000. The new law will mostly likely make it impossible for Nazarbayev's opponents to register political parties.

At present, major political parties represented in Mazhilis include Otan with 24 seats, Civic Party with 11 seats, Communist Party with 3 seats, Agrarian Party with 3 seats, People's Cooperative Party with 1 seat. With the exception of the Communists all other parties are pro-government, Otan is formally headed by the president himself. Major opposition parties are represented by the RNPK (Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan), headed by Akezhan Kazhegeldin, exiled former prime minister and Nazarbayev's chief opponent, Azamat, DVK (Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan), and Ak Zhol. Members of the opposition represent mostly former government officials, businessmen, and intellectuals dissatisfied with nepotism, growing authoritarianism, and slow pace of economic reforms.

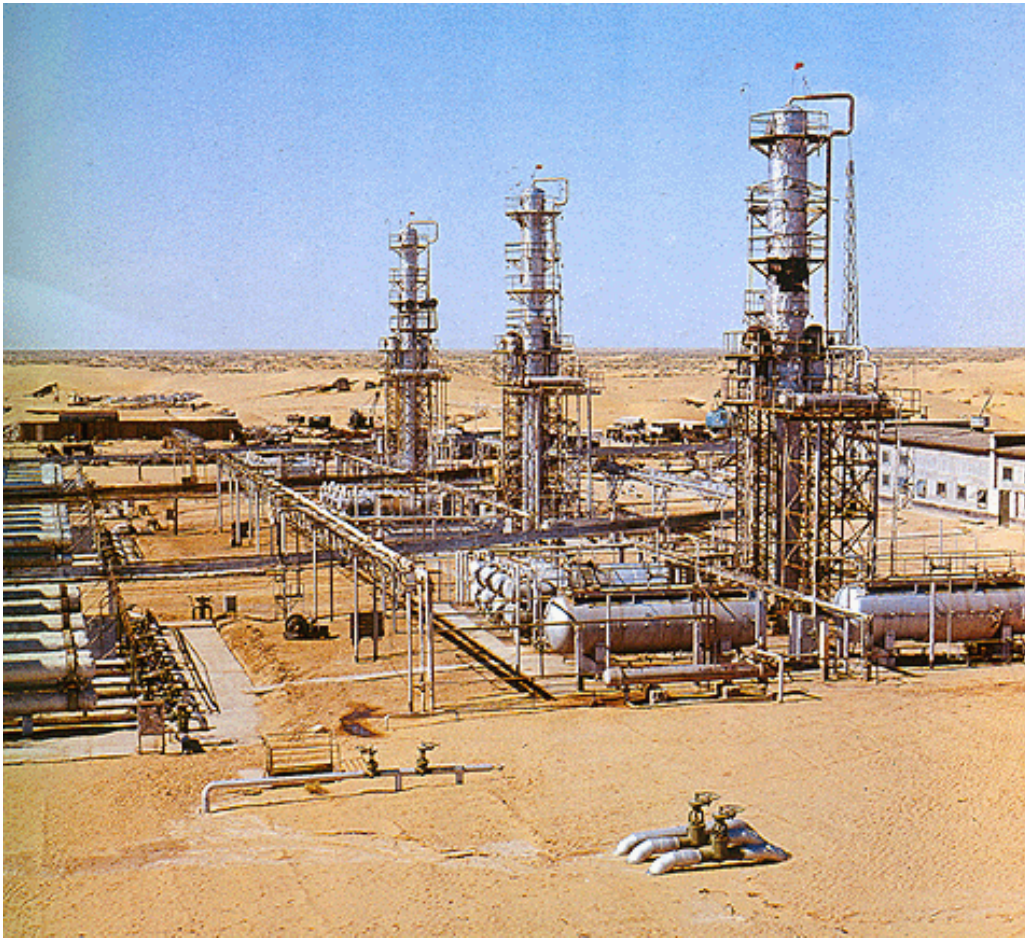
**Civil society.** In addition to political parties, there are above 3,050 NGOs registered with the Ministry of Justice as it is required by the Law on Public Associations passed in 1998. Participation in unregistered NGOs is illegal and subject to criminal prosecution. Creation of government-sponsored NGOs is widely practiced. Only a fraction of the registered NGOs is estimated to be fully functioning. The main obstacles to civil society development in Kazakhstan, as elsewhere in Central Asia, are patronage character of its institutions and lack of domestic financial support. Creation of government-sponsored NGOs is widely practiced.

In the early 1990s, Kazakhstan enjoyed a vibrant and relatively free media. Its independence was severely restricted as a result of the adoption of two laws: The 1998 Media Law and the 1999 Law on Confidential State Affairs which made information about Nazarbayev and his family and their economic interests a state secret and its disclosure a criminal offense. Electronic and print media are dominated by the *Khabar* group, owned by Nazarbayev's eldest daughter.

**Economy.** Despite the initial drop in GDP to about half it was before independence, since 1995 Kazakhstan has been successfully restructuring its economy and introducing market institutions, maintaining macroeconomic stability over the last years. By 1998, Kazakhstan has completed privatization of small enterprises. In 1999, private sector share in GDP was 60 percent. The 1999 GDP structure of the economy is as follows: 30 percent industry, 10 percent agriculture, and 60 percent services. The country is rich with mineral resources such as oil, natural gas, coal, iron ore, manganese, chrome ore, nickel, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium. This makes their extraction and processing most important industrial sectors with oil and metallurgy accounting for over two-thirds of the country's exports. Another important industrial sector is machine-building sector specializing in agricultural and construction equipment as well as some defense items. The government is now working to implement industrial policy to diversify the economy and reduce its dependence on oil.

Kazakhstan's oil reserves are estimated to be 16.4 billion barrels, not including the recently discovered offshore deposits in the Caspian Sea (Kashagan field) which may, if proven, add another 40 billion barrels. The oils sector draws 84 percent of FDI (over \$9 billion in 1993-1999). Lack of an agreement on the delimitation of the Caspian Sea has not halted Kazakhstan's offshore oil exploration projects or foreign investment. One of the major problems is transportation of oil out of the landlocked country. At present, there are only two pipelines, both going through Russia. Kazakhstan has been

tentative about participation in the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project which is designed to provide Caspian states with an alternative route.



Oil field

Kazakhstan has been successful in implementing reforms in the financial sector. Though the size of the banking sector is still relatively small, it has been moving toward operating in full compliance with the Basel principles. Kazakhstan was the first Asian country to introduced privatized pension system in 1997. Yet, the development of the stock market is being held due to the opposition of major business interests managing national “blue-chip” state enterprises. Decision to float *tenge*, national currency, in 1999 was encouraging to the growth of domestic production in such sectors as agriculture, food processing, etc.

Kazakhstan continues to be a large agricultural producer, specializing in livestock and grain. Over 90 percent of agricultural enterprises have been privatized. 75 percent of agricultural land has been leased to private farms or individual farmers. The amended land law (2000) allows for privatization of the land adjacent to rural dwellings which is

expected to give additional boost to the development of the sector.

***Social issues.*** Social problems arise for a number of reasons. Economic transition and rampant corruption (Transparency International ranks the country 86<sup>th</sup> of the 99 listed) have resulted in the growing social differentiation. Intra-ethnic tensions are rife: Kazakhstani Russians, especially Cossaks, who dominate northern and eastern regions and protest what they see as discrimination are silenced by charges of separatism, organizing “armed insurrection,” or treason, resulting in long prison sentences. Living standards are declining: UNDP estimated that in 2000, 65 percent of the population lives beyond the poverty line. The quality and availability of health care and other social services have deteriorated since independence. A number of social problems are caused by environmental degradation as a result of the Aral Sea desiccation (water pollution, high rates of cancer and congenital deformations, etc.), the legacy of the Soviet nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk (now Semei), and soil pollution from overuse of agricultural chemicals.

***Foreign policy.*** At independence, Kazakhstan unexpectedly became a nuclear power as it was a site of the Soviet ICBMs deployment. It immediately brought the country into the international spotlight: It became a signatory to the START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) and the Lisbon Protocol which obligated Kazakhstan to denuclearize (completed by May 1995). Kazakhstan became a member of the UN, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, and other international organizations. President Nazarbayev, promoting the country as a bridge between Asia and Europe, has pursued the policy of “multi-vector diplomacy,” trying to develop close relations with countries beyond Kazakhstan’s immediate neighborhood which includes Russia and China whose dominance he has been seeking to escape.

Relations with Russia though continue to be important for a number of reasons: a large Russian population in Kazakhstan; 6,846 km border the countries share; trade (Russia continues, despite continuing decline, to be the most important partner with 20 percent of Kazakhstani exports going to Russia and 37 percent imports coming from it); security. Russia continues to lease a number of military installations, including the Baikonur space center. Kazakhstan is a member of the 1992 CIS Collective Security Treaty; Customs Union with Russia which also includes Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. Dissatisfaction with the CIS made President Nazarbayev advance unsuccessfully an idea of a Eurasian Union (1994) and Eurasian Economic Community (1999) which

would have meant closer integration of Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics with Russia. Nazarbayev continues to reiterate that Russia is Kazakhstan's closest ally by virtue of history and geography.

While trade with China, barter in particular, is booming, relations between the two states are complicated due to historic fears of Chinese domination; presence of Uighur diaspora in Kazakhstan who advocates Xinjiang's independence; continued Chinese nuclear tests at Lob Nor test site, located close to the border with Kazakhstan. Yet the two countries moved closer together with the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 1996 whose goal is to foster political, security, economic and other forms of cooperation between China and Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Kazakhstan has attempted to build its relations with other Central Asian states within the framework of the Central Asian Economic Community established in 1994 together with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and joined by Tajikistan in 1998. The attempt failed due to difference in economic policies pursued by the member-states and personal rivalries between Central Asian presidents. As a result, an attempt to create a regional peace-keeping battalion, *Centrazbat*, which was trained by the NATO through the Partnership for Peace program, has also failed.

Prior to independence, Kazakhstan, as other Central Asian states, did not have independent armed forces. It began to build its military in 1992 and currently has an army of 45,000 personnel, an air force of 19,000, and a navy of 100 (the Caspian Flotilla, based in Astrakhan (Russia), is under the joint command of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan). Additionally, there are three paramilitary units which include the Republican Guard, security troops of the Ministry of Interior, and border guards, whose total strength is 34,500 personnel.

From the beginning Kazakhstan has sought to develop close relations with the West, especially the United States, as a balance to its relations with Russia and China. Kazakhstan also needs western FDI and expertise to develop its oil industry and transform the economy. Tengiz Chevron Oil project is the single most important US-Kazakh joint venture which has attracted almost half of \$1.5 billion American companies invested in Kazakhstan in 1993-1998. In the wake of 9/11, Kazakhstan has supported US campaign against international terrorism and granted emergency landing rights to US military aircraft engaged in the military campaign in Afghanistan. Yet the



crackdown on opposition and political repression which have intensified in 2001-2002 raise concern in Washington about the chances for a successful democratic transition in Kazakhstan. Also the Department of Justice is conducting investigation into whether signing bonuses American oil companies paid the Kazakh government were in fact kickbacks to Nazarbayev and his entourage.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- The importance of the energy sector for economic development of Kazakhstan.
- Economic reforms and corruption.
- Causes for reverse of political democratization in Kazakhstan.
- The significance of the Russian factor in Kazakhstan's domestic and foreign policy.

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## **KYRGYZSTAN**



**Government and politics.** The Republic of Kyrgyzstan, a country slightly smaller in size than South Dakota, proclaimed its independence on 31 August 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. Constitution adopted on 5 May 1993 provided for a strong presidential power further enhanced by constitutional amendments passed in 1996 at the expense of the legislature. The president has the power to appoint the prime minister, the cabinet (on the recommendation of the prime minister), the chairmen of the Central Bank and the Central Election Committee. He can dissolve the legislature if it rejects his nominee for the prime minister three times. He can also bypass the legislature and rule by edict. The president appoints governors of the seven provinces and forty-three districts the country is administratively divided into.

Legislative branch is represented by a bicameral parliament, *Jogorku Kenesh* (Supreme Council), which is elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. It consists of the *Myizam Chygaruu Jyiyny* (Legislative Assembly), the upper chamber, and the *El Okulder Jyiyny* (People's Representative Assembly), the lower chamber. The upper chamber has 35 members who sit in permanent session. They adopt and interpret laws and ratify international treaties, and can also impeach the president. The lower chamber has 70 members who meet several times a year to approve presidential appointees and deal with budget and tax issues. Despite strengthening of the presidential powers the parliament has displayed greater independence in its actions than in any other Central Asian state, dismissing presidential appointees, overturning presidential vetoes, and initiating legislation.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, and the Higher Court of Arbitration. Supreme Court judges are appointed for 10-year terms by the Supreme Council on the recommendation of the president. Despite measures taken to increase professionalism through the qualification exams and raising salaries, judicial system continues to be politicized.

Since independence the country has been run by President *Askar Akayev* who has been president since October 1990. He was last re-elected on 29 October 2000 in elections which the OSCE described as failed to comply with commitments for democratic elections. It was a departure from the early post-independence period when Akayev, a physicist, was considered the most reform-minded and democratically-oriented of the Central Asian leaders. Despite initial steps taken toward political and economic liberalization in the early 1990s, Akayev began to demonstrate authoritarian tendencies in 1994 when he dissolved the first post-independence parliament when it moved to limit Akayev's powers. With years he came to rely increasingly on the members of his and his wife's clansmen from northern Kyrgyzstan appointed to the highest positions in the government and less tolerant of any opposition. Prior to the 2000 parliamentary elections three leading opposition parties (*Ar Namys* (Honor), *El Bei Bechara* (Party of Poor People), and the *Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan*) were barred from participation in the elections under various pretexts. As the 2000 presidential elections approached Feliks Kulov, *Ar Namys* leader and one-time ally of Akayev and his vice-president,

was arrested and later convicted of a number of abuse-of-powers charges as he was about to enter the presidential race.

Despite these negative developments Kyrgyzstan remains the most liberal country in Central Asia which has a vibrant civil society, an independent media, and a fairly independent legislature with the largest number of independent deputies, 73 out of 105. The parties represented in the Supreme Council include pro-government the Union of Democratic Forces with 12 seats, My Country with 4, Democratic Party of Women with 2, Party of Afghan War Veterans with 2, Agrarian Labor Party with 1; and opposition the Communists with 6, People's Party with 2, Ata Meken (Fatherland) with 2, and the Erkin (Free) Kyrgyzstan with 1.

**Civil society.** Kyrgyzstan has a vibrant civil society. Yet it is plagued by the same problems as in Kazakhstan and out of thousands registered NGOs only about 500 are functioning. There are few legal restrictions on the NGO activity as the country still maintains the liberal 1991 Law on Public Organizations. In 1999, a new Law on Noncommercial Organizations was passed which allows the government to restrict the activities of an NGO should it be deemed undermining the public order or promote racial intolerance. In fact, in July 2000, one of the leading human rights groups, the Kyrgyz Committee on Human Rights, was deregistered and its leaders charged with "destabilizing the social order," which is a criminal offense. The 170-member NGO Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society was prevented by the Central Election Committee from monitoring the 2000 presidential election. At the same time, NGOs which deal with less sensitive issues, such as women's rights, environment, etc., generally have access to the government officials and have some influence on policy-making. Presidential Coordinating Council on Sustainable Development includes several NGO leaders.

Media in Kyrgyzstan is still to a significant degree state-owned. There are about 50 private newspapers and magazines, 14 TV and 11 radio stations. Independent media experiences not only government pressure but is constricted by insufficiency of financial and technological resources. As elsewhere in the region, criticism of the president and his family is a criminal offense. In the most celebrated case, Zamira Sadykova, a journalist of Res Publika newspaper, was imprisoned for a year and a half after publishing an article in 1995 alleging that President Akayev owned property abroad. Usually the government launches tax audits and criminal investigations to harass the most independent media outlets. In 1998, Akayev established an extra-constitutional Morals Commission authorized to evaluate the contents of the media publications and take action against the media when needed. In a clear violation of the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of press it, e.g., suspended three publications the same year which were allowed to reopen after they revised their line.

**Economy.** At independence Kyrgyzstan was one of the poorest republics of the former Soviet Union with an economy dominated by the agricultural sector. Its industrial development was limited to a number of enterprises which were part of the Soviet defense industry and which were closed down after 1991. Kyrgyzstan possesses a few mineral resources such as gold (one of the largest proven reserves in the world), mercury, lead, zinc, coal, etc. Its major energy resource is water.

Kyrgyzstan has been the leading former Soviet republic in restructuring its economy along the market principles. It was the first to introduce its national currency, *som* (May 1993) and to become a member of the WTO (November 1998). With the help of the IMF and the World Bank Kyrgyzstan has introduced a comprehensive package of macroeconomic and structural adjustment programs, which allowed to achieve production recovery and an increase in exports by 1996. Yet Kyrgyzstan has borrowed heavily from the IFIs and private lenders in the process of market transformations and despite all the success huge structural problems remain which makes the repayment of the debt virtually impossible and thus threaten turning the country into a permanent international client state. Agricultural sector continues to dominate the economy making 39 percent of the GDP with industry 22 and services 39 percent. Major industries include small machinery, textiles, food processing, cement, shoes, sawn logs, refrigerators, furniture, electric motors, gold, rare earth metals. As in Kazakhstan privatization has been successful in small and medium-sized businesses but stop short of privatizing large-scale, export-oriented enterprises. Private sector accounts for about 65 percent of GDP.

Private property on land in Kyrgyzstan was introduced by the 1998 referendum which approved corresponding constitutional amendments. Only 10 percent of the country's territory is considered fully arable. Yet in 2000 the parliament announced a five-year moratorium on the purchase and sale of land. Main agricultural products are tobacco, cotton, potatoes, vegetables, grapes, fruits and berries, sheep, goats, cattle, wool.

Kyrgyzstan's primary export commodities include cotton, wool, meat, tobacco, gold, mercury, uranium, hydropower, machinery, and shoes. It is still recovering from the 1998 Russia financial crisis which in has demonstrated country's dependence on foreign trade and energy imports and vulnerability to external shocks. The major persistent problems facing the government are excessive

external debt, double-digit inflation, inadequate revenue collection, and deteriorating infrastructure.

**Social issues.** Kyrgyzstan remains one of the poorest states of the former Soviet Union: Its per capita income is \$300 and 63 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Life expectancy declined from 68.8 years in 1991 to 66.9 years in 1997. By 2000, enrollment for secondary schooling dropped to 33 percent from 37 percent in 1990. Corruption remains pervasive. Inter-ethnic relations, especially with the local Uzbeks, which had led to the killing of 320 Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in 1990, remain to be a source of tension. The other source of tension is clan rivalries among Kyrgyz themselves. It is especially true in the case of the northern Sarybagysh, which has provided most of the Kyrgyz leaders, President Akayev included, and southern clans as the former has monopolized political and economic power.

Drug trafficking through Kyrgyzstan has created enormous social problems and criminalized the economy. Until 1974, Kyrgyzstan continued to legally grow opium poppy and produced about 16 percent of the world's supply. Opium production has never been eradicated but is surpassed by cannabis. Drug use is on the rise and now Kyrgyzstan has a higher ratio of drug users (11 per 1,000) than the US (10.5 per 1,000). These problems have been aggravated since independence and the civil war in Tajikistan which opened a major drug trafficking route from Afghanistan via Tajikistan and the Osh province of Kyrgyzstan, and then via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan into Russia and the rest of Europe. The city of Osh became the drug trafficking of Central Asia. It is estimated that about 64 drug-trafficking groups operate in the country. Kyrgyzstan has been actively engaged in regional and international efforts to fight drug-trafficking and production. UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) ran the "Osh Knot" which had several aims, including fostering regional cooperation and training 60 officials. It was terminated in 1999 due to disagreements with the Kyrgyz and corruption.

Environmental issues add to the many problems Kyrgyz society has to address. As a result of faulty irrigation practices water pollution is a major health problem since many people get their water directly from contaminated streams and wells. This leads to increased soil salinity and water-borne diseases against the backdrop of the general deterioration of the quality and availability of public health services.

**Foreign policy.** After independence Kyrgyzstan has aggressively pursued relations with the outside world to seek both international recognition and outside assistance in instituting economic reforms. It got both and due to its pronounced commitment to building democracy and a market economy, Kyrgyzstan became known in Washington and the West as "an island of democracy" and President Askar Akayev as "Askar Jefferson." Kyrgyzstan quickly became a member of the UN, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, other international organizations and the largest per capita recipient of foreign aid among the newly independent states.

However relations with the United States have cooled as Akayev backtracked on democratic reforms and displayed more authoritarian tendencies. During her visit to Kyrgyzstan in April 2000, then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright pressured Akayev to honor his country's commitments to the OSCE. After 9/11, Kyrgyzstan has joined US-led anti-terrorist campaign and leased its Manas airport to the US and NATO troops who conduct operations in Afghanistan. Germany is Kyrgyzstan's largest exports partner, accounting for about 33 percent of the country's exports in 1999.

Relations with Russia continue to be important. Russians make about 15 percent of the Kyrgyzstan's population and Russia continues to be the main imports partner, accounting for about 18 percent in 1999. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the CIS, Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus, and the Collective Security Treaty. In May 2000, Kyrgyzstan became the only CIS state to pass a law, making Russian the second official state language. Kyrgyzstan has the second smallest armed forces in the region – 9,000 troops – as it relies on Russia in addressing its national security concerns.

Relations with China are characterized by historic memories of Chinese domination and apprehension about its intentions today. To placate the Chinese, the government has refused to register resident Uighur organizations that advocate independence of Xinjiang. Kyrgyzstan is a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Maintaining good relations with its Central Asian neighbors is essential for Kyrgyzstan's survival. Relations with Kazakhstan are very close sustained in part by the marriage of President Akayev's only son to President Nazarbayev's youngest daughter. Relations with Uzbekistan are more problematic as President Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan has been critical of Akayev's policies, e.g., the introduction of the national currency, WTO membership, etc. To show his displeasure, Karimov has repeatedly cut off gas

and electricity to Kyrgyzstan. On its part, Kyrgyzstan, an upstream state, has threatened to cut water supply to Uzbekistan as well as Kazakhstan in an attempt to collect payment ostensibly for maintenance of the water supply infrastructure.

Yet the most immediate problem and national security threat to the country comes from Tajikistan. Relations between the two countries have been strained since 1989 when a border conflict over water and arable land erupted. It was settled in 1993 and Kyrgyzstan played an active role in UN-mediated Tajik peace talks. Recent problems have been caused by the armed groups of the Afghanistan-based Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who repeatedly penetrated Kyrgyzstan from the Tajik territory in 1999 and 2000 en route to Uzbekistan. They have captured several villages, took hostages, including American tourists and Japanese geologists, causing major embarrassment for Akayev and further straining of Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations. IMU incursions stopped with the start of anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan in October 2001.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- What factors explain that Kyrgyzstan has gone the farthest in economic liberalization in Central Asia?
- How have the country's strategic weaknesses influence its domestic policy?

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## **TAJIKISTAN**



**Government and politics.** The Republic of Tajikistan, a country slightly smaller in size than Wisconsin, proclaimed its independence on 9 September 1991. It is a presidential republic with separation of powers between three branches. The 1994 constitution established Tajikistan as a parliamentary democracy. Yet the power is concentrated in the hands of the president, especially after constitutional amendments in 1999 which introduced a single seven-year term for the president. The president appoints the prime minister and members of the Council of Ministers, subject to the approval by the parliament. He also appoints heads of provincial, district, and city governments who are simultaneously heads of local legislatures, subject to the approval by local legislatures, and has the right to dismiss local officials. Tajikistan is divided into 2 provinces, 1 autonomous province of Gorno-Badakhshan, and a number of districts in central part of the republic under direct central administration.

The unicameral parliament, *Majlisi Oli*, was introduced by the 1994 constitution. The 1999 constitutional amendments provided for a bicameral *Majlisi Oli*, consisting of the *Majlisi Namoyandegon*, Assembly of Representatives (lower chamber), and the *Majlisi Milli*, National Assembly (upper chamber). Members of the 63-seat lower chamber are popularly elected for the term of 5 years while 33 members of the upper chamber are indirectly elected, 25 selected by provincial deputies and 8 appointed by the president also for the five-year term. As a result of the 2000 parliamentary elections, President Rahmonov's People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan received 65 percent of votes, followed by the Communist Party with 20 percent, and Islamic Rebirth Party with 7.5 percent.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Economic Court, and the Military Court. Judges are appointed by the president to five-year terms by the president who also has the power to dismiss them. As elsewhere in the region, the judiciary remains nominally independent.

The first six years of its independence were the most traumatic in Tajikistan's recent history. The civil war, which lasted from 1992 through 1997, resulted in about 100,000 dead and a deeply fragmented country. In its early stages, the war was waged between the Rahmonov government, a coalition of the Soviet-era elites from the two provinces of Kulob and Leninobod, and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), a coalition of secular and Islamist groups and parties. The Rahmonov government, supported by the Russians and initially by President Karimov, wanted to preserve the status quo and prevent the opposition, especially the Islamic Rebirth Party (IRP), from influencing country's post-independent development. The UTO was united around the idea of a fair redistribution of political and economic resources which were concentrated in the hands of the Khujandi elite (Khujand is the capital of and a district in the Leninobod province), who dominated the post-WWII Tajikistan. After a split between the Kulobis and the Khujandis over power the civil war acquired a more regional character. In 1994, the UN-mediated peace talks on Tajikistan began and the UNMOT, UN observer mission to Tajikistan, was dispatched to monitor the implementation of the agreements reached between the government and the opposition. The war ended in 1997 and in accordance with the peace agreement the UTO was to receive 30 percent of jobs in the central, provincial, and local government; its military groups were to be integrated with the regular military and law enforcement units. Also, a Government of National Reconciliation and a National Reconciliation Commission

(NRC) to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement were to be established for the transitional period until the new parliamentary and presidential elections. Provisions of the peace agreement were only partially fulfilled, as, e.g., the UTO never received the stipulated percentage of government positions.

The 1999 presidential and 2000 parliamentary elections were won by Rahmonov and his People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan. Despite widespread voter irregularities, the UTO won seven percent of the seats in the new parliament and did not challenge the results of both elections. On his part, President Rahmonov included a number of opposition figures in his new government such as Akbar Turajonzoda, one of the prominent Muslim and UTO leaders, who was appointed first deputy prime minister. Following the elections the NRC was abolished and the UTO split up into its constituent groups and parties: the IRP, Rastokhez Popular Movement, Democratic Party, and La'li Badakhshon Society.

Rahmonov and his Kulobi faction continue to dominate Tajik politics, to a large extent due to the support of Moscow and the Russia military stationed in Tajikistan which he has relied upon since coming to power in November 1992. Yet the country remains fragmented and the central government does not exercise control over the entire territory: The once opposition's strongholds of central Tajikistan and Gorno-Badakhshan province as well as the Sogd (former Leninobod) province, which considers itself sidelined, maintain a significant degree of autonomy, exacerbated by the fact that a small number of opposition armed groups turned rogue, refusing to recognize the peace accord. Also, there is an apparent split within the Kulobi faction itself between President Rahmonov and Ubaidullo Khuvaidulloev, mayor of Dushanbe and a one-time Rahmonov's eminence grise. Political assassinations have been a part of Tajik politics even after the end of the civil war. Prominent figures of the former UTO and other independent politicians are usually the targets.

At the same time, Tajikistan has demonstrated a possibility of the inclusion of Islamists and secular opposition groups into politics without them undermining stability and behaving destructively despite discontent with the Kulobi dominance. In this sense, should the current multi-party politics continue, the country may serve as an example for the rest of the region.

**Civil society.** The civil war, fragmentation of the country, and lack of central control have contributed to the growth of NGOs and their fairly free functioning. Liberal attitude toward the NGOs in Tajikistan can also be explained that it is the only Central Asian country which, after the ban that existed during the civil war, allows the existence of religious political parties. There are about 300 registered NGOs in the country though it is estimated that the real number is about 1,000. Many NGOs, especially those funded from abroad, do not register to avoid taxation as the government increasingly sees them as a source of revenue. Half of the NGOs focus on environmental issues.

Improved relations with the government allowed NGOs to successfully lobby for the adoption of the new Law on Nongovernmental Organizations in 1999 which simplifies registration process, allows them to engage in commercial activity, etc. In 2000, President Rahmonov and the NGO community signed the Agreement of Social Harmony.

Media in Tajikistan has not enjoyed the same freedom as the NGO community, proving the point that Central Asian governments seek to maintain strict control over any activity connected with politics or sensitive subjects such as government officials involvement in drug trafficking. There are 14 broadcast and about 245 print media outlets in the country. The majority of newspapers are published weekly due to financial constraints. Opposition parties publish about 20 newspapers, the government owns 4.

**Economy.** Throughout the Soviet period Tajikistan had one of the poorest, agrarian-based economies. The economy was further weakened by five years of the civil war. Cotton has been the most important crop. Tajikistan possesses mineral resources which include silver, gold, uranium, and tungsten. Its major energy resource is water.

The structure of the Tajik economy is as follows: 19.8 percent of GDP falls on agriculture, 18.1 percent on industry, and 62.1 percent on services. In terms of labor force employment, 50 percent work in agriculture, 20 in industry, and 30 in services.

Economic transformations in Tajikistan have lagged behind, which can only partially be explained by the civil war, and now the country faces the need of both acceleration of market-oriented and post-war reconstruction. Though about 83 percent of small state-owned businesses were privatized only a small number of medium- and large-scale enterprises was. In 2000, inflation was 33 percent. Tajikistan was the last Central Asian state to introduce its own national currency, *somoni*, in April 2001.

Agriculture continues to be the dominant sector. Its products include cotton, grain, fruits, grapes, vegetables, cattle, sheep, goats, etc. Despite measures at privatization, agricultural sector is still dominated by state-owned farms. Those that are privatized usually end up in the hands of government and local officials as well as leaders of armed groups. Cotton, fruits, and vegetable oil constitute major export items. Cotton prices are effectively set by the government.



Cotton field

Industrial production consists mainly of aluminum, zinc, lead, chemicals and fertilizers, cement, metal-cutting machine tools, refrigerators and freezers. Tajikistan is a major world producer of hydroelectric power, being the third after the United States and Russia. The Nurek hydropower station produces over 11 billion kilowatt hours (KWH). The Rogun station, which is under construction, will have the capacity to produce 13 billion KWH. Despite few restrictions to foreign investment, only \$126 million of FDI were invested in Tajikistan primarily because of concerns over stability. FDI has been largely invested in gold and soft drinks production as well as textile industry. The country remains dependent on foreign aid and trade relations with the CIS countries, especially Russia and Uzbekistan: 62 percent of Tajik exports and 78 percent of its imports fall on the CIS. Export commodities include aluminum, electricity, textiles. Import commodities include electricity, petroleum products, aluminum oxide, machinery and equipment, and foodstuffs.

**Social issues.** Social problems in the country, which resemble the situation in other Central Asian states, have been exacerbated by the devastation and dislocation caused by the civil war. Most of the population lives in abject poverty: Population below poverty line is 80percent. Pervasive corruption and drug trafficking are widespread: A number of high-ranking Tajik officials have been arrested in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other countries for their involvement in drug trafficking. The country simultaneously suffers from the shortage of skilled manpower (many fled during the war), and mass unemployment which is about 51 percent of the population. Only about 62 percent of the relevant age group children are enrolled in primary and secondary school: Parents often cannot afford clothing or are afraid for children's security. Infant mortality is on the rise as is maternal mortality rate (130 per 100,000 live births) which is the highest in the CIS.



**Foreign policy.** Since independence Tajikistan has oriented its foreign policy toward maintaining close relations with Moscow. The Russians have supported the Rahmonov government through the civil war period and continue to favor him and the Kulobis over other regional elites. Tajikistan is the only Central Asian country which has the Russian military stationed on its territory which includes the 201<sup>st</sup> motorized rifle division and about 15,000 border guards, the majority of whom are local recruits. In 1999, Moscow and Dushanbe signed a ten-year agreement which established a Russian military base. Reliance on Russia in matters of national security explains the fact that the country has the smallest armed forces in the region – 6,000 active and 1,200 paramilitary personnel – and was the last to join Partnership for Peace Program (2002). Dushanbe is a member of the Moscow-led CIS, 1992 Collective Security Treaty, and Customs Union. Despite close security relations with Russia, trade relations are on the decline: only 8percent of Tajikistani exports go to and 13.6percent of its imports come from Russia.

The civil war and pro-Moscow orientation have led to Tajikistan's relative external isolation. Relations with neighboring countries remain strain. Portions of Tajikistan's northern and western border with Uzbekistan and its eastern border with China have not been officially demarcated. Relations with Uzbekistan go through cycles of deterioration: Tashkent is weary of Rahmonov's Moscow-centric foreign and security; is unhappy with the exclusion of the Khujandis from power; accuses Dushanbe with giving safe haven to the fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). To make its point known, Tashkent has frequently cut gas supplies to Tajikistan, closed down the only rail link Tajikistan has with the outside world, and gave refuge to the renegade Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdyev, who twice raided northern Tajikistan and in 1997 and 1998 and retreated back to Uzbekistan. After the civil war ended Uzbeks who fought within the UTO armed units stayed in Afghanistan and formed the IMU. Tashkent has repeatedly accused the Rahmonov government and former UTO commanders that they do not do enough to stop IMU incursions into Uzbekistan or directly aid IMU fighters.

Tajikistan has become closely entangled in the Afghan politics. First, as a result of the civil war tens of thousands of Tajik refugees were stranded in northern Afghanistan. The UTO headquarters was located in the town of Taloqan (Tahor province) where President Barhanuddin Rabbani of Afghanistan and Ahmad Shah Massoud, his field commander, both ethnic Tajiks, relocated after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in 1996. Second, in the late 1990s, Tajikistan became an entrepot of Russian and Iranian military assistance to the Northern alliance. Rabbani and Massoud used a military base in southern Tajikistan.

Iran was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Tajikistan. Despite common cultural heritage relations remain complicated. It was especially the case through the civil war period when Iran was suspected in supporting the UTO whose leaders lived in Tehran. As an official observer at the UN-mediated intra-Tajik peace talks Iran generally played a positive role partly explained by its desire to maintain good relations with Russia, Iran's major arms trade partner. Iran's economic ties with Tajikistan remain negligible.

Tajikistan's relations with the west remain limited. The only period of active international involvement in the country was during the UN-mediated peace talks in Tajikistan (1994-1997) and the UNMOT presence (December 1994 – May 2000) in the country. The United States was an unofficial observer at the talks. Due to security concerns, US embassy has been relocated to Almaty, Kazakhstan. Tajikistan is the only CIS country which does not have its embassy in Washington. In the wake of 9/11, Tajikistan's international exposure has increased. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was the first high-ranking US official to visit Tajikistan since Secretary of State James Baker's visit in 1992.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- How has the civil war changed regional politics and the role of Russia in Central Asia?
- The impact of the civil war on the rise of extremism Islam in Central Asia.
- What does the political return of the IRP mean for the future of political Islam in the region?

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## TURKMENISTAN



**Government and politics.** Turkmenistan, a country slightly larger than California in size, became independent on 27 October 1991. Administratively, it is divided into five provinces, *welayatlar*, and the capital city of Ashgabat which is a separate administrative unit. In accordance with the 1992 constitution, it is a presidential republic with a separation of power between three branches. The constitution stipulated the president to be called *Turkmenbashi*, i.e., the Leader of all the Turkmen. The president is elected for five year terms. He functions both as a head of state and Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, whom he appoints with the parliament's approval. The president also appoints and dismisses state prosecutors and judges, has the right to issue edicts having the force of law and to dissolve the parliament if it twice passes a no-confidence vote in the government.

Legislative branch consists of a unicameral *Majlis*, National Assembly. The Assembly has 50 members who are popularly elected

to serve five-year terms but have to be pre-approved by the president.

The constitution also established two other representative bodies which are absent in other Central Asian states: *Halq Maslahaty*, People's Council, and *Jashulilar Maslakhati*, the Council of Elders. People's Council serves as the highest representative body of "popular power." It unites the three branches of power, the president, cabinet, Majlis deputies, supreme court and supreme economic court judges, 60 directly elected representatives from the regions, and representatives of scholarly and cultural organizations. The Council members serve for five years without compensation, meeting once a year to advise the president, establish broad domestic and foreign policy guidelines, consider constitutional amendments, ratify treaties, etc. It is considered to be the highest body in the country. The Council of Elders was introduced to reflect the tradition of reliance of the advice of the elders in matters of importance. In accordance with the constitution the president has to consult with the council before making domestic and foreign policy decisions. The council is also charged with the task of selecting presidential candidates. Both councils are chaired by the president.

Judicial branch is represented by the Supreme Court. Its 22 judges are appointed by the president. Their function is limited to issues related to the judicial codex, Supreme Law, and to review constitutionality of laws.

Turkmenistan's politics has been dominated by Saparmurat Niyazov, former first secretary of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan, who was first elected to the office of the president in 1990. His term in office was extended by the 1994 referendum. In 1999, the People's Council proclaimed him president for life. Niyazov's official name (title) is "President Saparmurat Turkmenbashi Niyazov the Great." The title reflects the cult of personality of Niyazov which not only resembles, but exceeds that of Joseph Stalin. In the early post-independence period, the official rationale for Niyazov's cult of personality was the need to prevent the disintegration of the country by uniting the Turkmen tribes around a single leader. Niyazov's book, "Ruhnama," published in 2000, is presented by the official propaganda as an equivalent, if not a substitute for, the Quran.

Despite constitutional provisions allowing formation of political parties and NGOs, Turkmenistan remains the only CIS country with one-party system. Only the former communist party, which changed its name to Democratic Party of Turkmenistan, is allowed to exist. All opposition activity is banned. The ease with which Niyazov installed an authoritarian regime can be explained by the fact that during perestroika no significant opposition parties or groups emerged in Turkmenistan. All decision-making is concentrated in the hands of Niyazov. At the same time, Turkmenbashi has approved his Ten Year Democratization Plan in accordance with which the country would gradually move toward a multiparty system by 2008 and 2009 at which point the Majlis would be given greater powers.

Until recently Niyazov has also been successful in preventing the rise of opposition in the ranks of the government elites whom he reshuffles and imprisons regularly. A string of defections in the late 2001-early 2002 of a number of prominent politicians, most notably Boris Shikhmuradov, a former deputy prime minister and foreign minister, may signal that Niyazov's inner circle is getting increasingly weary of the autocrat's erratic rule.

**Civil society.** There is practically no civil society in Turkmenistan. The population is completely disenfranchised. Despite constitutional guarantees and legal framework, authorities discourage the formation of NGOs. Only a handful of NGOs which deal with environmental and women's issues are allowed to function, albeit without official registration. Niyazov abolished even the Soviet-era civil society organizations such as unions of journalists, film-makers, etc. He closed down the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan with its branch of research institutes as well as ballet, opera, theater, circus, and philharmonic as unnecessary and incompatible with the Turkmen traditions.

There is no freedom of press and no independent media in Turkmenistan. President Niyazov is listed as the founder of all newspapers published in the country. All media outlets promote Niyazov's cult of personality and refrain from reporting any social or political problems with the exception of Niyazov's criticism and dressing down the officials.

**Economy.** Turkmenistan is largely a desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases and huge gas and oil resources estimated to be between 2.86 and 7 trillion cubic meters for gas and 6 billion barrels for oil. It has the fifth largest gas reserves in the world and is the world's tenth largest producer of cotton. Other natural resources include coal, sulfur, and salt. Because of the hydrocarbons the industrial sector is the leading in GDP composition with 43 percent, agriculture accounts for 25 percent, and services 32 percent although only 19 percent of the labor force is employed in industry, while 44 percent work in the agricultural

and 37 percent in the service sectors.

Turkmenistan introduced its national currency, *manat*, in November 1993. Market economic reforms were to start in January 1994 after the adoption of the “Ten Years of Prosperity” program which in part envisaged the privatization of state owned enterprises as well as collective and state farms. In practice, little has been accomplished and the size of the private sector in Turkmenistan is only 25 percent. Evaluation of economic performance is further complicated by lack of reliable data: Even the state budget is not published. Whatever economic data is published gives a positive spin on the performance of the national economy.

There has been no privatization of land. Only 3 hectares can be leased to farmers subject to promises of good behavior. One-half of Turkmenistan’s irrigated land is planted in cotton. Other agricultural products include grain and livestock.

Oil and gas industry also remain under state control. Contracts in those industries are awarded arbitrarily by Niyazov and the revenues go to the Presidential Fund, which for all practical purposes have replaced the country’s treasury. Development of the energy sector is also hampered by the lack of export pipelines and an agreement on the Caspian Sea delimitation. The former has resulted in Turkmenistan’s dependence on exporting its gas through Russia, which has restricted the market to Ukraine and South Caucasus states, often resulting in prolonged episodes of payment arrears. The latter led to disputes with Azerbaijan over a number of offshore oil fields and, as a consequence, lack of commitment to the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project. Both sectors remain in need restructuring and need FDI to do that. So far, Turkmenistan has attracted about \$782 million in FDI. Despite legislative measures taken to encourage foreign investment, Turkmenistan is considered to have unfavorable investment climate.

Turkmenistan’s economy is heavily dependent on the energy sector as about two-thirds of its GDP and its budget come from the gas industry and gas exports. Gas makes 33 percent of the country’s export commodities, followed by oil (30 percent), cotton fiber (18 percent), and textiles (8 percent). Foreign trade partners include Ukraine, Iran, Turkey, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan.

**Social problems.** The country is plagued by the same set of social problems as the rest of the region. Tribal rivalries continue to be a factor despite Niyazov’s attempts at nation-building. Corruption is widespread, but lack of any data has prevented Transparency International from ranking Turkmenistan. The country has the lowest life expectancy in the CIS which is 61 years. 58 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The country faces severe environmental problems related to desertification, Caspian Sea pollution, salination, and the contamination of soil and groundwater with agricultural chemicals and pesticides. Turkmenistan is used as a transshipment point for illicit drugs from Southwest Asia to Russia and Western Europe. In general, Turkmenistan remains the most closed country in Central Asia which obscures the true picture of the problems the population may face.

**Foreign policy.** After independence Turkmenistan became a member of international organizations, including the UN, CIS, OSCE, IMF, World Bank, etc. In December 1995, the UN recognized Turkmenistan as a country with the status of positive neutrality. This reflected President Niyazov’s preference for the development of bilateral relations with all countries, above all former Soviet republics, and non-interference in external conflicts. Thus from the start of the civil war in Tajikistan, Ashgabat refused to join Russia and other Central Asian states in their peace-keeping operation in Tajikistan, though it hosted 3 rounds of UN-mediated intra-Tajik peace talks. In keeping with its neutrality status, it refused to join the CIS Collective Security Treaty, the Central Asian Economic Community, or any other multilateral regional organizations, including efforts to deal with the Aral Sea problem, which has often caused frustration on the part of Turkmenistan’s neighbors.

Nonetheless, Ashgabat has sought to maintain friendly relations with all of its neighbors, including Iran and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It tried, but failed, to mediate between various Afghan factions. Turkmenistan continued with its policy of neutrality after the start of the US-led anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan in October 2001. In general, Niyazov’s authoritarian policies and his growing cult of personality have led to the isolation of the country. Turkmenistani citizens are discouraged from traveling abroad as are foreigners from coming to Turkmenistan. In June 2000, Niyazov prohibited citizens from holding foreign accounts and established the Council for the Supervision of Foreigners.

Turkmenistan’s armed forces consist of an army (14,500 troops) and an air force (3,000). Presently, its navy is part of the Caspian Sea Flotilla, which is based in Astrakhan (Russia) and is under the joint command of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. In accordance with the Turkmen-Russian-Turkish agreement, Turkmenistan’s armed forces operate under joint Turkmen-Russian command with the participation of Turkish military advisors until they are developed.

### Issues and questions for further exploration

- Why Turkmenistan is the only Central Asian state where political opposition is virtually nonexistent?
- What can explain the rise of President Niyazov's cult of personality?
- Has the policy of "positive neutrality" contributed to Turkmenistan's isolation?

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## UZBEKISTAN



**Government and politics.** The Republic of Uzbekistan, a country slightly larger than California, proclaimed independence of 1 September 1991. In accordance with the constitution adopted in December 1992, it is a presidential republic with separation of powers. Administratively it is divided into 12 provinces, *wiloyatlar*, 1 autonomous republic of Qaraqalpaqstón, and capital city of Tashkent.

The president is elected to a five-year term and can serve two consecutive terms. He is given extensive powers, including the right to appoint and dismiss the prime minister and members of the cabinet (with the parliamentary approval), establish and dissolve ministries, appoint and dismiss judges of all levels, provincial governors and local administrators, initiate legislation and return laws passed by parliament for reconsideration, etc. The president enjoys personal immunity and at the end of his term he becomes a lifetime member of the Constitutional Court.

Legislative branch is represented by the unicameral *Oliy Majlis*, Supreme Assembly. It has 250 members who are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms and meet two times a year unless there is a need for a special session. The assembly has the right to initiate and pass legislation as well as execute policies through committee work.

Though nominally separate, judicial branch is subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, i.e., to the executive branch. It consists of the Supreme Court, Constitutional Court, and High Economic Court. Judges and procurators of all levels are appointed and dismissed by the president. To observe impartiality they are prohibited from being members of a political party.

Since independence Uzbekistan has had only one president – Islam Karimov who was first elected in March 1990, reelected in 1992, had his power extended by a referendum in 1995, and reelected again in January 2000. In the early 1990s, the country briefly enjoyed a period of political liberalization and pluralism. Opposition political parties such as Birlik, Erk, and Islamic Rebirth Party were allowed to exist even though unregistered officially. In 1992, Muhammad Solykh, opposition’s candidate, ran in presidential elections against Karimov and got about 14 percent of the votes amidst allegations that the elections were rigged.

Developments in neighboring Tajikistan, where the Tajik opposition, a coalition of secular and Islamist groups and parties, became a formidable force, and where the civil war broke out at the end of 1992, led Karimov to crack down on both secular and religious opposition in Uzbekistan. The president of Uzbekistan was afraid that the success of the UTO would serve as a stimulus for the Uzbek opposition and further embolden it in its actions. Also he was concerned about the possibility of irredentism on the part of the Tajik minority against the backdrop of the calls in Tajikistan to “return” Tajik-populated cities of Bukhara and Samarqand to

Tajikistan. All opposition activity and that of ethnic minorities was banned and only loyal political parties are allowed to exist. Currently, there are five registered political parties all of which have representation in the National Assembly elected in December 1999: People's Democratic Party (NDP, 48 seats), Fidokorlar (Self-Sacrificers) National Democratic Party (34 seats), Fatherland Progress Party (20 seats), Adolat (Justice) Social Democratic Party (11 seats), National Rebirth Party (MTP, 10 seats). Until 1996, Islam Karimov was a member of the NDP, former communists, when he withdrew claiming that the president represents the entire population of the country. Presidential and parliamentary elections in Uzbekistan are largely ceremonial rather than genuinely competitive. During the 2000 presidential elections even Karimov's "opponent," Abdulhafiz Jalolov of the NDP, publicly stated that he would vote the incumbent.

Karimov's strong-arm tactics have backfired as the opposition, especially Islamic, became more radical. In February 1999, bombs went off in different parts of Tashkent which the government variably attributed to the Islamists and secular opposition groups. The bombings which killed 16 and injured more than 100 people led to a further crackdown on the opposition and a number of death sentences and long prison sentences in absentia to prominent opposition. International human rights and lawyers groups estimate that there are at least 7,000 political prisoners in Uzbekistan.

In 1999, to tighten control over the polity, Islam Karimov initiated the institutionalization of the *mahalla* (neighborhood) committees as a part of his administrative structure. Mahallas, which historically formed around a mosque and provided social services to its members, were given the powers of self-government yet as part of the central government structure. Mahalla committee members receive state salaries.

Bombings in Tashkent coincided with the emergence, if were not were the first act, of the *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*. It was first formed in 1995 under the name of the Islamic Revival Movement of Uzbekistan which apparently reflected the fact that many of its leaders and members were fighting within the ranks of the Islamic Revival Movement of Tajikistan. With the end of the Tajik civil war, they branched off into a separate group based in Afghanistan which advocated the overthrow of the existing regime in Tashkent by declaring jihad against it and establishing an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. In 1999 and 2000, it attempted and partially succeeded in penetrating Uzbekistan through Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, taking hostages, including foreigners, and engaging in skirmishes with the Kyrgyz and Uzbek army. In 2000, the State Department declared it a terrorist organization. The IMU was reported to have established ties with and enjoy support of Osama bin Laden. After the launch of the anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan in October 2001, the IMU was reported to have been dealt a severe blow and its leader, Juma Namangani, killed.

Another important Islamist group active in Uzbekistan is *Hizbi Tahrir* (HT, Party of Liberation) which is a branch of the party established in the Middle East in 1950s. Its goal is wider than that of the IMU: HT wants to establish the restoration of an Islamic Caliphate in Central Asia and beyond. The other difference is that HT hopes to achieve its goal through nonviolent means.

This may be increasingly impossible and unappealing to HT and other opposition groups as the Karimov government shows no signs of opening up political space in the country. Continued emphasis on repression and domination of politics by one man coupled with deteriorating living standards make political future of Uzbekistan -- as well as of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan where the situation is similar -- inherently unstable.

**Civil society.** According to the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan, there are more than 2,300 registered NGOs in the country. There is practically no distinction between government-approved and government-organized NGOs. Only those public organizations that are deemed to have no political agenda are allowed to function. Those primarily include women's and environmental groups, WWII veterans, etc.

According to the Ministry of Justice, there are about 25 TV and 2 radio stations, 480 newspapers, and 140 journals Uzbekistan. All broadcast media are subject to annual re-registration. Though there is a number of independent electronic and print media outlets, in general media is under direct government control. Despite the exercise of self-censorship independent media outlets are often closed. In accordance with government regulations all TV and radio programming is taped. Criticism of President Islam Karimov is a criminal offense as is the distribution of newspapers published by opposition parties in exile.

**Economy.** At independence, Uzbekistan had a more diversified economy than other Central Asian states with the exception of Kazakhstan yet still predominantly agricultural. Today, agricultural sector accounts for 28 percent of GDP and 44 percent of the

labor force, industry 21 and 20 percent, and services 51 and 36 percent correspondingly. Uzbekistan is rich in natural resources which include natural gas, petroleum, coal, gold, uranium, silver, copper, lead and zinc, tungsten, molybdenum, etc. Uzbekistan is the third largest producer of cotton.

After independence, Uzbekistan continues to pursue statist economic policy, advocating a measured transition to market economy ostensibly to preserve social stability which, the government argues, will be upset by mass privatization and price deregulation. It thus maintains tight controls on production and prices and government subsidies on many items, including municipal utilities, and generally upholds Soviet-era welfare system. It refuses to introduce full convertibility of its national currency, *sum* (launched in June 1994), despite a number of agreements reached with the IMF which made the latter to withdraw from the country. Only in July 2002, the government took what is expected to be the first step toward full convertibility when it abolished multiple exchange rates. According to official statistics, the size of the private sector is 45 percent of GDP. Yet this and other economic figures are viewed by international financial institutions as unreliable. Besides, government regulations define as privatized even those enterprises and businesses which have been transformed into joint stock companies where the government is the only shareholder.



Tashkent Production Association named after V. Chkalov

Major industries include textiles, food processing, machine building, metallurgy, natural gas, and chemicals. Only 10 percent of its territory is suitable for cultivation. Agricultural sector is focused on producing cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain, and livestock breeding. Export commodities include cotton, gold, natural gas, mineral fertilizers, ferrous metals, textiles, food products, and automobiles. Uzbekistan's major export partners are Russia (13 percent), Switzerland, and UK (10 percent each). The country imports machinery and equipment, chemicals, metals, and foodstuffs. Major imports partners are Russia (14 percent), South Korea (14 percent), Germany (11 percent), and US (8 percent). A growing debt burden, persistent inflation, and a poor business climate led to stagnant growth in 2000, with little improvement predicted for 2001.

The official economic policy also stresses self-sufficiency which has limited country's integration into the world economy. In this sense, its response to the negative external conditions generated by the Asian and Russian financial crises was typical: Export and currency controls were further tightened. Steps taken toward introducing some elements and institutions of market economy have not prevented the country from running high inflation (50 percent in 2000). Despite the adoption of legislation favorable to foreign investment, the country failed to attract any significant FDI which in 2000 stood at \$73 million and reflected a steady decline since 1997 when it peaked at \$167 million. A growing debt burden, persistent inflation, ageing infrastructure, and a poor business



climate have led to stagnant growth in the recent years.

**Social problems.** Uzbekistan faces the same social problems as other countries of the region: Increase in drug trafficking, corruption (the country ranks 79 out of 90 states), crime, poverty (the government does not publish data on the percentage of the population below poverty line); declining life expectancy, quality of social and health services.

It also experiences severe environmental problems caused by the desiccation of the Aral Sea which has resulted in growing concentrations of chemical pesticides and natural salts which are blown from the increasingly exposed lake bed and contribute to desertification. Water pollution from industrial wastes and the heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides have caused severe health problems and a sharp drop in life expectancy, especially in the Aral Sea region.

**Foreign policy.** Since independence Uzbekistan has pursued a foreign policy aimed at protecting and strengthening its independence predicated in part on the perceived threat of the resurgent Russian neo-imperialism of the early 1990s. It sought to establish close relations with the west yet those relations have been strained due to Islam Karimov's authoritarian policies and human rights abuses except when the Uzbek president showed signs of change. Economic relations with the west have also not lived up to earlier expectations as the preservation of the essentially command economic system failed to attract FDI. Many of foreign entrepreneurs and businesses who came to Uzbekistan after 1991 subsequently left the country.

At the same time, Karimov succeeded in developing strong military relations with the United States following then-Secretary of Defense William Perry's visit in 1995 preceded by Uzbekistan's joining PfP in 1994. Uzbekistan has arguably the most capable armed forces in the region. At independence, Tashkent was the headquarters of the Soviet Turkestan Military District and hosted 3 Soviet army military schools. That plus the military infrastructure provided a good foundation for the building of the armed forces of independent Uzbekistan. At present, they consist of a 44,000-strong army and an air force of 15,000. In addition, there are paramilitary units of 18,000-20,000 personnel, including a 700-strong National Guard which protects the president.

US-Uzbek military relations proved very important in 2001 when Uzbekistan promptly made available its Khanabad base on the Uzbek-Afghan border for the US military engaged in anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan's relations with Russia have not been steady though Moscow continues to be the country's major trade partner. Concerns about neo-imperialist rhetoric on the part of Russian elites have encouraged Tashkent to pursue a more independent foreign policy and avoid any multilateral arrangements of political or security nature within the CIS. In 1995, Tashkent dramatically changed its policy toward Tajikistan, where it initially supported President Rahmonov government against the UTO, to favor, to the displeasure of Moscow, the return of the opposition and its inclusion in the Tajik government. For this reason Uzbekistan also withdrew from the CIS Collective Security Treaty in 1999. At the same time, Karimov signed a 2002 left the GUUAM (acronym for Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), which has been considered by many in the west as a counterbalance to the Russia-dominated CIS. He has also joined the Russia- and China-led Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2001 (check), which is acquiring a more pronounced political and security character.

Uzbekistan's relations with its Central Asian neighbors have been strained due to the perceived strife for regional domination shared by other Central Asians vis-a-vis the Uzbeks. As mentioned earlier, attempts at regional economic integration and security cooperation within the framework of Central Asian Economic Community failed. Relations with the neighbors further deteriorated after Uzbekistan mined its borders, following the IMU raids, which resulted in a number of civil casualties.

Relations with Turkey have been marred since the late 1990s when Tashkent accused Ankara that it harbors Uzbek opposition leaders, resulting in closure of Turkish colleges and the withdrawal of Uzbek students enrolled in Turkish universities. Relations with Iran have remained cool because of the suspicions that Teheran's agenda includes support for Uzbek Islamists. Instead, Tashkent opted for close relations with Israel seeing them as another element in developing close relations with the United States and the west.

### **Issues and questions for further exploration**

- How does the government of Uzbekistan explain slow pace of economic and political reforms in the country?

- The impact of the Afghan and Tajik politics on Uzbekistan's policy toward Uzbek Islamists and the country's foreign policy.
- In what ways do history, geography, and demographic influence Uzbekistan's regional policy ?

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- – run by the Central Asia Project of the Open Society Institute
- – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
- – Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, SAIS, Johns Hopkins School University
- – Russian site with English option
- 
- z – online edition of *The Almaty Herald*, in English
- . – Russian site with English option
- – Library of Congress site
- – Harvard University
- – *The Times of Central Asia*
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- – Turkmenistan Embassy in U.S.
- – Uzbek Embassy in U.S.
- – Kyrgyz Embassy in U.S.
- 
- – Turkemenistan's presidential site

- – Kazakstan’s presidential site
- – Site for Kyrgyz government, in Russian
- – Site for Uzbek government, in Russian

Many periodicals and scholarly journals focus on Central Asia:

- Ala Tau
- Archaeology and Anthropology of Eurasia
- Central and Inner Asian Studies
- Central Asia and the Caucasus
- Central Asia and the Caucasus in World Affairs
- Central Asia File
- Central Asian Monitor
- Central Asian Survey
- Current History
- Economist
- Far Eastern Economic Review
- Foreign Affairs
- Foreign Policy
- Inner Asia Report
- International Security
- Orbis
- Transition
- Post-Soviet Affairs
- Post-Soviet Geography
- Problems of Post-Communism
- Prism
- Slavic Review

- Slavonic and East European Review

# COTE D'IVOIRE SELF STUDY GUIDE



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The **Self-Study Guide: Cote d'Ivoire** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Cote d'Ivoire issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Cote d'Ivoire is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

Gilbert J. Donahue (Foreign Service Officer Retired; U.S. Embassy Abidjan 1974-76) prepared this Guide. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not

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First Edition  
July 2002

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## COTE D'IVOIRE TIMELINE

11 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> c.	Early Islamic empires in northern part of present-day Cote d'Ivoire
15 <sup>th</sup> c.	Coastal exploration by Europeans led by Portuguese Trade in gold, ivory, pepper and slaves
17 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> c.	Europeans conducted considerable trade in ivory
1637	French missionaries landed in Cote d'Ivoire
1842	First permanent French settlements in Cote d'Ivoire in Assinie and Grand Bassam
1889	French Protectorate of Cote d'Ivoire established
1893	France made Cote d'Ivoire a colony
1895	Cote d'Ivoire became part of French West Africa Colonial leaders put down many revolts by indigenous people and established French rule throughout country's interior
1896 to 1916	French recruited Ivoirians for World War I service France established <i>Indigenat</i> legal system and imposed requirement for <i>corvee</i> labor
1940 to 1945	Administration loyal to Free French under General de Gaulle
1944	Felix Houphouet-Boigny founded <i>Syndicat Agricole Africain</i> (African Agricultural Union - SAA)

1945	Houphouet-Boigny founded the Ivorian Democratic Party ( <i>Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire</i> - PDCI)
October 1945	First countrywide elections held in Cote d'Ivoire for delegates for French Constituent Assembly; Felix Houphouet-Boigny chosen as Ivorian African delegate; he successfully sponsored bill to end <i>corvee</i> labor and thereby became a hero throughout French West Africa
1946	France formed French Union, granted African members free speech, free association, and free assembly, and eliminated separate legal codes and forced labor requirement; Cote d'Ivoire became an Overseas Territory of France
1947	Houphouet-Boigny and other African leaders founded African Democratic Rally ( <i>Rassemblement Democratique Africain</i> - RDA)
1958	Cote d'Ivoire became a self-governing republic in the French Community
April 1959	Cote d'Ivoire adopted its first constitution; PDCI won all seats in National Assembly; Houphouet-Boigny became prime minister
1959	Houphouet-Boigny and counterparts in other French West African countries formed the Council of the Entente, aimed at spurring region's economic development
August 1960	Cote d'Ivoire proclaimed independence from France
October 1960	Houphouet-Boigny was elected country's first president
October 1990	Houphouet-Boigny legalized other political parties and permitted first multiparty elections for president and national assembly; first opposition newspaper permitted; Houphouet-Boigny elected to seventh and last term as president; a constitutional amendment provided that the leader of the National Assembly would become president on the death or resignation of the sitting president
December 1993	Houphouet-Boigny died; Henri Konan Bedie succeeded him as president
October 1995	Opposition parties boycotted the presidential election; Henri Konan Bedie won re-election with 96% of the vote; opposition claimed sham
October 1999	Opposition candidate Alassane Ouattara was legally barred from running for president
December 1999	President Bedie was overthrown by a coup headed by General Robert Guei; Bedie fled to Togo, then France
January 2000	General Guei suspended the country's foreign debt payments
July 2000	New constitution was approved for the Second Republic
October 2000	Alassane Ouattara was barred from running for president; the race was between General Guei and Laurent Gbagbo
November 2000	General Guei claimed election win, then fled the country following massive demonstrations; contender Gbagbo declared himself winner by default

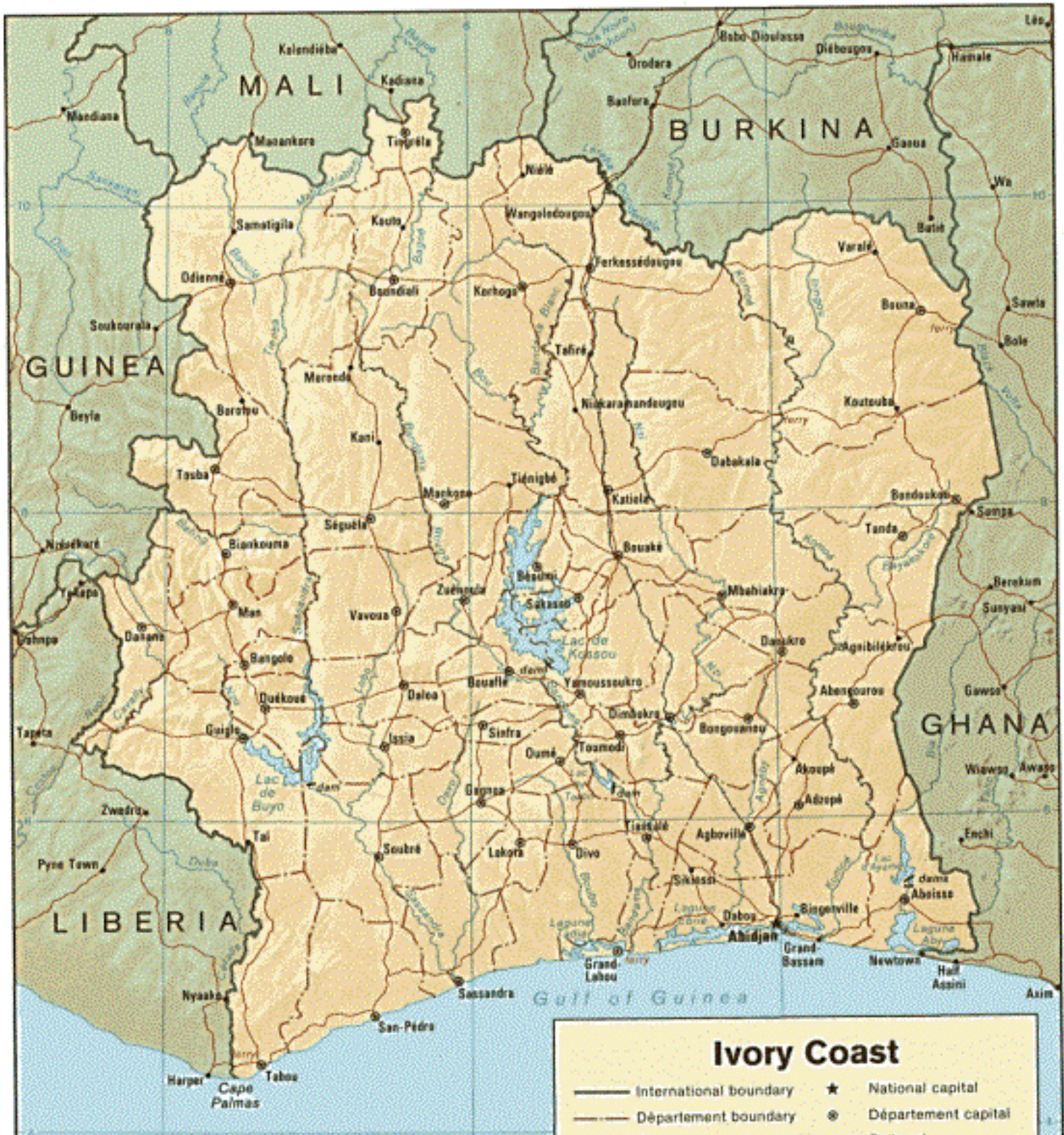
December 2000

Alassane Ouattara was excluded from running for the National Assembly; his party members then boycotted the election

March 2001

Municipal elections were dominated by Ouattara's RDR party and PDCI; Gbagbo's FPI party did not campaign heavily in those elections

# IVORY COAST COUNTRY MAP, SOURCE: CIA





# INTRODUCTION

Those who have followed African developments closely have witnessed over the past twenty years the steady decline of Cote d'Ivoire, once a shining light of political stability and the pinnacle of economic development in West Africa. As this study attempts to demonstrate, factors that underlay the country's success were also instrumental in its downfall. The experience of Cote d'Ivoire provides lessons for both political and economic management in the process of African development. However, foreign policy and the international markets – especially those for commodities and finance – have also played important roles in bringing Cote d'Ivoire's economic plight.

Cote d'Ivoire is a country of many contradictions. It has been described as “the Jewel of West Africa.” Although its people provided some of the most sustained resistance to French colonialism, it became one of France's most loyal clients. Considered by many as a model of democracy and political stability, in reality, Cote d'Ivoire's autocratic government failed to develop democratic institutions and harshly dealt with its opposition. While projecting the image of a modern market economy, the country actually followed a dirigist, plutocratic “state capitalism” economic model. Although Africans were nominally in charge, they operated at the behest of their European (mostly French) backers. Thus, Cote d'Ivoire became a prime example of neo-colonialism.

A treacherous coast and difficult terrain so greatly impeded the country's exploration by Europeans that its inhabitants remained fairly isolated and autonomous until about one hundred years ago. As the French colonizers pushed inland from the coast they increasingly imposed the hard hand of autocratic rule on the people, forcing them to provide free labor for public works as well as private plantations, and subjecting the indigenous people to a separate legal and penal system. Post-World War II France under President de Gaulle provided social, political and economic improvements, greater autonomy, and eventually, independence.

Truly the father of his country and a rare French-African cultural hybrid, Felix Houphouet-Boigny founded the country's first political party in the 1940s and became its most prominent politician. His opposition to French discriminatory policies made him a champion for the colonized throughout French

West Africa. His subsequent willingness to cooperate with the French gave him the opportunity to represent Africa in France itself. In 1960, Houphouet-Boigny led his country into a relatively prosperous independence that was the envy of its neighbors. During its first twenty years of independence, Cote d'Ivoire remained an island of stability in a region rife with military coups, civil war and economic distress. The country's economic prosperity and growth were the necessary underpinnings of its stability. Another factor, however, was the iron hand of President Houphouet-Boigny, who permitted only one political party and increasingly denied civil rights and liberties lest a rival to his power emerge. He also sowed the seeds of the present anti-foreign bias by encouraging the immigration of farm workers from neighboring countries.

The system began to crack in the late 1970s, as official corruption became more noticeable and was less well tolerated, and economic growth and prosperity were affected by a downturn in the international markets for the commodities on which the economy depends. By the late 1980s, Cote d'Ivoire was suffering balance of payments difficulties as well as mounting interest payments for its foreign debt. The international financial institutions called for political liberalization. President Houphouet-Boigny, unwilling to yield power to a successor, and determined to run for a seventh term in 1990, nevertheless did finally allow other political parties to form. When he died in office in 1993, his successor, Henri Konan Bedie, was untested politically. Although popularly elected as president in 1995, Bedie's overt favoritism toward his Baoule ethnic group caused resentment among other groups. His anti-foreign *Ivoirite* policies alienated the economically important one-third of the population with a "foreign" background. Moreover, the Bedie government badly managed the economy and brought the country close to bankruptcy in 1999. His fatal mistake was to delay paying salaries to the military, thereby giving the military a pretext to take political action against him.

In an unprecedented development for Cote d'Ivoire, the old government was swept away by a nearly bloodless coup on Christmas Eve 1999. Retired Chief of the Army General Robert Guei was asked to head a government of national salvation. After assuring the international community he would return the country to democracy, Guei presided over a national convention to draft a new constitution and called for new elections, in which he announced himself a candidate. Although Guei claimed victory in a rigged election that was boycotted by several political parties, he was forced by popular sentiment to flee the country. As a result, Laurent Gbagbo, head of the Ivorian Popular Front and a longtime opponent of President Houphouet-Boigny and his Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire, claimed victory and became president, despite calls for a rerun. Gbagbo quickly joined ranks with other "nationalist" parties to embrace President Bedie's *Ivoirite* policies and freeze out of the political process opponents from the Muslim north who had a "foreign" background. Chief among these is former prime minister and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara. The challenges President Gbagbo faces include stabilizing the political situation, restoring economic growth, managing international political and economic affairs, and, if possible, introducing real democracy, while at the same time keeping a watchful eye on the Ivorian military. This is a tall order.

Thus far, Cote d'Ivoire's leaders have maintained a neocolonial dependence on France and blocked effective reforms. It remains to be seen whether the country has now embarked on a new era of its independence in which it is better placed to become self-sustaining as well as politically inclusive.

# GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

## General Setting and Climate

The Republique de Cote d'Ivoire, or Ivory Coast, has the largest population and strongest economy of the West African Monetary Union (all of which are francophone countries). The head of state is Laurent Gbagbo, and the head of government (prime minister) is Affi N'Guessan. The government is a constitutional democracy. The official language is French, and Dioula is widely spoken.

With a land area of 124,503 sq. mi., Cote d'Ivoire is a bit larger than and roughly the same square shape as New Mexico. Cote d'Ivoire is bordered by Liberia and Guinea on the west, Mali and Burkina Faso on the north, Ghana on the east, and the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Guinea to the south. The country has a tropical hot and humid climate in the south, and is warm and somewhat less humid in the north. The southern region has two wet seasons (March-July and October-November). Cote d'Ivoire is divided into three broad belts running east to west, beginning in the south with coastal lagoons, then rainforest and savannah, and finally highlands in the west and northwest. Mt. Nimba, located near Man and the highest point in the country, rises to 5,750 ft.

The country's political and administrative capital is Yamoussoukro (pop. 120,000), located in the center of the country. The city was the birthplace of the country's first president, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who designated it as the national capital in March 1983. The largest city and major commercial port is Abidjan, the former capital and chief economic center (pop. 3.5 million). About 25 percent of the country's population lives in or near Abidjan. Abidjan was established as the French administrative center in the 1930s. Composed of four peninsulas converging at a key intersection of lagoons, Abidjan was ideally suited as a trading and transportation center. The French-built Vridi Canal in 1951 made Abidjan the country's premier port and center of industry as well as administration. The U.S. Embassy remains in Abidjan. Other important cities are Bouake (396,000) and Daloa (138,000).

## Physical Geography

The Lagoon region in the south is protected by a strip of sandbars separating the brackish lagoon water from the ocean. The sandbars, as well as treacherous ocean currents, made it difficult for European ships to anchor and thus delayed European settlement of the region until the mid-1800s. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Tadio, Ebrie and Aby lagoons were connected by canals to further economic development. The flat land to the north of the lagoons is extensively cultivated in tropical plantation crops for export, mostly to Europe, including pineapples and ornamental flowers. There are also large plantations of oil palms and rubber trees.

The rainforest region originally covered one-third of the country. Since the 1970s, however, it has shrunk considerably due to overexploitation of tropical timber resources. The forest cover of 12.5 million

hectares in the 1960s has dwindled to only 3 million ha. now, plus 1.6 million ha. in the national reserves. The only primary forest left is in the Tai reserve in southwestern Cote d'Ivoire and in the Banco protected area near Abidjan. The forest region reaches down to the coast in the country's rocky western region near the port of San Pedro. The new capital Yamoussoukro, located northwest of Abidjan and just southeast of Lake Koussou, is on the northern edge of the forest zone.

The northern two-thirds of the country is a vast and mostly treeless savanna grassland. Since a series of droughts beginning in the 1970s, there has been increasing desertification in this region. The key industries are cattle raising and cotton production. The western area rises toward the Guinea highlands and the eastern area near Ghana has many small hills. The main city of the region is Bouake, the country's second largest, located north of Yamoussoukro. The Komoe National Park is located in the northeastern quadrant of the Savanna.

The country's four major rivers are, from west to east, Cavally, Sassandra, Bandama, and Komoe. All of them run from north to south and only their lower reaches near the coast are navigable. The Bandama was dammed in 1972 creating Lake Kossou, northwest of Yamoussoukro. The dam produces a considerable amount of the country's electricity.

## Economic Geography

Cote d'Ivoire had a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$22 billion in the early 1990s. The GDP per capita was \$588 in 2000. That year, the country had real growth of -2.3%, a balance of trade of \$676 million, foreign debt of \$14.02 billion, and foreign direct investment of \$134 million.

The country's chief exports are cocoa (36% of the total in value terms), coffee, tropical woods, petroleum, cotton, bananas, pineapples, palm oil, and fish. Cote d'Ivoire's natural resources include crude oil, diamonds, manganese, iron ore, cobalt, bauxite, and copper. Land use is as follows: 9% arable land; 4% permanent crops; 9% meadows and pastures; 26% forest and woodland; 52% other. The country has eight national parks.

In addition to the main port of Abidjan-Port Bouet, the other principal seaports are San Pedro (for export of coffee and cocoa), Sassandra (export of tropical timber), and Grand Bassam (for export of plantation production).

Cote d'Ivoire has 46,600 km of highways and a 410-mile-long railroad from Abidjan to the border of Burkina Faso (the rail line continues on to Ouagadougou). The country's extensive inland waterways are economically important, including 980 km of navigable rivers, canals, and coastal lagoons. The country has one of the densest and best-maintained highway systems in West Africa, including 43,000 miles, 8% of which are paved.

Cote d'Ivoire's merchant marine has seven ships totaling 71,945 GRT/90,648 DWT: 5 cargo, 1 petroleum, oils, and lubricants (POL) tanker, and one chemical tanker. There are 42 airports in service

and the country's civil aviation fleet has 12 transport aircraft.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- How did Cote d'Ivoire's relative isolation from the rest of the continent, as well as its geographic protection from European exploration, affect its culture and history?
- How have the different geographic and climatic zones affected economic development in those areas?
- What are some of Cote d'Ivoire's advantages vis-à-vis its neighbors?
- How has Cote d'Ivoire been able to make use of its inland waterways for regional and national development?
- To what extent does the country's terrain still impede Cote d'Ivoire's development?
- How has Cote d'Ivoire been affected by the exploitation of its forest resources and the southward growth of the Sahara desert?

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# HISTORY

## Early History

Although little is known of Cote d'Ivoire's history prior to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, recently discovered Neolithic



artifacts indicate evidence of prehistoric civilization. For most of the country's history, its southern forests provided an effective barrier to large-scale development. As a result, Ivorian ethnic groups were isolated and maintained little contact with nearby peoples. In Roman times, Cote d'Ivoire was on the southern extremity of a caravan route going south from the Mediterranean Sea across the Sahara to the northern edge of the rainforest. Trade was conducted in salt, slaves, gold and other items.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the country found itself on the fringes of several Islamic kingdoms that flourished south of the Sahara, just touching Cote d'Ivoire's savannah area north of the dense forest near the coast. Under the 11<sup>th</sup> century Sudanic empires, which developed several well-known centers of Islamic learning, Arab traders from North Africa visited Cote d'Ivoire to spread Islam. The northwest corner of Cote d'Ivoire near the city of Odienne was part of the Islamic Empire of Mali during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. There was little penetration of Islam in the forest areas, however. Subsistence agriculture developed in clearings in the forest belt and in the savannah grasslands. Ivorian peoples also hunted and grazed livestock.

Extensive European involvement in Cote d'Ivoire was delayed until the modern era due to the country's rugged, harborless coastline. Immediately prior to the period of European exploration, there were five indigenous states in Cote d'Ivoire. The Muslim Empire of Kong (Juula-Senoufo peoples) was founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the north-central region. Settlers fleeing the Asante confederation in present-day Ghana founded the Abron kingdom of Jaman in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. That kingdom was located south of Bondoukou, became a major center of commerce and Islam, and produced widely regarded Quranic scholars. The Baoule kingdom was established in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in the central part of the country near Sakasso. Members of this kingdom strongly resisted French domination in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Agni kingdoms located in eastern Cote d'Ivoire still resist the imposition of outside authority. The kingdoms of Indenie and Sanwi attempted to secede from independent Cote d'Ivoire as recently as 1969.

## European Exploration

European coastal exploration began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century under the Portuguese. They and other Europeans initially traded for gold, ivory, and pepper, and beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, slaves. Cote d'Ivoire's lack of good harbors caused European traders mostly to bypass it. From the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans maintained profitable trade in ivory, for which the region was named. The first French missionaries landed in the country in 1637 at Assinie on the southeastern coast. Although they established a mission there, they did not remain permanently. French ships continued to visit Cote d'Ivoire and they returned to Assinie in 1701 with Prince Aniaba, an Ivorian who had been taken to France for education by the French navy. At that time, French missionaries and soldiers established a settlement, but it also failed to last, due to climate and disease. In fact, during the 1700s, the Europeans referred to this area of Africa as the "bad man's coast." The difficulty that Europeans had in surviving the climatic conditions delayed further settlement by one hundred years.

French Admiral Bouet met with African leaders in the area during the 1830s to conclude trading treaties to ensure supplies of gold, ivory, rubber and palm oil. In the 1840s, French soldiers negotiated treaties

with the indigenous peoples to establish fortified trading posts on the coast. Thus, the first permanent French settlements in Cote d'Ivoire were military forts. They were eventually replaced by trading posts at Assinie in 1842 and Grand Bassam in 1843. Grand Bassam subsequently became the colony's first capital. The French gradually pushed inland from the coast. During the 1840s-1860s, a welter of treaties provided for French sovereignty within the military posts, as well as trading privileges, in exchange for fees, or *coutumes*, paid yearly to local rulers. During this period, palm oil became an important export.

## French Settlement

The French presence in the region was partly geostrategic, i.e., to counter the influence of Britain. After the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1871), France withdrew its military garrisons from its West African settlements and turned the posts over to resident merchants. In 1878, Grand Bassam was turned over to Arthur Verdier, a Marseille shipper. Verdier cleared forested areas and established cocoa and coffee plantations, acquiring the plants from Ghana. During that period, the first mahogany logs were exported from Cote d'Ivoire. Lieutenant Louis-Gustave Binger was appointed French Resident in Cote d'Ivoire and in 1882 he founded the Kong Company to manage a coffee plantation.

At the 1885 Berlin Conference, European countries agreed to recognize each other's colonies in the rest of the world. On the coastline of Africa, only permanent European settlements would be recognized. In 1890, this rule was extended to the interior, as well. To ensure the validity of its claims, in 1886 France reassumed direct control of its West African trading posts and pushed into interior regions. The consequent search for gold and other trade goods caused French opportunists to penetrate as far as the northern area of Cote d'Ivoire. In 1887, Binger conducted a two-year exploration of the interior, the first to link Senegal with Cote d'Ivoire. During that same period, Marcel Treich-Laplène negotiated agreements with local rulers to extend French influence beyond the coast. French troops also built forts and posts throughout the territory. In 1889, Britain recognized French sovereignty over the territory. France and Liberia established a border agreement in 1892, and in 1893 France and Britain agreed on the border with Ghana. The country's northern border was not set until 1947.

In 1893, Cote d'Ivoire formally became a French colony, Binger became the first governor, and the capital was located at Grand-Bassam. In 1895, Cote d'Ivoire became part of French West Africa under the overall supervision of the French Governor General in Senegal. At that time French West Africa was comprised of Cote d'Ivoire, Dahomey (Benin), Guinea, Niger, French Sudan (Mali), Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), and Mauritania. The individual colonies were divided into districts called circles, each of which was headed by a commandant who governed with relative autonomy. As advisors, the commandant chose a council of notables, including local rulers with his own appointees. During this period, the French imposed the *Indigenat*, a separate system of law, providing for summary judgments, and applying only to the indigenous peoples, not the French. This system, widely hated throughout the French colonial domain, was finally abolished in 1946.

Before 1900, Samory Toure, a Malinke leader from Guinea, led resistance to French dominion. During 1879-98, he ruled a Muslim empire including much of West Africa. In northern Cote d'Ivoire, Samory

ruled the area between Odienne and Bouna, and had his capital at Dabakala, where he kept a well-trained army. The Senoufo and Baoule people supported him against the French. In 1898, the French captured Samory and exiled him to Gabon. Thereafter, the French rapidly consolidated their position in Cote d'Ivoire.

## French Rule

Due to a yellow fever epidemic in Grand-Bassam, the French moved the capital to Bingerville in 1900. Since Paris required colonies to be self-supporting in administration and defense, the French imposed a head tax to fund public works. The indigenous people resisted the tax, viewing it as a humiliating reversal of the previous French agreement to pay a *coutume* to local rulers.

During 1902-1916, there were many revolts against French rule by the forest peoples. In 1906, Governor Louis-Gabriel Angoulvant began the forceful conquest of the entire territory, which included harsh campaigns against the Baoule, Dan and Dida peoples. On January 8, 1910, the Abe Revolt took place in the region near Agboville, to the northwest of Abidjan and near the new rail line to Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). The people tore up the rails and killed everyone who was not an Abe. Governor Angoulvant carried out brutal manhunts throughout the forest in search of the perpetrators. The Abe people conducted guerrilla war for several years before they were subdued. By 1916, Cote d'Ivoire was firmly under French control. France compelled many Africans to fight by its side in various campaigns during World War I.

To improve the colony's economic base, the French government sold land concessions to planters for private plantations. While the concessions were conceived primarily to lure white settlers to the colony, some Africans, mainly colonial administrators, also purchased land. During this period, the French government established state mines, opened lumber operations, and built transportation and other infrastructure. The French also introduced cash crops for export, including cocoa, coffee and millet. The opportunities for Africans to participate in these enterprises gave rise to a wealthy planter class. The rich, better-educated Ivorians adopted French culture and became the vanguard of a new African elite. They were exempt from military and labor service and became accepted as cultural and social equals by the French. Thus, the elites recognized the economic advantages of submission to French rule.

French rule was direct, systematic and authoritarian. Colonial administrators engaged in divide and rule policies, choosing local leaders and even regrouping villages. The French systematically destroyed traditional power relationships among ethnic groups. The colony's inhabitants were considered French subjects with no political rights and a separate system of law applied to them. All adult males had to perform *corvee* labor. That is, they were forced to work ten days for no pay each year, either on French-owned plantations or public works projects. Forced labor was the most hated aspect of French rule. After 1930, a small group of westernized Ivorians was allowed to apply for French citizenship; however, French colonial policies continued to favor the Europeans with higher prices for their produce, access to protected markets, and the provision of free labor under the forced labor system. These differences fueled African resentment. In fact, it has been said that Cote d'Ivoire had the bloodiest, most turbulent colonial

history of any country in West Africa.

Because Cote d'Ivoire's indigenous population was not numerous enough to provide labor for the rapidly growing French-owned plantations, the colonial administrators recruited farm workers from Upper Volta, and they annexed part of that territory in 1932 to ensure the steady supply of laborers. Meanwhile, social changes also resulted from the influx of Catholic missionaries, who established churches and primary schools.

## World War II - Promises of Autonomy

In 1934, the French moved the capital to Abidjan near the central coast, a location that was more accessible to interior towns and which offered greater potential for industrial development. In 1936, the new socialist government in France positively addressed many Ivorian concerns, including the desire to raise the minimum wage, and reduce the *corvee* labor time commitment. The Socialist Party of Cote d'Ivoire was founded at that time. The Vichy Government forced the colonies to proclaim loyalty either to Vichy or the Free French. Since most Ivorians favored the Free French after General Charles de Gaulle took control, the Vichy Government punished the colony by extending the *corvee*, conscripting laborers for the military, and forcing farmers to donate food to the military. This was a period of economic exploitation, overt racism, and hardship for Africans.

France's precipitous fall to Germany early in the war gave rise to the Ivorian nationalist movement, and many intellectuals were attracted to Marxist ideas. In 1943, Communist Study Groups organized branches in West Africa, including Abidjan. In response to African planters' complaints about French discrimination, Felix Houphouet-Boigny founded the African Agricultural Union (*Syndicat Agricole Africain* – SAA) in 1944 to seek an end of the *corvee* and improve the situation for African planters and farmers. By 1945, the SAA had 20,000 members from all ethnic groups and areas of Cote d'Ivoire. The SAA provided the core for the Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (*Parti Democratique de Cote d'Ivoire*-PDCI), which was founded after the war by Felix Houphouet-Boigny.

The 1944 Brazzaville Conference, General de Gaulle's meeting with high-ranking colonial officials, recommended significant political, economic and social reforms in an effort to appease the educated African elite. De Gaulle promised that after the war, the colonies would be represented in the French Constituent Assembly. He agreed to draw up a new constitution that would provide the colonies greater autonomy as well as their own elected legislative assemblies. The conference decided that France would respect local customs, abolish the *Indigenat* (1945), adopt a new penal code, end *corvee* labor conscription (1946), improve health and education, and employ more Africans in colonial administration. After the war, the French government fulfilled few of these promises.

## Houphouet-Boigny and Limited Self-Government

In October 1945, the first countrywide elections were held in Cote d'Ivoire to choose two delegates for the French Constituent Assembly. Felix Houphouet-Boigny was chosen as the Ivorian African delegate.

By successfully sponsoring a bill to end *corvee*, he became famous throughout French West Africa. France also granted citizenship to all people in its colonies. However, citizenship rights were not defined to enable most of the indigenous population to exercise the full civil rights of French people. In 1946, Houphouet-Boigny supported local self-government and the political equality of the French and Africans in the French Constituent Assembly. Later that year, he founded the *Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire* (PDCI), and then was reelected as a delegate to the Second Constituent Assembly, which established the French Union. France thereby granted African members free speech, free association, and free assembly, and eliminated the separate legal codes and the forced labor requirement. French African colonies were designated overseas territories. However, the French Government retained all legislative and executive powers. Cote d'Ivoire remained under the administration of the French Ministry of Overseas Departments and Territories.

In 1947, Houphouet-Boigny and other African leaders founded the African Democratic Rally (*Rassemblement Democratique Africain* - RDA), which called for full equality with the French and was therefore viewed as a threat by the colonial administration. Cote d'Ivoire became a center of recruitment for the militant African party. The French also saw the PDCI as a threat, since it opposed the conservative and discriminatory colonial government installed in 1947. Houphouet-Boigny escaped imprisonment only due to his parliamentary immunity. The PDCI organized strikes, and boycotts of French goods and violence erupted in 1949. Because the French Government considered the PDCI a threat to its rule, colonial administrators arrested many leaders and circumscribed the party's activities. Therefore, by 1951, the PDCI was near collapse. Houphouet-Boigny decided to sever relations with the Communist Party, which resulted in a new phase of French political concessions and economic cooperation.

In 1956, under the Fourth Republic, France backed away from the concept of integrating its overseas territories with continental France. Instead, Paris sought to provide autonomy for domestic policy, with France solely responsible for foreign affairs, defense, higher education, and economic assistance. The French Assembly passed an amendment to the constitution called the *loi-cadre*, largely as a result of Houphouet-Boigny's careful maneuvering, to provide all adults the right to vote for representatives to local and district councils and to empower each territorial assembly to make laws. One of President de Gaulle's first acts was to offer the African colonies a choice to become independent or continue as part of Overseas France under the *loi-cadre*.

## Process of Independence

The 1958 Fifth Republic Constitution provided for free association of autonomous republics within the French Community. Designed to facilitate the evolution of internal self-government, community status would keep the African states firmly French. Nonetheless, Cote d'Ivoire supported the Community, arguing this was a pragmatic course in view of the lack of trained personnel to run an independent government. In that year, President Charles de Gaulle visited Abidjan and welcomed the Ivorian decision. In September 1958, Cote d'Ivoire voted to become a self-governing republic within the French Community. In April 1959, Cote d'Ivoire adopted its first constitution and the PDCI won all the seats in the National Assembly. Houphouet-Boigny also became prime minister. In 1959, Houphouet-Boigny

and his counterparts in other French West African countries formed the Council of the Entente, in opposition to the pro-independence Mali Federation of Guinea and Mali. After the independence of Guinea, however, the French Community was considered “dead” and there was nothing to keep its remaining members from declaring independence on their own.

Therefore, on August 7, 1960, with Paris’ blessing, Cote d’Ivoire followed Senegal and Mali in declaring independence. Cote d’Ivoire enacted its first constitution as an independent country on October 31, 1960, and elected Houphouet-Boigny as president. The country maintained its traditionally close relations with France and kept many French advisors in government positions. The French helped build the Ivorian defense force, based on the French colonial marine infantry. The Ivorian constitution established a democratic government with a presidential system, separation of powers and independent judiciary. The PDCI won all National Assembly seats in the first election and, within a short period, the government became authoritarian under the single party rule of the PDCI. No other political parties were allowed. Houphouet-Boigny limited the powers of the National Assembly and tailored election laws in the PDCI’s favor. He established a highly personalized regime, controlling government through the use of patronage and effectively co-opting his political enemies. At the time, Philippe Yace, Secretary General of PDCI and president of the National Assembly, was the second most powerful leader in the country.

## **Independence – The First Twenty Years**

During the first twenty years of independence, Houphouet-Boigny consolidated party and government power. He ensured strict loyalty by party members and military officers. To his credit, he sought to balance the composition in government of ethnic groups, regional affinities, political leanings, and economic power bases, and the president made effective use of state and party patronage. Representatives of each important ethnic group held cabinet posts, but the president himself directly controlled the police and military.

During the 1960s, dissenters against government policy were routinely rounded up and arrested. Houphouet-Boigny pardoned them if they admitted guilt; others were forced into military service. That way, Cote d’Ivoire could claim it had no political prisoners. Some of those arrested chose exile, either to neighboring countries or to France. Houphouet-Boigny justified this policy by arguing that political stability was a requirement for economic prosperity. In 1962, radical PDCI members sought to kidnap the president in order to press for political concessions. This attempt failed, however, and the radicals were arrested and secretly tried. There was another plot by leftists, politicians and northerners in 1963. Also in the 1960s, Kragbe Gnagbe, a Bete, organized an alternative political party based near Gagnoa. The government responded by arresting many organizers. As a reaction, the Bete people carried out a bloody revolt against the government in 1970 and Gnagbe was banished to his village. This did not squash the tradition of Bete criticism inside the government, as well as vocal opposition to Houphouet-Boigny’s rule. By 1971, most government opponents were released from prison.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the large-scale migration of Africans from nearby countries seeking economic opportunity. Many of these economic migrants were Mossi people from Burkina Faso. They

provided cheap labor for Cote d'Ivoire's coffee and cocoa plantations. However, they also sparked resentment on the part of Ivorian ethnic groups. There were demonstrations in 1969 in Abidjan by unsuccessful job seekers from the countryside. In addition, Ivorian intellectuals and elites chafed at the continued employment of French officials in ministries and industries. Many Ivorians saw the president as favoring Europeans and resisting Ivorianization of the economy. University students demonstrated against the PDCI. Foreign-trained students sought a more socialist approach toward economic development and opposed the government's "neo-colonial" policies. That year, there was a student-government confrontation at Abidjan University organized by the Movement of Ivorian Primary and Secondary School Students (*Mouvement des Etudiants et Eleves de Cote d'Ivoire* – MEECI). The government cracked down hard.

During the 1970s, Houphouet-Boigny refined his style and sought out younger intellectuals and trained technocrats for high level posts. He also campaigned for political support from the middle and lower classes. He conducted a series of public dialogues in the mid-1970s to discuss current issues, including government reforms and business concerns about corruption. However, the dialogues did not result in substantial reform. The president also maintained useful contacts with traditional tribal leaders, after putting down nascent rebellions by ethnic groups in 1969 and 1970. Houphouet-Boigny relied on strong management, pragmatic organization, French political and economic backing, and foreign investment and technology. His style worked. This was a period of economic growth and optimism.

However, the 1970s were a period of political instability in neighboring West African countries, where military forces routinely toppled leaders. There was even an alleged military coup attempt in Cote d'Ivoire in 1973. The president harshly dealt with the military instigators, but recognizing their grievances, subsequently gave the military greater scope in national affairs and Ivorianized its leadership. Following his fourth election in 1975 with 100% of the votes, Houphouet-Boigny reshuffled the cabinet in an effort to root out members fingered for corruption or disloyalty, and he appointed military officers to civil positions in the capital and prefectures.

Nevertheless, just as Houphouet-Boigny attracted more highly skilled people to the government, he provided PDCI sinecure positions to his old guard of loyalists. The PDCI did not embrace democratic procedures, but instead sought to sustain the economically privileged political class. Both party members and government officials engaged in nepotism and corruption, and there were poorly defined and overlapping responsibilities amongst them. Houphouet-Boigny finally allowed the open election of party officials in the late 1970s.

## Houphouet-Boigny's Last Twenty Years

By 1980, Cote d'Ivoire had enjoyed twenty years of solid economic growth and political stability. In every way, it was a standout in the region. However, corruption by the wealthy and politically powerful was very apparent. The officials' penchant for lining their own pockets rapidly became a political liability. An economic downturn in the early 1980s caused by the fall of international commodity prices led to economic hardship for most people, caused a rise in urban drug abuse and crime, and served as a

rallying cry for political agitation.

In 1980, Houphouet-Boigny ran unopposed for president and was elected to a fifth term. In addition to corruption, presidential succession became an issue. At the seventh party congress of the PDCI, he abolished the post of secretary general and Houphouet-Boigny himself was installed as the party's executive chairman. Philippe Yace lost favor with the president and was booted out. A constitutional amendment established the post of vice president to succeed the president in event of a mid-term vacancy. However, the office of vice president was not filled until after the 1985 election. Following election to his sixth term that year, Houphouet-Boigny again amended the constitution and eliminated the office of vice president. Houphouet-Boigny's advanced age, coupled with public concern about succession, remained political issues to the end of his life. He was seen as irreplaceable – he had made himself so. But he was not infallible and there were cracks in the country's economic miracle.

Although Houphouet-Boigny's personal position was unassailable, the decade of the 1980s saw rising social discontent that was increasingly manifest in demonstrations against the government. In 1983, 4,000 teachers organized by the National Union of Secondary School Teachers of Cote d'Ivoire (*Syndicat National des Enseignants du Secondaire de Cote d'Ivoire* – SYNESCI), the only union independent of the PDCI, stuck to voice basic opposition to both presidential and cabinet mismanagement of the economy. The president dissolved the union, closed all secondary schools, and sent home 200,000 students.

Anti-government and anti-PDCI political tracts circulated in Abidjan. In an effort to head off further embarrassing disclosures, PDCI leaders made excursions to the countryside to conduct public dialogues and discredit their detractors. By the time of the PDCI's 1985 eighth party congress, a full-blown crime wave affected Abidjan and other cities, a large influx of immigrants from Burkina Faso and Ghana swamped the country and, growing in notoriety, the Ivorian criminal underworld conducted ever more brazen attacks against French and Lebanese business interests. Thus, the 1980s were a period of uncertainty and instability which reflected an increasingly authoritarian government out of touch with the electorate.

Economic mismanagement, and volatile world markets for the country's commodity exports, eventually led to severe balance of payments problems and the decision to default on foreign debt in 1987. That year, Houphouet-Boigny stopped coffee and cocoa exports in order to stabilize the market. Because the policy was poorly implemented and enforced, however, it had no impact on the market but it did cause the government to lose much prestige and support from agricultural interests.

In 1987, Robert Gbai Tagro established the *Parti Republicain de la Cote d'Ivoire*. This was neither recognized nor banned, but its congress was crushed and the leaders were detained. In 1988, there was a plot against Houphouet-Boigny within the PDCI by Dioula businessmen from Touba. The government dealt swiftly with the plotters.

As the 1990s began, many groups demonstrated against government policies and in favor of greater democracy, especially legalization of other political parties besides the PDCI. Prior to the 1990 elections, the World Bank pressed for the free formation of political parties. In response, Houphouet-Boigny



legalized nine political parties and permitted the publication of one opposition newspaper. He also appointed Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim from northern Cote d'Ivoire and an economist with experience in international banking, to work with the IMF on a plan for economic reform. Late 1990 saw the country's first multiparty elections, in which candidates from 26 political parties. Houphouet-Boigny received 85% of the vote for a seventh term. Laurent Gbagbo, leader of the Ivorian Popular Front Party (PFI), was the chief opposition candidate. The PFI won one seat in the National Assembly, which for the first time included twelve opposition members to the PDCI's 163-seat majority. The opposition claimed the presidential election had been rigged.

In November 1990, the National Assembly enacted a new constitutional amendment to clarify presidential succession: the leader of the National Assembly would become president on the death or resignation of the sitting president. At the time, Henri Konan Bedie, a technocrat and fellow Baoule, was National Assembly leader and therefore widely regarded as Houphouet-Boigny's likely successor. Another constitutional amendment provided for the appointment of a prime minister. That position went to Alassane Ouattara.

In May 1991, Ivorian troops violently disrupted a student meeting at Abidjan University, reportedly killing several students, but the government denied there had been any deaths. In 1992, the investigating committee implicated high ranking military officers in the abuses, but President Houphouet-Boigny refused to take disciplinary action against them. A march by 20,000 people demanded that the government step down. During the entire five-month period Houphouet-Boigny remained in Europe.

## **The post-Houphouet-Boigny Era**

The Houphouet-Boigny era ended with his death in December 1993. Following a short power struggle for succession between Bedie and Ouattara, France, the United States, and most other countries backed Bedie's claim of ascendancy. Bedie did not have his predecessor's charisma or political skills. Continued economic hardship during the 1990s and pressure for a greater voice in political issues continued to erode his popular support. Before 1995, the PDCI maintained power despite the multiparty presidential and legislative elections of 1990. The government routinely denied opposition parties the right to meet in public places, citing possible violence if demonstrations got out of hand. The 1992 Anti-vandalism Law held organizers of demonstrations and marches liable for any property damage resulting from those activities. Abandoning Houphouet-Boigny's policy of ethnic balance, Bedie increasingly favored fellow Baoules for government and party positions, thereby sowing the seeds for inter-ethnic rivalry.

In October 1995, many opposition parties boycotted the presidential election, claiming the government had improperly amended the electoral code in 1994 to bar potential rivals from running. The opposition objected to the denial of the candidacy of Alassane Ouattara, head of the Democratic Rally of Republicans (RDR), on the grounds that Ouattara's parents were not Ivorian born. Ouattara was considered Bedie's greatest potential rival, and political enemy. The RDR also levied complaints about the composition of voters' lists and restrictions on demonstrations. The government banned marches and

sit-ins prior to the election, and opposition party members blocked access to polling stations and impeded delivery of election materials. The opposition's boycott was finally lifted after a government agreement with the opposition to revise the voting lists. The opposition parties grouped together under the Republican Front (FR) banner, but did not field coalition candidates for the election. In addition, there was ethnic violence between the Bete (ethnic group of Laurent Gbagbo) and the Baoule (Bedie's group) peoples. Foreign observers considered the voting a relatively smooth process, but Amnesty International complained about violations of right of assembly and free expression during the campaign, as well as arrests and convictions of some students – the Federation of Students and School Pupils (FESCI, which was banned in 1991) – as well as journalists.

Favorable economic conditions in the mid-1990s helped Bedie win the 1995 presidential election, and enabled his party, the PDCI, to win 80% of the seats in the National Assembly. Several Bedie-proposed constitutional amendments adopted by the National Assembly in 1998 were criticized by the opposition parties: an extension of the presidential mandate from five to seven years, authorization for the president to withhold election results during periods of unrest, and the establishment of a senate one-third of whose members would be named by the president. Meanwhile, economic conditions worsened and opposition voices became more strident. Some opposition leaders were imprisoned, and Bedie's campaign against Ouattara became more personal. A combination of political maneuvering and judicial decisions depicted Ouattara as a foreigner since his parents were not born in Cote d'Ivoire and thus again prohibited him from seeking the presidency.

Popular discontent with the government came to a head on Christmas Eve 1999, when General Robert Guei conducted a successful and relatively bloodless coup against President Bedie. However, the coup did not put an end to political uncertainty. Two military mutinies and attempted assassinations followed the coup. General Guei spent his first six months consolidating political power, assuring the international community of his support for a return to democratic government, and dealing with the country's dire financial straits, which included defaulting on its foreign debt. In July 2000, voters approved a new constitution for the Second Republic, which institutionalized nationality requirements for presidential candidates. The new constitution effectively ended Ouattara's presidential ambitions.

In the October 2000 presidential election, Ouattara was constitutionally barred from running and the PDCI candidate lost in the first round. The electoral battle was between General Guei, who had hoped for PDCI support, and Laurent Gbagbo, the "historic opponent" of the PDCI. Both Ouattara's RDR and the PDCI, which accounted for two-thirds of the electorate, boycotted the elections. There were many incidents of military and police action against demonstrators, including major human rights abuses. For example, fifty-seven bodies were found dumped in a mass grave in Yopougon, a suburb of Abidjan. Although the electoral commission gave Guei the victory, he fled the country after massive demonstrations. Laurent Gbagbo proclaimed himself president by default, and refused to rerun the election, despite questions about its legitimacy. Since Ouattara was excluded from running, the RDR party boycotted the election. Although only 33% of registered voters turned out, Gbagbo's FPI won 96 seats in the 225-seat Assembly, and was able to co-opt 22 independents; the PDCI won only 94 seats and became the opposition. Ouattara's RDR, however, continues to challenge the other parties. It dominated the March 2001 municipal elections, together with the PDCI. This was the RDR's first effort to campaign

nationwide. Gbagbo's FPI did not campaign heavily in those elections.

Since the election of 2000, President Gbagbo has attempted to consolidate his government and rebuild relations with the international community as well as with ethnic and regional groups. Although following the election he stressed national reconciliation, he has since taken a highly partisan approach. Gbagbo is dependent on a restive military and is preoccupied with remaining in power. Much of Gbagbo's future success will depend on strong economic growth and his ability to resolve political issues in a country increasingly divided along ethnic, regional and religious lines.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What factors in Cote d'Ivoire's early history continue to affect the country's current events?
- How did Cote d'Ivoire's social makeup – i.e., the proliferation and complexity of its ethnic groups – affect its response to European colonialism?
- How did the early history of international trade and the establishment of agriculture-based plantations affect the country's economic and political development?
- To what extent did the French approach to administering its colony influence the governing methods of independent Cote d'Ivoire?
- What is the relationship between the French creation of an indigenous moneyed elite and the current social and economic cleavage in Ivorian society?
- How did the importation of farm labor from Burkina Faso sow the seeds for the xenophobia of the 1980s and 1990s?
- Do Ivorians now have more or fewer civil rights than they enjoyed on the eve of independence from France?

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# MAP OF COTE D'VOIRE'S ETHNIC GROUPS



## POPULATION AND CULTURE

### Population

Cote d'Ivoire's total population is 15,980,950 (2000). This is a considerable increase from the 5.4 million in 1970 and represents a 3.8% annual growth rate. Ivorian life expectancy is 55 years, relatively high for Africa. Infant mortality has been declining.

## Ethnic Makeup

Unlike many African countries with a small number of contending ethnic groups, Cote d'Ivoire has more than sixty. They include the following: Baoule (15%), Senoufo (10%), Bete (6%), Lagoon peoples (5%), Agni/Anyi (3%), and a Mande cluster including Juula, Bambara and Malinke (17%). The single largest ethnic group is the Baoule, which produced both President Felix Houphouet-Boigny and his successor, President Henri Konan Bedie. Current President Laurent Gbagbo is a Bete.

With many small ethnic groups, the country has been less prone to domination by a single group. President Houphouet-Boigny was careful to avoid favoring any one group and he ensured that positions of power were shared among all groups. His successors, especially President Bedie, were less scrupulous in avoiding ethnic favoritism, and indeed, ethnic background is increasingly important in politics.

In addition, about 30% of the country's inhabitants are non-Ivorian Africans or non-Africans, including Lebanese, Europeans, and Asians, as well as refugees and immigrants from neighboring African countries, especially Burkina Faso. Although non-Ivorians are economically critical to the country, since the early 1990s, they have faced social, political and economic discrimination.

## Religion

Islam, the second most widespread religion in Africa, has the most adherents in Cote d'Ivoire, claiming 60% of the inhabitants. Mosques predominate in towns and villages in the northern half of the country, and several traditional centers of Islamic learning and culture exist in the north.

About 20% of the inhabitants practice Christianity, including both Catholic and Protestant churches. The Catholic faith predominates among the middle class and urban southerners. The first permanent Roman Catholic mission was established in 1895, and the first African priest was ordained in 1934. In the 1890s, the church started seminaries and schools, and St. Paul's Cathedral was built in Abidjan. President Houphouet-Boigny personally funded the construction of the Our Lady of Peace basilica in Yamoussoukro, the second largest church in the world, which can fit 200,000 people within its confines. After its consecration by the Pope in 1990, the church became a pilgrimage destination for Catholics in Africa.

Harrism is the largest and oldest protestant denomination in the country. Founded in 1914 by Liberian William Harris, the church is an Africanized form of Protestantism that won a large following in part because there was no discrimination against women. This was important in Cote d'Ivoire due to the traditional role of matrilineal descent in Ivorian culture. Since the 1920s, Harrism has been recognized as a branch of Methodism. It is a syncretic faith that includes the protestant Bible, Catholic holidays, the Christian cross, the African chief's cane, long white robes, traditional dances, storytelling sermons, group prayer, and emphasis on miracle cures.

About 18% of the population adheres to indigenous religions, which include ancestral worship and

animism, the belief that everything in nature has a soul. Some ethnic groups believe in reincarnation. In addition to a supreme being, some groups worship lesser gods seeking their intervention for good health, harvests, or children. Ancestral spirits are understood to be members of the family or line who were transformed into spirits. They remain in contact with the living and help them in their present lives. Magic is common to many rituals and many Ivorians wear *grisgris*, or charms, to ward off evil spirits or to deter the action of evil spells cast by their enemies. In some parts of the country there are blends of Muslim, Christian and traditional forms of religion.

## Historical Migrations and Settlement

Cote d'Ivoire was already inhabited during the Late Stone Age (8000 to 4000 B.C.). Archeological evidence includes ax heads and pottery. There were many settlements along the Bandama River and near Abengourou, as well as Touba, Diva, Fedessedougou and Korhogo in the north. Based on the discovery of shells and pottery from burial mounds, the area near the lagoons was inhabited by 1500 B.C. About 2000 years ago, Cote d'Ivoire had already become a meeting point for many peoples of western Africa. By that time, there were settlements of the Mande, Voltaic, Kru and Akan-speaking peoples. Although the great West African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai (A.D. 400-1600) were to the north, trade routes connected them with settlements on the edge of the rainforest in present-day Cote d'Ivoire.

Between 1300-1700, many of the country's current ethnic groups settled there, occupying Odienne, Katiola and Kong. In the 1500s, the Mande or Dioula people migrated from Mali into the northwest region inhabited by the Senoufo. Under them, Kong and Bondoukou became centers of Islam. Bondoukou eventually became the center of the Abron Kingdom, founded by settlers from Ghana. The Baoule and Agni people migrated from the Asante region of Ghana west into central Cote d'Ivoire in the 1700s. The Baoule founded Sakasso as their capital and the Agni established the kingdoms of Indenie and Sanwi, with Abengourou as the capital of Indiene. By 1600, about one million people lived in the present territory of Cote d'Ivoire.

## Description of Ethnic Groups

Here follow descriptions of the best-known Ivorian ethnic groups:

### Agni/Anyi

The Agni and Abron peoples are related to the Baoule. They still pay allegiance to their kings, have an elite status and have historically wielded considerable political power in Cote d'Ivoire. They are well known for their artwork in metal, wood and clay.

### Baoule

These people live in the central part of the country and their economy is based on plantation agriculture, producing coffee and cocoa. The group has a matrilineal social structure and includes many wealthy

planters and politicians.

## **Bete**

This group is the Baoule's chief rival. Primarily Christian, they raise cash crops, believe in the superiority of their culture, and have long supported anti-government movements.

## **Dan or Yacouba**

These people are known for their dances and masks, cloth, baskets and wooden sculptures. They worship a single god, Zran, who is the creator of the universe. Their traditional education consists of an initiation rite to induct its members into secret societies. The people believe that the *gor*, who is responsible for dispensing justice, can turn into animals to survey the forces of good and evil. The Dan masks are important symbols with smooth, delicate lines and sensual features. One famous dance is the stilt dance, in which the dancer stands 20 feet high. Another is the acrobatic and dangerous juggling dance, where the female dancer is tossed into the air and must avoid sharp knives when falling back to earth.

## **Dioula**

These people, who originated in Guinea, live in the far northwest. Their religion is a blend of Islam and traditional beliefs. The Dioula are subsistence farmers, growing rice, millet and peanuts, and raising goats, sheep, poultry, and some cattle. They have a patrilineal society and their villages are grouped around men with the same clan name. Their headmen are also imams or religious leaders.

## **Kru**

These people, located on the southwestern coast, were traditionally fishermen, but they are rapidly becoming assimilated into the mainstream of Ivorian urban society. Like the Bete and Guere, the Kru, all inhabitants of the west central rainforest, originally migrated from present-day Liberia.

## **Koulango**

These people in northeastern Cote d'Ivoire are related to the Lobi and farm and raise cattle. Their main crops are yams, corn, peanuts, cotton and watermelons. They also raise goats, sheep and cattle.

## **Lagoon Peoples**

Prominent among the various groups that inhabit the lagoon area are the Ebrie and the Abidji.

## **Lobi**

These people live east of the Senoufo. They are a proud people known as excellent archers. The Lobi

women have ornamental plates that pierce their lips.

## Senoufo

Living in the northern savanna, these are among the oldest ethnic groups in Cote d'Ivoire. They are known for their woodcarving, masks, and hand-painted Korhogo fabrics. Their crops include yams, rice, peanuts, and millet. Culturally, the village is an extended family. The Senoufo's cultural capital is Korhogo, a city that dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. They have secret associations to prepare boys for adulthood. The training takes place in a sacred forest and can last the entire lifetime. The dance of the leopard men is performed when the boys return from the initiation.

## Non-Ivorians

For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, French and Ivorian government policies encouraged economic migration from nearby areas, especially Upper Volta, now known as Burkina Faso, northeast of Cote d'Ivoire. Most of those who took advantage of this opportunity were members of the Mossi people. Originally, they were destined to work as farm laborers in Cote d'Ivoire's important and growing agricultural plantations. While most of the economic immigrants still live in rural areas, they form significant communities in Abidjan and other cities and towns.

A large group of Lebanese immigrants, numbering 60,000 – 180,000, are engaged in the country's wholesale and retail trade. Many of the Lebanese arrived in Cote d'Ivoire during the 1960s and 1970s to escape the Lebanon civil war.

A community of French expatriates, numbering 25,000- 30,000, has remained in Cote d'Ivoire since independence. This number includes French and Ivorian government officials and technicians, as well as business administrators and technical experts. Although many French left the country following the death of Houphouet-Boigny in 1993 and also after the 1999 coup, this remains an important group.

## Traditional Culture

Cote d'Ivoire's traditional culture includes much unique art – especially masks and textiles – which are among the best in West Africa. Baoule vessels and masks are realistic. The Dan people carve wooden spoons with two legs for serving rice. Their striking masks show a human face with a calm expression and eyehole slits reminiscent of Asian Buddhism. The Senoufo produce ornately carved wooden doors and highly stylized statues of hornbill figures. In many ethnic groups, the masks represent ancestor worship or man-animal connections. Some groups believe that masks and statues collect energy from the dead and serve as “spirit traps” to control spirits for the good of the living. Griots, or oral historians and traditional advisors, are important to the cultural traditions of many groups.

## Popular Culture



The Ivorian government owns two daily newspapers, two major radio stations, and the country's two broadcast television channels. Four of the country's radio stations are not under government control and Canal Horizon is a private television subscription service. The main print media are *Fraternite Matin*, the PDCI party newspaper, *Le Jour*, *La Nouvelle Republique*, and *La Voie*.

Cote d'Ivoire has produced several writers of note, including Bernard Dadie, whose novels in English translation include *Climbie* (1971), relating a childhood journey to France, *The Black Cloth*, and *The City Where No One Dies*.

Writer Ake Loba's novel *Kocoumbo* describes his suffering from being uprooted and a time spent in poverty in Paris. Amhadou Kourouma wrote *The Suns of Independence* about a village chief deposed after independence.

Music is an important medium of social expression. It became politicized during Bedie's presidency. Prominent during the 1999 Christmas Eve coup was a reggae beat song by Alpha Blondy entitled, "French Army, get out of here." Many Ivorian popular songs carry an anti-corruption, anti-authoritarian message. An example is a 1999 song called "Dictature," which accused President Bedie of "ruling by dividing, dividing by trickery."

## Holidays

Although Cote d'Ivoire obtained its independence on August 7, 1960, the country celebrates its national day on December 7. In addition, all major Christian holidays are official (Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Assumption Day, and All Saints Day), as well as New Year's Day. Muslim holidays are also observed in some regions.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What are some of the advantages and disadvantages for Cote d'Ivoire as a result of having a large number of diverse ethnic groups?
- In the years since independence, has Cote d'Ivoire developed a national culture?
- What is the role of the French language in the Ivorian culture?
- Has this been a help or a handicap?
- How have Cote d'Ivoire's various ethnic groups and traditional cultures contributed to the national culture?

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## SOCIAL ISSUES

### Class Structure

Since early in the French colonial period, there has been a marked distinction in Ivorian society between the literate, French-speaking elite, and all other Ivorians. These differences – especially the mastery of the French language – have been a mark of, and prerequisite for, privilege. In traditional times, ethnic groups were ruled by customary heads who followed the matrilineal or patrilineal custom of the particular group. In many ethnic groups, land and other resources were held in common. While some traditional groups maintained formal kingdoms with hierarchical administration, many indigenous groups were governed solely at the village level and maintained only cultural, not political, links with neighboring groups. The advent of a more hierarchical social structure, therefore, parallels the imposition of colonial rule and the establishment of a market economy.

The post-independence period of rapid urbanization in the 1960s-1970s brought about considerable economic and social cleavage. This was apparent especially in cities and towns, and the capital Abidjan. The privileged, urban-dwelling, government officials and heads of private companies received a larger share of national wealth, and the gap widened between them and their compatriots. There was a strong desire to live in cities and towns since their inhabitants enjoyed better government services. There were fewer secondary schools or health clinics in the more distant parts of the country. Since the 1990s, the government has taken steps to improve the provision of government services beyond the main urban centers, and the middle class has been growing.

“Foreigners,” which includes both those people born outside Cote d’Ivoire, as well as those whose parents were not born in the country, fall outside Cote d’Ivoire’s traditional social structure. This group represents 30% of the country’s population, most of whom remain in rural areas performing agricultural work (usually on Ivorian plantations) or inhabit cities and towns where they perform less skilled jobs when employed. There are 3 million “residents of foreign nationality” and 2 million residents of foreign

origin, including migrant workers. Most non-Ivorian Africans face at least some form of social and legal discrimination. There have been attacks on foreigners in the south, something akin to ethnic pogroms, as well as anti-ethnic riots and political demonstrations.

Non-African foreigners, including French and Lebanese, are for the most part temporarily residing in Cote d'Ivoire, do not seek citizenship, and do not encounter active discrimination in Ivorian society. There have, however, been crimes against foreigners and their property, often politically motivated by those calling for Ivorianization of enterprises. Many Ivorians tend to see European residents as economic exploiters.

## Family Life

A widely shared characteristic among Cote d'Ivoire's many ethnic groups is respect for family, elderly people in general, and women. The Ivorians are hospitable people, polite, gentle and laid-back. Trust is very important in a relationship. Ivorians feel duty-bound to care for the extended family. This characteristic has seriously strained urban dwellers faced with an influx of relatives from the countryside. In social relations, men shake hands and women kiss each other three times on the cheek, starting with the left cheek. Ivorians consider it impolite to stare at people. While traditional clothing for women includes a head wrap, wearing one is a matter of individual choice in urban areas.

## Health and Welfare

Cote d'Ivoire has long had one of the most extensive public health programs in West Africa. In 1960, the average longevity was 39 years. By 1992, it had risen to 53 years for men and 57 years for women. Although there has been a drop in longevity during the past decade as government health budgets suffered, Ivorian longevity is still much higher than the norm for West Africa. Cote d'Ivoire's cities and towns have experienced overcrowding, income disparity has caused a stark contrast between the rich and the poor, and the government has been unable to provide sufficient clean water and sewage services to maintain a healthy environment. There is often malnutrition in rural areas, which also lack sealed water sources, a necessity to prevent parasitic disease. Malnutrition in northern Cote d'Ivoire is among the worst in all of Africa.

Health services, particularly in rural areas, remain inadequate. Common diseases afflicting Ivorians are malaria, hookworm, yaws, and onchocerciasis (river blindness). During the 1990s, AIDS became the leading cause of death. The country's economic difficulties have reduced health budgets, thereby limiting the government's efforts to control these diseases. River blindness, which is particular to West Africa, is caused by a parasite and spread by the black fly. Most of those affected are under 35 years old. Only 40% of households have access to water from a closed pipe which inhibits the spread of the disease. Access to clean water is as important as medicine.

## Education

The Ivorian educational system is based on the French model dating from the colonial era. Although public education is free through the university level, the government does not ensure that all children receive education, and it is common for families in rural areas to favor boys over girls. French is the language of instruction throughout the system at all levels and most textbooks are still published in France. There are also Catholic and Muslim schools.

Cote d'Ivoire had an enviable education system during the 1970s. However, due to the country's economic hardships since then, students are required to pay for their educational materials, teachers' salaries have been reduced, and new construction and expansion of schools have halted. Between 1980 and 1992, the percentage of school age children enrolled shrank from 79% to 69%. While 75% boys attend primary school, only 50% of girls do.

Children usually start primary school at age 7 or 8. The schools are often crowded and poorly staffed. Only 20% of primary school graduates continue to secondary schools in towns or cities. Families of students from rural areas must provide housing or pay for boarding at secondary schools. The graduates of secondary schools can become primary school teachers, attend vocational school, or go on to university. The National University of Cote d'Ivoire in Abidjan has 20,000 students, one-half of whom are from other African countries. Some Ivorians attend universities in France, Belgium, Canada and the United States. In the late 1990s, adult education programs emphasized basic literacy and gave priority to women. The goal was to increase the overall literacy rate to 85% by 2010, including 70% of Ivorian women. Currently, the literacy rate is 40%: 50% for males and 30% for females.

## Labor Force

Cote d'Ivoire has one of the highest birthrates in the world, 3.8%, and half of the population is under 16 years of age. More than half of the country's population lives in cities and towns. Cote d'Ivoire's labor force is estimated at 5,718,000, with over 85% engaged in agriculture and 11% wage earners. Organized labor accounts for about 20% the wage labor force. Unemployment is high in cities – as much as 25% -- and crime is high. About 15% of Abidjan's residents live in slums. The agricultural sector continues to employ much "foreign" labor. As a group, the 30% of the workforce that is foreign contributes more than half of the country's income.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- Are social class, ethnic and gender differences becoming more or less important in Ivorian society?
- Are the differences between the village, on the one hand, and the city and town, on the other, growing or diminishing?
- What factors contribute to the high Ivorian birthrate?

- How do government efforts to improve provision of health services and education affect the country's ability to build a modern economy?
- How might the traditional social class structure have affected efforts to build a modern nation and alleviate poverty?
- How do Ivorians square their dislike for "foreigners" with their continuing economic reliance on this labor pool?

# ECONOMY

## Economic Policy

French colonial policy, which required economic self-sufficiency, helped make Cote d'Ivoire France's most prosperous territory in West Africa by the mid-1950s. The country's economic success was based on agriculture. Underlying the economy and making its performance possible was the French support for the country's currency, the C.F.A. (*Communauté Financière Africaine*) franc, which was convertible to the French franc (and now the Euro). The French government guaranteed the stability of the franc and established the Central Bank of the West African States to issue currency and control credit for the participating governments. The C.F.A. franc greatly facilitated commercial and financial activities among the countries of the region as well as their international trading partners. At the time of writing, the CFA franc traded at the rate of 791.87=\$1.00.

During the first twenty years of independence, Cote d'Ivoire was extolled as a shining economic success story based on its reliance on the "free market" system. At the time, Cote d'Ivoire was one of the few sub-Saharan countries not promoting socialism. And, its success was notable. In fact, Cote d'Ivoire's economy followed a dirigist, state-planned and invested economic model heavily reliant on French direction and assistance. There was considerable government control over the economy, via investment and tax policies. Cote d'Ivoire can be compared to Brazil, not only as an important producer of agricultural commodities, but also as an emergent industrial nation undergoing rapid social as well as economic transformation.

Cote d'Ivoire's agricultural sector provides 80-95% of the country's total exports and is the most important contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the importance of this sector makes the economy heavily dependent on volatile international commodity markets. Since the 1980s, the country's large foreign debt has been hard to manage and led the government to privatize many state enterprises. Nevertheless, Cote d'Ivoire lacked sufficient investment to maintain its high economic growth rate. The economic downturn of the late 1990s demonstrated that the country's widespread prosperity lacked deep roots. Continued availability of foreign investment – especially from the private

sector – and adequate energy sources at stable prices are critical to the country's economic growth in the long-term.

## Economic Performance

Ivorian President Houphouet-Boigny's greatest achievement was to make Cote d'Ivoire the wealthiest country in West Africa (per capita). He believed that increasing the agricultural output would make up for the lack of other commercializable resources. Following independence in 1960, the country also spurred development of non-agricultural economic growth in the coastal area near Abidjan. This occurred largely through French private investment and by French technical experts. The government itself was also deeply involved in the economy, not only building infrastructure, but also setting up and managing para-statal enterprises. During the 1960s and 1970s, Ivorians flocked to Abidjan for jobs, thereby increasing the differences between the city and the village.

By end of the 1960s, Cote d'Ivoire had achieved a 50% increase in the production of coffee, cocoa and bananas, and a 200% increase in pineapple production. During the 1960s, the country had an average annual growth rate of 10-12 percent. The Ivorian Caisse de Stabilisation was established to regulate prices for agricultural commodities, to buffer Ivorian producers from the price volatility of the international market, and to make a profit for the government during the good times. The Ivorian government encouraged production of agricultural commodities for export, allowed prices to rise with inflation, welcomed the influx of cheap agricultural labor from neighboring countries, and coddled Ivorian farmers in what would eventually become a heavily debt-laden sector.

However, due to the country's overall high growth rate, agriculture accounted for only one-quarter of the economy by the early 1970s. The discovery of oil in the late 1970s helped diversify and stimulate the economy further. By 1980, per capita income had increased 61% and the country enjoyed a more even distribution of wealth than other African countries. Immigrants from various African countries continued to arrive in Cote d'Ivoire to work in agriculture. Even during this period of strong economic growth, urban populations experienced both unemployment and under-employment, and Europeans continued to dominate the top executive jobs. In addition, there were growing regional disparities.

In the mid-1970s, the government made a major effort to diversify the economy by expanding the production of palm oil, natural rubber, coconut oil, cotton, sugar, and tropical fruits. The Ivorian economic success sustained itself reasonably well through the 1970s, but the overall growth rate dropped precipitously in the following decade.

During the worldwide recession in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the country's economic growth slowed considerably, commodity prices fell internationally, and severe droughts continued to affect Ivorian farmers' yields. The 1973 Sahelian drought especially plagued northern farmers. Desertification resulting from the southward growth of the Sahara, which many believe was hastened by the over-exploitation of forest resources in the country's southern band, continues to worsen economic conditions in the north. The economic slowdown also resulted in rampant unemployment in cities where workers

had previously been lured by economic opportunities. In addition, the country suffered from hyperinflation between 1973 and 1985.

Although Cote d'Ivoire had a 7.2 percent annual growth rate during 1960-81, better than almost any other country during the same period, this was not the result of "economic liberalism." The government was involved in the economy as an owner and manager of agriculture and industry, and as a close regulator of the private sector as well. Since the 1980s, many of the government-invested industries were privatized. During this period, there were calls for the government to Ivorianize the public sector, as well, since many expatriates still held responsible positions in the government and the para-statal. At that time, international coffee and cocoa prices dropped and there were tensions between Ivorian and migrant farmers.

By the late 1980s, even more significant than the fall in international commodity prices was the drying up of foreign and domestic investment needed to sustain economic growth. Offshore petroleum production failed to meet expectations. Meanwhile, the government diverted scarce export income into non-productive investments, such as the immense Catholic basilica in Yamoussoukro. Substantial foreign borrowing increased the country's foreign debt burden and mortgaged its economic future.

In the 1980s, the Ivorian government undertook efforts to stockpile coffee and cocoa in hopes of firming the world market price. This plan failed and caught the government in a position of not being able to repay its foreign loans. The high level of foreign borrowing during the mid-1970s led to debt payment problems. In May 1987, Cote d'Ivoire suspended payments on its foreign debt and held re-scheduling negotiations with the Paris Club, the IMF and the London Club. In the late 1980s, the government undertook a structural adjustment program, putting in place austerity measures, as a result of IMF requirements, but a corruption scandal caused the cutoff of funds from the IMF and other lenders. Furthermore, a decision by the European Union to allow chocolate makers to use less cocoa butter resulted in the potential loss of \$1.5 billion in export revenue which caused a reduction in cocoa prices for producers by as much as 20%.

In the run-up to the 1990 election, Laurent Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front party called for ivorianizing the public sector and decentralizing municipal governments. President Houphouet-Boigny, however, took a hard line, dissolving unions, closing universities, and arresting the protesters. By the 1990s, there were resentments and frustrations among farmers in northern Cote d'Ivoire, who simultaneously faced the collapse of the world commodity markets, the worsening of their fields due to desertification, apparent corruption, and favoritism to the country's south. Frequent failures of electric power in Abidjan made it impossible for residents to ignore the serious problems in the economy, as well as the implications for continued government rule. The pro-democracy movements in neighboring West African countries, especially Mali and Ghana, also influenced Ivorians in considering changes to their system.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank forced Cote d'Ivoire to agree to a structural adjustment plan as a condition for assistance. The government had to reduce civil service salaries and grants to students. Many Ivorians targeted government officials' corruption as an issue and began to call for an end to one-party rule. Following the 1993 death of President Houphouet-Boigny and during the

first term of his successor, President Henri Konan Bedie, Cote d'Ivoire reached an agreement with the IMF/World Bank to forego 50% of its foreign debt and reschedule the rest as part of a new structural adjustment package, valued \$800 million. However, the Fund/Bank also required specific reforms: the end of state-mandated cocoa prices to farmers and the abolition of the state marketing board, the Caisse de Stabilisation.

The Ivorian economy experienced steady growth after 1995 due to French devaluation of the CFA franc, improved cocoa and coffee prices, growth in non-traditional primary exports, limited trade and banking liberalization, offshore oil and gas discoveries as well as external financing and debt rescheduling by multilateral lenders and France. In 1998, the government concluded an enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) with the IMF that resulted in rescheduling a portion of the accumulated debt. The country's \$16 billion debt was thereby reduced to \$12 billion. Nonetheless, during 1999, approximately 38% of the budget was committed to debt servicing.

When the Ivorian military took over power in January 2000, it canceled Cote d'Ivoire's international debt payments. In March 2001, the World Bank declared Cote d'Ivoire to be in a non-payment status, making it ineligible for new loans and fresh disbursements from the already approved assistance programs. Although the country had achieved a 6% growth rate during 1995-98, by 1999 growth had dropped to 1.6%. In 2000, the country experienced negative growth for the first time, -2.4%.

Following the fall 2000 presidential elections and the establishment of President Laurent Gbagbo's new government in 2001, the World Bank/IMF determined the country had made satisfactory progress towards its economic goals. In March 2002, the Bank/Fund approved a new adjustment program. The Ivorian government recently completed a new Poverty Reduction Strategy Framework in preparation for further donor assistance. Foreign donors have generally agreed to provide broad-based assistance for the environment, especially forestry and national parks, as well as rural development, infrastructure and education. Sustainable growth over the long-term will require the development of a modern labor force, for which universal education is the key, as well as the upgrading of the organizational capabilities of institutions, and dealing conclusively with poverty. Government's ability meet these challenges is a key test of its effectiveness. Economic decisions made in the 1980s and 1990s, which very much limit the options of the current government leaders, continue to dog Cote d'Ivoire.

## Agriculture

Cote d'Ivoire's principal resource is its rich, well-watered soil. During the colonial period, especially between 1900-1930, the French established the country's plantation economy, based on coffee and cocoa, bananas and pineapples, which became the chief exports. Pre-independence, most large, commercial plantations were owned by French settlers and farmed by Ivorian *corvee* labor. Generally, Ivorian farmers found difficulty competing with French plantation owners, who received better prices and favorable trade treatment. During World War I, the French relied on Ivorians to produce more cocoa, cotton, rice and rubber destined for the war effort in Europe.



Since independence, Cote d'Ivoire has become the world's largest cocoa producer – one million tons a year, or 40% share of world market. The country is also the leading African producer of coffee -- 175,000 tons annually. The agricultural sector employs more than one-quarter of the population and there are 620,000 cocoa and coffee farmers. At least 20% of coffee, cocoa, rubber and palm oil products are processed in Cote d'Ivoire prior to export. Additional agricultural products are cotton, bananas, rubber, rice, sugar, pineapple, coconut, yams, cassava (which produces tapioca), okra, sweet potatoes, peppers, and plantain bananas. Livestock is restricted to goats and sheep as the incidence of the tsetse fly greatly restricts cattle raising. Despite the country's success in agriculture, Cote d'Ivoire remains one of top 10 food importers in Africa because cultivated land emphasizes commercial cash crops.

## Industry

Cote d'Ivoire's main manufacturing industries involve the processing of food and other agricultural materials processing, lumber production, textiles, chemicals, auto assembly, oil refining, and the production of steel containers and aluminum sheets.

Cote d'Ivoire's forest resources, especially the niagou, samba and mahogany trees, were sought after by European cabinetmakers and importers of hardwood plywood. Unfortunately, over-exploitation of the country's forest reserves led to the collapse of the timber industry. What is worse, the excess logging of timber resources also resulted in rapid, unremediated and unremediable deforestation. Although the country's forest resources have been seriously depleted, it still produces the following wood products: plywood, crates, boxes, veneer, cabinets, and furniture.

The country's few extractive industries include the mining of copper, nickel, uranium, and manganese, as well as some diamond production on the Bou tributary of the Bandama River. Oil was discovered in commercializable quantities in 1977. Production began in 1980 and the country currently has an annual output of 2.5 million barrels. In 1990, gold was discovered.

Tourism, which was the most developed in West Africa, fell as a result of political instability in the late 1990s. Since the tourism industry drew on the country's rich cultural heritage as well as its relatively developed infrastructure to facilitate trips to the outlying regions, it is hoped this sector will revive.

## Power, Transportation and Communications

Cote d'Ivoire is self-sufficient in electric power and exports power to Ghana, as well. There are two hydroelectric plants, on the Bia and Bandama rivers. There are plans to include Cote d'Ivoire in a five-country regional West African natural gas link up with Nigeria.

During the period of European exploration, Cote d'Ivoire's section of the Gulf of Guinea did not lend itself to trade due to the lack of natural harbors. During 1901-1934, the French constructed wharves at Grand-Bassam to facilitate the export of cash crops. They built the Asagny Canal to connect Grand-Bassam with Abidjan and Grand-Lahou, other key commercial cities. In 1950, the French built the Vridi

canal, which opened up Abidjan to ocean-going ships.

Cote d'Ivoire has a good telecommunications system. There are also two modern ports: Abidjan, one of the busiest in Africa, and San Pedro, in the southwest. The country has excellent national and international air links centered on the Abidjan International Airport at Port-Bouet. Air Afrique was headquartered in Abidjan until its demise in 2002.

## Foreign Investment and Trade

Cote d'Ivoire has been a member of the IFC since 1963, and its IFC portfolio totals \$115 million, the fourth largest in Africa. Since the mid-1990s, foreign investment has dropped 40%. Cote d'Ivoire's main exports are agricultural commodities, especially coffee and cocoa. In 1995, the country's exports were \$3.7 billion, and imports were \$2.4 billion. Cote d'Ivoire's main trading partners for exports are the Netherlands, France, Germany, and the United States; for imports, the main trading partners are France, Nigeria, Germany, Italy, and the United States. Imports from the United States include paper products, computer hardware and software, cosmetics, and toiletries.

Because the bulk of Cote d'Ivoire's exports are agricultural commodities, the international terms of trade often go against the country. Doubtless, this fact helped contribute to the balance of payments difficulties the country experienced in the 1980s and 1990s. The devaluation of the CFA franc helped spur exports, which had been held back due to the country's high cost structure. Continued challenges for the government are to lure new foreign direct investment as well as foster the indigenous capital market.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- What were the most successful economic policies made during the 1960s-1980s?
- Which economic policies during that period were less successful?
- Which sectors are most likely to attract private sector investment?
- Which sectors would benefit the economy the most if public sector spending were increased?
- What is Cote d'Ivoire's current economic policy and what are its prospects for success?
- How can Cote d'Ivoire continue to build a modern economy and society on the basis of the export of agricultural commodities?
- How can Cote d'Ivoire's agricultural plantations continue to depend on "foreign" labor to harvest commodities if that labor force is discriminated against politically and socially?

- What are the prospects for the development of Ivorian industry?
- Will Cote d'Ivoire continue to rely on IMF/World Bank loans or will it be able to attract foreign direct investment and mobilize its internal capital?

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Necklace of West African trade beads from Cote d'Ivoire

# POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

## Government Structure

The government of Cote d'Ivoire is closely modeled on that of the French Fifth Republic. The 1960 constitution was based on the French constitution of 1958, which provided for a democratic republic with three branches of government. It also bears the strong stamp of first president Houphouet-Boigny's influence. As in the United States, for most of the country's history, the president has simultaneously been head of state, head of government, and commander in chief of the armed forces. Houphouet-Boigny also headed the PDCI, which was the country's only legal political party for most of his rule. Houphouet-Boigny's successor Bedie also headed the PDCI. The current president, Laurent Gbagbo heads his own political party, the PFI.

The constitution called for the president to be elected directly every 5 years. The president was to be assisted by the Council of Ministers and the Economic and Social Council. The councils' purpose was to suggest and vet ideas and laws or programs for the president's consideration.

The 1960 constitution guaranteed freedom, granted equal treatment before the law and permitted no discrimination based on religion, race, gender, or place of birth. People charged with crimes were presumed innocent until proved guilty and had the right to representation by counsel. The right to post bail, however, was not guaranteed, nor were the freedoms of press or assembly.

The legislative branch, the National Assembly, has had 175 deputies since 1985. The deputies are elected for five-year terms at the same time as the president, and they elect their own leader. The function of the deputies is to pass or reject laws proposed by president or other deputies.

The judicial branch comprises the following superior courts: the Supreme Court, which reviews National Assembly laws before they are implemented; the High Court of Justice, which has right to impeach the president and try government officers for crimes in office; and the State Security Court. The judicial branch also oversees various lower courts that try criminal and civil cases. The president appoints all judges.

The constitution of 1960 provided for several layers of local government. The country was divided into 49 prefectures, which were in turn divided into sub prefectures. The prefects and sub prefects were appointed by the national government and normally were not natives of areas they governed. Their purpose was to ensure the proper implementation of laws and provision of government services, such as health care, education, and agricultural assistance to farmers.

The lowest level of local government was villages and cities. The villages could select a leader or chief,

who must then be approved by the prefect and work under the supervision of the sub prefect. Larger cities and towns were permitted municipal councils and mayors. The municipal council was elected by the citizens. The mayors were selected by the council. The Ministry of Interior set guidelines for the selection process as well as the responsibilities of the office holders.

Cote d'Ivoire's legal system was based on French civil law and African customary law. Judicial review was performed in the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court. Cote d'Ivoire has not accepted compulsory jurisdiction by the International Court of Justice.

## Houphouet-Boigny's Model

President Houphouet-Boigny was comfortable with the French dirigist model in economics, which requires a strong, centrally driven unitary government with most decision making taking place in the capital by bureaucrats. For the most part, during the period of 1960-90, only PDCI members could be elected to political office, only PDCI publications and media were permitted, and Ivorians did not enjoy freedom of speech or press. The government routinely relied on the army to back up the police in controlling and quashing demonstrations and other forms of public dissent.

The president and the PDCI controlled election to the National Assembly, which became a rubber stamp for the president's preferred policies. The PDCI is organized along the lines of the French Communist Party, which provided technical assistance during the 1940s. However, the PDCI is a mass organization, without restrictions on membership. Prior to the country's independence, the PDCI sought continued association with France in the French Community. The PDCI has been an effective mouthpiece for the elite, and has not been comfortable with democracy or with democratic methods. In its heyday, Houphouet-Boigny maintained autocratic control and enabled the PDCI to remain the country's sole political party for 30 years.

Houphouet-Boigny made effective use of the Ivorian custom of *palaver* (a public discussion of issues involving the leader) to govern. Controversial issues were publicly aired in this environment, which gave all sides a chance to make their positions known. After listening to the debate, the chief executive then made his decision. In most cases, the entire group accepted his decision. Continued public dissent was rare, and usually not permitted by the government. Houphouet-Boigny encouraged farmers and businesspeople to seek positions in local government as well as the national legislature. The president governed through an alliance of Akan-speaking southerners and Muslim northerners.

## Fractures in the System

Since the early 1980s, students have protested against the continued role of foreigners in the economy and government, as well as corruption. They also agitated for an end to one party rule. Prior to the election of 1990, other parties were allowed to form and the current president, Laurent Gbagbo, headed a major opposition efforts.

## The Post-Houphouet Era

As economic conditions during the 1980s worsened, the perceived slow pace of Ivorization became a political issue among some groups, especially students and urban dwellers. There was a popular call for political choice, but the government was not willing to permit other parties. Economic conditions forced the government to reduce services and freeze wages. Unemployment rose, as did inflation. Attacks against expatriates led to a dropoff of tourism and foreign investment.

Both Ivorians and Cote d'Ivoire's foreign partners, especially France, were concerned about the lack of a clear succession policy and an anointed successor to the president. They also pressed Houphouet-Boigny to legalize other political parties besides the PDCI. In September 1989, Houphouet-Boigny undertook "five days of dialogue" permitting criticism of party and government that called for a multi-party system. Prior to the election in 1990, the president permitted the formation and legalization of other political parties and allowed their candidates to run for office.

After Houphouet-Boigny's seventh election victory in 1990, which followed the government's brutal quelling of frequent demonstrations, he designated fellow Baoule Henri Konan Bedie as the vice president and Muslim northerner Philippe Yace as National Assembly speaker. Under various previous constitutional amendments, the incumbents of one of those positions had been designated as the successor to the president in the event of his inability to govern. In 1990, Houphouet-Boigny had enacted a new constitutional amendment that clearly designated the vice president as his successor.

## Politics Under Bedie

President Bedie stressed a policy of Ivorian nationalism known as *Ivoirite*, the overt favoring of citizens whose parents were born in Cote d'Ivoire. Because Bedie gave precedence to members of his Baoule group, politics became defined by ethnicity more than any single other factor. A combination of government corruption, inefficient enterprise management and poor government direction characterized Bedie's term in office.

## How the 1999 Coup Changed Politics

Cote d'Ivoire has been changed in many ways since the 1999 Christmas Eve coup. First and foremost is the precedent of a change of government brought about by the military, a first-time occurrence in Ivorian history. Now that the military has demonstrated success in taking over the country, their power can never be discounted by the elected president. This military has, therefore, become a force in politics. This is new for Cote d'Ivoire. Secondly, the country enacted a Second Constitution that enshrines many of the anti-foreign policies that became popular during the 1990s. That is, a significant portion of the inhabitants of the country have been denied the basic political rights of citizens. It remains to be seen whether this can be sustained, especially since these "foreigners" are so important economically. Finally, the coup did bring into the presidency the first "opposition" candidate. However, President Gbagbo governs without the benefit of a clear-cut electoral victory. If he runs in a future presidential election and

wins outright, that would legitimize his administration. However, the nature of future elections is by no means certain, and President Gbagbo's ability to retain sufficient popularity to win one is even more difficult to foresee.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- How did France's colonial policies affect post-independence governmental organization and functioning?
- How did Houphouet-Boigny's personal background shape him as a political leader?
- Why did Houphouet-Boigny distrust democracy?
- What have been the most important factors affecting the Ivorian political system during the past ten years?
- Has the establishment of a multi-party system spurred the development of democratic institutions?

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Ivorian bronze statue of a king and his courtiers

## POLITICAL LEADER PROFILES

### FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY

The future first leader of his country was born on October 18, 1905 in Yamoussoukro, central Cote d'Ivoire. A member of the country's largest ethnic group, the Baoule, Felix Houphouet-Boigny was descended from a line of chiefs. A blend of French and traditional cultures, Houphouet-Boigny became a catholic at age 11 and attended the Ecole William Ponty and the Ecole de Medicine et de Pharmacie in Dakar, Senegal, where he was trained as a *medecin africain*, an African doctor. While in Dakar, Houphouet-Boigny became acquainted with the future political elite of West Africa.

Houphouet-Boigny's early career, during 1925-40, involved serving as a rural doctor and running a coffee plantation in Cote d'Ivoire. He married a woman related to the Agni kings and in 1940 he inherited extensive coffee plantations near Yamoussoukro, whose output he expanded with modern techniques to include cocoa production. After being appointed Baoule chief for that area, he formed the Association of Customary Chiefs, and he eventually became associated with international Marxist organizations. In 1944, Houphouet-Boigny helped found the African Agricultural Union, representing 20,000 African planters, laborers, civil servants, and traders, to counter existing colonial policy favoring French plantation owners. Since that year, Houphouet-Boigny was his country's most prominent politician.

His list of accomplishments is vast:



In 1945 he got the French to abolish *corvee* forced labor on plantations;

He formed the *Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire* (PDCI), which was to remain the country's sole or main political party until 1999;

In 1945 and 1946 he was elected to the French National Assembly, where he affiliated with the Communist Party;

In 1950 he broke with the Communists and began cooperation with the French;

He made the PDCI part of the *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* (African Democratic Rally), in the pre-independence period a political force throughout French West Africa;

In 1956 he was appointed as a minister of state in the French government and became mayor of Abidjan;

In 1957 he was elected president of the Grand Council of French West Africa in Senegal and speaker of the Territorial Assembly of Cote d'Ivoire;

In 1958 he served as Minister of Health in Paris and he campaigned for self-government within the French Community;

In 1959 he became prime minister of Cote d'Ivoire; and

In 1960 he was elected the first president of Cote d'Ivoire.

To his credit, during his years in office, Houphouet-Boigny maintained Cote d'Ivoire on a western-oriented course. His charismatic personality enabled him to do much, and kept the taint of scandal and corruption from sticking to him. He governed by hard charm and effectively managed a personality cult. He assiduously co-opted political rivals and periodically granted amnesty to political prisoners as well as those in prison for less violent crimes.

After only a few years in office, he was already respectfully known as *Le Vieux*, the "old man." From start to finish, his main political base was his fellow African planters. Houphouet-Boigny encouraged the commercial production and export of coffee and cocoa. He made many trips to the United States, which he admired, and met with eight U.S. presidents.

In the 1960s, Houphouet-Boigny introduced the policy of Ivorization, i.e., replacement by educated Ivorians of French or other expatriate government officials and professionals, teachers, technicians, and managers. Widely hailed during the 1960s and 1970s for managing the "Ivorian miracle," towards the end of his career, Houphouet-Boigny became increasingly unresponsive to the call for political reform, refusing to give up power or to facilitate the succession. During his seventh term as president, he died in

office on December 7, 1993, after a six-month struggle with prostate cancer. His ultimate legacy was to leave his country in the hands of status quo cronies tarnished by corruption and uninterested in democracy.

## HENRI KONAN BEDIE

A Baoule and a Christian like Houphouet-Boigny, Bedie is a second-generation politician and a technocrat. He was born in Dadiékro in Central Cote d'Ivoire in 1934, and was educated both in Cote d'Ivoire and France, where he received a doctorate in economics at the University of Poitiers. In 1960 he entered the French colonial service and served as diplomatic counselor at the French Embassy in Washington. Subsequently, he was the first Ivorian Ambassador to the United States for six years. In 1966 he was named Minister Delegate for Financial Affairs, and thereafter was promoted to Minister of Economy and Finance, serving concurrently as governor of the IMF and administrator for the World Bank.

In 1977 Bedie was dismissed from the ministry after the bankruptcy of some state-owned sugar factories. He then became special advisor on African affairs to the president of the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank in Washington. In 1980 he returned to Cote d'Ivoire and was elected president of the National Assembly. During the 1980s, he received support from the younger generation of politicians, except those who favored closer ties with the United States and Germany. As the leader of the National Assembly at the time of Houphouet-Boigny's death, Bedie constitutionally succeeded him as president.

Less self-confident and politically skilled than Houphouet-Boigny, Bedie overtly favored members of the Baoule ethnic group and pushed an exclusionist policy, especially against those born outside Cote d'Ivoire, and aimed primarily at keeping potential rival Alassane Ouattara from holding elected office. Despite successively draconian measures that significantly curtailed civil rights and led to human rights abuses, Bedie was unable to contain the resentments of northerners and others, especially as the economy tanked in the late 1990s. In 1996 he devised a new interpretation of *Ivoirite*, Ivorian identity, separating the population into "pure Ivorians" and "circumstantial Ivorians," i.e., immigrants and their descendants. These policies, which some Ivorian intellectuals labeled "neo-fascist," restricted the civil rights of people whose forebears were not born in Cote d'Ivoire, and resulted in the social as well as political stigmatization of "foreigners." Bedie also ensured that strict nationality rules were enacted in the Ivorian Electoral Code. However popular such policies might have been with Ivorians, the public perception of government corruption and inept economic management resulted in the December 1999 military coup and government takeover by General Robert Guei, and Bedie's subsequent flight to Togo and then France. Bedie's legacy was ethnic polarization, xenophobia, and economic bankruptcy.

## ALASSANE DRAMANE OUATTARA

Ouattara, a Muslim, was born in 1942 in Dimbokro in northern Cote d'Ivoire to parents who had immigrated from modern-day Burkina Faso. He studied at the Drexel Institute of Technology in

Philadelphia, and received a M.A. and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania. A technocrat, Ouattara served his country in many capacities, both inside and outside government. President Houphouet-Boigny, who recognized his capability, named him prime minister. He thus became Henri Konan Bedie's chief political rival.

Ironically, Ouattara laid the foundations for the country's ethnic polarization while prime minister by introducing national Identity cards. The emphasis on the birthplace of Ivorian residents and their parents became his political undoing. In 1994, he founded the Democratic Rally of Republicans (RDR) and remains its leader. In that year, he accepted the appointment of IMF deputy director. In 1995, new electoral rules prevented him from running for president. He also served in several positions at the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), including as governor. In April 1998, Ouattara announced he would again seek election in Cote d'Ivoire, even if it required a court case to test his eligibility. However, President Bedie successfully manipulated anti-northerner sentiments among southerners and thereby mobilized public opinion against Ouattara. Changes in the 2000 Second Republic constitution, and supreme court decisions, effectively bar Ouattara from elective office in Cote d'Ivoire.

Despite what appears to be an end to his political aspirations, Ouattara remains the single credible opposition leader in Cote d'Ivoire. Although Ouattara can count on a substantial following among Muslims in general and fellow northerners in particular, he is shunned by the nationalists, including traditional PDCI supporters and members of other parties prominent in the south and west.

## **GENERAL ROBERT GUEI**

General Guei, born in 1941, is a member of the Yakouba (Guere) ethnic group in western Cote d'Ivoire, which is related to the Gio group of Liberian President Charles Taylor. There may have been a political relationship between General Guei and President Taylor. He was a French-trained career officer. Under President Houphouet-Boigny, he served as army chief of staff and led Ivorian troops against students at the University of Abidjan to quell demonstrations in 1991. He refused a similar order in 1995 from President Bedie and retired to his plantation leading to rumors he was planning a coup. Although he criticized Bedie for playing ethnic politics, Guei nevertheless supported Bedie's nationalist and anti-foreign policy of *Ivoirite*. Bedie demoted Guei, and then kicked him out of government in 1997, because of the coup rumors. Nicknamed "Le Boss" by his military colleagues, he was long considered a political enemy of Bedie.

When disgruntled soldiers demanding back pay successfully engineered the 1999 Christmas Eve coup, General Guei accepted their appeal to serve as interim leader. He headed the National Committee of Public Salvation comprised of nine senior military officers. During his ten months in power, he stopped Cote d'Ivoire's international debt payments, reassured the international community he would support a return to democracy, held a convention to draft a decidedly anti-foreign Ivorian constitution, and then decided to run for president, despite earlier assurances he had no such ambitions. The latter decision resulted in prolonged student riots.

Although Guei personally welcomed Ouattara on his return to Cote d'Ivoire following the coup, Guei nevertheless backed constitutional changes that barred Ouattara from seeking elective office. Guei himself was denied support by his own party, the PDCI, which boycotted the elections along with Ouattara's RDR. Although Gbagbo won the November 2000 vote, Guei claimed victory, and then fled to Liberia in the wake of widespread opposition-led demonstrations and lack of army support. Although there is little popular support for the military, it continues to be feared, and has become a necessary linchpin of the current president's rule. There continue to be popular concerns voiced about General Guei's relationship with Liberian President Taylor.

## LAURENT GBAGBO

Cote d'Ivoire's current president, and the first president of the Second Republic, Laurent Gbagbo is a member of the Bete community, a rival group to Houphouet-Boigny's Baoule. Born in 1945 in the central-western city of Gagnoa, he was a political activist during his student days and spent 1971-73 in prison. He met his wife Simone Ehivet in the mid-1970s. They are both committed socialist activists. Gbagbo was a young history professor during the 1982 anti-government protest by students at the National University of Cote d'Ivoire. Following the demonstration, Gbagbo sought voluntary exile in France.

At the time, Gbagbo signified a paradigm shift in Ivorian politics. Labeled a "youthful firebrand," he was the only politician of note to publicly challenge President Houphouet-Boigny and he refused to be co-opted. Gbagbo spoke out in favor of a multiparty political system and real democracy and he sought to fight against the "dictatorship of the PDCI." He returned to Cote d'Ivoire in 1988 to help found the Ivorian Popular Front (*Front Populaire Ivoirien* – FPI). As the FPI candidate for president, Gbagbo was beaten by Houphouet-Boigny in 1990, although he received a respectable 18% of the votes. Following student demonstrations in the early 1990s, Gbagbo was jailed again in 1992. As a member of the National Assembly in the mid-1990s, Gbagbo allied with the PDCI in support of a revision of the electoral code to prohibit "foreigners" from seeking office. The alliance was short-lived and both the FPI and Ouattara's RDR boycotted the polls, thereby throwing the presidency to Bedie in 1995.

Although Gbagbo made a favorable showing in the November 2000 presidential election, General Guei claimed victory. However, when the army refused to support him against popular opposition, General Guei fled the country and Gbagbo became president by default. Since Gbagbo refused to hold new elections, his succession to the presidency was won at the cost of legitimacy. Gbagbo's challenge is to govern a country badly riven by ethnic and anti-foreign tensions, and with severe economic strains as well. Time will tell whether he will be true to the democratic ideals he once espoused.



Detail of bronze statue of Ivorian king

## NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

### Overview

Since independence in 1960, France continued to maintain close relations with Cote d'Ivoire. Indeed, for the first decade, many French administrators remained in place, both in government and business. Cote d'Ivoire drafted a rational and achievable economic development plan that it proceeded to implement. Ever since then, France has maintained considerable economic and political influence. At the time of independence, Cote d'Ivoire faced enmity or strained relations with neighbors Guinea, Mali and Ghana. Therefore, Houphouet-Boigny insisted that France maintain a battalion of marines near Abidjan to buttress his own military.

Under Houphouet-Boigny, Cote d'Ivoire established a tradition of freethinking in foreign policy. It was not afraid to go against the trend of other African countries. Cote d'Ivoire was one of the few African countries with a significant Muslim population to establish relations with Israel. It was one of the last countries in Africa to shift recognition from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China, and Cote d'Ivoire established a dialogue with apartheid South Africa in the 1970s, an almost unprecedented policy move.

Prior to 1989, Cote d'Ivoire was extremely careful in its dealings with communist countries. Since that year, it has unhesitatingly fostered relations with Russia and Eastern European countries.

Although Cote d'Ivoire has generally been responsive to western countries' interests and concerns, and has played a role in support of West African peacekeeping operations, it has nevertheless maintained a complex relationship with Liberia.

## **Relations with African Countries**

Prior to independence in 1960, Houphouet-Boigny and other Ivorian leaders were actively involved in various political movements affecting all of West Africa. In 1959, Houphouet-Boigny founded the Council of the Entente, a grouping of Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Benin and Niger (and which now includes Togo), to foster continued ties to France and French economic aid. Cote d'Ivoire was a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and in the 1970s, it joined ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, which has the dual roles of ensuring peace and stability and encouraging trade among member states. Cote d'Ivoire has supported ECOWAS's efforts to maintain a regional military force for peacekeeping.

Cote d'Ivoire's independent line on foreign policy sometimes created problems with neighbors. During the 1966-71 Nigerian civil war, Cote d'Ivoire backed Biafran independence, one of only four African countries to do so. During the 1970s, Cote d'Ivoire maintained a dialogue with the white South African government and opened trade ties during the period of apartheid. Cote d'Ivoire was one of very few African countries, and only one outside of southern Africa, to do so.

Cote d'Ivoire's relations with Liberia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea have worsened or improved, depending on the policies those governments were implementing at the time. Since the 1970s, Cote d'Ivoire sought to improve its relations with West African countries. Nevertheless, Cote d'Ivoire is considered to have been involved in the internal politics of Burkina Faso and to have helped overthrow President Thomas Sankara. In 1985, Houphouet-Boigny negotiated peace between Mali and Burkina Faso over a boundary dispute. In 1989, Cote d'Ivoire became involved in the Liberian civil war. Charles Taylor, the Liberian rebel leader at the time and currently Liberia's president, amassed his forces and entered Liberia from Ivorian territory. There were allegations at the time that Cote d'Ivoire helped him obtain weapons. In 1991, Houphouet-Boigny hosted a peace conference in Yamoussoukro between Taylor and the then Liberian government.

Cote d'Ivoire has a history of maintaining a dialogue between francophone and anglophone countries of West Africa and attempting to mediate conflicts in other parts of Africa. Following the death of President Houphouet-Boigny, President Bedie continued this tradition. In 1997, Bedie met with Angolan opposition leader Jonas Savimbi to further the peace process. In 1998, Bedie visited South Africa at the invitation of Nelson Mandela to consolidate trade and economic relations.

## **Relations with France**

Cote d'Ivoire's closest and most consistent foreign ties have been maintained with France, especially in the area of security. France is the country's most important trading partner, and has continued to favor Cote d'Ivoire with technical and financial assistance. France also sought to support its significant private sector investment in the country. France trained Ivorian troops and in 1970, French troops helped put down an uprising in the Bete region near Gagnoa. Houphouet-Boigny was able to co-opt the rebels by paying them high salaries in government and PDCI positions, as well as by securing advanced equipment provided by France. Despite the overwhelming importance of the country's relations with France, Cote d'Ivoire sought to diversify its dependence on France by welcoming cooperative relations with other European countries as well as the United States.

Since Houphouet-Boigny's death, and especially since the mid-1990s, the French have changed their approach to the former colonies. There has been a tendency to be much less directly involved in the countries' politics or economy. The French devalued the CFA franc, decreased their financial support and foreign assistance to governments, and encouraged multilateral assistance from the IMF and World Bank, rather than continued bilateral support. Cote d'Ivoire was one of the few countries to have benefited from the devaluation of the CFA franc. The fact that France did not act to quell the 1999 coup demonstrates the extent of the change in its policy toward its client, despite the 20,000 French citizens residing in Cote d'Ivoire at the time and the continued military presence of 550 soldiers.

## **Relations with Communist Countries**

Cote d'Ivoire sought to maintain friendly, but standoffish, relations with the major communist states. This policy resulted from President Houphouet-Boigny's personal experience with the French Communist Party in the 1940s, with the various communist study groups formed in West Africa in the 1950s, and with his concern about socialist influence from his left-leaning neighbors, Guinea and Mali, in the 1960s. Cote d'Ivoire was one of the few West African countries to develop a market-based economy. Therefore, ideologically, it was at odds with communism. The country's officials were also concerned about pressure that the Soviet Union and its satellites might seek to exert on the country's foreign policy, including its votes in the United Nations. Thus, in the early 1960s, Cote d'Ivoire refused development assistance from any communist country.

In the 1980s, Cote d'Ivoire was one of the last African countries to switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China. And after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of communism in Eastern Europe, Cote d'Ivoire established friendly relations with their successor states.

## **Relations with Other Countries and the United Nations**

In the 1960s, Cote d'Ivoire established diplomatic relations with Israel, but under pressure from other African governments, broke relations in 1973. Israel provided much useful development assistance at the level of the village. Cote d'Ivoire resumed diplomatic relations in 1986 and has maintained them ever since. Cote d'Ivoire has close diplomatic ties with other major commodity producers, especially Brazil

and Malaysia. As has been true for all African countries, the United Nations has played an important role in Cote d'Ivoire, especially as an advisor on economic development.

## Relations with the United States

Since independence, Cote d'Ivoire has maintained a close relationship with the United States. Several Ivorian leaders and government officials have lived or studied in the United States and there has been an active cultural exchange program between the two countries. The United States has provided development assistance for energy, health care and micro-credit programs. There have been very few periods of strain, with the December 1999 coup and its aftermath under General Robert Guei being the most recent.

## Foreign Relations of the Gbagbo Government

As a result of the post-coup reconciliation forum and the conclusion of the Yamoussoukro Communiqué, Cote d'Ivoire has improved relations with the European Union, France, the United States and other African countries, and foreign donors have resumed their assistance to Cote d'Ivoire.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- Why have France and Cote d'Ivoire desired to maintain close relations?
- How is their relationship changing?
- To what extent has the common French language facilitated, and the different English language made more difficult, establishment of good working relationships with Cote d'Ivoire's neighbors?
- What are Cote d'Ivoire's assets in the conduct of foreign policy? What factors work against Cote d'Ivoire?
- Can Cote d'Ivoire continue to play a useful diplomatic and security role in its region?

## Reference Sources

- Harshe, Rajen, Pervasive Entente: France and Ivory Coast in African Affairs, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1985      DR545.63.F8H37





Ivory Necklace and Bracelet from Cote d'Ivoire

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### COTE D'IVOIRE SPECIFIC

#### Official Government Websites

- [www.usembassy.state.gov/Abidjan](http://www.usembassy.state.gov/Abidjan)

American Embassy Abidjan website, with current information and many useful links

- <http://cweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/citoc.html>

Library of Congress country study on Cote d'Ivoire, 1991

- [www.un.int/cotedivoire](http://www.un.int/cotedivoire)

## Cote d'Ivoire's Mission to the United Nations **General Information**

- [www.city.net](http://www.city.net)

Cote d'Ivoire

- [www.geocities.com/bcahoon.geo/Cote\\_dIvoire.html](http://www.geocities.com/bcahoon.geo/Cote_dIvoire.html)

English, Timeline and standard reference facts on Cote d'Ivoire

## ***Laurent Gbagbo***

- [www.laurentgbagbo.net](http://www.laurentgbagbo.net)

Laurent Gbagbo's self-promotion website

- [www.gbagbo.com](http://www.gbagbo.com)

French, Promotional website

- [www.laurentgbagbo.net](http://www.laurentgbagbo.net)

Additional information on President Gbagbo

- [www.pr.ci/president/biographie](http://www.pr.ci/president/biographie)

French, Official website with biography of President Gbagbo

## ***Robert Guei***

- [www.africa-info.com/pages/2ci/index.html](http://www.africa-info.com/pages/2ci/index.html)

Robert Guei's profile

## ***Alassane Ouattara***

- [www.imf.org/external/np/omd/bios/ado.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/np/omd/bios/ado.htm)

## English, Biography of Alassane Ouattara **News**

- [Dailynews.yahoo.com/fc/world/ivory\\_coast](http://Dailynews.yahoo.com/fc/world/ivory_coast)
- [www.abidjan.net](http://www.abidjan.net)

## Current news

- [www.adminnet.com](http://www.adminnet.com)

Mostly English, with some French

## **Culture**

- [www.didierbile.com](http://www.didierbile.com)

Didie Bile, the King of Zouglou, a popular musician

- [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)

Current and historical cultural features on ethnic groups and popular culture

- [Travel.dk.com/wdr/ci/mci\\_poli.htm](http://Travel.dk.com/wdr/ci/mci_poli.htm)

## Tourism information

### **Economy**

- [www.mbendi.co.za/exch/ase/p0005.htm](http://www.mbendi.co.za/exch/ase/p0005.htm)

Abidjan Stock Exchange

- [www.blackworld.com](http://www.blackworld.com)

Blackworld's coverage of Cote d'Ivoire

## **GENERAL AFRICA**

- [www.afrika.no](http://www.afrika.no)

English, Norwegian Council for Africa; Much useful information and many links on all of Africa, including individual countries

- [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com)

English, News and commentary, up-to-date

- [www.africana.com](http://www.africana.com)

English, Leader biographies and review of history and current events

- [www.africa-info.com](http://www.africa-info.com)

English, Review of history, geography, demographics

- [www.africanewswire.com](http://www.africanewswire.com)

English, Archived texts

- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/africa/news>

English, Current news and archived texts of BBC news coverage of Africa

## TEXT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adloff, Richard, West Africa: The French-speaking Nations, Yesterday and Today, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964 916.61 A237W

Old, but good context on colonial era and early period of independence.

- Bohannon, Paul, and Curtin, Philip, Africa and Africans, Fourth Edition, Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, Inc., 1995. 960B 1995

Standard university textbook.

- Cutter, Charles H., The World Today Series – Africa 2001, Harpers Ferry, WV: Stryker-Post Publications, 2001

Up-dated discussion of political and economic situation since 1999.

- Davidson, Basil, Africa in History, Revised and Expanded Version, New York: Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1991. 960D 1991

Standard reference work.

- Handoff, Robert E., editor, Cote d'Ivoire, A Country Study, Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1991 DT545.22.C66 1990

An excellent compilation from various sources.

- Kummer, Patricia K., Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) Enchantment of the World, New York: Children's Press, Grolier Publishing, 1996. J966.68 K 1996

Good guidebook and convenient source of current information on the country for those planning to visit or live there. Recommended for children (grades 4 and up).

- Sheehan, Patricia, Cote d'Ivoire (Cultures of the World series), New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2000. J966.68 S 2000

Picture-laden guidebook with some more frank and up-to-date information on

problems of the country during the late 1990s. Especially good coverage of people and their festivals.

- Trillo, Richard and Hudgens, Jim, West Africa – The Rough Guide, New York: The Rough Guides, 1995 916.6 T829W

Fairly recent tour guide with useful and practical information.

# East Africa Study Guide: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania



## Introduction

This self-study guide is intended to provide users with a working knowledge of the nations and peoples of East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Separate chapters address topics of historical to contemporary interest. Each chapter of the study guide begins with a general overview followed by issues to ponder. Thereafter the user is directed to a series of readings that elaborate on the theme presented. A listing of web sites is also provided. Obviously, the user who follows through on the readings or who even expands his study beyond the specific recommendations will benefit most from the exercise. Self-study involves a bit of legwork. Readings have been chosen from books and articles that are available in the NFATC and Main State libraries, but books may also be obtained from good university or even public libraries. Finally, on-line bookstores carry the essential texts.

Although this East African guide covers all three countries, there is an obvious breakout of topics that pertain more specifically to each nation. These will be identified as one progresses. However, given the commonality of history and of current problems – AIDS for example - one of the fascinations of East Africa is the comparison that one may make between the varying pathways chosen by the three nations. Thus, readers are encouraged to sample readings pertaining to countries outside their immediate focus so as to reinforce comparative judgments and to understand the wider regional context.

Ambassador Robert E. Gribbin prepared this study guide. He lived and worked in all three East African nations from the 1960s onward. He professes to all the opinions expressed herein and accepts responsibility for the errors and omissions.

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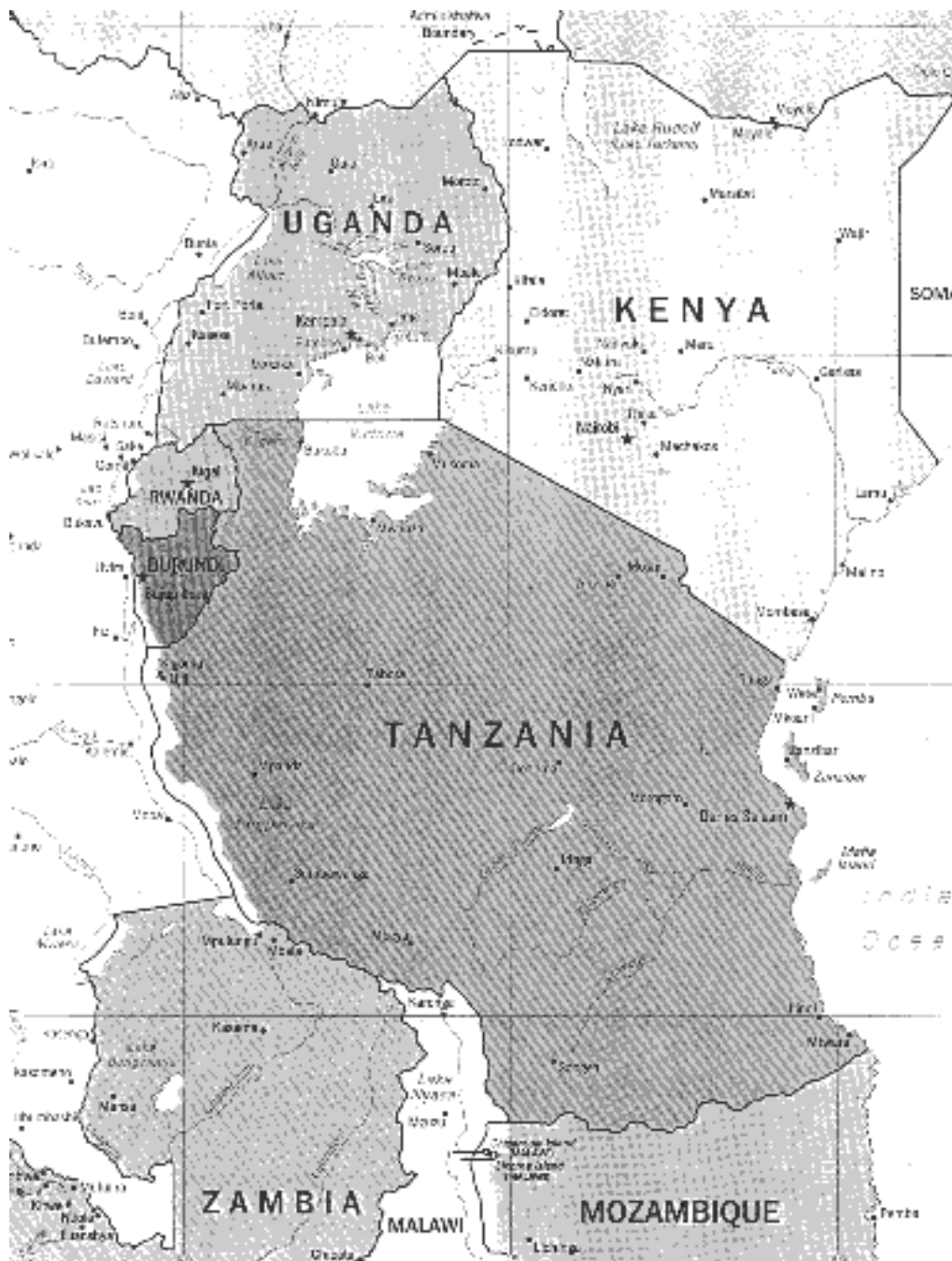
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## Chapter 1: Pre-History

### Geography

East Africa is one of the most spectacularly scenic parts of the planet because of its geography. Generally, eastern Africa is high and dry. The land rises from the coast to inland plateaus of two to five thousand feet. Statistically most of the land including Kenya's northeast and northwest, Uganda's north and Tanzania's center are very dry. Some places are deserts and others can only sustain the hardest vegetation. Fertile land abounds, however, in all three countries with Kenya having proportionately the least amount relative to its overall area. Nonetheless, East Africa's 100 million people are predominately farmers and they strive to produce crops under conditions, which range from marvelous to terrifying.



The Great Rift Valley is the region's most notable feature. It is the only place on land where the earth's tectonic plates are still moving. Beginning in Jordan, this rift holds the Red Sea, blasts through Ethiopia and manifests itself in two divisions in East Africa, the eastern and the western rifts. The eastern rift valley carves an impressive trough across Kenya and into Tanzania beginning with Lake Turkana and subsequently holding a series of lakes such as Baringo, Bogoria, Nakuru, Elementita, Navashia, Magadi, Natron and Manyara in its basin. The eastern rift valley is characterized by steep walls which provide spectacular views. The valley floor is littered with volcanoes some of which were recently active and countless hot springs. In fact, geothermal production of electricity is growing in Kenya. The eastern rift is Kenya's most dramatic geographical feature, but it does peter out south of Lake Manyara in northern Tanzania.

If anything, the western rift valley is more impressive. It holds Lakes Albert and Edward and the Semliki Nile on Uganda's western border with Congo, then Lake Kivu between Rwanda and Congo, then Lake Tanyanika, the world's second deepest fresh water lake with depths over 5,000 feet, which constitutes the border between Tanzania and Congo. These rift winds further south to cradle Lake Malawi on Tanzania's southern border. This valley also contains much volcanic activity as evidenced by hot springs and fumeroles. Mount Nyiragongo, a volcano near Goma, Congo remains quite active. Eventually, this rift will separate East Africa from the rest of the continent and let the sea flood in. However, that eventuality lies many millions of years in the future.

East Africa's largest lake, Lake Victoria Nyanza (the name itself is a marvelous redundancy - translated from Swahili it means Lake Victoria Lake) lies in a shallow basin between the two rift valleys. This vast body of fresh water provides the livelihood directly and indirectly for millions of people. Because of its size, Victoria creates its own micro-climate of regular rainfall for surrounding areas. Lake Victoria is also the source of the Nile River, which begins its northward flow at Rippon Falls, Uganda.

The highest points on the geographical tapestry of East Africa are mountains. Mount Kilimanjaro, of clear volcanic origin and certainly the most photographic peak in the world, is Africa's highest topping out at 19,340 feet. In probably what was one of the blatant gestures of colonial arrogance, Queen Victoria gave the Mountain to her cousin Willy (Kaiser Whilem of Germany) in 1901 as a birthday present. (Check the map and see how the boundary diverts to allow for this "gift.") Kilmanjaro and neighboring Mt. Meru tower over Tanzania's northern border. Further west other large volcanoes, including Ngorongoro, whose collapsed crater is the world's most unique game park, dot the landscape.

In addition to Kilmanjaro, whose northern slopes remain in Kenya, Kenya's main mountains are Mt. Kenya (17,058 ft.), whose snow covered crag dominates the sky of northern Kenya and Mount Elgon (14,178 ft.) which sits astride the western border with Uganda. In terms of surface area, Elgon wins the prize as the largest volcano in the region. Uganda's southern border with Rwanda/Congo is defined by the Virunga Volcanoes, home to the rare mountain gorillas.

Elsewhere Uganda's most prominent mountains, the mystical Mountains of the Moon, known today as the Ruwenzoris constitute part of the western frontier with the Congo. Mt. Stanley's glacier covered peak

Margarita (16,763 ft.) lies mostly hidden from outside view by ever-present clouds. Truly, the remote reaches of the Ruwenzoris resemble land that time forgot with huge ferns, verdant grasses and giant succulent plants dominating a landscape of rare plants and birds. In Kenya other ranges such as the Abedares on the eastern rift wall and the Matthews range in the semi-desert north, pushed upwards by crustal movements, indicate the range of geological forces at work in the region.

Kenya has only two major rivers that reach the Indian Ocean, the Tsavo/Galana and the Tana. A third the Uaso Nyiro evaporates in the northern desert. Tanzania too has only two major rivers, the Rufiji and the Rovuma, that reach the sea. None of these rivers is easily navigable. Historically they have not provided a means of access to the interior or vice versa. Other watercourses in Kenya and Tanzania empty into the lakes of the rift valleys or into Lake Victoria. All of Uganda's streams drain into the Nile watershed and eventually into the great river itself. The Nile begins its 3,000-mile course to the Mediterranean Sea from the northern bank of Lake Victoria (elevation 3710 feet) near present day Jinja. After the dam at Owens Falls, which produces electricity for Uganda and parts of Kenya, the Nile (in this section known as the Victoria Nile) tumbles down through white water rapids to Lake Kyoga. It turns westward and speeds up until it crashes through the nineteen-foot wide portal at Murchinson Falls and drops 150 feet in a cataclysm of spray and thunder. Then it meanders slowly to Lake Albert amidst thousands of hippos and huge crocodiles. Exiting as the Albert Nile from the northern end of the lake, the river contains some fast sections as it passes out of Uganda into Sudan. The cataracts end in southern Sudan from whence the Nile is navigable to Khartoum and beyond.

## Early Man

Anthropologists, evolutionists and paleontologists agree that human kind got its start in East Africa some several million years ago. While they agree on the basic assumption to the effect that man evolved from ape like ancestors, they disagree on when this might have happened and as to what the direct lineage was. The ape/man branch apparently had several dead ends including the much later but better known Neanderthal man. In East Africa, however, the dead ends came earlier in the paleontological record and each skeleton or fragment thereof, especially skulls, opens new areas of discussion and debate. The effort is to fully document the evolution of Homo Sapiens (i.e. us) through discovery of missing links. Also, scientists wish to understand the dead ends - why and when. This may seem like arcane science to the uninvolved, but it is very topical in East Africa. National museums in Nairobi and Dar Es Salaam feature relics of early man found at Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania (near the Serengeti) or Koobi Fora, Kenya (on Lake Turkana). The distinguished Leakey family (father Louis, mother Mary, sons Richard and Philip) blazed the way but they have been subsequently joined by numerous scientists from all around the world in trying first to find and then to interpret the fossil record. Museum societies in the three capitals often sponsor talks on current excavations.

## Modern Man

Leaping forward over the eons of time during which the region apparently sustained almost no people to the modern era, East Africa's population grew and changed over the past several thousand years due to

successive waves of gradual migrations. The oldest peoples currently in the region are remnants of hunter-gatherer clans, related to the bushmen of southern Africa or the pygmies of the Congo basin. Other Africans are usually identified at the broadest level by language group. In this regard Africa's three-principle language groups all meet and overlap in East Africa, especially in Kenya. Most East Africans speak Bantu languages, they trace their distant ancestry to people who pushed out of the Niger River delta region of current day Nigeria/Cameroon to populate most of the continent. The Bantu expansion in Africa took thousands of years and obviously involved lots of assimilation along the way. Tanzania today counts some 120 groups or tribes of people who speak Bantu tongues. Some Bantu tribes, for example the Embu, Meru and Kikuyu people of Kenya are closely related. However, they have major differences with other nearby Bantu tribes such as the Luhya and little in common with more distant groups, such as the Baganda in Uganda.

The second language group present in East Africa is the Nilotic group. As the name indicates people speaking these languages trace their roots to the upper Nile region. The Luo people around Lake Victoria and the Acholi of northern Uganda are classified as western Nilotic, the Masai of the Kenyan and Tanzanian plains are eastern Nilotic and the Kalenjin (President Moi's group) are southern Nilotic. Perhaps because they are more closely related in time, Nilotics tend to have more cultural practices in common than do Bantus.

The third language group is the Cushitic or Hamitic group represented in Kenya by Somali speakers and other emigrants from the Horn of Africa.

Finally, today there are other groups present in all three nations. Most numerous are "Asians," the term used to describe all people from the sub-continent of India. Many of their ancestors came to build the railroads around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arabs as well have lived for generations in the towns of the Swahili coast. Finally, Europeans - mostly British but including others - collectively called "wazungu" in Swahili compose a small minority of settlers and businessmen.

Even though the people of the region form a complicated mosaic of interacting languages and traditions, individual identity is often defined by Africans themselves in terms of tribe or ethnicity. Increasingly in the melting pots of cities and in the modern sector, tribal identity is breaking down somewhat as class, education, religious or other affiliations become important. That being said, and despite efforts to broaden cross-tribal appeal to deal with issues as they affect all citizens, politics in the region, especially Kenya and Uganda, continue to be defined in many instances by tribe.

One of the unifying aspects of life in East Africa is the growth of Swahili and English as common languages. Swahili is a Bantu language that has incorporated many words from Arabic, English and other languages. Spoken as an original language by the people of the coast, the Zanzibari dialect of Swahili was adopted by the East African Swahili Board in 1943 to be the basis of a standardized language. This version of Swahili became the national language of Tanzania. Under the tutelage of first President Julius Nyerere it spread widely throughout the country. Swahili is also an "official" language of Kenya and can be used in Parliament and in government, even though all documents are still mostly in English. Swahili is less common in Uganda where Luganda (the language spoken by the Baganda people) serves also as a

lingua franca, but Swahili is spoken by many people and is the language most used by the army.

English is the language of the modern sector - business, education, science, government and diplomacy – in all three nations.

## **Items to Ponder**

Why was East Africa the garden of Eden? What characteristics made it conducive to the evolution of early man? Are those elements still present today?

How has the geography of the region influenced national boundaries? One often speaks of illogical boundaries in Africa, is that true for East Africa?

Tribalism will be a theme throughout this study guide. Begin to think about personal and group identity. Who are you? How do you introduce yourself to others? By family, region of origin, profession? What do you associate with that gives you a group identity?

Hujambo! Sijambo! Habari yako? Mzuri (How are you? I am fine! What is new? Fine). As evidenced by this little greeting dialogue, Swahili is a wonderful language and most spoken forms are fairly simple. Swahili words infiltrate English throughout East Africa, for example, "wanainchi," i.e. person of the country, is almost always used in Kenya to the exclusion of citizen. Learn some Swahili (there are many phrase books and the old FSI course is excellent) and you will enjoy your tour.

## **Readings:**

Reader, John. *Africa: A Biography of the Continent*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1998.

DT20R43

Pages 9-99.

Reader's excellent pre-history of Africa is fascinating. The first sections deal with the development of human kind and are relevant to this opening chapter on East Africa.

Davidson, Basil. *Africa in History; Themes and Outlines*. McMillian, New York, 1991.

DT 20.D28 1991

Pages 7-24, "Peopling of a Continent."

Davidson has written the best history of Africa. Parts pertinent to East Africa will be flagged as we go along.

## **Web Sites:**

<http://history.evansville.net/prehistory.html>

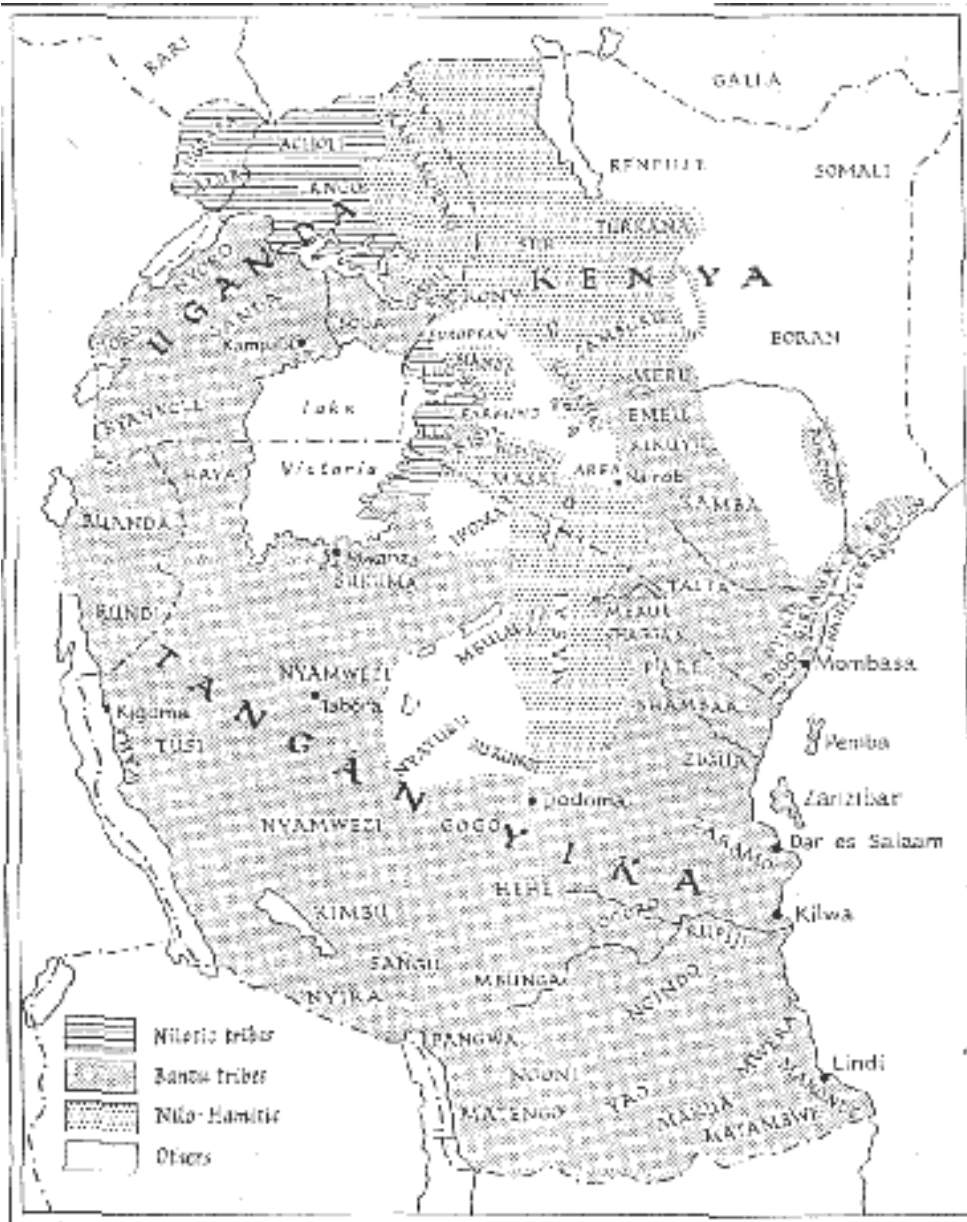
This site has a lot of anthropology links.

[www.members.aol.com/Donnpages/EarlyMan.html#EARLY](http://www.members.aol.com/Donnpages/EarlyMan.html#EARLY)

Quick and easy references to Lucy and other finds in East Africa.

<http://daphne.palomar.edu/hominid/default.htm>

This site contains a series of essays, which provide a more scholarly, journalistic look at the origins of man.



The Tribes of East Africa.

## Chapter 2: Early Civilizations

Even as population movements changed the complexity of the hinterlands, a recognizable, distinct and very sophisticated culture grew up along the coast. By about 800 AD small trading towns dotted the coast

line from Sofala in the south (in present day Mozambique) to the Benadir coast of present day Somalia in the north. Trade between these enclaves and the greater world of the Indian Ocean littoral – Arabia to India - flourished for centuries.

The people of these enclaves were the ancestors of the present day Swahili people; African with a good mixture of Persian and Arab included. Their towns were built of coral, which can be easily quarried and carved when wet, but which hardens to stone as it dries. The workability of this material permitted elaborate designs to be carved as ornate decorations to prominent buildings and homes. Settlements from this era evolved into present day Mombasa, Malindi, Kilwa, Zanzibar and Lamu. Other early towns were abandoned when wells dried up, disease struck or war ravaged them. It is from ruins, Geti near Malindi in Kenya is probably the best preserved, that scholars today learn something about the vanished civilization. Collectively this civilization was known as the Zenji Empire, named from a Persian word for black. Zanzibar for example is derived from the same source and means "black coast." Although the word Zenji was appropriate, these towns constituted no empire but rather a collection of independent city-states. While there were often links between ruling and prominent families, the towns usually owed no allegiance to any single sovereign.

Like Venice and Genoa in Europe, the coastal towns existed on trade. They were not centers of production, but merely collectors and forwarders of goods. They took a percentage and lived well. Gold, ivory and slaves constituted their offerings to the east. In turn the Zenji towns imported consumer goods such as porcelain, cloth, brass and other metals. They are known to have had contact with China, India and, of course, Arabia. Even though slaves were undoubtedly part of their commerce, slaving as it was to become in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was not a mainstay of the Zenji economies.

The geography of the coast was conducive to an independent seaward oriented culture. The coast is protected from greater reaches of the mainland by swamps, escarpments and near deserts. The coastal strip receives adequate rainfall. The climate is conducive to tropical agricultural. The sea provides bountiful food. And the monsoon winds blow consistently from northeast to southwest during half the year then change 180 degrees to blow in the opposite direction for six months. This means that lanteen rigged dhows can ride the winds to the east and back. Although interactions with people of the hinterlands were regular, the towns do not appear to have exercised political or military power beyond their immediate shore side spheres. To the contrary, the towns were apparently attacked and sacked from time to time by raiders from the interior.

## **Arrival of the Portuguese**

This golden, but fragile civilization endured for hundreds of years. Little is known of it, because the people had no written language, or, in any case left no records. The towns were independent but interrelated. Islam was adopted at some point along the way. It probably arrived with Omani Arabs in the seventh century. Real change, however, came in 1498 with the arrival of Portuguese sea captain Vasco da Gama. Da Gama is the best known of a series of Portuguese explorers who, under the initial impetus of Prince Henry the Navigator beginning in 1415, pushed doggedly along Africa's western coast finally to

round the Cape of Good Hope in 1488 (named by its Portuguese discoverer Bartolomeu Dias). The Portuguese quest was for adventure, wealth, power, and new lands. Prince Henry enlisted the support of the Pope who blessed the explorations and fired Portuguese religious zeal to find and aid the mythical Christian king "Prester John" who was reportedly besieged by Moslem infidels.

In the spring of 1498 having rounded the Cape of Good Hope, Da Gama entered unknown territory as he turned northward along the eastern coast. Da Gama missed the first of the Swahili towns, Sofala, at the outlet of the Zambezi River, but he subsequently landed in Mozambique town. There he found a flourishing civilization that was more advanced in many respects than was Portugal's. However, the inhabitants were infidels. That fact, coupled with the reality of superior Portuguese firepower, justified looting the town. Subsequently Da Gama looted other towns as he moved up the coast toward Mombasa, which he found hostile and prepared to resist. He by-passed Mombasa, but word of his inimical intent spread ahead of him so that the rulers of Malindi upon learning of Da Gama's coming struck a bargain with him. In exchange for peace, they would show him the way to India. Da Gama agreed, but before leaving Malindi erected a large stone cross, which he brought from Portugal, called a "padrado" that still stands today upon Malindi's headland.

Although abandoned by his Malindi-provided Arab navigator in India, Da Gama found his way back to East Africa, looted the few towns he missed on the way out and returned to Lisbon. He came back to the Indian Ocean two years later and blazed the way for other Portuguese vessels captained by even more rapacious individuals. Because black infidels peopled the towns, the Portuguese displayed no qualms about reducing them to vassalage. They enforced their will and established military bastions from which to rule. Admiral D'Almedia's conquest of the region was sealed with the subjugation of Kilwa and Mombasa in 1507. The most enduring relic of this era is the massive stone edifice of Fort Jesus which dominates the old harbor entrance at Mombasa. However, rather than military might, it was Portuguese insistence on monopolizing trade that rang the death knell for the Swahili coast. Because the Portuguese did not have the number of ships necessary to takeover or maintain the trade, it declined precipitously. Additionally, the Portuguese wanted more gold than was available and they used force to take what they wanted. Obviously, there was resistance to Portuguese rule plus much clandestine trade. Even though the Swahili coast survived this first brush with European imperialism, it was never to be the same.

Portuguese dominance of the seas and consequently of the East African coast endured 200 years, but left few marks. Only administrators and military men lived in the region. Virtually no settlers came and the staunchly Islamic communities proved immune to feeble missionary efforts. Over time the Portuguese presence weakened. Intrigue and revolts became more frequent. Mombasa was a particularly troublesome place. Fort Jesus fell to local Sultan Yusuf in 1631. It was recaptured by Portugal, but fell definitively in 1698, following a five year siege during which most of the defenders died. Saif ben Sultan who conquered the fort also drove the Portuguese from Kilwa and Pemba in 1699. Having cleared the Swahili coast of the Portuguese, he then returned to Oman to straighten out dynastic issues

To complement weakening Portuguese power in its coastal enclaves, by the end of the seventeenth century the Dutch and the English displaced Portuguese control of the oceans. Since not much of value had been found along the East African coast, it slipped out of the glare of European attention. As noted

above, sovereignty was regained, in the first instance by Imams and Sheiks from Oman who in turn passed control to prominent Swahili family dynasties such as the Mazuris in Mombassa.

## Issues to Ponder

What of the Zenji Empire remains in the culture of the coast? Does the tolerance towards others reflect a centuries old contact with the wider world?

Prince Henry the Navigator died long before Da Gama's voyage; yet he caused the development of ships and navigational devices that permitted such voyages to occur. Portuguese discoveries led directly to the Atlantic slave trade and the subjugation of Africa to European powers. Has anyone else had such an impact on Africa? Should Henry be blamed or absolved?

Why were the Portuguese so inept and unable to leave a better legacy in East Africa?

## Readings:

Davidson, Basil. *Africa in History: Themes and Outlines.*

Pages 78-82, "Swahili Coast and Interior"

Pages 190-198, "The Portuguese Era"

Davidson, Basil. *African Civilization Revisited.* Africa World Press, Trenton, NJ

Pages 125-165, "Early East Africa."

## Web Sites:

[www.pbs.org/wonders/Episodes/Epi2/Swahi\\_2.htm](http://www.pbs.org/wonders/Episodes/Epi2/Swahi_2.htm)

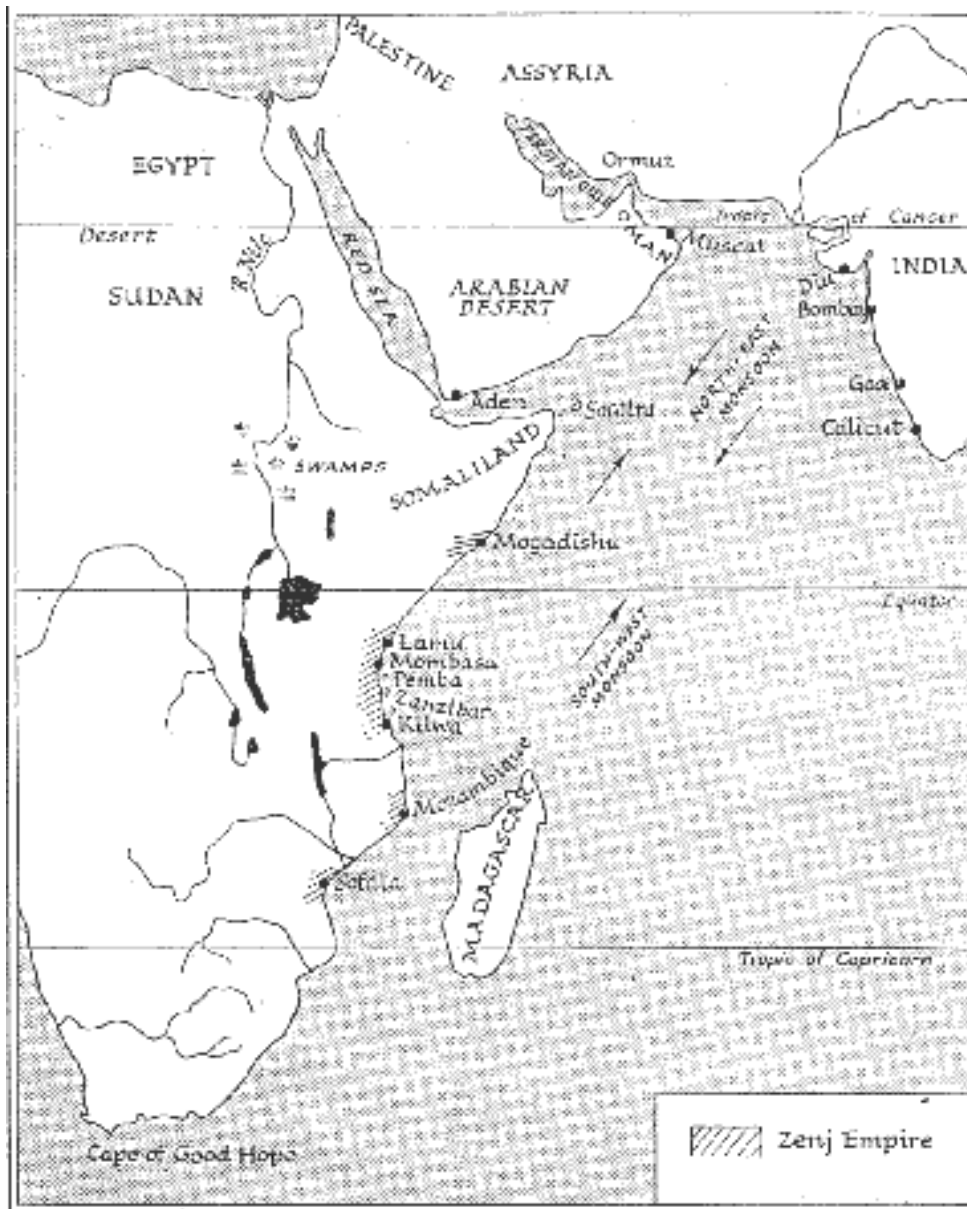
[www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/timelines/](http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/timelines/)

[www.Africana.com](http://www.Africana.com)

[www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/6497](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Styx/6497)

All three sites contain readable summaries of this epoch along the coast. The latter site focuses more exclusively on the Portuguese expansion.





The Indian Ocean.

## Chapter 3: The Omani Epoch

### Omani Sultans Rule the Coast

Omani rulers exercised indirect rule over the coast for the next hundred years, but the Sultan only formally re-claimed the coast as his dominion in 1777. His successor Seyyid Said sought to levy more direct rule in the early 1800s, but to do that had to re-take control from the Swahili families. Mombasa was the prize because of its harbor and fort. The Mazuris, however, wished to retain their independence and in 1823, just as the Sultan's forces closed in, the Mazuri sought British protection. Thinking that the establishment of a protectorate was an excellent way to abolish slavery and exceeding his orders (he had none) British naval Captain Owens who was then in Mombasa accepted the Mazuri offer and thus temporarily thwarted Sultan Seyyid Said's plans. The British government, however, reneged on the deal

in 1826 because it wanted no obligations or responsibilities in East Africa. Seyyid Said subsequently took control of Mombasa in 1837.

During the period of time when he consolidated his rule on the coast, Sultan Seyyid Said lived in Zanzibar. In fact, he formally shifted his capital from dry, sandy Muscat to green, fertile, Zanzibar in 1832. Beyond the obvious inducement of climate, Seyyid Said reckoned that commercial opportunities along the coast were superior to those of southern Arabia. He set out systematically to ensure success. He introduced cloves and found that the soils and climate of Zanzibar and neighboring Pemba Island were perfectly suited for the crop. Cloves then complimented long-standing trade in slaves and ivory from the mainland.

Sultan Seyyid Said was an astute diplomat. He recognized British power so did little to antagonize the British. Instead he always put forward enough real cooperation to compliment the façade of even greater gentility which he portrayed to the world. Other trading nations of the globe recognized the growing importance of Zanzibar and Seyyid Said's court. The United States opened a consulate in Zanzibar in 1837, which remained in operation (with a small hiatus during World War I when it moved temporarily to Mombasa) until 1979, long after Zanzibar's 1964 union with Tanyanika.

In short order, Seyyid Said built the slave trade from a trickle to a torrent. He was never interested in imperial domination of the mainland, but only in drawing out its wealth. As they had done for centuries past Arab slave caravans trudged regularly into the interior of Tanganyika where they acquired slaves either by barter or purchase from local chiefs or by direct capture. Slaves were bound together, collected at points such as Tabora and Ujiji, then marched to the coast. Newly acquired slaves often carried ivory as their first duty to their new masters. In the 1820s and 30s about fifteen thousand Africans were sold each year in the slave market in Zanzibar. For each person sold, three did not live long enough to reach market and another one or two died in transit to Arabia or India. Although these annualized numbers in no way approach the outflow of slaves from West Africa to the Americas, remember that the eastern slave trade had been ongoing for a thousand years. So the total of slaves exported from East Africa over the centuries may well equate to the fifteen to twenty million people who endured the Atlantic passage.

Whatever the numbers, the slave trade had a devastating effect on African society in the interior. Villagers were never safe from marauding slavers. Slave raids fostered acceptance of violence and periodic disruptions of everyday life forced a continued cycle of economic subsistence. There was neither the time nor the historical space for the people of East Africa to create the types of institutions and surplus wealth (which west Africans had experienced a thousand years earlier) that led to economic advancement.

## Combating Slavery

Following its 1815 victory in the Napoleonic wars (in which England gained the island of Mauritius from France), English ships ruled the Indian Ocean. Conforming to domestic pressure – much of which was generated by William Pitt and John Wilberforce - Britain gradually began to increase anti-slavery pressures in the region. Britain focused first on the sea-borne trade which could be interrupted, then more

determinedly on the land-based trade and the markets along the coast. By and large these anti-slavery activities coupled with the fact that Britain was the global superpower of the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew it inevitably further into East Africa. (This study guide does not go into the intellectual history of Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries which gave rise to new ideas regarding the equality of men - manifested in the American and French revolutions – which undermined the idea of slavery. Readers interested in pursuing this topic will find much material available.)

In 1807 Britain banned the slave trade and authorized the Royal Navy to interdict slavers. Even though traffic in English ships halted almost immediately, the ban had little impact in the Indian Ocean. Flush from victory over France, in 1822 the British forced the Moresby Treaty on Sultan Seyyid Said which required that he not sell slaves to Christians, nor transport slaves to the British colonies of India and Mauritius. The treaty did not interfere in the commerce within the Sultan's dominions nor with exports to the Muslim world. Although the loss of peripheral markets irritated the Sultan, pragmatist that he was, he accepted the British conditions. In 1833 the British Parliament voted to abolish slavery in its dominions. This, of course, had no impact on East Africa, but did set the stage for further British efforts to curtail the trade which came in 1845 via the Hamerton Treaty with Seyyid's successor Seyyid Majid. The treaty legally severed the slave trade between East Africa and Arabia. Enforcement of trading restrictions was very difficult due to the inadequate means available. Therefore much of the trade continued as before. During the era of explorations which ensued (discussed below) the evils of slavery were exposed by the mass media of the day – books, newspapers and journals – which generated great public clamor in Europe for outright abolition. Finally in 1873 under threat of a British blockade of Zanzibar, Sultan Bargharsh (Seyyid's third son) agreed to abolish the trade. Even so, it took another thirty or so years to stamp out vestiges of the trade and the institution itself. It was not, in fact, until 1897 that slavery was outlawed in Zanzibar.

### **Issues to Ponder**

Was East African slavery more humane than the slave trade to the plantations of the new world? Does the legacy of slavery still exist on the coast? If so, how might it be manifested?

What was the day of the American consul in Zanzibar like? What did he do? Whom did he report to?

What was Seyyid Said's longest lasting impact on the region?

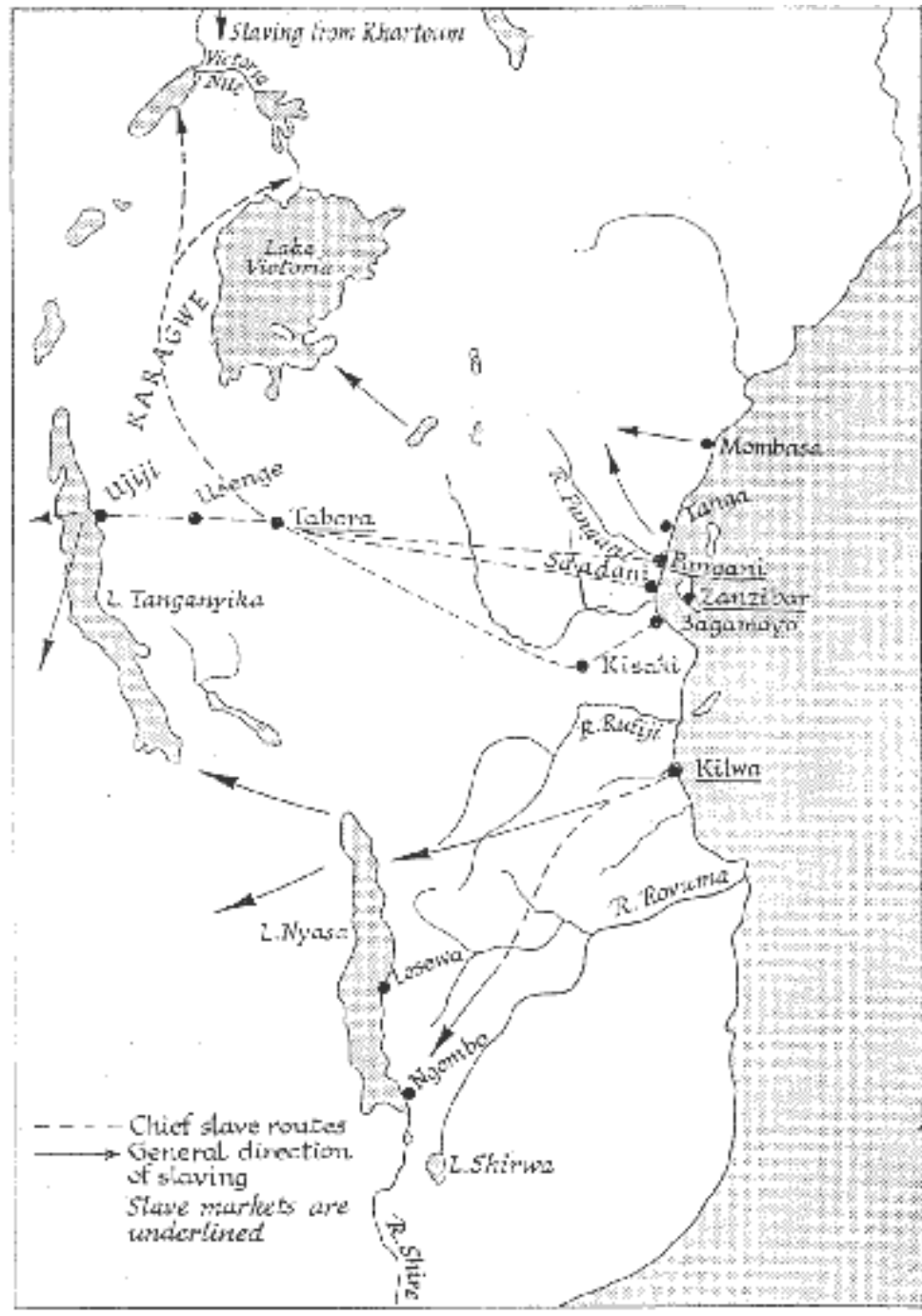
### **Readings:**

Davidson. *Africa in History: Themes and Outlines*  
Pages 255-261

### **Web Site:**

[www.Zanzibar.archives.com](http://www.Zanzibar.archives.com)

A true gem of a web site. This one contains a series of papers about Zanzibar. The items on slavery and the lineage of the Sultans are pertinent to this chapter.



Slave Routes.

## Chapter 4: Exploration

### Attention shifts to the mainland

By the middle of the nineteenth century, most of the world's map had been filled in to the satisfaction of Europe. Yet several great mysteries remained to be unraveled. Foremost among these was the source of the Nile River. From Ptolemy's time, the Mediterranean world heard rumors of snow and ice in the center of Africa. Ptolemy said that the Nile rose in the Mountains of the Moon. But where were those mountains? Also, what was the course of the mighty Congo River that disgorged itself into the Atlantic Ocean? Intrepid men (and women) set out to solve these mysteries mostly for the glory of it (riches and fame were showered on those who survived), but also for the sheer adventure of testing themselves against the unknown. One of the pathfinders, Dr. David Livingstone, was something of an anomaly because his motivation was also related to stamping out slavery. The mortality rate of European explorers in tropical Africa was appallingly high largely due to disease, but also as a result of conflict with indigenous people who, because of the slave trade, were deeply suspicious and hostile towards outsiders. Nonetheless, even against great odds, men stepped forward willingly to participate in these journeys of exploration.

Among the first bits of tantalizing news from Africa was the 1847 allegation by a German missionary J. Rebman resident at Rabai near Mombasa to the effect that a great snow covered mountain (Kilimanjaro) existed inland just south of the equator. His colleague Krapf confirmed the sighting in 1849 and also reported a second snow clad peak (Kenya) further to the north. Learned societies were skeptical and someone even wrote a book "proving" that snow could not exist on the equator, but the reports sparked the interest of the Royal Geographical Society and resulted in further efforts to unlock the mysteries of East Africa.

Most expeditions into East Africa were mounted from Zanzibar. They followed the slave caravan routes across central Tanganyika to the Lake. Livingstone went this way in 1853, again in 1856 and again in 1866. His reports of the evils of slavery plus the geographical marvels (he saw and named Victoria Falls on the Zambezi River in 1855, but the African name "smoke that thunders" is much more apt.) gave him cult like status with the reading public. However, little was heard of Livingstone after the beginning of his third journey. He seemed to have disappeared into the depths of the dark continent. Henry Morton Stanley, who was to become the 19<sup>th</sup> century's best known man of adventure, took a commission from the New York Herald newspaper and set off to search for him in 1871. Walking into the Tanganyikan lakeside village of Ujiji on November 10, 1871, Stanley spied an ill white man shuffling forward to greet him. He proffered his hand and uttered the immortal phrase of obvious logic, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"

Stanley's account of his expedition was front-page news around the world and re-kindled a public interest in African exploration, and in Stanley himself, that lasted the best part of the next thirty years.

Meanwhile Burton and Speke solved the Nile mystery in 1857 when they verified no northern outflow from Lake Tanganyika. Several weeks later, Speke alone saw the vast expanse of Lake Victoria (which he named for his queen). Although Speke speculated the lake was the source of the Nile, this was not confirmed and became a cause celebre in England pitting Burton and Speke, proponents of conflicting theories, against each other. The issue was resolved in 1860 when Speke returned with James Grant and saw the outlet at Rippon Falls. In the early twentieth century the British administration erected a statue of

Speke at this point with the inscription saying that John Hanning Speke was the "first man" to see the source of the Nile. Later a Ugandan government took down the plaque noting that while Speck may have been the first "European" to see the Nile, many African men before him had often seen it.

In 1860 Samuel Baker and his wife Isabelle filled in blanks on the map regarding the course of the Nile and in the process found Murchinson Falls. Henry Stanley made East and Central Africa his turf with voyages of discovery to the lakes of the western rift valley, the Mountains of the Moon (which Stanley passed by on one occasion, but did not see because of clouds) and finally the course of the Congo River. Stanley went on to greater glory in the expedition to rescue Emin Pasha and then, as an employee of King Leopold, in the establishment of the Congo Free State.

John Thompson explored Kenya in 1882. Previously, the country had been avoided by Europeans on account of fear of the Masai, but Thompson experienced few difficulties and traced a grand circuit from Mombasa to Lake Rudolph (which Hungarian Count Teleki coming from Ethiopia mapped earlier) on to Lake Victoria and back to the coast.

By 1880 the geographical mysteries of the continent were solved, but more importantly the lands and the people that inhabited them were revealed to the outside world. Whether they wanted to or not (and, of course, no one asked) East Africans were about to embark on a new era of encounters with that world.

### **Issues to Ponder**

What today would compare with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century fascination with the exploration of Africa? Going to Antarctica, climbing Everest, travel to the Moon or Mars? Maybe just the Discovery Channel?

What does it take in a person's character to venture into the unknown, understanding a real possibility of death?

### **Readings:**

Ward, N.E. & White, L.W. *East Africa: A Century of Change 1870-1970*. Africana Publishing Corp., New York, 1971.

DT 431.W37

Pages 1-12

This excellent history of the region will become our basic text for the next few chapters of this study guide.

### **Additional Readings:**

Moorhead, Alan. *The White Nile*. Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York 1960

This is the definitive book about the search for the source of the Nile. The first half of it is pertinent to the

upper Nile, mostly Uganda, and the latter part deals with the struggle for Sudan.

Harrison, William, *Mountains of the Moon*

The story of Burton and Speke. This book was also made into a film. Check your video store.

Livingstone, David, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone*

Stanley, Henry M. *How I Found Livingstone.*

\_\_\_\_\_, *Through the Dark Continent.*

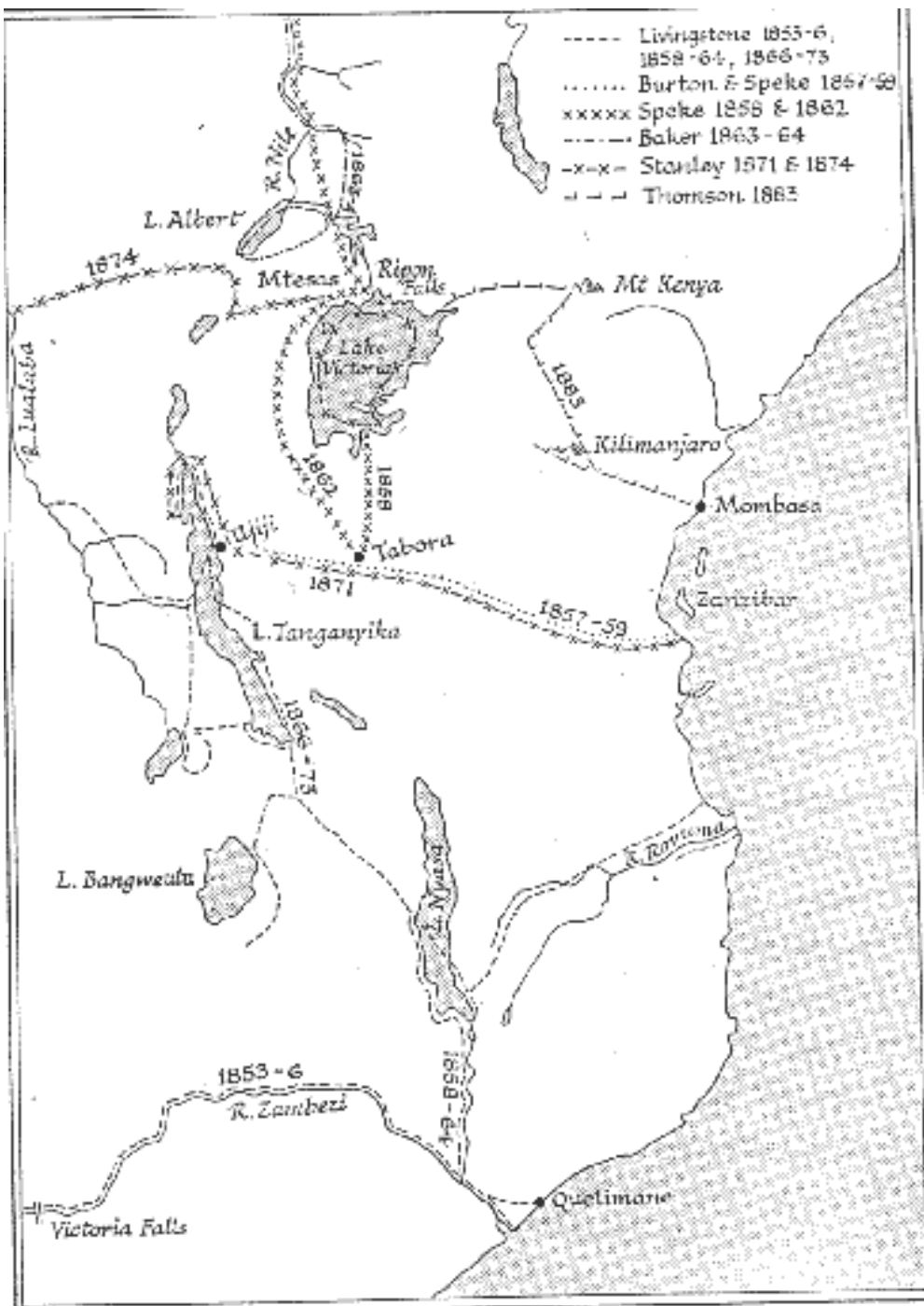
\_\_\_\_\_, *In Darkest Africa.*

Speke, J.H. *Journal of Discovery of the Source of the Nile.*

Burton, Sir Richard, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa.*

Thompson, J.P. *Through Masai Land.*

If you want to get a contemporary flavor of the best sellers the explorers themselves were writing about their adventures, sample some of these original works.



Explorers of East Africa.

## Chapter 5: The Partition of Africa

Initially European nations, Britain in particular, were not interested in colonies in Africa. Britain had been spurned by America, and saw that similar divisions were coming with Canada and Australia. If people of British origin declined links to the motherland, why then could one expect that black and brown people would want ties? The colonial experience in India too had been less than satisfactory and expensive besides. Instead Britain was more than content with military dominance of the seas, which enabled flourishing commerce. British prosperity was based on trade wherein raw materials and goods were bought and sold on open markets. As long as these markets functioned there was no need for



governmental control of raw materials. However, in order to assure profitable trade, the British government chartered companies and granted them exclusive rights to specific areas of British influence. To this end in the late 1880s the Imperial British East African Company headed by Sir William Mackinnon was granted trade rights in East Africa. The competing German company was the German East African Company directed by Karl Peters. Both entities actively established trading relationships and signed treaties with local chiefs along the Tanganyikan and Kenyan coasts. While both organizations made profits, neither was spectacularly profitable. Peters sought to expand German influence in Kenya and in Uganda, but both companies made the case in their respective capitals that greater administrative control and the development of infrastructure were essential to stopping slavery (still a good rallying cry) and to commercial success. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Gladstone, who served for much of the last half of the nineteenth century, held off Parliamentary proponents for African colonies.

Yet when the time came Britain was forced by European politics to acquire colonies. The impetus came from King Leopold of Belgium and German Chancellor Bismarck. Leopold was a schemer par excellence who sought to establish Belgium, and himself, as a greater power via the acquisition of colonies. After eyeing Asia and Latin America (already taken) he settled on Africa. He organized a "benevolent" society, employed Henry Stanley and began to establish trading stations along the Congo River. French explorer de Brazza took note and began a competing system of alliances with chiefs on the north bank of the river. As time progressed, Leopold's society metamorphosed into a private company (which he controlled) and finally into a Belgian government colony. But to back up, Leopold's acquisitiveness coupled with Portugal's long-standing territorial claims and complimented by Bismarck's intent to make Germany a real world power all coalesced into the Berlin conference of 1885. Diplomats in Berlin simply carved up Africa into spheres of influence. France and Britain got the lions' shares as they were granted rights to the hinterlands behind their coastal spheres of influence, but Leopold got his Congo, Portugal retained most of its claims and Germany was allocated territories in West Africa (Togo and Cameroon), Southwest Africa (Namibia) and East Africa (Tanganyika). The only conditions that the colonial powers imposed upon themselves at Berlin were the obligation to exercise "effective control" over and to develop their new possessions. This obligation became the driving force for greater metropole efforts in the newly delineated colonies.

The East African coast had been troublesome to carve up, complicated as it was by the recognized sovereignty of the Sultan of Zanzibar over the coastal zone and by his claims to the interior. Britain acquiesced to German control of the coastal strip of Tanganyika including its acquisition of the port of Dar es Salaam, but Britain defended the Sultan's rule over Zanzibar, Pemba and a ten-mile wide strip in Kenya, including Mombasa. Based on a treaty Peters signed with a local sheik Germany also laid claim to an area around Witu (between Malindi and Lamu in Kenya). Bismarck sent a flotilla of battleships to Zanzibar to ensure that the Sultan signed away his rights in accordance with decisions made in Berlin. Even though authorized by its peers at Berlin, Britain was reluctant to become more involved in East Africa, until it decided to strengthen its role in Egypt. In the late 1880s once Britain decided to stay in Egypt, it too became concerned with control of the Nile River, as had the rulers of Egypt for thousands of years.

In previous years explorers and missionaries found thriving kingdoms in Uganda where they planted

seeds of division: English vs. French, and Catholic vs. Protestant vs. Muslim. By the 1880s Leopold had pretensions to parts of the Nile watershed. France's claims to the area were not resolved until the Fashoda (Sudan) confrontation with Great Britain on the Nile in 1889. Germany too sought to exercise dominion in Uganda. Moreover, in 1885 an Anglo/Egyptian army under General Gordon had been soundly defeated at Ormdurman leaving the Sudan in the hands of the Mahdi, an Islamic fanatic. For all these reasons Britain felt compelled to obtain and exercise control of Uganda.

The initial responsibility for the establishment of an official British presence in Uganda was assigned to officials of the Imperial British East African Company. Lord Lugard set out to accomplish this task in 1890. After a series of wranglings with Kabaka Mwanga (king of Buganda), Lugard obtained a treaty which recognized the company's authority in Buganda, but anti-British intrigues continued in the court of the Kabaka and in rival kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole. However, Lugard was not diverted and proceeded to consolidate control of Uganda. In 1894 Sir Gerald Portal, the British consul from Zanzibar, arrived in Kampala and declared a British protectorate.

Meanwhile the provisions of the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 cleared up conflicting claims on the coast. Germany agreed to stay out of Uganda, but could extend its claim in Tanganyika westward to the Congo. Germany also gave up its claim to Witu. In return, for the sum of 200,000 English pounds Germany bought outright the ten mile coastal strip of Tanganyika which earlier it only "leased" from the Sultan. Germany also recognized a British protectorate over Zanzibar, which included the island itself, Pemba Island and the ten-mile wide coastal strip in Kenya and part of Somalia. Establishment of this protectorate relieved the Sultan of the realistic fear that Germany would completely take over his dominions. Finally, as the dealmaker, Britain returned to Germany the island of Heligoland in the North Sea, which it had held since the Napoleonic era.

As agreements go, except for Sultan Barghash who lost territory and his independence, this was a fairly good treaty as it eliminated a dangerous British- German rivalry in the region.

### **Issues to Ponder**

Why did the European nations need colonies? What did Germany and Belgium realistically gain? Did Africa matter, or was it just a way to keep score? Could you have drawn the borders of East Africa in a better fashion?

Did the Sultan of Zanzibar deserve to lose his lands or was he a victim of racism?

### **Readings:**

Ward and White. *East Africa ; A Century of Change 1870-1970*  
Pages 12-44, "The Partition of East Africa."

Pakenham, Thomas. *The Scramble for Africa: the White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from*

***1876 to 1912***. Random House, New York, 1991.

Chapter 16, "The Sultan's Flag"

Chapter 17, "Cries from the Heart"

Chapter 18, "Dr. Emin, I presume"

Chapter 19, "Salisbury's Bargain"

Pakenham's opus is a detailed study of the acquisition of spheres of influence, power and colonies throughout the continent. He focuses much attention on politics and pressures on European governments and leaders in their home arenas. An excellent table of contents lets the discerning reader choose chapters of most immediate interest.

### **Web Sites:**

[www.Africana.com](http://www.Africana.com)

[www.Zanzibar.archivies.com](http://www.Zanzibar.archivies.com)

Both these sites, which we have visited before, contain items relevant to the age of exploration and the partition of Africa.



Anglo-German Agreements of 1886 and 1890.

## Chapter 6: Conquest and Consolidation

Exercising control of the people of East Africa took some doing. Outsiders were not especially welcome; particularly when they dismantled traditional political structures, disrupted social customs and introduced alien philosophies and religions. As was true elsewhere on the continent Africans found Europeans to be a different type of opponent. Rather than raid, win and leave, taking livestock and maybe women, the Europeans stayed and sought to rule. Ultimately throughout all of East Africa the establishment of colonial rule was aided by the spread of disease such as sleeping sickness and measles which decimated populations and weakened their social fabric. Rinderpest too, chiefly the epidemic around 1900, wiped out cattle herds and concomitant economic prosperity. Conquest and consolidation, however, took different forms in each of the three territories.

### British Uganda

Ugandan kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Busoga were well-established functional

societies. Other groups in the territory such as the Teso, Acholi, Langi, Bugisu and Bukedi were not organized centrally. Luggard established a policy of indirect rule, which meant that he used the existing tribal structures to establish and enforce British rule. Essentially this meant that aside from some basic law-and-order and economic issues, i.e. tax collection, life for most went on pretty much as before. Even so, British officials were instructed to get out, meet the people and learn the districts. Even though the District Officer held some ultimate power of coercion, which always provided him with a strong hand to play, imperial policy favored persuasion over coercion.

As noted earlier, Luggard signed a company treaty with the Kabaka of Buganda in 1890 which was followed by the declaration of a protectorate in 1894. During those intervening years and afterwards, some military effort and a good bit of politics were required to bring other kingdoms, especially Bunyoro, into the British fold. In fact, as an aftermath to the conquest of Bunyoro, accomplished with Bugandan military help, several Bunyoro regions – now called the lost counties – were transferred to Buganda's control.

By 1902 when the British demarcated border for eastern Uganda was shifted from the rift valley (of Kenya) to its present location bisecting Mt. Elgon, most of Uganda was pacified under British authority. However, the political issues that plagued Uganda later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were well established. Those issues included: the prominence of the kingdom of Buganda in the Ugandan protectorate, divisions within the Baganda people according to religion – Catholic, Protestant (Anglican) or Muslim. These divisions often had dynastic implications for the ruling family. Beyond Buganda, traditional rivalries amongst the other kingdoms and tribal groups – the Bunyoro, for example, continued to complain about the lost counties - were compounded by their separate adherence along tribal or regional lines to either Catholicism or Anglicanism. Political parties would later build on these cleavages. Another issue was that of land ownership, particularly the Mailo lands of Buganda. (Mailo is a word derived from "mile" that was applied to land that, for the first time, could be sold or leased.)

A key tenant of British indirect colonial administration was that a protectorate or colony should be self-supporting. It should generate the funds necessary to support its operations and development. Obviously, this philosophy meant that taxes had to be paid, but to do that money needed to be earned. Consequently cash crops of cotton, coffee and tea were introduced. Since the indigenous sector was not able to pay lots of taxes, revenue needs justified the imposition of high import and export taxes – a structural economic problem that still plagues the three states today.

## German Tanganyika

In contrast to the British, the Germans insisted on Germanizing their colony. First, however, they had to conquer it. In the 1890s Germany separately fought the Hehe, the Nyamwezi and the Chagga in order to establish control. Subsequently, Germany introduced the "akida" system of appointed local officials who reported in turn to German commissioners. The men chosen to be akida agents had little loyalty to the existing tribal governing system, and usually were not from the area where they were posted, so were responsive to their German masters. This system was fairly repressive; coercion was used to obtain labor,

payment of taxes, etc. However, one positive aspect of German colonial administration, seen in retrospect, was the use of Swahili throughout the territory.

Also in contrast to the British, the German government took a more active interest in promoting economic development. It was willing to spend money from Berlin on agriculture, infrastructure and other projects. The German administration introduced cotton and sisal and helped establish them as crops. It also began a government backed education system. The crowning opus was construction of the Tanga to Moshi rail line in 1893 and construction of the central line from Dar es Salaam to Tanga and Lake Tanganyika in 1905 – 1914 (the British added the extension to Mwanza in the 1920s).

Governor Count von Glotzen who served in the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century introduced some reforms to reduce abusive coercive practices, but simmering resentment burst forth in 1905 in the Maji Maji rebellion. Maji Maji was a carefully planned full-scale revolt by the Ngoni and related people in the southern part of the territory. Designed to oust the Germans completely, the plan was to kill officials, traders and missionaries; to force the Germans back to the coast and even to capture Dar es Salaam. Fortunately for the Germans, the Ngoni fought alone, apparently they never sought support from the larger better-organized Nymawezi or Hehe tribes. Maji maji means water water in Swahili. Warriors were anointed with magic charms that were supposed to turn German bullets to water. (This same idea of magic and faith turning bullets aside surfaced in the Simba Rebellion in the Congo in the sixties and again with Alice Lakwana's Holy Spirit Movement in Uganda in 1986.) The southern revolt caught the administration totally by surprise. Maji Maji warriors enjoyed initial success in killing and running off Germans. However, once contained, it was simply a matter of time before German colonial troops with modern arms reversed the tide of battle. The German response was heinous; its scorched earth policy brought an end to the rebellion but at the cost of reducing the south to ruin and alienating the people of the region for generations. At about this same time German suppression of a revolt in South West Africa (Namibia) took on the dimensions of genocide when the Herero people were almost annihilated as distinct ethnic group following General von Trothu's "Extermination Order."

Although unsuccessful in ousting the Germans, the Maji Maji rebellion did generate a more careful look at colonial policies by the administration and did result in some easing of strictness.

## British East Africa

Kenya was different from both of its neighbors. It was lightly populated, had no centralized kingdoms or large tribal societies. While the coastal strip under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Zanzibar produced food and copra, the end of slavery in the Sultan's dominions in 1897 with no other source of labor in sight brought an end to large scale plantation agriculture. The region immediately behind the coast was barren bush for hundreds of miles. Because the combination of geography and the fearsome Masai kept intruders away, Kenya's interior was spared the ravages of slavery.

On Thompson's and other explorers' treks to the interior, groups of agriculturists such as the Kikuyu and nomadic herdsmen like the Masai were encountered as well as Luhya and Luo farmers and fishermen

around Lake Victoria. Of these Chief Mumia, a Luhya, who lived just north of the lake had been hospitable and helpful to Luggard in his efforts to reach Uganda.

Once the Ugandan protectorate was declared in 1894, Britain was faced with the problem of how to get to and from that landlocked territory. The solution was to build a railroad from Mombasa to the lake. This vast construction project began in 1897 and terminated at Kisumu on Lake Victoria in 1901. Along the way it generated the towns of present day Kenya. Nairobi started as the storehouse and construction site at the end of the plains and before the climb to the rift valley escarpment. Nakuru was an entrepot in the center of the rift valley and Kisumu grew up around the terminus of the line at Lake Victoria. Indian coolies were brought in to build the rail line. Many stayed. Joined by families, they grew into the community collectively called Asians that one finds in East Africa today. The rail line was also the cause of the Ugandan border being shifted westward in 1902 when the powers-that-be decided it would be better administratively to have all the line in one territory.

British authorities fought to establish imperial rule in Kenya. A series of separate skirmishes with the Kikuyu, Meru, Kisii and Luo brought peace to their respective regions. The Nandi were the most troublesome especially when they saw the railroad dividing their land, but they too were subdued. The British generally avoided confrontation with the Masai who were reputed to be the most warlike of Kenya's people.

The railroad changed Kenya. Justification for opening Uganda was not enough; backers of the rail scheme needed more. Although the idea of white settlement in the cool, fertile and non-tropical highlands had been advanced earlier by Johnston, Luggard and Mackinnon, it was not until a railroad through nowhere was being built that further justification for the venture was required. European settlement was the answer.

In order to attract settlers, a crown lands ordinance was passed in 1901, which rendered the conveyance of title possible. Settlers were then sought from Britain and South Africa. In the pre-World War years they trickled in slowly and like pioneers everywhere found it a demanding task to bend the new land to their way of life and ideas about agriculture. Though perseverance and individual effort they succeeded and effectively transformed the Kenyan highlands into "white man's country." Settling along the railway, they turned it into a profitable operation within a dozen years.

Although the British administration used mechanisms of indirect rule in Kenya, labor and land issues, especially the alienation of tribal land for European settlement were continually troublesome and were the seed that flowered later as Kikuyu nationalism. Even after independence land questions would remain central features of political argumentation in the quest for tribal and individual economic prominence.

## Issues to Ponder

What enabled Britain and Germany to establish their respective rule in East Africa? Moral superiority, political advancement, military might, divine providence? What did the Germans and the British, at the time, think authorized them to take over?

Was African resistance more or less active than you had thought? What mobilizing factors were involved?

What were the differences between "direct" and "indirect" colonial rule. Which was more effective? Which was better?

### **Readings:**

Ward & White, *East Africa: A Century of Change, 1870-1970*  
Pages 45-78, "The beginnings of colonial rule"

Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*  
Chapter 23 "The Flag Follows the Cross"  
Chapter 34, "Maji Maji"

### **Additional Readings:**

Miller, Charles. *The Lunatic Express*, Random House, New York, 1971

This book recounts the trials and tribulations of building the Kenyan railroad. It is a superb history of the time and the region covering Zanzibar, Uganda and, of course, Kenya.

Huxley, Elspeth, *White Man's Country (Volume One: 1870-1914); Lord Delemare and the Making of Kenya*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1935.

DT434.K4H78

Huxley wrote the definitive biography of Lord Delemare, a truly unique individual whose enthusiasms, exuberance and money made him larger than life as an individual, as well as someone fanatically committed to Kenya; to its economic and political success. He was the unchallenged leader of the settlers for nearly a half century.

Meinertzhagen, Richard, *Kenya Diary (1902-1906)*, Eland Books, London, 1957.

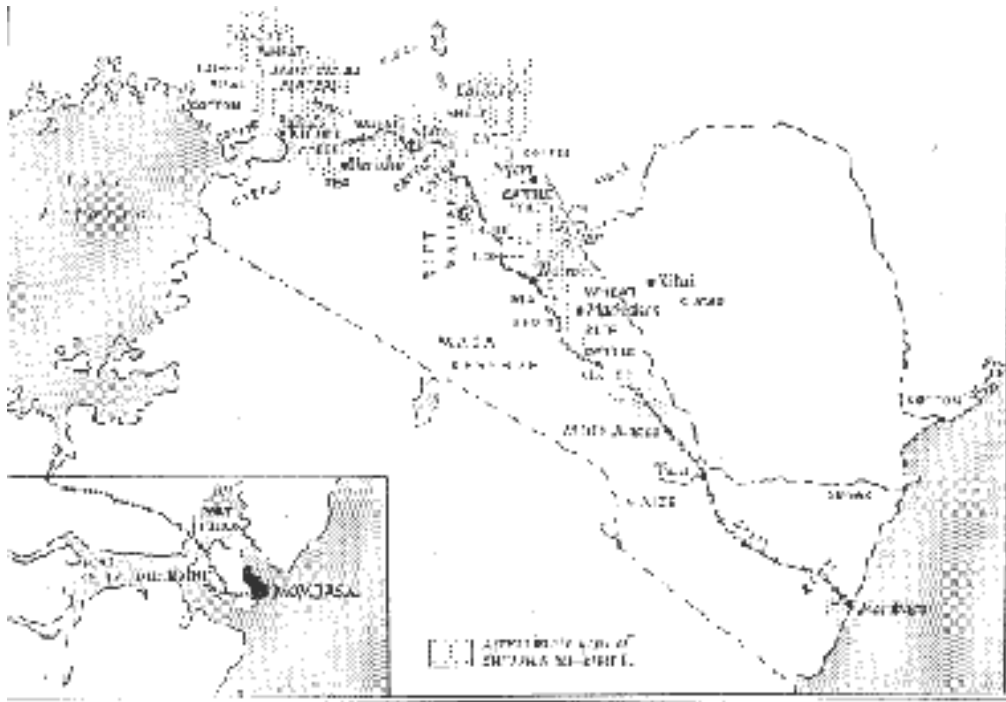
DT434.K4M4

Meinertzhagen was a district officer in Kenya at the turn of the century. His very readable reminisces give an accurate flavor of indirect administration and of the efforts necessary to pacify the Kikuyu and the Nandi. Also, he happily killed an astonishing number of rhino. Although handicapped by his surname, Meinertzhagen went on to become the chief of British intelligence in East Africa during World War I where he pitted wits with General von Lettow-Vorbeck, but that's the next chapter.

Churchill, Winston S. *My African Journey*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908.

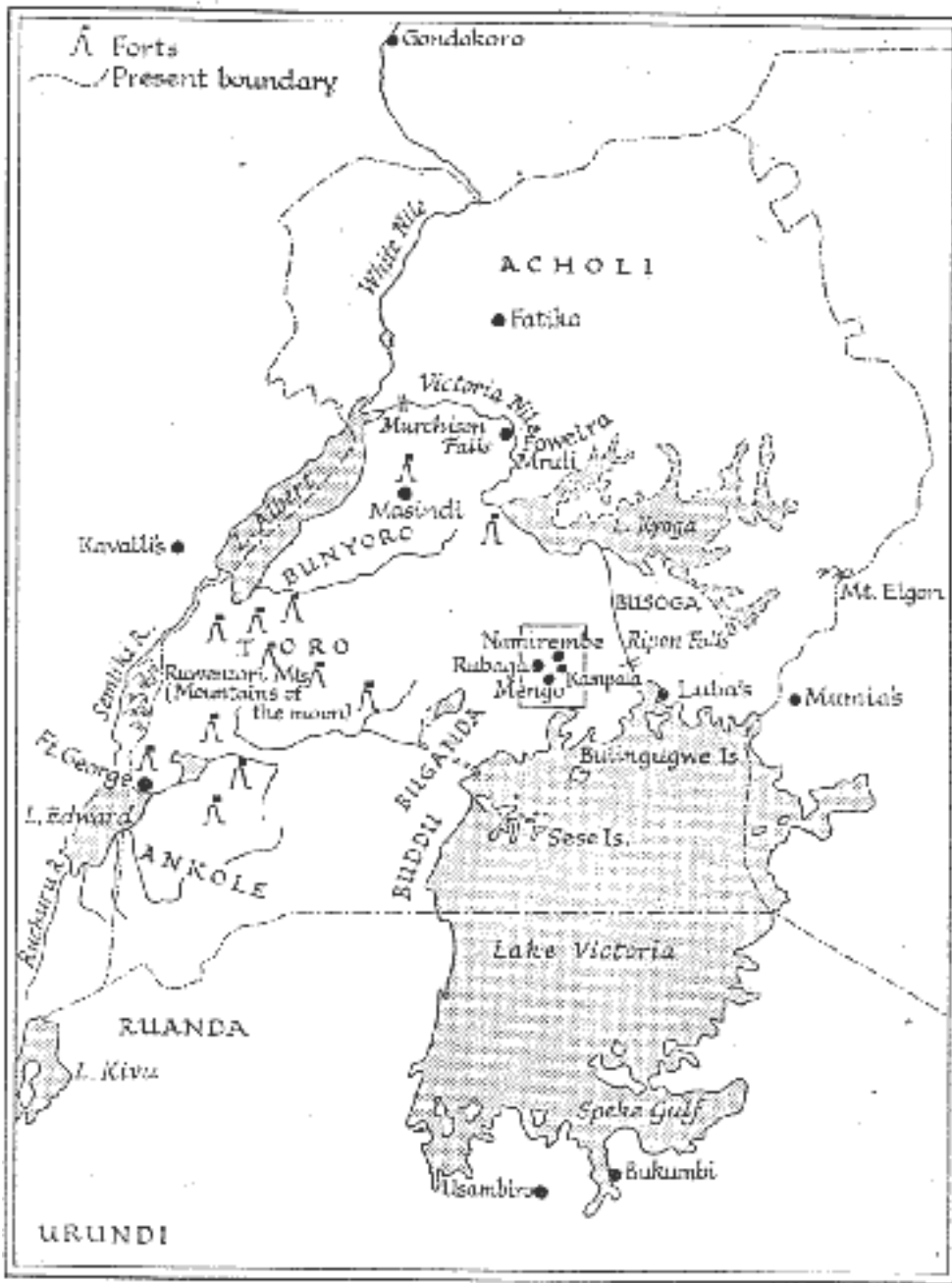
As a young assistant cabinet minister for the colonies, Churchill took the railroad from Mombasa to Lake Victoria, sailed to Entebbe, biked, walked and boated down the Nile to the Mediterranean. An excellent writer, his descriptions of Uganda are especially interesting.





The Railway, European Settlement, and Agricultural Products of Kenya.

## PEOPLES AND KINGDOMS OF UGANDA



## Chapter 7: World War I

As if the changes of the previous twenty years weren't enough, World War I arrived. The war generated long range consequences for Tanganyika and Kenya, but it had an immediate impact as well.

When war loomed, the military commander in German East Africa General P.E. von Lettow-Vorbeck, was astute enough to recognize that European powers would try to keep the war away from the colonies. He knew from the outset that Germany would probably lose the war, but felt rather than keep war from Africa, he should do as much as he could to tie up British assets in Africa. This would consequently provide more breathing space for German forces in Europe. He judged that he probably could not win in

East Africa either because he would be unable to get munitions and supplies. Nonetheless, with those caveats in mind, Lettow-Vorbeck convinced his reluctant governor of his position and began his campaign.

In 1914 Lettow-Vorbeck's army consisted of several hundred German regulars, several hundred Tanganyikan troops and hundreds up to thousands of porters, called carriers. Dar es Salaam's central market is known as Karikor (carrier corps) as it was first an assembly ground for the carriers. General von Lettow-Vorbeck's motley army seized the initiative, attacked and took Taveta on the Kenyan border from whence it raided and cut the Mombasa/Nairobi rail line at Tsavo. This got British attention. British forces, mostly Kenyan irregulars, counterattacked at Taveta, got a fight but then found the Germans gone. In 1915 an expeditionary force of Indian troops landed at Tanga on the Tanganyikan coast and were routed by the German defenders. In 1916 when General Smuts of South Africa took command of the British effort and began pressing German positions, Lettow-Vorbeck marched south. Along the way men and guns from the German cruiser *Konigsberg* which had been blockaded in the Rufiji delta by British warships joined him. The heavy naval guns were strapped onto carts and towed along. (Today, one is in Entebbe, Uganda as a war memorial). The German commander began a long game of cat-and-mouse skirmishing as his forces moved along. He led his enemies south into Mozambique, back again into western Tanganyika and then into Northern Rhodesia. It was there, after the Armistice, on British territory, with his tattered flags flying and drums beating, that he surrendered. In sum, Lettow-Vorbeck achieved his goal. He was never defeated. He tied up tens of thousands of British men and millions of pounds of resources. Although, the East Africa campaign had no impact on the outcome of the war, General von Lettow-Vorbeck became a legend.

Legendhood notwithstanding, the consequences for Tanganyika were devastating. First, there had been no administration for years so what had been established, particularly in the economic arena was lost. War and troop movements from both sides had taken a toll on the rural areas. The modern economy had stopped. The country was wrecked. Recovering from this devastation was not easy. Germany was shorn of its colonies by the victors. In its place Britain accepted (the U.S. refused) to govern under a mandate from the League of Nations. Although in retrospect this probably provided a climate more conducive to future political freedoms, in the short term, Tanganyika became an obligation and a responsibility rather than a possession where the metropole was willing to invest. Deprived of resources, the economy limped along and never registered a respectable rate of growth.

In the aftermath of the war, Britain began a program of granting land to British officer war veterans in Kenya's white highlands. This led to an influx of settlers that raised overall numbers of whites to a critical enough level so that they had to be taken into account by the administration. Soon settler interests and British administrative interests began to diverge with regard to the role and future of Africans in the colony. The settlers wanted land and cheap African labor to farm it, whereas the administration sought to protect and advance the interests of the indigenous Kenyans. This is not to say that the administration became pro-African; it very much saw Kenya's future as an imperial multi-racial dependency, but it did begin to constrain settler aspirations.

Another consequence of the war was the collapse of the world financial system. Kenya's currency was the

Indian rupee, which fell like a rock making settler financial obligations, which were enumerated in pounds sterling, shoot up. While there was a quick rebound in prices just after the war for primary products, by the early twenties the boom was over as the devastated European economies had much reduced spending power. Inflation was rampant in Kenya and farm laborers naturally sought higher wages to pay for more expensive imports. Thus white settlers, who constituted the modern sector of the economy, were squeezed by creditors and laborers alike. The resulting economic stall precipitated further confrontation between settlers and Africans and between settlers and the administration.

A final consequence of WWI was expanding political awareness of the African populations of all the territories. Africans had fought and carried. They had journeyed far, seen other lands, met other people, seen whites fighting whites for no understandable reason. They shared all these views with families and neighbors upon returning home. This greater opening to the wider world, as accelerated by the war, was a factor in newly created African organizations and societies that were the precursors of the coming political movements.

### **Issues to Ponder**

Was von Lettow-Vorbeck a genius or just an egomaniac who personally drove East Africa into a decades long morass? If he had not fought, would Germany have retained Tanganyika?

Of the consequences of the war, which do you think was the most influential in changing the course of history in the region?

### **Readings:**

Ward & White. *East Africa, A Century of Change, 1870-1979*  
Pages 78-96, "The First World War"

### **Additional Readings**

Miller, Charles, *The Battle for the Bundu: The First World War in East Africa*

This is the same Miller who wrote The Lunatic Express. Like the other book, this is a detailed chronicle – literally almost step by step – of the war in East Africa. Military history buffs will find it compelling.

Boyd, William, *An Ice Cream War*

This is a novel, but it is set squarely in the context of the war. Boyd respects all the historical facts. Although he focuses exclusively on the European characters – Africans are mostly background - the story is entertaining and provides a realistic feeling for the situation.

## **Chapter 8: Between the Wars**

# Kenya

Land, labor and the Legislative Council were the issues between the wars. Since Kenya was still lightly settled by Europeans, an effort was made to entice ex-servicemen to come and farm. Several thousand ultimately came and many stayed, but only several hundred succeeded as farmers. At the same time settlers were determined to preserve the highlands for whites only. Efforts by Asians and appeals for them by a sympathetic colonial government in India came to naught. Policy remained firm. Asians were not to farm in the highlands. (They were permitted to occupy marginal lands near Kisumu where they started a sugar industry.) Segregated residential areas in the towns and cities also became the norm. As an interesting aside, the British government offered the Zionist Movement the opportunity to make the Trans-Nzoia region (between Eldoret and Kitale) a new Jewish homeland in exchange for relinquishing claims to Palestine, but Zionist leaders refused.

Africans were confined to "native reserves" and thus effectively excluded from land that they or their ancestors had used intermittently for years. Africans, especially Kikuyus whose traditional territory bore the brunt of seizure for English farms, chafed at exclusions from unused farmland. Their animosity grew as their numbers and "land hunger" increased. The largest scale dispossession operation, however, was the removal of the northern Masai from the Laikipia plateau, which opened this vast ranch land to European settlers. (Since much of this region was not suited to crops, it was not coveted in the same way as cropland by Kikuyu farmers.) Currently, Kenya's great ranches of hundreds of thousands of acres each, many of which inadvertently act as game reserves, are in the Laikipia region northwest of Mt. Kenya.

The establishment of viable cash crops, coffee for example, was the objective of European farmers, but cash crops - coffee in particular - were denied to African farmers. Reasoning for this was several fold; first Europeans believed that Africans could not properly care for coffee; thus their plots would harbor disease and risk infecting larger European plantations. Secondly, and more to the point, was labor. To farm effectively Europeans needed African labor, which they wanted on their own terms. Africans, however, were content to engage in subsistence farming that met their daily needs. They had no desire to leave families to work away from home. Therefore, settlers additionally feared that if Africans could produce cash crops they would have even fewer incentives to seek work on European farms in order to have money for taxes or purchases. Much argument, legislation and coercion were employed over the decades as practices gradually evolved in the highlands away from migrant labor to a system of residential labor wherein men and their families lived on white-owned farms.

Paralleling racial land policies were racial political policies. Although Britain envisaged a multi-racial colony where, in time, even Africans would come into their own, it was confounded by strident settler aspirations for self-preservation through strict racial separation. Nonetheless, Britain made its intent clear in the 1923 Devonshire White Paper.

"Kenya is an African territory, and His Majesty's Government think it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount, and that if, and when, those interests and the interests of the immigrant races

should conflict, the former should prevail."

Throughout the troublesome years to come, Britain half-heartedly stuck to that principle. As part of its colonial policy Britain gradually increased the powers of the Kenyan Legislative Council and began to shift from appointed to elected members. Finally, the Council came to include elected members from the European, Asian, Arab and ultimately African communities (for decades Africans were represented by Europeans appointed for that purpose). The political history of this era is largely given over to the posturing and political battles over representation on the Legislative Council, not only the numbers of seats per community, but also whether election would be on communal or common roles.

In retrospect the superciliousness of colonial attitudes of moral superiority and paternalism seem unfathomable today, but they were very real and very operative at the time. British society was based on class where everyone had a position in society. In the colonies the British saw themselves as the ruling, wealthy, upper class. The Asians were shopkeepers and traders and the Africans were the laborers and servants. Missionaries viewed Africans as essentially people without culture, blank pages upon which to write Christianity. Administrators saw them as peoples without valid traditions or political institutions who were to be protected and tutored. Additionally administrative jobs and careers were tied to success within the system. Settlers, of course, saw Africans as labor to be exploited. Combined the three European groups – colonial officers, missionaries, and settlers – all had a stake in the perpetuation of the colonial system. Thus, any effort to challenge that system on the basis of land or labor rights or God forbid, indigenous political aspirations, was perceived as dangerous and seditious.

## African Political Awakenings

Modern African politics began in the twenties. Harry Thuku was a young government clerk who protested work conditions and land policies. Jailed, he became a lightning rod for African grievances. He formed an organization that became the Kikuyu Central Association in 1921. Other tribal associations such as the Kavirondo Association (Luos and Luhyas) and the Ukambani Association also emerged. Britain had envisaged African political leadership growing from its system of indirect rule, that is, Britain hoped the traditional chiefs and others who had become part of the colonial apparatus would gradually take on political responsibilities. This was not to be, but it took some time throughout all of East Africa before colonial authorities accepted that the new breed of African political leaders would arise among the young educated men in the towns.

The tribal associations made no immediate claims to Legislative Council representation; rather they took up cudgels on issues directly related to their peoples. The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) agitated for access to unoccupied land in the highlands. A young firebrand, Jomo Kenyatta was sent to London in 1929 and again in 1931 to lobby Kikuyu land concerns with Parliament. (The second time he stayed until 1946.) KCA seized on the issue of female circumcision to take on the Anglican and Catholic churches and as a way to instill Kikuyu nationalism. Fallout from this struggle led to the creation of hundreds of independent Kikuyu schools. Kenyatta's account of these issues and his constant challenges to colonial attitudes are found in his book on the Kikuyu people, Facing Mount Kenya. Meanwhile, the Kavirondo Association objected to land alienation around Kakamega for gold mining while the Ukambani

Association fought against government mandated herd thinning during years of drought.

## Uganda

Although the idea of European settlement was briefly considered for Uganda, it became clear that the situation there was not conducive to such an undertaking. Asians, however, were permitted to settle. They soon organized vast sugar and tea estates. Without the motor of European agricultural production that Kenya possessed, colonial authorities searched to find suitable cash crops for Uganda to replace the once prolific but now dwindling ivory exports. Cotton was the answer. Soon Ugandan farmers were producing commercial quantities of cotton. Coffee too became a staple crop - the robusta variety throughout most of the land, but high quality arabica on Mt. Elgon and in the western highlands. East African authorities extended the "Ugandan" railroad to Uganda in 1924 by finishing the line from Nakuru to Kampala.

Constitutionally, Britain established a multi-racial Legislative Council in Uganda. While Europeans served on the Council, they represented no special constituency, but the people of the protectorate as a whole. Asians and Africans were appointed to the Council early on. The key issue during these years was the role of the kingdom of Buganda in relation to the rest of the country and especially in relation to the Legislative Council. Britain tried to rule equitably, but Buganda – recalling the Protectorate Treaty of 1898 - insisted on special status as an independent entity within the territory. Consequently, the Bugandan Parliament, the Lukiko, refused to participate in the Council. Colonial governor Sir Philip Mitchell got so frustrated with the Lukiko's obstinacy that he withdrew colonial officials from Buganda for a period of years during the 1930s.

## Tanganyika

The years between the two world wars were a slow time for Tanganyika. Britain, the new colonial authority, took time to re-establish government functions. In a notable reversal of German direct rule, Governor Byatt introduced indirect colonial administration in the 1920s. Indirect rule, however, was not as successful as hoped because many traditional authorities had disappeared or been devalued during the German epoch. One far-reaching decision by the new authorities was the policy of non-encouragement of European settlement. Some German settlers did return and some other Europeans also came, but they received no special inducements or status and the African character of the territory was retained.

Tanganyika's important cash crop was sisal. Additionally, to the dismay of Kenyan settlers, Governor Byatt encouraged Chagga farmers on Mt. Kilimanjaro and in the Para Mountains to grow arabica coffee. In contrast to efforts elsewhere in East Africa to implement policies conducive to the flow of cheap labor to white owned farms, the Tanganyikan authorities sought to protect African workers from abuses. To this end they set forth requirements for improved working conditions and even set up camps to house and feed men journeying to and from seasonal work.

Constitutionally, Britain set up a Legislative Council similar to those of Uganda and Kenya. Only Europeans and Asians sat on it initially; some members were designated to represent Africans. The

colonial government also began to establish local government councils but, as noted above, found few tribes – only the Chagga – organized enough to be able to participate. Nyamwezi and Sukuma leadership had been destroyed and the GoGo, Masai and Ngoni never had centralized structures in the first place.

The worldwide economic depression hit all of East Africa hard. Tanganyika's economy stalled. Commercial despair coupled with British reluctance to rule led for a time to thoughts of returning the territory to Germany. However, the idea was not too serious and Europe tumbled into war before any thing occurred.

### **Issues to Ponder**

Some say colonialism was a product of its era, i.e. Victorian and Edwardian times, and once exported to Africa the values of those times – paternalism, racism, moral superiority - became set in stone and seemingly impervious to changes occurring at home. Others say colonialism was more about realistic economic exploitation than attitudes. Finally a third point of view is that colonialism was an inevitable outgrowth of European competition in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What do you think? Was colonialism justified?

Disputes over access to land have been part of human history since time immemorial, but in Kenya - perhaps as nowhere else on the planet – such issues have driven the formation of the modern state. Keep tracking this problem.

### **Readings:**

Ward & White. *East Africa: a Century of Change, 1870-1970*

Kenya: pages 126-143

Uganda: pages 144-160

Tanganyika: pages 160-168





## Chapter 9: Paths to Independence

### Effects of World War II

No battles were fought in East Africa, but the territories provided troops and essential supplies for the allied effort. The U.S. opened a Consulate in Mombasa in 1942 for the express purpose of buying hides and skins for boots, pyrethrum (a natural insecticide), tantalite (used in bomb scopes) and other items for the war effort. Italian POWs captured in Ethiopia and Somalia were incarcerated in Kenya and put to work building roads. Those who stayed on after the war formed the core of Kenya's small Italian community.

Africans who went to war went far. The King's African Rifles fought not only in Ethiopia, but also in North Africa and in Burma. Men who returned home truly came back with a different view of the world. They became part of a modern politically aware group, which felt entitled to a greater political role.

Unlike the post-WWI era, the economic boom that followed WWII did not collapse, but rather carried East Africa to greater prosperity.

Another consequence of the war was changed attitudes in Britain about colonies. The war could not have been won without colonies and popular sentiment was shifting in favor of economic support leading to eventual political autonomy. This was evident in the passage of the Colonial Welfare and Development Act of 1945, which provided funds for infrastructure, schools and health clinics. Additionally to Tanganyika's benefit, the United Nations Trusteeship system replaced the League of Nations mandate. Under new rules the trustee was required to prepare its territory for independence and, to ensure progress, its activities were subject to scrutiny by UN members.

In all four territories constitutional progress was marked by an increase in African representation on respective Legislative Councils, a widening of the franchise, and a shift of governing responsibility from the colonial authorities to the Legislative Council. Even so, particularly in Kenya, Britain remained determined to structure a multi-racial constitutional governing system that enshrined firm protections for minority rights.

## Kenya

In the forties education zoomed to the forefront of African concerns and in the process established a social priority which remains valid today. In 1945 the Beecher Commission recommended that four years of primary school be immediately instituted country-wide, to be followed by another four years as soon as possible. It also recommended the creation of government secondary schools as well as vocational, agricultural and technical schools and a teacher training institute. Implementation of these recommendations, while not replacing church and independent Kikuyu schools, put the government fully into the educational business for the first time.

## Mau Mau

In 1944 Mr. E.W. Mathu became the first African appointed to Kenya's Legislative Council. He founded a new political party named the Kenyan African National Union (KANU). By 1948 there were four African members of the Council and by 1951 there were six. Despite this marginal but real progress on the constitutional front, Kikuyu grievances, especially over land, erupted into violence. The Kikuyu had long complained over being excluded from the white highlands, especially as their number increased and land became scarce in the reserves. Mathu was joined by recently returned budding politician Jomo Kenyatta in arguing the Kikuyu point of view, but to no avail. Popular Kikuyu resentment manifested itself in traditional oath taking which led to intra Kikuyu violence in the late forties aimed at real and perceived supporters of the authorities. Violence became more common and extended to whites in the early fifties. Violence took the form of intimidation, maiming of cattle, hut burning, forced oathing and killing. The rebels took to the bush on the high slopes of Mt. Kenya and in the dense forests of the Aberdare Mountains from whence they raided surrounding areas.

In response to the violence the colonial government declared a "state of emergency" in 1952. As almost the first act, the governor arrested Jomo Kenyatta, accused him of leading the rebellion and banished him to the barren northwest to await trial. KANU was banned and its other leaders also arrested. The government recruited "home guards" of loyal Kikuyus, brought in police and military forces composed of Kenyans from other tribes, enlisted settlers as special anti-guerrilla forces and assigned regular British army units to combat the irregulars. Mau Mau was very disruptive. Not only did it usher in a reign of terror in the central highlands and the Kikuyu reserves, but it led to massive dislocations, forced resettlement into protected villages and squalid detention camps. However, all told only 58 whites and Asians and about 2,000 African civilians were killed. Military casualties on the government side were about a thousand and much higher, perhaps 10,000, among the Mau Mau forces. Most of the fighting concluded by 1956, but the state of emergency remained in effect until the eve of independence in 1962.

Mau Mau had several near term consequences of which the most important was to elevate Kenyatta to mythical status as a martyr and leader. Secondly, Mau Mau was perceived in England very much as the logical consequence of racist settlers seeking to dominate Africans. This resulted in sympathy for the beleaguered Africans and rising approval of African political aspirations. Also, the assignment of regular British forces ensured that decisions about Kenya's future would be made in London and not by settlers in Nairobi. In longer-term perspective and with an obvious element of historical revisionism, Mau Mau – which was purely a Kikuyu phenomenon - became mythologized as a "Kenyan" nationalist struggle, which embodied the independence hopes of all the people of the territory.

## **Constitutional Progress**

Despite Mau Mau – or even because of it – Britain continued to push ahead with Legislative Council revisions. In 1957 Tom Mboya, Oginga Odinga (both Luos) and Daniel arap Moi (a Kalenjin) were elected to the Council. In that year 29 of the 59 members were elected on communal rolls so that Europeans, Arabs, Africans, and Asians, further sub-divided into Hindus and Moslems, all had seats. (On a communal voting roll members of each racial community elect members to specific seats reserved for that community. On a common roll, all voters vote together for all seats. Obviously, the purpose of a communal roll is to assure minority representation in elected bodies.) By the mid-fifties it was clear that Kenya would at some point become independent, as Ghana did in 1958. Although there was a small hard core of opposition, Europeans on the Legislative Council began to accept this eventuality and several parties; the United Party of Kenya and the New Kenya Group began to look for ways to cooperate with their African colleagues. Mboya lead the African block. Following the 1957 elections his vision for Kenya included: no franchise requirements, no racial/communal voting rolls, no restrictions on land ownership but a maximum size of land holdings, eight years of primary school, African involvement in local government and an end to the Mau Mau emergency.

In 1960 constitutional negotiations at Lancaster House in the UK led to agreement for a greater number of elected seats to be chosen from a common roll. Those elected would form a responsible autonomous government. In subsequent elections two African political parties contested for power. The Kenyan African National Union (KANU) - largely a coalition of the two largest tribes, the Kikuyu and the Luo - led by James Gichuru, Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya took the majority of seats while the Kenyan

African Democratic Union (KADU) - led by Ronald Ngala (from the coast), Masinde Muliro (a Kamba) and Daniel arap Moi - established a strong minority. Since KANU refused to form a government in the absence of Kenyatta, Ngala formed Kenya's first internal African government. By 1962, however, in time for the second round of Lancaster House constitutional talks, the emergency was over and Kenyatta assumed a leadership role. In the second round of talks, KADU achieved protections from domination by the majority tribes through the creation of regional assemblies with considerable powers over agriculture, education, health and local government. With this constitution in hand, Kenyatta assumed the position of Prime Minister and independence was set for December 12, 1963.

## Uganda

Uganda's political history in the post war era was largely that of maneuvering between Buganda, the colonial authorities and other political elements for control of the Legislative Council and ultimately the independent government. In 1945 the Governor appointed African representatives from Bunyoro and Busoga along with the Katikiro (Prime Minister of Buganda) to the Legislative Council. Immediately the Lukiko objected and ordered the Katikiro not to participate on the grounds that Buganda must remain aloof from wider territorial government. In fact, the Kabaka, Sir Edward Mutesa II, insisted that Buganda become fully independent. As evidence of British acceptance of his position, the Kabaka wanted the responsibility for Buganda to be shifted from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office. Machinations of the early fifties that culminated in this proposal were too much for Governor Andrew Cohen who summarily deported the Kabaka trusting that his successor would be more pliant. Cohen's hopes were realized in some respects in 1954 when changes to the Bugandan government enhanced the Lukiko's power and transformed the Kabaka into a constitutional monarch.

The Protectorate Constitution of 1958 provided for direct election of representatives to the Legislative Council from all parts of the territory. However, still insisting on its special prerogatives, the Bugandan government boycotted the elections thus denying itself representation on the new Council. Meanwhile, other political forces and parties were making their case. Dr. Milton Obote created the Ugandan National Congress (subsequently the Ugandan Peoples' Congress – UPC), which drew its strength from the north. Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Catholic Mugandan, started the Democratic Party (DP), which catered to those opposed to the Bugandan Protestant establishment. Apolo Kironde created the United National Party designed to support the Kabaka and the Lukiko. These parties contested for power under new rules laid out by the Wild Commission in 1959. The Commission eliminated minority safeguards inherent in communal rolls, it provided for a Council of Ministers to be drawn from the Legislative Council to run government affairs under the supervision of the governor. Finally, it permitted the continued existence of traditional rulers, i.e. the five kingdoms, but gave them no political role in the territorial government.

In the elections of 1961, Obote's UPC won the popular vote throughout the country, but captured only 35 seats. The Democratic Party ran second and took 43 seats including all seats in Buganda. Sticking to its special status argument, the Lukiko boycotted the election thus forfeiting Baganda representation on the Council to its opponents in the Democratic Party. On March 1, 1962 Kiwanuka became Prime Minister of an internal self-government. Because of Lukiko's non-participation, the new government was inherently unstable. Consequently as part of ensuing independence negotiations federalism was re-proposed and this

time accepted. The new National Assembly would be directly elected by most citizens, but 21 Bugandan MPs would be chosen by the Lukiko, a majority of whose members by this time were themselves elected rather than appointed. Elections under this formula were held in April 1962. The UPC again won the most seats but did not obtain a simple majority. Kironde's party evolved into the Kabaka Yekka Party (the Kabaka "alone") and under this banner, as named by the Lukiko, its members took seats in the Assembly. Exploiting Baganda differences, Obote convinced the Kabaka Yekka members to join the UPC in a coalition to outvote the Democratic Party and dismiss Prime Minister Kiwanuka. Obote took over,

Uganda became independent on October 9, 1962 with Obote as Prime Minister.

## **Tanganyika.**

Tanganyika's path to independence was less troublesome than its neighbors. However, because of its poverty, its prospects as a viable nation were more modest as well. Africans were named to the Legislative Council in 1945 and by 1951 their number had expanded to four (of fourteen). On the recommendation of his Council, innovative governor Sir Edward Twining appointed an African, Chief Kidaha Makwaia, to his executive team. Finally, by the mid-fifties, Britain abandoned the remnants of indirect rule and established a system of elected local governments. Also the Legislative Council continued to evolve in numbers and responsibilities. As was true elsewhere in East Africa, Tanganyika moved steadily away from the idea of communal voting rolls and protected constituencies towards universal representation.

Dr. Julius Nyerere emerged on the political scene in 1953 when he transformed a moribund association into the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU). A pragmatist, Nyerere counseled moderation in terms of working within the system, but was adamant that Tanganyika should move quickly forward to independence. In particular, Nyerere found allies among the members of the UN Trusteeship Council who held oversight responsibility for Tanganyika. In 1958 TANU won a majority in the Legislative Council. In 1960 TANU won all but one seat. Subsequently, Nyerere formed a government and worked closely with Governor Sir Richard Turnbull, who was sympathetic to nationalist aspirations. With some constitutional modifications in 1961 to reflect the reality of the political system already in place and functioning well, Tanganyika achieved self-government. It became fully independent on December 8, 1961 with Nyerere as Prime Minister.

As noted earlier, Tanganyika was poor. Cash crops consisted of coffee, sisal and a smattering of other products. Most of the people were subsistence farmers. Tanganyika had produced small quantities of gold for some time and a wandering prospector found diamonds in Geita in 1946. Dr. J.T. Williamson, a Canadian geologist later gave a magnificent stone, "the Star of Africa" to Queen Elizabeth upon the occasion of her coronation. In an effort to find a viable crop, Britain spent millions on a vast groundnut production scheme in the late forties designed to produce vegetable oil for the world market. After several years of effort, the poorly planned, poorly implemented project collapsed completely. Mention of the Tanganyikan groundnut scheme fiasco today still brings grimaces to the faces of development experts around the world.

## Issues to Ponder

As many books have been written about Mau Mau as on any other topic pertaining to Kenya. They include novels, memoirs from each side of the conflict, efforts to chronicle it impartially and lots of political revisionism replete with historical "spin." Sample some. Meanwhile, assess Mau Mau in the context of its times. It changed the course of history in Kenya, led to the emergence of real national consciousness and the leadership of Jomo Kenyatta. Yet within months of independence virtually, all acknowledged Mau Mau leaders themselves disappeared from the political scene.

Although its people were relatively well educated and its economy strong (in comparison to other African states at this time) the seeds for Uganda's future troubles were clearly visible in the weak political institutions it inherited at independence. Whose fault was this? What could have been done differently? Why was Uganda not a viable country-to-be?

Julius Nyerere made his political appearance in this chapter. We will look more at him later, but how much of Tanganyika's peaceful accession to independence was due to him personally or how much credit should be given to the colonial/trustee authority? Why was Tanganyika different?

## Readings:

Ward and White. *East African, A Century of Change, 1870-1970*

Kenya: pages 176-198

Uganda: pages 198-218

Tanganyika: pages 218-232

## Chapter 10: Zanzibar

Zanzibar dropped from our scope during the recitation of East Africa's history during the Twentieth century. Indeed Zanzibar did recede into the shadows as the focus of politics and development concentrated on the mainland. Following implementation of the anti-slavery ordinances at the turn of the century, Britain became the complete master of Zanzibar. The British representative known progressively as the Regent, the Consul General and the Resident ruled. The Sultan remained only as a figurehead. However, long reigning Sultan Seyyid Khalifa who served from 1911 to 1963 did effectively embody the virtues of a benign constitutional monarch and came to symbolize continuity and stability to his people. Over time Britain introduced its colonial practices to replace the Sultan's inept judicial and police systems, but generally Britain grafted its indirect system of administration onto the Sultan's antiquated administration. Although they solved the slavery problem, British administrators did little to resolve the intense racial antagonisms that grew up in its aftermath. The British record for spending on infrastructure or economic development was poor. Although ostensibly the Sultan's dominions extended to the ten-mile

wide coastal strip of Kenya, in reality the British administered that part of the protectorate from Mombasa with little reference to Zanzibar.

Zanzibar's population was a polyglot composition of Arabs, Africans, Europeans and Asians. Arabs were mostly of Omani descent; many families first came with the early Sultans in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other Arabs were of more recent vintage and some only rode the dhows, stayed for a season and departed. Arabs composed the traditional ruling class associated with the Sultanate. They owned the mid-size to large clove and copra plantations which had been economically devastated by the termination of slavery. The small European community comprised the handful of consuls, representatives of global trading companies or shipping lines and colonial officials. Asians were influential merchants, moneylenders and shopkeepers. In addition to those who had been there for generations, more Indians settled in Zanzibar in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an alternative to the mainland. Africans composed the majority of the population and occupied the bottom rungs of society and the economy. They too were divided into two or even three distinct groups. First, were the indigenous people of the islands whose culture and background were that of the Swahili coast. A second group were those who had been slaves or were the descendants of slaves. Some of the indigenous people could be characterized as belonging to this group as well. Third, were those, even second-generation ex-slaves, who were identified as mainlanders. This group also included a steadily growing number of true mainlanders who, following the abolition of slavery, were recruited to work the plantations.

Land and education became issues between the wars. With slave labor gone, the clove plantations produced less and less. Many reached a state of collapse and were acquired by default by the Asian moneylenders. Worried over Asian acquisition of coconut and clove land at the expense of the islanders (and feeling a bit guilty about removing the Arabs' economic prop of slavery), in 1934 the government formally restricted sale of land outside the African/Arab community. It also developed a program to transfer ownership of some plantation land to African smallholders. Educational efforts were not as successful. In fact, it was not until after WWII that substantial numbers of Zanzibari children had the opportunity to go to school.

While the crux of economic life was manifested in the increasing Asian takeover of the economy, issues in politics pitted all three races against each other. Arabs were the traditional elite and maintained their dominance. The British saw them as the planters and the clerks for the administration. During the fifties, however, this dominance, theretofore assured by reserved seats on the Legislative Council as well as the Sultan's nominal role as chief of state, began to slip away. The British followed their East African process of gradual constitutional development by slowly allowing more elected seats and a progressive widening of the franchise. In 1960 Zanzibar adopted constitutional changes that would have a majority of members elected from a common role. This new Council would become the basis for true self-government.

Political parties organized to compete for power in January 1961. The Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) led by Abied Karume reflected the aspirations of ex-slaves and mainlanders. A breakaway faction, the Zanzibar and Pemba's Peoples' Party (ZPPP) led by Abdul Rahman Babu appealed to Pembans and represented African interests against the Arabs. The Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP) led by Shiek Ali Muhsin was deemed to be the Arab party, but garnered substantial support from indigenous islanders. Election results

were split. Although the Afro-Shirazi Party received a clear majority of the overall vote, it deadlocked with the ZNP at 11 seats each in Council after dividing the ZPPP's three seats. Since government was impossible new elections were called. This time campaigning turned violent, racial harangue and intimidation were rampant, shops were looted and people killed in riots, but nearly 95 percent of the voters cast ballots. Again the Afro-Shirazi Party won a majority of the popular vote, but only ten seats. The ZNP also got ten seats with 3 falling to the ZPPP.

The ZNP and the ZPPP joined forces in a coalition. Afro-Shirazi partisans objected to this outcome and its members boycotted the Council. Nonetheless internal self-government went forward on the basis of these election results which were repeated in pre-independence voting of July 1963. Zanzibar thus became independent on December 9, 1963 as a constitutional monarchy with newly enthroned Sultan Seyyid Jamshid bin Abdullah as monarch and a ZNP Prime Minister in charge of government. However, a large African faction headed by the Afro-Shirazi Party felt cheated and remained discontent.

## Revolution

Zanzibar's revolution produced a violent change in the social, economic and political order of the islands. Although there was discontent within the Afro-Shirazi Party led by Abied Karume, the ASP leadership was apparently not thinking in terms of a coup, but others were. Only a month after independence an enigmatic Ugandan immigrant named John Okello led an uprising. Okello had a history of working class jobs in Uganda, Kenya and on Pemba Island. He believed he had a mission from God to purify society. He held an abiding hatred of foreigners which he defined as Asians and Arabs. The ultimate irony is, of course, that he himself was also a foreigner in Zanzibar. In any case, Okello's dreams were put into action during the closing months of 1963. He carefully selected, trained and organized a group of several hundred men for revolution. Most of the leaders were, like Okello, recent arrivals from the mainland, especially from Kenya.

Okello's war was made easier by the arrogance of the new government which lightly dismissed rumors that something was afoot, had no army, made a stupid decision to centralize all armaments in two police stations of Zanzibar town which sat smack in the middle of African neighborhoods. Finally, the new government fired about forty policemen, Africans from the mainland, but did not repatriate them. These policemen subsequently lent their expertise and knowledge to the revolution.

Okello's ragtag army struck on the night of January 10. In fighting that lasted several hours, they captured the two police station armories and the radio station thus seizing control of Zanzibar. The Sultan, his family and some ministers fled before dawn. In the ensuing days and weeks self-proclaimed Field Marshall Okello unleashed a terror aimed at Arabs. Lists were used to identify those to attack. Perhaps as many as ten thousand persons were tortured and killed, women and girls raped, shops, homes and plantations burned. Arab and Asian civil servants were dismissed and imprisoned. While visiting this chaos and settling ancient grievances on the islands, Okello was careful to exclude the British from his ire. Thus, there was no intervention by British troops on stand-by in Nairobi or from British warships that soon arrived in Zanzibar's harbor.



Okello stated early on that he was not interested in government. In fact, he named Karume president during one of his early radio broadcasts. Karume, however, was not part of the plot nor were Abdulrahman Babu, leader of Umma, a communist oriented splinter party, and Kassim Hanga. The two latter men had been separately plotting their own violence. However, all three opposition leaders had been caught unaware by Okello's move. In fact, all three were in Dar es Salaam when it happened. They quickly returned to Zanzibar and even as Okello directed the terror, they began organizing the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council (ZRC). Over the course of several weeks in late January and February these leaders of the indigenous people and established mainlanders eased Okello progressively to the margins. When Okello left Zanzibar in late February for a victory tour of neighboring capitals, Karume consolidated power and then refused permission for Okello to return. (Okello bounced around East Africa for a few years. He did some time in a Kenyan jail at some point where he wrote his memoirs. He was last seen shaking hands with Idi Amin in 1971.)

Meanwhile on Zanzibar the new order was being put into place. Land and businesses were nationalized. Rule by decree established. Asians by the thousands and Arabs from the detention camps were dispossessed and sent packing. The ZRC was much influenced by the communist leanings of Babu and Kassim and found ready openings to the east – East Germany, the Soviet Union and China. Arms shipments and experts swiftly solidified these new bonds. The cold war arrived in Zanzibar almost overnight. Originally pro-British, Karume became disenchanted with the slow pace of British recognition of his regime and with other signs which he interpreted as counter-plotting. He also adopted a distaste for the United States. Chargé d'affaires Picard was expelled in January for passing lurid rumors to the press. In April, in a bluster of communist inspired rhetoric, Karume ordered the American satellite tracking station closed and expelled acting U.S. Chargé Petterson along with all American and all British citizens.

## Tanzania

As all this was going on, Karume felt buffeted by his colleagues and compelled to adopt their socialist/communist views. While he apparently liked the policies, he sensed strong personal rivalries from his peers and feared cold war machinations. His solution to these rising challenges was unity with Tanganyika. Unity was secretly planned and hastily accomplished in April 1964. Karume got what he wanted which was autonomy for Zanzibar under the broader umbrella held by Julius Nyerere. Karume's rivals were trucked off to be ministers in the new union government in Dar es Salaam. Since Zanzibar was no longer a sovereign entity as such, it became less of a cold war prize. For Nyerere union represented the logical extension of national territory. Furthermore, union reduced the risk of surprises from a volatile neighbor and set some controls on the nearby communist presence.

The Act of Union was passed on April 26, 1964. Even while retaining his Zanzibari presidency, Karume also took title to the newly created position of First Vice President of Tanzania.

## Karume in Power

Uneducated but shrewd, Karume consolidated his rule. He rarely left the islands. He became despotic,

arbitrary and capricious. He recruited a small army and established a fairly competent East German trained secret police. Karume brooked no rivals. He maneuvered them out of the way, sent them to the mainland, imprisoned and executed them. Essentially Okello's revolution succeeded in destroying the old order, but Karume's new order was arbitrary and chaotic. Suspicion and fear were the hallmark of the day. Social services decayed and bureaucratic inefficiency prevailed. All land was nationalized, but three-acre parcels were then allocated to individual families. This saved the economy because when clove prices rebounded in the late 1960s Zanzibari clove growers earned hard currency for the islands. All businesses were nationalized in the sixties and private commerce formally outlawed in 1970. Karume's outrages against sensibilities were many. One well-reported transgression was the forced marriage of young Arab and Asian girls to himself and his political cronies.

Zanzibar was a parasite in the union. It contributed little to the arrangement and took much from it. Karume largely ignored Nyerere. Zanzibar maintained relations with eastern bloc nations and came to depend strongly on East Germany and China. Karume was assassinated in 1972 by the son of a man he probably killed in 1964. Aboud Jumbe replaced him as Chairman of the Revolutionary Council and began a slow process of re-establishing political norms and reasonable economic and social order.

### **Issues to Ponder**

Zanzibar's revolution was begun by a megalomaniac who put another warped individual into power. Does the quest for power automatically corrupt? Or does the sort of ruthlessness inherent in each man's character simply make him the only type of individual capable of managing such a situation?

Were there any positive outcomes to the Zanzibar revolution? Who were the winners over the long run? Have they yet really won? Did Britain acquit itself well?

Although we will look more at Nyerere later, what compelled this ostensibly honorable man and his mainland government to accept Karume's and Zanzibar's outrageous actions and behavior?

### **Readings:**

Ward & White: *East Africa: A Century of Change, 1870-1979*  
Pages 232-245

### **Additional Readings:**

Clayton, Anthony. *The Zanzibar Revolution and Its Aftermath*. Hamden, Conn. Archon Books, 1981  
DT 435.75.C58

This is a fascinating, readable and detailed account of Okello, the revolution and Karume.

**Web Site:**

[www.zanzibar.archieves.com](http://www.zanzibar.archieves.com)

Flagged previously, this site contains several interesting pieces about this epoch.

## Chapter 11: Leaders

With the exception of Karume, several unusual men came forward to lead their nations through the last throes of colonialism into independence. Specifically, Kenyatta, Nyerere and Obote quickly became larger-than-life figures who cast varied shadows over their respective political landscapes. Indeed the history of the three nations would have been much different had they not played key roles. Kenyatta was the supreme pragmatist, Nyerere an unabashed ideologue, and Obote a first rate opportunist.

### Kenyatta

Born in the 1890s, about the time Europeans first arrived in Kikuyuland, Jomo Kenyatta got a smattering of mission primary education before moving to Nairobi. He emerged as a Kikuyu nationalist, took on the reins of the Kikuyu Central Association in the twenties and was sent by that organization to London in the thirties to lobby Parliament for land rights. He circulated in leftist circles, visited the Soviet Union, preached Kikuyu causes including female circumcision, studied anthropology, wrote an anti-colonial treatise in the form of an explanation of Kikuyu culture, married an English woman, and took refuge on a Sussex farm during WWII. He imbibed British culture and learned the British way of thinking. Throughout he stayed in contact with Kenyans, but on account of the distance, remained aloof from Nairobi political squabbles. He returned to Kenya in 1946 and quickly became immersed in agitations for land. His nationalism was deemed seditious by the authorities and the settlers and, although no conclusive proof was ever offered, he was tagged with being an instigator of Mau Mau. Kenyatta was arrested in 1952, convicted and imprisoned. His political reputation grew even as he spent ten years in jail. He was released just in time to become Kenya's first Prime Minister.

Without a doubt an agitator and nationalist, Kenyatta was also a moderate who – had he been given the chance – would probably have worked within the system. History did not happen that way, however, and because of what people thought of him - settlers and the authorities considered him the devil incarnate while Africans believed him to be the savior of the nation – he achieved powerful stature. As president he coupled this stature with the aura of age and the reality of wisdom. He was fondly and respectfully known as "Mzee," a Swahili term for elder. Kenyatta implemented pragmatic and conciliatory policies. He urged the settlers to stay and make Kenya prosperous. Yet he acted quickly to assuage "land hunger." He instituted land reform and opened the highlands to all. He opted to continue a free market economy. He pursued pro-western foreign policies, but rarely ventured into the international arena. Internally, he groomed, trained and balanced both his own generation of political colleagues as well as the coming generation of leaders.

Kenyatta was not perfect. His judgment was not always sound. He could be autocratic. As a politician he played hard and sometimes dirty. As he aged and withdrew from the day-to-day management of government, he relied on persons who often pursued their own agendas - either personal political aggrandizement or private wealth. He allowed too much political and economic power to accrue to his family and to the Kikuyu elite. Yet on balance, the verdict is extremely positive. Kenyatta led Kenya to independence without rancor. Given the emotions of that time, that was a singularly astonishing achievement. He later established the moderate and pragmatic parameters that characterize Kenya today as a quasi-democratic, free-market oriented, largely peaceful society. On the negative side, the roots of Kenya's current problems, i.e. less than full democracy, abuse of human rights and corruption, also lie in the Kenyatta era.

Over eighty years old, Kenyatta died in office in 1978.

## Nyerere

Julius Nyerere was born in 1922 at Butiama, near Musoma on Lake Victoria in western Tanganyika. He was educated in mission schools and as clear evidence of his extraordinary intellect was among the first Tanganyikans to earn university degrees. Nyerere taught school prior to becoming a full time politician in the 1950s. He never lost the demeanor and aura of a teacher. Indeed "Mwalimu" (teacher in Swahili) was the most appropriate title ever assigned to this humble and decent man whose ideas and philosophy dramatically changed not just Tanzania, but also the whole way the world looked at third world nations and their problems.

Nyerere entered the political arena in the fifties and shortly became the founder of the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU). He became a member of the Legislative Council and as independence drew near collaborated with Governor Turnbull to assure the smooth transfer of power. Nyerere became Tanganyika's first Prime Minister and its first President. Nyerere's agenda was to combat disease, poverty and ignorance. To do that he sought to mobilize the nation, to assemble and devote its meager resources for the betterment of all. The tranquillity he had hoped to engender as part of this quest was rattled by the violence of the Zanzibar revolution in January 1964. That revolt was mirrored shortly thereafter by a mutiny in the newly minted Tanganyikan army. Although army grievances had more to do with pay and conditions of service than they did with political aspirations, Nyerere was shaken by the event, but in accordance with his personal style – and in contrast with Kenyatta who called in British troops to quell a similar outburst – Nyerere negotiated his mutiny away.

As noted in Chapter 10, Tanganyika and Zanzibar joined in 1964 to form Tanzania (the name is usually accented, as are most Swahili words, on the penultimate syllable - TanzaNia). Although, as also noted, Zanzibar retained autonomy in most spheres, nonetheless, the act of union alone gave further credence to Nyerere as an architect of a new Africa.

## Ujamaa

Nyerere's vision for the nation was to shape new approaches to problems. He constructed a whole ideology of how a poverty stricken nation like his could through self-reliance throw off the confines of colonialism and imperialism and take control of its own destiny via a distinctly African brand of socialism. Nyerere began by mobilizing rural people to better use resources for development. He noted that Tanzania lagged behind the rest of the world in economic progress. To catch up, he said, "We must run, while they walk." In accordance with his ideas Tanzania created a system of ujamaa villages which grouped traditionally scattered homesteads of rural residents onto a single site for several purposes. First, to facilitate the flow of government services of education, adult literacy, health services, agricultural extension efforts and the like. Secondly, by pooling efforts via cooperative production and larger-scale marketing, villagers should make greater strides than via traditional inefficient methods. Villagers would stress their self-reliance via such a system. Supporting these ideas was the conviction that collectivism was traditionally African. The word "ujamaa" itself means family.

Another step on the economic front was the belief that the state, as opposed to the private sector, should control the means of production. Consequently, the government nationalized most of Tanzania's industry. Historically, this proved to be an error in terms of maintenance or expansion of output, but part of the initial purpose behind nationalization was to enforce the fact that Africans, not outsiders, were masters in their own house.

Concomitantly, Nyerere believed that political competition wasted human resources. He felt it important that all Tanzanians accept one vision of society and of the future. He believed that common vision could best be expressed via a single political party. He accepted that choice should be part of self-reliance in the political sphere, but was convinced that democracy could be accommodated within the sole party. Furthermore, unlike almost every other leader on the continent, Nyerere put into practice the idea that the one party must be a real channel of communication from the leadership to the people and vice versa. Consequently, a TANU party structure grew up nationwide that paralleled or excised governmental functions. While this doubled the bureaucracy that citizens had to deal with, party officials were less bound by regulations and enjoyed greater flexibility in managing local issues.

Nyerere was aware that in much of Africa the heady promise of independence was being destroyed by the canker of corruption. He was determined to spare Tanzania that fate. In 1967 he enunciated the Arusha Declaration which put forward a leadership code that reflected Nyerere's personal asceticism. Under the code leaders were to eschew personal investments and acquisition of property. They were to subsist solely on their government or party salaries and not use their positions for unethical purposes. This Puritanism and the vigor with which the people enforced it did in fact have the desired result, which was to combat corruption.

Finally, Nyerere made a bold mark in international affairs. An ardent believer in African independence, he was a staunch supporter of southern African freedom movements. Groups opposing white rule in the south found ready support and succor in Dar es Salaam. British policy of acceptance of white Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 cast a pall over Tanzania's ties to the U.K. Additionally, Tanzania's socialist proclivities complicated relations with other western nations including the U.S. However, Scandinavian states rallied to a socialist brother and the Communist bloc did as well, especially

China. In accordance with its philosophy of self-reliance, Tanzania accepted support from any professed friend. Nyerere sought to bind third world nations together so as to increase their bargaining power vis-à-vis the cold war contestants. He joined the Non-Aligned Movement and was an ardent supporter of the Organization for African Unity.

In what was almost another African first, Julius Nyerere voluntarily retired from Tanzania's presidency in 1985. By that time the world he knew in the 1960s was no more. The cold war was about to wind down and Southern Africa was free from colonial domination. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and their economic philosophies dominated third world development issues. Nyerere's bold experiments in ujamaa, a nationalized economy, a single party state and self-reliance had not borne the fruit he envisaged (under subsequent leadership many economic directions were reversed.) Yet Nyerere's legacy is compelling. Tanzania today exudes a great sense of nationhood and a powerful ethic of self-reliance and self-confidence. The nation that Nyerere created from the disparate tribes of Tanganyika and Zanzibar remains vibrant.

Nyerere died in 1999.

## Obote

The least charismatic of the three fathers of their countries, Milton Obote had the most difficult assignment in forging unity and a sense of direction out of the complexities of Ugandan politics. He gave it a try during his first years in office, but ultimately retreated - particularly during his second incarnation as president - to tribal parochialism, which was his downfall.

Obote was born in 1924 in Lira. A Langi tribesman by birth, like all northerners, Obote was viewed as a lesser breed by the haughty rulers of Buganda. The Langi, the Teso and the Acholi people of the north and east had not been historical players in Uganda where attention had focused on Buganda in the first instance and the other kingdoms in the second. Nonetheless, as northerners became educated, they too clamored for political rights. Obote spent several years at Makerere College, but left without obtaining a degree. He worked for a while in Kenya in the 1940s then returned home and found his metier in politics. A mesmerizing orator, he proved to be a ruthless infighter and ambitious schemer. Obote was among the first to seize upon new political opportunities. Initially he formed a Langi based group called the Ugandan Nationalist Movement, which successively joined other groups before finally coalescing into the Ugandan Peoples' Congress in 1960. Although the UPC was the first political party with some elements of broad national appeal, the fundamentals of Ugandan politics remained firmly based on tribe and/or religion. The Baganda themselves were split by religion and most everyone else was anti-Baganda.

Obote convinced the Kabaka Yekka Party to join the UPC in a coalition and under those terms he became Uganda's first Prime Minister in 1962. This doomed coalition was a marriage of convenience. Obote wanted national power and the Kabaka wanted to ensure that his Bagandan rivals in the Democratic Party were denied power. As a condition of the coalition, the Kabaka had demanded a federal system. However, the new federal state, which allowed latitude for the five kingdoms, was not successful. Following much

political maneuvering and infighting, including a debacle over the still contentious lost counties plus an effort to oust Obote from the UPC (thwarted in part on account of support for Obote from General Idi Amin, Deputy Army Commander), confrontation with the Kabaka came to a head. Obote won. In what was to be dubbed "the battle of Mengo," thousands of Baganda died and the Kabaka fled to London. Obote suspended the constitution in 1966, removed the Kabaka from the presidency and ordained a centralized republic with himself as president. Obote took steps to eliminate Buganda as a political entity. The centralization of power permitted the development and increasing use of detention and violence to cow or eliminate rivals.

Recognizing the need to build a popular power base, Obote sought to expand his government's appeal by transforming the nation into a socialist state. (Theories of "African" socialism abounded during the sixties and were quite popular – and equally devastating – across the continent.) During the next few years Obote's "The Common Man's Charter" steered Uganda leftward through a series of nationalizations, extension of government regulation into the economy and use of cooperatives for many rural endeavors. The economic program was popular in some quarters and despised in others. In short, it fostered even more acrimony in an already divided nation. However, it was neither bitter politics vis a vis Buganda, nor disagreement over policy that cost Obote his position, but rather his failure to control General Amin. Although promoted to Army Commander by Obote, Amin correctly felt Obote's moves to increase the number of senior Langi officers as well as to investigate Amin for killing a military rival, threatened his tenure as army chief. Consequently, in January 1971 when Obote was in Singapore for a Commonwealth summit, Amin launched a coup d'état.

Obote went into exile in Tanzania where he plotted his return. To jump ahead a half dozen years, Obote supported Nyerere's military response to Amin's seizure of Tanzanian territory in 1979. Amin was ousted in 1979 and following short-lived governments of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa (currently a public defender in New Jersey), Obote returned to the presidency. This time he made little pretense of trying to forge a national consensus, instead he relied on his northern brethren to combat insurgent armies at every turn. He faced Amin loyalists in the far northwest, disgruntled Bagandan irregulars in the center and a well organized guerrilla campaign of Yoweri Museveni in the southwest and in the Luwero triangle outside Kampala. Obote relied on his army, traditionally staffed by northern Acholi and Langi tribesmen, to fight these foes. They did a very poor job and as the house was crumbling about them, Obote turned more exclusively to his Langi tribesmen. The Acholi counter-reaction was to oust Obote, which they did in July 1985.

Obote went into exile again (rumor has it that he looted the national bank on his way out of town). He currently resides in Zambia.

## Issues to Ponder

If you haven't soured on British colonialism yet, carefully study the kangaroo trial accorded to Jomo Kenyatta. Keep in mind, however, that this judicial proceeding and others like it were where the Kenyans learned how to handle political dissent. Kenyatta and especially Moi learned the lesson well.

What is the impact of a single person in a nation's destiny? How much different would Kenya have been without Kenyatta? While that might be imaginable, it is inconceivable that Tanzania as it evolved could have done so without the influence of Mwalimu. Lacking him, Tanzania would probably have remained an unremarkable third world basket case. With him, however, it was a very remarkable third world basket case.

When making your assessments of Nyerere's programs, avoid simple characterizations of what worked or didn't work. Instead, try to get inside his head, try to understand his dreams, his vision and his ideas. Obviously, many of Nyerere's programs did not work, but is that because his philosophy was fatally flawed, or was it because the Tanzanian people (or humankind in general) weren't up to the task?

Obote falls short on our list of heroes, yet Uganda had the most numerous, best educated people in all of East Africa. Where were its leaders? How badly flawed was the system at independence? Whose fault was that? Obote did not have the strength of character or political skills to lead Uganda out of morass. Could anyone have saved Uganda from tribal and sectarian violence?

### **Readings:**

There are many readings pertinent to this chapter. Indulge yourselves. Nyerere-phobes will want to look hard at Mwalimu's ideas.

Arnold, Guy, *Kenyatta and the Politics of Kenya*, London, J.M. Dent & Sons, 1974.

DT434.K4A7

Pages 98-110, 167-180, and 192-210 provide the basic information. Those who want more would enjoy the chapters on Facing Mount Kenya, Mau Mau and the Kapenguria trial.

Legum, Colin and Mnari, Geoffrey, editors, *Mwalimu: The Influence of Nyerere*, Trenton, Africa World Press, 1995

DT448.2.M89

This is a fascinating collection of essays by scholars extremely knowledgeable about Tanzania who assess the various elements of Nyerere's contributions to political and economic thought and practice. Skim through it all, but read Chapter 4, Ujamaa; Chapter 6, One-Party Democracy; Chapter 7, Human-Centered Development and the closing short chapters assessing his impact.

Ofcansky, Thomas P. *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1996.

DT433.222.O35

Pages 39-68 cover politics and government from Obote 1 to Museveni.

Mutibwa, Phares. *Uganda Since Independence, a Story of Unfilled Hopes*. Trenton, Africa World



Press, 1992

DT433.26.M88

Pages 22-71 provide a more detailed look at the Obote era.

### **Additional Reading:**

Murray-Brown, Jeremy, *Kenyatta*, New York, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1973

DT433.576.K46M8

Milton and Ingrham. *Obote: a Political Biography*. London, Routledge, 1994

(Not in Department of State Libraries)

### **Web Sites:**

[www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/171099/Comment/News\\_Analysis8.html](http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/171099/Comment/News_Analysis8.html)

[www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/171099/Comment/News\\_Analysis9.html](http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/171099/Comment/News_Analysis9.html)

Published shortly after his death, these two commentaries on Julius Nyerere by prominent scholars Ali Mazuri and James Nyong'o recount Mwalimu's contributions.

[www.uganda.co.ug/millium/obote.html](http://www.uganda.co.ug/millium/obote.html)

This is a decent encyclopedia entry on Obote with links to other figures of his era.

## **Chapter 12: Conqueror of the British Empire**

Idi Amin came from obscurity to leave a mark of terror and buffoonery on Uganda. In the process he traumatized the people, destroyed the economy and wrecked the political system. Although Amin was certainly possible in the first instance because of the tribalism, which permeated politics, his legacy was to further tribalize society to the extent that the dysfunctionality he engendered still plagues Uganda today.

A Kakwa tribesman from the West Nile District, Amin received only a smattering of primary schooling. A northern warrior, he joined the King's African Rifles in 1946. An amiable giant of a man, British officers thought Amin to be an ideal soldier – simple, enthusiastic, strong and of regal bearing, i.e. he looked good in a parade. He fought Mau Mau insurgents in Kenya and rose steadily in the ranks. As independence loomed, Amin was one of two senior sergeants to be commissioned as officers. He received training in Britain and Israel, but was not literate enough to successfully complete the courses. Nonetheless, because of seniority he became one of the top men in the independent Ugandan Army. He rose quickly from lieutenant to general. When Deputy Army Commander in 1966, Amin sustained Obote against a poorly plotted takeover. Afterwards Obote promoted him to Army Commander. Although his personal quirks, aberrations and predilection for violence were evident, Amin did command the loyalty of some troops, particularly Kakwa brethren whom he brought into the army. Although Amin had helped Obote out of several jams, the Army Commander was a liability, an embarrassment, but above all an

unpredictable unknown, for the president.

Amin correctly interpreted Obote's attempts to move him aside in late 1970, and so he struck back. When Obote was attending a Commonwealth meeting in Singapore in January 1971, Amin took over. Amin's coup d'état did not enjoy the total support of the army, which was dominated by Acholi and Langi northerners, but it was embraced by the people of Buganda who were delirious with joy at the ouster of their nemesis Milton Obote. Always cunning and with a solid sense of theater, Amin consolidated Bagandan support by authorizing the re-burial in Buganda (at Kasubi) of recently deceased Kabaka Mutesa II who died in exile in London.

Even in the euphoria of takeover, Amin began to purge the army of his real and perceived enemies. This was the beginning of the years of slaughter that cost several hundred thousand Ugandans their lives. The rationale behind most of the killings was "enemy of the state," but decisions were arbitrary and capricious. Many prominent Ugandans including first Prime Minister Kiwanuka and Anglican Archbishop Lwum were murdered. The State Research Bureau staffed by Amin's thugs who flaunted fancy clothes and dark glasses, systematized torture and death.

With the expulsion of the Asians, citizen and non-citizen alike, in 1972 Amin dealt a crippling blow to the economy. Shopkeepers and proprietors of small businesses for the most part, Asians also served as doctors and lawyers and owned factories, sugar and tea plantations. Despite a storm of protest from abroad, Amin was adamant; all 50,000 Asian would leave...and so they did – humiliated, stripped of their wealth and possessions. Many Africans who long envied the perceived prosperity of the Asians and resented their business practices applauded this action. The "economic war" as the expulsion and the subsequent acquisition of property came to be known was a resounding defeat for the economy. New owners sold off stocks and had no way to re-supply. Credit systems evaporated. Because a large part of the moneyed sector disappeared, the economy spiraled downward.

Amin also reversed Uganda's foreign policies and threw his lot in with the Muslim world. The leftward jaunt under Obote already raised qualms in Britain and the west about Uganda's orientation. Amin multiplied these fears as he appeared unreliable and increasingly incompetent. The expulsion of the Asians, mostly to Britain, confirmed the judgment that Uganda was not a worthy partner. A whole series of other incidents involving detained Peace Corps Volunteers, the murder of Edward Stroh, the hijacking of Air France (and the subsequent Israeli raid on Entebbe), the murder of Dora Bloch, the arrest of Cecil Hills, not to mention growing knowledge of the grisly murder machine of the State Research Bureau all combined to sour and interrupt ties with western nations. In their stead, playing on his Islamic faith, Amin turned to the Muslim world, to Egypt, to Saudi Arabia and especially to Libya. Less critical, but also with fewer resources to share, these nations rallied around Uganda. To the dismay of critics both inside and outside of Africa, Amin ascended to the presidency of the OAU in 1975, further tarnishing the reputation of that body.

In his final act of arrogance, Amin decided to reclaim the Kagera salient, the small bit of Tanzanian territory just south of the Ugandan border. Amin claimed that the Akagera River was the natural boundary, so he was just rectifying a colonial border mistake. Ugandan occupation of region in 1979

brought an immediate military response from Tanzania. Nyerere mustered his army, which counter-attacked. Accompanied by a motley grouping of Ugandan dissidents including pro-Obote forces, Bagandan dissidents, and newly minted rebel leader Yoweri Museveni, the Tanzanian army recaptured the salient and slowly moved toward Kampala. Amin's army put up feeble resistance. Ultimately their chief fled, first to Jinja, then home to Aura and finally into exile in Libya.

Today Amin lives in exile in Saudi Arabia, under conditions resembling house arrest.

### **Issues to Ponder**

1. Was Idi Amin an anomaly or merely the most egregious example of colonial authorities' failure to select and train suitable men for military positions?
2. How do you account for Amin's appeal to the Ugandan public? Was he a legitimate hero or was he just good theater?

### **Readings:**

Mutibwa, Phares. *Uganda Since Independence, A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes* Trenton, Africa World Press, 1992

DT433.26.M88

Pages 78-122

### **Additional Readings:**

Decalo, Samuel. *Psychoses of Power, African Personal Dictatorships*. Boulder, Westview Press, 1989

DT352.8.D44

Pages 79-119

Decalo writes an excellent description of Amin's personality – what drove him and how he drove others.

Grahame, Iain. *Amin and Uganda, A Personal Memoir*. London, Granada, 1980

DT433.282.A55G7

Grahame remembers the soldier Amin he commanded. He also recounts the several occasions when he was sent by the British government to intervene and plead with his former subordinate.

Martin, David. *General Amin*. London, Faber and Faber, 1974

DT433.282.A5M3

Written just as he attained the presidency, this book recounts Amin's military service more than his political career.

### **Web Sites:**

[www.uganda.co.ug/millennium/amin.htm](http://www.uganda.co.ug/millennium/amin.htm)

A serviceable biography of the man.

## Chapter 13: Uganda: Liberators and Revolution

Uganda's agony did not end with Amin's departure. In the chaotic period that followed two short-lived governments, both propped up by Tanzanian occupiers, attempted to rule. First was Yusuf Lule, a Mugandan who was not part of the Baganda hierarchy. He proved unable and was quickly replaced by Godfrey Binaisa. Binaisa too was weak and proved unable to contain corruption in the army. Many officers leftover from the pre-Amin era were actively working for Obote's return. Binaisa was also sandbagged by fellow Baganda from the Democratic Party who refused to work with him. Finally, Binaisa's ouster was accepted by Museveni, the Minister of Defense at the time, who represented a growing third force not aligned with any of the older parties. With Binaisa's departure, the pro-Obote Military Commission stepped in and organized elections in 1980. Museveni formed a new party, the Ugandan Patriotic Movement, to contest the elections against Obote's UPC and Ssemogerere's DP. The elections were flawed, essentially rigged by Paulo Muwanga, Vice Chairman of the Military Commission. The UPC won a commanding majority and Obote took office in December.

The 1980 elections had major consequences. First, Uganda missed an opportunity to redress matters in the wake of Amin's departure and to establish a viable political system. Secondly, the debacle provided the rationale for Museveni to opt out of working within the system and to begin efforts to overthrow it. Thirdly, Obote realized that many Ugandans hated him and his new government. Rather than try to mend fences, Obote retreated into staunch tribalism. Finally and most tragically, the situation overall was conducive to the continuation of criminal and state-orchestrated violence that had become part of every day life.

In the wake of the stolen election of 1980, Obote made no reconciliatory moves. The DP, however, pursuing misguided hopes that it could reform the system from within took up its 51 seats in Parliament. On the other hand, Museveni concluded that the system – a too powerful presidency dominated by a vile, corrupt northern army – had to be changed, if Uganda's cycle of violence were to cease. He and his followers formed the National Resistance Army (NRA) and took to the bush.

Obote unleashed his loosely reined army against the belligerents. The army committed many atrocities against civilians – predominately Bagandan farmers - in the Luwero Triangle region just northwest of Kampala. The struggle quickly took on dimensions of a tribal war: southern Bantus versus northern Nilotics. The fighting Nilotics increasingly came from the Acholi half of the army. Acholi military leaders saw that Obote sent their tribesmen to war while keeping the Langi half (Obote's tribesmen) in garrisons elsewhere. This division inside the army, reinforced by the Acholi view that the war was lost in the field and could only be resolved by negotiations, led to Brigadier Basilio Okello's coup d'etat of July 1985. The coup makers installed their senior man, General Tito Okello, as president. Obote fled to Zambia.

Despite overtures to the Baganda, the Acholi regime quickly showed it merely changed the guard. Troops

ran amuck in Kampala and an alliance was forged with the remnants of Amin's army from the West Nile. The NRA initially did not respond to Okello's peace overtures, but finally under enormous pressure from outside, its political wing, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), did join peace talks organized in Nairobi in November under the aegis of President Moi. By December those talks hammered out a power sharing agreement which was signed by both sides.

Museveni apparently recognized that the Okellos could never honor their obligations under the agreement. Therefore, he concluded that the NRA too, which already controlled about half of Uganda, would not be held to the provisions of the agreement. Consequently, in January 1986 the NRA finally moved on and took Kampala. Museveni was sworn in as president.

The significance of the NRA takeover was several fold. First, for Uganda it represented revolutionary change – the old colonial based political system that exploited tribal differences was thrown out and the predatory northern army was dissolved. Secondly, Museveni's continuation of the struggle after signing the Nairobi agreement was taken as a personal affront by President Moi. This translated into strained relations between the two men and their nations for the next decade. Thirdly, the NRA takeover was a home grown revolution (with minimal outside support) that successfully replaced a recognized sitting government. This sent shudders through neighboring autocrats like Moi and Mobutu.

## **Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**

Born into a Bahima family in southern Ankole (near the Rwandan border), Museveni was named by his father in honor of the seventh battalion of the King's African Rifles. He attended university in Dar es Salaam where he threw his considerable energy into student politics and where he also imbibed nationalist revolutionary vibes of Tanzania and of FRELIMO. Museveni did not burst unknown upon the political scene with the NRA, but was already an acknowledged leader. He held the post of Minister of Defense during the Lule and Bianisa regimes when he was deemed to be the second most dangerous challenger (DP chief Ssemogerere being the lead) to Obote's return. Museveni was defeated (by a DP candidate) in the stolen election of 1980.

In the bush Museveni's leadership and revolutionary vision flourished. He was of a new generation of pragmatic leaders who owed nothing to the system. A man of far reaching vision, Museveni held determined convictions of the rightness, and righteousness, of his point of view. Nonetheless, although not easily swayed, he was astute enough to listen to contrary opinions and to weigh them on their merits. In office as president, he has mastered the practice of co-opting opponents to accept his point of view or ridiculing and cowering them into silence. President Museveni has an appealing public persona. He uses humor and homespun wisdom in public pronouncements. He rejects labels of "politician" or "general," instead he describes himself as a "revolutionary." Under his direction Uganda's economy strengthened. Also, President Museveni himself emerged onto a wider regional and global stage as a leader whose influence and opinions count.

## **The National Resistance Movement**

The NRM took power in 1986 with a self-imposed mandate to rebuild Uganda. Its ten-point program included restoration of democracy, the establishment of security and re-launching the economy.

Decrying Uganda's "backwardness," the NRM completely rejected party politics. Instead it opted for a pyramid of elected bodies called Resistance Councils (RCs). Citizens directly elect village level RCs. RC members, in turn, choose the next level and so forth up to the national level, which is Parliament. Persons stand for election on their own merits rather than under a party banner (everyone generally knows, however, which party a candidate would support were parties permitted.) Nonetheless, the exclusion of party affiliations reduced the vicious tribalism that characterized previous politics. Secondly, the RC system reserved seats in Parliament for special constituencies, i.e. women, youth, labor and the army. Laudably, this insured that women were well represented. Uganda's commendable constitutional consultations (1989-92) found widespread support for the new representational system.

Despite support for the RC system, the continued ban on political party activities remains contentious in Uganda. Parties are permitted to exist, but may not contest elections, hold rallies or otherwise "politic." Furthermore the ban became a point of dissension between the U.S. (and to a lesser extent other donors) in the late 1990s. Debate on the timing to resume full political freedoms remains topical at the turn of the century. Meanwhile, a relatively unfettered press emerged and, except in conflict zones, human rights were respected.

The Museveni government confronted security problems at every turn. First, in 1986, it had to chase down the retreating Acholi and West Nile forces. Some of the Acholi troops joined civilians and metamorphosed into priestess Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement, which upon her departure, was further transformed into the Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony. These atavistic Acholi movements initially appealed to an anti-Bantu sentiment, accentuated by the NRA's abuses directed at non-combatants in the north,. In the years since the late 1980s, when the NRA imposed better internal discipline, the victims of the LRA have been overwhelmingly their fellow Acholis. Despite vast military superiority and intense political efforts, the NRA has not brought the LRA to heel. Today the LRA enjoys very little support in Acholiland, but has been sustained by a hard core of believers operating from bases in southern Sudan with support from Khartoum.

Uganda was plagued with other insurgents as well. Ex-Amin forces were largely neutralized in 1989 when Brigadier Ali joined the government, but a small secessionist movement of the Bakonjo people has operated in the Ruwenzori Mountains for decades. More recently, in the late ninties and into 2000, the African Democratic Party, a loose coalition of dissidents including some Islamic fundamentalists, operating out of the Congo sowed havoc with raids along the eastern border and even into Kassese and Kibale towns.

In 1990 about 4,000 NRA troops of Rwandan refugee origin, led by General Fred Rwigema, one of Museveni's original NRA bush compatriots, deserted and invaded Rwanda under the banner of the Rwandan Patriotic Army. Although he denied prior knowledge and provided minimal active support for the deserters, Museveni certainly acquiesced to their leaving and did little to thwart their invasion of

Rwanda. In fact, the Rwandan departure ended the political liability of having so many foreigners in the NRA.

On the economic front, the NRM government has dramatically changed the landscape. We will look at that in the next chapter.

### **Issues to Ponder**

1. No-party politics characterize present day Uganda. What arguments justify banning political parties? What are the arguments for lifting the ban? Would you join the cynics who say the ban is only in place until Museveni and the NRM can build themselves up enough so that they would not lose a fair election?
2. Internal violence remains a factor in Uganda's political life. Can this apparently ingrained practice be halted? or will it remain a problem for years to come?
3. President Museveni often chastises his countrymen for blaming troubles of backwardness, under-development, political violence, etc. on outsiders instead of accepting responsibility for their own predicament. Is he correct?

### Readings:

Mutibwa, Phares. *Uganda Since Independence, A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*, Trenton, Africa World Press, 1992  
DT433.26.M88  
Pages 125-198

### Additional Readings:

Zartman, William, editor, *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1995  
JQ1879.A15C647  
Pages 33-49, Khadiagala, Gilbert M. "State Collapse and Reconstruction in Uganda"

### Web Sites:

[www.uganda.co.ug](http://www.uganda.co.ug)

This web site has lots of links to Ugandan newspapers. *New Vision* (pro-government) and *The Monitor* (critical of government) have the largest circulations.

## Chapter 14: Uganda's Economy

One of the remarkable success stories of Africa in the last 15 years is the rehabilitation of Uganda's economy. The base for success was always there. At independence in 1962 Uganda's per capita income was among the highest in Africa and its income distribution was the best. But nationalizations during Obote's first presidency skewed efficient resource allocation. Amin's plundering of the government and expulsion of Asians ruined daily commerce and destroyed the tax base. Continued violence and instability under Obote the second time around kept donors and investors at bay. During the twenty or so years from the mid-1960s, Uganda's GDP dropped precipitously.

The NRM, however, was committed to the restoration of economic growth through the building of a mixed economy. Although Museveni was initially suspect on account of his University of Dar es Salaam "socialist" education (plus some of his early statements), he proved to be an apt pupil of economic reality and a pragmatic executor of tough policies. President Museveni and his team instituted sweeping economic reforms. They freed the exchange rate, disposed of state owned enterprises, permitted Asians to regain property, eliminated marketing boards, sliced away petty regulations and reformed taxation. Above all they encouraged diversification in the agricultural sector and insisted on more transformation of primary products into finished goods. These measures paid off, not only on their own merits, but also because their implementation opened veritable flood gates of foreign aid from the World Bank, the IMF, USAID, Britain and others.

Lest we sound too laudatory, we flag that free market economics bring problems of unequal income distribution. This is compounded in Uganda (as in Kenya) by the elite having priority access to opportunities and by corruption. Although steps have been taken to curb "eating" as it is locally known, punishments have not yet been harsh enough to seriously inhibit corrupt practices. Additionally, Uganda has not delivered up to the expectations of rural residents in terms of modernization particularly the improvement of roads, schools and health clinics. It is precisely these sorts of issues – hopes for improvements in their own lives and disgust with those perceived to be perverting the delivery of improvements – that are fodder for political dissent.

### **Issues to Ponder**

1. Uganda offers the perfect case study of how macro-economic discipline adversely affects social spending. In other words, adherence to IMF/IBRD economic reform targets usually translates into less money available for government spending. Cuts or reduced increases are usually taken in education and health sectors. Is that fair? See the readings for several perspectives.
2. Persons excluded from the modern sector must make ends meet. Their economic activities are often referred to as the informal economy. In all of East Africa informal economies claim a large portion of the population. A priority for nations is to discover ways to integrate the formal and informal sectors.

### **Readings:**

Ofcansky, Thomas, op cit.



**Additional Readings:**

Hansen, Holger Bernt and Twaddle, Michael, editors, *Changing Uganda – The Dilemmas of Structural Adjustment and Revolutionary Change*, London, James Curry, 1991

DT433.285.C47

See: Mugenyi, Joshua, "IMF Conditionality and Structural Adjustment"

Oblo, Christine, "Women, Children and a Living Wage"

**Web Sites:**

[www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/ug2.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/ug2.htm)

This is an excellent and concise recounting of economic policy developments under NRM rule.

[www.perds.go.ug](http://www.perds.go.ug)

Sponsored by the Ministry of Finance, this site provides good current information on the economy and business climate with many links to similar sites.

## Chapter 15: From Kenyatta to Moi

The Kenyatta era tapered off. Problems of ossification of government mirrored the aging leader. Since his family and the Kiambu Kikuyu coterie around him were desperate to hang on to power, and Kenyatta himself was unwilling to name an heir, his entourage concocted a plan to keep an unwanted successor from arising. They made it illegal to speculate on the death of the president and on a possible successor. This did indeed contain the overt positioning, but only heightened the internal maneuvering. Ultimately the idea was to permit self-effacing Vice President Daniel arap Moi, who served Kenyatta loyally, to become president in accordance with the Constitution. According to the Kiambu plan, he then would be replaced by some carefully chosen Kikuyu. When Kenyatta did die in 1978, Moi inherited the presidency as foreseen. The plan then went awry as the Kikuyu inner circle could not agree on a candidate. Charles Njonjo (a Kikuyu), Kenyatta's Attorney General, stood by Moi and helped battle back aspirants. Njonjo's savvy coupled with Moi's theretofore hidden cunning as exemplified in the appointment of Mwai Kibaki (also Kikuyu) as Vice President and the rather considerable powers of the office combined to solidify his hold on the presidency.

Moi inherited a nation marked with the indelible stamp of Mzee. Kenya was characterized by Kenyatta's system of patronage and the concentration of power in the administrative authorities (just like the British). Yet, despite its faults, Kenya was a fairly prosperous place. Its private sector-oriented economy flourished. Coffee prices were good in the late seventies. In the growing economy there was a place for everyone to pursue his ambitions. Additionally, Kenya had taken none of the ideological bents of its neighbors. It continued with a British style Parliamentary system and maintained pro-western foreign

policies. The military stayed in the barracks. Most human rights were decently respected and national issues were debated in Parliament.

Daniel arap ("son of") Moi was born in 1924 near Karbarnet in Baringo District. He is Tugen, a subset of the Kalenjin tribe. Educated in American mission schools, Moi remains a churchgoer and is prone to use Biblical quotations in speeches. Initially a teacher, he turned to politics in the nineteen fifties and was one of the first Africans elected to the Legislative Council in 1957. As independence approached Moi joined Ngala and others to form the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) which was a coalition of the smaller tribes designed to offset KANU, the coalition of Kikuyus and Luos. KADU was absorbed into KANU in 1964 and Moi shifted his allegiance to Kenyatta. Moi was selected to be Kenya's third vice president in 1967. As vice president he stayed in the background, but obviously learned many lessons of political control from the master manipulator Kenyatta himself.

Tall, gravelly-voiced, stern-faced, Moi cuts an avuncular figure. Kenyatta's trademark was a flywhisk and Moi's is a baton. As president, over the years, Moi has become more autocratic and more out of touch with the people. His challenge has been to preside over a nation acutely divided by tribal animosities (particularly in the political arena), an elite, which considers continued wealth and power its birthright and an economy, which has been up and down. All of this plays out against the backdrop of a burgeoning population, especially of urban poor, and growing demands led by the educated portion of the population for greater political freedoms.

The coalition led by Njonjo, which helped consolidate Moi's early presidency, began to unravel in 1980. In a carefully orchestrated campaign, word went out from the presidency of a "traitor." This assertion got lots of press play and it soon became evident that Njonjo was the target. Although no compelling evidence of real treason was ever produced, Njonjo was hounded out of public life. The message was clear. Loyalty and subservience to Moi were essential for a political career. Soon after the Njonjo episode, another conspiracy named "Mwakenya" was alleged. The final outrage was an attempted coup d'état mounted by men from Kenya's Air Force. Although the Air Force was composed largely of Kikuyus, Luo non-commissioned officers instigated the uprising. On a Sunday in August 1982 coup makers took Nairobi's radio station and set up roadblocks in town. Army Commander Mohamed, a Somali, immediately rallied his forces and occupied Nairobi with little opposition from the rebels. In the interim, however, lawlessness in Nairobi set off a spate of looting which proved difficult to contain. Indeed, the combined events of a coup attempt and unfettered looting showed how fragile the veneer of public order really was.

The result of these challenges was to confirm in the Moi camp the idea that it was under siege from the larger tribes – the Kikuyu and the Luo. This mind set then engendered a siege mentality during which all challenges to the regime were met with harshness. The government harassed, intimidated, arrested, imprisoned and mistreated its critics. Such actions raised public consciousness about the regime and, in turn, rebounded in greater alienation. Western countries were outraged. The U.S. in particular called for a halt to human rights abuses. Subsequently, human rights concerns coupled with unresolved issues regarding tolerance of corruption led donors, including the World Bank, to cut back assistance programs in Kenya.

The 1988 election was a low point in Kenya's democratic history. KANU used all the power available to it to ensure victory in what observers' said was not a free and fair election. The next low point was the political murder of Foreign Minister Robert Ouko. The minister was taken from his farm in Koru in the middle of the night. His mutilated body was found partially burned nearby the next day. The circumstances of the crime itself were sensational enough, but the government's clumsy attempts to cover-up fueled convictions that the presidency was involved. A yearlong inquiry led by a Scotland Yard detective came to the same conclusion. Moi cronies and confidants Nicholas Biwott and Hezekiah Oyugi lost their jobs.

As Kenya moved into the nineties, it was clear that economic and political changes were vital. Reforms in one arena complimented reforms in the other. Economic regulations were eased. Monopolies – cereal boards, milk and meat commissions, etc. were abolished. Parastatals like Kenya Airways were privatized. The doors to competition were opened internally and to a lesser extent externally. Implementation of these set of reforms led to resumption of World Bank and some other donor assistance.

In the political sphere, multiple parties were permitted. Although a number were created, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) led by old warhorse Oginga Odinga, a Luo, and Kikuyu lawyers Paul Muite and Gideon Imanyora, younger activists, led the challengers. Soon they were joined by Kenneth Matiba, a Kenyatta kinsman, and Martin Shikuku, a maverick Luhya MP. Former Vice President Mwai Kibaki formed the Democratic Party. FORD was soon rent asunder by internal differences and essentially broke into two factions Odinga/Muite vs Matiba/Shikuku.

Even though the Moi coterie continued to sow division wherever it could and used the still considerable powers of the presidency to intimidate and harass opponents, the elections of 1993 confirmed that power was shifting away from the president. He gained only 36 percent of the vote, but led the presidential voting so was returned for another eight year term. Due to gerrymandering KANU retained a majority in Parliament. More importantly, Moi's support came from the relatively poorer sections of Kenya - Rift Valley, Coast and Northeastern Provinces. The larger tribes voted along tribal lines for their brethren.

In the later nineties, Moi continued to institute reforms only under dire pressure. He demonstrated a knack to do just the bare minimum at the last minute. But reforms of the civil service, anti-corruption measures, greater independence for the judiciary and more economic measures have just barely kept the lid on. Students, the Law Society of Kenya, professional associations, non-governmental organizations, the media and even the churches clamor for more liberalization and greater freedoms.

The boost to the economy that reform measures engendered have helped buy time, but the structural problem of badly skewed distribution of wealth remains troublesome. Kenya's fast growing population means that land hunger can never be satiated. At the same time, it also means that quantities of poor youths crowd both the urban and rural areas. There is no relief in sight for them.

President Moi says that he will step down when his current term ends in 2002. Kenya then will be a much different place and the new leadership will have to create new, probably more pluralistic mechanisms,

through which to govern.

## Issues to Ponder

1. Certainly the concept of loyalty in Kenya, to tribe and to leaders, takes on a dimension unknown and perhaps even unfathomable to Americans, but the idea of responsible dissent has still to find root in Africa. One is either a supporter or an enemy. There is little ground in between for constructive criticism...and politicians do take things personally.

2. Like the United States, Kenya has an unfortunate history of political assassinations. Mboya, Pinto, Kariuki and Ouku all died because of their politics. What are the similarities and the differences between events here and there?

## Readings:

Miller, Norman and Yeager, Rodger. *Kenya, the Quest for Prosperity*, Boulder, Westview Press, 1994.  
DT433.58.M55 1994  
Pages 97-125

## Additional Readings:

Morton, Andrew. *Moi: The Making of an African Statesman*. London, Michael O'Mara, 1998  
DT433.582M64M6

This is a partially authorized biography, which sheds some light on President Moi's family, early years and attitudes.

Smith, Hempstone, *Rogue Ambassador*, Sewanee, Tenn., The Sewanee Press, 1997  
E840.8H45A3

This personal memoir by a controversial ambassador chronicles the policy struggle between the U.S. and Kenya over democracy as well as the ambassador's confrontational dealings with the Department of State on the same issue. A shorter version can be found in Ambassador Smith's article, "Kenya: A Tarnished Jewel" published in *The National Interest* magazine, Winter 1995/96.

## Web Sites:

[www.theatlantic.com/issues/96feb/africa/africa.htm](http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/96feb/africa/africa.htm)

This is an excellent article by Bill Berkeley that gives a good account of the frustrations and challenges faced by Kenyans under Moi in the 1990s.

# Chapter 16: Kenya's Economy

Kenya's economy is a continuation of its colonial economy which was based on agricultural exports complimented by a protected manufacturing sector producing import substitutes. This economy grew up behind a rather stiff set of government imposed controls that only began to be loosened in the 1980s.

Coffee, tea and pyrethrum were the colonial era exports, which were grown mostly on white owned farms. The export base expanded when post-independence land reforms placed an African yeomanry on mid-size farms on millions of acres formally held by Europeans. Extension services encouraged African production of cash crops and augmented the quantity of agricultural exports. In the years since independence there was great diversification into other cash crops such as fresh vegetables, houseplants and even cut flowers for airfreight to Europe.

Behind Kenya's barriers which protected local enterprises from global competition, a manufacturing sector grew up making items like batteries, soap, beer, cement, textiles, vehicle assembly, agricultural chemicals, tires and the like. These concerns provided employment and were the basis for the formal economy, i.e. the portion of the economy that is measured, regulated and taxed. Meanwhile, because most Kenyans were excluded from the formal sector, they continued to work and produce in the "informal" sector comprised of subsistence farmers, pastoralists, many thousands of street traders and "jua kali" (hot sun) workshops.

Although ostensibly a capitalist economy during the colonial, Kenyatta and early Moi eras, the government became increasingly involved in managing the economy through marketing boards, regulations and government owned corporations. Parastatal companies offered myriad opportunities for patronage, nepotism, cronyism and corruption. Kenyan managers who often sported big bellies would slap them satisfactorily and note, "participation in democracy." Even though few efforts were made to fix the system that was rotting at the top, the government responded readily to everyday concerns of the Wanainchi by imposing price controls on key commodities such as sugar, tea, matches, vegetable oil, maize meal and beer. To satisfy anti-Asian sentiment, the government also reserved trading in essential commodities to African merchants.

Kenya has no major mineral deposits and much of its land surface is arid with little agricultural value. Great tracks of this marginal land, however, are home to one of the greatest profusions of wildlife in Africa. Tourists have come for a hundred years to hunt (former President Roosevelt killed thousands of animals during his 1904 safari) and to view. The game parks are a major attraction, as are Kenya's sparkling beaches. By the 1980s despite ups and downs with poachers and devastating drought, over 350,000 visitors a year made tourism Kenya's second largest foreign exchange earner, a position which it retains today. The sector generates tens of thousands of jobs as well, many of which are held by persons from marginal land game areas.

Kenya experienced a solid economic growth rate in the sixties and seventies, the latter largely due to the coffee boom (frosts in Brazil dramatically reduced the world supply). But by the eighties, the growth rate had dropped to about 4% per year, which equaled Kenya's population growth rate. It was clear that major structural reforms and cleansing of corruption were necessary if momentum was to be regained. Progress was slow, hampered in part, by a devastating drought in the early eighties, imported inflation due to the

global energy crisis, and investor loss of confidence attributed to the 1982 coup attempt. The increase in authoritarian rule that followed also led to disengagement by the donor community.

In 1983 President Moi commissioned Central Bank Governor Philip Ndegwa to produce reform recommendations. Ndegwa recommended that government budgetary and fiscal policies be changed. An IMF structural adjustment program was also begun. Over time reforms have included freeing the currency, elimination of import barriers, modification of the tax system, reduction of internal regulation, elimination of price controls, opening monopolies to competition and privatization of parastatals. The deeply imbedded corruption issue has proven more difficult to contend with, but privatization reduced opportunities for corruption and progress has been registered. Public airings of a sugar import scandal and a banking swindle coupled with punishment of the perpetrators helped drive home the message that such activity was no longer permissible.

At the turn of the 21st century, Kenya's economy looks better than it has in years from a structural point of view, but severe problems remain. National infrastructures, especially roads, are in a woeful state. Energy supplies are insufficient. Environmental controls are practically non-existent. Arable land is over subscribed. Historically self-sufficient in food, Kenya is now hard pressed to maintain that sufficiency. When drought hits as it did in 1999 and 2000, Kenya must import food. The economy cannot create jobs – either urban or rural - fast enough to absorb new workers. There is a vast gap between the wealthy ruling class and the poor. In sum, the rapidly expanding population quickly negates almost any progress that is achieved.

## Issues to Ponder

1. A Kenyan economist argues that Kenya's prosperity relative to other African states occurred because it spent less on social welfare. Like the United States and Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century resources were concentrated in the wealthier class who invested. The diversified and growing economy that resulted benefits all. While this theory justifies Kenya's economic history, it also has a ring of truth to it. Time will tell whether the price is worth it. What do you see as the trade-offs?
2. Globalization, defined as the growing linkage between national economies via information age technologies, is seen as blight and a benefit for the third world. A blight because it will further widen the gap between rich and poor, i.e. computer users vs non-users. Globalization is deemed a benefit because the second and third generation of Kenya's elite will be the innovators and entrepreneurs who can use information technology to Kenya's advantage. Only time will tell which trend predominates.
3. Globalization also renders national economic controls and policies less powerful. For example, multinational banks make lending decisions irrespective of monetary policy. Prices are set in the world market place and barriers to trade are abolished. Economic information is completely uncontrollable. Loss of government levers means that governments become less able to control their national destinies and to provide for the

common welfare. How is this going to impact on East Africa?

### Readings:

Miller and Yeager, op cit  
Pages 125-161

### Web Sites:

[www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/ke2.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/ke2.htm)

This is the World Bank address for information on Kenya.

## **Chapter 17: Tanzania: Post Nyerere Politics and Economy**

Nyerere's multi-pronged experiment included: nationalizations (ultimately there were over 400 parastatals – everything from banks to diamond mines to meerschaum pipe companies), ujamaa (socialism at the village level), and the Arusha code of conduct (which kept government and party elite out of business). Combined with ineffective management and misallocation of resources, these factors provoked a backward slide of the economy into the doldrums. Additionally, Tanzania's socialist orientation did not generate external resource flows. The communists, except for China's major one-time shot of the TAZARA railroad to Zambia's copper belt, did not have much to give. Although European socialist governments, i.e. the Scandinavians, made Tanzania a priority, major western donors and the Bretton Woods institutions backed away.

Internally, the TANU political machine made itself predominate. Party faithful ran bureaucracies across the country. Even though his public persona was magnanimous, Nyerere tolerated little internal dissent. Tanzanian jails overflowed with political prisoners. Also, despite the fact that the 1967 Arusha set of principles was designed specifically to limit corruption and to eliminate conflict of interest, in effect, it drove such activities underground and made them more difficult to root out. In short, by the mid-seventies, the verdict was becoming clear; Tanzania's noble economic experiment was failing.

To his credit, Mwalimu recognized the problems and accepted partial responsibility for them. He apparently also saw that he could not preside over any real reversal of direction, so decided not to stand for the presidency in 1985. However, he retained the chairmanship of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM); the political party successor to TANU formed when it merged with Zanzibar's sole political party ASP in 1977. As chairman Nyerere continued to exert influence on Tanzania's political course.

In 1986 Nyerere's vice president, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, was chosen to represent CCM. As the candidate of the sole political party in the one-party state, he was elected president. Mwinyi's first order of business was to begin economic reforms. He established an Economic Recovery Program and entered into talks

with the IMF and World Bank. Reforms included dismantling government controls, liberalization of regulation, and floating of the currency. Although some initial progress was achieved, the system proved entrenched. Reforms also ran into popular discontent generated by sharp increases in prices of imported goods as the Tanzanian shilling found international equilibrium. During Mwinyi's second term reform zeal waned and economic malaise re-asserted itself. On the political front, however, the winds of change were blowing. Tanzania permitted the establishment of multiple political parties in 1992. Parties organized as expected along tribal and personality lines, but were unable to displace the monolith of CCM, which was truly a national machine.

In free and fair elections in 1995, CCM candidate Benjamin Mkapa won over sixty percent of the vote and was sworn in as president. Omar Ali Juma from Zanzibar was elected Vice President. Tanzanian Labor Party candidate Mrema polled twenty-six percent of the popular vote. The TLP and four other parties won seats in a CCM controlled Parliament.

Born in 1938, Mkapa's initial political training was as Nyerere's press spokesman. Very much a Nyerere and TANU/CCM insider, Mkapa was fully aware of the issues at stake. As president, he renewed economic reforms, insisted on more rapid privatization, and tackled reduction of the civil service. Promising a more effective fight against corruption, in 1993 he entered into a structural adjustment program with the IMF/IBRD. Under Mkapa's leadership Tanzania swallowed some tough medicine as it realigned its economy. But by and large, the remedy, although damaging to the patient, took hold. By 2000 Tanzania turned a corner and was achieving real progress and steady growth.

## **The economy itself**

Tanzania's economy remains primarily agricultural. Agricultural exports of coffee, sisal, cotton, cashews, cloves (from Zanzibar), tea and wheat make up 85% of total exports. Considering that only five percent of Tanzania's total area is catalogued as "arable," it is easy to understand that Tanzania is one of the poorest countries on the planet. Per capita income is only about \$150 per year. Obviously most Tanzanians make their livelihood via subsistence agriculture.

Unlike its East African neighbors, Tanzania does have exploitable minerals. The famous Wilkinson Diamond Mines have been re-privatized and gold is beginning to be mined on an industrial basis. Natural gas deposits at Songo Songo in the Rufiji delta have been under development for years. When on line, the gas should alleviate Tanzania's severe energy crunch.

Via privatization Tanzania's meager industrial sector has been dramatically re-structured, although not without controversy. Controversy because of complaints that assets were incorrectly priced and sold off either via old boy networks to the political class or sold at bargain rates to external investors – bogeyman multinationals – who will only exploit the nation. Of course, there is some truth in both perspectives, but overall the transformation is beginning to prove positive. Locally produced commodities like beer, soap, batteries, plastics, etc., are of good quality. Credit is becoming available as private banks expand and agricultural export performance has improved due to more efficient marketing mechanisms.



Problems abound. Internal economic infrastructure remains woeful. Road and rail systems are inadequate and in a poor state of repair. Hydraulic power production fails to meet demand. Most tellingly, the delivery of social services to rural citizens lags far behind expectations.

Like Kenya and Uganda, Tanzania hosts spectacular areas brimming with wildlife. Yet unlike its neighbors development of this resource has been slow. Part of the issue has to do with a longstanding dispute with Kenya over who should benefit from the tourist dollar (for example, northern border crossings to Kenya from the Serengeti have been closed for decades so as to keep Nairobi based operators at bay), but the issue is also philosophical. Tanzania did not want the demonstration effect of opulent decadent westerners polluting its simple pastoral people or the conservative Muslim communities of the coast. More recently, Tanzania slowly opened the door to greater tourism albeit charging top dollar for park fees in an effort to capture the top end of the tourist spectrum. This change is already producing greater revenues from the parks and beaches. Growth should continue.

In summary, at the turn of the century, Tanzania is getting most of its macro-economic policies in alignment with global requirements. Despite perturbations, the economy is re-shaping to free market dimensions. This should ensure the continuation of assistance flows from donor nations as well as new investment, which will compliment internally mobilized resources and thus enable the modest growth so far obtained to expand further.

### **Issues to Ponder**

1. Where might Tanzania have been if it had not taken a thirty-year economic detour?

### **Readings:**

Smith, John, "Top Down Democracy in Tanzania," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, October 1999.

### **Web Sites:**

[www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/tz2.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/afr/tz2.htm)

This is an excellent site packed with good economic information.

[www.ft.com/ftsurveys/country/sc2246a.htm](http://www.ft.com/ftsurveys/country/sc2246a.htm)

This web address gets you into a series of sectorial articles on Tanzania produced by the *Financial Times*.

[www.nyenzi.com/tanzania/socialist.htm](http://www.nyenzi.com/tanzania/socialist.htm)

This is an excellent site that has a number of articles on various aspects of Tanzania's political history.

## **Chapter 18: International Relations**

# Kenya

All three of the East African states came out of the British colonial tradition and inherited a natural affinity and orientation towards the west. Kenya has never deviated much from this orientation. Britain remains its major partner politically as well as economically. Additionally, Kenya established solid links to other developed Commonwealth nations such as Canada and Australia. And even though there were some ups and downs, the United States too maintained solid relations with Kenya over the years. On the other side of the ledger Kenya eschewed close ties with the eastern bloc and with Libya. Instead, Kenya maintained ties to nations on the western side of the cold war, i.e. Israel, Taiwan, South Korea, and South Vietnam. Even though it paid lip service to the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, in reality, Kenya stood aloof from the more contentious subjects on the radical agenda. Rather, its foreign policy was shaped by Kenya's own needs, especially in the economic development sphere, and its reluctance to play a larger role, even on the African stage.

Kenya's reluctance to engage internationally emerged early as decided by President Kenyatta. In the first instance he was already old when he came to power and did not like to travel. He especially disliked flying. Secondly, when Kenyatta did attempt to exert influence, partially at the behest of the United States, during the Stanleyville crisis of 1964, he was badly bruised diplomatically and felt betrayed by the U.S./Belgian military intervention just when he was pressing a negotiated solution. Kenyatta concluded that such activity would not rebound to his credit so thereafter kept away. This policy of separateness remains largely in effect today.

Kenya did, however, have troubles of its own. First, it faced an irredentist Somali movement in the vast northeast just after independence and had to expend considerable effort in dealing with the "shifta" bandits. Secondly, Nyerere led Tanzania onto a socialist path, as did Obote in Uganda shortly thereafter. Kenyatta believed his colleagues were wrong. He also thought they mounted a challenge to Kenya, which maintained a capitalist path. Economic, political and philosophical differences with his neighbors led to closed borders, the collapse of East African Common Services and un-neighborly accusations. Matters, of course, intensified when Amin took power in Uganda. In 1973 Kenya readily lent its airspace and landing fields for the Israeli raid on Entebbe. Already cool, Kenyan relations with Uganda took another nosedive following Museveni's take-over in 1986. President Moi who was trying to facilitate a negotiated outcome felt betrayed by upstart Museveni. Museveni, in turn, saw Moi as a relic of an older time.

Kenya's relations with Ethiopia and Sudan were more correct, essentially on account of distance. An ally of the Emperor, Kenya steered clear of Mengistu and has kept its distance from Meles as well. Sudan posed more of a problem because Sudanese People liberation Army (SPLA) leader John Garang makes Nairobi his home, as do hundreds of politically aware southerners. Thousands of Sudanese refugees live in Kenya's far northwest from whence humanitarian operations are conducted into southern Sudan. Through the mechanism of IGAD (the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development), Kenya has been active with its Horn of Africa neighbors in seeking a solution to the Sudanese conflict. Elsewhere Kenya is a reluctant host to tens of thousands of Somali refugees and leaders, but has largely refrained from mixing in any of the volatile politics of that trouble spot.

As noted above Kenya's relations with the United States have been generally good. The U.S. approves of Kenya's moderate pro-west orientation, of its competition-oriented economy and of its democratic institutions. The two nations share the same perspective on many global issues. Kenya readily agreed to sign a military access agreement in 1980 when the U.S. felt threatened by events in Iran and the Persian Gulf. (The U.S. opened a consulate in Mombasa in 1981 (closed in 1991) to oversee political relations with the Islamic coast and to supervise dozens of U.S. Navy ship visits.) Over the years the United States provided over a billion dollars in development aid to Kenya. Many American companies are headquartered in Nairobi, tens of thousands of Americans take safaris in beautiful game parks, a large American missionary community works in rural areas and the Peace Corps thrives.

The terrorist bombing of the U.S. embassy in August 1998 traumatized both the United States and Kenya. The people of Nairobi rallied actively to rescue victims, to remove the dead and to care for the injured. In the aftermath of the event Kenyan citizens were horrified to learn that hatred could take such a toll of their fellow citizens. The sense of shared victimization reinforced positive sentiments towards Americans. The Kenyan and American governments subsequently coordinated very closely in seeking out perpetrators of the crime.

The positive side of the relationship notwithstanding, the U.S. criticizes Kenya's human rights shortcomings, its entrenched corruption and the leadership's reluctance to open more fully to democratic norms. Kenya, in turn, complains that it is being held to a standard higher than that applied to other African states. The U.S. agrees that is the case, because more is expected of Kenya. The dialogue continues.

## Uganda

Uganda too came to independence with a strong British orientation. Although he still maintained ties to Israel, Obote's move to the left and third world activism put him squarely in the Non-Aligned camp and strained relations with the United Kingdom. Obote was critical of Britain's obstinacy regarding apartheid in South Africa and the U.K.'s acquiescence of settler unilateral independence in Rhodesia. Obote thought these issues to be so important that he went to the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore in 1972 to pursue them knowing full well that Idi Amin was discontent at home.

As noted in an earlier chapter, Amin let ties with the west fall aside to be replaced by links with the Muslim world – Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. The U.S. closed its embassy in 1973. Amin's bizarre behavior, however, sooner or later alienated most everyone but Qadhaffi. Amin was elected chairman of the OAU in 1975 in accordance with standing practice of selecting the chairman from the host country (the Kampala venue for the OAU was chosen long in advance).

Kenyatta carefully regulated contact with Amin and Kenya kept guard on the common border. However, malefactors profited. Much Ugandan coffee was smuggled out and many ostensibly Ugandan-bound goods – upon which no Kenya duties were collected – never reached Uganda. Fleeing Amin, Obote found refuge in Tanzania from whence with Nyerere's full support he sought to regain power. The 1979 war

epitomized Nyerere's hatred and disgust with Amin and cast some aspersions on Nyerere's otherwise progressive image.

The United States re-opened its embassy in Kampala in 1979, but it was not until after Obote left the scene for the second time (in 1986) that western nations began to re-engage in Uganda in a substantive fashion. Re-engagement took the form of complete dialogue on political, human rights and economic issues. Although as with Kenya there have been differences in degrees of compliance, with western benchmarks, overall the donor community led by the United States, the U.K. and the World Bank have been quite satisfied with results in Uganda. One internal sticking point with the U.S. revolves around Uganda's time frame for the return to normal party politics.

President Museveni is often dubbed a model of a new breed of African leaders who owe nothing to the former political order. Whatever the designation, Museveni plunged Uganda into a complicated set of problems within the region. The issues with Kenya were noted previously and while relations improved by the year 2000, hiccups still occur. Sudan is a grievous problem where the juxtaposition of Ugandan support for SPLA rebels is offset by Sudanese support for the Lord's Resistance Army as well as its support for African Democratic Party rebels operating out of Congo.

Partially because of anti-Ugandan rebels in Zaire/Congo, in 1996 Uganda threw its weight behind the rebel alliance that ousted Mobutu. Subsequently, when the Kabila alliance collapsed, Uganda and Rwanda joined forces with new bands of rebels to oppose Kabila in the war that subsequently tore Congo apart. Uganda is a party to the 1999 Lusaka Accords, which put forward a framework for peace in Congo, including the withdrawal of foreign troops, but so far (in September 2000) progress towards peace is stymied.

As noted previously, President Museveni accepted the RPA mutiny and invasion of Rwanda in 1990. The post-genocide alliance between Kampala and Kigali that began in 1994 was strong as evidenced by joint involvement in protection of their eastern borders, operations against perpetrators of genocide who took refuge in Zaire and the ouster of Mobutu. This same alliance is instrumental in the ongoing war in Congo aimed at replacing Kabila. However, the alliance frayed a bit in the summer of 2000 when fighting erupted between Ugandan and Rwandan troops in Kisangani over the spoils of war. Leaders subsequently mended relations and by September 2000 the anti-Kabila alliance again presented a united front.

## Tanzania

Less British in orientation than its neighbors, Tanzania was also less beholden to the "motherland" at independence. Nyerere's vision was to be self-reliant. To this end he sought to balance Tanzania's external orientation between the West and the East as well as internally within the South. However, his "socialist" rhetoric alienated western powers that were chary to deal with such radicalism and who had the conviction that Nyerere's state controlled economy was doomed to fail. Estrangement from Great Britain was compounded over disagreements regarding British acceptance of the apartheid state of South Africa and its failure to prohibit Rhodesian unilateral independence. The United States shared British unease

with Nyerere's radicalism, which, for the U.S., was compounded by Tanzania's support of Mozambique (anti-Portuguese) freedom movements. As if that weren't enough, Tanzania accepted China's offer to build a railroad from Dar es Salaam to Zambia's copper belt (a project that western experts said was not profitable). This turn to the communist world, even though Nyerere never had much use for the Soviets, confirmed negative judgments about Tanzania.

Nyerere joined the Non-Aligned Movement, a grouping of third world states determined to forge their own destiny outside the confines of the cold war. However, led by nations like Cuba, Yugoslavia and India, the NAM was little more than a vociferous anti-west grouping. Nyerere was also instrumental in creating a South/South dialogue designed, partially because of the failure of the NAM, to generate and share third world expertise and resources among nations of the third world.

The passage of time eased Tanzania's strained relations with the west. The cold war ended. Mozambique became independent. The Chinese did not prove to be much of a threat to western economic prowess in Africa. From the western perspective, the NAM remains a thorn in the smoother functioning of the world, but beyond rhetoric it poses no real threat. Internally, when Tanzania's bold economic experiments failed to bear fruit, the west was prepared to re-engage and to work with the Tanzanian government for economic development.

Regionally, just before and at independence Tanzania rejected closer ties with Kenya within the context of East African unity. In pre-independence days Tanzania was leery that Kenya's white settler community might exert too much influence in any union arrangements. In the post-independence era it feared Kenya's relatively stronger, capitalistic economy. Tanzania's weak manufacturing sector just could not compete. Initial common market arrangements collapsed precisely because of this concern. Additionally, as leaders with diametrically opposed political philosophies, Kenyatta and Nyerere kept their distance from each other. Nyerere was much more compatible with Obote whom he saw as a fellow traveler in the quest for social justice and African independence. As noted above, Nyerere's support for Obote extended to invading Uganda and helping put Obote back in power.

Support for Obote aside, Tanzanian leaders also enjoyed good relations with Museveni. When he took power in 1986 (after Nyerere's departure from the presidency), Tanzanian and Ugandan relations continued at even keel. Tanzania has productive peaceful ties with its other neighbors – Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia and to a lesser extent with Congo. Ties with Rwanda and Burundi, however, have been troubled periodically by refugees and insurgents from those nations seeking refuge in Tanzania. Yet in both the cases of Rwanda and Burundi, power-sharing talks designed to sort out internal conflict have been held in Arusha, touted recently by President Clinton as the "Geneva of Africa."

As was the case with Kenya, the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam in August 1998, in which only Tanzanians died, generated a shared sense of vulnerability between Tanzanians and Americans. Tanzania has a resident community of American missionaries scattered widely around the country, a small Peace Corps program, but only a few businessmen. Tanzania has, however, over the years attracted dedicated American academics who studied, wrote about and supported Nyerere's various programs.

## Issues to Ponder

1. Constant themes in American policy in Africa for the last forty years have included: the cold war face-off, shared international and regional objectives, establishment of a stable system based on the rule of law which promotes democracy and human rights, and the achievement of a free market economy. When countries did well in reflecting American values and priorities, U.S. relations prospered, when countries came up short, relations turned sour. U.S. ties with all three East African nations have reflected the ups and downs of assessments of where they stood on the scale at any given time. In the last few years there seems to be a convergence of opinion on what is desirable, so current relations are often based on how effective a nation is in achieving goals.

## Readings:

Uganda: Ofcansky, Thomas, op. cit  
Pages 125-153

Kenya: Miller and Yeager, op. cit  
Pages 161-181

Tanzania: Legum and Mnari, Mwalimu The Influence of Nyerere  
DT448.2.M89  
See chapters on Tanzania's economy.

## Additional Readings:

Hansen and Twaddle, op. cit.

Pages 187-208, Throup, David "Kenya's Relations with Museveni's Uganda"

# Chapter 19: Society, Population and AIDS

Africans still value family and tribe above national identity. Within the tribe one has shared language, common culture, myths, values, and most importantly a built in support group vis a vis outsiders. Historically tribes were complete societies unto themselves. They occupied specific territories, which they defended against interlopers. Land use was central to both agrarian and pastoral peoples. Tribal law and practice governed access and use. Along with domestic disputes, land issues were much litigated in whatever judicial forum the group employed. Tribes developed governing institutions ranging from a council of elders (the norm in most of Kenya and northern Uganda) to elected or hereditary chiefs (in much of Tanzania) to elaborate kingdoms (central and western Uganda). Persons had specific

responsibilities within the society. Most tribal societies had some sort of adulthood ceremony or rite of passage for boys and girls. Although historically tribes interacted with one another it was often via the market place, political alliance or warfare.

Given that the social fabric of Africa was tribal, it is little wonder that tribal affiliation became a building block of modern politics where tribal identity and personal allegiance outweigh other concerns. This sort of tribalism (the word itself has taken on slightly negative connotations of backwardness) has been particularly vicious in Kenya and Uganda where tribal groups constitute fairly sizable blocks – up to 25 percent – of the population. The fear is that one group will seize control at the expense of others. In Tanzania, in contrast, no group dominates to that extent so government must be by coalition. Plus, Nyerere did a commendable job of building a national consciousness. These factors render tribalism a less explosive political force in Tanzania.

Whatever their tribe East Africans are now caught in a period of transition from traditional ways of life to the modern world. Groups as a whole and individuals within groups are in various stages of this transition. The least modern peoples, pastoralists such as the Masai, Turkana, Samburu, and Karamojong, El Molo fishermen on Lake Turkana or the pygmy bands of the Semliki forest live very much as they have for thousands of years. They wear colorful dress, carry spears, herd animals, fish or hunt and gather. Even so tribal elders may have a son or nephew who works as a security guard in Nairobi or as a game scout in a nearby park. They are likely to have a transistor radio in their hut, a plastic jerry can for water and other vestiges of the modern world. Increasingly, some children of these nomadic groups go to school. Even though young men from the pastoral tribes try to maintain warrior traditions, the kind of raiding practiced in years past is no longer tolerated.

The greatest number of East Africans are subsistence farmers. They eat what they grow, barter or sell surpluses in local markets and buy what necessities they can afford. As was true with their ancestors, access to land is the key determinate of economic success. Evolving concepts of land use ranging from ujamaa villages to outright ownership complicate relations in rural Africa. Nonetheless, farm families scrape up school fees to send their children to school. They attend church, belong to cooperatives, participate in community development activities, exercise their right to vote, and have relatives in town. Despite their difficult circumstances rural Africans face their lives with an admirable sense of determination and optimism.

A growing number of East Africans are urbanized. They come to the towns and cities in search of jobs which most don't find. Better educated persons, including young women, scramble for clerical, shop keeping, government or other positions. Those who don't find work in the modern sector often resort to informal sector activity – shining shoes, selling papers, running kiosks, or day labor. Others resort to crime. Africa's cities are indeed dangerous places. New arrivals rely on the social net of extended family and tribal brethren as they strive to find a place in the urban pot. One fully employed person often supports a household of over a dozen relations. A new phenomenon that bears watching is that bonds of poverty are creating a class-consciousness that overrides tribal affinities in urban areas.

Sitting on top of the economic pyramid are the elite, usually self-made men and women who by virtue of

acumen, education and ambition arrived at the top. These people too accept extended family obligations to house, feed and educate relatives. They also send money home to parents. (The ultimate ambition of every Nairobi elite is to buy a big farm and retire to the country.) In short, current African society is a very dense network of relationships that start with the family and extend outward along tribal lines. Increasingly modern sector Africans are also connected via school ties, political party alliances, sports or business interests. Inter-tribal marriage, although still far from common, also occurs.

## Population Growth

The single most powerful negative factor impeding economic growth is rapid population growth. Kenya, with one of the highest population growth rates in the world, has gone from 12 million people at independence to 27 million today. Uganda and Tanzania are also similarly impacted. Dar es Salaam, for example, a town of just over one hundred thousand in 1960, sports almost three million inhabitants today. Population growth nefariously saps economic growth. East African nations battle hard just to stay even. Populations mushroomed in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because modern medicine, especially childhood immunizations, meant more children lived into adulthood. Economic planners quickly saw the problem looming, but families who prized children did not heed exhortations to reduce births. Additionally, limited availability of birth control devices and flat out opposition to birth control by pro-natal governments and the Catholic Church hampered early programs. It was only after the reality of the economic cost of large families sunk in, as exemplified by more school fees, clothes, etc., that East Africans began to space births. When birth control devices became more available and governments changed their stance, birth rates began to decline, but the problem remains acute. Meanwhile, the sheer numbers of people overwhelm social and economic infrastructure. Suitable agricultural land is not available so marginal land is utilized and even that is not enough. A new underclass of rural landless poor has been created.

## AIDS

The newest scourge visited on the people of East Africa is HIV/AIDS. Deemed by researchers to have attained epidemic proportions first in Raikai District of Uganda, AIDS subsequently spread throughout the region. Transmitted heterosexually initially by truck drivers, soldiers, prostitutes and others who engaged in sex with multiple partners, HIV infections multiplied easily among urban populations.

In the year 2000 the rate of HIV infection among sexually active people in Kampala, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam hovers around 30%. AIDS devastates a nation's human resources as it strikes people in peak earning years. The loss of their human potential is compounded when deaths tear families asunder and condemn tens of thousands of orphans and other survivors to lives of poverty.

Can the tide be stemmed? Probably not, but it can and is being slowed, especially in Uganda via an intense education program aimed at changing peoples' sexual practices. "Zero grazing," i.e. faithfulness to one partner, is a common slogan. Condom use is taught and encouraged. Counseling support systems are available to infected persons and their families. Neither the governments of Kenya or Tanzania have been



as pro-active as Uganda in facing the crisis. Unfortunately, without great activism, the prospects for reversing the infection rate are not good.

Cures? Even though Africans are fatalistic about "slim" disease, they have flocked to spurious miracle cures. A woman near Masaka, Uganda, for example, sold clay out of her backyard as fast as she could dig it as a natural cure. A medical researcher in Kenya claimed to have discovered a cure, which he named Kenron, and raked in thousands before his pseudo-scientific product was shown to have only marginal impact. However sad these instances are, they indicate growing knowledge about AIDS and its invariably fatal consequences. Equally sadly, even the most favorable projections indicate that millions of people will die. The pandemic may be contained over time, but no cure is in sight.

### Issues to Ponder

1. Tribalism is a minefield – past, present and future – for the peoples of East Africa. Rapidly increasing populations result in inherently greater competition for the more slowly expanding economic pie. This translates into stiffened tribal solidarity with regard to land, education, job opportunities, governmental largess, military promotions and political power. How nations manage this competition and the caldron of emotions it generates will largely determine how harmonious their futures will be.
2. The population and AIDS data comprise a terrifying Malthusian double whammy. East Africa is being swamped by a rising tide of children and youth at the same time it grapples with succor for the large number of HIV/AIDS victims. These parallel calamities will test the resiliency and social cohesiveness of East African societies. Facing these problems forthrightly is a real exercise of leadership for national authorities. Are they up to the challenge?

### Readings:

Kenya: Miller and Yeager, op cit  
Pages 61-97

Uganda: Ofcansky, op. cit  
pages 69-93

Tanzania: [www.nyenzi.com/tanzania/people.htm](http://www.nyenzi.com/tanzania/people.htm)

Latham, Michael C. "AIDS in Africa: A Perspective on the Epidemic," *Africa Today*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 1993  
(available via pro-quest)

This is an excellent discussion of the problem and the policy choices Africans face. Even though the discussion covers all of Africa, most of the examples are from Uganda and Kenya.

### Web Sites:

[www.fhi.org/en/gen/nbooksrep.html](http://www.fhi.org/en/gen/nbooksrep.html)

This site leads to the latest statistics and summaries of the AIDS epidemic in Kenya and Tanzania.

[www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)

On this site chose "health and population" which leads to AIDS data and information about programs in East Africa.

### **Congratulations!**

You have finished the study guide. We hoped you achieved your goals. You should now know something about East Africa, but there will not be a test. Remember there are dozens of books, hundreds of articles and a growing number of informative web sites out there waiting for you to continue your study.

# ETHIOPIA SELF STUDY GUIDE



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The **Self-Study Guide: Ethiopia** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Ethiopian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The guide should serve an introductory self-study resource. The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this guide was prepared by Dr. David H. Shinn, US Ambassador to Ethiopia from 1996 – 1999. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Shinn. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are public domain, from sites that explicitly say "can be used for non-profit or educational use," or are from the author's own materials.

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## ETHIOPIAN TIMELINE

### Prehistoric Hominid Discoveries

Australopithecus ramidus teeth and bones 4.5 million years ago

Australopithecus afarensis “Lucy” 2.9—3.4 million years ago

Man-made tools 2.5 million years ago

### Pre-Aksumite Period

Egyptian fleet sent to Punt on Red Sea Coast c. 2985 – 2946 BC

Beginning of contacts across the Red Sea c. 2000 – 1000 BC

King Solomon c. 974 – 932 BC

Founding of Yeha c. 800 – 500 BC

Ptolemaic expeditions to the Ethiopian interior c. 305 – 221 BC Aksumite Period

Founding of Aksum c. 100 BC – 100 AD

First minting of coins c. 270 AD

Conversion of King Ezana to Christianity c. 330 AD

King Kaleb expedition to South Arabia c. 525 AD

Arrival of first Muslims c. 615 AD

Decline of Aksum c. 800 – 1000 AD Medieval Period

Zagwe dynasty c. 1137 – 1270

Yekuno Amlak and the “Solomonic Restoration” c. 1270

Zara Yakob 1434 – 1468

First campaign of “Gran the Left-handed” against Ethiopia 1527

Arrival of Portuguese troops 1541

Defeat of Muslim troops and death of Gran 1543

Oromo migrations c. 1540 – 1600 Gonder Period

Emperor Fasiladas 1632 – 1667

Expulsion of Roman Catholic missionaries 1632

Founding of Gonder as capital 1636

Influence of Oromo on Gonder c. 1600s

Decline of Gonder’s power c. 1730 – 1755 Beginning of Modern Period

Emperor Tewodros II 1855 – 1868

Napier Expedition and attack on Maqdala 1868

Menelik (King of Shoa) 1865 – 1889

Opening of the Suez Canal 1869

Emperor Yohannes IV 1871 – 1889

Ethiopians defeat Egyptian forces 1875 – 1876  
Ethiopians defeat the Mahdist forces at Battle of Metema 1889  
Emperor Menelik II 1889 – 1913  
Treaty of Wuchale with Italy 1889  
Ethiopians defeat Italians at Adwa 1896  
U.S. establishes diplomatic relations with Ethiopia 1903  
Ethiopia joins League of Nations 1923  
Italy signs treaty of friendship with Ethiopia 1928  
Coronation of Haile Selassie 1930  
Fascist Italy invades Ethiopia 1935 -- 1936  
Ethiopia, Britain and others defeat Italy 1941  
British military administration of Ethiopia 1941 – 1944 Post World War II Ethiopia  
Founding member of the United Nations 1945  
Ethiopia sends troops to fight with UN in Korea 1950 – 1953  
Federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea 1952  
U.S. and Ethiopia sign Mutual Defense Agreement 1953  
Revised constitution approved 1955  
Beginning of Eritrean independence movement 1958  
Failed coup d’etat against Haile Selassie 1960  
Ethiopia incorporates Eritrea as a province 1962  
Organization of African Unity puts HQ in Addis Ababa 1963  
Conflict with neighboring Somalia 1964  
Serious famine in Ethiopia 1972 – 1974  
Haile Selassie deposed by left-wing military officers 1974  
Mengistu Haile Mariam leads socialist regime 1974  
Beginning of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) 1975  
Ogaden war with Somalia 1977 – 1978  
“Red Terror” Campaign against political dissidents 1977 – 1978  
Serious drought in Ethiopia 1984 – 1985  
Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front forms 1989  
EPRDF and Eritreans force Mengistu into exile 1991  
Meles Zenawi leads EPRDF in Ethiopia 1991  
Isaias Afwerki takes charge of Eritrea 1991  
Eritrea opts for independence 1993  
EPRDF wins national elections 1995  
War breaks out between Eritrea and Ethiopia 1998  
EPRDF wins national elections 2000  
Ethiopia defeats Eritrea on battlefield 2000  
UN forces monitor Eritrea-Ethiopia border 2001  
Schism develops within TPLF 2001





Totems from the Konso ethnic group.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this self-study guide is to provide basic background information on Ethiopia for persons being assigned there. The guide tries to present the information in a way that individuals can obtain a better understanding of the country and, as a result, have a more productive and pleasant tour of duty. You are encouraged to think about the questions raised at the end of each section and pursue those that interest you, drawing on resource materials cited in the paper. Various websites that contain current information relevant to many of the questions raised below follow at the end of the paper.

## GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

### MEANING OF NAME

Ethiopia takes its name from the Greek meaning “the land of burnt faces.” The name was in use by the Greeks as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC when Ptolemy II made hunting expeditions to Ethiopia. Inscriptions on monuments in northern Ethiopia suggest that the Ethiopic syllabic writing system is at least 3,000 years old. There are numerous references to Ethiopia in the Bible, but it is not always clear that they refer to what is present day Ethiopia. In the eyes of early foreign writers, Ethiopia sometimes served as a reference point for people who lived in many parts of Africa far from Ethiopia’s current borders.

Common use in earlier times of the term Abyssinia for Ethiopia also tends to confuse the issue. Abyssinia comes from a corruption of the Arabic word *habesh*, which means “mixed breed.” The Habeshat people from the southwest coast of Arabia and Yemen colonized the west coast of the Red Sea, now Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. Abyssinia makes its first appearance in a European work in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, a book by an English writer. Strictly speaking, Abyssinia applies only to the ethnic population roughly coincident with the former Aksumite State discussed under the history section. Ethiopia is a more suitable term for all of the language groups living within the present borders of the country.

## LOCATION AND SIZE

At the center of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia shares a boundary with five countries—Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan. The borders with Somalia and Sudan are about 1,000 miles long while those with Eritrea (567 miles), Kenya (512 miles) and Djibouti (209 miles) are considerably shorter. The back door to the Persian Gulf and an area of frequent conflict, the Horn of Africa is of more than passing strategic interest to the United States.

At 435,000 square miles, Ethiopia is larger than California and Texas combined. It also has a diversity of topography that rivals these two states. California and Texas have, however, one extremely important feature missing in Ethiopia—a coastline and access to the sea. Ethiopia lost its Red Sea coastline in 1993 when Eritrea became de jure independent. Until the outbreak of war with Eritrea in 1998, Ethiopia was largely dependent on the Eritrean port of Assab and the port of Djibouti for the movement of its imports and exports. Since 1998 and the closure of the border with Eritrea, Ethiopia has relied on Djibouti and looked into the possibility of increasing trade through ports in Somaliland and Sudan.

## IMPORTANT PHYSICAL FEATURES

Ethiopia’s bedrock constitutes part of the earth’s first continent of Gondwanaland, of which Africa is the largest intact remnant. There are several distinctive features about Ethiopia’s topography. Starting at Lake Stephanie, now a dry lakebed on Ethiopia’s southern border with Kenya, and continuing northward to the Danakil Depression bordering Djibouti and Eritrea, the Great Rift Valley dissects the country. A massive highland plateau covers most of Ethiopia to the north and west of the Rift. A smaller highland plateau extends into a significant part of Ethiopia south and east of the Rift. Lakes punctuate the Rift Valley in the south and center while the Awash River and Danakil Depression are the main features in the north. Most of Ethiopia’s periphery to the west, south and east is an area of low altitude, hot temperatures, minimal rainfall and sparse population. As a result of this situation, it is common to refer in a very general way to two Ethiopian cultures constituting a variety of ethnic groups—one living in the highlands and the other in the bottom of the Rift and the lowlands on the periphery of the country. The northernmost part of the highland plateau is Ethiopia’s historical core.

Ethiopia’s geographical diversity manifests itself in many ways. Returning to the comparison with California and Texas, Mt. Dashen, located in the Simien mountains northeast of the zonal capital of Gonder, rises to 15,158 feet and is the fourth highest mountain in Africa. Mt. Whitney, the highest

mountain in the lower 48 states, has an altitude of 14,494 feet. Ethiopia has more than 20 mountains with an altitude of at least 13,000 feet. The Danakil Depression, one of the hottest places on earth, is also the lowest point in Ethiopia at a minus 410 feet. The lowest place in Death Valley, California, is minus 282 feet. The Danakil is a large triangle-shaped basin with numerous volcanoes and well known for its lack of water and inhospitable climate. Ethiopia has more spectacular escarpments than those found in Texas or perhaps anywhere else in the United States other than the Grand Canyon. At the end of the long rains, they are verdant and give rise to thousands of beautiful waterfalls. Ethiopia hosts one of the world's larger lakes, Tana, and a small part of another, Rudolph also known as Turkana, most of which is in neighboring Kenya.

Ethiopia is blessed with rivers, not surprising in view of its high escarpments and mountains that capture the moist air coming from the Atlantic and equatorial Africa to the west and especially evaporation from the huge swamp in Southern Sudan known as the Sudd. The most important of these rivers is the Blue Nile, locally called the Abay, which flows for 1,000 miles through Ethiopia and Sudan before joining the White Nile at Khartoum, capital of Sudan. By comparison, the Rio Grande, which originates in Colorado and forms the border between Texas and Mexico, is almost 1,900 miles long. From its source at Lake Tana until it joins with the waters of the White Nile and reaches the Mediterranean, the Blue Nile flows for 2,750 miles. The Blue Nile and several other tributaries originating in Ethiopia contribute 86 percent of the water that ultimately reaches the Aswan Dam in Egypt. The importance of this fact will be noted later. This powerful river also contributes one of Ethiopia's most important tourist attractions, the Blue Nile Falls where water from Lake Tana drops over the edge of a lava flow, creating a spectacular sight at the end of the rainy season. Ethiopia's other major rivers are the Awash, Omo and Wabe Shebele. The Awash flows east and literally disappears in the saline lakes near the border with Djibouti. The Omo feeds into Lake Rudolf and the Wabe Shebele flows into Somalia, where it dissipates in the hot sand before reaching the Indian Ocean.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND LAND**

Not particularly blessed with natural resources, Ethiopia does produce modest quantities of gold and has small reserves of platinum, copper and potash. There are large reserves of unexploited natural gas located in the politically unstable and isolated Ogaden Region, inhabited by Somalis. Some of the rich oil fields now being exploited in neighboring Sudan may extend across the border into Ethiopia. Ethiopia does have significant hydropower potential. As a result of many years of poor agricultural techniques, deforestation and over-grazing, heavy rain in the highlands has severely eroded much of Ethiopia's soil. Only an estimated 12 percent of the land is arable. Some 40 percent are permanent pasturage of varying quality and 25 percent consists of generally sparse forests and woodland. The remainder has minimal productive value.

## **CLIMATE**

Befitting its large size and varied topography, Ethiopia has many different climates. As Ethiopia lies just north of the equator, the longest days are in June and July when there are about 45 minutes more daylight

than in December and January. The capital of Addis Ababa, which is about 8,000 feet above sea level, has a temperate climate throughout the year. The annual low temperature is about 40 degrees and the annual high is about 75 degrees. There is usually very little rain in the capital from October through May. The rain is normally heavy and occasionally continuous for several days at a time from June through September. But even during the rainy season, there are sunny and clear days.

Temperatures are icy cold in the high Simien and Bale mountain ranges where there are occasional frosts and even snow. Much of the highlands experience a temperate climate like that found in Addis Ababa while some of the lowlands have torrid temperatures. Differences in rainfall are equally dramatic. During the primary rainy season there can be torrential downpours in the highlands while the lowlands usually experience minimal precipitation and sometimes go an entire year with virtually no rain. As one climbs from the lowlands to the highlands, of course, the temperature and rainfall change accordingly. The difference between a good crop year and a bad one often depends as much on the timing of the rain and its location as it does on the annual amount. In fact, some of the crop growing areas located at the highest altitudes of the country occasionally have a bad year because there is too much rather than too little rain.

## **VEGETATION, NATIONAL PARKS AND TRAVEL**

Ethiopia's vegetation is as varied as its topography and climate. The southern and western highlands still have some impressive indigenous forests. Towards the end of the heavy rains, wild flowers blanket parts of the central highlands. The northeastern highlands of Tigray are drier and thinly vegetated. The Rift Valley south of Addis Ababa is dominated by grasses and acacia trees. The western lowlands have lush vegetation after the rains. The vast eastern and southern lowlands inhabited by the Somali, Afar and Boran constitute a brown, thinly vegetated desert during most of the year.

Although there are ten national parks in Ethiopia, most of them are poorly administered and disappointing as compared to parks in East Africa. Simien and Bale National Parks are the most interesting. The rare Simien fox and mountain nyala can be seen in both and Simien National Park is the home of Ethiopia's rarest endemic herbivore, the Walia ibex. The bird life is spectacular in many parts of Ethiopia. Although a variety of other animals can be seen, their numbers are generally small. There has been too much human encroachment, civil war and lack of funding for park maintenance.

The bottom line is that Ethiopia's geography is among the most diverse, interesting and beautiful on the African continent. It changes dramatically from the dry season to the rainy season and from the lowlands to the highlands. Anyone who is assigned to Addis Ababa for more than a few months and does not see some of the rest of Ethiopia misses a unique opportunity. In order to fully appreciate the diversity of the topography, flora and fauna, trips by road are recommended over those by air whenever possible.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- What are the political and economic implications for Ethiopia now that it is landlocked and no longer controls access to the sea?

- What problems do Ethiopia's Rift Valley and high escarpments pose for economic development of the country?
- Looking back historically, were the Ethiopian highlands a plus or minus in ensuring independence of the country?
- To what extent has Ethiopia's climate been the cause of its periodic famines?

### **Resource Materials for Further Study**

(Note: The Ethiopian first name is the family name; these sections list Ethiopian authors by first name.)

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- Alemneh Dejene. Environment, Famine, and Politics in Ethiopia. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990.
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Ethiopian Orthodox religious material.

## HISTORY

Ethiopia may be the origin of humankind. The earliest hominid teeth and bones found to date come from the Afar-inhabited section of the northern Rift Valley.

Ethiopia has the longest history as an independent country of any in Sub-Saharan Africa and one of the longest in the world. Unlike the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia also has a rich written history as a result of early church records and accounts from numerous travelers and explorers who passed through the country. Together with Liberia, it is the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa never to be colonized; Italian military occupation from 1936-41 hardly qualifies as colonization.

## CRADLE OF HUMANKIND

Recent discoveries in the Rift Valley's Central Awash region of hominid, i.e. erect-walking human ancestors, teeth and bone fragments date back about 4.5 million years. This takes the human chain further back than any other discoveries to date and suggests, until contrary evidence is found, that Ethiopia leads the search for the origins of humankind. These discoveries during the 1990s are known as *Australopithecus ramidus*. The partial skeleton of the more famous "Lucy," whose name comes from a Beatles' song popular at the time of her discovery in 1974, is known scientifically as *Australopithecus afarensis* and dates back 2.9 to 3.4 million years. Lucy's diminutive skeleton resides in a safe in Addis Ababa; interested persons can view a replica plaster cast at the National Museum. Paleoanthropologists found Lucy in the Rift Valley just north of the more recent discovery of *ramidus* material. This search area has become the most exciting in the world for paleoanthropologists seeking the earliest hominid evidence. Once a lush, tropical valley, there are layers of hominid teeth, bones and tools in the Awash dating from at least 4.5 million years until several thousand years ago.

## PRE-AKSUMITE CIVILIZATION

Linguistic evidence suggests that both Cushitic and Omotic speakers were living in Ethiopia by about 7,000 BC. These two linguistic families spawned a number of languages still spoken in Ethiopia today. Cushitic gave rise to Agew in the central and northern highlands and, to the east and southeast, Saho, Afar, Somali, Sidamo and Oromo. Omotic led to Wolaita and Gemu-Gofa. The Cushitic and Omotic-speaking peoples collected wild grasses and other plants for thousands of years before cultivating those they liked best. The descendants of these peoples came into contact with migrants from Arabia. Northern Ethiopia probably established contact with southwestern Arabia across the Red Sea by 2000 BC. Persons from Arabia began to arrive in Ethiopia by the first millennium BC, bringing with them Semitic speech, writing and a stone building tradition. From these contacts the Ge'ez language, a forerunner of Amharic and spoken to this day by Ethiopian Orthodox priests, developed. The newcomers joined with indigenous inhabitants, producing a pre-Aksumite culture. The most significant structure remaining from this period is the stone temple of Yeha located just north of Aksum. Believed to date from between 800 to 500 BC, it may have been Ethiopia's first capital. The exterior shell can be visited today; the interior walls, floors and roof have disappeared.

## THE AKSUMITE STATE

A unique African civilization emerged at the beginning of the first millennium AD in the northern highlands of Ethiopia and Eritrea. Aksum, located in present day Tigray Region, flourished for almost seven centuries and became one of the most powerful kingdoms of the ancient world. The port of Adulis in Eritrea was also an important Aksumite trading center with the Mediterranean and India. Even pre-Aksumite Yeha continued to be influential. Aksum thrived on trade. It exported frankincense, grain, animal skins, rhino horn and ivory. It imported from Egypt, Arabia and India cloth, glassware and iron and wine and olive oil from Syria and Italy.

The Aksumite State was strongest between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries; the kingdom extended across the Red Sea into southern Arabia and west into the Nile Valley of Sudan. Aksum was rich, well organized and technically and artistically advanced. It produced coinage in bronze, silver and gold and erected extraordinary monuments, some of which stand today. Christianity came to Ethiopia during Aksumite rule and helped to transform society. It not only shaped spiritual and intellectual life, but also influenced its culture, social life, art and literature.

Islam from the Arabian Peninsula had a significant impact on Aksum during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. Members of the Prophet's family are believed to have taken refuge in Aksum in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, leading to cordial relations between Aksum and Islam. The Arabs considered the Aksumite state as an equal with the Islamic state, Byzantine Empire and China. But the expansion of Islam in Egypt and the Levant reduced the influence of Aksum and hastened the isolation of its church. Trade and the economy declined and hard times set in. After the mid-seventh century, Aksumite and Muslim fleets skirmished in the Red Sea; Islam gained the upper hand. To the present day, however, Aksum remains a religious and spiritual capital for many of Ethiopia's Orthodox population.

## THE ZAGWE DYNASTY

Following the decline of Aksum in about the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century, power in the region shifted southward. Military colonies drawing on Aksumite culture, the Semitic language and Christianity began to develop around the Agew population. By the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a post-Aksumite Christian kingdom emerged in the central northern highlands and extended to the Red Sea ports of Adulis and even Zeila in present day Somalia. During the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, this culture expanded throughout that part of Ethiopia inhabited by the Amhara people. A new dynasty known as the Zagwe and based in the Agew district of Lasta came to power in about 1137. Strong Christians, the Zagwe focused on the construction of new churches and monasteries. The Zagwe kings built the amazing rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, a must stop for anyone assigned to Ethiopia. Perhaps because the center of power was farther from the coast, less is known about Zagwe than Aksum. From the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church emphasized the Old Testament and the Judaic roots of the church. This differentiated it from European Christianity and even from the faith of other Monophysites such as the Copts. Unhappiness with rule from Lasta developed in Eritrea, Tigray and among the Amhara. An Amhara noble, Yekuno Amlak, overthrew the last Zagwe leader about 1270 and proclaimed himself as king. More than 130 years of Zagwe rule came to an end.

## THE “SOLOMONIC LINE” AND RISE OF THE AMHARA

Yekuno Amlak “restored” the “Solomonic” dynasty because it claimed descent from both Aksum and King Solomon in ancient Israel. According to Ethiopian tradition, the lineage of Aksumite kings originated with the offspring of an alleged union between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The belief developed that royal legitimacy derived from descent in a line of Solomonic kings. All subsequent Ethiopian kings traced their ancestry to Yekuno Amlak and, consequently, to Solomon and Sheba. Shoa province became the geographical and political center of the Christian kingdom. Internecine family conflict during Yekuno Amlak’s reign and immediately after was resolved about 1300. In order to avoid these difficult succession problems, future monarchs had all of their sons imprisoned except for the designated heir.

A succession of Amhara leaders expanded the territory under their control. One of the most important was Zara Yakob, who reigned from 1434 to 1468. He conquered several neighboring Islamic territories, strengthened central control over what was previously a highly decentralized administrative system, sponsored a reorganization of the church and encouraged the flowering of Ge’ez literature. The unity of the state depended on an emperor’s ability to control the governors of individual kingdoms. Zara Yacob moved this process forward. The early 15<sup>th</sup> century also witnessed the arrival of the first official European delegation and Ethiopian visits to Europe.

## THE ISLAMIC AND OROMO CHALLENGES

Islamic raids on Christian Ethiopia from the Somali port of Zeila plagued the country during the



1490s. The Ethiopians put them down, but early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al Ghazi, known as “Gran the Lefthanded” by his Christian enemies, rallied a diverse group of Muslims in a jihad designed to end Christian power in the Ethiopian highlands. Gran defeated the Ethiopian emperor and by 1532 had overrun most of eastern and southern Ethiopia. At the request of the emperor, Portugal sent a force of 400 well armed soldiers to deal with Gran. The Portuguese army and the Ethiopians experienced defeat near Lake Tana. A new emperor, aided by the remnant of the Portuguese force, raised a large army, defeated the Muslim army and, in the process, killed Gran in 1543. Thousands of people lost their lives in the Christian-Muslim wars, which were also a setback to earlier cordial relations between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. Already weakened by the Muslim attacks, the Christian kingdom became pressured to the south and southeast by migrations of the pastoral Oromo people. In a series of massive population movements during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Oromo penetrated much of the southern and northern highlands as well as the lowlands to the east seeking new land and pastures. Many Oromo mixed with the Amhara, became Christians and developed a stake in the system. The Oromos generally retained, however, their language and sense of identity. The Oromo migrations weakened both Christian and Muslim power. The effect was to leave the Ethiopian state fragmented and much reduced in size, with an alien population in its midst. The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia today; the Amhara and other ethnic groups are still coming to terms with the political implications of this situation.

## **THE GONDER STATE**

Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Ethiopia in the mid-1550s. Following their failed efforts to convert the Ethiopians from their Monophysite beliefs, Emperor Fasiladas, who reigned from 1632 to 1667, expelled all the Roman Catholic missionaries. The problems caused by the missionaries, especially the Jesuits, left a deep hostility toward foreign Christians that continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fasiladas sought to reassert central authority and to reinvigorate the Solomonic monarchy and the Orthodox Church. Ruling from Gonder, the state experienced a flowering of architecture and art that is still visible today. Successive Gonder kings relied upon Oromo military units to counter challenges to their rule. At one point, Oromo became the primary language at the court and Oromo leaders reached the highest positions in the nobility.

Gonder became consumed with court intrigue and faced a serious challenge from Tigray. The central government self-destructed and emperors became little more than puppets in the hands of rival feudal lords and their armies. From 1769 until 1855, the central kingdom ceased to exist as a coherent entity. Autonomous nobles engaged in constant warfare.

## **EMPEROR TEWODROS II**

Crowned emperor in 1855, Tewodros II is the first leader of what is generally known as modern Ethiopia. Ruling from the natural fortress of Maqdala, Tewodros established a national army, arms factory and road network. He worked to reform the land system, abolish slavery and promote Amharic as the national language in place of Ge’ez. His reforms met strong opposition from the clergy and rival lords. Fanatical in his response, Tewodros solicited British support for his modernization programs.

When this failed, he imprisoned some British functionaries in his court at Maqdala. In 1868 Sir Robert Napier led a British military force of 32,000 men to confront Tewodros. An American journalist, Henry Stanley, accompanied Napier to Maqdala. Having superior numbers and far better equipped, Napier freed the hostages at Maqdala, looted its royal treasure and torched the stronghold. Tewodros committed suicide; he left a disorganized kingdom. His defeat weakened Ethiopia, giving other potential European colonizers ideas.

## **EMPEROR YOHANNES IV**

A battle for succession followed the death of Tewodros. A Tigrayan prevailed and was crowned Emperor Yohannes IV in 1872. He supported the church and encouraged a form of federalism. He required local lords to recognize his power and pay taxes to the state. After obtaining the support of his subjects, Yohannes proved that he was also a good soldier. Egyptian forces advanced into Ethiopia from Eritrea. Yohannes drew them into battle and defeated them convincingly in 1875 and 1876. Several retired American officers from both sides of the American Civil War served as advisers to the Egyptian troops in Ethiopia.

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased the strategic value of the Red Sea and European interest in Ethiopia. Italy took control in 1885 of the port of Massawa in Eritrea and stopped all arms destined for Ethiopia. On the west side of Ethiopia, the forces of the Mahdi filled the void left by Egypt and overran Sudan. A large Islamic army of Mahdists arrived in Ethiopia in 1888, sacked Gonder and burned many of its churches. The following year Yohannes met and defeated the Mahdist forces at the Battle of Metema on the Sudanese border. Yohannes died in the battle.

## **EMPEROR MENELIK II**

Menelik II claimed the throne in 1889. Some ten years later he established control over much of present-day Ethiopia and gained recognition from most of the European colonial powers of the empire's boundaries. Menelik established his royal encampment at Addis Ababa, which means "new flower" and became the country's capital. A forward-looking leader, Menelik authorized a French company to build a railroad from the port of Djibouti to Addis Ababa. He embarked on military conquests to the south that more than doubled the size of the empire. He consolidated his power by awarding newly conquered land to his soldiers and those he appointed to office.

The European powers, however, were casting an increasingly covetous eye on Ethiopia. Menelik considered Italy the greatest threat and in order to forestall imperial designs on Ethiopia signed the Treaty of Wuchale with the Italians in 1889. Disagreement over the meaning of the treaty, of which there were versions in Amharic and Italian, caused Menelik to renounce it later. Relations became further strained after Italy established a colony in neighboring Eritrea and penetrated Somali territory. Great Britain agreed that Ethiopia should fall within the Italian sphere of influence while France encouraged Menelik to oppose the Italian threat. Italian forces invaded Tigray from Eritrea late in 1885. During a pitched battle the following year near the Tigrayan capital of Adwa, Menelik humiliated the Italian forces, inflicting the

first defeat on a European power by an African army. Italy then recognized Ethiopian independence and Ethiopia accepted the Italian colony in Eritrea. By 1908 the European powers had accepted Ethiopia's borders except for those with Italian Somalia. Menelik had a debilitating stroke in 1906. A Council of Ministers assisted in the management of state affairs.

## **EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I**

Following Menelik's death in 1913, his grandson briefly held power, to be replaced soon after by Menelik's daughter. Ras Tafari, later to become emperor, served during this period as the prince regent. He achieved a major diplomatic success in 1923 when Ethiopia gained entry to the League of Nations. Ras Tafari took effective control of the government in 1926. He signed a twenty-year treaty of friendship with Italy two years later. He established the Bank of Ethiopia in 1930 and signed the same year an agreement with Britain, France and Italy that gave Ethiopia the right to procure arms for use against external aggression. Crowned emperor in 1930, Ras Tafari took the name Haile Selassie I. The following year he introduced Ethiopia's first written constitution. He encouraged reforms aimed at modernizing the country and decreasing the authority of the nobility. He established reliable provincial rulers throughout the territory inhabited by the Amhara as well as most of the rest of the country. The only traditional leader capable of challenging his authority was the leader in Tigray.

## **MUSSOLINI'S INVASION AND ITALIAN OCCUPATION**

Italy reaffirmed its 1928 treaty of friendship with Ethiopia as late as 1934. But Italy wanted to colonize Ethiopia and the international climate of the mid-1930s suggested that Italy could get away with aggression. Italy provoked an incident in 1934 at Walwal in Ethiopia's Somali-inhabited Ogaden region bordering Italian Somalia. A relatively minor fight ensued between Ethiopian and Italian military units. The following year, the League of Nations exonerated both parties in the Walwal incident. Mussolini decided, however, that he had enough of an excuse to attack Ethiopia and did so without a declaration of war in 1935, from both Eritrea and Italian Somalia. The League of Nations declared Italy an aggressor but took no effective action. Superior Italian armaments and chemical weapons overwhelmed the Ethiopians, who had difficulty obtaining adequate weapons. Some Tigrayan and Oromo units defected to the Italians. In spite of significant disadvantages, Ethiopian forces fought on for seven months. Haile Selassie went into exile in early May 1936 and Italian forces entered Addis Ababa. The Emperor made a powerful speech before the League of Nations the following month where he declared two choices before the world: support for collective security or international lawlessness. Following occupation, Italy merged Ethiopia with Eritrea and Somalia to create the new colonial territory of Italian East Africa. It quickly removed and transported to Rome the Aksum stele, which Italy recently agreed to return to Aksum. About 60,000 Italian workers entered Ethiopia to improve the country's infrastructure. One of the legacies was a much improved road system. Ethiopians strongly resisted Italian rule; Mussolini's response was brutal. After an attempt on the life of the Italian viceroy in Addis Ababa in 1937, the Fascists conducted a three-day massacre in the city that killed several thousand Ethiopians. The Ethiopian patriotic movement drew support from all parts of the country while Haile Selassie remained in exile. Although Italy controlled all of the major towns, it never conquered the entire country. The outbreak of World War II in 1939 changed

the course of events in Ethiopia. Italy's declaration of war against Britain led the latter to offer assistance to Ethiopian patriots operating on the Sudan-Ethiopia border. By the beginning of 1941 Britain launched three major attacks on Italian East Africa, including one led by Haile Selassie. The emperor and his forces entered Addis Ababa victorious on May 5, 1941. The Italian occupation was over although the Italians were not entirely pushed out of Ethiopia until early the next year. There was a British military administration in Ethiopia for the remainder of the war, but it left responsibility for internal affairs with the emperor. An Anglo-Ethiopian agreement in 1942 confirmed Ethiopia's status as a sovereign state.

## **POST-WAR ETHIOPIA**

There was considerable post-war reconstruction and reform in the 1940s and 1950s. American assistance grew rapidly. Ethiopia established a new government bank, a national currency and the first national airline, Ethiopian, which became one of the most successful in Africa. Ethiopia built new schools and opened its first institution of higher education, Haile Selassie I University now known as Addis Ababa University.

Efforts at reform met with mixed success. The emperor was not able to implement significant land reform, much of which remained in the hands of the nobility and the church. The emperor put in place a revised constitution in 1955. It made provision for an elected Chamber of Deputies while the emperor continued to appoint the members of the Senate. The government remained autocratic and real power remained with the emperor. The patriarch in Alexandria, Egypt, had traditionally named the patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Haile Selassie changed the system in 1956, naming the patriarch himself.

Serious efforts at modernization did not stem dissatisfaction in some quarters over the slow pace of reform and the autocratic rule of the emperor. Taking advantage of a state visit to Brazil in 1960, the emperor's Imperial Bodyguard staged a coup d'etat. Initially successful in Addis Ababa, the rebels seized the crown prince and more than twenty cabinet ministers and other government leaders. The stated intent of the coup makers was the establishment of a government that would improve the economic, social, and political position of the general population. They failed, however, to gain widespread popular support; army and air force units remained loyal to the emperor, who quickly returned to Ethiopia. But the unsuccessful coup did put into question the ability of the imperial system to withstand the political changes sweeping through Africa.

## **COPING WITH CHANGE**

The two regions posing the greatest challenge to the empire were Eritrea, which after the defeat of the Italians was under British military administration until 1952, and the Somali-inhabited Ogaden. The United Nations installed in 1952 an autonomous Eritrean government linked to Ethiopia through a loose federal structure under the emperor's sovereignty. From the beginning, Ethiopia took steps to incorporate Eritrea more fully into the empire. The Eritrean Assembly, many of whose members had been accused of taking bribes, voted unanimously in 1962 to change Eritrea's status to a province of Ethiopia. This decision energized Eritrean groups that already opposed incorporation into Ethiopia. An armed conflict

between these groups and Ethiopian forces plagued Haile Selassie and his successor until the Eritreans achieved military victory almost 30 years later.

After the British left the Ogaden in 1948, Ethiopia moved back with its administrators. Inhabited by nomadic Somalis in a region where borders are not clear, the new Republic of Somalia, which became independent in 1960, immediately claimed the Ogaden and Haud areas of Ethiopia. This Somali policy, supported by some Somalis living inside Ethiopia, led to periodic conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia that continues up to the present.

In addition to confronting problems in Eritrea and the Ogaden, Haile Selassie experienced growing opposition in the fourteen years of his rule after the failed 1960 coup. His efforts at major tax reform ended largely in defeat. Some parts of society wanted more rapid reform while others strongly resisted any change. Student demonstrations became more common. Inflation and corruption persisted at a time when Haile Selassie was growing old and was less in control of the situation. The final straw was a famine in 1972-74 causing the death of as many as 200,000 peasants. The government botched its handling of the famine and even tried to hide it from the outside world. The pieces were in place for dramatic change.

## **THE 1974 REVOLUTION AND THE DERG**

Taking advantage of a deteriorating situation in the country, a group of left-wing military officers known as the Derg or Committee seized power in 1974. They held the emperor under house arrest for about a year before murdering him. An internal power struggle and clashes over ideology haunted the revolution initially. Before the end of its first year, one faction killed the first leader of the Derg and more than fifty other prominent individuals. Major Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as the leader of the Derg. He embarked on a socialist path and made preparations to launch a new offensive against the growing threat of Eritrean secession. The Derg also deposed the patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

The Derg's ultimate goal was the creation of a one party system. It nationalized all land, abolished tenancy and put peasants in charge of enforcement. The Derg laid little groundwork for this radical change and strong opposition developed in some areas. Internal political groups began to challenge Mengistu for control of the revolution. He dealt severely with his opposition. The most infamous campaign, known as the "Red Terror," occurred in 1977-78 and resulted in the death of perhaps 100,000 political opponents.

The radicalization of the regime coincided with a growing threat from an indigenous Somali liberation group supported by neighboring Somalia. Mengistu turned in desperation to the Soviet Union for support having given up on the United States, which had had close ties to the emperor. Soviet military assistance and advisers together with Cuban troops poured into Ethiopia and stopped the Somali threat. In the process, however, Mengistu became a hostage to the Soviet Union. In the meantime, Eritrean groups stepped up their opposition to the regime and a serious, new threat developed in Tigray—the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Other dissident groups among the Somali and Oromo also put increasing pressure on the Derg.

As Ethiopia became more closely tied to the Soviet Union, it announced that its single political party was a genuine communist party and the government took on the trappings of a Marxist-Leninist state. A horrific famine followed the drought of 1984-85 in which hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians died. Failed government resettlement campaigns, communal farms, “villageisation” programs and war with the Eritreans and TPLF aggravated the disaster. Locust and grasshopper plagues followed the drought. Food production continued to decline. The economy was in a free fall by the late 1980s. The Eritreans and TPLF steadily gained territory in the north. By 1988 Ethiopia had lost most of Eritrea and the TPLF controlled most of Tigray.

The various opposition groups in Ethiopia united to form the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1989. Pressure by the EPRDF throughout much of the country, including the vicinity of Addis Ababa, and the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front left Mengistu in a precarious military position. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and changes in Eastern Europe left him without allies. With the economy in shambles, Mengistu fled in 1991 to Zimbabwe where he remains to the present day. The EPRDF entered Addis Ababa days later and took control of the government.

## **THE EPRDF GOVERNMENT**

Meles Zenawi emerged as the leader of a transitional government in Ethiopia while Isaias Afwerki assumed control of Eritrea and established a provisional government. The provisional government administered Eritrea until 1993 when Eritreans voted overwhelmingly for independence. Ethiopia accepted the new government in Eritrea. Meles pledged to oversee the formation of a multi-party democracy in Ethiopia, which had again become a land-locked country with the loss of Eritrea. Ethiopians elected a constituent assembly in 1994; the same year it adopted a constitution for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Elections for Ethiopia’s first popularly chosen national parliament and regional legislatures took place in 1995. Most opposition parties chose to boycott them, ensuring a landslide victory for the EPRDF.

The EPRDF government of Prime Minister Meles has promoted a policy of ethnic federalism, devolving significant powers to regional, ethnically based authorities. Ethiopia has nine semi-autonomous administrative regions that have the power to raise and spend their own revenues. The economy has performed reasonably well under the EPRDF in spite of periodic drought conditions. It restored cordial relations with the West and its neighbors. Opposition to its rule continues, however, from political parties such as the Oromo Liberation Front and the All Amhara People’s Organization. Human rights organizations continue to criticize the EPRDF’s record. Ethiopia faced a major challenge following the outbreak of conflict along the border with Eritrea in 1998. After much loss of life and financial expense, it only came to an end following an Ethiopian military victory in 2000. The United Nations has a monitoring force in place in the area of conflict, preparatory to delimiting and demarcating the border.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- Do Ethiopians today give much thought to the fact that Ethiopia may be the origin of humankind?

- How does Ethiopia's long and proud history affect domestic politics today?
- How constant have Ethiopia's borders been over the millennia?
- What has been the impact of Ethiopia's early contacts with Islam on its current relations with the Islamic world?
- What is the impact of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Oromo migrations on Ethiopian politics today?
- In view of Italy's checkered historical relationship with Ethiopia, what do you think is the nature of relations between the two countries now?
- Did the close American relationship with Emperor Haile Selassie complicate its links with successor governments?
- Disagreement over ownership of land has been a theme in Ethiopian history. Where does it stand today?
- Ethiopia has never completely pacified Somali inhabited areas and irredentism remains a potential threat from Somalia. What are the prospects for bringing real peace to Somali Region of Ethiopia?

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## POPULATION AND CULTURE

### POPULATION

Ethiopia had an estimated population in 2001 of more than 64 million people, making it the third most populous country on the continent after Nigeria and Egypt. There is some disagreement over the current population growth rate, due in no small part to the imprecise impact of the growing number of HIV/AIDS cases on the death rate. The World Bank put the growth rate at 2.4 percent in 1999, down from 2.9 percent in 1995. On the other hand, the CIA World Factbook suggests the growth rate for 2000 was 2.76 percent. Whatever the actual percentage today, it is probably safe to assume that it is declining. The World Bank believes life expectancy at birth dropped from 44.1 years in 1995 to 42.4 years in 1999. Again the CIA World Factbook uses a higher figure of just over 45 years for 2000. About 17 percent of



Ethiopia's population now lives in an urban setting, still a relatively low figure even for a developing country.

## LANGUAGE GROUPS

Ethiopia has a more complicated language and ethnic composition than most countries in Africa. This is perhaps not surprising in view of the fact that it is the third most populous country. It has been further complicated by a considerable amount of intermarriage in certain areas. There are at least 70 languages spoken as mother tongues, a few by many millions and some by only a few thousand persons. The number of distinct social units exceeds the number of languages because some separate communities speak the same language. More than 50 of the languages spoken in Ethiopia fall within three families--Semitic, Cushitic and Omotic--of the Afro-Asiatic super language family. The remainder speaks languages found in the Nilo-Saharan super language family.

Most speakers of Ethio-Semitic languages live in the highlands at the center and north of the country. Persons who speak East Cushitic languages tend to be located in the highlands and the lowlands of the center and south while other Cushitic speakers live in the center and north. Omotic speakers are concentrated in the southern part of Ethiopia, especially in the area north of the western part of Kenya. The Nilo-Saharan speakers live in the southwest and west along the border with Sudan.

Amharic is the most important of the Ethio-Semitic languages. The official language of the empire, it continues to be used widely in government and business and serves as the lingua franca of the country. There are, however, parts of Ethiopia where the indigenous people speak little if any Amharic, especially in Somali and Afar regions and other peripheral areas. Tigrinya, spoken by the Tigray people, is the second most important Ethio-Semitic language. There are seven Ethio-Semitic languages spoken by the Gurage people. Relatively small numbers of Ethiopians speak Tigre, which is related to Tigrinya. The most numerous are the Beni Amir, who live in the north and west near the Sudan border. Two other groups that speak Ethio-Semitic languages are the Harari, concentrated in the town of Harar, and the Argobba, who live on the slopes of the Rift Valley and southwest of Harar.

Oromiffa, also known as Afan Oromo, is the most important Cushitic language in Ethiopia. The Oromo live in a large crescent shaped area stretching from the Kenya border through Harar and Addis Ababa and continuing to the Sudan border. Many Oromo also speak Amharic. The Oromo live in both the highland and lowland sections of Ethiopia. Several Cushitic-speaking groups live in the far south, the most numerous being the Konso. The Somali, Afar and Saho, all Cushitic-speaking peoples, share a pastoral tradition. The Somali predominate in the southeast while the Afar live along the Djibouti and lower part of the Eritrean border. The Saho are found along the central part of the border with Eritrea. Saho is a linguistic rather than an ethnic category. Sidama is often used to describe a group of languages, the most important of which are Sidama and Hadya-Libido. There are six groups of Central Cushitic (Agew) speakers. Relatively small numbers of persons speak these languages. One of the groups, the Beta Israel or Falasha Jews, has received a huge amount of publicity. Virtually all of them have immigrated to Israel. The only Cushitic-speaking group in the far north is the Beja.

Many small groups that speak languages of the Omotic family live between the lakes of southern Ethiopia's Rift Valley and the Omo River. There are as many as 80 different groups, although some of them speak dialects of the same language. The Wolayta-speakers are the most numerous followed by those who speak Gemu-Gofa. Some 40 individual groups speak a variant of Gemu-Gofa. Two separate groups speak Kefa-Mocha. Nilo-Saharan speakers to the west and Cushitic speakers to the east have influenced the Omotic languages.

Of the four language groups represented in Ethiopia, the smallest number of people speaks a Nilo-Saharan language. The most important of these languages are Nuer and Anuak, spoken by people who live along the border with Sudan in the southwest. The Kunema and Nara speakers are located in western Tigray. The Berta and the Gumuz, who together are called the Benishangal, live along the central part of the border with Sudan. Several groups of Koman speakers live in the same general area near the border with Sudan.

## **ETHNIC GROUPS**

Ethiopia's ethnic groups correspond roughly to the language groups reviewed above. Many of the ethnic groups are small and wield minimal political power. As a result of intermarriage and questionable statistics, information on population totals and percentages for the various ethnic groups are only educated guesses. The most numerous are the Oromo at about 40 percent of the population. Amhara account for perhaps 25 percent, Tigrayans about 8 percent, Somali 6 percent and Afar 4 percent. The various Sidamo peoples probably constitute about 9 percent and the Gurage about 2 percent. Many small groups make up the remainder. Historically, the Amhara have held a disproportionate amount of political power while the Oromo have been under represented. Today, however, Tigrayans are in a particularly strong position in the central government. Opposition political parties in Ethiopia tend to draw their support from a particular ethnic group or coalition of closely related groups.

## **RELIGION**

Throughout most of Ethiopian history, there has been a close link between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the state. The 1955 constitution made clear that it was the established church of the empire. The church was a central part of the power structure during Amhara and Tigrayan rule. The Oromo are divided among Ethiopian Orthodox, Islam and Protestantism. Islam tended to spread among ethnically diverse and geographically dispersed groups at different times. It failed to provide the same degree of political unity as the Orthodox religion. Traditional belief systems were strongest in the lowland regions, but they developed elements of both Islam and orthodoxy. The arrival of protestant missionaries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from Europe and North America gave rise to a significant number of followers, particularly in the western and southern parts of Ethiopia. The largest Protestant churches are Kale Hiwot and Mekane Yesus.

The long history in Ethiopia of relations between Muslims and Christians has left a mixed legacy. Islam

still remembers that Ethiopia gave refuge to members of the Prophet's family in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, Ethiopians have not forgotten the Muslim-Christian wars, especially the 16<sup>th</sup> century attacks by "Gran the Lefthanded" and the 19<sup>th</sup> century invasion by the forces of the Mahdi. The imperial regime officially tolerated Muslims. It permitted Muslim courts to deal with family and personal issues according to Islamic law. But the imperial authorities gradually took over Muslim schools and discouraged the teaching of Arabic. The close association between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the state tended to alienate Muslims.

The left-wing revolution in 1974 resulted in a major change in the official status of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and other religions. The Mengistu regime disestablished the Orthodox Church and removed the patriarch. It declared all religions equal and a number of Muslim holy days became official holidays in addition to the Christian holidays. Divisions persisted, nevertheless, between Muslims and Christians. Following defeat of the Derg in 1991, the Meles government repaired relations with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church but went to considerable lengths to maintain harmonious relations with both Muslims and Protestants. Key members of the EPRDF are not thought to be particularly religious, but they seem to be tolerant of all religions.

Ascertaining the percentage of Ethiopians who subscribe to a particular religion is about as difficult as ascribing percentages to ethnic and language groups. The Amhara and Tigrayans are almost entirely Ethiopian Orthodox. The Oromo are mainly Muslim, but have significant numbers of Orthodox and Protestant followers. The Somali and Afar and smaller related groups are almost entirely Muslim. Many of the Omotic-speaking peoples in the south are followers of indigenous practices, but Protestant missionaries have made significant inroads. The small ethnic groups along the Sudan border tend to be Muslim. There are also a few pockets scattered around Ethiopia where Roman Catholicism has taken hold. Ethiopian Orthodox and Muslims probably account for slightly less than 45 percent each of the population. Protestantism may have reached almost 5 percent of the population while animists account for the remainder.

## **ART, MUSIC, LITERATURE AND FOOD**

Ethiopia has a wonderful tradition in art, which until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, drew primarily on religious and historical motifs. Only in recent years has Ethiopian art begun to attract the attention that it deserves. Modern Ethiopian artists are also making their mark in the world of art. Afewerk Tekle, known for his Meskel Flower painting and stained glass in the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity, is the most famous, but some younger artists are following close behind. Zerihun Yetmgeta is another of the older artists who has left a significant legacy.

Because Ethiopia is so large and diverse, there are many forms of music and dance. Most are confined to particular ethnic areas. The variety of music and dance common to the Ethiopian highlands is the best known and can be heard and observed regularly in Ethiopian nightclubs and bars. Now that there are so many Ethiopians living in the diaspora, the music has also developed a following outside the country. Aster Aweke, for example, is well known in Ethiopia and in the diaspora.

Ethiopian literature has a long and proud history. Until recently it was rarely written in any language other than Amharic or one of the indigenous languages and seldom translated. This is particularly true in the case of poetry. As a result, Ethiopian authors are generally not well known outside the country. This is beginning to change as more literature is being written in English and other world languages. Sahle Sellassie and Daniachew Worku are examples of modern Ethiopian novelists.

The traditional food from the Ethiopian highlands deserves a special note. Again, the ethnic diversity of the country has resulted in a variety of diets. But “Ethiopian food” is traditionally associated with that common for centuries in the highlands. It consists of the national bread, *injera*, which resembles a huge, spongy pancake with a slightly sour taste. Made from a local grain known as teff, it is traditionally served on a communal mushroom shaped basket known as a *mesob*. It is accompanied by *wat*, a variety of stew like condiments made of both meat and vegetables. You tear off small pieces of *injera*, combine them with the *wat*, and eat the delicious combination without utensils. The rise of the Ethiopian diaspora has resulted in the establishment of many Ethiopian restaurants throughout Europe and North America. In the Washington area they are concentrated in Adams Morgan.

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Ethiopia has many national holidays, most of them related to major Ethiopian Orthodox festivals although key Islamic holidays have been added. The dates of some of the holidays, especially the Islamic ones, vary slightly from year to year, depending on the sighting of the moon. The most colorful Orthodox holiday is *Timkat* or the celebration of Christ’s baptism. It is a three-day event in January. Another popular Orthodox ceremony is *Meskel* or the finding of the true cross, a two-day holiday in September. Holidays celebrating political events include the victory over the Italians at Adwa (March 2), liberation of Ethiopia from Italian fascist rule (April 6), international labor day (May 1) and the overthrow of the Derg (May 28). Regular business is conducted in Ethiopia Monday through Friday.

### Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- Even if one accepts an annual population growth rate as low as 2.4 percent, can Ethiopia cope with the growing population in the coming decades?
- Has Amharic been a unifying language in Ethiopia?
- What will the official policy of ethnic federalism do to the development of languages in the country?
- What is the effect of ethnicity on Ethiopian politics?
- What are the prospects for religious harmony in Ethiopia?
- Are Ethiopian art, music and literature, much of which is of a very high quality, likely to receive

greater recognition outside the country?

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Basket from Harar

## **SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **CLASS STRUCTURE**

Class structure in Ethiopia throughout its imperial history resembled a feudal regime. Nobles and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church controlled much of the land; the peasants worked the land for the nobility. Social status during imperial rule depended on one's landholdings, which provided the basis for class formation and social stratification. The 1955 constitution, which was approved during the reign of Haile Selassie, had as an underlying theme the power of the monarchy. The first chapter dealt with the pomp and glory of the imperial institution and the rules of "Solomonic" succession to the throne.

This system came to an end with the overthrow of the imperial regime by the Derg in 1974. The Mengistu government instituted a constitution in 1987 based on the principles of scientific socialism. According to the constitution, Ethiopia was "a state of working peasants in which the intelligentsia, the revolutionary army, artisans, and other democratic sections of society participate." It committed the state to central planning and the owner of the means of production. It described the family as the basis of society. Social stratification based on landholding largely disappeared. But as the Derg sought to build a classless society it, in fact, created one based on pure political power and influence.

The EPRDF approved a new constitution in 1994. An egalitarian document with numerous provisions concerning human and individual rights, it is based on the principle that all citizens have equal access to publicly funded social services, including education. It also asserts that all people are equal before the law. The preamble to the constitution calls for "full respect of individual and people's fundamental freedoms and rights to live together on the basis of gender equality and without any religious or cultural

discrimination.” The constitution covers so many rights and freedoms that it is not surprising some are honored in the breach. In practice, there is a very small wealthy class and relations are generally cordial among individuals from the various economic strata. Considerable controversy surrounds, however, the EPRDF’s policy of ethnic federalism.

## **FAMILY LIFE**

Daily activity in Ethiopia revolves around the extended family as is true for most African societies. To some extent individual ethnic group characteristics determine the way in which families function internally and interact with other families and society at large. Because Ethiopia is comprised of so many different ethnic groups, it is difficult to generalize about the nature of family life. There are significant differences, for example, in the way families function in a rural setting as compared to an urban one. Likewise, families living a pastoral existence will have different patterns than those who are settled agriculturists.

Generally speaking there is a much greater willingness to assist and care for members of the extended family than is the case in the West. Consequently, a family member will usually care for the sick and the elderly rather than expect a governmental institution to accept this responsibility. Family members with a steady income or greater degree of wealth normally assist those, including cousins, in-laws, etc., who are in financial need. Children whose parents can not afford to pay for school fees will routinely request help from a member of the extended family who is perceived to be in a better financial position. This can become a tremendous burden for salaried employees, even relatively low paid ones, who are seen by family members as an unending source of assistance. Family bonds tend to be stronger than is the case in the industrialized world. This is starting to break down, however, in urban settings.

Although there are growing urban-rural differences, most Ethiopians live with their families until marriage. In rural areas, the parents of the couple usually arrange the marriage and a long engagement often follows. Several days of feasting cap the ceremony. The financial burden of weddings has become huge, especially in the cities, and some Ethiopians are beginning to question whether these enormous expenses are a good way to launch a life together. After marriage in rural areas, the couple usually joins the household of the husband’s parents. The couple eventually requests a plot of land from the village in order to build a house. Increasingly in urban areas, marriage resembles the Western model where an individual seeks a partner of his/her choice.

Divorce is a relatively easy process in Ethiopia and marriages can be dissolved at the request of either party, depending on religious affiliation. Adultery is the most common reason given. Each partner theoretically retains the property he or she brought to the marriage. Allowances may be made in favor of the “wronged” partner.

## **GENDER**

Although the 1994 constitution calls for gender equality, it will take many years to change millennia of

tradition. The fact is that Ethiopian women, as is the case in so many traditional societies, have unequal status to men. The overwhelming majority of women live in rural conditions where they experience daily physical hardships throughout their lives. This involves carrying heavy loads such as water over long distances, manually grinding grain, collecting firewood, raising large families and even helping the men in the fields. Ethiopian women have traditionally suffered various kinds of discrimination and have had fewer opportunities for personal growth, education and employment. The custom of many Ethiopian societies is to require female circumcision in spite of the fact that the government and some NGOs are trying to stop the practice.

Ethiopians measure a woman's worth in terms of her role as a mother and wife. Rural women are an integral part of the agricultural economy, most of which is at the subsistence level and highly labor intensive. Combined with giving birth to large numbers of children, such an existence takes a high physical toll. Rural Ethiopian women tend to look older than their actual age. Ethiopian women employed in urban areas are concentrated in the service sector. Women factory workers generally earn a lower wage than their male counterparts. At the same time, there are signs of progress for women living in towns and cities. Education, health care and employment outside the home have become more available. Although nationwide illiteracy remains high, it is not significantly higher for women (about 68 percent) than for men (about 57 percent) and it is declining at a faster rate for women.

## **HEALTH AND WELFARE**

Missionary doctors, nurses and midwives brought modern medicine to Ethiopia during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They had little success, however, in decreasing the effects of acute and endemic diseases that debilitated large segments of the population. The creation of the Ministry of Public Health in 1948 began the process of confronting national health problems.

A number of factors contribute to the continuing poor state of health in Ethiopia. Rivers and lakes are the sources of water for most Ethiopians. This water is often unsafe; it is estimated that only 25 percent of the rural population and 75 percent of the urban population have access to safe water. Malnutrition is widespread in much of Ethiopia even during a good crop year. Periods of drought and famine magnify the problem. Health services are concentrated in the urban areas. Only about 60 percent of the population have access to any kind of health service and it is often of low quality. There is one doctor for every 40,000 Ethiopians and 87 hospitals with only 12,000 beds for more than 64 million people. The health care infrastructure has been crippled by more than three decades of conflict, underfunding and neglect. Efforts to improve the situation are underway, but it will take decades to overcome the challenge. Government expenditures on health care as a percentage of total expenditure, for example, increased from 3.5 percent in 1986/87 to 4.9 percent in 1995/96.

The major killing diseases in Ethiopia are perinatal-maternal conditions, acute respiratory infection, malaria, nutritional deficiency for children, diarrhea, AIDS and tuberculosis. There is wide regional variation in the pattern of diseases. Malaria, for example, is endemic in at least 70 percent of Ethiopia but does not generally occur in the higher altitudes. Schistosomiasis and yellow fever also tend to be



concentrated at lower altitudes. Venereal disease is more common in urban areas where prostitution contributes to the problem. HIV/AIDS is increasing at a rapid rate; as many as 4 million people may be infected. Because of its large population, Ethiopia now has the third highest number of HIV positive persons in the world. Between seven and ten percent of the sexually active population is HIV positive. Infection rates are considerably higher in urban areas and along major transportation routes than in the rural parts of the country. Although the basic cause of AIDS is now understood by nearly all Ethiopians, there is still a huge stigma attached to the disease and a reluctance to discuss it at the personal level. The government, assisted by churches, partner countries and numerous NGOs, has belatedly undertaken a major effort to deal with the pandemic.

It is very difficult to define poverty in a country as poor as Ethiopia. One government study done in the early 1990s suggested that more than 50 percent of the population suffered from chronic poverty. Welfare programs are largely non-existent in Ethiopia. The extended family is expected to provide for those in need. Churches, mosques and NGOs contribute, however, to the well being of many Ethiopians. The government focuses primarily on health care and education.

## EDUCATION

Religious instruction organized by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the only formal education in Ethiopia until the early 1900s. The first public school opened in Addis Ababa in 1907; by the mid-1930s there were still only about 8,000 students in 20 public schools. The number grew to 60,000 students in 400 primary schools by 1952, supplemented in the 1960s by 310 mission and privately owned schools with an enrollment of 52,000. The Derg regime expanded significantly primary school enrollment, which grew to 2.5 million in the mid-1980s. It crept up to 2.7 million by the mid-1990s. This constituted about 28 percent of the total primary school population; the percentage for girls was about 21 percent. Junior secondary schools increased from 1000 in the mid-1980s to over 1200 in the mid-1990s while senior secondary schools grew from 260 to 330 in the same period.

There has been less success in improving the quality of primary and secondary education. Schools are generally understaffed and poorly equipped. Laboratories are virtually non-existent in some secondary schools. The physical infrastructure of many schools, especially in rural areas, is well below standard. Perhaps most important, many educators believe the quality of teachers has deteriorated in recent decades. The policy of ethnic federalism permits the regions to determine the principal language of instruction in primary school. Oromia, Afar, Somali and Tigray regions have selected the predominant local language. The others continue to rely on Amharic. All schools teach English at a certain point, but the quality of instruction has declined due to the significant increase in the number of students in school and the decrease in organizations like the Peace Corps that made a major contribution to the teaching of English.

The educational system has long been a manufacturer of an unemployable cadre of students rather than provider of skilled manpower. It tends to be theory focused and is not designed to link theoretical knowledge to practical problems. Civic education has not traditionally been an important part of the

curriculum, although this is changing. Nor is the system designed to develop openness, assertiveness and creativeness among students. The number of vocational and technical schools in Ethiopia remains low but is finally beginning to show signs of growth. The government is also devoting a greater share of its budget to education. It increased from about 10 percent in the mid-1980s to 15 percent in the mid-1990s.

Although some question the quality of higher education today, the government has devoted significant resources in recent years to expanding it. The government reorganized the system, creating several regional centers for higher education that are autonomous from Addis Ababa University, the largest campus. All universities are under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Relative lack of autonomy from the Ministry has led to occasional problems such as the nationwide boycott of classes by students in 2001 following disagreements over policy issues. Each university campus draws students from throughout the country; this policy allows them to mix with other ethnic groups, thus offsetting the more parochial implications of ethnic federalism at the primary and secondary school level. Higher education enrollment grew from about 4,500 in 1970 to more than 18,000 in the mid-1980s. The number has increased well above that today.

## **LABOR FORCE**

The overwhelming majority of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, usually at the subsistence level, although the percentage has declined from about 88 percent in the mid-1980s to 70 percent in the mid-1990s. In the urban labor market, a higher proportion of females engages in sales and service related activities while men dominate the craft related occupations. Women are much more likely to be self-employed and men are found in far greater numbers in the government. Unemployment is high in urban areas. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) represents the different guilds at the national level. Compared to the American labor system, CETU is an obliging organization in its relationship with the government. Peasant associations and cooperatives are important institutions in the agricultural sector. They focus primarily on improving the well being of the farmer through collective purchases of agricultural inputs and collective sale of farm products. They have minimal impact on agricultural policy.

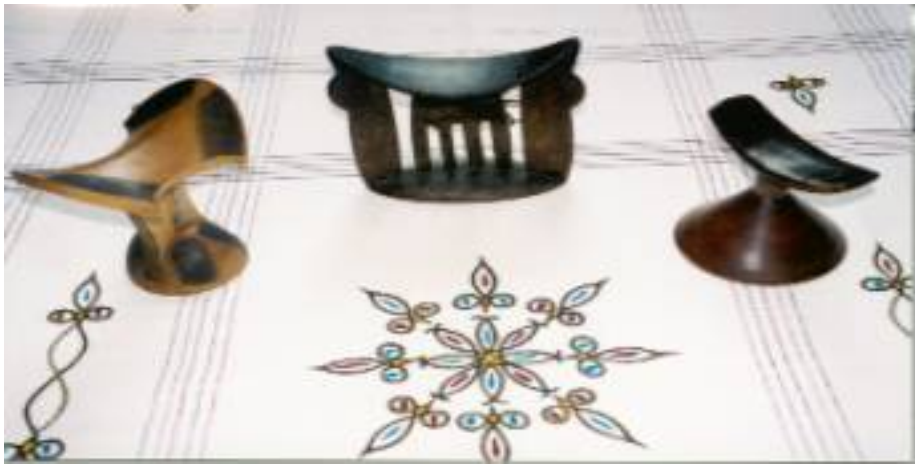
### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- Are class differences still an important issue in Ethiopia?
- Is the growth in the percentage of Ethiopians living in urban areas generally a healthy development for society?
- What measures can be taken to improve gender equality?
- What realistic steps can Ethiopia take to improve the health care system and expand it to areas where there now is no care?
- To what extent will the HIV/AIDS pandemic threaten Ethiopia's economic development?

- Is the answer to Ethiopia's future development to put more students through school, improve the quality of the existing curriculum or thoroughly revise the current educational system?
- Why does the union movement play such a modest role in social change?

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Head rests from different parts of Ethiopia

## ECONOMY

### EPRDF ECONOMIC POLICY

When the EPRDF came to power in 1991, it brought with it some Marxist-Leninist economic baggage. This socialist ideology combined with a more recent willingness to implement market reforms makes it difficult to categorize EPRDF policy. It seems to have grudgingly accepted market economics as the only option for Ethiopia but still has a tendency towards government intervention and control. Some of the EPRDF economic theorists are probably not convinced that capitalism will provide the rapid and sustainable economic development that Ethiopia desperately needs. The EPRDF seems committed, however, to taking those steps that it believes will most effectively energize the population to contribute to the economy in a way that will benefit all regions of the country.

The EPRDF believes that the agricultural sector should be the driving force for the rest of the economy. Both land and labor productivity in this sector is exceedingly low. The goal is to improve productivity by introducing new technology, fertilizer, improved seed and extension services. To achieve this goal, however, the EPRDF believes the government must intervene on a massive scale by orchestrating the distribution of fertilizer and improved seed and overseeing the extension system. In urban areas the EPRDF sees itself as the provider of social and physical infrastructure, including housing. This, in turn, will in its view stimulate the private sector to invest in productive enterprises leading to more employment. The EPRDF is also committed to some regional balance in its economic development program. Although government budget allocations are designed to encourage this process, it has been difficult to achieve development in areas where the infrastructure is poor and the number of educated and skilled people are few.

Other basic EPRDF economic policies include improved tax administration, especially broadening the base on the revenue side and reducing expenditures to less than that of nominal GDP. It intends to minimize the tendency of government to crowd out the private sector by reducing government borrowing

from domestic sources. It plans to create an environment that will permit the establishment of a competitive financial system. It is trying to increase private investment by speeding up privatization, improving the investment code, increasing dialogue with the private sector and ensuring an adequate supply of urban land for investment purposes.

Ethiopia, in on-going discussions with the IMF, has made clear that its mid-term economic strategy includes a focus on poverty reduction by fostering rural development, expanding and improving a comprehensive food security program and building conditions for high and sustainable growth. The goal over the short term is real annual GDP growth of seven to eight percent and consumer price inflation at no more than five percent. The primary fiscal policy objectives over the short term are to redirect resources from defense-related expenditures toward poverty-reducing outlays and to lay the foundation for better tax revenue mobilization. Monetary policy is also aimed at keeping inflation in the low single digits. Structural reforms include modernizing monetary management, improving interbank operations, strengthening the soundness of smaller banks and upgrading the management of the state-owned Commercial Bank of Ethiopia. It also intends to further liberalize the foreign trade and exchange regimes, allow market determination of the exchange rate and promote export development.

## **EPRDF ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

The structure of Ethiopia's economy has changed little since the EPRDF came to power. Agriculture continues to contribute more than 50 percent of GDP. The average share for agriculture over the last 20 years has been about 55 percent. Industry's contribution to GDP has remained relatively static at about 10 percent. The service sector, on the other hand, has increased to about 25 percent of GDP from 20 percent during the Derg. The contribution of the distributive sector has remained static at just over 10 percent.

Ethiopia's real GDP under the EPRDF has grown on the average at a rate of about 4.5 percent annually. The per capita GDP growth rate has been about 2.6 percent, which compares favorably with a 1.9 percent rate during the last ten years of the Derg. Ethiopia's economic situation deteriorated sharply in 1999/2000 as a result of a severe drought, the 1998-2000 border war with Eritrea, a major worsening of its terms of trade associated with lower coffee export prices and the steep rise in petroleum import prices. In spite of this situation, the IMF reported that real GDP growth reached 7.5 percent in 2000/01 while inflation turned negative, reflecting a bumper cereal crop and large inflows of food aid. This strong showing occurred in spite of an expenditure of \$3 billion by Ethiopia to finance the conflict with Eritrea. The Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute offers a more dismal picture of the economy, citing a sharp drop in foreign investment, a reduction in tourism, the high cost of the war, costs associated with rerouting imports and exports and higher debt. Ethiopian reserves dropped from about a half billion dollars in 1997 to well under \$400 million in 2000. The Institute concludes, however, that Ethiopia continues to have a reasonable GDP growth rate. The IMF believes the debt-service ratio will fall from 19 percent in 1999/2000 to 15 percent in 2002/2003 and 9 percent by 2009/10. It further expects the ratio to drop to an average of 7.5 percent beyond that. Gross domestic savings averaged 7.2 percent during the Derg and 6.9 percent during the EPRDF. There is a steady trend, however, suggesting that some of the measures taken by the EPRDF to encourage savings are beginning to work. While gross fixed capital

formation as a percent of GDP declined sharply during the last 11 years of the Derg, it has made a healthy recovery under the EPRDF, averaging over 15 percent and doing best in recent years. Because the low savings ratio could not finance this increase in investment, the resource gap widened from an average of 7.1 percent of GDP during the Derg to about 8.7 percent under the EPRDF. This resulted in an increase of debt burden during EPRDF stewardship. The Ethiopian economy has performed modestly under the EPRDF. Its successes stem from the positive effect of the dismantling of the most suffocating anti-private sector policies of the Derg regime and generous support from the donor community. High growth rates in industry and services are largely due to the recovery made from the unusually low level during the last years of the Derg. The agricultural sector did not perform as well as expected. This is not surprising in view of several bad harvests due to drought and, in some high altitude locations, an excess of rain. Perhaps the biggest surprise, however, is the fact that the economy has done as well as it did in spite of a \$3 billion expenditure on a war with Eritrea.

## AGRICULTURE

Ethiopia is divided into two major agricultural zones—the highlands and the lowlands. The highlands constitute about 40 percent of the land area and the lowlands 60 percent. About 25 percent of the land area are intensively or moderately cultivated. Animals graze on most of the remainder, although some areas are so steep, eroded and/or lacking in water that they serve virtually no agricultural purpose. Ethiopia may have the largest livestock population in Africa. Farming practices vary somewhat according to vegetation zones and the tradition of different ethnic groups. The most common way of tilling the field is by oxen or cattle. Mechanized plowing is rare. It is not uncommon to see farmers working small plots using hoes or even sharpened sticks to break up the soil. Oxen and cattle pull a crude wooden plow fitted with iron tips. The farmers then spread seeds and plow them under in the same manner. Increasingly, farmers are using fertilizer. In the final analysis, the rains or lack thereof determine the size and quality of the crop. There is very little irrigated agriculture in Ethiopia. When the crops fail, farmers kill off their livestock to survive. When the livestock are gone, they are dependent on foreign assistance and vegetation such as wild plants and roots. Commercial farming began in the 1960s. Following a brief period of modest growth, the Derg nationalized the commercial operations and converted them to state farms. Most of these efforts performed poorly and the EPRDF handed some of them over to local farmers and privatized others. Of the original 26 state farms, there are now only 13 remaining. They raise wheat, corn, cotton, coffee and tea. The EPRDF is encouraging large-scale commercial farming, but the results have been modest. Access to good land is the main obstacle. Investors must identify land that is not already being used by others. This forces them to the low, hot, disease-ridden parts of Ethiopia where there is still unoccupied land. The major cereal crops are teff (used in the national bread *injera*), wheat, barley, corn, millet and sorghum. Pulses are the second most important element in the national diet and a principal source of protein. Niger seed, flaxseed and sesame are widely cultivated. Castor beans, rapeseed, peanuts, safflower and sunflower seeds are a less significant part of the diet. Ensete, also known as the false banana, is an important food source in the southern and southwestern highlands. Fruits and vegetables grow well in parts of Ethiopia but consumption tends to be low because of their high cost. Common vegetables include onions, green beans, peppers, squash and cabbage. Ethiopia produces a variety of citrus, bananas, mangoes and papaya. The most important cash crop is coffee. In fact, arabica coffee may have originated in Ethiopia. As many as 15 million Ethiopians depend on the production,

processing, trade and transport of coffee for their livelihood. More than 90 percent of the country's coffee production comes from smallholder farmers. A significant amount grows wild. The major foreign exchange earner, some varieties of Ethiopian washed coffee earn a premium in the world market. Starbucks usually carries at least one variety of Ethiopian coffee. Coffee prices rise and fall quickly, making it difficult to estimate the impact of the crop in any given year on Ethiopia's foreign exchange income. Other cash crops include cotton, sugar, tea and tobacco, most of which are consumed domestically. Ethiopia grows chat, fruit and vegetables for export. Chat, a mild stimulant that is illegal in the U.S., is becoming increasingly popular in Ethiopia. Livestock contribute an estimated 30-35 percent of agricultural GDP and about 15 percent of overall GDP. Cattle account for 70 percent of this value, sheep and goats 14 percent and poultry 13 percent. Camels, mules and horses constitute the balance. Their value includes the provision of draft power, meat and milk. In addition, they have a high export value for hides and skins. Ethiopia may have as many as 80 million head of livestock and 60 million poultry.

## INDUSTRY

Prior to the 1974 revolution, foreigners established and/or owned most of the 273 manufacturing enterprises in Ethiopia. The Derg nationalized virtually all of these companies. The EPRDF is slowly returning them to private hands. The three-percent contribution of Ethiopia's manufacturing sector to GDP is among the lowest in the world. In fact, the contribution of all industry to GDP slipped from 12 percent in 1980 to 10 percent in 1995. The total number of "manufacturing" establishments in the mid-1990s was well over a million but only 642 of this number employed 10 or more persons and used power machines. The remainder constituted cottage, informal, small-scale and handicraft industries.

About 40 percent of all small-scale, cottage and handicraft enterprises are in the food and beverage sector. One-third of the cottage and handicraft industries involve textiles while about one-third of the small-scale activities are in metal working and weaving. Enterprises that employ 10 or more persons focus primarily on food and beverages, furniture and fixtures, non-metallic mineral products and leather goods. All of the small-scale, cottage, handicraft and informal industries are privately owned. About one-third of the large-scale industries are owned by the government. Approximately 45 percent of all the value added originates from manufacturing in Addis Ababa. Oromia Region accounts for another 37 percent.

## TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Ethiopia has a relatively underdeveloped road system although there have been significant improvements in recent years thanks to the European Union and World Bank. It is expensive and difficult to build and maintain roads in much of the country because of the mountainous topography and heavy seasonal rains. Nevertheless, most cargo and passengers travel by road. Ethiopia has about 18,000 miles of roads. Since the closure of the Ethiopia/Eritrea border in 1998 and the loss of the port of Assab, the most important route for commerce is the one between Addis Ababa and the Gulf of Aden port of Djibouti. Most of the roads are not paved, but virtually all of them are passable year round except in unusually heavy rain. There are many more miles of tracks that are only passable in dry weather. Some of the roads

built during the Italian military occupation are still in use today.

The only railroad in Ethiopia connects Addis Ababa and the port of Djibouti. Construction on the narrow gauge track, which runs for 423 miles in Ethiopia, began in 1897 and reached Addis Ababa in 1917. Ethiopia tried to become less reliant on the railroad in the 1960s. When it closed during the Ogaden War with Somalia in 1977-78, Ethiopia realized it needed to improve the road to the Eritrean Red Sea port of Assab. Following the outbreak of hostility with Eritrea, the closure of the border and the loss of access to Assab, Ethiopia realized again how important the railroad was to its survival. As a land-locked country, Ethiopia has no port. Its reliance on Djibouti during the war with Eritrea and the tendency of Djibouti to be overtaxed caused Ethiopia to consider other alternatives until such time as Eritrean ports again become available. As a result, Ethiopia is making increased use of the Gulf of Aden port of Berbera in Somaliland and is exploring with Sudan the use of Port Sudan on the Red Sea. As a legacy of the period when Ethiopia controlled Eritrea and had ports on the Red Sea, it still has a merchant marine of 12 ships, including 7 cargo vessels, 1 container ship, 1 petroleum tanker and 3 roll-on/roll-off ships. Ethiopian Airlines (EAL) is one of the largest and most efficient in Africa. It is a government-owned operation that began in 1946 with guidance from TWA. An all-Boeing wide-bodied fleet, EAL provides service throughout Africa and has flights to Asia, Europe and the United States. Ethiopia has also developed an extensive domestic network of flights and airports. It has 11 airports with paved runways, many of them recently completed or expanded. It has 74 other airports with unpaved runways. Due to its size, mountainous topography and limited road network, air travel is an important way to get around Ethiopia. The telecommunications system in Ethiopia is rudimentary. It remains under government control. There are under 400,000 telephones in the country and several thousand cellular phones, mostly in Addis Ababa. The government domestic phone system relies on open wire and microwave radio relay. The international system has an open wire to Sudan and Djibouti and microwave radio relay to Kenya and Djibouti. There are three Intelsat satellite earth stations, 5 AM radio broadcast stations, two short wave and 25 television broadcast stations, all under government control. There are about 400,000 television sets. All Internet service comes over the government-controlled telephone line. There are several thousand Internet subscribers, nearly all of them in Addis Ababa.

## FOREIGN TRADE

The value of Ethiopian exports totals almost a billion dollars, a figure that has risen steadily in the 1990s. The increased value of exports has been greater in services than in merchandise, although the latter still constitutes more than half the total. Five products—coffee, hides and skins, oil seeds, pulses and fruits and vegetables—account for about 80 percent of export earnings. Coffee alone provides about two-thirds of the merchandise export earnings. The export of manufactured goods accounts for only about four percent of the total by value and has been declining in recent years. Most Ethiopian exports go to Germany, Japan, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, France, UK and Italy. As a percent of GDP, imports are running at over 20 percent and the trend was upward during the 1990s. Capital and consumer goods account for two-thirds of the total and semi-finished products for most of the rest. The dollar cost of imports is about 1.25 billion if the extraordinary military purchases during the conflict with Eritrea are excluded. Major imports include fuel, fertilizer, vehicles, machinery, electrical products, metal and metal products and cereal. The principal sources of supply are Saudi Arabia, Italy, United States and Japan. Russia and the



former Soviet Republics were important sources of military equipment during the conflict with Eritrea.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- To what extent has the EPRDF followed its economic policy precepts?
- How completely has the EPRDF accepted free market mechanisms?
- How would you rate the EPRDF's economic performance over the last ten years?
- What will be the likely impact on its future economic performance of Ethiopia's \$3 billion expenditure on the conflict with Eritrea?
- What are the prospects for diversifying the production of cash crops?
- Why is there so little industrialization in Ethiopia?
- Why does the government continue such tight controls over telecommunications, thus limiting its expansion by the private sector?
- Why does so little of Ethiopia's trade occur with neighboring countries?

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## **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

### **THE 1994 CONSTITUTION**

Following the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991, transitional authorities created a constitutional commission and promulgated the new federal constitution late in 1994. It formally became the law of the land in 1995 after approval by newly elected representatives. This constitution is a sharp departure from previous Ethiopian constitutions. It creates a federal multi-party system of government and accords extraordinary importance to the ethno-linguistic groupings in the country. Chapter 2 states that “all sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia.” It goes so far as to allow the right of secession by any Nation, Nationality or People of Ethiopia. This possibility is the most controversial part of the constitution. Some argue that this concept will permit disparate groups to live together while others believe it constitutes the seed for the disintegration of Ethiopia.

The handling of land ownership was one of the most hotly contested aspects during the deliberations of the constitutional commission. The constitution declares that “the right to ownership of rural and urban land . . . is exclusively vested in the state and the Peoples of Ethiopia.” As a result, land is not considered a market commodity. It is seen as the common property of the extended family, ethnic group, clan, etc. This has become an especially controversial issue in urban areas where private individuals and investors

often prefer to own land. It is possible to obtain long-term leases, but not outright ownership. Another important change in this constitution is the provision that mandates the equality of Ethiopian languages. This provision has led to the use of several languages other than Amharic in the school system, as a medium on radio and television and in the written press.

Interpretation of the constitution is left not to the courts but to the House of Federation in the legislative branch. The process includes a Council of Constitutional Inquiry consisting mostly of legal experts that submits its findings to the House of Federation for a final decision. A process that originates at the regional or federal level can amend the constitution. When the initiative comes from the regions, a third of the regional councils must support a proposal by majority vote. In addition, either of the federal houses of Parliament can initiate a constitutional amendment by a two-thirds vote. Ordinary constitutional amendments then require a two-thirds vote in a joint meeting of the federal houses as well as a majority vote in two-thirds of the regional councils. The constitution permits the declaration of a state of emergency by the Council of Ministers followed by approval of the House of Peoples' Representatives.

## **EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND EPRDF**

National legislative elections take place every five years. They were held in 1995 and 2000 and are not scheduled again until 2005. They elect members of the bicameral Parliament, which consists of the House of Peoples' Representatives (lower chamber) and House of Federation (upper chamber). The House of Peoples' Representatives nominates the President, who is then elected by a two-thirds vote during a joint session with the House of Federation. The nominee does not have to be a Member of Parliament. The President, Negasso Gidada since 1995, holds office for six years in order to serve as a bridge from one five-year Parliament to another. Although the President serves as chief of state, his role is largely ceremonial. President Negasso is from Oromia.

The Prime Minister is the head of government and, together with the Council of Ministers, holds the highest executive powers. The Prime Minister is a member of and elected from the House of Peoples' Representatives for a five-year term. Meles Zenawi has held this position since 1995. The Prime Minister is the chief executive, chairman of the Council of Ministers, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The Prime Minister appoints most senior officials to the federal government and is in charge of the country's foreign policy. There is a Deputy Prime Minister who has no constitutionally specified task except to carry out responsibilities specifically entrusted to him by the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Meles is from Tigray Region and Deputy Prime Minister Tefera Walwa is from Amhara Region.

Upon nomination by the Prime Minister, the House of Peoples' Representatives appoints the members of the Council of Ministers or cabinet. The Council of Ministers is responsible to both the Prime Minister and the House of Peoples' Representatives. Each minister is in charge of a government ministry such as justice, education or foreign affairs and is, therefore, responsible for routine government business under the purview of that ministry. The key task of the ministers is the formulation of the federal budget. The ethnic background of ministers and deputy ministers generally reflects the ethnic composition of Ethiopia.

Real executive power on key policy issues lies with the ruling political party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). It is an umbrella organization for a number of essentially ethnic-based political parties, most of which played a role in overthrowing the Derg regime. The major parties that comprise the EPRDF are the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM) and the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO). There are numerous other smaller parties in the EPRDF. Neither the decision-making process nor the deliberations of the secretive EPRDF are well understood by outsiders. What is clear, however, is the preponderant role played by the TPLF, the Ethiopian organization most responsible for the fall of Mengistu Haile Mariam. Although many Ethiopians resent the heavy influence of the TPLF in determining government policy, there is grudging appreciation for the fact that the TPLF more than any other group ridded the country of the Derg.

It is apparent that the policies of the EPRDF and, especially, the TPLF have been adapting to new circumstances, especially in the area of economic policy. As noted earlier, the EPRDF has slowly moved away from some Marxist-Leninist concepts to a greater willingness to embrace market economics. Simmering policy differences within the EPRDF, particularly the TPLF, came into the open in 2001. There was a split in the TPLF with Prime Minister Meles leading the group remaining in power and another group of senior TPLF officials leaving the party. There were several reasons for this schism. From the beginning of the conflict with Eritrea, there were policy differences on how tough to be towards Eritrea. Meles tried to be more conciliatory; others took a harder line. Meles is thought to be more willing to institute liberal economic policy reforms than were those who broke with the TPLF. There are also differences in the amount of transparency and openness that the two factions are willing to allow in the TPLF and EPRDF. The faction that has the support and loyalty of the security forces will ultimately come out on top—at least over the short term.

## **OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES**

Political parties that are not part of the EPRDF have existed in Ethiopia since the fall of the Derg in 1991. In fact, one important group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), initially aligned itself with the EPRDF but broke away after about a year. Its leadership is now in exile and the OLF is trying to overthrow the EPRDF government. Other parties have continued to operate inside Ethiopia. They include the All-Amhara People's Organization (AAPO), Coalition of Alternative Forces for Peace and Democracy (CAFPD), Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and Ethiopian National Democratic Party (ENDP). There are a number of other smaller parties, some of which come and go. Most of the opposition parties boycotted the 1995 and 2000 elections.

Although Ethiopia's constitution specifically calls for a multi-party state, it is a difficult environment for an opposition party to succeed. The EPRDF is in firm control of the government, radio, television and much of the written media. There are opposition papers, some of which are outspoken in their criticism of the government. But the opposition parties are not allowed to compete on a level playing field and are often subject to harassment by local officials. It is equally true, however, that the opposition parties are weakly financed, usually poorly led and almost always disorganized. Nor is there any unity among the

opposition groups. This situation does not bode well for the development of a meaningful and vibrant multi-party system.

## PARLIAMENT

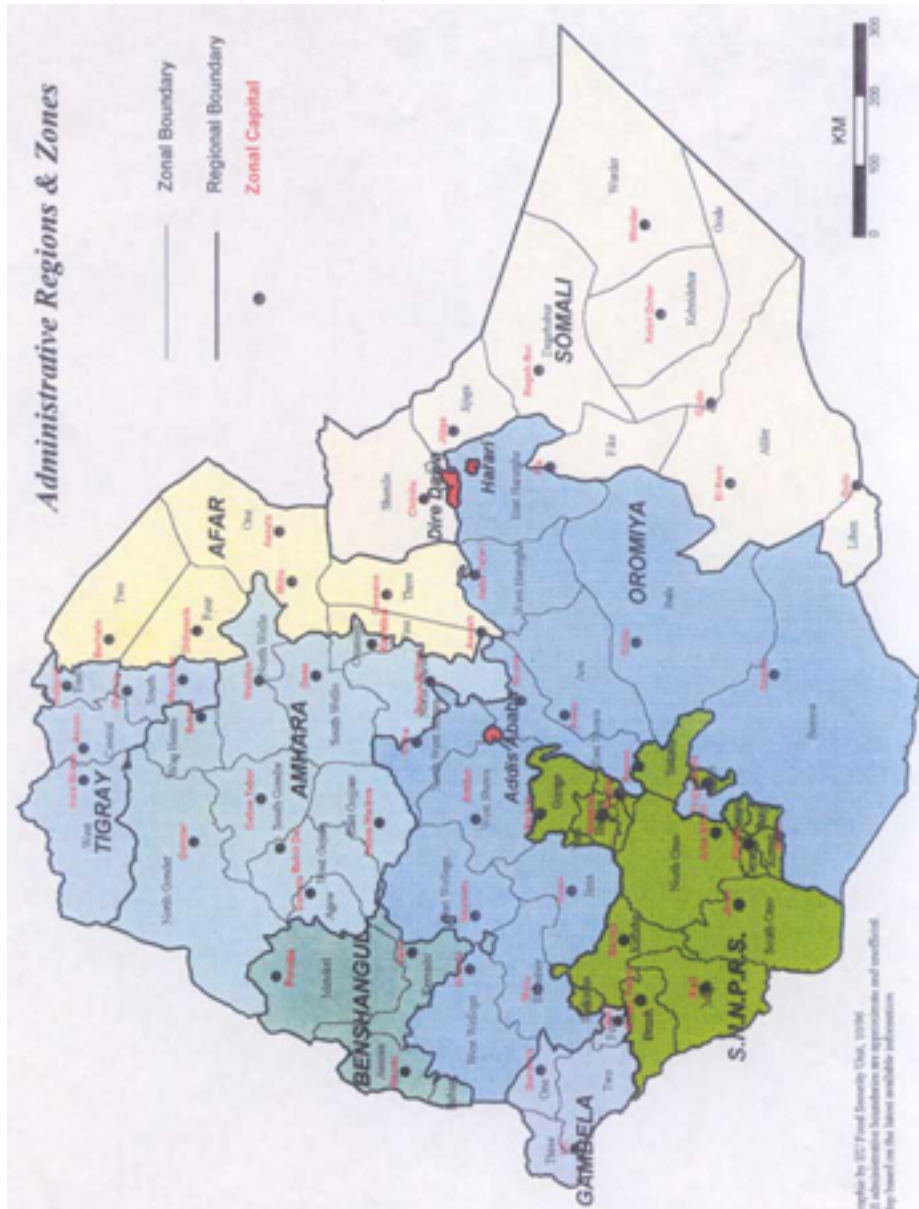
The people directly elect the 548 members of the House of Peoples' Representatives (lower house) from single member districts for five-year terms. Ethiopia has universal suffrage for persons 18 and over. State assemblies choose the 117 members of the House of Federation (upper house) for five-year terms. In the 2000 elections, EPRDF candidates won 483 of the 548 lower chamber seats. Regional parties won 46 seats, independents 8 seats and the remainder is not specified. Members of Parliament are immune from any legal or administrative action based on an opinion expressed or vote cast. They also have partial immunity from arrest. The House of Peoples' Representatives is the more important of the two organizations. It can enact laws dealing with utilization of land, natural resources and interstate commerce; interstate roads, postal and telecommunication services; enforcement of constitutionally established political rights; nationality, asylum and other specified issues. The constitution also assigns it a variety of other responsibilities. The House of Federation is designed to represent the many different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Its most important function is its power to interpret the constitution. It has a mandate to promote equality among the various ethnic groups in the country and determines the amount of subsidy the federal government gives to the regional governments. The principal law emanating from the House of Peoples' Representatives is the proclamation. The only requirement is that it not contradict the constitution. Proclamations can originate in the Council of Ministers or internally in the House. The House also publishes the official gazette of Ethiopia known as the *Negarit Gazeta*. Many observers of Ethiopian politics are quick to dismiss Parliament as a "rubber stamp" of the Council of Ministers and the EPRDF. Although it clearly is not a strong legislative organization, it is too facile to conclude that it is unimportant. There are some outspoken members, particularly independent Somalis, who do not shrink from criticism of government policy. The Lower House has initiated controversial investigations. It is also questionable whether a truly unpopular policy could be forced through Parliament. Everything considered, however, it is not yet a very exciting body.

## JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Ethiopia's federal system of government has two sets of courts and jurisdictions. There is a three-tiered federal system. At the bottom are the Federal High and Federal First Instance Courts, which are established as necessary by the House of Peoples' Representatives. At the top of the structure is the Federal Supreme Court, which is established automatically by the constitution. Each region or state also has a three-tiered system of State Supreme, High and First Instance courts. Unlike the federal courts, the constitution automatically constitutes all three of these courts at the regional level. The intention is to create Federal High and Federal First Instance Courts in areas of high population density and intense economic activity where it may be necessary to supplement the regional courts. Ethiopia established a special system and proceeding for trying persons accused of crimes during the Derg regime.

The Federal Supreme Court has the highest and final jurisdiction over federal matters and the State

Supreme Court has similar jurisdiction over state matters. The Federal Supreme Court has the constitutional authority to review and correct any decision of a “basic error of law.” The State Supreme Court has the same authority for matters that fall under its purview. The Prime Minister nominates the President and Vice President of the Federal Supreme Court. The House of Peoples’ Representatives approves them. Except for violation of disciplinary rules or gross incompetence, federal judges cannot be removed from duty until they reach the mandated retirement age. The judiciary is generally independent. The greatest problems facing the judicial system are a shortage of judges and prosecutors, inadequate funding and huge backlogs in the court system.



## ETHNIC FEDERALISM

Ethnic federalism is the most radical and controversial policy instituted by the current government. The EPRDF created ethnic federalism in part to ensure that Ethiopia not continue the policy of “Amhara domination.” (The Amhara have not always dominated in Ethiopia, but they have been in control throughout much of Ethiopian history.) Ethnic federalism has important implications for all aspects of

social and political development in the country. Each region or state has its own executive branch headed by a president and supported by functional department heads. There are also regional legislatures and a judicial system. Perhaps unique in Africa, regional governments can raise their own revenue.

For administrative purposes, Ethiopia is divided into nine ethnically based regions or states and two chartered cities. The regions are Afar, Amhara, Benishangul/Gumuz, Gambela, Harar, Oromia, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) and Tigray. The two chartered cities are Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. (See map of administrative areas.) The residents of Afar, Somali and Tigray Regions are almost exclusively of the Afar, Somali and Tigrayan ethnic groups respectively. Amhara Region and Oromia are populated 85-90 percent by Amharas and Oromos respectively. The remaining administrative units contain a wide mix of smaller ethnic groups, especially SNNPR. It is a mistake, therefore, to suggest that the regions represent a single ethnic unit.

The regions are, in turn, divided into 64 zones, which are roughly equivalent to American counties. Each zone has its own administrative apparatus that reports to the regional government. The zones are subdivided into 550 districts, known locally as *weredas*, which also have administrative responsibilities. The districts are further subdivided into thousands of *kebeles* or neighborhood/rural organizations. The *kebeles*, a holdover from the Derg period, create and monitor the local militias. Ethiopia is a very large and populous country; it has created an elaborate and expensive federal structure of government. The advantage, if one assumes that it provides good government, is that it brings administration directly to the people. It has been a huge challenge, however, to fund adequately this infrastructure and to find sufficient numbers of trained and honest bureaucrats to fill the local government positions. It is too soon to tell if this grand experiment will succeed. It is a Herculean and innovative undertaking.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- Are there reasons to believe the 1994 constitution will hold up longer than the 1955 and the 1987 constitutions?
- To what extent do the political parties that make up the EPRDF have strong support among the people they claim to represent?
- What keeps the opposition political parties from uniting in common cause?
- What will it take for Parliament to become a powerful force in Ethiopian politics?
- How can Ethiopia ensure there are enough judges and prosecutors to fill positions in the judicial system?
- Do the different ethnic groups have different views on the desirability of ethnic federalism?

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Ethiopian crosses



Painting of Ethiopian man

## **NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY**

### **NATIONAL SECURITY**

Ethiopia has faced attacks from outside for many centuries. Islamic forces from the Somali lowlands in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, “Gran the Lefthanded” from the Sudan in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and Egyptian troops and then the Mahdist forces from the Sudan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century all tried to overrun the Ethiopian highlands. The Italians made an unsuccessful effort in the late 1800s and finally succeeded in the 1930s. The last attempt by outsiders to seize a large part of the country occurred in the 1970s when the Somali government

briefly occupied most of the Somali inhabited part of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has learned from these experiences and, as a result, maintains a strong national security force. Ethiopia also benefited, especially in earlier times, by the fact that the core of the country is located in topographically inhospitable highlands. Foreign invaders paid a high price whenever they entered the rugged mountains.

Eritrea caught Ethiopia off guard when it occupied in 1998 a tiny piece of Ethiopian-administered territory near Badme on the border between the two countries. The previous Derg regime had kept at least 250,000 Ethiopians under arms. The EPRDF significantly downsized the force level after it defeated the Derg in 1991. It probably had at the outbreak of the conflict with Eritrea less than 100,000 regular military personnel, few of whom were anywhere near the border with Eritrea. During the two-year war with Eritrea, the Ethiopians built up their forces to about 350,000 and significantly increased military expenditures. Now that the war has ended, Ethiopia is demobilizing some of these troops, but it is a safe bet the numbers will not go down to the pre-conflict levels. Following the military defeat of Eritrea, Ethiopia has shown that it has one of the largest and most powerful military organizations on the continent today, including a modern air force. But the senior level of the defense force underwent a purge following a split in the TPLF. It remains to be seen how this will affect the overall efficiency of the military organization.

## NEIGHBORS

Ethiopia is located in a tough neighborhood and, from time to time, has been a tough neighbor itself. The Horn of Africa has been one of the most conflicted parts of the world for the last 50 years. There is constant pressure on finite arable land. Water is scarce in the lowlands. Strategic materials such as minerals and oil are in short supply throughout the region. (Sudan is now producing a significant amount of oil.) The people who live in this part of Africa are proud, familiar with adversity and not reluctant to take up arms against a neighbor. National boundaries divide ethnic groups on virtually every section of Ethiopia's frontier. It should come as no surprise that the end of colonial rule in the region resulted in a significant number of conflicts. They probably would have broken out earlier were it not for the presence of colonial troops.

Somalia became an independent state in 1960, created by the amalgamation of British Somaliland and Italian Somalia. Somalia announced at independence that it intended to incorporate into its territory Somali-inhabited areas in neighboring Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia. This policy has resulted in periodic conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia ever since. There were full-scale wars in 1964 and in 1977-1978, when Somalia occupied most of southeastern Ethiopia. What was previously known as Italian Somalia has been a failed state since 1991. There have been a few incidents near the border but there has been no large scale fighting between the two countries since 1991. In the meantime, Somaliland broke away from Somalia and established cordial relations with Ethiopia.

An even more troubling relationship is the one with Eritrea. Ever since Eritrea became a province of Ethiopia in 1962, some Eritrean groups have fought to achieve independence. This effort succeeded when the EPRDF and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front toppled the Mengistu government in 1991. The

new EPRDF government accepted Eritrean independence. Relations were cordial until conflict unexpectedly broke out in 1998 after Eritrea invaded a small piece of territory administered by Ethiopia. An all out war ensued that ended in an Ethiopian military victory in 2000. In spite of the fact that Ethiopia was once heavily dependent on the Eritrean ports of Assab and Massawa for handling its imports and exports, it may be many years before relations return to normal.

Ethiopia's thousand mile border with Sudan has the advantage of passing through territory which is isolated from their respective capitals and, until the recent discovery of oil in Sudan, is not strategically important. As a result, occasional problems between Sudan and Ethiopia have not developed into serious border conflicts. Perhaps because the border is isolated, however, groups whose goal is to overthrow the government on the other side periodically use the territory as a base. Consequently, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement has for many years operated from inside Ethiopia while various anti-Ethiopian organizations periodically use Sudan as a base. Ethiopia's greatest current concern with Sudan is that it might serve as a base to export Islamic fundamentalism. For the moment, however, relations are good and Ethiopia intends to purchase oil from Sudan and make use of Port Sudan for its commerce.

Since achieving independence in 1963, Kenya has had cordial relations with Ethiopia. The only surprise is that the relationship has not been closer than it is. This is partly explained by the nature of the Kenya-Ethiopia border. As in the case of Sudan, it is far away from both capitals and not particularly strategic. Land transportation links between the two countries are poor, thus limiting trade. Kenya and Ethiopia have traditionally cooperated in countering the irredentist threat from Somalia. But there is also occasional conflict along the border, which divides the Boran ethnic group in both countries. Cattle raiding is a serious problem among the Boran and results in occasional incursions by Ethiopian forces into Kenya. Ethiopia has also had a generally good relationship with tiny Djibouti, although that border divides the Afar and Somali tribes in both countries. Djibouti port is important for Ethiopian trade and was critical during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war.

As the major source of water for Egypt, Ethiopia is a key player in the nine nation Nile Basin Initiative. The Blue Nile and other rivers originating in the Ethiopian highlands provide 86 percent of the water reaching the Aswan Dam. Ethiopia would like to use more of its water for hydropower and irrigation than is currently the case. This requires careful discussions with Egypt and the other Nile Basin countries. If not handled appropriately, there is a potential for conflict with Egypt. Ethiopia is also a member of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), which brings together Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda. As a result of the governmental breakdown in Somalia and the Ethiopia-Eritrea war, IGAD has been relatively inactive in recent years.

## **AFRICA**

When the nations of Africa created the Organization of African Unity in 1963, they located the headquarters in Addis Ababa. Following suit, the UN Economic Commission for Africa established its headquarters in the Ethiopian capital. Until his overthrow in 1974, many Africans looked to Emperor Haile Selassie as the "symbol" of independent Africa. Ethiopia has played a less prominent role in Africa-

wide politics since 1974. Neither the Derg regime nor the EPRDF government has chosen to emphasize Africa-wide activities. They have focused instead on internal issues and the immediate region described above. Because of its long independent history and large population, however, Ethiopia remains a major figure in African politics. Nearly every African country has a resident embassy in Addis Ababa today.

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

Ethiopia has a long relationship with many Western European countries and a major assistance link with the European Union. Catholics from Portugal were among the first Europeans to develop close ties with Ethiopia. Explorers and emissaries from Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy and Germany were not far behind. There is a rich history of European contact with Ethiopia, a surprising amount of which is documented in written works. In the early 20th century, important advisers from Sweden, Switzerland and Austria joined other Europeans by taking positions in Ethiopia. Businesspersons and emigrants from Greece also arrived. Although the European presence, except for the period of Italian occupation, was never large, Europeans were instrumental in certain aspects of Ethiopia's development.

Today, the countries of Western Europe are primarily partners in trade and economic development. The most important ones are Italy, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland and France. Ethiopia has put behind it the hostility that existed during the occupation of the country by Fascist Italy. Most of the West Europeans have an embassy in Addis Ababa and relations are generally cordial with all of them. There was considerable friction in some of the relationships during the Eritrean-Ethiopian war and many of the Europeans, especially the Scandinavians, remain concerned about Ethiopia's policies on human rights.

## **RUSSIA, CHINA AND JAPAN**

Imperial Russia began contacts with Ethiopia in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, driven in part by the desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to establish relations with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The Russians persisted in spite of friction with the Italians. The Russians had a legation in Addis Ababa during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A number of prominent explorers and scientists visited Ethiopia until the Bolshevik Revolution; the last Imperial Russian charge d'affaires in Addis Ababa mortgaged the legation in 1919 to raise funds to leave the country. The Soviet Union returned to Ethiopia as a major force in the 1970s during the Marxist-Leninist Derg regime; Ethiopia effectively became a Soviet satellite. Moscow provided the Derg with about \$3.5 billion in military assistance during this period. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia returned to a normal relationship with Ethiopia although it was a major supplier (for cash) of military equipment during the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict.

China has managed to maintain a cordial relationship with Ethiopia since the end of World War II. Although the amount of its assistance is not huge, it has been appreciated. China has a significant diplomatic presence in Addis Ababa and, in its quiet way, seems to be influential with the current government. Ethiopian diplomatic contact with Japan began in the 1920s at the League of Nations. The Japanese sent a delegation to the coronation of Haile Selassie in 1930 and exchange visits began soon

after. There were important trade ties and camaraderie between the emperors of both countries. The outbreak of World War II again interrupted the relationship, which was renewed when Haile Selassie made an official visit to Japan in 1956. The overthrow of Haile Selassie set back the relationship, although trade and assistance links blossomed after the EPRDF took power.

## UNITED STATES AND CANADA

As compared to Western Europe, the U.S. link with Ethiopia is relatively recent although unofficial ties go back to 1868 when New York Herald journalist Henry Stanley accompanied the Napier Expedition to Maqdala. Retired American officers from the Civil War in the service of the Egyptian Khedive joined Egyptian forces in an unsuccessful attack on Ethiopia in the 1870s. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. sold most of the cotton cloth imported by Ethiopia. The official relationship began in 1903 when Robert Skinner, then American Consul General in Marseilles, led an official delegation to Addis Ababa where he established diplomatic relations and signed a Treaty of Commerce.

The U.S. tried to maintain a continuous diplomatic presence in Addis Ababa after 1903 but there were numerous interruptions. The U.S. mission in Aden followed Ethiopian affairs on those occasions when no one occupied the U.S. legation. The U.S. never recognized the Italian occupation of Ethiopia in 1936-41 and withdrew its diplomatic mission soon after the Italians took over. The apex of the U.S.-Ethiopian relationship occurred in the post World War II period and until the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974. The US signed a Mutual Assistance Agreement with Ethiopia in 1953 and established a huge and important communications station outside Asmara, now capital of Eritrea. During the 1950s and 1960s the largest U.S. official presence anywhere in Africa was in Ethiopia. At one point, Ethiopia had the largest Peace Corps program in the world.

The fall of Haile Selassie and rise of the Marxist-Leninist Derg regime in the mid- 1970s put a quick end to this extensive and important relationship. During much of the Derg period, the U.S. downgraded its small embassy to the charge d'affaires level. Military assistance stopped and economic aid, except for emergency humanitarian support, came to an end. This situation reversed itself soon after the EPRDF came to power. Although U.S. programs did not return to the levels of the Haile Selassie government, Washington did institute a significant aid program and reinstated a small military assistance program. The Peace Corps returned briefly, only to depart after the outbreak of conflict with Eritrea. The U.S. continues to provide the single largest amount of emergency assistance in times of need. Policy disagreements with Ethiopia as it pursued the war with Eritrea temporarily set back the relationship. There are also concerns on human rights issues. But American-Ethiopian ties at all levels are strong; more than a quarter million Ethiopians now live in the United States.

The Canadian relationship with Ethiopia is of fairly recent origin. Ethiopians perceive Canada as a non-threatening source of advice and assistance. Canadian aid to Ethiopia as compared to American aid is not large, but it is significant and Ethiopia is one of Canada's aid concentration countries. Many Ethiopians have immigrated to Canada and many others have studied there. Canadians are well respected in Ethiopia.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- With one of the strongest defense forces on the African continent, should neighboring countries fear Ethiopia?
- Alternatively, will Ethiopia's defense forces be put to greater use in African peace keeping operations?
- What can be done to reduce conflict in the Horn of Africa?
- Should U.S. programs in the region put more emphasis on conflict prevention?
- Once stability and a national government return to Somalia, will there likely be a revival of Somali irredentism?
- With Ethiopia providing 86 percent of the Nile water reaching the Aswan Dam, what does this mean for Ethiopian-Egyptian relations?
- What is keeping Ethiopia from playing a more important Africa-wide role today?
- With a history of attacks against Ethiopia, how has Rome managed to maintain cordial relations with Addis Ababa?
- Which country will have the most enduring relationship with Ethiopia—Russia, China or Japan?
- What are the most important American interests in Ethiopia?
- What effect does the Ethiopian-American community have on U.S. policy towards Ethiopia?

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Ethiopian silver jewelry



Ethiopian hand made chair

## USEFUL WEB SITES

### ETHIOPIA SPECIFIC

- [www.telecom.net.et](http://www.telecom.net.et) (links to business, government, NGO and college web sites in Ethiopia).
- [www.ethioindex.com](http://www.ethioindex.com) (Ethiopia news search index for various papers).
- [www.ethiozena.net](http://www.ethiozena.net) (utilization of world wide web for Ethiopic script).
- [www.ethiopiafirst.com](http://www.ethiopiafirst.com) (news from Ethiopia).
- [www.ethiopianembassy.org](http://www.ethiopianembassy.org) (web site for Ethiopian Embassy in Washington).
- <http://pressdigest.phoenixuniversal.com> (English language digest of articles from the Ethiopian press in all languages).
- [www.ethiopians.com](http://www.ethiopians.com) (news stories about Ethiopia).
- [www.addistribune.com](http://www.addistribune.com) (articles from the Addis Tribune newspaper published in Ethiopia).
- [www.mcc-reporter.com](http://www.mcc-reporter.com) (articles from the Reporter newspaper published in Ethiopia).
- [www.waltainfo.com](http://www.waltainfo.com) (digest of Ethiopian news service).
- [www.ogaden.com/index.htm](http://www.ogaden.com/index.htm) (information about Somali issues in Ethiopia).
- [www.ethiospokes.net](http://www.ethiospokes.net) (official statements from the office of the government spokesperson in Ethiopia).
- [www.ethiopar.net/index.htm](http://www.ethiopar.net/index.htm) (web site for the Ethiopian Parliament).



- [www.tourethio.com](http://www.tourethio.com) (information about tourism in Ethiopia).
- [www.eprdf.com](http://www.eprdf.com) (web site for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front).
- [www.eprp.com](http://www.eprp.com) (web site for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party).

## EAST AFRICA AND HORN OF AFRICA

- [www.eastafricanforum.com](http://www.eastafricanforum.com) (press articles on East Africa and the Horn of Africa).
- [www.nilebasin.org](http://www.nilebasin.org) (news and background information on Nile water issues and the nine countries that make up the Nile Basin).

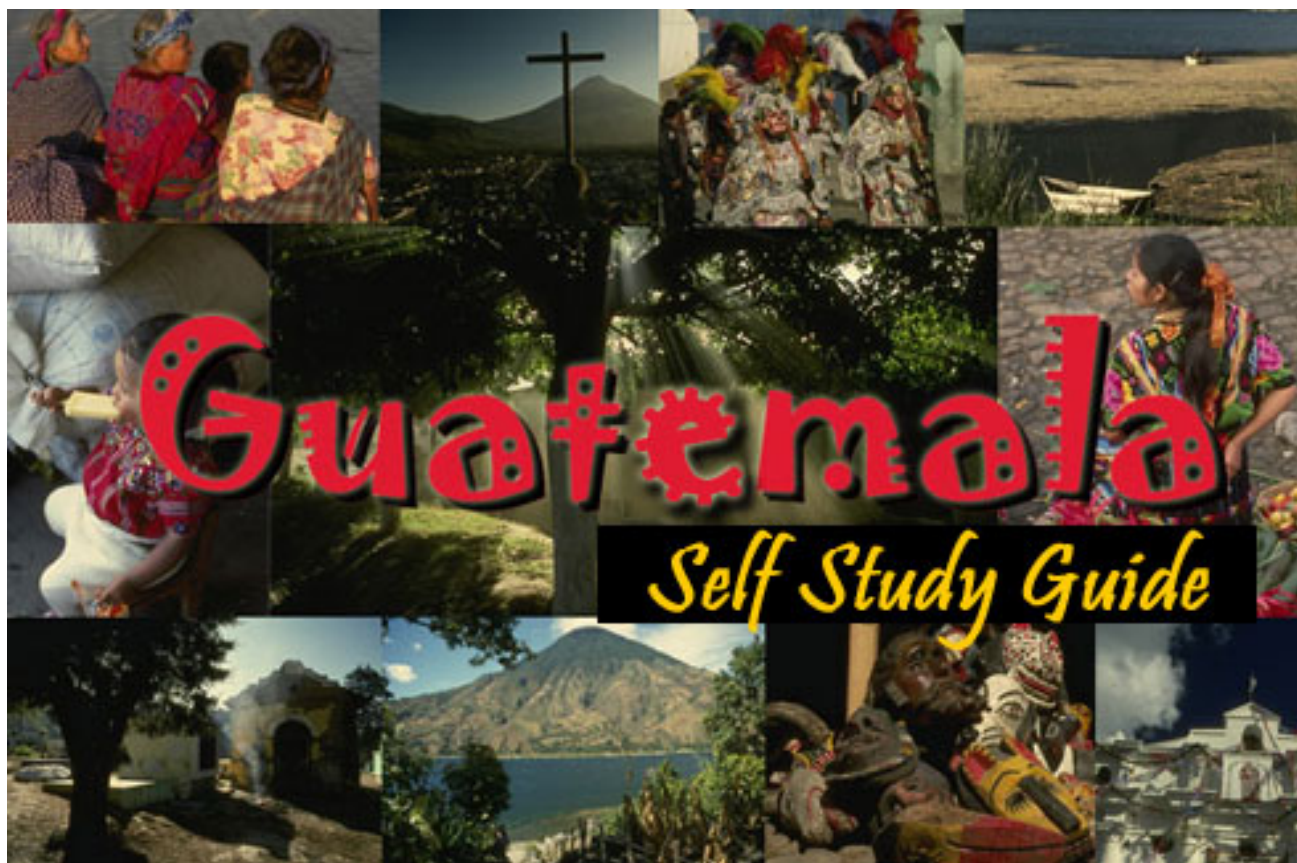
## AFRICA

- [www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com) (Africa wide news).
- [www.africabib.org](http://www.africabib.org) (extensive bibliography of periodical articles on Africa).
- [www.africanconflict.org](http://www.africanconflict.org) (conflict related news about Africa).
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/africa> (BBC news about Africa).

## GENERAL

- [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) (includes policy and background information on Ethiopia).
- [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) (includes USAID related material about Ethiopia).
- [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) (includes background information on Ethiopia).
- [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) (includes information on Ethiopia).
- [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org) (includes IMF related information about Ethiopia).
- [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) (includes World Bank related information about Ethiopia).
- [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int) (includes information on humanitarian issues in Ethiopia).
- [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch) (includes information on refugee issues involving Ethiopia).
- [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) (includes information on human rights issues in Ethiopia).
- [www.accord.org.za](http://www.accord.org.za) (includes information about Ethiopia).
- [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) (includes news about Ethiopia).





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The Reader's Guide: Guatemala is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Guatemalan issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Guatemala is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

Various members of the staff of the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress contributed to the preparation of this study. Todd Conklin wrote the chapter on the Economy. Rexford Hudson wrote the chapters on Government and Foreign Affairs, and Helen Chapin Metz served as project manager and compiled the remaining chapters. Marilyn L. Majeska edited the study.

The views expressed in this guide are those of the authors and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and nonprofit use only.

First Edition September 2000

# Introduction

Guatemala is a country with varied terrain and great contrasts in climate. Historically, Guatemala has inherited a legacy from the Mayan culture of the first five or six centuries A.D. Subsequently, beginning in 1549, the area that constitutes present-day Guatemala became the seat of Spanish government for all of Central America. In the more recent past, in the 1960s, following the rule of several military figures and a worsening economy, various guerrilla groups entered into a civil war against the government. Finally, in December 1996, the warring factions signed eleven peace accords. In addition to setting forth constitutional changes, the accords specifically respect Indian culture, languages, religious customs, and agricultural rights. Mayan Indians are believed to constitute at least 50 percent of the population, although some prefer to consider themselves ladinos, a term encompassing all others, including Mayas who have shed their Indian cultural identification.

Religion plays a major role in Guatemala, a Roman Catholic country, and entails the observance of saints' days and other practices. Over the years, Mayan Indians have grafted prehispanic cultural practices onto European Catholicism. Since the 1980s, Protestantism, particularly as observed by evangelical sects, has made significant inroads among the Guatemalan population. Guatemala has a high population growth rate and the second youngest population in Latin America. The social and economic structure is skewed, with some 200 ladino families at the top, a relatively small middle class consisting mainly of ladinos, and most of the population, ladino and Indian, living in relative poverty. Guatemala suffers from a high illiteracy rate, which handicaps economic development. Despite its having the largest gross domestic product in Central America, Guatemala is plagued by high unemployment and under-employment rates. Guatemala's economy relies heavily on the export of coffee, sugar, and bananas. The country, however, imports almost all of its industrial goods, thus maintaining a trade deficit. In addition to agriculture, the economy draws revenue from tourism and construction.

After a series of autocratic rulers, and aided by the signing of the peace accords in 1996, Guatemala is currently striving to engage in more democratic government, committed in principle to eliminate human rights abuses, respect the rights of minorities, and limit the power of the military. By adhering to such principles, Guatemala seeks to improve its standing in the world community, and particularly its relationship with the United States, its major trading partner and source of aid. In practice, however, there is considerable public distrust of government, of the military, and of promises made by various political parties. Time will demonstrate the success of the government in carrying out the needed reforms in various fields.

## Chapter 1. Geography

### Location and Size

Guatemala is located southeast of Mexico, a country that constitutes its principal border. It also abuts Belize to the east (including the Gulf of Honduras), Honduras and El Salvador to its southeast, and the

northern part of the Pacific Ocean to its west (see map). Guatemala's boundaries encompass approximately 108,780 square kilometers, an area slightly larger than the state of Tennessee.



## Climate

Although Guatemala lies entirely within the tropics, its varied terrain provides great contrasts in climate. Heat and humidity characterize most of the lowlands while cold, frost, and occasional snow are common in the highlands. The climate and associated vegetation depend largely on altitude, which ranges from sea level to almost 4,200 meters, and proximity to one of the coasts. The *tierra caliente* (hot country) extends from sea level to about 750 meters; it has average daytime temperatures of 29E to 32EC. The *tierra templada* (temperate country) extends from 750 meters above sea level to about 1,660 meters; daytime temperatures average from 24EC to 26.6EC, and nighttime temperatures average from 15.5E to 21EC. The *tierra fría* (cold country) extends above the 1,660-meter level and has daytime averages as high as 26EC and nighttime averages of 10EC and occasionally lower.

The prevailing winds are the rain-bearing northeast trades that blow inland from the Caribbean. As a result, the northern lowlands, parts of the highlands, and the Caribbean coastal region have humid conditions for most of the year. From November through April, the rest of the country has a distinct dry season, except for a strip of the upper piedmont on the Pacific slope between 1,000 and 1,600 meters

above sea level; there the rainfall conditions are similar to those along the Caribbean coast. The dry season is called *verano* (summer) and the wet season *invierno* (winter).

## Topography and Drainage

Guatemala's topography varies greatly but can broadly be divided into four main areas: the Pacific coast, the highlands, the Caribbean coast and river valleys, and Petén. The Pacific coast has no natural harbors, and its offshore waters are quite shallow. The Canal de Chiquimulilla, which runs along the coast for about 100 kilometers, is part of a coastal lagoon that has been dredged to allow small craft traffic. The coastal plain is predominantly savanna interspersed with forests, which line the rivers flowing from the highlands. Farther inland tropical forest covers the foothills and lower slopes of the highlands. The soils are well drained and fertile. Monsoonal winds blowing from the Pacific bring rain to the area but are often destructive to crops, and the pronounced dry season requires irrigation. Farther inland the plain becomes a steeper ascent to the highlands through upper piedmont. Rainfall is heavy, especially in the western section, where high quality coffee is grown.

The highlands, or mountainous area, constitutes about half the country. The dominant mountain range is the Sierra Madre, which runs roughly parallel to the Pacific coast from the border with Mexico to that with El Salvador. There are fourteen major volcanoes in this range. Guatemala is situated in an exceptionally seismic zone in which five major tectonic plates meet: American, Caribbean, Cocos, Nazca, and Pacific. Earthquakes, therefore, are frequent and at times violent. An earthquake in February 1976 was perhaps the most destructive to date, affecting more than 8 percent of the national territory and killing some 30,000 people.

A number of rivers flow from the Sierra Madre to the Pacific Ocean. They are navigable for only short distances, but they have considerable potential for hydroelectric power. The range has two lakes, Lago de Atitlán, considered one of the world's most beautiful, and Lago Amatitlán, just south of Guatemala City.

The Caribbean coast along the Gulf of Honduras is flat and open to storms. However, the Bahía de Amatique, on which Puerto Barrios is located, is sheltered. The climate of the coastal area, including the valleys that extend inland, is humid and tropical throughout the year. Tropical rain forest covers much of the region.

The fourth area, Petén, constitutes about one-third of Guatemala's territory and extends into the Yucatan Peninsula. It is a rolling limestone plateau, between 150 and 225 meters above sea level, covered with tropical rain forest interspersed with wide savannas. Because of the porous soil, much of the drainage is underground. However, when the rains are particularly heavy, the numerous small lakes overflow and flood the land.

## Issues to Explore:

### 1. The impact of Guatemala's varied topography on economic development

## 2. The impact of Guatemala's varied topography on transportation

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## Chapter 2. History

For several centuries a center of Mayan culture, one of the most advanced pre-Columbian civilizations of the New World, the area that is now Guatemala became the seat of Spanish government for all of Central America beginning in 1549. During the colonial period and the early days of independence, the captaincy general of Guatemala consisted of the present-day republics of Central America—Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica—plus the present-day Mexican state of Chiapas. The present-day boundaries of Guatemala date only from 1838.

### Preconquest Guatemala

The earliest archaeological evidence of permanent settlement dates from the second millennium B.C. Such settlements have been excavated on the outskirts of Guatemala City, in the highlands, and in the hot rain forest area of northern Guatemala known as Petén. Major achievements of Mayan culture, however, are found in the lowlands, dating from the classical period of the first five or six centuries A.D. Mayan civilization was noted for its accomplishments in the fields of architecture, mathematics, astronomy, and chronology. Reasons for the decline of Mayan civilization are obscure, but by the time of the Spanish arrival in the sixteenth century the various political entities in the highlands, which included Mexican invaders, were in continuous war with each other.

### Early Settlement

In 1523 Hernán Cortés, the viceroy of New Spain, sent Pedro de Alvarado, accompanied by Spanish troops and their Mexican auxiliaries, to conquer the region that included present-day Guatemala. Although the Spanish force was outnumbered by the local armies, their horses and firearms gave them an easy victory. By July 1524 Alvarado had established a capital, which he called Santiago de los Caballeros, on the site of present-day Antigua Guatemala (leveled by earthquake in 1773; subsequently Guatemala City was established adjacent to it). Initially, the conquering Spanish soldiers were given *encomiendas* (tracts of land) along with numbers of Indian laborers. In return for the labor of the Indians, who were treated as slaves, the landowners were to convert them to Christianity. The New Laws of 1542 (which were never enforced) gave rights to the Indians, however, and stated that thenceforth no Indians would be

enslaved. Indians who had not been enslaved prior to the New Laws were resettled in villages where they were liable to tribute but left to rule themselves. However, the Indians revolted and killed the Spanish friars who had been placed among them, leading to another conquest by Spain. A new *audiencia* (Spanish colonial governmental authority) of Guatemala was established in 1570. The governors of Guatemala were subject to the Viceroyalty of New Spain based in Mexico City; for some 250 years, relatively stable Spanish colonial rule prevailed.

## Independence

In the eighteenth century, the liberal ideas of the French enlightenment penetrated Guatemala. The liberal movement had the support not only of intellectuals and urban professionals but also of agriculturists and merchants excluded from Spain's trade monopoly who would benefit from free trade. Following Mexico's declaration of independence on April 10, 1821, the acting president of the *audiencia*, Gabino Gaínza, proclaimed Guatemala's independence on September 15, 1821, designating himself president of the Federation of Central America. The following years found Guatemala and other areas of Central America in a state of confusion; the situation led eventually, in 1838, to the autocratic rule in Guatemala of José Rafael Carrera. By the time of his death in 1865, Carrera had revoked all the liberal legislation of his predecessors. Carrera, a rigorous Roman Catholic and a political reactionary, was the first of a series of four caudillos (dictators). The second caudillo, Justo Rufino Barrios (1873-85), was known to many as the "Great Reformer." He stripped the Roman Catholic Church of many of its privileges, established a national school system and civil code, and introduced private property rights into Indian villages. The third caudillo, Manuel Estrada Cabrera (1898-1920), was noted for the corruption of his regime and its favoritism toward the wealthy. The fourth caudillo, Jorge Ubico (1931-44), ruled, through repression, in favor of the economic elite and executed or exiled his potential enemies.

In the interval between the rule of Cabrera and Ubico, Guatemala enjoyed prosperity, democracy, and government competence under José María Orellana (1921-26) and Lázaro Chacón (1926-30). In 1945, following the overthrow of Ubico by a military junta and the adoption of a new constitution, Juan José Arévalo won the presidency in a free election. A social democrat, Arévalo implemented long-overdue structural reforms such as a social security system and a labor code. In 1950 he was succeeded by Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, who encouraged the participation of Indian peasants in an agrarian reform program directed particularly against the U.S. United Fruit Company. Some 100,000 peasant families benefited from the redistribution of about 884,000 hectares of land. Arbenz also encouraged student and labor activists. As a result of these measures, the new administration of President Dwight Eisenhower, which in 1953 was stressing "containment of communism," decided that Guatemala posed a grave threat to Western Hemisphere security. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in 1954 devised Operation Success to create an "invading army" of foreign-armed Guatemalan exiles to overthrow Arbenz and substitute Carlos Castillo Armas.

## Counterrevolution

Castillo Armas launched a thorough counterrevolution designed to demobilize the Indian population, most



of whom were disenfranchised, and to reestablish ladino (a term used to include all non-Indians; see chapter 3) hegemony. Land reform laws were annulled, and expropriated land was returned to its former owners. The new constitution outlawed left-wing parties and made various political crimes punishable by death; many political prisoners were executed without trial. Castillo Armas was assassinated in 1957; his regime was followed by several regimes of an oppressive, authoritarian kind. Even after presidential elections were resumed in 1966, the armed forces dominated the three presidencies, and the country suffered excesses at the hands of extreme right-wing groups. The army backed Fernando Romeo Lucas García in 1978, who for almost four years instituted a reign of terror that led to opposition even from the middle class.

As a result of these oppressive regimes, which were dominated by the military, and of resentment over unequal land distribution, as well as the example of Fidel Castro Ruz's success in Cuba in 1959, a guerrilla insurgency began to develop in the 1960s. The early poorly organized stages of the movement were put down by the use of U. S. counterrevolutionary techniques. In the late 1970s, however, political violence resumed, in part as a result of the social dislocation caused by the 1976 earthquake. Labor unions began voicing political demands, strike activity picked up (numerous workers had lost their jobs), and an active guerrilla insurgency reappeared. Active in both urban and rural areas, the insurgency succeeded in recruiting within the Indian population. In May 1978, in an attempt to put down an Indian demonstration, government troops massacred more than 100 men, women, and children. By the early 1980s, almost the entire leadership and many members of popular organizations that opposed the government were dead, in exile, or operating clandestinely in antigovernment political or guerrilla organizations. The principal guerrilla groups came together in February 1982 to form the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG).

## New Constitution

Meanwhile, in March 1982 a military junta led by Efraín Ríos Montt overthrew the newly elected president. Ríos Montt was himself overthrown the following year by another general. Then, in July 1984, elections were held for a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. Under the new constitution, which became effective on January 14, 1986, Mario Vinicio Cereno, the first civilian president since 1954, took office in January 1986. Cereno needed to keep army support to prevent a coup while simultaneously reining in human rights abuses, curbing the insurgency, developing the economy, and improving Guatemala's standing in the world community. In the face of these various challenges, Cereno adopted a cautious stance and failed to achieve hoped-for reforms or changes. His successor, Jorge Serrano Elías, another civilian, assumed the presidency in 1990, again facing human rights issues and peace negotiations with the insurgents. In its 1992 report to Congress on human rights the U.S. Department of State for the first time blamed Guatemalan security forces (specifically, the armed forces) for most 1991 human rights abuses.

In January 1993, Serrano stated his commitment to signing an agreement with the URNG. However, on May 25, 1993, faced with increasing popular and military opposition, he dissolved the legislature and Supreme Court, stating that he would rule by decree. The consequent cutting off of foreign aid and popular discontent caused the army to remove Serrano from office on June 1, 1993. Ramiro de León

Carpio was promptly elected to complete Serrano's term, pledging a war against poverty and government corruption. In March 1994, de León signed a human rights agreement, which led to the entry in September of a United Nations mission, the Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), to supervise the process. MINUGUA's March 1995 report outlined continuing human rights abuses by the security forces. De León also failed to conclude peace with the URNG because the URNG withdrew from negotiations as a result of the government's violation of the human rights agreement.

Alvaro Enrique Arzú Irigoyen of the National Progressive Party, a pro-business party backed by technocrats and professionals, assumed the presidency in 1996. In March 1996, a temporary cease-fire was signed with the URNG; finally, on December 26, 1996, after a thirty-six-year civil war and some 100,000 dead, a series of eleven peace accords were signed in Guatemala City. Under the accords, constitutional changes and legislation placed the armed forces and the intelligence services under the control of an elected body. However, the guerrilla forces were disappointed at the limited amnesty, and the Commission for Historical Clarification established in February 1997 was not allowed to bring charges against those guilty of human rights abuses. Furthermore, right-wing elements of the military and the landed gentry strongly opposed many proposed political and social reforms.

### **Issues to Explore:**

- 1. The major continuing problems not settled by the peace accords and the Commission for Historical Clarification and ways in which Guatemala might deal with them**
- 2. The implications of Guatemala's tradition of military rule and its effect on the success of democratic governments in the country**

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## **Chapter 3. Culture**

### **Language and Dialects**

Spanish is the official national language of Guatemala, but only about 50 percent of Indians have indicated some proficiency with Spanish. The Mayan Indians speak some twenty distinct indigenous

languages. Of these, one of four languages—QuichJ , Kakciquel, Kekchi, or Mam—is spoken by 75 percent of all Indians. Ten other languages are spoken in only a small number of municipalities; the Ixil language, for example, is spoken in only three municipalities of northern Quiché. Another six Mayan languages do not extend beyond a single municipality.

## Ethnic Composition

Official projections place Guatemala's population in 1998 at 10.8 million (the Department of State *Background Notes* gives the estimated 1999 population as 11.1 million; the most recent census in 1994, which reported a total of 8.3 million persons, did not cover remote areas). An estimated 65 percent of the total population are Indians of Mayan origin living primarily in Guatemala's highlands in the north and west. In addition, small numbers of Xinca live on the Pacific coast near El Salvador. The remainder of the population are ladinos, a term that as currently used includes Caucasians, mestizos, black Caribs, or Garifuna (descendants of fugitive slaves and Carib Indians, found on the Caribbean coast), and Mayans who have shed their Indian cultural identification.

The figures for the population's Indian ethnic composition are considered debatable, however, given the above definition of ladino. Government censuses have recorded a steady decline in the overall percentage of Indians; the percentage dropped from some 70 percent in 1880 to 50 percent in 1964 and to 37 percent in 1989. Critics question the accuracy of these figures, however, noting that the census required participants to self-identify as either Indian or ladino. In a society that discriminates against Indians, it is likely that many Indians concluded that it was safer to be listed as ladino. Thus, more than half of all Guatemalans may be ethnically Indian.

## Religious Beliefs

In principle, Guatemala is a Roman Catholic country that follows the religious observances of that faith and claims some 80 percent Catholic adherents. In practice, however, contemporary Mayan religious practices involve an unusual grafting of selected European Catholic concepts onto a prehispanic culture. As Joaquín Noval has observed, the Maya venerate a vague hierarchy of supernatural beings with a distant God on top. Between God and man stands a number of other important religious forces, including Jesus, the Virgin Mary, various Catholic saints associated with community and family, and spiritual entities such as the wind, rain, sky, and mountains.

Of the various concepts assimilated by the Maya, *cofradía* is of special significance. Introduced during the Spanish colonial period, *cofradía* originally referred to labor guilds, each with a patron saint. In the Mayan context, *cofradía* serves to direct civil and religious community life through the annual celebration of the patron saints of respective villages. Beginning at about age fifteen, and continuing over the next thirty years, village men assume increasingly burdensome and expensive *cofradía* posts. This effort culminates in responsibility for organizing and financing the village fiesta, an activity that can consume an entire year's income. Upon completion of the final post, the individual joins the ranks of the village elders, who are entrusted to organize communal affairs.

In addition to Roman Catholics and Mayan religious adherents, since the 1980s Protestantism, particularly evangelical sects, has made inroads among the Guatemalan population. In the 1980s, as many as one-third of the population were thought to be evangelicals, but this number subsequently declined and the number of current members is not available (see also *The Role of Religion*, chapter 4).

## **National Holidays**

The celebration of holidays, many of which have a religious association, assumes an important place in Guatemalan culture, especially for the Mayan Indian people. The fixed holidays are:

January 1 New Year's Day

May 1 Labor Day

June 30 Army Day

August 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the patron saint of Guatemala)

September 15 Independence Day

October 20 Revolution Day (commemorates 1944 revolution)

November 1 All Saints Day

December 25 Christmas Day

December 31 New Year's Eve

Easter, which in 2001 falls on April 15, is a movable holiday. Furthermore, each town and village has its own fiesta day.

## **Issues to Explore:**

- 1. The impact of religious beliefs on Guatemalan culture and society**
- 2. The role of language in maintaining separate Guatemalan ethnic groups**
- 3. The degree to which Guatemalans share a common culture, given the differences between ladinos and Indians**

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## Chapter 4. Social Issues

### Population Growth

Guatemala's population growth rate exceeds that of Latin America as a whole. The country's population more than tripled between 1953 and 1993, from some 3 million to slightly more than 10 million. The increase resulted from gains in life expectancy (the UN estimates that in the year 2000 Guatemalan life expectancy will be 68.1 years, almost the Latin American average) and extraordinarily high fertility rates (in 1985-90 the rate was 5.8 children per woman of child-bearing age—the highest in the region; the Latin American average is 3.4). The result was the second youngest (after Nicaragua) population in Latin America. In 1990, 45.4 percent of Guatemalans were less than fifteen years of age compared with a Latin American average of 35.8 percent. Between 1950 and 1990, Guatemala's population density increased from 27.3 to 84.5 residents per square kilometer. This number far exceeded the Latin American average of 21.5 residents per square kilometer and was surpassed only by El Salvador, Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Although the UN forecasts a decrease in Guatemalan fertility rates to 3.6 and 2.7 by 2010 and 2025, respectively, the projected total population is 15.8 million by 2010 and 21.7 million by

2025. In summary, these figures represent catastrophic levels, and the rapid population increase has already placed enormous strains on Guatemalan society and overwhelmed the delivery of essential services.

### **Issues to Explore:**

1. **The implications for Guatemalan society of the large youthful population**
2. **The implications for Guatemalan society of the high fertility rate and the population density**

### **Ethnic and Social Diversity and Social Structure**

As outlined under "Ethnic Composition" in chapter 3 above, almost all Guatemalans are characterized either as ladinos or as Mayan-speaking Indians. Most ladinos live modestly, but almost all elites are ladinos. Indians, on the other hand, are largely poor, uneducated, and subject to social discrimination. Evidence of the historic legacy of such discrimination is found in one of the substantive peace accords, part of the settlement between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG—an umbrella organization grouping four insurgency movements. Signed in March 1995, the accord on Indigenous Rights calls for recognition of Guatemala's ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity and for the right of indigenous people to live by their own cultural norms.

Guatemala's tiny upper class historically has consisted of some 200 ladino families, linked through a network of alliances and marriages, who control most commercial, agricultural, financial, and political affairs. Since the 1870s, ladinos have lived in towns and municipal capitals throughout the Indian-populated highlands, where they control local administration and commerce. In the 1990s, however, the ladino presence was most prominent in four of Guatemala's eight regions: the Southeast (the departments of Santa Rosa, Jalapa, and Jutiapa), the Northeast (the departments of El Progreso, Izabal, Zacapa, and Chiquimula), Metro (the department of Guatemala representing Guatemala City), and Petén. Ladinos average some 90 percent of the population of each of these regions—98 percent in the case of the Southeast.

In contrast to the ladino concentrations indicated above, Indians comprise more than 80 percent of all residents in the North (the departments of Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz) and the Northwest (the departments of Huehuetenango and Quiché) and almost 50 percent of those living in the Southwest (the departments of Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Totonicapán, Sololá, Retalhuleu, and Suchitupéquez). Ninety percent of residents of the North and Northwest, mainly Indians, barely survive because of their low incomes. The plight of Indians in the North and Northwest was worsened as a result of the political violence of the late 1970s and the early 1980s and the actions of the government military. The violence caused many to flee to other areas, particularly Mexico.

The some 200 ladino families that historically have constituted Guatemala's upper class derive their wealth primarily from key agricultural exports such as cotton and sugar; their landholdings are among the most concentrated in Latin America. A few such upper class families obtain their wealth from industrial

activities, which are mainly located in Guatemala City. Since 1970 key military leaders, enriched by ownership of large portions of land in the Northern Transversal Strip where they have established huge cattle ranches, also have entered the elite upper class.

The middle sector is mainly urban and ranges from business people and professionals to public employees, office workers, and organized labor. As formal sector workers, this group qualifies for Guatemala's modest retirement and disability programs. Only about 5 percent of the workforce belongs to unions, a figure probably overstated because it includes small farmers whose "unions" operate as cooperatives. The lower class is largely unorganized and works primarily in the agricultural sector or in the urban informal market.

Although ladinos control the coffee, cotton, and sugarcane *fincas* (landed estates devoted to agriculture) of the coastal plain and the *boca costa* (the upper piedmont slopes) near the Pacific, most ladino farmers engage in subsistence agriculture on plots too small to support their families. In the 1990s, some 75 percent of ladinos lived in poverty, but in instances where they occupy the same economic stratum as Indians a wide cultural gulf separates the two groups.

The principal cultural differences between Indians and ladinos relate primarily to such areas as religion, education, and rural as opposed to urban life. In the sphere of religion, Indians traditionally have combined aspects of prehispanic cultural beliefs with the tenets of European Roman Catholicism. The *cofradía* system (see Religious Beliefs, chapter 3), for example, has helped differentiate Indians from ladinos both as regards religious beliefs and placement in a rural as opposed to an urban social structure. Education, which is relatively limited in rural areas, also constitutes an overarching distinction between the two cultures.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **The impact of ladino/Indian differences on Guatemalan economic development**
2. **The impact of ladino/Indian differences on Guatemalan social structure**
3. **The impact of ladino/Indian differences on Guatemalan politics**

## The Role of Religion

Since independence, religion has played a complex role in Guatemalan society. During the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, religion, particularly the dominant Roman Catholic Church that historically was part of Guatemala's Hispanic heritage, was a critical element in recurring conflicts between liberals and conservatives. The Catholic Church hierarchy strongly supported the conservative cause.

Yet despite its national importance, the church has had a weak institutional presence in Guatemala, especially in the countryside. Beginning in the 1940s, however, church leaders sponsored the Catholic Action movement to develop rural communities, strengthen the church in areas rarely visited by priests,

and enforce a more orthodox belief system among adherents of folk Catholicism. In conjunction with other significant changes, such as population growth and land scarcity, Catholic Action unintentionally helped undermine the authority of village elders and set the stage for the phenomenal expansion of the Protestant evangelical movement. By the mid-1980s, the latter movement contained an estimated one-third of the national population. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the Catholic Church, which had evolved into a strong critic of human rights violations by the military, experienced a resurgence of membership and a detente with evangelical congregations.

In its program of expansion beyond Guatemala City, which began in the 1940s and 1950s, the Catholic Church used foreign missionary orders to set up social action programs, including schools, clinics, and credit cooperatives. In addition, Catholic Action catechists traveled the countryside spreading an orthodox Christianity at odds with the *cofradía*-grounded folk Catholicism of the highlands. Meanwhile, the position of village leaders had been undermined by their inability to continue providing for the stable egalitarianism that had formed the basis of rural life. As the population swelled in the absence of meaningful land reform, landholdings became increasingly subdivided and incapable of meeting the most basic needs of families. The situation led to migration to Guatemala City and elsewhere. The evangelical movement stepped into the leadership void, offering Guatemalans an ordered social existence and personal salvation. Evangelicals also, however, preached social change, condemning village fiestas as alcohol-filled and sinful events.

The earthquake of 1976 is considered pivotal in the expansion of the evangelical movement. Evangelicals responded to the resulting devastation with a massive outpouring of assistance while concurrently stressing the importance of religious conversion. Moreover, when the military targeted rural Catholic leaders who criticized the government, killing or kidnapping many, evangelicals, who took no political stance, filled the void. In 1982-83, Guatemala's head of state, General Efraín Ríos Montt, an evangelical, speaking to Guatemalans in his weekly radio and television addresses, urged them to convert to Christ, thus providing support to evangelical efforts.

Most Guatemalan evangelicals are also Pentecostals, emphasizing baptism in the Holy Spirit as expressed in speaking in tongues. Among the problems that evangelicals continue to face are local leadership struggles and disputes that have led to ongoing fragmentation of groups. The Roman Catholic Church, in turn, must balance the interests of folk Catholics, orthodox Catholics, and the rapidly expanding Catholic charismatics, who often have more in common with Pentecostal adherents than with their local congregation.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **The differences in the roles played by the Roman Catholic Church in urban as opposed to rural areas; the influence of each role on Guatemala's present situation**
2. **The relationship/similarity of factors responsible for the rapid growth of the evangelical movement in Guatemala with such occurrences elsewhere in the region**



## Education

Guatemala faces daunting educational challenges. According to the United Nations, the average Guatemalan has only four years of schooling. The illiteracy rate of 31.7 percent is the second highest in Latin America. Illiteracy is higher in rural than in urban areas and higher among women than men. As part of the peace process and in an effort to conquer educational shortcomings, the government is implementing programs to encourage community- and parent-managed primary schools and increase bilingual education in Spanish and one of the major Mayan languages (see below). To stimulate improvements, the annual budget for education in 2000 has been raised 20 percent over the 1999 amount to US\$457 million (Q3.5 billion). According to the Ministry of Education, in 1998 some 1.8 million students attended 13,631 primary schools, of which 10,765 were public schools. At the secondary level, 259,807 students in 1998 attended 1,645 secondary schools of which 1,408 were private; the secondary student total represented a 10.4 percent increase over 1994.

Education in Guatemala consists of preschool, primary, secondary, and university levels, with a special bilingual program for Indian students. The bilingual program provides instruction from preprimary through the fourth grade in the four most widely spoken Mayan languages. A one-year preschool program exists for five- and six-year-olds. Children between the ages of seven and twelve follow a theoretically mandatory six-year primary school curriculum. Secondary education consists of a three-year basic cycle for those between the ages of thirteen and fifteen and a three-year diversified cycle for those aged sixteen to eighteen. The recently privatized but state financially supported University of San Carlos, founded in 1676, has a central campus in Guatemala City and eleven smaller campuses in the principal provincial capitals. In 1998 San Carlos had more than 88,000 students while the four private universities had some 53,000. (According to *The World of Learning, 1998*, in 1997 the University of San Carlos had 70,431 undergraduates, 768 postgraduates, and the other four Guatemalan universities had a total of 37,464 undergraduates.)

Several reasons account for the considerable numbers of secondary and university students. Secondary schools and universities are located almost exclusively in urban areas the populations of which have been steadily increasing as a result of rural to urban migration. In addition, most secondary and university students are ladinos, who are to be found primarily in urban areas. And lastly, secondary and higher education is viewed more and more as necessary for remunerative employment.

Great disparities exist in school enrollment, reflecting strong regional, gender, and ethnic biases. For example, primary school attendance for boys and girls in Guatemala City is about 90 percent, whereas in some areas it is less than 40 percent. In general, more boys than girls attend school and average a longer attendance. The urban bias in Guatemalan education is particularly pronounced at the secondary level. More than 90 percent of all secondary students live in urban areas, with Guatemala City alone representing about 50 percent.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **Ways in which Guatemala can best reconcile differences between urban and rural education**
2. **Ways in which Guatemala can best reconcile differences between the education of male and female students**

## Indian Culture

The degree to which Indians have maintained their indigenous culture varies widely with reference to individuals and different geographic areas. A significant factor influencing the retention of Indian culture is the degree of isolation from ladino culture. Self-identification has proved to be a useful concept in evaluating the individual's relationship with what has been called the "Mayan cosmic vision." In its ideal form, such a vision contains numerous interlocking components: a syncretic belief system (see Religious Beliefs, chapter 3), a community-based egalitarianism, an emphasis on subsistence agriculture, the use of a Mayan language (see Language, chapter 3), and a distinctive style of dress, especially for women.

The *cofradía* system (see Religious Beliefs, chapter 3) helps both to tie the individual into the community and to level wealth within the community. Through their active participation in fiesta tasks, villagers learn that they function as members of a larger group and are subordinate to that group. The individual has a responsibility to promote the group's interests, not his own. *Cofradía* reinforces these notions by requiring those with above-average resources to invest their surplus in community-enhancing activities. Although participants receive prestige, power, and the respect of their village, their actions also effectively prevent the formation of a stratified local community.

Indian life in its most authentic form is intrinsically rural in nature, emphasizing village life and the predominance of the community. Roughly 80 percent of all self-identified Indians live in rural Guatemala. Land represents a spiritual link to one's ancestors and constitutes a Maya's most important possession. Milpa (cultivation of a small field that is cleared from the forest, cropped for a few seasons, and abandoned for a fresh clearing) provides not only the means to the staple of the Mayan diet, corn, but also helps establish the rhythm of communal life. Mayan plots generally are non-mechanized and employ very low technology.

Although important, language (see Language and Dialects, chapter 3) by itself is not critical to defining Indian life. Some Indians in Quetzaltenango, for example, continue to maintain Indian culture without an understanding of the Indian languages spoken in their region, Quiché and Mam.

In the past, a distinctive style of dress served as yet another means of differentiating Indians from ladinos. Although some men, especially in Solalá and Huehuetenango, continue to wear Indian dress, most men wear Western garb similar to that worn by ladinos. In contrast, most Indian women wear a long skirt with a sash and a distinctive blouse (*huipil*).

Indian identity is easiest to maintain in conditions of relative isolation from the dominant ladino culture. In 2000, however, few Indian communities can truly be described as isolated. Since the 1880s, Indians in the Altiplano have migrated to the *fincas* (landed agricultural estates) of the Southwest in search of

seasonal labor. Many have settled permanently as salaried employees, severing ties to traditional values. During the second half of the twentieth century, numerous internal and external factors have further weakened Indian self-identification. Internally, rising population pressures have generated subdivision of already minuscule plots and growing landlessness for many Indians. As Indians have migrated permanently to Guatemala City, their adherence to the customs of their village community has lessened. Externally, Guatemalan social forces as varied as the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant evangelical pastors, and the military—all dominated by ladinos—have impinged on Indian communities, interjecting new concepts that have ruptured the homogeneity of Indian life.

Still, numerous examples abound of the resilience of Indian culture. The lifestyles of the Chortis of Chiquimula and of the Pocomes Orientales of Jalapa are evidence that the Maya tradition can be preserved even in regions where ladinos are a clear majority. The selection of Rigoberta Menchú, a Mayan woman, as recipient of the 1992 Nobel Peace Prize represented an historic event in Guatemala and has helped solidify a more assertive Indian national presence. Menchú's Committee for Peasant Unity has organized Mayas (and poor ladinos) and has led strikes in the Southwest to demand increases in the minimum wage. In March 1995, the government and the guerrilla umbrella organization Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG—see chapter 6) reached agreement on a comprehensive accord to respect Indian culture, language, religious customs, and agricultural rights. Time alone will demonstrate the commitment of the government to implement this accord and the strength of the Mayan Indians' desire to maintain their traditional culture.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **Ways in which the Guatemalan government can best preserve the positive aspects of Mayan Indian culture**
2. **To benefit the present situation of the Mayas, are there cultural elements that need to be changed**

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## Chapter 5. Economics

### Overview

Guatemala's economy ranks as the largest in Central America, with a government-estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of about US\$23 billion (all statistics, unless otherwise indicated, are late 1990s figures; the Economist Intelligence Unit gives 1999 GDP as US\$18.3 billion). Despite its comparatively large GDP, Guatemala is perpetually in economic peril. Unemployment and under-employment levels are extremely high. Official statistics estimate that the unemployment rate is at 9 percent while the under-employment rate is between 30 percent and 40 percent. Official statistics are skewed, however, because they include only persons belonging to the Social Security Institute, many of them civil servants. This cohort represents only 28 percent of the total population. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that currently more than two-thirds of Guatemala's working-age population is under-employed; the IMF also estimates the unemployment rate to be much higher than the official statistic of 9 percent. Further, the IMF notes that even though Guatemala has made progress in improving social conditions and economic stability over the course of the 1990s, "extreme poverty continues to be widespread and the income distribution is highly skewed."

Guatemala's external debt, which is listed by the Central Bank as US\$2.6 billion (14 percent of GDP), is one of the most manageable external debts in the region. Despite the low external debt, the overall budget deficit expanded sharply in the late 1990s because an extremely low tax burden (9.6 percent of GDP), combined with expansionary fiscal and monetary policies, came up against decreasing revenues. The gradual economic progress and hope of the early and mid-1990s were decreasing by the end of 1999, despite some improvement in Guatemala's economic landscape in the latter half of the year.

High crime rates, endemic official corruption, and political unrest make Guatemala unattractive to foreign investors. In addition, the government's political and economic policies have been poorly thought out, inconsistently applied, and poorly executed. As a consequence, the rate of inflation has risen sharply, productivity has collapsed, and economic output has slowed. Without a significant influx of foreign capital and a consistent economic policy, Guatemala will remain in its current state of poverty into the foreseeable future. Many Guatemalans combat the bleak economic outlook with their feet: the country has one of the highest rates of outward migration in Latin America.

## Agriculture

The agriculture sector accounts for one-fourth of Guatemala's GDP, two-thirds of all exports, and employs more than half of the labor force (60 percent). The performance of the economy relies heavily on exports of coffee and sugar. Money earned from the exportation of coffee alone (US\$586 million) is equivalent to one-quarter of Guatemala's total export earnings. Guatemala is the fifth largest exporter of coffee in the world. In addition to coffee, sugar has become one of Guatemala's most dynamic traditional crops; export earnings of sugar are 12 percent (US\$315 million) of Guatemala's total export earnings. Guatemala's other top agricultural products/exports are bananas, corn, black beans, rice, and cardamom.

The uneven distribution of agricultural land remains a severe problem and parallels the economic divisions among Guatemalans. A mere 2.5 percent of the country's farms, with an average area of 200 hectares (ha) each, occupy more than 65 percent of all agricultural lands. The remaining 88 percent of the country's farms, with an average of 1.5ha each, occupy only 16 percent of the land. As a result of the distribution pattern, the majority of Guatemalan workers are limited to farming only 1.5ha of land and consequently fall below the poverty level. In general, the economic future for Guatemala is not bright. Changing weather patterns are adversely affecting crop production, and the country is still recovering from Hurricane Mitch, which struck in 1999 and wreaked havoc in the sector. Short-term improvement is not likely.

## Foreign Trade

The United States is the main destination for Guatemalan products and accounted for more than half of all exports throughout the 1990s. The agricultural sector produces the top exports: coffee, sugar, bananas, and cardamom. Central America accounts for 30 percent of all Guatemalan exports. El Salvador is the largest Central American export market, taking in US\$340 million over the course of 1998. Guatemala

traditionally holds a trade surplus over its Central American neighbors. However, in terms of the rest of the world, the increase in Guatemala's exports has been outpaced at an even greater rate of growth by the amount of goods imported. In 1998 Guatemalan exports totaled US\$2.9 billion, while the total dollar amount of imports was US\$3.3 billion. The two nations responsible for the majority of imports are the United States (42.8 percent) and Mexico (9.9 percent). Industrial equipment comprises the majority of imports; fuel, machinery, grain, fertilizers, and motor vehicles are consistently on top of Guatemalan yearly import lists.

Between 1999 and 2000, Guatemala signed a significant number of trade agreements. In 1999 it signed a trade agreement with Cuba to promote bilateral trade. Another 1999 free trade treaty involved Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras—a market of more than 50 million people. In early 2000, Mexico and the United States signed trade agreements with Guatemala, enabling Guatemala to trade freely in almost the entire Western Hemisphere. As a result of the trade agreements, foreign direct investment in Guatemala appears to be increasing. It is estimated that by 2002 thousands of new industrial jobs will have been created by the new agreements. Yet, despite the agreements and analyst predictions of new jobs, the value of goods exported from Guatemala in 1999 actually decreased by US\$75 million from 1998. Guatemala remains an agrarian nation, depending mainly on exports of coffee, sugar, and bananas for its income and importing nearly all of its industrial goods. As long as this balance of trade continues, the country will continue to run a trade deficit.

## Commerce and Industry

Since 1997 the construction industry has witnessed strong and steady growth. This growth has largely been the outcome of the peace accords signed with the nation's insurgent organizations. These accords required the government to strengthen the nation's infrastructure and build affordable housing for all citizens. These investments have helped revitalize the once moribund construction industry.

Tourism also strengthened throughout the 1990s and now ranks alongside sugar as the second highest foreign exchange earner after coffee. From 1998 to 1999, the number of tourists increased by 10 percent to 636,276. North America accounted for the largest share of tourists (39 percent), followed by Central America (35 percent), and Europe (18 percent). However, the momentum gained by tourism during the late 1990s was lost by the events of 2000. A number of highly publicized kidnappings, homicides, and crimes against foreigners have greatly diminished Guatemala's appeal to tourists. The weakness of the judicial system and high levels of corruption among public safety agencies only add to the problem.

Foreign franchises also make a significant contribution to the economy. At present, there are more than 150 different foreign franchises comprising more than 450 units. This segment makes up more than 85 percent of Guatemala's industrial market. United States firms account for 90 percent of all foreign franchises. Mexico, Spain, Great Britain, Chile, Canada, France, and Israel help make up the remaining 10 percent. Along with the typical U.S. food chains, foreign franchisers are responsible for hotels, clothing, cosmetics, advertising, candy, security, and restaurants. As a result, foreign nations control the Guatemalan economy in almost every aspect other than agriculture.

Another rapidly emerging sector is the in-bond manufacturing facilities (*maquiladoras*), most of which are engaged in manufacturing clothes, personal hygiene items, and small electronics. This segment is significant because it provides employment to two of the most marginalized segments of Guatemalan society, women and the middle-aged. However, the same factors that have hampered other economic sectors, for example, official corruption, high levels of crime, poor labor rights, and economic changes, have precluded significant growth here as well.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **The ability or the desire of Government of Guatemala leaders to make a positive impact on Guatemala's economic condition**
2. **The political consequences of the state of Guatemala's economy**
3. **The implications of the Guatemalan economy for the nation's role within the Central American region and the world**

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## Chapter 6. The Political Setting

Since a revolution in 1944 ended a century-old tradition of strongman rule, Guatemalan politics have been a struggle between contrasting forces of society—democracy and dictatorship, civilian and military, Indian and ladino, Christian fundamentalism and Marxism-Leninism, war and peace. Although the country has had civilian government and formally has been a presidential democracy since 1988, the army has remained the dominant political actor.

General elections for president, members of the Congress (*diputados*), and mayors (*alcaldes*) throughout the country were held on November 12, 1995, followed by a presidential runoff election held on January 6, 1996. In that election, Alvaro Enrique Arzú Irigoyen of the National Advancement Party (Partido de Avanzada Nacional—PAN) defeated Alfonso Antonio Portillo Cabrera of the Guatemalan Republican Front (Frente Republicano Guatemalteco—FRG) by a vote of 51.2 percent to 48.8 percent in a free and fair election. Arzú's narrow margin of victory was equivalent to 32,000 votes, and the abstention rate was 63 percent.

In late 1996, the country's thirty-six-year civil conflict ended when the Arzú administration signed peace accords with the guerrilla organization, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca—URNG). The accords called for implementing the constitutional reforms proposed in 1995 concerning the multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual composition of the state; the role of the armed forces and the police in society; and the strengthening of the judicial system. On October 26, 1998, Guatemala's Congress approved the forty-seven constitutional reforms. However, in a national referendum on May 16, 1999, the proposed reforms were defeated by a wide margin. Their rejection was blamed on a lack of information and mistrust of the political establishment by the electorate; only 18.6 percent of the 4 million registered voters took part in the referendum. Although ordinary laws could be enacted to accomplish many of the reforms, the constitutional reforms nonetheless held great symbolic value for the peace process.

Although the Arzú administration achieved respectable economic growth in addition to restoring peace, the country's socioeconomic conditions have deteriorated since the end of the civil war. In addition, economic benefits have been distributed unevenly, markedly increasing unemployment, crime, and poverty. Despite improved conditions since 1996, much of the country has yet to benefit from the peace accords. The decline in the value of the currency, the quetzal, during 1999, added to popular pressure for a change of leadership.

In the first round of the presidential election on November 7, 1999, which had an unusually high voter turnout of 53.4 percent, Alfonso Portillo of the FRG failed to gain a majority, garnering 48 percent of the vote. However, in the runoff election held on December 26, 1999, which had a voter turnout of 40.86 percent, Portillo won the presidency over the favorite, Oscar Berger Perdomo of the governing PAN, by drawing 68.3 percent of the vote. Portillo even defeated Berger in the PAN's traditional stronghold of Guatemala City.

Portillo's wide margin of victory in the December 1999 elections has been attributed to a well-managed campaign that portrayed him as a charismatic, populist leader, as well as to a large protest vote against the ruling PAN. Born in 1951, Portillo, a trained economist and lawyer, was once a dedicated Marxist



academic and a member of the centrist Guatemalan Christian Democracy (Democracia Cristiana Guatemalteca—DCG). Although his views have evolved, they remain wide-ranging and discordant; he continues to advocate both class warfare against the A oligarchies and cooperation with establishment institutions such as the military and business.

## The Governmental System

### Overview

Guatemala has been governed under various constitutions since becoming a republic. Since World War II, the countrys constitutions have been short-lived. The constitution of May 31, 1985, which became effective on January 14, 1986, provides for a separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. The country is divided into twenty-two administrative departments (*departamentos*). The twenty-two departments are further subdivided into 331 municipalities (*municipalidades*). Guatemala has universal and secret adult suffrage. Beginning at age eighteen, voting is compulsory for literates who are not serving on active duty with the armed forces and voluntary for illiterates. Presidential and congressional elections are held concurrently every four years.

President José Serrano Elias (president, 1991-93) suspended the constitution on May 25, 1993. However, it was reinstated on June 5, 1993, following Serranos forced resignation and Congresss selection of Ramiro de León Carpio, the former human rights ombudsman, as interim president. A referendum on constitutional reform was held on January 30, 1994. Although voter turnout was only 17.5 percent, 83 percent of voters approved the reforms. Under the November 1993 constitutional reforms, new congressional elections were held, the number of congressional representatives (*diputados*) was reduced from 116 to eighty, and the justices of the Supreme Court of Justice (Corte Suprema de Justicia) were replaced and their number increased from nine to thirteen. In addition, the terms of office for president and congressional representatives were reduced from five to four years and for Supreme Court justices from six to five years.

There are no legal impediments to women's participation in Guatemalas politics and government, but women are underrepresented in the political arena. Nevertheless, women hold some prominent political positions. Voters elected nine women to Congress in November 1999, women hold two seats on the Supreme Court, and one on the Constitutional Court. There were two female ministers in the Arzú government, and there is one, the minister of culture, in the Portillo government.

## The Executive

The executive branch consists of the president, vice president, and the Council of Ministers (Consejo de Ministros). The president is both the chief of state and head of government. The president is directly elected under universal suffrage by absolute majority for a single term of four years and cannot serve a successive term or prolong the four-year term. Beginning with the 1995 elections, the president began serving a four-year term. Alfonso Portillo took office as president on January 14, 2000. His vice president

is Juan Francisco López Reyes. The vice president, whose duties include presiding over Congress and participating in discussions of the Council of Ministers, also serves a four-year term. The president appoints the members of the Council of Ministers. Portillo's cabinet appointments include several allies of General Efraín Ríos Montt, who is the most influential figure in the FRG and leader of the Congress.

## The Legislature

The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Congress (Congreso de la República), whose members were traditionally elected by proportional representation. Under the constitutional reform of November 1993, 75 percent of the members of Congress are elected directly by the people through universal suffrage, and 25 percent are elected on the basis of proportional representation. The reforms reduced the term of the legislative deputies from five to four years, with unstagged terms. Congress can and does act independently of the executive, but fragmentation along party lines and a weak support and staff structure result in a legislature that is relatively weak.

As a result of a revision by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal Supremo Electoral), the new Congress elected on November 7, 1999, now totals 113 members, as opposed to the eighty members agreed to by Congress in 1993. Ninety-one of the members were elected according to departmental representation and twenty-two by national listing. Although the sixty-three seats won by the FRG are short of the two-thirds majority required to pass constitutional amendments, they are more than the fifty-seven votes required for a simple majority. The FRG's gains represent the largest congressional majority of any party in contemporary Guatemalan history.

## The Judiciary

Guatemala has a U.S.-style civil law and Supreme Court system in which legislative acts are subject to judicial review. The judicial branch consists of the Supreme Court, the Court of Constitutionality (Corte de Constitucionalidad), the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, the Court of Appeals (Corte de Apelaciones), and local courts. The Court of Constitutionality is presided over by the president of the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court and local courts handle civil and criminal cases. The Congress appoints the members of the Supreme Court based on a selection list submitted by the bar association, law school deans, a university rector, and appellate judges. Using a similar procedure, Congress also appoints members of the Court of Appeals. There are ten civil courts of appeals and two labor courts of appeals. On October 13, 1999, Congress elected magistrates to fill all seats on the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals. The Supreme Court nominates all lower judges. Other judicial offices include the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the Commission of Human Rights. Judges serve five-year terms. The death penalty is authorized for murder and kidnapping.

Guatemala has not accepted compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ), that is, World Court, jurisdiction. A mid-1999 survey revealed that 88 percent of Guatemalans considered the administration of justice in the country inadequate. Although the judiciary is independent, judges and other law

enforcement officials are subject to intimidation and corruption, and the inefficient judicial system frequently is unable to ensure fair trials and due process. Efforts to reform the judiciary are ongoing, but the climate of impunity persists. Intimidation of witnesses, victims, prosecutors, and judges continues to be a problem. Allegations persist that Guatemalan security forces infringe on citizens' privacy rights.

Vigilantism and escalating crime have been consequences of the inefficient judicial system. In August 1999, a UN investigating commission concluded that the Guatemalan judicial system needed substantial reform. Human rights organizations claim that the inefficiency, incompetence, and corruption of the Supreme Court that was replaced in October 1999 had left Guatemala's justice system in its worst state ever.

## Key Political Parties

Guatemala's constitution guarantees the free formation and growth of political parties whose aims are democratic. The November 1999 elections involved thirteen political parties, including two two-party coalitions. Four parties and both coalitions won seats in the legislature, led by the FRG with a sixty-three-seat majority, followed by the PAN with thirty-seven seats, and the New Nation Alliance (Alianza Nueva Nación—ANN) coalition, which included the URNG party, with nine seats.

### *Guatemalan Republican Front (FRG)*

The Guatemalan Republican Front (Frente Republicano Guatemalteco—FRG), founded in 1988, won the presidency and a clear majority in the Congress in the 1999 elections. The FRG is a loose-knit alliance of conservatives, Pentecostal Protestants, evangelicals, Indians, members of the middle class, and reformist politicians. It includes both President Portillo and Ríos Montt, president of the Congress.

### *National Advancement Party (PAN)*

The National Advancement Party (Partido de Avanzada Nacional—PAN) is a conservative, pro-business party founded in 1985 as a committee to advance the independent candidacy of Arzú for mayor of Guatemala City. In the November 1999 elections, the PAN won only thirty-seven congressional seats, as compared with forty-four in 1995. Although Arzú has continued to use the PAN as a vehicle for furthering his political ambitions, Oscar Bergers emergence as the PAN's presidential candidate in the 1999 election reflected the party's growing tendency to develop an identity independent of Arzú.

## Left-Wing Groupings

The URNG registered as a political party on December 20, 1998, and competed in the November 7, 1999, general elections as part of the New Nation Alliance (ANN). The left-wing ANN was formed in 1999 as an alliance of the Authentic Integral Development (Desarrollo Integral Auténtico—DIA), the Unity of the Democratic Left (Unidad de Izquierda Democrática—UNID), and the URNG. The ANN placed a distant third in both the November 1999 presidential and congressional elections. DIA-URNG candidates won a

respectable 11 percent of the vote and nine seats in the Congress. The ANN's prospects remain good for becoming the nation's third political force. Its 1999 presidential candidate, Alvaro Colón Caballeros, emerged as a charismatic leader. The pro-URNG New Guatemala Democratic Front (Frente Democrático Nuevo Guatemala—FDNG) won no seats in 1999, and therefore lost its registration status. As a result, many of its supporters have since joined the ANN, with which the FDNG is likely to merge.

## Interest Groups

### *The Military*

The military has been involved in all major political developments since 1964. The army controls the armed forces and much of the security apparatus. As a result of stipulations in the 1996 peace agreement, the military was reduced in strength from nearly 40,000 members in mid-1996 to approximately 30,000 by 1997. The military also manages substantial economic resources, including holdings in banking, manufacturing, and transportation. The military lost some influence as a result of its role in the political turmoil of 1993, and, as a consequence, presidents have been able to exploit divisions within the military to limit its political effectiveness. The rapid turnover of defense ministers has also prevented any single individual from gaining personal control over the armed forces. In 2000 President Portillo appointed Colonel Juan de Dios Estrada Velásquez, a junior officer, as minister of defense, bypassing twenty higher-ranked officers. The post had been held for decades by the ranking military general. (The constitution requires the minister of defense to be either a colonel or a general.) Although there is a growing trend to hold lower-ranking officers and enlisted men accountable for major human rights violations, most of the military still attempts to resist civilian control of its internal affairs. However, most officers are reluctant openly to confront civilian authority.

### *Economic Associations*

After the army, the private sector has remained the best-organized and most powerful political interest group in the country. Business chambers or associations, most of which are conservative and often support extreme right-wing political parties, represent the interests of the large exporting producers. These interest-group associations have been the most important vehicles of political influence used by the private sector. Since 1957, the influential Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Associations (Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras—CACIF) has served as the powerful umbrella organization of these groups, which include the owners of large plantations and ranches. Throughout the 1990s, Guatemalan governments found themselves at odds with the CACIF over its strongly pro-business policies and its opposition to many economic policies.

### *The Church*

Although Roman Catholicism is Guatemala's predominant religion, the Roman Catholic Church has not sought to develop its potential for influence. It has significant influence on some causes, such as issues

concerning agrarian reform, human rights, and social inequalities, but is neither outspoken nor radical. Most of its 600 priests are foreign nationals. However, support of the church is widely considered as necessary for a government to have legitimacy. The church has helped to publicize past human rights abuses and pressed for negotiations and accommodation with the URNG guerrillas. The church's relations with the government were severely strained as a result of the assassination on April 26, 1998, of a bishop, Juan José Gerardi Conedera, who had authored an extensive study of human rights violations during Guatemala's decades of civil conflict. Members of the Presidential Staff (Estado Mayor Presidencial—EMP), the notorious presidential guard, were suspected of involvement in the murder.

### ***Labor Unions***

The constitution and the Labor Code provide workers with freedom of association and the right to form and join trade unions. Unions may and do form federations and confederations and affiliate with international organizations. According to the Ministry of Labor, only 2 percent of the 3.5 million-person work force belong to labor organizations. The approximately 1,300 registered unions and 400 company-sponsored "solidarity organizations" are independent of government and political party domination. The government does not control unions. However, in its Fourth Report on the Peace Process, the United Nations Mission for Guatemala (Misión de Naciones Unidas para Guatemala—MINUGUA) noted that "genuine trade union freedom does not exist" because of anti-union violence. Workers have the right to strike, but Labor Code procedures for having a strike recognized as legal are cumbersome. Although the public sector historically has been the scene of frequent strikes, almost always called without legal authorization, there were no public sector strikes during 1999. Trade union leaders and members generally did not suffer labor-related violence in 1999.

### **Prospects**

President Portillo and his FRG can be expected to dominate the government until the next general elections, scheduled for November 2003. The main elements of the Portillo administration's agenda are reform of the fiscal system, revision of the privatizations carried out under the Arzú administration, revision of the Armed Forces Code and dissolution of the Presidential Staff, restoration of economic stability, curbing of the perceived privileges of large businesses, and compliance with the peace accords and the recommendations of the Truth Commission.

Although Portillo has vowed to keep the promises that he made during his electoral campaign, these promises were extravagant and contradictory and he is unlikely to fulfill them. For example, he will be expected to explain the April 1998 murder of Bishop Juan José Gerardi, to make the judicial system more effective and fair, and to reduce the high levels of crime. He will struggle to satisfy most of the expectations that he raised. His invitation to work with all social and political forces to reach consensus on national issues (a Agovernability pact) is unlikely to have much effect because most leading figures are skeptical. Previous presidents have suggested similar projects to no avail. Despite its 1999 electoral defeat, the PAN could still thwart the FRG by forming a majority coalition with other parties in the Congress, although not before the November 2003 elections. In the meantime, the PAN could frustrate the FRG administration's legislative agenda.

Furthermore, Portillo, who campaigned as the people's champion against the excesses of the ruling elite, faces a dilemma. Should he move too rapidly in attempting to curb the military and punish violations of human rights, the military and other members of the establishment, particularly the powerful business interests, could retaliate. Decisive actions by Portillo to enhance social justice may also disrupt relations with international financial institutions that have conditioned aid on austere economic reforms. The chance of a military coup is quite small, however, because the officer corps has been purged substantially, the civil war was resolved peacefully, the FRG government is sympathetic to the military's interests, and the business sector and international community would strongly oppose a coup. Nevertheless, should Portillo move too slowly he could alienate many of the FRG's dispossessed voters and strain relations with the United States and other developed countries, as well as with international human rights organizations.

Perhaps the key to determining whether Portillo succeeds or fails in implementing his proposed changes is Efraín Ríos Montt, who, as leader of the ruling FRG, is president of the Congress. Most of the FRG's congressional members are loyal to Ríos Montt. Ríos Montt, a former dictator who seized power in 1982, serves as a symbol of the previous status quo. Although he is constitutionally banned from running again for president, he has the power to shape the Portillo administration's future changes. Portillo claims to have reached a governability agreement with Ríos Montt, but it remains to be seen if Portillo is able to balance the conservative forces within the FRG, represented by Ríos Montt, with his own more liberal stance.

### Issues to Explore:

1. **The prospects for building consensus on issues of national importance, including implementation of as yet unmet peace accord commitments, in view of the electorate's having voted out the ruling party in the past several elections**
2. **How the army would react if the government attempts to neutralize the military's traditionally assertive political role through revision of the Armed Forces' Code, appointment of a civilian minister of defense, additional purges of senior officers, and prosecution of senior officers for human rights violations**
3. **How the business elite would respond if the government attempts to make the elite's traditional protector, the army, submissive to the masses**
4. **The prospects for reforming the judicial system, which is considered corrupt and inadequate by most Guatemalans, and the consequences of failing to do so**

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## Chapter 7. Foreign Affairs

### Guatemalan-U.S. Relations

Relations between the United States and Guatemala traditionally have been close, although at times strained by human rights and civil/military issues. The United States has long been the most important actor in Guatemalan foreign relations. After 1954, when the United States supported the counterrevolutionary invasion, the United States became the key foreign ally of successive Guatemalan governments, largely through the provision of economic and security assistance. The U.S. government suspended military aid to Guatemala in 1977 following an upsurge in death squad activity and the publication of the U.S. Department of State's first human rights report. Modest training assistance was reinstated in 1983. Relations between Guatemala and the United States deteriorated considerably in 1990. U.S. military assistance to Guatemala was again suspended in December 1990 as a result of the murder in June of American citizen Michael Devine, a hotel owner and longtime resident of Guatemala, by members of the Guatemalan armed forces. The soldiers responsible for Devine's murder were tried, convicted, and imprisoned, but the officer who led the killers escaped from detention in May 1993. The United States views his capture and imprisonment as fundamental to improved relations with the Guatemalan military.

U.S. government and business interests have long exercised substantial influence in Guatemala. The

United States provides economic assistance and is Guatemala's largest trading partner, providing 44 percent of the country's imports and receiving 31 percent of its exports. U.S. official assistance to Guatemala since 1986 exceeds US\$1 billion. The United States also plays an important role in Guatemala's relations with international financial organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Several contentious issues have divided the two countries. Under the short-lived administration of José Serrano (president, 1991-93), U.S. influence was instrumental in the initiation of investigations of human rights violations and in the reduction of labor abuses. The United States played a critical role in the events of May and June 1993, when it moved quickly to oppose President Serrano's attempts to suspend the constitution and impose dictatorial rule. Suspending all aid and threatening to end Guatemala's most-favored nation trade status, the United States brought about the fall of Serrano and the installation of de León as president. The United States continued its attention to human rights abuses under the de León administration. Although some elements in the Guatemalan military and security forces have fiercely resented the U.S. role, Guatemalan governments have preferred to accommodate the United States rather than risk U.S. sanctions or damage to the important tourism industry. More than 150,000 U.S. citizens visit the diverse attractions in Guatemala each year. In 1995, the U.S. government eliminated Guatemala's access to International Military Education Training (IMET) funds over human rights concerns. Guatemala later became eligible for expanded IMET, and a program resumed in 1997.

The United States, as a member of "the Friends of Guatemala" along with Colombia, Mexico, Spain, Norway, and Venezuela, played an important role in the UN-moderated peace accords of 1996, providing public and behind-the-scenes support. The United States strongly supports the six substantive and three procedural accords, which, along with the December 29, 1996 final accord, form the blueprint for profound political, economic, and social change. Tangible support for the implementation of the accords has come from a number of sources. Development assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is concentrated in programs to strengthen democratic institutions, improve health and education, and protect the environment. The United States also provided up to US\$25 million in FY 1998 Economic Support Funds, including a grant of US\$5 million. The aid was directed toward the most immediate needs associated with the implementation of the peace accords, such as demobilization of the former combatants. To address the issue of impunity, USAID and the U.S. Department of Justice have funded programs to strengthen the courts, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, and the civilian police. Other U.S. federal agencies, such as the Departments of Agriculture, Labor, and the Treasury, have programs either in place or in the planning stages to support specific aspects of the peace accords.

Guatemalan-U.S. relations worsened significantly in 1996, when the United States revived accusations of past human rights abuses, including the murder of Michael Devine in 1990 by members of the Guatemalan Army and the death of a guerrilla commander married to an American lawyer. The conclusion of the peace accords at the end of 1996 eased tensions, and the United States pledged more than US\$50 million in additional assistance. In May 1997, President Arzú met with President Clinton and his counterparts from Central America, Belize, and the Dominican Republic to celebrate the remarkable democratic transformation in the region. The leaders reaffirmed their support for strengthening democracy, good governance, and promoting prosperity through economic integration, free trade, and



investment. They also expressed their commitment to the continued development of just and equitable societies and responsible environmental policies as integral elements of sustainable development.

The direct role of the United States in Guatemalan affairs has declined since the Central American conflicts have ended, and U.S. aid levels have diminished. In 1998, Guatemala became the first government outside the United States to file a lawsuit against U.S. tobacco manufacturers in an attempt to recover the costs of treating tobacco-related illnesses. The rape and robbery of several U.S. college students in early 1998 badly soured relations. In February 1999, three of five defendants in the case were sentenced to twenty-eight-year prison terms. In late 1998, Guatemala and its Central American neighbors asked the United States to give greater access to their products under the Caribbean Basin Initiative and to grant them parity under the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to help their economies recover from the destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch.

Current U.S. policy in Guatemala includes supporting the institutionalization of democracy; encouraging Guatemalan respect for human rights and the rule of law; supporting broad-based economic growth and sustainable development; cooperating with the Guatemalan government to combat narcotics trafficking; supporting Central American integration and regional peace efforts, including the dialogue process with the Guatemalan insurgency that ended successfully in 1996; maintaining mutually beneficial trade relations; and supporting a solution to the Belize dispute acceptable to the parties involved.

## Regional Relations

Guatemala is a member of the Organization of American States (OAS). The country's major diplomatic interests are regional security and, increasingly, regional development and economic integration. The Central American Ministers of Trade meet on a regular basis to work on regional approaches to trade issues. In March 1997, Guatemala hosted the second annual Trade and Investment Forum, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The two-day event highlighted the growing relationship that Guatemala has with its closest trading partners and offered regional opportunities to foreign investors. In March 1998, Guatemala joined its Central American neighbors in signing a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). Guatemala also originated the idea for, and is the seat of, the Central American Parliament (Parlacen). Guatemala participates in several regional groups, particularly those related to the environment and trade. For example, President Clinton and the Central American presidents signed the Central American-USA Pact (Conjunto Centroamerica-USA—CONCAUSA) agreement at the Summit of the Americas in December 1994. CONCAUSA is a cooperative plan of action to promote clean, efficient energy use; conserve the region's biodiversity; strengthen legal and institutional frameworks and compliance mechanisms; and improve and harmonize environmental protection standards.

Guatemala's long-laid claim to Belize caused problems with Britain and later with Belize following its 1981 independence from Britain. Relations have since improved. In 1986 Guatemala and Britain re-established commercial and consular relations; in 1987 they re-established full diplomatic relations. In December 1989, Guatemala sponsored Belize for permanent observer status in the Organization of American States (OAS). In September 1991, Guatemala recognized Belize's independence and established

diplomatic ties, while acknowledging that the boundaries remained in dispute. Although Belize has recognized Guatemalan diplomatic representation at the ambassadorial level for several years, the Guatemalan government did not accredit the first ambassador from Belize until December 1996. Although Belize continues to be a difficult domestic political issue in Guatemala, the two governments have quietly maintained constructive relations. In anticipation of an effort to bring the border dispute to an end, in early 1996, the Guatemalan Congress ratified two long-pending international agreements governing frontier issues and maritime rights.

Having recognized British sovereignty over Belize, Guatemala is trying to settle disputed territorial issues through direct talks. Instability has increased on Guatemala's border with Mexico because of the insurgency in the Mexican state of Chiapas and the Mexican heroin producers operating in Guatemala. The repatriation of an estimated 40,000 Guatemalan refugees who had fled to Mexico during the 1980s was completed in early 1999, with another 22,000 choosing to remain in Mexico.

## Other Foreign Relations

Guatemala is a member of the United Nations and many of its specialized agencies, as well as numerous other international organizations. As part of an agreement on human rights negotiated with the insurgents, the UN deployed an observer mission, the MINUGUA (United Nations Mission for Guatemala), to Guatemala in November 1994. The MINUGUA has become a significant source for curbing potential human rights abuses. Despite criticism from the government and business community, the MINUGUA has continued its activities since the December 1996 peace agreement. In January 1997, a consultative group of international donor countries and financing institutions pledged US\$1.9 billion to help implement programs in fulfillment of the peace accords. The group included the World Bank, the IDB, the Central American Bank of Economic Integration, the United States, the European Union, Spain, and Germany. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan promised support for recovery from the civil war when he visited Guatemala in July 1998. However, the international donor community will condition further financial assistance in the peace process on fiscal reform. Guatemala maintains relations with Taiwan, long an important supplier of training and technical assistance to the Guatemalan Army, at the risk of losing trade with China.

### Issues to Explore:

- 1. Implications for Guatemala's relations with the United States, other developed countries, and international organizations should the Portillo government and/or successor governments fail to carry out its promised reforms and the terms of the peace accords**
- 2. Possible actions that could be taken by the United States and the international community should the army and business sector block the reform efforts called for by the peace accords**

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# HAITI

## A Self-Study Guide



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This Self-Study Guide on Haiti is intended to provide US government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to the history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations of Haiti. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource for further exploration of information and issues. With this in mind, each reader is strongly encouraged to undertake independent reflection using the self-study questions for further research identified at the end of each section. Included in the guide as research tools are a bibliography of publications on Haiti and an index to useful sites on the Internet. For more detailed bibliographic information, readers can consult “*A Reader’s Guide to Haiti*,” prepared for the Foreign Service Institute in September 1999.

Dr. Robert Maguire, Director of Programs in International Affairs at Trinity College in Washington DC and the Trinity College Haiti Program, prepared this first edition guide on Haiti. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National

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# **HAITI SELF STUDY GUIDE**

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## Introduction

Haiti's size on the world stage has been compared with an accordion: sometimes, when the instrument's bellows are open, it is large; sometimes, when they are closed, it is small. Over the past three hundred years the nation located on the western third of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola has on numerous occasions occupied a position at the center of the world stage, highly disproportionate to its small size and population. At other times, it has stood at the edge of that stage, marginalized or isolated through external imposition and/or internal choice.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the French colonial possession was renowned as one of the world's most productive slave-based plantation economies. By the early twenty first century, the independent state had become notorious for its grinding poverty, political strife, and extreme internal social and economic polarization. In between, Haiti emerged in 1804 as the Western Hemisphere's second independent nation, forged from a successful revolt of slaves. Cast subsequently as a pariah state by the world's slave-holding powers and as a beacon of liberty and hope for oppressed peoples worldwide, the new country was plagued by a severely damaged post-revolution economy, harsh international sanctions, and successive internal power struggles leading largely to decades of misrule. The proud and promising, but troubled nation entered the twentieth century under the watchful eye of an expansionist United States, which invaded its southern neighbor in 1915, occupied it until 1934, and has cast a long shadow over Haiti ever since. During the Cold War era, the harsh Duvalier family dictatorship (1957-1986) received tacit support from the US. In the post-Cold War/Duvalier era, US support for Haiti's quest to develop more democratic governance ultimately resulted in its leading a 1994 multinational military intervention that removed a defacto military government and restored an elected president.

Haiti has emerged from its past as a country of contradictions. Its two-century quest to forge an independent nation from the ruins of a successful revolution has evolved into a country alarmingly dependent on external resources to make ends meet and fraught with severe internal dichotomies along lines of geography, ethnicity and race, culture, and access to power and resources. From its early promise as a beacon of liberty and hope for the world's oppressed, Haiti has become a place from which oppressed and impoverished citizens flee, seeking a better life elsewhere.

How are we to understand Haiti? Is it a nation victimized by others because of its glorious past? Is it a country being destroyed by its own internal dichotomies? Is it a place that can still achieve its early promise if only the halts of inept governance and severe strife can finally be removed? Or, is it, perhaps more realistically, a combination of all of this? This study guide is not intended to answer these questions. Rather, it is designed to provide background information that can open paths toward further research. Those who follow those paths will reflect on issues and questions that can help them better understand Haiti's multidimensional past, present, and, certainly, future.

### MAP OF HAITI (Base 801108 12-97)



Base 801108 12-87



## Geography and Population

### Location and Physical Geography

Haiti is not an island. Rather, it is located on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean, to the west and south by the Caribbean Sea, and to the east by the Dominican Republic. Its closest, non-contiguous neighbors are Cuba, Jamaica, the Turks & Caicos Islands, the Bahamas, and the United States. Haiti's southern coast is the first landfall traveling due north from Columbia. Occupying a land mass of 10,714 square miles, Haiti is roughly the same size - though not the same configuration - as the state of Maryland. The country's shape is likened to that of a crab's claw, with northern and southern peninsulas reaching from its main body toward the west. Settlements at the ends of the northern and southern claws are closer to Cuba and Jamaica, respectively, than to Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. In addition to its mainland, the country is composed of several offshore islands, principal among them being La Gonave and La Tortue.

Haiti is mostly mountainous and rugged. Approximately 63 percent of Haiti's territory is composed of lands having slopes greater than 20 percent. Conversely, less than 20 percent of the territory has land with slopes less than 10 degrees. Two mountain ranges, the Massif de la Hotte and the Massif de la Selle, which includes Pic la Selle the country's highest peak (c.2,900 feet), run in a west to east direction along the southern part of the country. Another range, the Massif Central, gives rise to the Central Plateau. Smaller mountains extend towards the north and west. Plains and river valleys, although limited in size, are the most productive agricultural land and the most densely populated areas. The Northern Plain, the Artibonite River Valley, and the Cul-de-Sac Plain, just north of Port-au-Prince, are the country's most extensive areas of low-lying land. Haiti's rivers are numerous but short, mostly not navigable, and often flow with significant irregularity.

As a rule, Haiti's tropical climate is humid and characterized by daily variations of temperature that are greater than annual variations. Temperatures vary with altitude, however. The mountain village of Kenscoff located to the interior of Port-au-Prince, for example, has an average temperature of 60 degrees, whereby the coastal capital averages 79 degrees. The country's location on the leeward side of Hispaniola and its mountainous terrain also combine to create weather conditions that vary considerably. Rainfall patterns range from less than 12 inches a year in the northwest to more than 120 inches in the southwest mountains. Tropical storms, hurricanes, droughts and floods are not infrequent. The country has no active volcanoes. While Haiti has not experienced a major earthquake in more than 50 years, mild tremors are felt on occasion.

Much of the country's natural vegetation has been removed during the past three centuries through clearing for agriculture, grazing, and the exploitation of timber. This process has accelerated in recent decades with increased population pressure. Haiti's virgin forests have been reduced to less than 6 percent of the land area, as forest resources are sought for

firewood and charcoal production. Subsequently, an estimated 6,000 hectares of top soil are washed away annually as food crop cultivation and grazing have moved into higher and steeper elevations. Irregular river flow, flash floods, salinization of fresh water supplies and landslides have resulted from the extensive removal of surface vegetation in Haiti's mountainous watersheds. As Haiti's natural vegetation has disappeared so have the habitat and shelter of its wildlife. Wild boars are no longer present. The number of avian species present in Haiti has dwindled significantly. Many remaining species are endangered, including the country's flamingos, which are hunted without restriction.

### Human Geography

Haiti is densely populated. Exact population data, however, is unavailable, even though the government attempted to undertake a census in 2001-2002. The estimated population in 2000 was 8 million, with an annual growth rate of about two percent. Haiti's population is a young one with approximately 40 percent under 15 years of age. The average life expectancy is 51 years. Emigration and the ailments of poverty function in tandem to limit Haiti's population growth. Haiti's growing prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections, estimated at 5 percent of the population, may have begun to have a negative impact on population growth.

About 60 percent of Haitians live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture. Migration to cities, especially Port-au-Prince whose metropolitan area population now exceeds 1.5 million, has increased considerably in recent decades. Thirty years ago, the percentage of the rural population was closer to 75 percent. As Port-au-Prince expands, its settlements climb up already deforested mountainsides, spread onto marshy seaside lands, and occupy former agricultural lands, particularly in the Cul-de-Sac Plain north of the city. Despite significant off-the-land migration, rural populations continue to grow. Throughout the country, the plains and valleys are densely populated. While most hillsides and steep mountains are dotted with homesteads and cultivated plots, some areas of extreme erosion and drought have been abandoned.

Although only 30 percent of Haiti's surface is considered suitable for agriculture, more than 40 percent is under cultivation. Most farms, very small and severely undercapitalized, are worked by their owners. With few areas irrigated, most farmers depend on rainfall, a risky business in the best of times and a terribly risky business today with numerous micro-climate areas becoming drier as a result of deforestation. Rural settlements, generally dispersed, are sometimes organized along roads. Peasant homesteads, usually small wooden framed houses with a roof of corrugated iron, are often grouped in extended family clusters, called *habitation*. Household furnishings are sparse. Individual means of transportation are virtually nonexistent. Peasant women usually market food crops that are produced by men, following by foot, donkey or truck (*tap-tap*) the periodic markets usually organized twice a week in local towns and villages.

Municipalities, also referred to as *bourg*, are scattered throughout the country. As administrative, political and commercial centers, most have a police station, a court of justice, a town hall, small shops or depots lining the principal thoroughfare or surrounding a central square, and a Roman Catholic church. Real urban life, however, is limited to Port-au-Prince and to five or six large towns, all of which are a small fraction of the size of the country's capital. Although settlements characterized by large villas, often hidden behind high walls, have grown up in the hillsides surrounding the capital, those areas are also occupied by expanding slums, or *bidonvilles*. Shantytowns have also expanded onto the coastal areas west and north of the city, and toward the Cul-de-Sac Plain, where many of the country's small middle or professional class also have been building homes. The vast majority of Port-au-Prince residents live on meager incomes and the signs of poverty are ever present in this highly congested city and its equally congested suburbs.

### Political Geography

Haiti is divided into a three geopolitical units: *departements*, of which there are nine; *communes* (or municipalities) of which there are 133, and *sections communales*, of which there are 565. Haitians living overseas - or the Diaspora - are often referred to as being part of the country's Tenth Department. Departments correspond roughly with American states; municipalities with counties; and communal sections with towns or districts.

Department names relate either to their location or one of their major geographic features. The dominant settlement in each department is its capital city, as follows:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Capital City</u>
West ( <i>Ouest</i> )	Port-au-Prince
South East ( <i>Sud-Est</i> )	Jacmel
South ( <i>Sud</i> )	Les Cayes
Grand Anse	Jeremie
Center ( <i>Centre</i> )	Hinche
Artibonite	Gonaives
North East ( <i>Nord-Est</i> )	Fort Liberte
Nord ( <i>North</i> )	Cap Haitien
North West ( <i>Nord-Ouest</i> )	Port-de-Paix

Haiti's two largest off shore islands, Isle de la Gonave and Isle de la Tortue, are part of the West and North West departments, respectively.

Geography and Population *Self-study questions:*

1. What are current political and economic implications of Haiti's geographic location, particularly given its proximity to Cuba, Jamaica, the Bahamas and the United States? What are the implications of Haiti's location due north of northern South America?
2. Only a few islands in the world are occupied by two independent nations, with Hispaniola, occupied by Haiti and the Dominican Republic, being one of them. It is fair to say that in most cases of shared-island occupation, relations between the two neighbors have not always been smooth. Identify current issues linked to the shared occupation of Hispaniola. Think in terms of both challenges and opportunities.
3. A small country with a rugged topography, Haiti has been - and to a great extent still is - a nation of small farmers. What is the impact of the three factors of size, topography, and dominant land use on the country's prospects for development?
4. Current estimates place Haiti's population in 2025 at 12 million. What impact will the country's continued population growth most likely have on internal migration patterns and the environment? What prospects are there to modify this impact, particularly in view of continued population growth?

## History

### European Contact and The Colonial Period

Within little more than 100 years of the 1492 landfall by Christopher Columbus, the original Arawak Indian population of the entire island, estimated by some to have been as high as one million, had virtually disappeared as a result of warfare, brutal treatment and rampant disease. Throughout this post-Columbus period, the Spanish settlement on La Isla Espanola was sparse and concentrated mostly in its eastern end, particularly around the port town of Santo Domingo. By the early seventeenth century, French pirates, or *bucaniers*, occupied the western side of the island, particularly La Tortue Island off its northwest coast, using their location as a base for attacking Spanish shipping. By mid-century, the French had begun to establish plantations in mainland coastal areas for the cultivation of sugarcane, coffee, cocoa, indigo, tobacco and cotton, and for the extraction of precious tropical hardwood. In 1664, when French settlers founded the town of Port-de-Paix in the northwest, the French West India Company took possession of the French settlements.

In 1697, by the Treaty of Rijswik, the western third of the island was formally ceded to France by Spain and was renamed Saint-Domingue. The colony's population increased greatly during the 18th century, particularly as a result of the massive importation of black Africans to work as slaves on the expanding plantations. By 1789, 500,000 of a total population of 556,000 were slaves. The remainder of the population was composed of 32,000 whites and 24,000 free blacks or people of color (*gens de couleur*). Fueled by slave labor and state-of-the-art infrastructure development paid for by massive amounts of French overseas investment, Saint-Domingue became the most prosperous colony in the New World, sending such volumes of sugar, molasses, rum, coffee, cocoa, indigo, cotton and hardwood to France as to require more than 700 ocean-going vessels annually to haul off the colony's products.

### Revolt, Revolution, Independence

The highly disproportionate number of slaves among the colony's population, combined with their harsh treatment, was a recipe for revolt. On August 24, 1791, in place called Bois Caiman on the northern plain, slaves rose in rebellion, led by a now legendary vodou priest named Boukman. Over the next several years marauding slaves set fire to fields and attacked plantations, spreading fear throughout the colony. In order to maintain its beleaguered colony, France abolished slavery there in 1794. Inspired at least in part by the ideals set forth by the leaders of the French Revolution, however, the winds of dissatisfaction in what had become the world's wealthiest plantation colony, did not settle, particularly among the colony's people of color who had allied themselves with the leaders of the French Revolution.

In May 1801, Toussaint Louverture, a former slave, became Saint Domingue's governor general and remained loyal to the French. Shortly thereafter, however, Napoleon sent a 30,000

strong expeditionary force from France to restore the old regime, including slavery. Led by his brother-in-law, General Charles Leclerc, the force also included several exiled mulatto officers. Other mulatto officers, however, including Alexandre Petion, did not join the French. In May 1802, after several months of struggle against the expeditionary force, Louverture came to terms with Leclerc. The French, however, abrogated the agreement, captured Louverture through deceit, and imprisoned him in France, where he died on April 7, 1803.

Subsequently, two other of Haiti's "founding fathers," Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe, led the black army against the French in what became a razed earth campaign to expel them and avoid the reinstatement of slavery. Demoralized by their opponent and decimated by disease, particularly malaria, the French were defeated, surrendering on November 9, 1803 and withdrawing from Saint Domingue on November 18. On January 1, 1804, the revolutionary leaders proclaimed independence from France and restored the Arawak name, Haiti, to the hemisphere's second independent nation. The Haitian blue and red flag was by removing the white stripe from the French tricolor. From the beginning of the revolt, French colonists and some people of color had begun fleeing the colony, with many going either to Cuba or to Louisiana. At independence, the few whites that remained in Haiti were expelled, leaving the country in the hands of a population composed largely of former slaves. Indeed, at independence, it is said that over half of Haiti's population was African-born.

### The Post Independence Period

The war of independence had largely destroyed Haiti's state-of-the-art plantation infrastructure and, with it, its economy. Christophe managed to improve the shattered economy temporarily by enacting a policy of 'military agriculture' that forced former slaves to work on the plantations along the northern plain. The stigma of plantation labor, however, inspired most laborers to resist the recuperation of large-scale, commodity-based agriculture. They opted, rather, either to retreat from the plantations and establish small subsistence farms in isolated locales, or to occupy the remnants of plantation land, mixing food crop and cash crop cultivation with animal husbandry. As such, Haiti's peasantry was constituted.

While foot soldiers and their families retreated from slavery and plantation agriculture, the country's leaders set upon each other. On October 17, 1806, Dessalines who had previously assumed the title Emperor Jacques I, was killed while trying to put down a mulatto revolt. Christophe then took control of the country, but civil war soon broke out between Christophe in the north and Petion, based in Port-au-Prince, in the south. In his northern kingdom, Christophe built a spectacular palace, Sans Souci, as well as an imposing fortress, the Citadelle Laferriere, also by way of forced labor. In the south, Petion took a different approach toward economic recuperation. He granted land to former slaves and encouraging them to engage in mixed crop agriculture. Peasant coffee cultivation was a particularly important source of revenue to the state and for a new class of largely French-speaking, educated mulatto businessmen, or *commerçants*, who resided in the coastal cities and controlled the country's commerce.

Upon his death in 1818, Petion was succeeded in the south by another mulatto, Jean-Pierre Boyer. In 1820, Christophe suffered a stroke. With mutinous soldiers and a population angry over his attempt to re-institute plantation labor moving toward his palace, the revolutionary leader committed suicide, allowing Boyer to unify the country. In 1822, Boyer invaded and conquered Santo Domingo, which, having declared itself independent from Spain the previous year, was engulfed in struggle with the Spanish crown. He immediately abolished slavery in the former Spanish possession. With Haitians entering Santo Domingo and Spanish whites and Creoles leaving the Haitian-occupied country in large numbers, the racial configuration of the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola was fundamentally changed. The occupation continued until 1844, when it was expelled by a popular uprising.

### An International Pariah State

Issued shortly after independence, the Haitian constitution declared that any person of African origin or descent would gain freedom and citizenship there. As such, the hemisphere's second independent nation quickly became an international pariah when European colonial powers, joined by the United States, officially shunned the black republic, hoping to isolate from their own slave-based economies its 'virus' of freedom-from-slavery. Haiti's southern neighbors replicated this pattern. Simon Bolivar, fighting for independence in South America, visited Haiti in 1815 and 1816, finding respite from his Spanish adversaries and receiving material support from Petion. Under US pressure, however, Bolivar betrayed the friendship of Haiti in 1826, when he led the new republics of Latin America in joining with the United States to exclude Haiti from the hemisphere's first region-wide meeting of independent states held in Panama.

In 1825, France grudgingly recognized Haitian independence return for an indemnity of nearly 100 million francs, to be paid at an annual rate until 1887. By 1838, the young republic, having transferred to its former colonial owner more than 30 million francs that could have been used for national recovery, suspended payments. The United States finally recognized Haitian independence in 1862, as it was about to grant its own slaves freedom. Other republics in the Western Hemisphere slowly followed suit, commencing with Brazil's recognition of Haiti in 1865 and ending with Peru's in 1938.

### Political Turbulence and the US Occupation

Between 1843, when Boyer was overthrown by a military coup, and 1915, when the United States invaded the country, Haiti was plagued by political unrest. Of 20 leaders during this period, 16 were either overthrown or assassinated. Political rivalries tended to be framed by geography and skin color. Attempts to establish enduring political parties and develop stable government were weakened not just by rivalries, but also by the exclusion of women, rural dwellers and the poor from the political process at the behest of deeply engrained, Port-au-Prince-based *classe politique*.

A leadership pattern characterized as *politique de doublure*, or politics by understudy, emerged during this period. Under this framework, a black political leader, usually with a military background and often a regional strongman, after forcing himself upon Port-au-Prince and gaining the presidency of the country, would develop a mutually beneficial relationship with the capital's political and commercial classes, who then became his advisors, or 'understudies.' Such arrangements were often quite tenuous, however, as some presidents turned against their advisors, while others were abandoned by them once their grip on the palace weakened. Under this system of governance, the Haitian treasury was successively depleted by rulers with a tenuous grip on power who were eager to gain the material trappings of that power, and whose desires were eagerly accommodated by their understudies within the country's commercial class.

As US political and economic interests expanded into the Caribbean at the end of the 19th Century, Haiti's political instability offered a rationale for increased US involvement in its domestic affairs. In 1905, when the United States took Haiti's customs into receivership, US business interests gained a secure financial foothold in the sovereign republic and valuable concessions from its government. In 1915, with political unrest in Port-au-Prince and the specter on the horizon of intervention by Germany to protect its own economic interests in Haiti, United States marines were dispatched to Port-au-Prince. While US authorities justified their action on the grounds of the Monroe Doctrine and humanitarian concerns, many Haitians believed the US rationale for invading their country was to protect and expand its business interests, and to establish a military base at Mole St. Nicolas in Haiti's far northwest. After the invasion, Haiti signed a treaty with the United States - originally for 10 years, but ultimately extended through 1934 - establishing US political and financial domination. In 1918, Haiti received a new constitution that permitted foreigners to own land in the black republic for the first time since independence.

One effect of the US occupation was the nominal re-establishment of the mulatto elite in control of the government. Another was the dissolution of the old revolutionary Haitian army and its replacement by a Marine-trained *Garde d'Haiti*. Many black Haitians resented the occupation, which they believed excluded them from public office and subjected them to daily racist indignities at the hands of the marines. Causing further resentment was the revival of a practice from Christophe's time by which the US Marines organized *corvee*, or forced labor, groups for public infrastructure projects such as road-building. Resentment grew quickly to resistance, with several thousand guerrilla fighters called *cacos* engaging in armed skirmishes with the US Marines. With their protégés in the newly formed Haitian national security force at their side, US Marines eventually dealt the *cacos* a fatal blow when their leader, Charlemagne Perault, was captured and killed in 1919.

Having tamed the resistance, US forces turned more fully to the exercise of 'nation building,' putting energy and resources into public works programs that oversaw the construction of health clinics, bridges, roads, electrical systems and urban sewage systems. In the Haitian countryside,



evidence of this infrastructure remains today, particularly in the form of the military outposts constructed throughout the country and occupied jointly by US Marines and the *Garde d'Haiti*.

### After the Occupation

In August 1934, facing increased pressure at home and in Haiti, President Franklin D. Roosevelt withdrew the marines, ending the longest foreign occupation in US history. The national infrastructure of military occupation was handed over to the Haitian Guard. Governance of the country was handed to President Stenio Vincent who had been elected to that position by a national assembly reconstituted in 1930. A plebiscite extended Vincent's term to 1941 and amended the constitution so that future presidents would be elected by popular vote.

In 1937 troops and police in the Dominican Republic, with popular support, massacred thousands of Haitian laborers there, while thousands more fled across the border into Haiti. Haitians had been recruited and drawn to work as cane cutters in the DR's plantation sector that had expanded significantly under the 1915 - 1924 US occupation of that country. The massacre drew upon a deeply rooted enmity between the two countries that had its roots in the 1824-1844 Haitian Occupation. Dominicans, with their Spanish culture and greater admixture of European blood looked disdainfully upon black Haitians. Haitian labor, however, had become necessary to the Dominican economy.

In 1946, Haitian workers and students protested in opposition to Vincent's successor, Elie Lescot, who had altered the constitution to extend his term in office. Three ranking officers in the reconstituted Haitian army (*Force Armee d'Haiti - FAd'H*), which had emerged from the occupation-era Haitian guard, led a *coup d'etat*, seizing power and overseeing the election of Dumarsais Estime to the presidency. When Estime sought to extend his own term in 1950, the same three officers again took control. Soon after, one of them, Colonel Paul E. Magloire, was elected president in a plebiscite overseen by the army. Magloire in turn sought to remain in power, but in December 1956 the army forced him to resign from office.

### The Duvalier Dictatorship

In 1957, against a backdrop of political and social unrest, Francois Duvalier, or "Papa Doc" - a former employee of a US medical aid project - was elected president with the tacit support of the army. Duvalier espoused black nationalist rhetoric, promising to end domination by the mulatto elite and to put political and economic power into the hands of the black masses. In July 1958, following an unsuccessful attempt by the army to remove him from office, Duvalier organized a private paramilitary force - the *Tontons Macoutes* - sanctioned to terrorize the population and provide a counterweight to the FAd'H. His control firmly established, Duvalier had himself elected president-for-life in 1964.

Under the dictatorship of Francois Duvalier, Haiti became, in effect, a police state and a pariah state, increasingly isolated from the world community. By the late 1950's, Duvalier's political opponents and the country's professional class - often one and the same - had begun to flee the country in growing numbers, heading for self-imposed exile in the United States, Canada, France, and French-speaking Africa.

By the eve of his death in 1971, Papa Doc had led Haiti along a path of destruction. The country faced a diminished economy, the withdrawal of most international aid, the collapse of what had been a vibrant tourist industry, a considerable 'brain drain,' and a largely traumatized population. Nevertheless, having successfully established control over the army by bestowing power and privilege in the hands of loyal supporters, Duvalier was able to orchestrate a transition of power to his 19 year-old son, Jean-Claude.

The regime of president-for-life Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier immediately sought to distance itself from the repressive reputation of Francois and gain international respectability. Promising an 'economic revolution,' the new president and his handlers, most of whom had been integral players in his father's regime, managed to present an improved face of Haiti, to which there was a positive response. International aid - particularly from the United States - revived. Some Haitian professionals returned. Even the tourism sector experienced a modest revival. While superficially repression appeared to decline, the population, as a whole, experienced few expanded civil liberties and political opposition to the government remained taboo. Matching the more quiet, but continued, political repression was growing poverty among the citizenry. As a result, by the late 1970's the new facade of economic development was matched by the images of increasingly desperate poor people setting to sea in precariously overloaded sailboats to seek refuge in South Florida.

In 1980, Jean-Claude Duvalier married a mulatto, Michele Bennett, and transferred to his wife and her family and associates many of the privileges and prerogatives that had belonged to his father's inner circle. Subsequently, a rivalry grew between the 'dinosaurs' of Papa Doc and the 'technocrats' brought into government by Jean-Claude. Many of the latter were mulattos. While trying to maintain international economic support, the regime followed an uncertain path, appearing to lift political controls only to restore them brusquely as soon as dissent was expressed. As internal repression continued, Haitians in communities throughout the country began to organize grassroots groups seeking to improve their member's social and economic status. These groups, usually aligned with churches or non-governmental organizations, began to emerge as a new challenge to the regime.

### Duvalierism without Duvalier

In late 1985 and early 1986, the government attempted, without great success, to repress countrywide demonstrations against high unemployment, poor living conditions, growing economic disparities, and the lack of political freedom. With his power base eroded as a result of internal rivalries, and popular unrest blanketing the country, Duvalier and his wife fled Haiti

for France on February 7, 1986 aboard a US military aircraft. A five-member civilian-military council, the National Council of Government (CNG), led by Lieutenant General Henri Namphy assumed control of the government while the country became engulfed by popular explosions of what Haitians called their second independence. Concurrently, the *dechoukaj*, or uprooting, of the physical trappings of the dictatorship took place. The Tontons Macoutes disappeared. As the Duvalier paramilitary force dissolved, the army quickly regained its dominant position. Against this backdrop of hope, unrest and transition, the CNG authorized a national commission to draft a new constitution that was then ratified in a popular referendum in early 1987. The elections mandated by that document were scheduled for late the same year.

Violence led by pro-Duvalier elements and the Namphy-led army, plagued the country during the lead up to the November 1987 elections. On election day, voter massacres in Port-au-Prince carried out by gangs allied with the FAd'H forced their cancellation. In early 1988, Leslie Manigat, an exiled intellectual with political ambitions, was chosen President in an election run by the army. Most voters had stayed home. Only months later, Namphy overthrew Manigat and then, in return, was sent into exile in September 1988 in a coup led by junior officers of the FAd'H but orchestrated by another General, Prosper Avril, who was installed as president.

Facing mounting opposition at home and pressure from abroad, Avril left the country in early 1990 when he failed to move the country toward elections. Avril was succeeded by a prominent judge, Ertha Trouillot, according to constitutional guidelines. Careful oversight from within Haiti and by the international community resulted in the political acquiescence of the army, enabling Trouillot's provisional government to hold successful national elections in December 1990.

The runaway victor of the 1990 presidential race was Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Catholic priest and charismatic personality who had gained a massive following among the country's urban and rural poor as an outspoken critic of the Duvalier and military regimes. Throughout the post-Duvalier period, Haiti had been plagued by a struggle between those vying to impose "Duvalierism-without-Duvalier" and those seeking political, social and economic reform, with various international actors, including the United States, perceived as playing influential roles in Haiti's struggle to cast off its authoritarian past. It was in this context that Aristide's victory, sanctioned by international observers, was seen as a glowing victory of the reformers.

Aristide was inaugurated on February 7, 1991, exactly five years after the demise of the Duvalier dictatorship. As an outspoken opponent of Duvalierists, the army, and the socio-economic status quo, he was despised by most of the country's elite's and the military. His efforts to initiate political, economic and social reform were interrupted in late September when a violent military *coup d'etat* forced him and his government into exile, turning Haiti once again into a police state and an international pariah. Over the next three years, turmoil engulfed the country as an estimated 3,000 - 5,000 supporters of Aristide and his government were murdered, and countless others cowered in fear of the *defacto* regime. Tens of thousands took

to boats going north, fleeing violence and repression not seen since the darkest days of Duvalier rule.

Although the coup reversed the gains of those seeking reform, those gains were not erased. The coup leader, General Raoul Cedras, and his co-conspirators succeeded in grasping power, but they failed either to consolidate their hold on it or to gain the national and international legitimacy they desperately sought. The strength and depth of Haitian support for the Aristide government, the legitimacy granted to it as a result of the 1990 elections, and the refusal of international actors to abandon Aristide and embrace the defacto rulers ultimately enabled Haiti's nascent process of change to get back on track.

Following three years of international attempts to unseat the defacto government through combinations of negotiations and economic sanctions, in September 1994, a United Nations-sanctioned and United States-led multinational military force entered Haiti, much to the delight of the vast majority of Haiti's population, and forcefully escorted the leaders of the defacto military government from power. Shortly thereafter, President Aristide and his elected government was restored to power. The government was restored to a country deeply traumatized by the attempted return to past. It was also restored to a country whose overall human, institutional, economic and physical infrastructure had disintegrated considerably from the indignities of the recent period of military mis-rule.

In the presence of international peacekeepers, trainers, program-planners, economists, and election monitors, Aristide completed his five-year term of office. Some of the trauma of the past was treated when the Haitian army was dissolved, a new national police force was created, national elections were held, and attempts to rebuild the shattered country got underway. Yet, when Rene Preval was inaugurated as Aristide's successor in February 1996, Haiti remained a country whose future was very much burdened by its past.

History *Self-study questions:*

1. At the time of Haiti's independence, more than 50 percent of its population had been born in Africa. What impact might this have had on the evolution of Haiti's post-independence social, economic and political path, and how might this have contributed toward contemporary differences between Haiti and other Caribbean nations whose independence came much later?
2. In addition to becoming an isolated, international pariah state following independence, Haiti was also forced to deplete its treasury to pay the indemnity demanded by France and required for Haiti's ultimate diplomatic recognition by other nations. What impact did these factors have on Haiti's ability to pursue a path toward economic development in the aftermath of independence? What was their long-term impact on the country?
3. Today, Haiti is the home of an elite *classe politique* known more for its ability to resist change than for embracing it. How might Haiti's historical path have contributed to this phenomenon?
4. In 2004, Haiti - and Haitians - will celebrate the country's 200th anniversary of independence. In the context of celebrating the bicentennial, what historical issues ought Haitians stress, particularly given that this will be a golden opportunity to communicate them to the rest of the world?
5. The Haitian army has a long legacy of active involvement in Haitian politics, often serving as the arbiter of who gets to - and stays - in power. Today, Haiti does not have an army; rather, it has a recently created national police force (HNP) under civilian jurisdiction. A new national police force created under the US Occupation rapidly transformed itself into the Haitian Armed Forces (FA'dH) and re-instituted the army's role as political arbiter. Are conditions different or similar today regarding a potential parallel evolution of the HNP? Identify key indicators to help determine whether or not the HNP is evolving in the same way as the FAd'H.

## Government and Politics

### Political Dynamics

Since the inception of the Haitian state, the country's political system has displayed certain enduring dynamics. Traditionally, Haitian politics have been the domain of the army and urban elites. Other potential political actors, with the occasional exception of the Catholic Church, have been excluded from political life. As the country's twin power-brokers, the national security forces and the urban elites usually developed mutually beneficial alliances to achieve their political and economic objectives. Political analysts have referred to this alliance as the aforementioned *politique de doublure*, with elites in the background, pulling the strings of power.

Typically, Haiti's leaders have been anointed or self-anointed, as opposed to rising to leadership based on ideas, work, or merit. As a rule, political movements led by charismatic leaders have dominated the country's political life. Political parties have tended to be either absent or bereft of longevity or large constituencies of supporters. Without exception, Haitian politics have focused on one office - the presidency. For generations, individuals have aspired to this single jewel in the country's political crown. Elective offices other than the presidency have little or no importance in and of themselves. Rather, they exist for little more than rewards, patronage, and prestige.

The quest for political power seems to have given rise to two enduring political axioms. The first is win - and win big, with the means justifying the end. The second is should one lose, the task becomes to undermine the winner, with the means once again justifying the end. In a political system based upon these twin axioms, layered over with the politics personality, not platforms, and with a pattern of little tolerance for dissent, there is no tradition of political negotiation, grace in victory, or being part of a 'loyal opposition.'

Patterns of political leadership in the *Republique d'Haiti* have resembled those seen in a dynastic monarchy. Leaders have a long history of attempting to extend their terms in office at will. Many have succeeded. Some, including most recently both Francois and Jean-Claude Duvalier, have given themselves lifetime mandates as *President-a-vie*. Limits on power, particularly as prescribed by the country's constitution or laws, have been ignored by the will of force, symptomatic of the well-known Haitian proverb, "Laws are made of paper, and bayonets are made of steel." Free and fair elections have been a rare commodity, and, until recently, the peaceful transfer of power from one officeholder to another was virtually unknown.

Since the 1986 ouster of the Duvalier dictatorship, the 1987 ratification of a new constitution, and the 1994 dissolution of the army, however, these patterns have begun to change, albeit slowly. Although the jury remains out in terms of how far changes in Haiti's political dynamics

will go, whether they will be sustainable, and if they will result in enduring democratic governance, some changes are worth noting. For example, significant changes have occurred in political participation. Since 1986, those traditionally excluded from meaningful participation in Haiti's political life - the urban and rural poor - have begun to exert an independent political voice. That participation was especially seen in the 1990 election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Since then, improvements in political participation have included the election to local and national offices of Haitians from modest backgrounds. As a result, some erosion of the traditional power of the urban elites who compose the country's *classe politique* is in evidence.

The successful transition of elected presidents experienced in 1996 from Aristide to Preval, and in 2001 from Preval to Aristide, represents another change in Haiti's political dynamics. The deeply enrooted "presidentialitis" of Haitian politics and the corresponding limited balance of powers within the Haitian political system remains evident, however, in spite of the 1987 constitutional make-over of how government in Haiti would be created and function. Political parties, though evident in large profusion on the political landscape, remain either weak institutions dominated by self-anointed leaders, or structures more akin to the manifestation of the successful political movement of a charismatic figure than a durable political institution. The former is characteristic of the so-called parties grouped at present under an opposition organization called the *Convergence Democratique (CD)*, whereas the latter appears to apply to the ruling party, *Fanmi Lavalas (FL)*, created by Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

### The Constitutional Framework

The 1987 Constitution, overwhelmingly approved by popular referendum, declares the intent to establish and maintain democracy in Haiti through the lens of ideological pluralism, electoral competition, and the separation of powers. Mindful of the political dynamics outlined above and the perfidious abuse by leaders of past constitutions, the framers of the 1987 version incorporated articles stipulating that it can be amended only with a two-thirds majority approval by two consecutive sessions of the National Assembly. They also ban a sitting president from initiating and enacting amendments during his term of office, along with the practice of amendment by popular referendum. The constitution was applied - or suspended - selectively by military governments between 1987 and 1994. With the reinstatement of democratically elected government in 1994, the constitution has also been fully reinstated. Since 1994, governmental actions as a rule have been bound by the constitution and justified, at times not without controversy, by what is written in that ambitious and complex set of laws. Significantly, debate around the legitimacy of a government's actions now tends to revolve around considerations of their constitutionality.

Key constitutional provisions seek to reshape Haiti's governmental system and counteract certain political traditions. Specifically, the constitution reduces presidential power through various checks and balances and decentralizes government authority, creating elected councils for local government. It specifies provisions for an independent judiciary, abolishes the death penalty, and focuses on the protection of civil rights through restrictions on the arrest and

detention of citizens. The 1987 document calls for a career civil service based on merit, separates the police from the army and placing the former under civil jurisdiction, and recognizes both French and Creole as official languages.

Among constitutionally mandated institutions to operate or oversee certain key governmental functions, the creation and functioning of the one mandated to organize and run national elections has proven particularly problematic. Specifically, the constitution calls for a Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) to conduct elections, paving the way for the creation of a permanent CEP from members nominated by elected officials in departmental-level institutions following the inauguration of the first democratically elected president. Although the latter event occurred in 1991, successive attempts at organizing a CEP according to constitutional guidelines have failed. As a result, Haiti remains without a permanent electoral council, and attempts on numerous occasions to reconstitute even a provisional council have been so fraught with political power struggles that elections have repeatedly been thrown off their constitutionally-mandated schedules due to the inexistence of a functioning CEP.

### Governmental System

Haiti's complicated system of decentralized governance is premised on the composition and functioning of a series of executive and legislative bodies that correspond to the country's three principal geopolitical units: departments, municipalities, and communal sections. At each geopolitical level, the executive and legislative units are in juxtaposition to provide a system of checks and balances.

Starting at the smallest of the units, voters in each of the 565 communal sections elect to four-year terms a three-member **Communal Section Administrative Council (KASEK)** and a seven-to twenty-five member **Communal Section Assembly (ASEK)**. ASEKs serve a parliamentary function, charged with advising and assisting the KASEKs. The KASEKs are responsible for administering the affairs of the communal section and, as such, serve as the executive branch of local government. ASEKs also nominate justices of the peace and appoint a representative to the Municipal Assembly, the next highest legislative level of government. At this writing, both ASEKs and KASEKs are constituted nationwide.

Each of Haiti's 133 municipalities has both a **Municipal Assembly** and a **Municipal Council**. The assemblies are composed of one member per communal section, plus a town delegation whose members are elected to four-year terms. Municipal assemblies serve an essentially parliamentary function, overseeing the three-member Municipal Council whose members are elected to a four-year term and function in an executive role. The president of the Municipal Council serves as mayor. At this writing, Municipal Councils are constituted nationwide, with Municipal Assemblies not yet fully constituted all over the country.

The legislative and executive bodies for each of Haiti's nine departments are the **Departmental Assembly** and the **Departmental Council**, respectively. The assembly is constituted first,



comprised of one member from each Municipal Assembly within the department. The Departmental Assembly in turn elects three people to serve four-year terms on a Departmental Council. Members of the council do not have to be chosen from among assembly members. In addition to its role in electing members to the council, the Departmental Assembly nominates candidates for the CEP and judges for the courts of appeal and the courts of first instance. It also selects a representative to serve on the **Interdepartmental Council**. The nine members of the Interdepartmental Council become members of the **Council of Ministers**, which also includes the prime minister and his cabinet of ministers. Representatives of the departmental assemblies who become members of the Council of Ministers carry ministerial rank and voting rights on issues of governmental decentralization and development. At this writing, neither Departmental Assemblies nor Departmental Councils are fully constituted nationwide. As a result, there is not yet a fully functioning Interdepartmental Council.

The **executive branch** is headed by a **president** elected by popular vote to a five-year, non-renewable term. Presidents can be elected to two, non-consecutive terms, however. The president names a **prime minister** who, once confirmed by the National Assembly, heads the government. He or she selects a council of ministers or cabinet and appoints secretaries of state. The president presides over the Council of Ministers, which must be composed of no fewer than 10 members. At this writing, there are 16 ministries in the government of Haiti, including the portfolio held by the Prime Minister. They are: Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development; Commerce and Industry; Culture; Economy and Finance; Environment; Foreign Affairs; Haitians Living Overseas; Interior and Territorial Collectivities; Justice and Public Safety; National Education, Youth and Sports; Planning and External Cooperation; Public Health and Population; Public Works, Transportation and Communication; Social Affairs; and Women's Affairs. The president also appoints representatives to coordinate and control public service functions in each department, excluding public safety. At this writing, the President of Haiti is Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The Prime Minister is Yvon Neptune.

The **legislative branch** is headed by the **National Assembly** composed of a **Senate** and a **Chamber of Deputies**. Three senators from each department are elected to staggered six-year terms, with one-third of the 27-member Senate coming up for election every two years. The eighty-three deputies are elected from smaller electoral districts determined by population distribution. Large urban areas can be represented by no more than three deputies. Deputies are elected to four-year terms.

The **judicial branch**, also decentralized, is based on an ascending order of courts, beginning at the municipal level. The lowest level court in the system is the **Court of the Justice of the Peace**. Justice of the peace courts are located in each of Haiti's municipalities. Each court has at least one judge. Justices of the peace hear civil law cases, including those that involve limited sums of money, and landlord and tenant disputes. They also hear criminal cases where the penalty does not exceed six months in jail. **Courts of First Instance** are either civil or criminal tribunals located in major cities. Cases heard by these courts include those sent by the inspector general of the Haitian National Police. **Courts of Appeal** are one step above the

Courts of First Instance. Located in Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaives, and Cap Haitien, the appeals courts have a president and four or five judges. They hear both civil and criminal cases, including appeals from the courts of the justice of the peace. Haiti's highest court, the **Court of Cassation**, or Supreme Court, consists of a president, vice-president and ten judges. It generally functions in two chambers with five judges each. When hearing appeals or pleas concerning the unconstitutionality of laws or decrees, however, the highest court convenes in a single chamber.

The several specialized courts that complete the judicial system are a Superior Court of Auditors and Administrative Disputes and special courts to oversee matters concerning property rights, juveniles, and labor conflicts. The Senate may constitute itself into a High Court of Justice to preside over crimes of state treason, embezzlement or abuse of power involving high state officials. In 1996, a School of the Magistrature opened in Port-au-Prince to provide judicial training for current and new judges. Haiti has derived the formal aspects of its legal system from Roman law, the Napoleonic Code, and the French system of civil law.

### Current Political Issues

Enactment of the twin axioms of Haitian politics mentioned above have thrust the country into a prolonged political crisis characterized by legislative gridlock, bitter feuding among political actors, electoral controversy, and thus far ineffective attempts at crisis resolution. The ability of the Government of Haiti to enact constitutional election mandates, build public institutions, reform the state, govern effectively, and respond to citizen's needs has been severely hampered as a result.

The roots of the current crisis go back to January 1997, when the leader of the governing Lavalas political movement and then-former President Aristide announced the formation of a new political party, the Lavalas Family (FL). Immediately, the movement splintered into two camps: those who gravitated to the FL and President Preval; those who stayed loyal to the previous vehicle of Lavalas mobilization, the OPL (renamed Organization of People in Struggle from Lavalas Political Organization), and Prime Minister Rosny Smarth, whose block still held the majority of seats in the National Assembly. The rivalry between the two camps quickly became bitter.

Successively, 1997 and 1998 saw tarnished off-year legislative elections, the resignation of Smarth, the inability of the divided Senate to confirm Preval's several nominations, and the failure of the National Assembly to legislate. Although the Senate eventually confirmed Jacques Edouard Alexis in December 1998, the action came too late for steps needed to organize the legislative elections required in late 1998. When the terms of most legislators elected in 1995 expired in early 1999, Preval cited constitutional provisions and issued a decree dismissing the entire Chamber of Deputies and most of the Senate. The detractors of Preval, Aristide, and the FL labeled this move as a "political coup d'etat."

Political negotiations during 1999 eventually led to enough compromise between the feuding groups for the creation of a CEP to organize the now-delayed elections. Following two postponements, elections for 19 Senate seats, 72 Chamber of Deputy seats, all of the country's 133 Municipal Councils, and all of its 564 KASAKs and ASEKs were held on May 21, 2000. In all, 30,000 candidates from 37 political parties or groups ran for the 7,500 offices up for grabs. Turnout at the polls was high among voters, political parties, and domestic and international election observers, including an observation mission from the OAS. Approximately two-thirds of all registered voters cast ballots.

A pall was cast on the apparent successful electoral exercise almost immediately, from two different camps. First, even before the announcement of preliminary results, representatives of four of the five political parties that nominated candidates for offices across all nine departments (*the OPL, Espace de Concertation (EC), the Assembly of Progressive National Democrats (RNDP)* and *the National Christian Movement of Haiti (MOCHRENA)*) began to cry foul. The fifth party, *FL*, did not join the chorus, particularly as it already appeared that it had fared well in the vast majority of the races. Perhaps *FL* had done too well, suggested the OAS, the second camp to sound an electoral alarm. Challenging the methodology used by the CEP to tabulate votes in the Senate races that gave all 19 Senate seats to the *FL*, the OAS stated that as many as 10 seats should move to second round run-offs, according to the electoral law.

The controversy over the disputed Senate seats heightened as the opposition parties joined the chorus, several members of the CEP resigned citing governmental intimidation, and the government refused to abide by the OAS requests for run-offs, in spite of the efforts of that organization - joined by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) - to find a way out of the emerging electoral morass. Escalating the crisis further was the automatic suspension of assistance by the European Union following this type of electoral dispute, along with the suspension of bilateral aid by the US government. Not long afterward, these were followed by similar steps taken by such international financial institutions as the World Bank. Nevertheless, toward August 2000, the government ratified the results of the disputed May 2000 elections, giving the *FL* virtually unfettered power at all levels of government in Haiti.

The next political marker on the horizon was the presidential election scheduled for late 2000. With the *FL* nominating Jean-Bertrand Aristide as its candidate, the four protesting parties came together to join a united front - called the Democratic Convergence (CD) - and attracted a handful of minor parties to their side. The coalition opted to boycott the presidential elections. In late November, without the presence of OAS monitors, Jean-Bertrand Aristide easily won his second term as President of Haiti. The *FL* also won all nine Senate seats contested in the same election.

As the February 7, 2001 Presidential Inauguration approached, the crisis deepened. The boycotting CD, ignoring Aristide's entreaties for participation in the event, chose to stay away and name from within its own ranks a "provisional president," who almost immediately surprised

many Haitians by calling for the recreation of Haiti's army. On inauguration day, with few international leaders in attendance, Aristide gave an address that set forth a detailed plan for national development and called for Haitians to work together for the achievement of the plan, supported by the international community. The CD responded by issuing its call for a clean slate, or "zero option," with the resignation of the government and the entire electoral process beginning again from square one.

With the political temperature in Port-au-Prince rising, various international actors extended their involvement toward a hopeful resolution of the crisis. In late 2000, the Clinton Administration dispatched former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, who met with Aristide and came up with an eight-point plan for addressing the crisis. Upon its ascension to office in January 2001, the Bush Administration endorsed the eight-point plan. Concurrently, the Assistant Secretary General of the OAS, often in the company of CARICOM officials, shuttled back and forth to Port-au-Prince, also seeking a way to resolve the political gridlock. By mid-June, with the government responding to several of Lake's eight points and committing itself to a resolution of the electoral dispute through the resignation of the senators in disputed seats followed by new elections, the OAS cautiously spoke of the impending resolution of the crisis.

Now cast as *the* opposition group, the CD, however, maintained its hardened position, refusing to accept government offers for ending the crisis. In August 2001, political violence in the form of an attack by suspected former members of the Haitian army on several police stations put a damper on the resolution of the crisis. Following an armed assault on the Presidential Palace in mid-December and a subsequent anti-CD explosion by FL-partisans that resulted in burning and looting of CD-affiliated properties, any immediate hope for crisis resolution came to an end.

As Haiti moved into 2002, it confronted the specter of growing political violence and chaos around the country, putting it on the brink of social, economic and political disaster. The government lacked resources to govern and increasingly perceiving itself on the defensive as the dispute over a handful of senate seats seemed to snowball so that no steps it took or actions it proposed seemed sufficient to break the log jam. Remaining a thorn in the government's side were a twin - and some claimed entwined - set of opponents: the politicians affiliated with the CD, which held fast to its zero option strategy, and the apparent partisans of the old guard seeking change through violence.

With feelings of desperation and insecurity spreading among the populace, and people expressing greater and greater frustration with the overall political process and all the country's political actors, the OAS, again with crucial support from CARICOM, took action. In early 2002, it passed Permanent Council Resolution 806 that provided the organization a mandate to work more actively toward the resolution of the political crisis by independently inquiring into the events of December, seeking reparations to damages done to organizations and individuals who suffered damage as a result of those events, and establishing a special OAS Mission in Haiti for strengthening democracy there.

In September, the OAS followed CP. Res. 806 with CP. Res. 822. This resolution took an even more active role, setting forth a road map for crisis resolution with a specific mandate and deadline for setting up a CEP to lead toward elections. CP. Res. 822 also tackled security-related issues related to climate for elections, including the increasing spread of weapons among Haiti's people. The new resolution also de-linked the suspension of international aid to the government of Haiti from the mired political process.

By the middle of 2003, however, resolution to the crisis had not been achieved. CP. Res. 822 remains the operational framework for crisis resolution, in spite of the fact that the immediate deadline for the formation of the CEP was missed when hard core opposition groups, expressing security concerns, refused to match government actions of nominating representatives to the body. Increased episodes of sporadic political violence, particularly in the area of the Haiti - Dominican Republic border, once again threatened to untrack diplomatic efforts toward crisis resolution. On a more positive note, in mid-May the Government of Haiti achieved an agreement with the IMF that holds the promise of enabling multilateral funders to recommence operations in the country and provide the government with much needed support. Some analysts believe that a renewed flow of development assistance to the government will play a positive role not only in helping to fend off an approaching humanitarian crisis in Haiti, but also in resolving the long-festering political crisis.

Government and Politics *Self-study Questions*

1. Haiti's penchant toward "Presidentialitis" in politics will be difficult to overcome. How might this enduring characteristic of Haitian politics be weakened or overcome, particularly in view of the fact that this is a key goal of the 1987 Constitution?
2. Immediately following the ouster of Jean-Claude Duvalier, a huge cry arose across the country Haiti - largely excluding Port-au-Prince - for the effective decentralization of the state. How did the 1987 Constitution respond to this national desire? What has been the track record for achieving it thus far? Is decentralization a good idea? What are - and remain - the principal constraints to decentralization of the Haitian state?
3. In view of the strong legacy in Haiti of political movements as opposed to political parties; of self-nominated and charismatic leadership; and of the twin political axioms elaborated in the text, is working to form US-type political parties the best insertion point for international actors seeking to help Haiti strengthen its democratic institutions? Why or why not? What other insertion points might be considered?
4. Another legacy of Haitian politics has been the system of *politique de doublure*. Do the relationships of Haiti's current political leadership with the country's elites follow a similar or different pattern to the phenomenon of 'politics by understudies?' What is the pattern?
5. What are the factors of Haitian politics that have been contributing to the country's long-standing, current political impasse? In view of those factors, what might be the most effective strategies for international actors seeking to help Haiti out of its political morass?

## Economy

### Agriculture

Haiti's largest single economic sector is agriculture. Today's agricultural economy grew out of a slave plantation system during the colonial period that was based on the export of agricultural products and precious hardwoods. Little processing of these products or manufacturing took place in the colony. Haiti's economy was transformed into a mixed agricultural economy following the revolution, when slaves abandoned the mostly destroyed plantations. In that mixed economy, small farmers, or peasants, often working multiple farm plots of an acre or so in isolated hilly areas, produced cash crops, particularly coffee, along with food crops using slash and burn methods of farming. Agricultural commerce, particularly the export of coffee, was controlled by a small group of merchants based in coastal cities and towns. Working through intermediaries, they purchased peasant-produced coffee and other crops like cacao and cotton, exporting them to Europe and North America.

Though few large plantations survived the revolution, sugarcane remained an important crop, grown both by small holders and by some large holders, particularly following the US Intervention in 1915 and the removal of the Haitian constitutional ban on foreigners owning land. In addition to a post-intervention investment in sugarcane, US companies also established large holdings for bananas, rubber and sisal. Following World War II, however, Haiti's banana and rubber ventures collapsed. Sisal production declined in the 1980s. While sugarcane is still cultivated, mostly on smallholdings, two or three large operations continue, struggling to remain solvent. Most of Haiti's peasant-grown sugarcane is processed in small, primitive grinding operations and transformed into cane syrup, coarse brown sugar, or country rum (*clairin*). A commercially produced rum under the label *Barbancourt* is exported worldwide.

Haiti's leading agricultural export today is mangoes, a seasonal crop. Like coffee, mangoes are a peasant-produced crop, bought and exported by coastal-based merchants and their intermediaries. The more significant basis of Haiti's agricultural economy today is the production of food for domestic consumption, produced on smaller and smaller plots by peasants who plant mostly corn, beans, sorghum, rice, and tubers. Rice is also planted in large, irrigated holdings in the Artibonite Valley. Livestock, particularly chicken and pigs, are also produced, usually on small farms and in limited quantities. Haiti's pig population is still rebounding from its extermination in the 1980s as a result of an African swine fever outbreak.

Although agriculture still engages some 45 percent of the working population, the country does not produce enough food to feed itself. Haitian agriculture, particularly that of the small farmer, has suffered severely from lack of investment and assistance. Some 90 percent of Haiti's government agronomists are based in Port-au-Prince. What little assistance Haiti's small farmers receive is more likely to be provided by foreign non-governmental organizations than by the Haitian state. The vast majority of Haitian farmers work their land using only a machete and

a hoe, depending on rainfall in an environment increasingly devastated by deforestation, erosion, and resultant changing microclimate patterns. Farmers, with little or no access to agricultural credit, except at usury interest rates often reaching 20 percent per month, have begun to move off the land in large numbers. A surprising amount of Haiti's limited quantity of low-lying land appears fallow, sometimes a result of emigration by the middle class owners. Much precious farmland in the area of Port-au-Prince has been lost to urban expansion.

### Industry and manufacturing

Like agriculture, Haitian industry and manufacturing grew out of the raw product-exporting plantation system, where investment for product transformation occurred principally in the colonizing country. Following the revolution and the creation of Haiti's decentralized peasant society, Haitian manufacturing developed in small towns and villages where craftsmen produced practical articles from local materials. The legacy of this decentralized, homegrown manufacturing is seen in a portion of today's Haitian craft sector, which remains located in villages and towns nationwide.

Another portion of today's economically important craft sector, however, is situated in factories in Port-au-Prince, where it comprises a segment of the country's industry and manufacturing sector. That sector, composed principally of light assembly operations, grew mostly in the 1980s as a result of international aid, Haiti's proximity to US markets, its cheap and ample labor, and preferential investment and trade arrangements. The size of the light assembly sector has ebbed and flowed according to economic and political developments. Under the dictatorship of Jean-Claude Duvalier, the sector was stable, employing an estimated 60,000 - 80,000 workers. Following the ouster of Duvalier, and particularly during defacto military rule from 1991 - 1994 when an international embargo was placed on Haiti, the sector declined precipitously, employing as few as 7,000 workers in 1994. Today, while the sector still largely based in Port-au-Prince is on the rebound, it has not reached levels of previous development largely on account of the country's deteriorated infrastructure and lack of investor confidence. Recent industrial park investment by Dominican Republic business interests in the Haiti-DR border areas, however, raise the prospect of both the decentralization and expansion of the light assembly sector.

One element of Haitian manufacturing that seems to boom constantly is the construction sector. Fueled in large part by remittance money sent by family overseas and by revenue from such nefarious activities as drug trafficking, Haiti appears to be a country with a permanent housing boom - from cinder block pillboxes to hillside mansions. This labor intensive sector offers Haitians a great deal of formal and informal employment, and fuels thriving cement and building materials import and manufacturing operations.



## Other Sectors

Haiti's mining sector, somewhat robust for two decades when based on bauxite, collapsed in the 1980s when deposits were exhausted. Today it is small and undeveloped. Mining ventures are limited principally to some extraction of gold and copper deposits in the north of the country, and small growth in the domestic sea salt sector in response to growing international demand for natural products. Haiti's large deposits of high quality limestone have begun to attract the attention of investors as demand for that product expands in international markets. Haiti has no oil or natural gas deposits.

The country meets its energy needs through high-cost importation of oil and gas, and through some hydroelectricity production, notably at Peligre along the Artibonite River. Much of the population's basic energy needs are met through the consumption of low-grade kerosene, also imported, and of charcoal, produced from Haiti's dwindling national fuel wood supply. Although charcoal production has become a major cause of Haiti's environmental deterioration, alternate sources of energy have not been successfully introduced.

Given the country's rugged and natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, and geographic location, Haiti should have a vibrant tourism sector. For brief periods in the mid-20th century, the sector showed signs of flourishing. In more recent times, however, political unrest and repression, poverty, the fear of AIDS, and the general un-development of facilities and the transportation infrastructure of the country have combined to limit this sector. Tourism in Haiti today has become mostly the domain of Haitians overseas returning home for periodic visits. As that population grows, becomes economically established and ages it offers great promise for the revitalization and growth of tourism in Haiti.

While surrounded on three sides by water, Haiti has only a limited and primitively developed fishing sector. Small fishermen fish coastal waters from sail and rowboats, using hand cast nets and woven fish traps. The quadruple detriments of limited investment, over fishing waters nearest the coast, use of sailboats - and the country's most skilled watermen - to achieve migration goals, and environmental degradation of fishing grounds because of land-based erosion have worked together against the development of Haiti's fishing industry

## Commerce and Trade

A tremendous contrast in Haiti's commercial sector exists between its formal and informal sectors. The former, represented by licensed business and banking services found mostly in Port-au-Prince and the country's secondary cities, is quite limited when compared with the informal sector of higglers (*madan sara*), small producers, hustlers and various service providers that dominate Haiti's economy. The under-capitalized informal sector that provides at least some form of employment and revenue to vast numbers of Haiti's citizens has been estimated recently as having at least 6 or 7 times the capital assets of the country's formal sector. Unfortunately, however, because these assets are not recognized as a source of

collateral for investment capital, they are not effectively used as a motor for Haiti's economic development. Recently, however, a number of the country's commercial banks have 'discovered' the informal sector and its reliability as a customer for credit, making loans as small as \$100 to informal sector business people.

The split of Haiti's economy between formal and informal sectors is symptomatic of the division in Haiti between its economic 'haves' and 'have nots.' Various estimates usually state that some 67 percent of the country's economy is controlled by four percent of its population, with a corresponding 20 percent of the economy allocated to 70 percent of the population.

Haiti's principal formal trading partner for both exports and imports is the United States. Haiti also has strong trading ties with the Dominican Republic, although as much as 2/3rds of the commerce that flows across the shared border is not recorded. Haiti maintains trade relations with Europe, particular France, and has recently become a full member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which holds the promise of heightened trade between Haiti and the mostly English-speaking CARICOM members. Haiti's membership in CARICOM is also already resulting in heightened advocacy for, involvement in, and support of Haiti by CARICOM members in various international fora. Haiti benefits from preferential US trade agreements through its inclusion in the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBI). In early 2003, legislation for the Haitian Economic Recovery Opportunity Act (HERO) was introduced in the US Congress to provide Haiti with a broader range of trade preferences, similar to those recently accorded Africa's most underdeveloped countries.

#### Development Assistance and External Aid

Given Haiti's status as the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, it has been the recipient of considerable amounts of development assistance and external aid, particularly during the period of Jean-Claude Duvalier's rule and for several years following the 1994 restoration Aristide's elected government. Aid has come in the form of loans and grants from bilateral and multilateral donors, including the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. The United States and the European Unions are Haiti's major bilateral partners, although both have suspended direct assistance to the government since 2000, as have the multilateral donors. The suspension of aid has devastated the government's ability to provide services to citizens since an estimated two-thirds to three-quarters of the government's investment budget is supported by foreign aid.

Canada and Taiwan are also important donors, as are the governments of France and Germany. Much assistance has also entered Haiti through non-governmental organizations and religious groups. This assistance tends to support smaller scale projects in diverse locations in the country, many of which, however, do not sustain them selves when the assistance ends.

Perhaps the most significant - and sustainable - form of development assistance and external aid received by Haiti comes from Haitians themselves, in the form of the country's vast number of

Haitians living overseas, or Diaspora. Conservative estimates of the annual value of money sent home by family members reaches \$600 million. The estimate increases annually. Remittances are used to cover such basic individual and family needs as health care, education, food, and lodging. In addition to sending money, Haitian's overseas also send goods, or arrive laden with them on their visits home.

Economy *Self-study questions*

1. When Haitian peasants migrate to the Dominican Republic and become involved in agriculture there, they have a reputation as successful farmers. Yet, in Haiti, peasants usually fail to support themselves and their families successfully from their farming efforts. What might be some of the key reasons for these differences? What ought to happen in Haiti to help make farming - and farmers - improve their chances of success? Or, is Haiti just too far gone to be worth major investment in small-farmer agriculture?
2. In view of Haiti's dilemma of depending on charcoal as a cheap and ready energy source vis-à-vis its environmental deterioration and the disappearance of fuel wood supplies, what should - and can - be done?
3. Throughout rural Haiti, cocaine is called 'manna' as in something wonderful that has come down from heaven. The quality of life of many Haitian villagers has improved dramatically because they have intentionally - or unintentionally - gotten their hands on some manna and sold it for a relatively handsome sum. Has drug trafficking become such an important element of the economic survival of Haiti - and individual Haitians - that a successful attempt to stem the flow would result in considerable unrest and suffering among Haitians? Might Haitian officials be reluctant to join forces with the US in cracking down on drug trafficking because of the detrimental impact its success might have on Haiti's economy and society? If so, what steps might the US take to mitigate against this?
4. In The Mystery of Capital, Hernando De Soto's book on worldwide informal economies and the need to 'formalize' their assets so they can be used as collateral for loans and investment, examples from Haiti abound. What might be the economic impact in Haiti of the loosening up of the hundreds of millions of dollars currently tied up in poor people's hands because they have been excluded from the formal economy? Is formalization a realistic option for the Haitian poor?
5. Although the US Congress has yet to pass HERO - and its passage is far from assured - what impact might additional trade preferences for Haiti, particularly in the apparel industry, have on the country's economic well-being? While Haiti may be helped by this kind of individually-received preference, will it be hurt if it is simply lumped in with other countries in regional - or hemispheric - trade pacts, or has to compete with them (such as NAFTA), particularly in terms of its ability to penetrate the US market? If so, why is it in the long-term interests for the US to enter into trade agreements that otherwise might hurt Haiti?

## Culture

In distinct contrast with the cloud cast over Haiti by its problems of political instability and economic underdevelopment, the country is brightened by a dynamic, authentic, and well-developed cultural life. The cultural expression at the root of today's Haitian society has emerged to a great extent from the interplay over time of two distinct cultural hearths: French and African. Initially, they stood apart, separated by language, skin color and power. The drums and chants of the slave had little in common with the violin and waltz of the colonists. To a certain extent, the two expressions - African and French - still stand apart, especially as a function of social status and class. To a certain extent, things French still have a higher status than things non-French, or Haitian. Yet, to perhaps an even greater extent, the parallel French and African cultural heritage of Haiti has merged into a vibrant Creole culture that is uniquely Haitian.

Fundamental to that merger and uniqueness is Haiti's national language - Creole (*Kreyol*). Born as a language of command between French-speaking overseers and African slaves with diverse linguistic backgrounds, it has evolved into a Haitian language, sharing its roots with both French and the language of African ancestors. Perhaps ten percent of Haitians speak French today. All Haitians speak Creole. It is not at all untypical for conversations that begin in French to transition to Creole once the ice is broken or the topic is truly engaged.

Haitian culture today is far from static. It continues to evolve, not just as a function of its French and African roots, but also as a function of the country's larger presence on the world stage and, most importantly, as a function of the influences of its sons and daughters living overseas, particularly in the English-speaking United States.

### Literature

Haitian literature is still almost exclusively written in French, though efforts are being made to translate works into Creole and to establish Creole as a literary language with its own novels, poems and plays. Haiti has had some writers of international status, including Jean Price-Mars, who evaluated African heritage in Haitian culture; Jacques Roumain, a poet, essayist and novelist; Jacques-Stephen Alexis, who wrote novels about Haitian society; and Rene Depestre, noted for elegant French poetic creations. As an indication of the cultural interplay today between Haitians at home and Haitians overseas, however, the best known contemporary Haitian writer, Edwige Danticat, was transplanted to New York from Haiti as a child. Her works often examine the impact of her Haitian roots on her experience of emigration and being an immigrant.

For a society with a high degree of illiteracy, Haiti supports a number of publishing houses in Port-au-Prince. Self-published works are common. It is said that Haiti publishes a higher number of books per capita than its more literate Caribbean neighbors.

## Art

Haitian paintings have received worldwide attention since the 1940s when a school of naive or primitive artists developed in Cap Haitien and Port-au-Prince. Multitudes of artists - mostly self-taught - have followed in the footsteps of Haiti's primitive masters, whose paintings grace the walls of top rate museums and galleries around the world. The primitive influence is also seen in wood carvings, metal sculpture and tapestries, particularly the sequin studded vodou flags that have become very popular in recent years. Although formal galleries abound in and around Port-au-Prince, individual artists often display their wares on street corners and by hotels. It is not uncommon to see an artist walking through a crowded street carrying a painting. Haiti's streets are routinely decorated with ambulant art, as one of the most vivid expressions of the country's artistic tendencies is seen on the multitude of brightly painted passenger vehicles - the crowded *camionettes* and *tap-tap* - each bearing a different motif and message according to the interests and expressions of the owner and the artist.

## Music

Haiti's *camionettes* and *tap-taps* are also known for blasting pulsating rhythms of Haitian music as they move slowly in congested city traffic. Prospective passengers often listen before they decide to climb onboard, preferring to choose a vehicle vibrating with their favorite rhythm - be it *kompa* or *rasin* - or their favorite musician or band - be it Sweet Mickey, King Posse, Koudjay, Boukman Eksperyans, or one of a multitude of others. Or, showing an eclectic taste, prospective passengers may wait for a vehicle blasting out ragga dance hall music or reggae from neighboring Jamaica, or the sounds of Haitian and Haitian-American rappers, particularly the Haitian refugee - or '*Fugee*' - from New York City, Wyclef Jean, giving their verses in varying mixtures of Creole and English.

The interplay of music between Haiti and Haitian-Americans, though a relatively recent development, has its roots in the travels of Haitian orchestras to New York beginning in the 1960s, shortly after large numbers of Haitians began arriving in the United States. The concert path expanded to other venues, such as Boston and South Florida, and today goes up and down the US east coast. Over the course of time, individual musicians - and complete bands - made the US their home. Now they are joined by a new generation of Haitian-American musicians - sometimes from their own families - who have begun reversing the migratory path by traveling to Haiti to perform.

Haiti's music - and musical culture - has been, and remains, diverse. Without a doubt, the single greatest influence on Haitian music has been the drum - and drumming - brought over from Africa. In the aftermath of the Haitian revolution, the drum that had been silenced by the French slave owners could be silenced no more. In addition to the pulsating urban rhythms already mentioned, Haitian music includes the quieter, acoustic sounds from the countryside, where accordions, guitars, drums and bamboo flutes take over from electric instruments that cannot

find electricity. It also includes the slow Haitian meringue sounds popular along the border, in the north of Haiti, and with an older generation.

### Recreation

Although the intense poverty of Haiti can rob its citizens of opportunities for relaxation and recreation, numerous recreational occasions and activities do exist, and elicit the participation of millions of Haitians. Foremost among them is the Lenten carnival - widely celebrated annually regardless of whatever else may be going on in the country. Intensely held over the three or four days preceding Ash Wednesday, carnival itself is preceded by weeks of small street parades led by *ra-ra* bands in cities, towns and villages throughout the country. Especially during the summer months, Haitians travel around the country to villages celebrating their patron saint day. Manifesting the syncretism that has occurred between Catholicism and Vodou, village festivals usually also have a vodou undercurrent. In sports, most Haitians are true fanatics of the national sport - soccer. Time stops in homes with a radio or a t.v. when a soccer match is broadcast. Villages around the country with only a small stony field to offer are worn clean of grass by dedicated players. Finally, a different kind of sport - cockfighting - is popular throughout the countryside, particularly to gambling enthusiasts. \_

Culture *Self-study questions*

1. Haitian cultural expression, particularly at musical and sporting events and during carnival, tends to be highly participatory, with even the most distant spectators displaying animated expressions of involvement. How do you see this as different from participation at US cultural events? How will you feel in this highly participatory cultural environment?
  
2. Often, Haitian bands are quite large, with a number of ‘hangers on’ who seem to do little than play a hand-held percussion instrument. In view of the steady and large migratory flow of musicians to and from Haiti, coupled with the fact that over time many Haitian musicians have found ways of remaining in the US, what will be your approach to trying to determine whether or not a visa applicant is an essential member of the band or more of a member of the band’s entourage?
  
3. A Haitian craftsman once told me that it seems that the more difficult things get in Haiti, the more beautiful, creative, and fanciful are the expressions of its craftsmen and artists. Why do you think this may be the case?
  
4. How do you think Haiti’s African heritage has influenced various aspects of the country’s cultural expression? Why do you think Haiti’s cultural expression is much more deeply African than that of other Caribbean countries?



## Social Issues

The first thing often told to foreigners by Haitians is that Haiti is really two countries: the Republic of Haiti and the Republic of Port-au-Prince. This is a short hand way of explaining that their homeland has been a country of great social and economic division and dichotomy. By the 1980s, these divisions had become so systematized and marked, that leading scholars referred to the country as one practicing a form of “Caribbean apartheid.” As these dichotomies evolved, distinctions of social status had become so pervasive that they touched on such factors as location or geography, language, religious practice, health care, skin and facial features, and marital status. The social dichotomies of Haiti even reached into how one’s status was identified on a birth certificate.

As a result of this dichotomization of society, an individual fell into the category of being someone who was either “official” or “tolerated.” Some of the specific dichotomies of Haiti’s Caribbean apartheid, with the ‘official’ feature first have been:

- Location/Geography: *moun lavil* (city dweller) - *moun andeyo* (hick)
- Language: French - Creole
- Religious Practice: Catholic - Vodou
- Health Care: Hospital/Western Medicine - Healer/Traditional “Leaf”  
Medicine
- Skin/Facial Features: Light/European - Black/African
- Marital Status: Marriage in Church - Informal Union (*plasaj*)
- Birth Certificate: Citizen (*citoyen*) - Peasant (*peyizan*)

That Haiti became a place of such rigid contrasts is not surprising when one considers the social divisions during the colonial period, based heavily on race. In Haiti, by French practice, individuals, if not ‘pure’ black or ‘pure’ white, were neatly fit into one of 64 categories according their racial mix going back at least four or five generations. Strict rules of behavior, exclusions, inclusions and privileges that even included prescribed articles and colors of clothing were applied according to one’s racial admixture. With independence, only one element of this racial hierarchy disappeared - that at the very top, as the whites were expelled. All else, with its systems of inclusions and exclusions, remained in place.

Leaders for social change in Haiti in the 1970s and 1980s, focused on the necessity of changing the poor’s own deeply engrained, negative and inferior perceptions of themselves - a kind of blame the victim complex. Church leaders at this time spoke of the need to restore the poor’s sense of personal dignity and self-worth. By the late 1980s, the change sought by social leaders had begun. The ouster of the Duvalier dictatorship followed by a new constitution that validated the legitimacy of Creole and empowered all Haitians with an equal right of inclusion at the ballot box put important change in motion, threatening the status quo. That change was starkly represented in 1991 by new popularly elected leadership that used Creole in official functions

and that ultimately did away with the dual birth certificate system. For those on top of the system, this kind of change was perceived as more than a menace. In 1992, a respected Haitian sociologist attributed the violent military coup d'état that ousted President Aristide to the fact that those accustomed to managing the country toward their own well-being could not accept the fact that the vote of their servants counted the same as theirs.

Social change may be the slowest of all change. As a rule, throughout Haitian history, the poorer, blacker, and less urbane an individual, the lower his or her status. The richer, lighter, and more urbane an individual, the higher his or her status. In Haiti, today, the engrained social and economic dichotomies, while not changing much over 20 years, have nevertheless begun to change. Those whose lives have improved due to the changes are not content to go backward. As such, conflicts over issues of social change have been at the root of much of Haiti's stormy political and economic history in the recent past.

### Women

In Haitian households, women are sometimes referred to as the *poto mitan*, or weight bearing center post, of society. Particularly in poor and middle class families, it is the woman who takes responsibility for raising the children, tending to health and education issues, engaging in commerce, and managing the household and family finances. In upper class families, it is usually the woman of the house who manages the servants. In rural areas, women and men play complementary roles, with men assuming primary responsibility for farming and women assuming primary responsibility for marketing.

Women of all walks of life have played critical roles in recent years in the country's public life. A woman who served as Provisional President, Supreme Court Judge Ertha Pascal Trouillot, led the country to its first free and fair elections in 1990. For years, women have held top management positions in the country's private banks. Women's associations and organizations have been active in urban and rural Haiti for decades. Women of all classes played key roles in fomenting social change initiatives since the 1980s. In recognition of the important role played by women in Haitian society, the government created a Ministry for Women's Affairs for the first time in 1995.

### Civil Society

During the post-Duvalier era, this expression has come into widespread use, but its use varies widely according to the diverse points of reference of those who employ it. As a rule, organized civil society refers to the array of organizations that are not of the government. Civil society organizations can be rural or urban; local, national or international; narrow or broad in their constituency, aims, and activities. As a rule, they are durable, democratically structured, and formally organized, and, as a result, often seek and receive some form of formal legal recognition. This distinguishes organized civil society from more informally organized groups and associations that tend to emerge in response to specific contexts and then melt away later.

Hence, this also distinguishes most civil society organizations from Haiti's so-called popular organizations, which tend to be less formally organized and lack democratic structure. Such popular organizations as the gang-type *zenglendo*, *san maman*, and *chimeres* have a tendency to engage in non-democratic or criminal activities, and either ascribe themselves - or are ascribed to - political and other leaders or groups. In Haiti, organized civil society is commonly composed of professional associations, trade unions, business and trade associations, poor people's organizations, women's associations and groups, small farmer's associations and grassroots groups, neighborhood and community associations, and church-sponsored associations or groups.

Organized civil society at Haiti's grassroots became extensively developed starting in the 1970s, when associations and organizations comprised of poor people throughout rural and urban Haiti began to be formed, in large part as a result of organizing efforts undertaken by the Catholic Church. With the fall of Duvalier, these associations grew and multiplied, in some cases to regional or national organizations, including several peasant movements. As this happened, they became outspoken leading forces for social, economic, and political change, developing alliances and liaisons with others seeking this goal, including some rising populist political leaders.

Haiti's grassroots civil society organizations played an instrumental role in the election of Aristide in 1990. With Aristide's election, numbers of civil society leaders either left their organizations to join government efforts, or became clearly allied with them. As a result, grassroots civil society organizations were at the brunt end of reprisals meted out by the Haitian army and its allies following the late 1991 coup d'état. Between 1991 and 1994, the grassroots component of Haiti's organized civil society suffered and was weakened considerably. It has still not fully recovered from this traumatic period.

In more recent years, Haiti's organized civil society, like the society writ more large, has tended to become politically polarized. In the past several years, certain elements of the country's civil society have attempted to play the role of broker of political disputes, but without great success, at least in part because of this polarization. As Haiti's political landscape became more complex after 1986 and again after 1994, and civil society became a more high profile actor in the country's political life, major elements of that element of Haitian society became politicized.

### Education

Education is officially compulsory for children between the ages of seven and 13. Because of lack of school facilities and staff, the difficulties confronted by many families to cover school costs for all children in the family, and the occasional need for children to stay away from school and work at home, only an estimated 50 percent or lower of the children in this age group actually attend school. Estimates of adult illiteracy range from around 80 to 40 percent. One reason for this range is due to the fact that increasing numbers of Haitians are becoming at least partially literate in Creole, for which there has been a standard orthography for only 20 or so

years. Measuring literacy rates in Creole is a very inexact science. Most schools around the country are either church-run or private schools, of extremely varying quality. Public schools tend to be under-equipped and ill staffed. Haiti's curriculum traditionally has been based on a French model. The leading private schools, in Port-au-Prince, have produced an educational elite, while most of the society remains un- or under educated. Haiti's State University is small and underdeveloped. A number of private universities, including a Catholic university, have been established in recent years. Haitians who can afford to send their children to the United States, Canada, or France to attend university.

### Health and Welfare

Haiti has the highest rate of infant mortality in the Americas, and the lowest average annual adult life span. Malnutrition is rampant and diets are notoriously insufficient. Infectious diseases abound because of improper shelter, unsafe water, unsanitary living conditions and limited health care services. Malaria is quite common. The incidence rate of AIDS, now estimated at 5% of the population, is among the highest outside of sub-Saharan Africa. In recognition of the growing problem of AIDS in Haiti, the country has become one of only two Caribbean countries slated for inclusion in the special \$15 billion international AIDS assistance program recently authorized into US law. The country suffers from a chronic shortage of health care personnel - in both cities and in rural areas. Many rural areas are served only by international medical missions of volunteer doctors that visit infrequently. Typically, government's track record for providing for the health and welfare of its citizens has been miserable.

### Labor Force

Statistics on Haiti's labor force, like many statistics about Haiti, are difficult to gather. An estimated 60 percent of Haitian workers remain engaged in farming despite a marked shift away from that sector by migrating farm families in recent years. Services and government employ the bulk of the remaining labor force, with manufacturing following. Unemployment is estimated at between 60 and 70 percent. Some two thirds of Haitian workers participate in the country's informal economy. Given the limited opportunities for employment in Haiti, significant numbers of laborers have sought work in the Dominican Republic or elsewhere, including the Bahamas. As many as 500,000 Haiti and 'Dominico-Haitians' now reside in the Dominican Republic.

Haiti's minimum wage, fixed in Haitian gourdes, is now worth the equivalent of little more than \$2.00 a day. Since 1986, the exchange rate of the gourde to the US dollar has risen from 5:1 to as high as 40:1 in recent times. The minimum employment age in all formal sectors is fifteen years. In rural areas, children enter the agricultural economy at a young age, working on the family farm. In urban areas, children enter the informal economy at a young age, engaging in activities that can augment family income. Some children, particularly those sent to the cities from rural families ostensibly for their education, are used as low paid or unremunerated servants, especially in middle and lower class households. Called *restavek* (stay with), these

children can be subject to the kind of abusive treatment often experienced by human beings who are trafficked.

### Religion

The official religion of Haiti is Roman Catholicism, but the constitution allows the free choice of religion. Some 75 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, and about 15 percent is Protestant. The Catholic clergy is now strongly “Haitianized” through the appointment of priests, nuns and bishops. During the 1980s, the groups of clergy pushed the Catholic Church toward playing a high profile and progressive social and political role, through its radio station, leadership training programs and national adult literacy program. When he was elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide was a member of Haiti’s Catholic clergy. He has since left the church. In recent years, the social and political role of the Catholic Church has diminished. However, the Conference of Catholic Bishops, as the presiding body of Haiti’s Catholic church, occasionally issues statements related to national social, economic and political issues. The Vatican is represented in Haiti by a Papal Nuncio, who also serves as the ceremonial head of the Haitian church.

A majority of Haitians are believers of vodou, a religion whose gods (*loas*) are derived from West African religions. For many years, clergy in Catholic and Protestant churches spoke out against vodou. Most practitioners, however, do not find any contradiction between vodou and Roman Catholicism. Catholic antipathy toward vodou has cooled considerably in recent years. A great deal of religious syncretism has occurred between the two religions. Francois Duvalier used certain vodou symbols extensively during his repressive rule in order to surround himself with a cloak of power. In early 2003, the Haitian state, for the first time ever, granted formal recognition to vodou as an organized religion.

A number of Protestant sects are found in Haiti. Methodists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians established churches in Haiti in the early 19th century. New sects, including Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Mormons came to Haiti during and after the US Occupation. In 1999, leaders of several more conservative Protestant churches created a Christian political party (MOCHRENA). A few Haitians have embraced Islam, evidenced by the presence of a mosque in Port-au-Prince.

Social Issues *Self-study questions*

1. As a country once labeled by many as having a form of “Caribbean apartheid,” Haiti begs comparison with South Africa. What is it about Haiti’s social structure led it to be susceptible to being compared with South Africa. What developments in Haiti over the past 15 years indicate that it is either making a transition away from its own version of apartheid or failing to do that?
  
2. Since independence, the Haitian state has not developed or enacted a social contract with the Haitian people. Investments by the state in such key contract areas as education, health, and welfare have been minimal. Still today, Haiti has a government that describes itself in populist terms and presents itself as seeking to develop and enact a social contract with the nation. What do you see as the principal obstacles to the Haitian state developing and enacting out a social contract with the Haitian people?
  
3. What might be the social - and political - implications of the formal recognition as a religion recently granted to vodou?
  
4. A recent development in Haiti responding to Haiti’s political impasse has been the emergence of an organization portrayed as an umbrella group of some 164 civil society organizations that will help work toward a solution of the impasse. While many have responded favorably to this development, others have responded negatively or skeptically, expressing doubts about its sincerity and objectivity. What criteria would you use to determine whether-or-not such an umbrella group claiming to be representative of civil society is indeed representative? What criteria would you use to try to determine the umbrella group’s sincerity, objectivity, and potential for making a positive and lasting contribution to crisis resolution?
  
5. *Restavek* has received a great deal of attention lately as a social issue, with some claiming that the practice is an insidious form of human trafficking and slavery, while others claim that in Haiti’s desperate reality it is simply a strategy used by the poor to try to gain access to education for their children and, hence, offer them a future. While there are cases of abuse, the latter group argues, one should not throw the baby out with the bath water of this traditional practice. What social reforms might occur in Haiti towards dealing with the problem of *restavek*? Which actors should play the lead roles and what should those roles be?

## Foreign Affairs

In recent years, Haiti has occupied the world stage quite disproportionate to its small size. This was particularly the case between 1991 and 1996 when the Haitian army's coup d'état resulted in international sanctions, intense multilateral diplomacy, a refugee crisis, and ultimately, a military intervention and peacekeeping operation sanctioned by the United Nations and led by the United States. The intense attention given to Haiti at this time also included active participation in crisis resolution by the Organization of American States, member states of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and a grouping within the UN referred to as the Friends of Haiti, composed principally of Argentina, Canada, France, the United States, and Venezuela. During UN peacekeeping operations in Haiti between 1994 and 1999, the governments of 34 countries contributed personnel to the relatively small Caribbean country.

Previously, Haiti had received some prominence on the world stage, mostly as a result of its successful revolution in 1804 and especially by other oppressed populations in the Western Hemisphere and Europe. Governments of slave holding countries, however, either ignored or decried Haiti in the first half of the 19th century. The advent of the US Civil War allowed President Lincoln to grant US recognition of the nation of free slaves, more than 50 years after its independence. The US and Europe's great powers became intensely focused on Haiti in the early 20th century mainly because of the country's strategic location. In 1915, the US invaded Haiti, in part to pre-empt a similar German action, and occupied the country for 19 years. Subsequently, and until the 1980s, Haiti was fairly isolated from the world community, stemming from its cultural and linguistic uniqueness, its economic underdevelopment, and international condemnation of the Duvalier dictatorship.

### Relations with the United States

Haiti has maintained a long-standing relationship with the United States, its northern neighbor and primary trading partner for both imports and exports. The US is also Haiti's most important single source of bilateral foreign assistance and the primary target for Haitian emigration. Many US non-governmental organizations and religious groups are active in Haiti. The Haitian private sector is closely tied to the US economy.

Diplomatic interest by the United States in Haiti has been uneven. Washington's late 19th and early 20th century interest in its neighbor arose chiefly because of the country's proximity to the Panama Canal and Central America. Haiti borders the Windward Passage, a narrow waterway on which maritime traffic could be easily disrupted. During and after World War I, the US occupied Haiti and a number of Caribbean and Central American countries. During the Cold War, Washington viewed Haiti as an anti-Communist bulwark, partly because of the country's proximity to Cuba. Francois Duvalier exploited US hostility toward Cuba and its fears of communist expansion in the Caribbean basin in order to deter the US from exerting excessive pressure on his own dictatorship.

Since the 1980s, US interest has been particularly focused on curbing illegal Haitian immigration. Washington has also viewed Haiti as a transshipment point for narcotics destined for US markets. Given the country's poverty, legacy of public sector corruption, and underdeveloped public security capacities, Haitian coasts today are particularly vulnerable to international traffickers seeking to land their product there for transfer to proximate US ports of entry, notably Puerto Rico and Florida.

From the 1970s until 1987, US assistance to Haiti grew. Between 1987 and 1994, however, the flow of aid to Haiti was disrupted on several occasions, notably during the 1991-1994 period of defacto military rule. Following the intervention and restoration of legitimate government in 1994, the US added a pledge of \$458 million to the \$2.342 billion pledged by other bilateral and multilateral donors as part of a five year plan for the rehabilitation and development of the country. Unfortunately, little more than half of those funds were disbursed over that period, largely on account of the inability of the Haitian government to meet disbursement conditionalities. Since the political turmoil of 1999 and thereafter, US bilateral assistance has diminished, channeled principally through non-governmental organizations. Aid to the government of Haiti has been minimal, ceasing altogether following the May 2000 election controversy.

#### Relations with the Dominican Republic

The second-most important country to Haiti is the neighboring, the Dominican Republic (DR). An enormous amount of trade, much of it informal, crosses the border, mostly going toward Haiti. The Haitian economy has proven to be a desirable market for Dominican products. During the 1991-1994 period of international economic sanctions against Haiti's military government, the flow of goods into Haiti from the DR provided a lifeline for the defacto rulers. In terms of long-term impact that flow facilitated sustained market penetration of Dominican products as never before.

Until recently, political relations between Haiti and the DR have been strained. Since the 1920s, large numbers of Haitians crossed into the DR both informally and under contract in search of work. The resultant, perceived "blackening" of the Dominican population motivated dictator Rafael Trujillo to carry out a notorious massacre of Haitians in 1937.

From the early 1950s until 1986, Haiti provided the DR with cheap, mostly agricultural, labor through formal intergovernmental exchange. With the issue of the status and treatment of those laborers a prickly one between the two countries, that arrangement ceased with the ouster of the Duvalier regime. The troublesome issue of the recruitment and treatment of laborers has not gone away, however. In 1991, for example, US Congressional hearings focused on the abusive treatment of Haitian children in Dominican cane fields. Periodically, particularly under former Dominican President Joaquin Balaguer, Haitians were periodically rounded up and transported back to Haiti.



Although the issue of Haitians in the DR remains a difficult one, since the mid 1990s, official governmental relations have improved. The two governments now explore cooperation on such cross-border issues as the environment, drug trafficking, and economic development. Haitians continue to flow into the DR, pushed by conditions at home and pulled by opportunities in the DR, particularly, in recent years, in its construction sector. Today, an estimated 500,000 Haitians or people of Haitian parentage live in the Dominican Republic.

### Relations with Other Countries

Ties with other Caribbean nations, limited until 1995, became more robust thereafter when Haiti restored relations with Cuba and then became a full member of CARICOM. Historically, Britain and France strove to limit contacts between their Caribbean dependencies and Haiti. Haiti's cultural and linguistic distinctiveness also prevented close relations with Caribbean neighbors. Haitians migrated to Cuba to cut cane for decades prior to the advent of the Castro government. When Castro came to power, many Haitians remained in Cuba. Today, Creole is Cuba's second language with many Cubans of Haitian descent living in the eastern half of the island.

Considerable Haitian labor migration to the Bahamas occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Since the late 1990s, relations between Haiti and the Bahamas have become strained over the continued migration of Haitians to the Bahamas. Subsequently, the Bahamas enacted programs for the return to Haiti of undocumented and new immigrants. Other Caribbean relations have not been strained.

In 1994, CARICOM troops were the first international contingent to land in Haiti. In more recent years, CARICOM governments have been particularly active in pushing the OAS to work aggressively toward a resolution of Haiti's political and economic difficulties. Haiti's relations with Spanish-speaking countries in Central and South America, limited historically, have expanded in recent years, as Haiti became part of a broader movement away from military rule in the hemisphere. Relations intensified in the 1990s as Venezuela, Argentina and Chile played leading roles in the international effort to restore democratic governance to Haiti following the 1991 coup.

Other countries important to Haiti include the primary donor countries of Canada, France, Germany and the Republic of China (Taiwan). Relations with France also remain important on account of historical and cultural ties. Increasingly, European assistance to Haiti has been coordinated under the auspices of the European Union, which by 1998 was the largest single donor of aid to Haiti. Haiti has enjoyed a supportive relationship with Canada, particularly the French-speaking province Quebec, home of a significant number of Haitian émigrés.

Haiti's membership in international and multilateral organizations includes the UN and its associated organizations (Haiti was a founding member), the OAS, the Inter-American

Development, the World Bank, the Lome Convention, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization.

### Foreign Affairs Self-study Questions

1. In the aftermath of the successful military intervention of Haiti in 1994, the consensus among US actors was that the US would not engage in an exercise of 'nation-building' in Haiti - in spite of the welcoming atmosphere given by most Haitians, but rather it would execute an exit strategy based largely upon an electoral calendar. In retrospect, what could - and should - have been done differently?
2. Some have come to think that 'with friends like these, who needs enemies,' with regards to the role international actors have played in Haiti at various times since the ouster of Duvalier in 1986. In retrospect, what have been the strengths - and the weaknesses - of international involvement in Haiti over the past 17 years? How would you address the weaknesses?
3. One salubrious effect of the 1991 coup d'etat is that it resulted in bringing the country out of its isolation, particularly among its Caribbean neighbors. How have developments over the past 10 years or so validated this statement? What do you see as the direction of Haiti's relations with its various Caribbean neighbors?
4. One of Haiti's special Caribbean neighbors is the country with which it shares a border - the Dominican Republic. In spite of the upswing in relations between the two countries over the past 10 years, there remain many obstacles to the relationship, with immediate and longer-term challenges to be confronted - individually and together. Outline the improvements in Haiti-DR relations over the past 10 years and indicate the obstacles. What are some actions that can be taken now to begin confronting both the immediate and long-term obstacles in those relations? What positive role can the US play in this regard?
5. Some characterized the 1994 UN intervention in Haiti as a US move wearing a UN fig leaf. How do you view the relationship today between the US and the OAS with regards to Haiti, particularly regarding the latter's involvement in seeking a solution to Haiti's enduring political crisis?
6. One long-stated foreign policy objective of the Aristide government is for Haiti to be treated as a partner among equals in its international relationships. Why has the Government of Haiti had to make this a stated objective of its foreign policy, and what are the chances that it will succeed?

## Haitians Overseas

Large scale, non-agricultural emigration from Haiti began in the 1950s, with France, Quebec in Canada, the United States and, to a lesser extent, French-speaking Africa as the principal destinations. At first, those leaving were members of Haiti's educated upper and middle classes, seeking a better standard of living abroad. Skilled professionals migrating to Africa helped to establish some of the first United Nations technical missions there. Migration to the US of doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, and others was principally to New York and, to a lesser extent, Boston and such other cities as Chicago and Philadelphia. Not long following the rise to power of Francois Duvalier in 1957, Haiti's "brain drain" grew in size. Opportunities for professional advancement in Haiti, already limited, decreased as political repression increased.

During the 1960s, semi-skilled Haitians from the middle and lower urban classes joined the exodus, leaving in increasing numbers. The flow continued during the 1970s and 1980s, in the US principally to the New York City area, and in Canada and France principally to Montreal and Paris, respectively. In the US, as increasing numbers of Haitians established themselves in New York, family members and friends from back home visited them. Between 1956 and 1985, the US government issued over one million entry visas to Haitians. It is estimated that some 50 percent of these visa holders overstayed their time with the hope of establishing permanent residence in the US

A new phase of migration from Haiti to the US began in 1972 when several sailboats carrying Haitians arrived in South Florida. Participants in this new migration phase - called "boat people" - were more likely to be poorer Haitians who could not afford the exit visas or the airplane tickets of the "Boeing people," or better off Haitians who continued to migrate further north. Many boat people were from rural areas. They sold valuable possessions, including farm animals and land, to raise the amount charged for the 700-mile trip to Florida. When they arrived in South Florida they did not, as a rule, travel very far from their point of entry. As a result, from the 1970s, Haitian enclaves in Miami and nearby South Florida cities began to grow in number and size.

During the 1970s and 1980s, as political repression continued and the country sank deeper into poverty, some 50,000 to 80,000 migrants arrived in Florida. In 1981, up to 1,000 Haitian boat people arrived in South Florida every month. Some arrived directly from Haiti while others reached indirectly, usually through the Bahamas. An unknown number perished at sea. Incidents of Haitian bodies washing up on South Florida beaches were not uncommon.

Haitians seeking entry into the US were viewed by the government as 'economic migrants,' and, as such, usually returned to Haiti when intercepted at sea by the US Coast Guard under the terms of an interdiction agreement between the US and Haitian governments. Many Haitians who arrived in the US managed to slip past authorities. Those who did not were often detained in the Krome prison facility in South Florida. Being black, mostly poor, and speakers of Creole

- a largely unknown language, placed Haitian immigrants in a difficult position in the United States. During the 1980s when the US Center for Disease Control named Haitians as one of several source populations for the new and frightening AIDS disease, the US Haitian population experienced particularly difficult times.

In 1990, the flow of boat people temporarily ceased following Aristide's election and the widespread expectations that it would lead to decreased repression and increased economic opportunity. By late 1991, however, Haitians were once again taking to the high seas and heading north, in larger numbers than before on account of the renewed violence and repression in Haiti that came with the military coup that ousted the Aristide government. During late 1991 and early 1992, some 37,000 Haitian boat people were interdicted on the high seas by US authorities. Thousands more fled in between 1992 and September 1994, as the violence and repression continued. With the removal of the military regime that September, however, the outpouring came to an almost complete halt. When economic and political conditions once again began to deteriorate in Haiti after 2000 and hope for improved conditions diminished, a small, but steady stream of boats were once again being interdicted in the high seas or discharging their poor, desperate passengers on one of South Florida's beaches.

The Haitian Diaspora in the United States continues to grow by more than the occasional boatload of refugees who manage to elude government authorities. Family and friends of Haitians already established in the US continue to arrive by air, many seeking permanent residence. Most importantly, the US Haitian Diaspora is growing through its own internal growth, as a second or third generation is born and raised within Haitian-American families throughout the United States.

In the past two decades, Haitians have moved beyond the traditional destinations of metropolitan New York City and South Florida, branching out to other cities up and down the East Coast and beyond. Presently, for example, Atlanta is experiencing a significant boom in its Haitian population. As they have become established in the US, Haitian-Americans have joined the ranks of other US immigrant populations that sought opportunity where it was found. Current census data indicate varying numbers of Haitian-American populations in all 50 states.

Haitian-Americans have begun to make a discernible mark as a US immigrant group, both in terms of their numbers and their talents. Several currently hold elected state office in Florida and Massachusetts, and others serve as mayors and city council members in South Florida communities. As increasing numbers of Haitian-Americans join the US political process, their voice to influence US policy toward and programs in Haiti grows louder. Haitian-American physicians, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, entertainers, sports figures, diplomats, and community activists are all joining elected officials as leaders in their fields.

With the growth of Haiti's US Diaspora has emerged a two-way flow, with first, second, and even third generation Haitians returning 'home' to visit family and friends, and to get to know their roots. Many Haitian-Americans seek ways to reconnect to Haiti in a way that can

contribute to the country's development. The US Haitian Diaspora sends cash transfers to Haiti of at least \$600 million annually, an enormous sum and enormously important source of support for those who have remained in Haiti.

Parallel to the growth of the Haitian Diaspora in the US has been the emergence of interest by the Haitian government in "Haitians Living Overseas." As part of that interest in the so-called 'Tenth Department,' the government has begun to take steps aimed at attracting members of the Haitian Diaspora to Haiti in celebration cultural events, particularly the two hundredth anniversary of Haitian Independence throughout 2004, and as investors in the Haitian economy.

### Haitians Overseas *Self-study Questions*

1. Historically, the large-scale immigration of populations from any single country to the United States have had positive - and negative - impacts both in the sending country and the US destination. What are the positive and negative impacts - in Haiti and the US - of the considerable migration to the US of Haitians?
2. Many Haitian-Americans have expressed an interest in gaining voting rights in Haitian elections. To date, however, the Haitian government has not moved toward the exercise of that option. Why do you think this has been so, and what impact might Haitians Living Overseas have on the electoral - and political - process in Haiti?
3. The track record of Haitian-American investment in Haiti has been mixed. While many Haitians have tried to invest in the country, few have been able to sustain their investment. Why do you think this has been the case? What might be done to improve it?
4. In recent times, particularly when Jean-Claude Duvalier fled Haiti in 1986 and when Jean-Bertrand Aristide was elected in 1990 and then restored to office in 1994, some Haitians of the Diaspora endeavored to return home. Few ended up staying. What do you think this was the case? Can you foresee a time when significant numbers of Haitians in the Diaspora will try to return home again? If so, when and why; if not why, not? What conditions would have to exist in Haiti to attract large numbers of Haitians to return and to be able to remain in Haiti?
5. For the most part, over the past 25 years or so, Haitians have been characterized as 'economic migrants,' not 'political refugees.' Why do you agree or disagree with that assessment? How should people taking boats for South Florida be classified today?

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#### **Website Resources**

Each of the web sites listed below will serve as a source of valuable information on Haiti, and as a gateway to the exploration of other sites:

[www.haiti.org/embassy](http://www.haiti.org/embassy)

The site of the embassy of the Government of Haiti.

[www.windowsonhaiti.com](http://www.windowsonhaiti.com)

A site with recent developments in Haiti and on Haitian culture, music and more. \_

[www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/haiti.html](http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/haiti.html)

Gateway to a comprehensive Haiti site that includes historical information, book reviews, and a lively Haiti list serve.

[www.Haiti-USA.org](http://www.Haiti-USA.org)

An examination of Haiti's historical contributions to the US and contributions made today by Haitians in America.

## About the Author

Dr. Robert Maguire became the Director of Programs in International Affairs at Trinity College in Washington, DC in September 2000 following a career with the US Government as a specialist in Latin America and the Caribbean, grassroots development, democratization, and political economy. He is best known for his work on Haiti, which has spanned more than two decades, mostly as Caribbean Foundation Representative for the Inter-American Foundation (IAF). In 2000, Maguire accepted a temporary position at the Department of State as Haiti specialist in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Dr. Maguire has also worked on Haiti issues as a visiting scholar at Johns Hopkins University and as the Director, since 1994, of the Georgetown University (now Trinity College) Haiti Program. Since the early 1990's, he has served as the Haiti Seminar Chair at the Foreign Service Institute. Among his publications are *Bottom-Up Development in Haiti* and *Haiti Held Hostage: International Responses to the Quest for Nationhood, 1986 to 1996*. He has traveled to Haiti more than 100 times and extensively within Haiti, and is fluent in Creole.

Maguire, a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Dominica, West Indies, has earned a Ph.D. in geography from McGill University, an M.A. in Latin American & Caribbean Studies from the University of Florida, and a B.A. in Social Studies Secondary Education from Trenton State College. At Trinity College he is responsible for the overall creation, development and administration of academic programs and curricula in international affairs, and teaches occasional courses in world geography, the Caribbean, geopolitics, and international migration.

# Indonesia

## A Self-Study Guide



George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center

School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute

U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Indonesia* is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Indonesian issues related to history, geography, culture, economics, government and politics, international relations and defense. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Indonesia is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the bibliography. Most the bibliographic material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or the major public libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide: Indonesia* was prepared by Dr Greg Fealy, a research fellow and lecturer in Indonesian politics at The Australian National University, Canberra, and a former C.V. Starr Visiting Professor in Indonesian Politics at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D. C. He has also worked as an Indonesia analyst at the Australian Office of National Assessments. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

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November 2003

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Bibliography and Guide to Further Reading

## THE LAND

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic nation. It stretches some 5,000 kilometers across the equator and comprises, according to a 2003 government survey, 18,000 islands and islets, about 6,000 of which are inhabited. These range in size from Kalimantan (Borneo), which is almost as large as Alaska, to tiny islands little bigger than a football field. The five main islands are Kalimantan, Sumatra, Papua (Irian Jaya), Sulawesi and Java. It also has 30 minor archipelagos. Indonesia's total area is 5,193,250 square kilometers, of which 2,027,087 square kilometers is land and 3,166,163 square kilometers is sea. It is the sixteenth largest nation in the world in land area.

Indonesia lies in a region of great geological instability. It sits astride three major continental plates – the Australian, Indian and Pacific – and has at least another 17 significant plate fragments within its borders. Tectonic forces result in frequent tremors and earthquakes. It also has high levels of volcanic activity. Most of Indonesia's active volcanoes can be found in an arc running from West Sumatra, down through Java and Bali, and terminating in the Maluku archipelago (Moluccas). Java, alone, has 112 volcanic centers, of which 15 are active.

Indonesia's chief weather pattern is that of the equatorial double monsoon (rainy season). The western monsoon brings heavy rain falls; the eastern monsoon brings a relatively dry season. The climate changes roughly on a six-month cycle. The wet season is from about November to March and dry season is from June to September. The intervening periods experience mixed weather conditions. Average temperatures in Indonesia are generally classified by geographical position: 28°C for coastal plains; inland and mountain areas 26°C; and higher mountain areas 23°C, depending on the altitude. Average humidity ranges from 70% to 90%.

The archipelago has abundant mineral wealth. It has tin, gold, copper and nickel in large quantities as well as extensive coal reserves. There are vast deposits of oil and gas, found in subterranean basins. The soils and agriculture of Indonesia vary enormously. In small areas of the archipelago, such as Bali, Java and north Sumatra, volcanic activity has produced rich soils capable of supporting intensive agriculture, particularly that of wet-rice production. Other parts of west and central Indonesia have less favorable agricultural conditions; the least fertile land is found in the east of the archipelago. The poorer regions usually have dry-field and swidden agriculture. Forests are another major resource. Indonesia has the second largest rainforest reserves in the world, after Brazil, but widespread logging in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua in recent decades has greatly depleted this resource.

The name 'Indonesia' is a combination of two Greek words: "Indos" (India) and "Nesos" (islands). Curiously, the term was first coined by an English anthropologist in the late nineteenth century and was picked up by "native Indonesians" studying in The Netherlands in the 1920s. It was then adopted by the nascent nationalist movement in the



late 1920s in preference to the other common non-Dutch term for the archipelago, “Nusantara” (Malay for “archipelago”).

## **THE PEOPLE**

Recent statistics put Indonesia’s population at somewhere between 203 and 230 million. In truth, no one knows the exact number of Indonesians, and most figures represent an informed estimate based on incomplete census data and statistical surveys carried out by government agencies. The most widely quoted and probably the most accurate figures are those from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS). The Bureau’s 2000 national census put Indonesia’s population at 206,264,595. In early 2002, BPS revised this figure upwards to 216.9 million. The World Bank estimated Indonesia’s population in 2002 to be 211.7 million. Regardless of the precise figure, Indonesia has the world’s fourth-largest population after China (1.274 billion), India (1.029 billion) and the United States (286 million).

Indonesia is ethnographically highly diverse. Scholars estimate that it has between 150 and 300 ethnic groups (depending on how they are classified). By far the largest ethnic group is the Javanese, who are thought to make up about 40% (85 million) of the total population. Javanese are concentrated in Central and Eastern Java. They are the most politically dominant of ethnic groups, with four of Indonesia’s five presidents being Javanese. The next largest grouping is the Sundanese of West Java who constitute about 15% of the population (30 million). Other major ethnic groups are the Madurese of East Java (6% or 13 million), the Minangkabau of West Sumatra (5% or 11 million), the Balinese (2.6% or 5.8 million) and the Bugis of South Sulawesi (2.3% or 4.8 million). Indonesia also has significant “foreign” minority communities (often referred to as *nonpribumi*, meaning “non-native”). The largest of these are the Chinese, who are said to number about three million, and the Arab community, most of whom are of Yemeni extraction.

Archaeological evidence suggests two major sources for Indonesia’s ethnic groups: Melanesian and Austronesian. The Melanesian (Papuan) migration began about 5000-7000 years ago and spread across much of the archipelago. Melanesians were later displaced in the western and central parts of Indonesia by Austronesians, a seafaring Mongoloid people from Taiwan or South China, who appear to have begun settling in the region from about 4000 BC. Little is known of the interaction between the Melanesians and Austronesians but it is thought that genetic mixing in many areas resulted in the modern-day ethnic diversity of Indonesia. The dark skin, curly hair and broad facial features of the Melanesians is more evident in eastern Indonesia, most notably in Papua, whereas the “Han”-like appearance of the Austronesians, including paler skin, Mongoloid eyes and straight hair, is apparent in western and central ethnic groups.

This racial legacy has also influenced the linguistic development of Indonesia. About 350 languages are present in contemporary Indonesia: 200 Austronesian and 150 Melanesian. The main local language groups are Javanese, Sundanese, Acehnese, Balinese, Sasak (Lombok) and Buginese (South Sulawesi). Since independence in 1945, Indonesia’s

national language has been Bahasa Indonesia, which is based on Malay but also has significant borrowings from Arabic, Dutch, English and Portuguese. Although there is no official policy to eradicate local languages and dialects, the use of these among the younger generations is in slow decline.

Indonesia's current population growth rate is 1.6%, one of the lowest in Asia. For much of the archipelago's modern history, however, the population grew at an extraordinarily fast rate. For example, in 1939, Dutch officials put the population at 70 million. This figure had blown out to 97 million in 1961 and by 1981, it was 155 million. Thus the population had more than tripled in 42 years. The figures for Java, which is about the size of Alabama, are even more striking. It was estimated to have about three million residents in 1800, 28 million in 1900, 41 million in 1961, 83 million in 1971 and 108 million in 1990. Today, Java has one of the highest population densities in the world: 945 people per square kilometer (the US has 30 people per square kilometer, Japan 317 and South Korea 409). Although Java forms just 7% of Indonesia's land area, it is currently home to about 60% of the nation's population. See Table 1 for information on the population distribution across Indonesia.

Life expectancy in Indonesia is 67 years, compared to 77 years in the US. Infant mortality is 42 per one thousand and maternal mortality during childbirth 395 per 100,000 births; these are among the highest in Asia. The official statistics for the number of HIV/AIDS sufferers is put at 52,000 (1999), though widespread under-reporting suggests that the real figure is far higher.

In terms of religious identification, Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country. In the 2000 census, 88% of Indonesians (about 191 million) declared their faith to be Islam. Indeed, there are more Muslims in Indonesia than in the entire Arab world. Some care is needed in interpreting this figure as all citizens are required to nominate one of five state-recognized faiths. Many Muslims may have only a nominal adherence to the faith. Other religious affiliations are: 6% Catholic (13 million adherents); 3% Protestant (6 million); 2% Hindu (4 million) and 1% Buddhist (2 million).

**Table 1: Population by Province (2000 BPS Census)**

	<b>Province</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Islamic Region of Aceh)	3,930,905
2	Sumatra Utara (North Sumatra)	11,649,655
3	Sumatra Barat (West Sumatra)	4,248,931
4	Riau	4,957,627
5	Bengkulu	1,567,432
6	Jambi	2,413,846
7	Sumatra Selatan (South Sumatra)	6,899,675
8	Bangka-Belitung	900,197
9	Lampung	6,741,439
10	Banten	8,098,780
11	Jawa Barat (West Java)	35,729,537

12	DKI Jakarta (Special Capital Territory of Jakarta)	8,389,443
13	Jawa Tengah (Central Java)	31,228,940
14	DI Yogyakarta (Special Territory of Yogyakarta)	3,052,100
15	Jawa Timur (East Java)	34,783,640
16	Bali	3,151,162
17	Nusa Tenggara Barat (West Nusa Tenggara)	4,009,261
18	Nusa Tenggara Timur (East Nusa Tenggara)	3,952,279
19	Kalimantan Barat (West Kalimantan)	4,034,198
20	Kalimantan Tengah (Central Kalimantan)	1,857,000
21	Kalimantan Selatan (South Kalimantan)	2,985,240
22	Kalimantan Timur (East Kalimantan)	2,455,120
23	Sulawesi Utara (North Sulawesi)	2,012,098
24	Gorontalo	835,044
25	Sulawesi Tengah (Central Sulawesi)	2,218,435
26	Sulawesi Selatan (South Sulawesi)	8,059,627
27	Sulawesi Tenggara (Southeast Sulawesi)	1,821,284
28	Maluku (Moluccas)	1,205,539
29	Maluku Utara (North Moluccas)	785,059
30	Irian Jaya (Papua) <sup>1</sup>	2,220,934

### Questions and Issues

1. Indonesia's ethnic diversity and dispersed archipelagic geography are often cited as reasons why the nation is vulnerable to fissiparous tendencies. Is this necessarily the case? Are there examples of other nations with similar ethnic and geographical features which have proven internally stable and socially cohesive?
2. A recent UN-sponsored report painted a bleak picture of Indonesia's environmental problems. It pointed to serious air pollution and contamination of ground water, accelerating depletion of forests and worsening shortages of potable water in many parts of the archipelago. Added to these problems were poor government monitoring and enforcement of environmental laws. Given Indonesia's population pressures and economic problems, is there any prospect of an improvement in the country's environmental outlook?

### HISTORY

<sup>1</sup> The central government has embarked on a program of partitioning Papua into three provinces: Irian Jaya (in the north); Central Irian Jaya and West Irian Jaya. Central Irian Jaya was proclaimed in Manokwari in early 2003 with little fanfare. West Irian Jaya was proclaimed in September 2003 and immediately sparked violent clashes between supporters and opponents of partition. Jakarta responded by suspending any further implementation of partition. Thus at the time of writing, the number of Papuan provinces remains uncertain, but it seems likely that by late 2004, Indonesia will formally have 32 provinces.

## Pre-colonial History

The Indonesian archipelago has had well developed and organized societies since the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. Many of these early Indonesians lived in permanent settlements with irrigated rice fields, domesticated animals, and copper and bronze implements. They were animists who believed that all animate and inanimate objects had a distinctive life force or soul and that the spirit world had control over natural events. In the more fertile areas such as Java and Bali, towns and kingdoms began to develop based around wet-field rice cultivation (*sawah*). More elaborate social and religious structures emerged as society became more organized around intensive, systematized production of rice and other crops. In dry-field (*ladang*) agricultural regions, communities were more mobile and less socially organized.

The opening of shipping routes between South Asia and China around the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and rising Indonesian participation in trade led to a spread of Indian cultural and religious ideas within the archipelago. Earlier historians believed that Indian conquerors, traders and missionaries had been primarily responsible for this Indianization of Indonesia, but more recent research points to local communities, and especially elites, initiating and encouraging this process. Undoubtedly as societies in the archipelago became more complex and wealthy, leaders were in need of more sophisticated concepts of kingship and state structure. Hindu, and later Buddhist, philosophy provided new forms of legitimacy and hierarchical organization. Rulers began to promote themselves as incarnations of Hindu deities and adopted rituals glorifying their position as intermediaries between the divine and profane worlds. Submission to the authority of the ruler came to be seen as essential to ensuring the material and spiritual wellbeing of society. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms could be found across the western part of the archipelago. Despite the growing sophistication of state structures, political instability remained the rule rather than the exception, and the rapid rise and fall of states was a feature of the early centuries AD.

Larger, more stable kingdoms began to emerge from the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The most important of these was the maritime empire of Srivijaya, which was centered on the Palembang region in modern-day South Sumatra. The Buddhist Sailendra kingdom emerged in Central Java in the same century, a lasting monument of which is the massive Borobudur temple. The largest Javanese empire was that of Majapahit, which reached its high point in the 14<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of Hayam Wuruk. The last of the powerful Java-based pre-colonial states were the sultanates of Banten, in West Java, and Mataram, centered in Central Java. Islam came to the archipelago in the thirteenth century and was spread by traders, mystics (Sufis) and religious scholars. As with Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam brought new means of political legitimation as well as a strong legal code in matters of commerce – an important advantage in the trading communities in littoral regions.

## The Colonial Period

The first European power to have colonial ambitions in the archipelago was the Portuguese. They came to Southeast Asia in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century primarily seeking to

control the lucrative spice trade emanating from Maluku. After capturing the vital port city of Melaka, on the Sumatran side of the Malay peninsula, the Portuguese soon established fortified bases in various Moluccan islands and succeeded in gaining a large share of the spice trade. Portugal's successes in the region were short-lived; local forces proved militarily superior and the Portuguese were also under growing pressure from Dutch, British and Spanish forces.

The Dutch soon became the dominant colonial power in the archipelago. They defeated the Portuguese in Maluku in 1605, thus gaining substantial control of the spice trade, and established a fortified settlement at what is now Jakarta in 1617. This latter site, named Batavia by the Dutch, became the chief trading port for The Netherlands in the archipelago. Their paramount interest in the region was economic rather than political. The Dutch East India Company (VOC), which controlled Dutch operations in the archipelago, initially sought to avoid territorial conquests, regarding them as expensive and an unnecessary distraction from the core activity of making money. Over time, however, the Dutch became gradually involved in conflicts within "native" states, and increasingly sided with local rulers or aspirants who could best safeguard or promote their colonial interests.

During the late-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Dutch built a genuine colonial state, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). As much as possible, they sought to leave in place the local aristocracy and traditional structures, thereby minimizing the cost and disruption to "native society and culture". Local rulers were, however, closely supervised by Dutch officials and colonial control over social, political and religious affairs was extensive. Compared to their British and French counterparts, the Dutch were half-hearted in their proclaimed commitment to a "civilizing mission". Education, health and welfare for the masses were neglected until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and there was little political participation allowed for non-Europeans. For most of the colonial period, the Dutch were more interested in wealth extraction than they were "enlightenment". It is perhaps for this reason that Indonesians today have little warmth or sense of allegiance to the Dutch.

### Japanese Occupation, Independence and Revolution

The three years of Japanese occupation of Indonesia were a watershed in the archipelago's history. The Japanese began attacking areas in eastern Indonesia in early January 1942 and by March 8, had forced the surrender of all Dutch forces in the colony. Many Dutch fled the colony but those remaining were interned in camps. The speed of the Dutch military collapse destroyed earlier assumptions about European superiority and Indonesians looked on in distaste as many of their former colonial masters hastily departed the country.

The Japanese propaganda and mobilization campaigns were to have a profound effect on Indonesian consciousness. The Japanese popularized a strident anti-European ideology and promoted the ideal of "Asia for the Asians". Moreover, they provided military training and intensive political indoctrination to many hundreds of thousands of Indonesians and used nationalist Indonesian leaders such as Sukarno and Hatta to

promote anti-colonial and pro-Japanese views. They also allowed Indonesians to fill senior bureaucratic and military positions as well as offering the prospect of independence. After three centuries of Dutch restrictions and perceived paternalism and condescension, these policies had an exhilarating effect on many Indonesians. Japanese rule also proved oppressive and harsh, particularly for those who were suspected of not supporting the war effort. Especially during the latter stages of the war, there was widespread deprivation and growing social unrest. Despite this, Indonesians tend to regard the Japanese occupation less critically than they do Dutch rule.

In early 1945, the Japanese allowed prominent Indonesians to begin formal preparations for independence, including the drafting of a constitution. As the war entered its final stages, Japanese officials were determined that Indonesia would not be “returned” to The Netherlands as a colony. Accordingly, news of Japan’s surrender on August 15, 1945 was suppressed within the colony to enable Sukarno and Hatta to proclaim the establishment of an independent Republic of Indonesia on August 17. The new state was based on Pancasila (literally, “five principles”), that is: a belief in God; nationalism; humanitarianism; democracy; and social justice. This religiously neutral state philosophy was a defeat for Muslim groups which had wanted Indonesia to be an Islamic state.

The declaration of Indonesian independence was dismissed by the Dutch as invalid according to international law, and they immediately set about resuming control of their former colony. Initially the task of securing the archipelago fell largely to British and Australian forces, but by late 1945, large numbers of Dutch officials and troops began to arrive in Indonesia. It was widely expected that newly established Republican forces would quickly succumb to superior allied armies and that the Dutch would soon regain full control. But the Republicans fought with tenacity, often reverting to guerilla campaigns in areas where Dutch authority was re-established. These caused extensive disruption and made it almost impossible for the Dutch to ensure the security of rural areas and transport links. Also unexpected was the success of Indonesia’s diplomatic campaign to gain international recognition of its claim to independence. Key members of the educated elite, such as Sutan Syahrir, emerged as astute and articulate advocates of the Republic’s case in international fora. By 1948, international opinion was beginning to turn strongly against the Dutch, with the United States, Britain and Australia increasingly sympathetic towards Indonesia’s claim and critical of The Netherlands tactics in reasserting their authority. For their part, the Dutch were also realizing the difficulty and cost of taming the archipelago. Eventually they relented and sovereignty was formally transferred to the Republic on December 27, 1949. Despite this, Indonesians still regard August 17, 1945 as their date of independence.

### Parliamentary and Guided Democracy

From 1950 to 1957, Indonesia had a European-style parliamentary system. Governments required a majority in parliament and were answerable to it; the president’s role was largely ceremonial. The system proved unstable, with six cabinets in just seven years. The main political fault line was between what Herbert Feith called “administrators” and “solidarity makers”. The administrators had a technocratic and economically rationalist

approach to policy; the solidarity makers were more populist and favored greater government intervention in social and economic matters. This cleavage cut across secular nationalist and Muslim politics.

Growing public disillusionment with parliamentary politics and worsening regional unrest provided an opportunity for Sukarno and the army, both of which were seeking a greater political role, to press for a more centralized and authoritarian system. Sukarno called this “Guided Democracy” and he claimed that it was more culturally appropriate to Indonesia than Western-style “50% plus one” democracy. From 1957 to 1960, he and the army, with support from the rapidly expanding Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), gradually dismantled constitutional democracy and replaced it with a presidential, executive heavy system. Sukarno claimed that Guided Democracy brought together the three main streams within Indonesian politics and society: nationalism, Islam and Communism (encapsulated in the acronym “Nasakom”). In reality, communal tensions rose to dangerous levels throughout the early 1960s. This was especially true of the PKI on one hand, and the army and Islamic groups on the other.

An abortive coup launched by leftist middle-ranking army officers and small sections of the PKI on September 30, 1965, provided the spark which ignited massive intra-communal violence. The coup was quickly put down by the army, led by then Major-General Soeharto, one of the few senior commanders in Jakarta not kidnapped and murdered by the coup plotters. The army and Muslim groups blamed the coup attempt on the PKI and moved systematically and ruthlessly to eliminate communism as a force. Killing squads slaughtered up to 500,000 PKI members and suspected communists and several hundred thousand others were detained for long periods without trial. Communism was also banned.

### Soeharto’s New Order

When Soeharto first achieved national prominence following his crushing of the coup attempt, few expected that he would soon become president, let alone one of the longest-serving heads of state of the twentieth century. Prior to the coup, Soeharto had avoided involvement in politics and lacked many of the attributes found in successful political leaders. Unlike the charismatic and extroverted Sukarno, Soeharto was a dull public speaker, had not displayed any skills in political organization and was cautious and understated in manner. But it soon became apparent that he was a masterly tactician and manipulator of those around him. He gradually out-flanked Sukarno and eventually replaced him as president in 1967. He also moved methodically against his opponents and potential sources of dissent, either coopting them into his New Order regime through the use of rewards or punishing those who defied him. His leadership style within government was often likened to that of a Javanese sultan: ministers would have to compete among themselves for his attention and favor, and his method of running government was highly personalized. Ministers’ portfolios would often overlap, enabling him to play cabinet members off against each other. Displaying loyalty and subservience to the president was just as important as performing competently in one’s portfolio.

The hallmarks of the New Order regime were stability and development. Restoring Indonesia's ravaged economy became a key priority for Soeharto. He abandoned the leftist orientation of Sukarno's Guided Democracy and welcomed Western investment and expertise. He gave extensive powers to a group of technocrats, commonly referred to as the "Berkeley Mafia", to formulate and implement policies for economic rehabilitation and growth. The regime argued that political order was an essential pre-condition for economic recovery and set out depoliticizing society while entrenching the position of the New Order's electoral vehicle, Golkar. The number of "non-government" political parties was limited to eight in the late 1960s and these parties were forced into uneasy amalgamations to form just two parties: the Muslim United Development Party (PPP) and the secular-nationalist and Christian Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). PPP and PDI were subject to tight electoral restrictions and constant regime intervention. Elections were highly orchestrated affairs designed to ensure the legitimacy of the regime. All public servants were obliged to vote for Golkar and the bureaucracy and the military often pressured communities to support the government party. In the six general elections of the New Order, Golkar gained sweeping majorities, its lowest vote being 61% and its highest 74%.

In the 1980s, the regime underwent a number of significant changes. Soeharto's personal domination reached its peak and there were few effective brakes on his exercise of executive power. Moreover, he began to indulge the increasingly avaricious tendencies of his family and close circle of cronies. This created tensions with the Armed Forces, as it found itself marginalized by the growing economic and political activities of the Soeharto family. The military's disaffection prompted Soeharto to shore up his support by cultivating Islamic community support. His regime had previously regarded Islam as a possible threat to its dominance and had firmly repressed it. From the late 1980s, Soeharto began making concessions to Islamic sentiment and appointing devout Muslims to senior positions, something he had been reluctant to do previously.

The Soeharto regime began to falter in the late 1990s. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 provided the trigger for a series of events which would eventually bring the president down. The value of the rupiah plummeted, many Indonesian companies were unable to repay their foreign debts, there was a run on banks, resulting in the closure of 16, and unemployment rose sharply. Amid all this, Soeharto, now 76, fell ill, causing widespread speculation as to his capacity to steer Indonesia through the crisis. Mounting student demonstrations from April 1998 and demands for the president to resign put the government under growing pressure. On May 21, after most of his senior ministers and the military withdrew their support, Soeharto announced that he would stand down. He was replaced the next day by Vice-President B. J. Habibie.

Despite the crisis which precipitated the New Order's demise, the regime's economic record was impressive. Indonesia averaged 7% growth from 1965 to 1980 and 5.5% growth from 1980 to 1990. Only Thailand had better growth in Southeast Asia during this period. There was also a consistent reduction in the levels of malnutrition and poverty from 1965 to 1997. Agricultural output also grew at 3-4% throughout this period, one of the highest levels anywhere in the Third World. By the late 1980s,



Indonesia had achieved self-sufficiency in rice production, something deemed impossible in the mid-1960s. Population growth was another remarkable achievement, with Indonesia shifting from one of the highest birth rates in Asia in 1965 (2.6%), to one of the lowest (1.5%) in the early 1990s. There was also a marked improvement in the quality of health and educational services. Against these positives, the regime presided over massive environmental destruction, widespread human rights abuses, endemic corruption and political stagnation.

### The Post-Soeharto Era

The catch-cry of the student protests which helped to unseat Soeharto in 1998 was “reformasi” (“reform”). The post-New Order has thus acquired the label “Era Reformasi”, a reference to the supposed implementation of sweeping political and economic reforms. There is much debate among Indonesians and foreign scholars regarding the extent of these reforms. In terms of legislative, electoral and constitutional reform, the changes have been significant. Most of the restrictions on the media and political parties were lifted within months of Soeharto’s fall. Indonesia’s first free and fair general elections in 44 years were held in mid-1999, with surprisingly little violence and intimidation. There have been a series of revisions to the original 1945 Constitution which have vastly improved the protection of human rights, provided a better balance of powers between the key institutions of state, introduced direct presidential elections for the first time in Indonesia’s history and eliminated unelected military and police representation from national and regional legislatures. A number of anti-corruption bodies have also been established, including the Wealth Audit Commission (KPKPN) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK). The nation has also embarked on one of the most radical decentralization processes ever attempted in the world. Underway since January 2001, this policy will see extensive devolution of authority over political and economic affairs to the district level (i.e., largely bypassing the first tier of regional government, the provinces). The military has also been brought under a measure of civilian control.

Many aspects of the political and bureaucratic culture, however, have changed little. Corruption and cronyism are still pervasive and may even have worsened since the end of the New Order. Many political parties remain elite-driven and lack genuine grassroots participation. Few of the major human rights abusers and corrupt officials of the New Order have been successfully prosecuted (Soeharto’s son, Tommy, and key crony, Mohammad “Bob” Hasan, are two of the rare exceptions to this – both are serving long prison sentences). The justice system continues to be shot through with corruption; a majority of verdicts are decided by money rather than their legal merits. Added to these problems has been the emergence of new social blights such as bloody intra-communal conflict, particularly between Christians and Muslims, and rising vigilantism.

Of the three presidents of the post-Soeharto era – Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid (popularly known as “Gus Dur”) and Megawati Sukarnoputri – only Habibie is likely to be remembered by historians as a significant reformer. An eccentric but intellectually gifted aeronautical engineer, Habibie strived to shake his reputation as Soeharto’s

“golden boy” by embarking on a whirlwind of legislative reforms. Many of the above-mentioned reforms were initiated by the Habibie administration. Often poorly thought out and badly drafted, they nonetheless provided a basis for change. His successor, Abdurrahman Wahid, was a controversial and erratic president. Despite a well-deserved reputation as a social and political reformer in the 1980s and early 1990s, by the time he became president health problems had diminished his leadership capacities and he quickly squandered the political goodwill which accompanied his initial election. He was dismissed as president in July 2001 and replaced by his vice-president, Megawati.

Megawati restored much-needed stability to Indonesian politics after the tumult of the Wahid presidency, but she is widely criticized for excessive caution and hesitancy. She remains an unlikely political leader. She lacks oratorical flair and dislikes the Machiavellian maneuvers that characterize much of Indonesian politics. She frequently complains of the unpleasant burdens of high office and shies away from confrontation. The Indonesianist, Harold Crouch, once observed that she prefers to “reign rather than rule”. Critics often claim that Megawati’s chief source of legitimacy is the fact that she is Sukarno’s eldest daughter, but this ignores her role as an opposition leader during the later Soeharto period. Megawati’s quiet but determined resistance to the regime’s dictates endeared her to many Indonesians. Her perceived decency and political simplicity were also attractive after three decades of New Order rule. Despite a sharp fall in her public standing throughout 2003, she is still the leading candidate in the 2004 presidential election.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Both Sukarno and Soeharto asserted that the failure of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s was due to the incompatibility of Western-style democracy with Indonesia’s culture. Do you agree? Are contemporary Indonesian society and values more suitable to democratic consolidation?
2. Jeffrey Winters has written that the overthrow of Soeharto’s New Order was “probably one of the shallowest regime transformations in a major country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century” and that the reform movement “peaked and collapsed on the same day, May 21, 1998”. Is this an accurate summation of the reform process?
3. Does the experience of the Soeharto regime prove that rapid economic development and modernization is only possible in an authoritarian system?

### **CULTURE**

Indonesia has a rich and highly diverse cultural life. Some of its art forms, such as the *gamelan* orchestra and plays using shadow puppets (*wayang*), are internationally famous and have become distinctive cultural markers. But many aspects of the nation’s complex cultural life are poorly understood by the outside world. Globalization and the spread of national electronic media have eroded some local cultures, but overall, the breadth of

cultural expression in Indonesia remains one of the sources of fascination for close observers of the country.

Indonesia has a strong literary tradition and many of the nation's more famous authors have had their works translated and published in English. The best known of Indonesia's living authors is Pramoedya Ananta Toer. A controversial figure, he was a leading member of the Communist Party's cultural arm, Lekra, in the early 1960s, and was jailed without trial for 14 years by the New Order, spending much of this time on the bleak prison island of Buru. It was there that he composed his masterful historical quartet of novels, generally referred to as the *This Earth of Mankind* series (the other three novels being *Child of All Nations*, *House of Glass* and *Footsteps*). The regime banned all of Pramoedya's *oeuvre*. This was not lifted until 1998 and his works have now become best sellers within Indonesia. Other notable works of his include: *The Fugitive*, *Story from Blora*, and *The Sparks of the Revolution*. Literary scholars have on several occasions nominated him for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Other leading Indonesian writers include: the poet and novelist Sutan Takdir Alisjabana; Marah Rusli, who wrote one of Indonesia's most popular stories, *Sitti Nurbaja*; Mochtar Lubis, whose novel *Twilight in Jakarta* paints a vivid picture of life in the capital during the Sukarno years; and the poet Chairil Anwar.

Indonesia's musical culture contains a number of distinctive forms. The *Gamelan* is undoubtedly the best known of these. The generic term *gamelan* refers to a great variety of ensembles in Java and Bali, differing in style, size and function. This is a highly developed musical form with subtle rhythmical and melodic structures. At a more popular level, there are musical types such as the gentle Portuguese-influenced *Keroncong*, which features singers, guitars and syrupy melodies, and the Indian-derived "Islamic" rock known as *dangdut*. This latter form enjoys high popularity at the grassroots and is often earthy and suggestive in style. Leading *dangdut* performers include: Rhoma Irama, Camelia Malik, Elvie Sukaesih and the raunchy Inul, whose gyrating "borer" dance attracted controversy and eager young male fans in approximately equal measure. Also ubiquitous in Indonesia is karaoke and many an unwary guest to an Indonesian function has found themselves having to sing unfamiliar tunes to the good-natured amusement of their hosts and fellow guests.

Indonesia's film industry is relatively small, given the size of the country. One problem is that films and television programs from India, China (especially Hong Kong) and the United States flood the market, often available at much cheaper cost than a locally produced program. Nonetheless, certain types of visual entertainment are flourishing. On television, the Indonesian version of the soap opera, usually known as *sinetron*, dominates prime-time programming on local free-to-air networks. The quality of *sinetron* varies markedly: some have thoughtful scripting and good acting and production standards; others are clichéd and formulaic, often peddling maudlin or sexually titillating content to attract viewers. A small number of good quality films are produced each year, but much of Indonesia's cinematic output is cheaply produced and largely devoid of aesthetic value.

Sport is another popular Indonesian pastime. Indonesia is one of the world's leading nations in badminton and it also has a number of moderately successful tennis players and boxers (boxing is one of the higher-rating sports programs on the television). Probably the most widely followed sport is soccer, though the poor standard of the domestic competition and Indonesia's lack of success at the international level are constant sources of vexation among the soccer-following public. (A common joke asks how it is that Indonesia can't find 11 decent footballers out of 200 million people!) English and European soccer broadcasts draw large audiences in Indonesia.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Given the high penetration of Indian, Chinese and American films and television programs, can Indonesia still be said to have a vibrant and distinctive cultural life?
2. Does the popularity of sexually suggestive cultural forms indicate that Islam, the religion of 88% of Indonesians, is not a powerful force on the nation's cultural life?
3. Will globalization and modernization lead to greater homogenization of Indonesia's popular culture?

### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

Indonesia has faced a number of pressing and controversial social issues in the five years since the end of the New Order. These include high levels of inter-religious violence (mostly between Muslims and Christians), a divisive debate over the role of Islam in society and politics, the threat of terrorism, hostility towards minorities, particularly the Chinese, and the rising incidence of crime and vigilantism.

#### Islamic Law

The role of Islam in the state has long been a contentious issue. When Indonesia was founded in 1945, Islamic leaders wanted a clause inserted in the constitution requiring Muslims to carry out the Shari'ah (Islamic law). The clause was part of the Jakarta Charter, a compromise agreement worked out between Muslim and secular nationalist leaders, which was initially included in the draft constitution but later omitted after non-Muslim communities threatened to secede. The issue re-emerged in the late 1950s and late 1960s, when Islamic parties again sought unsuccessfully to gain constitutional recognition of the Shari'ah. Soeharto's New Order emphatically opposed any attempt at comprehensive implementation of Islamic law, branding such moves to be not only divisive but also subversive. For 30 years, the issue virtually disappeared from public debate.

The end of the New Order brought with it a revival of the campaign for wider enactment of Islamic law. Several Islamic parties, including PPP and PBB, proposed the re-insertion of the Jakarta Charter into the constitution, though this was soundly defeated in

the MPR sessions dealing with constitutional amendments. In various regions of Indonesia, Shari'ah law began to be implemented in a more zealous manner. The most obvious case was Aceh, where wide-ranging Islamic law came into force in early 2003 as part of a Jakarta-sanctioned special autonomy package. In a number of districts of West Java, Sumatra and South Sulawesi, Shari'ah has been implemented in a de facto manner by local Islamic groups. This often includes the formation of vigilante squads to enforce the wearing of Islamic dress (usually targeting women) and attack "places of iniquity" such as nightclubs and red-light districts. There are also recently established, high-profile organizations such as MMI (Indonesian Mujahidin Council) and KPSI (Committee for the Implementation of Islamic Shari'ah) which are campaigning for full enactment of Islamic law.

Attempts to further Islamize Indonesian law have had a polarizing effect within society. Non-Muslims are strongly resistant but are also fearful of speaking out. Some of the most trenchant opposition to Shari'ah law activism comes from the liberal Islam movement. Figures such as Nurcholish Madjid, Abdurrahman Wahid, Ulil Abshar-Abdalla and Syafii Maarif use Islamic teachings to rebut arguments that Muslims and the state are obliged to carry out the Shari'ah. They uphold the notion of a religiously neutral, "deconfessionalized" state and espouse Islamic devotions as a matter for the private sphere, not the public sphere.

## **Terrorism**

Indonesia has long been said by regional and foreign intelligence agencies to have terrorist groups based within its territory. But for most Indonesians, the magnitude of the threat was not apparent until bombs tore through two crowded Bali nightclubs on October 12, 2002. In the worst terrorist attack since 9/11/01, 202 people died, including 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 32 Britons, 9 Swedes and 7 Americans. Another 350 were seriously injured.

The Megawati government, which had previously been reluctant to act against suspected terrorist groups, took a number of dramatic steps. For the first time in Indonesian history, it allowed dozens of foreign police and intelligence officers into the country to assist local officials with their investigations. It also introduced anti-terrorism laws which gave wide powers to the police and legal system to pursue and prosecute suspected terrorists.

Investigators very quickly uncovered evidence that Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a clandestine group founded by two Indonesian Islamic scholars of Yemeni extraction in Malaysia in the mid-1990s, had carried out the attacks. A string of arrests and revelations soon followed indicating the extent of JI operations and the intensity of its anti-Western animus. At the time of writing, over 100 arrests have been made and almost 30 men have been tried and found guilty – three of them sentenced to death by firing squad. The head of JI, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, was also jailed for four years, though charges that he was directly involved in decision-making regarding terrorist attacks were unproven.

The terrorism issue has several controversial elements to it. The first is that, although most Indonesians would appear to accept the severity of the local terrorist threat, they also are skeptical about the motives behind the U.S.-led “war on terror”. Public opinion polls repeatedly show that a majority of Indonesians believe that the West is using the terrorism issue to further its strategic and economic interests. Many surveys also suggest that the public believes the U.S. has had some role in orchestrating the “JI issue”. While Indonesian officials continue to pursue terrorists with rare vigor and dispatch, the government is wary of the political costs in being seen as too compliant to Western demands for further action, such as tighter supervision of the Islamic education sector. Second, many Indonesian Muslims are worried that local security agencies will use the “war on terror” to justify a return to the repressive “Islamophobic” policies of the Soeharto era. Third, there is much rivalry between the police, intelligence agencies and the military over who should lead the anti-terrorism campaign. The police have primary responsibility for domestic security and anti-terrorism operations and their success in investigating the Bali bombing has won wide praise. But TNI and BIN, the main civilian intelligence agency, are resentful of the resources and plaudits going to the police and have been pressing for a greater role.

### Minorities

The role and status of minorities has been a contentious social and political issue since the founding of the Indonesian state. This is particularly so for the largest minority community, the Chinese. Resentment and hostility towards the Chinese remains dangerously high in many sections of “indigenous” society and physical attacks on the Chinese and their property have occurred regularly since at least the eighteenth century and continue today. During the Soeharto era, the Chinese were accorded a privileged economic position which helped to further concentrate wealth disproportionately in Sino-Indonesian hands. However, the regime kept the Chinese politically and culturally isolated: Confucianism was banned, as also were public celebrations of Chinese festivals; the use of Chinese characters in public places was prohibited; and there were few prominent Chinese politicians. The position of the Chinese has improved over the last five years. Confucianism is no longer proscribed and Chinese New Year festivities are now publicly celebrated. Chinese have a higher political profile. Despite this, discrimination and insecurity remain a fact of life for most Sino-Indonesians.

### Rule of Law and Vigilantism

Faith in Indonesia’s law enforcement and justice systems is low. Both the police and judiciary have low professional standards and are notoriously corrupt. Police often demand payment to investigate a case and prosecute an offender; judges more often than not decide a case based on who pays the greater bribe rather than who has the stronger case in law. Not surprisingly, communities have, in recent years, been given increasingly towards vigilantism. Almost daily, suspected miscreants are set upon by local communities, often viciously so. Victims are frequently killed in the attacks and police rarely appear interested in apprehending their assailants. Undoubtedly, such attacks indicate a belief within grassroots communities that the only certain form of “justice” is

that which they can dispense summarily by themselves. But the cycle of violence and lynch-mob mentality engendered by vigilantism is a serious obstacle to developing a respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights within Indonesia.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Does the frequency of attacks on Chinese and their property indicate socio-economic resentment on the part of “native” (*pribumi*) Indonesians or outright racism? Why have other “distinctive” minorities such as Arabs and Indians not suffered similar violence?
2. Former president, Abdurrahman Wahid, once said that “Islamic politics has failed and most Indonesians are happy about that”. He argued that Muslims want Islam to be a private matter rather than a matter of state enforcement. Does history support his view?
3. What constraints does the Indonesian government face in prosecuting its campaign against terrorism?

### **ECONOMICS**

Until the 1997 financial crisis, Indonesia had recorded almost three decades of impressive growth. When Soeharto came to power in 1966, Indonesia had some of the worst economic indicators in the world. After eight years of ruinous mismanagement under Sukarno’s Guided Democracy, per capita Gross National Product (GNP) had fallen to about \$30 per annum. Daily food consumption was less than 1800 calories per head and malnutrition was widespread. Inflation was running at about 500%, foreign reserves were exhausted and the value of the rupiah had plummeted. Many economic commentators regarded Indonesia as a basket case.

Soeharto quickly set about rehabilitating and modernizing Indonesia’s economy. He appointed a group of US-trained “technocrats” led by the economist Widjojo Nitisastro to draw up new policies and oversee their implementation. The IMF was also invited to advise on economic policy. Vigorous anti-inflation measures were introduced, targets for balanced budgets were set, new foreign exchange regulations stimulated imports and concessions were offered to foreign investors in order to attract new capital. This was a major reorientation of economic policy based on direct foreign investment and the integration of Indonesia’s economy into the global capitalist system. Western donors and Japan rescheduled Indonesia’s heavy debt repayments and injected large quantities of aid. Foreign investment also flowed into the country with the oil industry being a particular focus. The oil boom of the early 1970s proved a windfall for the regime, with well over half of the government’s revenue coming from the petroleum sector. Strong export markets for nickel, timber and copper also swelled the state’s coffers.

The success of the New Order’s policies was apparent in Indonesia’s GNP growth rates: from 1965 to 1980 these averaged 7% per annum; during 1980-90, they were 5.5%.

Between 1965 and 1996, per capita GNP rose from \$30 to \$950, the highest income growth of any Southeast Asian country. There was also a consistent reduction in both the absolute number and percentage of Indonesians living in poverty.

The 1997 financial crisis brought a dramatic, and for many Indonesians, traumatic end to the boom. As large sums of foreign capital began flowing out of the country from September 1997, the value of the rupiah fell sharply, leaving many corporations with large US dollar loans highly exposed. Confidence in the financial sector was shaken by a run on the banks and an IMF-induced government closure of 16 banks. By January 1998, the rupiah had dropped to Rp17,000 per one US dollar. Economists have calculated that during this period, Indonesia suffered the most severe economic reversal of any country since the Great Depression. Certainly poverty levels rose from 11.3% in 1996 to 24.3% in 1998 (based on the World Bank criterion of a daily income less than US\$2).

Since that time, the Indonesian economy has gradually stabilized and regained some of its momentum of the pre-1997 period, though this recovery has been slowest of all the major East Asian economies affected by the financial crisis. Only in early 2003 did per capita GNP income return to the 1996 level, and the incidence of poverty and unemployment has also fallen consistently. Although Indonesia has been tardy in overcoming the effects of the crisis, its economy is now performing better than most of its regional counterparts. GNP grew by 3.8% over the year to June 2003; only Thailand had a better growth figure within ASEAN. Inflation had been brought down to 6% (from 14% in early 2002), and the exchange rate remained steady at about Rp8400/US\$1. Domestic consumption continues to drive economic growth. Investment, however, remains at about two-thirds the level preceding the 1997 financial crisis and international investors are reluctant to commit capital to Indonesia. The political uncertainty surrounding the 2004 general and presidential elections is likely to deter investment at least until 2005.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Was the strong economic growth of the Soeharto era due to good policy making or was the New Order the beneficiary of booming resource exports such as oil, gas and precious metals?
2. When the 1997 financial crisis hit Indonesia many politicians and community leaders blamed “predatory” international capital markets and bad IMF policies for the nation’s plight. Is there any justification for such a view?
3. Economists predict that Indonesia needs annual GNP growth of over 5% to generate work for its burgeoning labor force. Is there any prospect of such growth rates being achieved in the short to medium-term? If not, will Indonesia suffer increasing social unrest?

## **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

### Structure of Government



According to the Indonesian Constitution, there are five principal organs of state: the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR); the Presidency; the Parliament (DPR); the State Audit Board (BPK); and the Supreme Court (MA).

Indonesia's existing political system is a predominantly a presidential system but it also has elements of a parliamentary system. Major changes will come into force in 2004, but under the existing system, the president is elected by and answerable only to the supreme decision-making body, the MPR. The president selects and leads the cabinet and has wide executive powers. Parliament can censure a president and call for the MPR to initiate dismissal proceedings but it has no direct power to remove a president. In practice, parliament's powers of legislative obstruction and censure mean that a president's authority can be greatly undermined if he or she loses majority support in the legislature. The MPR's other tasks include: setting the Broad Guidelines of State Policy (GBHN), monitoring the performance of other organs of the state such as parliament, the BPK and MA, and amending the constitution.

The present parliament has 500 members, 462 of whom are popularly elected and 38 are appointed representatives of the Armed Forces (TNI) and the Police. The MPR has 695 members, comprising the 500 parliamentarians, 130 regional representatives (each of the 26 provincial parliaments in 1999 elected 5 delegates) and 65 community and professional group representatives. From 2004, parliament will have 550 members, all of whom are elected (i.e., guaranteed military and police representation will be eliminated). The MPR will also undergo extensive changes. A new Regional Representative Council (DPD) will be established comprising four members for each province (i.e., with the current 31 provinces, it will have 124 members). The DPD will have powers of legislative review in matters pertaining to regional affairs. Once the DPD is formed, the MPR will comprise the 550 members of parliament as well as the DPD.

During the Guided Democracy and New Order periods, Indonesia's power structures were highly centralised and rigidly top-down. All important decisions were made in Jakarta and regions were expected to implement without demur the central government's policies. Since the enactment of decentralisation laws in January 2001, Jakarta has surrendered extensive authority to district level government and legislatures. The central government, however, retains control of five main areas of policy: defence and security; monetary controls; foreign affairs, religious affairs; and justice. All other fields, including health, education, the environment and infrastructure, are now the responsibility of the approximately 420 district administrations.

Indonesia has a five-year electoral cycle and has used three different election systems in its history. The seven elections from 1955 to 1997 used a proportional system with provincial boundaries as electorates. For the 1999 election, a convoluted mix of proportional and district representation was used. Each province formed an electoral region but the allocation of seats was tied to a party's performance in districts (*kabupaten/kota madya*) within the province. For example, if a party won 25% of the vote in a province it was (theoretically) entitled to one quarter of the seats. It would then

gain seats in those districts where it recorded its highest vote. (In practice, the system had many anomalies and outcomes did not always reflect the intention of the legislation.)

The 2004 elections will be by far the most complex in Indonesia's history. There will be five electoral processes using three different systems, including a new electoral mechanism for parliamentary elections. The five processes are: national, provincial and district legislative elections; the DPD election; and the presidential election. The legislature and DPD elections will all take place on the same day: April 5.

Parliamentarians will be chosen by an open-list proportional representation system using newly drawn electorates. Voters can pierce either a party symbol or the box of an individual candidate. Members of the DPD will be elected by a single non-transferable vote system and each province forms one electorate. DPD candidates stand as individuals rather than party representatives. The first round of the presidential election will take place on July 5 when electors vote for a pair of presidential and vice-presidential candidates. To be elected, a "package" of candidates must win over 50% of the vote nationally as well as gain at least 20% of the vote in 50% of provinces. If no pairing of candidates meets these requirements in the first round, the top two pairs go through to a second round to be held on September 5. The constitution requires the new president to be installed by October 22, 2004.

### Political Parties

Indonesian politics has often been characterized in terms of *aliran* (literally, "streams"). The three major historical streams were secular nationalism, Islam and communism/socialism, with a range of parties representing each stream. The major nationalist party in the early decades of independence was the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). Although Sukarno was not formally a member, he was widely regarded as the guiding light of the party. PNI emerged from the 1955 election as the top-ranked party with 24% of the national vote. Always an ideologically diverse party, PNI suffered splits between its leftist and more conservative-technocratic wings during Guided Democracy. The New Order regime forced it to join other nationalist and Christian parties in PDI in 1973. Megawati became the chair of PDI in early 1994 but was later removed by the regime in 1996. Following Soeharto's downfall, Megawati loyalists led by her husband, Taufik Kiemas, formed the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) as a new vehicle for political secular nationalism and PNI-inspired ideals. PDI-P won 34% of the vote at the 1999 general election, making it by far the largest party. PDI-P is the most heterogeneous of Indonesia's current major parties. It includes members of the "greater PNI family" (i.e., older generation PNI people as well as younger "family" members who remain active in PNI-affiliated community and professional groups), technocrats and businessmen, retired military officers and former student and NGO activists. The party has few ideological preoccupations apart from an unelaborated commitment to maintaining Indonesia's secular nationalist orientation.

The Islamic stream is the most complex of the three. It has two major sub-streams: traditionalism and modernism (sometimes referred to as "reformism"). Traditionalist Muslims are those who adhere closely to one of the four main Sunni law schools, usually

the Syafi'i school, which predominates in Southeast Asia. They also tend to have more heterodox religious practices. The largest traditionalist organization is Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), which has its base in East and Central Java. NU claims to have about 35 million members, making it one of the largest Islamic organizations in the world. Modernists place greater emphasis on the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Sunnah) than on the classical law schools as a basis of doctrine and ritual. They are less tolerant of non-Islamic elements in their religious life. The largest modernist organization is Muhammadiyah, which claims a membership of about 30 million.

Shortly after independence, traditionalist and modernist Muslims agreed on a united front for political Islam. They established the Masyumi party for this purpose. Tensions between traditionalists and modernists led NU to split from Masyumi in 1952 and form its own political party. This left Masyumi a largely modernist party. At the 1955 election, Masyumi was the second-largest party, with 22% of the vote, and NU the third largest with 18%. For much of the 1950s, NU and Masyumi regarded each other as rivals and formed coalitions with non-Islamic parties. Masyumi trenchantly opposed Sukarno's Guided Democracy and was eventually banned by the president in 1960. NU served as the only significant Islamic party in Guided Democracy.

The Soeharto regime was determined to minimize the threat of Islamic parties to its dominance. Accordingly, it imposed onerous restrictions on political Islam. It prevented the rehabilitation of Masyumi and would only allow a new modernist-based party with a new name, Parmusi. NU was also subject to growing pressure from the regime to comply with its wishes. At the 1971 elections, NU gained 18% of the vote, virtually the same as in 1955, but Parmusi's vote was only 5%. In 1973, as part of the regime's "party simplification" policy, NU and Parmusi were forced into an amalgamation with two smaller parties to form the United Development Party (PPP). For much of the New Order, the PPP functioned as the main opposition party.

After the demise of the New Order, there was a proliferation of Islamic parties. Twenty-one of the 48 parties contesting the 1999 election were in some significant way Islamic. The traditionalist and modernist streams both experienced unprecedented fragmentation. NU launched a separate but endorsed party, the National Awakening Party (PKB), under the effective leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid, a former NU chairman. There were also three other, much smaller NU-based parties. A sizeable number of NU members remained loyal to PPP, particularly after NU's Hamzah Haz became the party's first non-modernist chairman in late 1998. The modernists were spread even more widely. Some continued within the Parmusi component of PPP; others remained in Golkar (discussed below). Still others joined the former Muhammadiyah chairman Amien Rais in forming a new "pluralist" party, the National Mandate Party (PAN). A final group sought to revive Masyumi and founded the Crescent Moon and Star Party (PBB). Overall, most Islamic parties were disappointed with their support at the general election. NU's PKB got 13%, PPP was down to 12%, Amien Rais's PAN 7% (far less than expected), and PBB a meager 2%. In total, the 21 Islamic parties got 39% of the national vote, 4% below the combined Islamic vote at the 1955 election.

The communist stream during the late 1950s and early 1960s was probably the largest single component of the electorate. Although the PKI's vote at the 1955 election was 15%, at regional elections across Java and some outer islands in 1957-8 it averaged 27% of the vote. This made other parties and the military fearful that the Communist Party would soon be in a position to dominate Indonesian politics. But the post-1965 coup arrest and slaughter of PKI members, combined with the rigorously enforced ban on communism, virtually eliminated the PKI as a force. In the 1999 election, only one party, the People's Democratic Party (PRD) had a genuinely leftist agenda; its vote was a fraction of one percent.

Golkar (literally "Function Groups") represents a major anomaly in the *aliran* analysis of Indonesian politics. Formed in the early 1960s by the military as a vehicle for anti-communist groups, Golkar was transformed into the government party in the late 1960s. It became the chief instrument in the New Order regime's corporatizing agenda, in which they sought to incorporate as many social and political groupings as possible within Golkar. Not surprisingly, the party was dominated by the military and bureaucrats, but many technocratically-inclined young professionals, including modernist Muslims, also flocked to the party. Following 1998, Golkar partially reformed itself, driving out some of the more prominent Soeharto-era figures and installing the Soeharto-era minister Akbar Tanjung as chairman. Although the party's vote dropped from 78% in 1997 to 22% in 1999, Golkar's performance was stronger than many analysts had expected. Golkar remains the most disciplined and professional of Indonesian parties and is likely to improve its position in the 2004 general election.

**Table 2. 1955 Election Results**

Ranking	Party	National Vote (%)	Seats in Parliament
1	PNI	24	57
2	Masyumi	22	57
3	Nahdlatul Ulama	18	45
4	PKI	15	39

**Table 3. Election Results, 1977-97**

Ranking	Party	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997
1	Golkar	62	64	73	68	74
2	PPP	29	27	16	17	22
3	PDI	9	8	11	15	3

**Table 4. 1999 Election Results**

Ranking	Party	National Vote (%)	Seats in Parliament
1	PDI-P	34	153
2	Golkar	22	120
3	PKB	13	51
4	PPP	12	58

5	PAN	7	34
6	PBB	2	11

### Questions and Issues

1. Should a country as diverse as Indonesia have a strong presidential system allowing firm central control of the state or a decentralized parliamentary system which permits representation of the widest range of community and interest groupings?
2. Is it likely that democratic elections will ever deliver a majority party or even a strong majority coalition?
3. Is the *aliran* concept still useful in analyzing political trends in Indonesia?

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE

#### Foreign Policy

The underlying principles of Indonesia's foreign policy have remained remarkably constant through most of the post-independence period. Two related concepts – non-alignment and a “free and active” (*bebas dan aktif*) stance – provide the central underpinnings of Indonesia's approach to international relations. The origins of this foreign policy philosophy can be traced back to the tumult of the Revolution (1945-49) and Indonesia's struggle for international recognition of its independence struggle. Leftists within the Republican government wanted Indonesia to be aligned to the Soviet Union, which at that time strongly supported the Indonesian cause in the UN. The more pragmatic and conservative Republican leaders were wary of provoking the Dutch and antagonizing the United States, which was then ambivalent on the question of Indonesian independence. In this environment, two of the seminal figures in Indonesia's foreign policy formulation made key speeches setting out what soon became the guiding principles: former Prime Minister Syahrir proposed to parliament in February 1948 that the country pursue a non-aligned stance; and Vice President Hatta, in August of the same year, argued forcefully for a “free and active” approach in dealing with other nations. Hatta's speech, in particular, was seen as laying the cornerstone of Indonesian policy. He stated:

Have the Indonesian people fighting for their freedom no other course of action open to them than to choose between being pro-Russian or pro-American? Is there no other position that can be taken in the pursuit of our national ideals? The government is of the opinion that the position to be taken is that Indonesia should not be a passive party in the arena of international politics but that it should be an active agent entitled to determine its own standpoint with the right to fight for its own goal – the goal of a fully independent Indonesia.

While Indonesia's foreign policy has swung in varying degrees towards the Communist Bloc and back to the West, in response to both domestic and international conditions, governments have still upheld their commitment to a non-aligned and active approach.

An early manifestation of Indonesia's foreign policy preoccupations was the 1955 Asian-African Conference held in Bandung. Twenty-nine states, many represented by their heads of states (including Chou En-lai, Nasser and Nehru), attended the conference. Although there were important differences of opinion between some of the states on international issues, the conference nonetheless captured a growing spirit of common struggle and assertiveness among former colonies. The conference was also seen by Indonesians as a triumph of diplomacy and confirmation that the nation could play a significant role in world affairs. The Asian-African conference has also been credited with paving the way for the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Indonesia was to be an important player in NAM.

During the early 1960s, Indonesia's foreign policy veered leftwards. Sukarno, in particular, became increasingly critical of the West, accusing it of having neo-colonial designs upon recently independent nations. He famously told the United States in 1964 to "go to hell with your aid" and he withdrew Indonesia from the United Nations. He also pursued a low-level military confrontation with Britain opposing the formation of Malaysia. Indonesia became more closely aligned with the Communist Bloc nations and Sukarno trumpeted a prospective alliance between Beijing, Pyongyang, Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Jakarta.

Soeharto dramatically changed Indonesia's foreign policy. A staunch anti-communist, he abandoned Sukarno's leftist orientation and drew Indonesia closer to the West and Japan. Indeed, gaining Western aid and investment were critical parts of the regime's blueprint for economic recovery. Soeharto was determined to integrate his nation more closely into international markets. Despite Soeharto's pro-Western and anti-communist disposition, the New Order was careful to maintain a broadly independent stance. Soeharto played a pivotal role in founding and guiding the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, partly because he wanted a regional counterbalance to superpower involvement in Southeast Asia. He also remained active in the NAM and allowed Indonesia to be one of the founding nations of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC). There were also strains in the regime's relations with Western nations, especially over human rights issues and Indonesia's policies in East Timor.

In the post-Soeharto era, Indonesia's attitudes towards the West have cooled somewhat. Many Indonesians were shocked by the severity of the 1997 financial crisis, believing that the IMF had left the country vulnerable to the predatory tactics of international money traders. The separation of East Timor in 1999, after an internationally supervised plebiscite and military intervention, hardened opinion that the West was seeking to divide and weaken Indonesia. The war on terror is also seen by many as having a concealed agenda to undermine Islam and Indonesian independence from US foreign policy imperatives.

## Defense and the Military

For most of Indonesia's history, governments have seen the main threat to security as being internal rather than external. As a result, the primary preoccupation of Indonesia's Armed Forces is in maintaining national order and unity; outside threats occupy a secondary importance.

Indonesia's Armed Forces (TNI; ABRI during the Soeharto era) see themselves as holding a unique position in the history of the nation: unlike most armed forces, which are a creation of the state, TNI believes that it was vital to the birth of the Indonesian state. Subsequent events tended to confirm TNI's self-perception as the central pillar of the state. These include: its role in militarily opposing the Dutch during the 1945-49 Revolution, the crushing of a series of regional rebellions during the 1950s and early 1960s, its putting down of the 1965 coup attempt and more recently, its campaigns against separatist movements in Papua and Aceh.

There are several key concepts within TNI doctrine. The first is Sishankamrata (The System of Overall People's Defense and Security), which sets out that the military and the people are inextricably linked and will work together to ensure the nation's security. Its origins can be found in the Revolution when, according to TNI histories, the close cooperation of ordinary civilians with TNI brought about the defeat of the Dutch. Thus, there was no boundary between civilian and military life and TNI has also seen itself as being a community-based rather than barracks-based force.

The second key concept is that of *dwi-fungsi* (dual function). Effectively, this doctrine asserts that TNI is both a socio-political and a military force. TNI argued that *dwi-fungsi* grew out of the military's traditional "alliance" with society and also its guardian role of national unity. During the New Order, *dwi-fungsi* was used to justify extensive military involvement in virtually all the key institutions of state. Indeed, the military had a parallel structure to that of the civilian state apparatus which extended down to the virtually every village in the archipelago. The military counterparts of civilian officials could intervene and control a wide range of decision-making processes. The system was known as the "territorial system" and it is a crucial element in TNI functioning. Since 1999, TNI has formally abandoned *dwi-fungsi* but the replacement doctrine retains many of the same features. Some elements of the territorial system have also been dismantled but the essential structure persists and TNI is determined to preserve the system given that decentralization has shifted many political and economic resources to the regions.

TNI's total number of personnel is 298,000, some 230,000 (72%) of which is army. Indeed, the Army is by far the dominant service in TNI, both historically and contemporaneously. Since the 1960s, all but one of the TNI commanders-in-chief has been from the army. The operational capacity of the Armed Forces is limited. It is poorly equipped and levels of training and morale are low. (Recent reports suggest that less than 30% of the Navy's ships are seaworthy and only 93 of the Air Force's 222 aircraft are operational). Standards among the territorial units (those recruited from and based in a specific area) tend to be particularly poor. Only the Special Forces, which

comprise Kostrad (green berets) and Kopassus (red berets), are reasonably well trained and resourced. Human rights abuses are commonplace and few perpetrators are ever prosecuted. TNI gains only about 30% of its income from the budget; the remainder is generated from “private” sources. These sources can range from large TNI-controlled enterprises, to gun-running, drug distribution and protection rackets.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Indonesia’s historical dependence on external economic assistance has meant that rarely has it been able to pursue its avowed “free and active” foreign policy. Discuss.
2. Despite its claim to be the guardian of national unity, TNI’s frequent human rights abuses and economic predations have created deep hostility in some regions and fueled separatist sentiment. Discuss.



## **TIMELINE**

- 1945 – August 17: Sukarno and Hatta proclaim Indonesia's independence.
- 1949 – The Netherlands formally hands over sovereignty to Indonesia.
- 1955 – Indonesia's first general election is held; four major parties are PNI, Masyumi, NU and PKI
- 1957 – President Sukarno begins the transition to "Guided Democracy" by appointing himself as "citizen Sukarno" to form an extra-parliamentary "business cabinet".
- 1959 – Constituent Assembly deadlocked on drafting the new constitution; Sukarno decrees the dissolution of the Assembly and proclaims the return of the executive-centered 1945 Constitution; Guided Democracy now in place.
- 1960 – Sukarno purges parliament of opponents and installs unelected military and "community group" representatives; bans the Masyumi party.
- 1963-4 – bloody clashes between Communists and Muslims in Java over the Communist Party's attempts at land reform through seizures of larger farm holdings.
- 1965 – September 30-October 1: coup attempt launched by middle-ranking leftist army officers and sections of the PKI; quickly put down by Major-General Soeharto.
- 1965-66 – massacre of PKI members and suspected communists by military, Muslim and nationalist groups; at least several hundred thousand are killed and an equal number detained without trial.
- 1967 – Soeharto installed by the MPRS as acting president, though he effectively holds full authority; Sukarno formally stripped of the presidency in 1968.
- 1971 – first election of the New Order regime; "opposition parties" subject to intense intimidation and intervention; the regime's Golkar party wins a large majority.
- 1974 – "Malari" riots break out in Jakarta following student protests against the New Order's policies; 8 killed and 800 arrested.
- 1975 – Indonesian "volunteers" invade the former Portuguese province of East Timor.
- 1984-5 – regime forces all social and religious organizations to accept Pancasila as their sole ideological foundation or face dissolution.

- 1990 – Soeharto endorses the formation of a government-sponsored Muslim Intellectuals' Association (ICMI), signaling a rapprochement with Islamic groups; ICMI becomes a major vehicle for Muslim career advancement and regime cooptation of Islamic groups.
- 1991 – Soeharto takes the pilgrimage to Mecca.
- 1997 – financial crisis hits East Asia; the rupiah plummets in value and Indonesia forced to accept IMF rescue package; Soeharto suffers a minor stroke in December.
- 1998 – May 21: Soeharto announces he will stand down and hand over power to Vice-President B. J. Habibie.
- 1999 – June 7: Indonesia's first free and fair elections in 44 years are held; contested by 48 parties, 19 of which win seats in the national parliament.
- 1999 – October 21: Abdurrahman ("Gus Dur") Wahid elected as president by the MPR; Megawati elected as vice-president the follow day.
- 2001 – July 23: Abdurrahman Wahid declares a state of emergency and attempts to shut down parliament and the MPR; his order is ignored by the police and military and he is dismissed as president by the MPR; Megawati is installed as president and Hamzah Haz as vice-president.
- 2002 – October 12: terrorist bombing of 2 nightclubs in Bali; 202 people die and 350 injured, making it the deadliest terrorist attack since September 11, 2001.
- 2003 – August 5: terrorist car-bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta; 12 people die.

## INTERNET SITE GUIDE

### Official Sites

- Indonesian government official website (only in Indonesian, at present): [www.indonesia.go.id](http://www.indonesia.go.id) (another English-language site, [www.ri.go.id](http://www.ri.go.id), is currently under construction).
- Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs (Deplu): [www.dfa-deplu.go.id](http://www.dfa-deplu.go.id) (English and Indonesian)
- Central Bureau of Statistics website contains a wealth of information on Indonesia's society and economy (English and Indonesian): [www.bps.go.id](http://www.bps.go.id)
- Indonesian parliamentary website offers quite good coverage of legislative processes in the DPR (mainly in Indonesian): [www.dpr.go.id](http://www.dpr.go.id).
- Indonesian National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM): [www.komnas.go.id](http://www.komnas.go.id). (Indonesian).
- Indonesian Election Commission (KPU) offers detailed information on Indonesia's election system and preparations (mainly in Indonesian): [www.kpu.go.id](http://www.kpu.go.id).
- Useful private website listing important Indonesian government and political sites: [www.gksoft.com.govt/en/id.html](http://www.gksoft.com.govt/en/id.html).

### Newspapers, magazines and online sources

*The Jakarta Post* - the leading English-language newspaper in Indonesia -  
<http://www.thejakartapost.com>

*Inside Indonesia* – topical and informative magazine on Indonesian current affairs and society - <http://www.insideindonesia.org/>

*Far Eastern Economic Review* - the best of the English-language magazines devoted to Asia – quite good coverage of Indonesia but now subscription only –  
<http://www.feer.com>

BBC's Asia Pacific and East Asia Today services are consistently good –  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asia-pacific>; and  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/eastasiatoday/>

*Gatra* – Indonesian-language current affairs magazine at <http://www.gatra.com>

*Tempo* - authoritative and probing current affairs magazine – <http://www.tempo.co.id>  
(available in both English and Indonesian)

*Kompas Online* - rather staid but usually the most reliable and accurate newspaper -  
<http://www.kompas.com> (has selected articles available in English).

*Media Indonesia* – <http://www.mediaindo.co.id>

*Republika Online* - the most influential 'Islamic' daily - <http://www.republika.co.id>

*Suara Merdeka* - Semarang daily with excellent website and archive access –  
<http://www.suaramerdeka.com>

*Jawa Pos* - East Java-based daily, usually with good quality journalism and links to its  
many local *Radar* offshoots – <http://www.jawapos.co.id>

John Macdougall, Indonesia Publications, [apakabar@clark.net](mailto:apakabar@clark.net)

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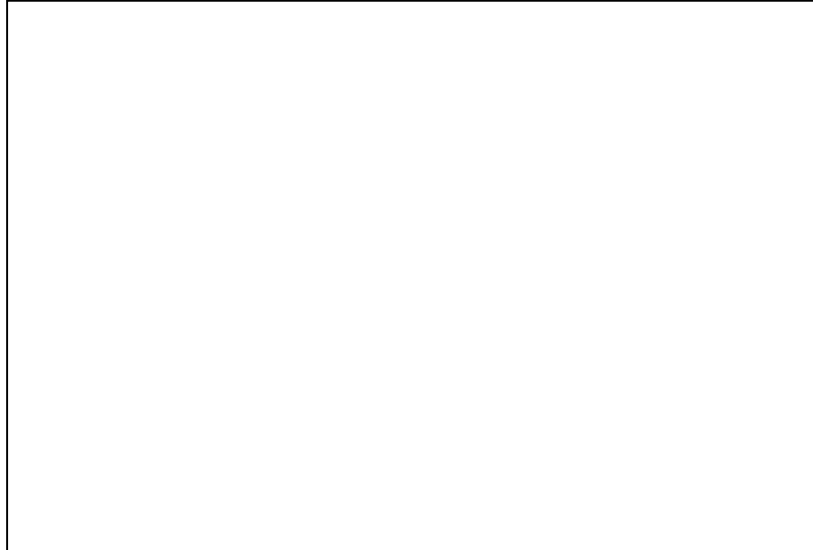
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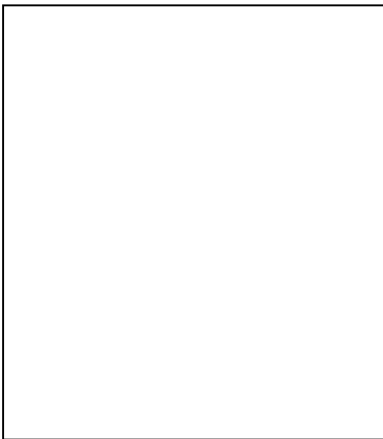
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# ISRAEL

## A Self-Study Guide



**DAVID BEN-GURION DECLARES ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE, MAY 1948**



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

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The Self-Study Guide: Israel is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to the history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations of Israel. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Israel is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

Dr. Bernard Reich, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs and former Chairman of the Department of Political Science at George Washington University in Washington, DC prepared this first edition guide on Israel. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and nonprofit use only.

First Edition  
February 2001

## **INTRODUCTION**

Israel is an independent Jewish state, small in size and population, located at the southwestern tip of Asia on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It achieved independence in 1948. Since Biblical times, Jews of the Diaspora have hoped that they would return to Zion, the "promised land," where the ancient Jewish state had been located, as described in the Bible. Over the centuries, Zionism focused on spiritual, religious, cultural, social, and historical links between Jews and the holy land. Political Zionism, with the establishment of a Jewish state as its goal, and Jewish immigration to Palestine both developed in nineteenth century Europe, partly as responses to anti-Semitism. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire during World War I and its dismemberment during the subsequent peace conferences led to British administration of Palestine (under a League of Nations Mandate) and set the stage for the eventual independence of Israel.

Israel has achieved rapid development and impressive accomplishments in the social and scientific arenas. It has been the region's most politically and socially innovative state and has achieved prosperity for its people. Israel has built a democratic system unlike that of any other in the Middle East and has melded immigrants from more than seventy countries into a uniquely Israeli population. In a country almost devoid of natural resources, its people have achieved a high standard of living.

Israel's development has occurred despite the fact that it has been in a state of war since independence and continually must be ready to defend its existence. Despite peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan, an aborted agreement with Lebanon, and a series of interim agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and periodic U.S.-sponsored talks with Syria, Israel's pursuit of permanent peace with its neighbors is far

from complete. The continuing Arab-Israeli conflict and the potential for conflict with elements of the broader Muslim world remain central tests of Israel's foreign and defense policies.

Internet Links for a Basic and General Introduction to all Aspects of Israel:

- Department of State background notes. [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)
- CIA World Factbook [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/)

The finest source for statistics about every aspect of Israel is its Central Bureau of Statistics. Its web site: [www.cbs.gov.il](http://www.cbs.gov.il)

Internet Links on Current Developments

General sources:

- BBC World News [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk)
- CNN News [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com)
- New York Times [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Washington Post [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- The Economist [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

News from and about Israel:

- Ha'aretz [www.haaretz.co.il](http://www.haaretz.co.il)
- Jerusalem [www.jpost.co.il](http://www.jpost.co.il)
- Ma'ariv [www.maariv.co.il](http://www.maariv.co.il)
- Yediot Ahronot [www.ynet.co.il](http://www.ynet.co.il)
- Globes [www.globes.co.il](http://www.globes.co.il)
- Jerusalem Report [www.jreport.virtual.co.il](http://www.jreport.virtual.co.il)

Internet Academic Sources:

Each of Israel's major academic institutions, and its component departments, institutes, and centers, maintains a web sit that provides access to a plethora of sources and materials on every aspect of Israel.

- Bar Ilan University [www.biu.ac.il](http://www.biu.ac.il)
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- Tel Aviv University [www.tau.ac.il](http://www.tau.ac.il)
- Weizmann Institute [www.weizmann.ac.il](http://www.weizmann.ac.il)

## **GEOGRAPHY**

Israel is a small country whose land borders (except with Egypt, Jordan, and the sea) are not permanent and recognized and whose size has not been determined precisely due to the absence of permanent and comprehensive peace. Within its current frontiers (established by armistice agreements signed in 1949 at the end of the first Arab-Israeli War), Israel is less than 8,000 square miles (some 20,700 square kilometers) and is bounded on the north by Lebanon, on the northeast by Syria, on the east by the West Bank, Jordan, and the Dead Sea, and on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. The country is 264 miles long and, at its widest, is some 70 miles.

Israel may be divided into four main natural land regions: the coastal plain, the highlands of Judea and Samaria, the Rift Valley, and the Negev Desert. The coastal plain lies along the Mediterranean and is composed of a generally narrow and sandy shoreline bordered by fertile farmland varying up to 25 miles in width from the northern border to the Israel-Egypt border in the southwest. Most Israelis live in the coastal plain and most of the industry and agriculture are located there. A series of mountain ranges run north-south from the Galilee to the Negev. The mountains of Galilee stretch southward to the Jezreel Valley, south of which are the mountains and hills of Samaria, Judea, and the Negev. Upper Galilee is the highest part of the country. Lower Galilee's hills are more broken. The highlands of Galilee are where most of Israel's Arabs live in a triangular-shaped area that includes the city of Nazareth. Mount Meron, Israel's highest mountain, is here. The Judean hills include Jerusalem. There is also the Carmel mountain range near Haifa.

The Rift Valley is part of the Great Syrian-African rift—the deepest valley on earth. In Israel, it includes the Jordan Valley, which is located between the mountains of Judea and Samaria in the west and the mountains of Jordan to the east; the Hula Valley between the mountains of Galilee and the Golan Heights; the Jezreel Valley between the mountains of Galilee and Samaria; and the Arava, a long and arid valley running from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea. Portions of the Arava were ceded to Jordan in the 1994 Peace Treaty and then leased back to Israeli farmers. The Dead Sea, a saltwater body, is part of the Rift Valley area and is the lowest land area on earth, about 1,286 feet below sea level. The Negev is an arid area of flatlands and limestone mountains that stretches southward from the Judean Desert, which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

The Jordan River, the longest of Israel's rivers, flows north-south through the Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake Kinneret and Lake Tiberias) and empties into the Dead Sea. Most of Israel's other rivers are small and generally seasonal in nature, except for the Kishon (which is about 8 miles long and flows east to west and empties into the Mediterranean north of Haifa) and the Yarkon (which is about 16 miles long and flows east to west and empties in to the Mediterranean at Tel Aviv).

Israel's climate generally is Mediterranean in nature—marked by hot and dry summers and cool but relatively mild winters. There is sunshine from May through mid-October and no rain falls during this season. Periods of hot and dry weather brought by easterly winds occur at the beginning and end of the summer, usually in May and September. The hot, dry, sandy, easterly wind of Biblical fame is commonly known as *khamisin*, from the Arabic for "fifty." The rainy season begins about mid-October, but it is only in December

that rainy days become frequent. Winter weather alternates between short but heavy rainy spells and sunshine. March and April are cool, with occasional rains of short duration. Nevertheless, there is a variation of climate by region, partly as a consequence of differences in altitude. North of Beersheba, Israel has a Mediterranean climate, but the Negev is generally arid and cultivation there is impossible without irrigation. The Jordan Valley is hotter and drier than the coastal plain. Tiberias and the Jordan Valley enjoy warm temperatures and little rainfall. In the hilly regions (including Jerusalem and the Upper Galilee), temperatures drop toward the freezing point, and brief snowfalls are not unusual.

Internet Links for maps of Israel and the Middle East

[www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map\\_collection/middle\\_east.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/Libs/PCL/Map_collection/middle_east.html)

## **SOCIETY**

At independence, Israel had some 806,000 citizens (650,000 Jews and 156,000 non-Jews). Israel's population by January 2000 stood at 6.2 million, some 80 percent of whom were Jews. Israel's non-Jewish population has quadrupled since 1948, mostly as a result of high rates of natural growth. The Jewish population has increased more than fivefold since independence with more than 2.6 million Jewish immigrants, many of whom came from Arab and Islamic countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Beginning in the late 1980s, some 750,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union added substantially to Israel's population while smaller but more dramatic immigrations came from Ethiopia. Under the Law of Return, any Jew, with some specific exceptions, may immigrate to Israel and receive citizenship. Immigrants are provided with housing and language and vocational training to speed their integration into the mainstream of Israeli society.

Israel's Jews are of a single religious faith and share a spiritual heritage and elements of historical experience. However, ethnically and culturally, they are heterogenous. The Jewish population is composed of immigrants from numerous countries and reflects a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, degrees of religious observance, and cultural, historical, and political backgrounds. No single ethnic group constitutes even 20 percent of the total Jewish population, although one of the largest is of Moroccan origin.

The two main groups in Israel's Jewish population are the Ashkenazim (that is to say, Jews of central and east European origin) and the Sephardim or Orientals (Jews who came to Israel from the countries of the Middle East and the Mediterranean area). Although the overwhelming majority of the Jewish population was of Ashkenazi origin at independence, Israeli society is now almost evenly split between the Ashkenazim and Jews of Sephardic origin, who are also referred to as "Edot Hamizrach" (eastern or Oriental communities). Increasingly, ethnic divisions are becoming less relevant as the instances of cross-cultural marriages grow and as native-born Israelis identify themselves not as Ashkenazi or Sephardic but as "Sabra".

Geographically, Israel is an Oriental country, but its culture, society, and political system remain primarily Western in nature and orientation. The early Zionists laid the foundations for an essentially European culture in Palestine and subsequent immigration accelerated the trend. The Western immigrants created and developed the structure of land settlement, institutions, trade unions, political parties, and educational systems in preparation for a Western-oriented Jewish national state. Future immigrants from non-Western countries had to adapt to a society that had formed these institutions.

After the Holocaust and the creation of Israel, whole Jewish communities were transported to Israel from the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. This massive Oriental immigration created a situation in which a large portion of the population had societal and cultural traditions different from those of their Western coreligionists who constituted the majority and dominant element in Israel. The religious traditions of Judaism provide a common core of values and ideals, but there are major differences in outlook, frames of reference, levels of aspiration, and other social and cultural components. Although steps have been taken to alleviate the situation, Israel continues to suffer from ethnic-cultural cleavages and a socioeconomic gap and consequent inequalities within the Jewish community.

Israel's non-Jewish citizenry, constituting about 20 percent of the total population, consists primarily of the Arabs who remained in what became Israel after the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War and their descendants. The Arab population is composed primarily of Muslims (about 80%) and is predominantly Sunni, although some 11 percent are Christian (mostly Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox) and some 9 percent Druze.

Although their legal status is the same as Israel's Jewish population, Israel's Arab citizens are confronted by problems qualitatively different. Between 1948 and the mid-1960s, activities of the Arab community were regarded primarily as concerns of Israel's security system, and most of the areas inhabited by the Arabs were placed under military control. The restrictions were gradually modified, and in 1966 military government was abolished. Although Israeli Arabs vote, sit in the Knesset, serve in government offices, have their own schools and courts, and prosper materially, they face difficulties in adjusting to Israel's modern, Jewish and Western-oriented society. The Arabs tend to live in separate sections of major cities. They speak Arabic, attend a separate school system, and generally do not serve in the army. The Arab and Jewish communities in Israel have few points of contact, and those that exist are not intimate; they are separate societies that generally continue to hold stereotypical images of each other which often are reinforced by the tensions and problems generated by the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. There is mutual suspicion and antagonism, and there is still a Jewish fear of the Arabs—a result of wars and terrorism.

Israel is a Jewish state; nevertheless, it guarantees all of its citizens—in law and in practice—freedom of religion and conscience and considerable autonomy under the *millet* system (in which the population was divided by religious allegiance) derived from the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, there have been tensions and often open clashes between the religious and secular segments of the Jewish community and between the



Orthodox and non-Orthodox denominations. At issue are the authority and power of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox religious authorities and their desire to mould Israeli society in their preferred image. Debate has focused on the appropriate relationship between religion and the state, between the religious and secular authorities, and between the Orthodox-dominated religious establishment and non-Orthodox movements (i.e., Conservative and Reform/Progressive Jewry). At the core of this debate is the contentious question of "Who is a Jew?" The issue has had philosophical, theological, political, and ideological overtones with specific practical dimensions in connection with immigration, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and conversion as well as in registration of identity cards and in the official collection of data and information. The question relates to the application of legislation such as the Law of Return, the Nationality Law, and others passed by the Knesset. Despite ongoing efforts, no permanent solution to the enduring "Who is a Jew" controversy has occurred.

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## **HISTORY**

The new state of Israel came into being on May 14, 1948, with the termination of the British Mandate, but its creation was preceded by more than fifty years of efforts by Zionist leaders to establish an independent Jewish state in Palestine.

The modern history of Israel may be dated from the Jewish immigration to Palestine in the second-half of the nineteenth century from Europe, especially Russia and Poland. The practical and modern effort to establish a state began with the founding of the Zionist movement and the creation of the World Zionist Organization by Theodor Herzl at the end of the nineteenth century. Waves of state-sponsored anti-Semitism ("pogroms") in eastern Europe and incidents such as the "Dreyfus Affair" in western Europe were important contributing factors in the development of modern political Zionism. Zionist aspirations were given impetus with the issuance of the Balfour Declaration (1917) in which the British Government expressed support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. Jewish immigration to Palestine grew throughout this period, but with the advent of the Nazi regime in Germany and the Holocaust, the numbers escalated rapidly in the 1930s. With the end of World War II there was pressure for the remnants of European Jewry to be permitted to immigrate to Palestine despite British restrictions. The Arab reaction to the effort to create a Jewish state was negative and frequently violent.

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Partition Plan (Resolution 181) which called for the division of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state (linked by an economic union) and for an international administration for Jerusalem. The Plan was accepted with reluctance by the Zionists but denounced by the Arab world which prepared for war to ensure that all of Palestine would be an Arab state. Between November 1947 and May 1948 the Arab community in Palestine, with the active encouragement of the neighboring Arab countries, waged a campaign of terror against the Jewish settlement ("yishuv") in an effort to prevent implementation of the partition plan. This Arab terror provoked small militant elements of the Zionist community to launch violent reprisals against the Arabs as well as against symbols of a British Mandatory Authority that was accused of siding with the Arabs. With the British withdrawal from Palestine in May 1948, the new Jewish state proclaimed its independence. David Ben-Gurion became the Prime Minister of the State of Israel and Chaim Weizmann was elected President. The new government was soon recognized by the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as by many other states. The Arab League declared war on Israel, and the neighboring Arab states announced that their armies would enter the former Palestine Mandate, ostensibly to "restore order." A long and bitter war ensued between Israel and armies from Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq with assistance from other Arab League members.

In the spring of 1949, armistice agreements were signed between Israel and each of the bordering states (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) which established a frontier (armistice line) between Israel and each of the neighboring states and portions of these areas were demilitarized. Peace negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict were to follow, but did not. As a consequence of the war, Israel encompassed more territory than had been allocated to it by the Partition Plan. At the same time, portions of the territory allocated to the Palestinian Arab state came under Egyptian (the Gaza Strip) and Jordanian (the West Bank) control. Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan. Under the terms of the armistice with Jordan, Israelis and other Jews were to be accorded access to Jewish holy places in Jerusalem's Old City and in the West Bank. However, this did not occur; rather, the Jordanians permitted holy places to be desecrated and destroyed.

Israel has fought six major wars (in 1948-1949, 1956-1957, 1967, 1969-1970, 1973, and 1982) with the Arab states to secure its position, but formal peace has eluded Israel with all but Egypt and Jordan. In addition, Israel has signed a series of interim agreements with the PLO and has held sporadic substantive talks with Syria under U.S. sponsorship. But a comprehensive peace agreement with all of its neighbors appears still far away.

Soon after its independence, Israel moved to function as a regular state. Elections for a parliament (Knesset) were held January 25, 1949, and regular parliamentary and presidential elections have been held, as required by law, since then. But, Israel's progress in its domestic life was not matched by comparable developments with the Arab states; frequent border incidents and clashes characterized the early 1950s.

Tensions continued to increase and the situation was exacerbated by external (primarily Soviet) arms supplies and Palestinian terrorist incursions into Israel and Israeli retaliatory raids on *fedayeen* bases in Egyptian-controlled Gaza. In the summer of 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal and tensions grew. In late October, Israel invaded the Sinai Peninsula to destroy hostile Egyptian military positions and to reopen the blockaded Strait of Tiran. In a brief war, Israel captured the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. Following a British and French ultimatum (coordinated in advance in top-level secret tripartite—British, French, and Israeli—meetings), their forces were interposed between Israel and Egypt along the Suez Canal. Eventually Israel was forced by U.S. pressure to withdraw from Egyptian territory and from the Gaza Strip. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) was stationed on the frontier between the two states and helped ensure quiet along the border for the next decade. The sea lanes through the Strait of Tiran to Israel's port of Eilat were opened to Israeli shipping. But the hope that peace talks might follow was not realized. Although the other Arab states did not join in the 1956-1957 hostilities, they made no effort to reach a peace agreement with Israel and their territories often became bases for attacks across the border into Israel. Israel maintained its military posture and capability to deal with the Arab threat.

In 1966 and 1967, Israel again focused on the problems associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Border incidents became more serious and escalation toward conflict began in late 1966 and early 1967 as clashes between Israel and Syria contributed to regional tensions. In May 1967, President Nasser of Egypt demanded the partial removal of U.N. forces from Sinai and Gaza, mobilized the Egyptian military, and moved troops and equipment into demilitarized areas. Nasser also announced the closing of the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping. Other factors also contributed to the growing tensions. Finally, on June 5, 1967, Israel launched a preemptive military strike against Egypt. Other Arab states joined in the hostilities that spread to include Jordan, Syria, and Iraq, among other Arab participants.

The Six Day War of June 1967 substantially altered the nature and parameters of the Arab-Israeli dispute. The realities of Arab hostility, the nature of the Arab threat, and the difficulties of achieving a settlement became more obvious. The issues of the conflict changed with the extent of the Israeli victory: Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights. Israel adopted the position that it would not withdraw from those territories until there were negotiations with the Arab states leading to peace agreements that recognized Israel's right to exist and accepted Israel's permanent position and borders. The Arab response to these terms of reference were the "three nos" adopted at the Khartoum, Sudan, meeting of the Arab League in September 1967: no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with Israel. Throughout the period between the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973), the focal point was the effort to achieve a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to secure a just and lasting peace based on United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, which recommended an exchange of land for peace between Israel and the Arab states. Although some of the efforts were promising, peace was not achieved and there was little movement in that direction. The 1969-1970 War of Attrition (launched by Egypt against Israel along the Suez Canal in April 1969)

marked the fourth round of hostilities between Israel and the Arabs; it was also unique in the sense of involving direct military engagements between Israelis and Soviet pilots flying Egyptian aircraft. It was also in this period that a restructured PLO emerged under the leadership of Yasser Arafat and posed new challenges to Israel's security, in the form of terrorist attacks inside Israel and on Israeli and Jewish targets internationally.

On October 3, 1973, Egyptian and Syrian military forces launched surprise attacks on Israeli positions along the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights. Despite initial Arab advances on both fronts, Israel pushed Syria back beyond the 1967 cease-fire line and crossed the Suez Canal to take a portion of its west bank. The war increased Israel's dependence on the United States, as no other country would provide Israel with the vast quantities of modern and sophisticated arms required for war or for the political and moral support necessary to negotiate peace.

The 1973 War was followed by renewed and intensified efforts to achieve Arab-Israeli peace. An extended process of "shuttle diplomacy" launched by United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger resulted in two disengagement of forces agreements in the Sinai (January 1974 and September 1975) and one disengagement agreement involving Israeli and Syrian forces on the Golan Heights (May 1974). However, efforts at building comprehensive peace out of these partial agreements did not succeed. A major step in this regard occurred in 1977 with the announcement by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat that he was prepared to negotiate peace directly with the Israelis. His November 1977 visit to Israel ultimately led to the Camp David Accords in September 1978 and the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty signed on March 26, 1979 (both witnessed by U.S. President Jimmy Carter). "Normal relations" between Egypt and Israel began officially on January 26, 1980, when Israel completed its withdrawal from two-thirds of the Sinai Peninsula, as called for in the peace treaty, and land, air, and sea borders between the two states were opened. In late February, embassies were opened in Cairo and Tel Aviv, and on February 26, Ambassadors Eliahu Ben-Elisar of Israel and Saad Mortada of Egypt presented their credentials.

Despite the peace treaty with Egypt and its implementation, Israel's other borders remained tense and problems often emerged. The frontier with Lebanon had been relatively quiet between the 1948-1949 war and the early 1970s, when the PLO was forced out of Jordan and ultimately took up positions in Lebanon. Cross-border PLO terrorist raids into northern Israel and Israeli retaliations (such as 1978's "Operation Litani" to push PLO forces out of firing range of northern Israel) escalated tensions. The PLO's presence in Lebanon exacerbated an already complicated balance among that country's indigenous political and military forces, an arrangement that broke down completely in 1975 with the start of civil war in Lebanon. In order to protect its interests, Syria became increasingly involved militarily in Lebanon. The continued presence in eastern Lebanon of surface-to-air missiles (SAM) that had been moved there by Syria in the spring of 1981 remained an Israeli concern, as were PLO attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide despite a U.S.-arranged cease-fire in the summer of 1981. On June 6, 1982, Israel launched a major military action against the PLO in Lebanon ("Operation Peace for Galilee"). The military objective was to ensure security for

northern Israel, to destroy the PLO infrastructure that had established a state-within-a-state ("Fatahland") in Lebanon, to eliminate a center of international terrorism, and to eliminate a base of operations from which Israel could be threatened; the success of the military operation also involved the early neutralization of the Syrian SAM emplacements in eastern Lebanon. But the political objectives of the operation were not so precise. In many respects, the results were ambiguous. Under U.S. and international protection, the PLO was permitted to withdraw most of its forces from Lebanon in August 1982. Israel's northern border was temporarily more secure, but the Israeli troops that remained in Lebanon became targets of Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorists and others, and numerous casualties resulted. A May 1983 agreement between Israel and Lebanon that would have facilitated a withdrawal of Israeli forces was abrogated a year later by Lebanon under pressure from Syria. In 1985, the bulk of Israeli forces were withdrawn unilaterally from Lebanon but a narrow "security zone" north of the border was manned by Israeli soldiers and members of the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army (SLA). The costs of the War in Lebanon were high, as have been the costs of Hezbollah's continuing war of attrition against Israeli and Israeli-backed targets in the security zone.

With the departure of the PLO forces from Lebanon, attention focused on divisions among Israelis over the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Although the internal debate over these territories had been a core issue since they were occupied by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War, their status took on new immediacy in the wake of the Palestinian rioting in the West Bank and Gaza that began in early December 1987. However, while it prompted extensive public debate, the *intifada* did not facilitate agreement among Israelis about a clear policy option for addressing the complex set of disputes with the Palestinians, a problem exacerbated by the continuation of a widespread Arab consensus on avoiding relations with Israel.

The August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the participation of Arab confrontation states in the multilateral coalition that fought the Persian Gulf War (January-February 1991) caused the first discernible cracking (since the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty) in the Arab consensus concerning Israel. This helped create the atmosphere for the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference (October 1991) that set in motion bilateral and multilateral processes of negotiations cosponsored first by the United States and the U.S.S.R. (later Russia). These negotiations, while unprecedented in their scope, did not generate any immediate substantive progress. Such progress was produced through secret back-channel communications—and then formal negotiations—involving Israelis and PLO representatives in the spring and summer of 1993 that were held under the good offices of the foreign minister of Norway. The exchange of letters of recognition between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat (September 9, 1993) and the signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles (September 13, 1993) set in motion a series of interim agreements affecting parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. However, these interim agreements—first with the PLO and then with the Palestinian Authority (elected in January 1997)—did not ameliorate the protracted debate among Israelis over the final political status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip or the Arab and Jewish populations there. To the contrary, the internal debate was exacerbated by widespread terrorism against Israelis in the spring of 1996 by Muslim extremist groups, such as

Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and by secular Palestinian groups opposed to the Oslo Accords—terrorism that the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of Yasser Arafat seemingly was unable or unwilling to combat.

Despite their inherent instability and uncertainty, the Israel-PLO interim agreements established an atmosphere in which substantive progress involving Israel and other Arab parties could be achieved. Principal among these was the Common Agenda for future negotiations signed with Jordan on September 14, 1993, which laid the groundwork for the Washington Declaration (July 25, 1994) and the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty (October 26, 1994). There were also diplomatic and/or commercial openings with a number of Arab countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Oman, and Qatar; the secondary and tertiary aspects of the Arab economic boycott of Israel were officially suspended by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); and periodic high-level talks, under U.S. sponsorship, were held with Syria about security arrangements on the Golan Heights and related issues. While some of these developments were important in and of themselves, all were part of a long-term process that has yet to provide Israel with permanent peace and normalized relations with all of its neighbors. Militating against this goal were a number of factors, including the continued threat of terrorism emanating from the West Bank and Gaza Strip; a protracted war of attrition waged by Iranian-backed Hezbollah and other Muslim extremist groups against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon; the continued domination of Lebanon by Syria, as well as Syrian support for groups opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace process; threats by a number of Arab countries to link normalizing of relations with Israel to the depth of Israeli political and territorial concessions in interim and final-status agreements with the Palestinian Authority; and the long-term strategic threat to Israel posed by active efforts by several Arab and Islamic regimes to acquire and deploy weapons of mass destruction and the long-range ballistic missile capability to deliver those weapons on targets throughout Israel.

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## **Defense, Security and Military Issues**

Defense and security issues have been a crucial element of Israel's history and foreign relations since its independence in 1948.

The following internet sites provide details for further examination of the subject:

[www.un.org/Depts/dhl/maps/pk/unof.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/maps/pk/unof.htm)

[www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm](http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm)

- Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [www.idf.il](http://www.idf.il)
- Ministry of Defense [www.mod.gov.il](http://www.mod.gov.il)

The following selective list of books published in English further illuminate the defense and security themes.

Ben Meir, Yehuda. *National Security Decision-Making: The Israeli Case*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1986.

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## **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

Israel is a parliamentary democracy but has no formal written constitution. A series of Basic Laws has been enacted since independence that guide Israel's actions and which

are intended, in time, to form portions of a consolidated constitutional document. Pressure has been building recently for the promulgation of a written constitution with a bill of rights.

The President is the head of state and is elected by the Knesset (parliament). The President's powers and functions are primarily ceremonial and his or her actual political power is very limited. The Prime Minister is head of government and, as the chief executive officer, wields considerable power. He or she is now chosen through direct popular election. The Prime Minister forms the Government (or Cabinet) whose members head the ministries. The Prime Minister determines the agenda of Cabinet meetings and has the final word in policy decisions, although such decisions are often arrived at through bargaining and compromise among the coalitions of parties that, since independence, have constituted Israel's governments. Decisions by the Government determine the direction and policy of the state.

Legislative power resides in the Knesset, a unicameral body of one hundred twenty members that is the supreme authority in the state. The Knesset's main functions are similar to those of other modern parliaments and include votes of confidence or no confidence in the government, legislation, participation in the formulation of national policy, approval of budgets and taxation, election of the President, and general monitoring of the activities of the executive branch. All members of the Knesset are elected at-large in a national and general election in which seats are apportioned by a complex system of proportional representation.

The judiciary consists of secular and religious court systems. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land and hears appeals from lower courts in civil and criminal cases and acts to protect the rights of Israeli citizens. While it does not have the power of judicial review, the Supreme Court has in recent years adopted a more activist role, both in invalidating administrative actions it regards as contrary to the law and in commenting on broader social issues. Each major religious community has its own religious courts that have jurisdiction over matters of personal status such as marriage and divorce, alimony, probate, and inheritance.

Israel has a large number of political parties that represent a wide spectrum of views, positions and interests. There are also religious and special-issue parties that focus on a particular subject or theme as well as political parties that represent the interests of Israeli Arabs and other minority and ethnic communities.

Internet sources on government and politics in Israel:

- Prime Minister's Office [www.pmo.gov.il](http://www.pmo.gov.il)
- Knesset Likud Party [www.knesset.gov.il](http://www.knesset.gov.il)
- Meretz Party [www.meretz.org.il](http://www.meretz.org.il)

The web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as a gateway to foreign policy but also to a plethora of sources on all aspects of government and politics:

[www.mfa.gov.il](http://www.mfa.gov.il)

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## ECONOMY

Israel's economy has made impressive progress and the economic well-being of its people has improved significantly since independence when Israel was a poor country with weak agricultural and industrial sectors and a dependence on imported consumer goods, raw materials, and food. Economic growth was stimulated by a massive influx of immigrants and large governmental and private capital flows from abroad. Although virtually bereft of natural resources and faced with substantial burdens of immigrant absorption and of defense, Israel achieved relatively prosperous economic levels by the late 1980s with a standard of living comparable to that in many Western European countries. Life expectancy is among the highest in the world; Israel has maintained a substantial level of social services for its population; and its gross national product (GNP) has made dramatic progress. Nevertheless, Israel's economy remains dependent on foreign assistance and is burdened with an extraordinarily heavy debt-repayment responsibility.

Israel's economy grew rapidly after independence. Between 1950 and 1972, the country maintained a real economic output rate of nearly 10 percent per year and its output per worker nearly tripled. This was accompanied by significant increases in the standard of living. Inflation became a problem as the economy reached double-digit inflation in the



early 1970s and triple-digit inflation (more than 400%) by the 1984 election. It was subsequently brought down to some 15 percent by 1987 through the efforts of the 1984-1988 National Unity Government. Balance of payments problems also marked the economy in the 1980s.

Israel lacks substantial natural resources—it has limited amounts of various chemicals, such as potash and phosphates, and water supplies—but this has been offset by the unusually valuable asset Israel has in its human resources. Massive immigration created problems in Israel's early years, but it also endowed Israel with a motivated and skilled labor force. Israel has developed its own highly regarded educational and scientific establishment. Illiteracy is virtually nonexistent, and Israel's population is one of the most highly educated in the world. It is in the forefront of scientific accomplishment in fields such as irrigation and water usage, energy technology, and medical-scientific research.

Israel's only significant domestic energy source is solar power; it has no coal or hydroelectric power potential and possesses very little oil and natural gas. Energy requirements are met largely by crude oil and coal imports, and nuclear power is under study.

Israel has lacked the capital necessary for its economy to function efficiently and since 1948 it has relied on foreign capital inflows to finance the economy and for current expenditures. External sources have included loans, grants, contributions, outside investments, United States government aid, the sale of Israel Bonds, German reparations and restitution payments, and donations from Diaspora Jewish communities. These sources have permitted Israel to pursue a policy of rapid economic and demographic expansion.

The country's economy today is a mixture of state and private enterprise. The service sector remains large because of government and quasi-government activity, including the machinery to integrate large immigrant populations and the trade and transport functions connected with a high level of foreign imports. However, in the 1990s successive governments set as a priority the privatization of state-owned institutions and the opening-up of the economy to increased competition and foreign investment.

Agriculture (most often associated with the kibbutz) traditionally has occupied a position of prominence in Israel and in Zionist ideology greater than its economic contribution has warranted. Its central place in Zionist ideology, dominant role in the settlement of the country, important function in absorbing new immigrants, and security aspects have assured agriculture its priority in Israel's economic policies. The government has been involved in developing, subsidizing, and controlling agricultural activity, including fishing and forestry, since independence. The agricultural sector uses modern scientific methods and has significantly expanded the area under cultivation through irrigation drawn basically from the Jordan River. Agricultural research is extensive, and farmers are quick to adopt improved techniques and respond to changes in market conditions. Israel has become self-sufficient in food production and is an exporter of various foods,

including citrus and other fruits, vegetables, and poultry products. In spite of its rapid growth, agriculture's prominent position has gradually eroded to the point where it contributes only about 5 percent of the GNP and it is a diminishing source of employment primarily because of improved techniques and mechanization. Farm organization is predominantly cooperative, with the moshav (an agricultural settlement run on cooperative lines) being the most popular, while private farming is primarily the domain of non-Jewish sectors, mostly Arabs and some Druze.

Industry became an important, diverse, and fast-growing sector of the economy that contributed about one-third of the GNP by the late 1970s and also became a major source of employment and of commodity exports. The manufacturing-sector output is similar in range, sophistication, and quality of products to that of smaller industrialized countries. Textile manufacturers produce a range of goods including knitwear and high-fashion clothing and there are also plastics, electronics, high-technology scientific and optical equipment, and food processing. The cutting and polishing of diamonds remains a major export industry. Israel's defense industries are dominated by government-owned plants, of which Israel Aircraft Industries is the largest. The mineral and chemical industry depends heavily on the Dead Sea, which is the country's leading mineral source and includes magnesium chloride, potassium chloride (potash), table salt, chlorine, and calcium and magnesium bromide. The Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty and interim agreements with the PLO both included provisions for the joint exploitation of minerals extracted from the Dead Sea region as well as tourism and manufacturing in the region.

Government policy supported industrial development with an export orientation to ease the country's chronic balance-of-payments problem. Emphasis was given to science-based industries with a large value added by domestic manufacturing, particularly since the 1960s. This was the kind of export (e.g., chemicals, metal products, machinery, and electronic equipment) that, along with polished gem diamonds, grew most rapidly in the 1970s. Diamonds are the only product in which Israel has more than a peripheral share in any foreign market, although Israeli-manufactured arms and weapons systems have become very popular internationally and have become an important dimension of the country's export policy.

The foreign markets for Israeli products, and even the pattern of industrial growth, were shaped by the Arab boycott that precluded the possibility of Israel developing close trade links to the economies of its immediate neighbors. Instead the country had to seek more distant markets. The peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and the accords with the PLO, led to a partial suspension of the Arab boycott in the early 1990s, which resulted in only modest improvements in the level and quality of commercial interaction between Israel and its neighbors. It is also a fact that there is limited compatibility between Israel's advanced industrial economy and those of its Arab and Muslim neighbors.

Israel's exports reached about \$23.5 billion in 1999 and included such products as manufactured goods including high-tech electronics and computer software, diamonds, citrus and other fruits and other agricultural products, chemicals, plastics, rubber products, mining and quarrying, textiles, processed foods, wood products, paper, and

jewelry. Tourism is also an important earner of foreign exchange. Israeli imports, valued at more than \$30 billion in 1999, included raw materials; machinery; equipment and vehicles for investment; consumer goods; rough diamonds; fuels; and ships, aircraft; and other military equipment. Israel's major trading partners include the United States and the European Union. The establishment of free trade agreements with the U.S. and the EU were important for Israel's export market. Israel also has signed free trade zone agreements with Canada, Turkey, and several countries in eastern Europe, and it has made important economic inroads in the former Soviet Union and Asia. Israel's economy is fully interconnected with the global economy, to the extent that economic trends elsewhere in the world, such as in Russia and Asia, have a direct bearing on the well-being of the Israeli economy.

Internet Links on the Israeli economy:

- Bank of Israel [www.bankisrael.gov.il](http://www.bankisrael.gov.il)
- Ministry of Finance [www.mof.gov.il](http://www.mof.gov.il)
- Chamber of Commerce [www.chamber.org.il](http://www.chamber.org.il)
- Tel Aviv Stock Exchange [www.tase.co.il](http://www.tase.co.il)

Two of Israel's largest banks maintain web sites:

- Bank Hapoalim [www.bankhapoalim.co.il](http://www.bankhapoalim.co.il)
- Bank Leumi [www.bankleumi.co.il](http://www.bankleumi.co.il)

The crucial role of energy in Israel's economy and national life is best documented in the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration's web site:

[www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/israel.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/israel.html)

## **ISRAEL IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

Since independence, Israel has sought positive relations with the members of the international community. It has joined and participated in the work of international organizations (despite longstanding efforts by the Arabs and their supporters to isolate and ostracize Israel at the United Nations and in other international fora) and it has sought to establish and maintain friendly relations with as many states as possible. Within the framework of this broad effort, there has been a particular focus on relations with the United States and the Soviet Union (and subsequently, with Russia).

Israel had a variable relationship with the Soviet Union and the members of the Eastern bloc since before independence. Although the Soviet Union supported the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947 and Israel's independence in 1948, relations deteriorated rapidly and the Soviet Union shifted to a pro-Arab position, including providing economic assistance and arms to front-line Arab states such as Egypt and Syria by the mid-1950s. Since 1967, when the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc states, except Romania, broke diplomatic relations with Israel, the questions of a Soviet role in the Arab-Israeli conflict

and the peace process and the status of Jews in the Soviet Union were central themes in Israel-Soviet relations. Under Mikhail Gorbachev a thaw developed and relations between Israel and the Soviet camp improved in a number of spheres. Formal diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union were restored in October 1991 in conjunction with the start of the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference under joint U.S. and Soviet sponsorship. Moscow permitted the migration of Soviet Jews to Israel, a process that ultimately swelled to some 750,000 Jewish immigrants in the 1990s.

Israel has seen Europe and the developing world (especially Africa and Latin America) as important components of its overall policy. It has sought to maintain positive relations with Europe based on the commonality of the Judeo-Christian heritage and the memories of the Holocaust. The European Union is also an important trading partner for Israel given the long-standing refusal of its immediate neighbors to engage in normal commercial relations. Israel's approach to the developing world has focused on its ability to provide technical assistance in the development process. Despite substantial effort in those sectors, the growing centrality of the United States as the primary facilitator of assistance to Israel, as well as of mediation in Arab-Israeli peacemaking, has caused Israelis to focus increasingly on solidifying relations with the United States.

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Internet Links on Israel and International Organizations:

- United Nations [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)
- World Bank [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)
- International Monetary Fund [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)

## **THE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE U.S.**

The special but central and complex relationship between Israel and the United States has been more significant. The relationship revolves around a broadly conceived ideological factor. Moreover, it is based on substantial positive perception and sentiment evident in public opinion and official statements and manifest in political-diplomatic support and military and economic assistance. However, the U.S.-Israeli relationship has not been enshrined in a legally binding commitment joining the two states in a formal alliance. Undergirding the relationship is a general agreement on broad policy goals. The two states maintain a remarkable degree of parallelism and congruence on such objectives as the need to prevent major war in the Middle East, to achieve a negotiated resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict that does not endanger Israeli security, and to strengthen Israel's economic and social well-being. Nevertheless, there have been instances of noncongruence of policy between Washington and Jerusalem on specific issues which have derived from various differences of perspective; for example, disputes with the Begin and Shamir governments over West Bank settlement activity, and differences between the Netanyahu government and the Clinton Administration over the depth and pace of Israeli redeployment in the West Bank. These differences aside, the United States is an indispensable ally that provides Israel with economic, technical, military, political, diplomatic, and moral support. It was seen as the ultimate protector against the Soviet Union in the Cold War and, since the demise of the Soviet Union, against militant Islamist terrorism and rogue regimes, and it is the primary (if not sole) guarantor of Israel's qualitative military advantage over its regional adversaries.

Over time the United States has changed from a power of limited direct support for Israel to the world's only superpower linked to Israel in a free trade area and a crucial provider of political, diplomatic and strategic (security) support as well as economic aid.

There is a widespread misperception that United States support for Israel has been a major element of United States Middle East policy since the creation of the state. United States economic and military assistance was far more substantial to other regional states (such as Turkey, Iran and Greece — in part reflected by the Truman Doctrine of 1947) than to Israel until the Kennedy-Johnson and, later, Nixon years. United States diplomatic-political backing for Israel in the United Nations and elsewhere is marked by the post-1967 war efforts reflected in Johnson's Five Principles of Peace speech of June 19, 1967 and, United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (which is substantially similar in its approach to peace). A well-developed strategic link derives from the Reagan administration and the president's perception of Israel as a "strategic asset" and the subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (1981), although the Nixon administration certainly identified value in support of King Hussein during Black September (1970). United States military aid and military sales to Israel were negligible in amount and unimpressive in content until the Kennedy administration sold Israel Hawk missiles and the Johnson administration sold Israel modern jet aircraft. It is useful to recall that the well-regarded Israel Air Force of the 1967 war was primarily equipped with modern French jet aircraft, not those of the United States. The first Phantom (F-4) jet aircraft arrived in Israel only in 1969. Total United States military aid to Israel was less than \$1 million until the Kennedy tenure and increased dramatically to substantial levels first with the Nixon administration and then in the wake of the Camp David Accords (1978)

— the so-called "Camp David dividend". Indeed Israeli efforts to secure a formal relationship with the United States in the mid-1950s was rebuffed by the Eisenhower-Dulles administration and it was Britain and France that collaborated with Israel in the Suez War (without US knowledge). It was also then that the Eisenhower administration forced Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in the conflict under pain of sanctions.

Israel's special relationship with the United States — revolving around a broadly conceived ideological factor based on positive perception and sentiment evident in public opinion and official statements and manifest in political and diplomatic support and military and economic assistance — has not been enshrined in a legally binding commitment joining the two in a formal alliance. Despite the extensive links that have developed, the widespread belief in the existence of the commitment, and the assurances contained in various specific agreements, the exact nature and extent of the U.S. commitment to Israel remains imprecise. Israel has no mutual security treaty with the United States, nor is it a member of any alliance system requiring the United States to take up arms automatically on its behalf.

The United States commitment to Israel has taken the generalized form of presidential statements (rather than formal documents), which have reaffirmed the U.S. interest in supporting the political independence and territorial integrity of all Middle East states, including Israel. These statements do not, however, commit the United States to specific actions in particular circumstances. The arrangements has been codified in the Sinai II accords of 1975 and in the MOUs since 1981.

It has largely been assumed by both parties that the United States would come to Israel's assistance should it be gravely threatened; this perception has become particularly apparent during times of crisis. Despite this perception and the general feeling in Washington (and elsewhere) that the United States would take action if required, there is no assurance that this would be the case. Israeli leaders continue to be interested in military and economic assistance as the primary tangible expression of the U.S. commitment and have been particularly cautious about potential U.S. participation in a conflict, fearing that combat losses might lead to a situation analogous to that in Vietnam. Thus, the exact role of the United States in support of Israel, beyond diplomatic and political action and military and economic assistance, is unclear.

The United States is today an indispensable if not fully dependable ally. It provides Israel, through one form or another, with economic (governmental and private), technical, military, political, diplomatic, and moral support. It is seen as the ultimate resource against potential enemies, it is the source of Israel's sophisticated military hardware, and its interest in lasting peace is central to the Arab-Israeli peace process. Although there is this positive relationship, there is also an Israeli reluctance, bred of history, to abdicate security to another party's judgment and action. Israel will continue to consider its perceptions of threat and security as decisive. In Israel's elite and collective popular judgement, the special relationship must be sustained. It has been a vital foundation of Israel's security and foreign policy for years. Based on shared democratic values and



similar conceptions of the world there have been concerns about threats from terrorism and dangerous (now called "rogue") states.

The two states maintain a remarkable degree of parallelism and congruence on broad policy goals. The policy consensus includes the need to prevent war, at both the regional and international levels, the need to maintain Israel's existence and security and to help provide for its economic well-being. At the same time, however, there was, is, and will be a divergence of interests that derives from a difference of perspective and overall policy environment. The United States has broader concerns resulting from its global obligations, whereas Israel's perspective is conditioned by its more restricted environment and lesser responsibilities. Israel's horizon is more narrowly defined and essentially limited to the survival of the state and a concern for Jewish communities and individuals that goes beyond the frontiers of the Jewish state.

Despite these areas of shared interests and concerns, and generally positive nature of the relationship, congruence is not always assured and Israelis also recall a series of negative episodes. They have other interests as well, and their perspective of the world emanates from different positions. Full accord being unattainable, there is nevertheless a need to reduce strains and discord in the relationship. There was and will be discord on issues relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and particularly the future of the Palestinians.

There has also been a divergence on methods and techniques to be employed, as well as discord on specific issues.

The general consensus on major issues does not ensure agreement on all aspects or specifics of each problem. As the dialogue has increasingly focused on details, rather than broad areas of agreement, there have been disturbances in the relationship. Both parties understand that this is inevitable but seek to minimize the areas of discord. Strains are probably inevitable given the extensive nature of the issues in the dialogue.

The objective of securing the special relationship that exists between Israel and the United States has developed over the years and is now a central focus of foreign policy objectives. This was not always so to the extent it now is. Today Israelis see the relationship as among the loftiest goals of policy. Sustaining and enhancing the relationship is a prerequisite for domestic political success.

Israel has developed a multifaceted and intense special relationship that is both vital and natural. It encompasses both the strategic imperatives of the Jewish state and the ideological connection. In the earliest days of Israeli independence, some argued for non-alignment in the cold war, but the central and dominating concept of David Ben-Gurion, and most of the political elite, was that Israel clearly stood with the West. From those early days Israel has emerged as a "major non-NATO ally" and a country clearly linked with the US for its political and strategic support as well as more clear economic and ideological reasons.

Changing administrations in Washington, and of governments in Jerusalem, have all affected the nature and content of the links between the United States and Israel within the broad parameters of the enduring special relationship. The patterns of agreement and discord established from the outset have manifested themselves subsequently — broad areas of concern on the more strategic and existential issues, accompanied by disagreement on the specifics of many of the elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict and on the means to achieve congruent objectives.

At Israel's birth the United States seemed to be a dispassionate, almost uninterested, midwife — its role was essential and unconventional but also unpredictable and hotly debated in U.S. policy circles. Today, more than fifty years later, some of the policy debate continues, and there are periods of discord in the relationship. Some of this reflects personality and related differences between U.S. and Israeli leaders. But there is little doubt about the overall nature of U.S. support for its small and still embattled ally.

In all relationships there are limits to the ability of one party to influence the other and limits beyond which a state will not go (and concessions it will not make) given its perception of its national interest. As with other states, Israel has imposed limits ("red lines") for its behavior and policies and there is an ultimate "independence" of action that Israel ascribes to itself. Many have assumed that because of the overwhelming importance of the United States to Israel (and especially because of the vast amounts of aid and political-diplomatic support) that the United States retains the ability to "influence" Israel to move in certain directions and adopt certain policies. There are a wide range of actions that Israel is likely to take at the suggestion of the United States. At the same time Israel is able to forestall such suggestions for a variety of reasons relating to the nature of the American political system (including checks and balances, the role of public opinion, the importance of lobbying groups, etc.) and others that are a direct consequence of Israel's self-perception. For Israel, as for other states, core values and vital national interests are not subject to compromise or policy modification, even under substantial external influence from an important and close friend. Reflecting the perspective of numerous Israeli leaders, before and since, Yitzhak Shamir noted in the Knesset in September 1982: "on the fundamental life-and-death issues ... we have no choice but to stand by our position firmly, strongly and clearly, even against our great friend the United States." For the Jewish state the ultimate decisions on peace, security and well-being remain in the decisions of its senior decision-makers.

Readings on the Israel-United States Special Relationship –

#### A Select Bibliography of Books

The U.S.-Israel relationship has been the subject of extensive writing by scholars, academics, politicians, journalists, and other observers. Also, many of the participants in the diplomatic and other connections between these two states have written memoirs and other works that provide interesting, although not always wholly accurate, accounts of the linkage. These are important sources and tell us a good deal about what happened, how these two states interacted, and -- often -- why.

The list which follows is a select one -- it contains only books and monographs written in English. The reader is reminded of a vast periodical literature and is referred to the bibliographical indexes just noted as well as to the bibliographies and notes in the works cited below for guidance to that literature. In addition to scholarly studies, it includes works that advocate a particular approach in the relationship and those that are highly critical of it, the latter group include some that are of the conspiracy theory genre. In sum they help to explicate the special relationship between the United States and Israel.

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## **ISRAEL FACES THE FUTURE**

At the heart of Israel's agenda for the future is the continuing Arab-Israeli conflict, with its dimensions of potential conflict and of peace, but placed within the context of numerous territorial and political disputes still to be resolved. Israel's need and desire for peace is not a subject for debate among Israelis, although the means to that end are. Nevertheless, the quest for peace remains a central theme of national life and Israelis are preoccupied with survival and security.

Israel has fought six major wars and countless skirmishes with the Arabs, has built an impressive and highly sophisticated but costly military capability, and holds a strategic edge over its neighbors. Despite, or perhaps because of, its battlefield successes and the specter of future combat, Israelis continuously recalculate the increasingly sophisticated military balance between themselves and the Arab and Islamic worlds and concerns about



weapons acquisitions, force structure, and capability, as well as willingness of Arab and Islamic nations to engage in battle with Israel, are never far from the center of attention. Factors in these assessments include the post-Gulf War build up of conventional weapons by several of Israel's immediate neighbors as well as the transfer of nonconventional (nuclear, biological, and chemical) weapons and weapons technology and long-range missiles by extra-regional actors (such as Russia, China, and North Korea) to militant Arab countries (such as Iraq, Libya, and Syria) and to Iran. The possibility of war with potentially high levels of casualties and other unbearable costs remains a matter of deep public concern.

For most Israelis, the prospects for a future in which they will live in peace with their immediate and more distant neighbors in the Middle East seems to lie at a point beyond the immediate future. This perception was not significantly affected by the process of negotiations ensuing from the Madrid Peace Conference or by the completion of interim agreements with the PLO or the signing of the peace treaty with Jordan, despite the fact that each of these events may be viewed as part of a long-term process that will lead to a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israelis also hope that an eventual end of the conflict with the Arabs will allow them to address a multitude of domestic challenges—relating, *inter alia*, to the role of religion in the state, social and economic disparities among Jewish Israelis, and the political status of Israel's non-Jewish citizenry—most of which were subsumed during the first fifty years of statehood to the more immediate challenge of protecting the state against existential external threat.

## **ISRAEL – DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1948)**

### DECLARATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL

ERETZ ISRAEL [the Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, *ma'pilim* [immigrants coming to Eretz Israel in defiance of restrictive legislation] and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community, controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodor Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home.

The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people—the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe—was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully-privileged member of the comity of nations.

Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.

In the Second World War, the Jewish community of this country contributed its full share to the struggle of the freedom- and peace-loving nations against the forces of Nazi wickedness and, by the blood of its soldiers and its war effort, gained the right to be reckoned among the peoples who founded the United Nations.

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

**ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.**

**WE DECLARE** that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate, being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the

Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October, 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel."

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL—in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months—to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream—the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE ALMIGHTY, WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14 MAY, 1948).

## **CHARTS AND TABLES**

President

Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister of Defense  
 Minister of Finance  
 Israel Defense Forces: Chief of Staff  
 Attorney General  
 Immigration of Palestine and Israel, 1882-1989  
 Population at End of Year

### President

Chaim Weizmann	1949-1952
Yitzhak Ben Zvi	1952-1963
Shneur Zalman Shazar	1963-1973
Ephraim Katzir	1973-1978
Yitzhak Navon	1978-1983
Chaim Herzog	1983-1993
Ezer Weizman	1993-2000
Moshe Katzav	2000-

### Prime Minister

David Ben-Gurion	1948-1954
Moshe Sharett	1954-1955
David Ben-Gurion	1955-1963
Levi Eshkol	1963-1969
Golda Meir	1969-1974
Yitzhak Rabin	1974-1977
Menahem Begin	1977-1983
Yitzhak Shamir	1983-1984
Shimon Peres	1984-1986
Yitzhak Shamir	1986-1992
Yitzhak Rabin	1992-1995
Shimon Peres	1995-1996
Benjamin Netanyahu	1996-1999
Ehud Barak	1999-2001
Ariel Sharon	2001-

### Minister of Foreign Affairs

Moshe Sharett	1948-1956
Golda Meir	1956-1966

Abba Eban	1966-1974
Yigal Allon	1974-1977
Moshe Dayan	1977-1979
Menahem Begin	1979-1980
Yitzhak Shamir	1980-1986
Shimon Peres	1986-1988
Moshe Arens	1988-1990
David Levy	1990-1992
Shimon Peres	1992-1995
Ehud Barak	1995-1996
David Levy	1996-1998
Benjamin Netanyahu	1998-1998
Ariel Sharon	1998-1999
David Levy	1999-2000
Shlomo Ben-Ami (acting)	2000-

### **Minister of Defense**

David Ben-Gurion	1948-1954
Pinhas Lavon	1954-1955
David Ben-Gurion	1955-1963
Levi Eshkol	1963-1973
Moshe Dayan	1967-1974
Shimon Peres	1974-1977
Ezer Weizman	1977-1980
Menahem Begin	1980-1981
Ariel Sharon	1981-1983
Moshe Arens	1983-1984
Yitzhak Rabin	1984-1990
Moshe Arens	1990-1992
Yitzhak Rabin	1992-1995
Shimon Peres	1995-1996
Yitzhak Mordechai	1996-1998
Moshe Arens	1999-1999
Ehud Barak	1999-

### **Minister of Finance**

Eliezer Kaplan	1948-1952
Levi Eshkol	1952-1963

Pinhas Sapir	1963-1968
Ze'ev Sharef	1968-1969
Pinhas Sapir	1969-1974
Yehoshua Rabinowitz	1974-1977
Simha Ehrlich	1977-1980
Yigael Hurvitz	1980-1981
Yoram Aridor	1981-1983
Yigal Cohen-Orgad	1983-1984
Yitzhak Moda'i	1984-1986
Moshe Nissim	1986-1988
Shimon Peres	1988-1990
Yitzhak Moda'i	1990-1992
Avraham Shochat	1992-1996
Dan Meridor	1996-1997
Yaacov Ne'eman	1997-1998
Meir Sheerit	1999-1999
Avraham Shochat	1999-

### **Israel Defense Forces: Chief of Staff**

Yaacov Dori	1948-1949
Yigael Yadin	1949-1952
Mordechai Maklef	1952-1953
Moshe Dayan	1953-1958
Chaim Laskov	1958-1961
Zvi Tsur	1961-1964
Yitzhak Rabin	1964-1968
Chaim Bar-Lev	1968-1972
David Elazar	1972-1974
Mordechai Gur	1974-1978
Raphael Eitan	1978-1983
Moshe Levy	1983-1987
Dan Shomron	1987-1991
Ehud Barak	1991-1994
Amnon Lipkin-Shahak	1995-1998
Shaul Mofaz	1998-

### **Attorney General**

Ya'acov Shimshon Shapira	1948-1950
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Haim Cohen	1950-1960
Gideon Hausner	1960-1963
Moshe Ben Ze'ev	1963-1968
Me'ir Shamgar	1958-1975
Aharon Barak	1975-1978
Yitzhak Zamir	1978-1986
Yosef Harish	1986-1992
Michael Ben Ya'ir	1992-1996
Ronnie Bar-On	1997 (3 days)
Elyakim Rubinstein	1997-

**Immigration to Palestine and Israel  
1882-1989  
(part 1 of 2)**

1882-1903	20,000-30,000
1904-1914	35,000-40,000
1919-1923	35,183
1924-1931	81,613
1932-1938	197,235
1939-1945	81,808
1945-1948, May 15	56,467
1948 (May 15-Dec 31)	101,819
1949	239,576
1950	170,215
1951	175,129
1952	24,369
1953	11,326
1954	18,370
1955	37,4878
1956	56,234
1957	71,224
1958	27,082
1959	23,895
1960	24,510
1961	47,638
1962	61,328
1963	64,364
1964	54,716
1965	30,736

1966	15,730
1967	14,327
1968	20,544
1969	37,804

(continued)

**Immigration to Palestine and Israel  
1882-1989  
(part 2 of 2)**

1970	36,750
1971	41,930
1972	55,888
1973	54,886
1974	31,981
1975	20,028
1976	19,754
1977	21,429
1978	26,394
1979	37,222
1980	20,428
1981	12,599
1982	13,723
1983	16,906
1984	19,981
1985	10,642
1986	9,505
1987	12,965
1988	13,034
1989	24,050
1990	199,500
1991	176,000
1992	77,100
1993	77,080
1994	82,000
1995	76,400
1996	70,605
1997	66,500
1998	56,700
1999 (as of September)	17,100



**Population at End of Year**  
(thousands)  
(part 1 of 2)

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Moslems</b>	<b>Christians</b>	<b>Druze &amp; Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
1948	758.7	----- 156.0 -----			
1949	1013.9	111.5	34.0	14.5	1173.9
1950	1203.0	116.1	36.0	15.0	1370.1
1951	1404.4	118.9	39.0	15.5	1577.8
1952	1450.2	122.8	40.4	16.1	1629.5
1953	1483.6	127.6	41.4	16.8	1669.4
1954	1526.0	131.8	42.0	18.0	1717.8
1955	1590.5	136.3	43.3	19.0	1789.1
1956	1667.5	141.4	43.7	19.8	1872.4
1957	1762.8	146.8	45.8	20.5	1976.0
1958	1810.2	152.8	47.3	21.4	2031.7
1959	1858.8	159.2	48.3	22.3	2088.7
1960	1911.3	166.3	49.6	23.3	2150.4
1961	1981.7	179.4	51.3	26.3	2234.2
1962	2068.9	183.0	52.6	27.3	2331.8
1963	2155.6	192.2	53.9	28.5	2430.1
1964	2239.2	202.3	55.5	28.6	2525.6
1965	2299.1	212.4	57.1	29.8	2598.4
1966	2344.9	223.0	58.5	31.0	2657.4
1967	2383.6	289.6	71.0	32.1	2776.3
1968	2434.8	300.8	72.2	33.3	2841.1
1969	2506.8	314.5	73.5	34.6	2929.5
1970	2582.0	328.6	75.5	35.9	3022.1
1971	2662.0	344.0	77.3	37.3	3120.7
1972	2752.7	360.7	73.8	37.8	3225.0

(continued)  
Population at End of Year  
(thousands)  
(part 2 of 2)

	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Moslems</b>	<b>Christians</b>	<b>Druze &amp; Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
1973	2845.0	377.2	76.7	39.3	3338.2
1974	2906.9	395.2	78.7	40.8	3421.6
1975	2959.4	411.4	80.2	42.2	3493.2

1976	3020.4	429.1	82.0	43.9	3575.4
1977	3077.3	446.5	83.8	45.6	3653.2
1978	3141.2	463.6	85.5	47.3	3737.6
1979	3218.4	481.2	87.6	49.0	3836.2
1980	3282.7	498.3	89.9	50.7	3921.7
1981	3320.3	513.7	91.5	52.3	3977.9
1982	3373.2	530.8	94.0	65.6	4063.6
1983	3412.5	542.2	95.9	68.0	4118.6
1984	3471.7	559.7	98.2	70.0	4199.7
1985	3517.2	577.6	99.4	72.0	4266.2
1986	3561.4	595.0	100.9	74.0	4331.3
1987	3612.9	614.5	103.0	76.1	4406.5
1988	3659.0	634.6	105.0	78.1	4476.8
1989	3717.1	655.2	107.0	80.3	4559.6
1990	3946.7	679.8	115.7	81.9	4821.7
1991	3947.0	680.0	116.0	79.0	4822.0
1992	4177.0	715.0	135.0	86.0	5113.0
1993	4335.2	751.2	149.2	90.6	5327.6
1994	4441.1	782.4	158.7	93.0	5471.5
1995	4549.5	814.7	162.9	95.5	5619.0
1996	4637.4	840.8	184.3	97.9	5759.4
1997	4731.8	879.1	188.8	100.0	5900.0
1998	4783.0	901.3	129.6	102.6	6037.0

### Israel and Jewish History -- A Selected Chronology

c.17th Century BCE The period of the Jewish Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

c.1250-1210 BCE The Exodus of the Jews from Egypt; wandering in the desert of Sinai and the conquest of Canaan under Joshua.

c.1020-1004 BCE King Saul. Establishment of the Israelite kingdom.

c.1004-965 BCE King David. Consolidation and expansion of the kingdom.

c.961-928 BCE King Solomon. The Temple is built in Jerusalem.

c.928 BCE Division of the state and the establishment of Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

c.722 BCE Assyrian conquest of Samaria, Kingdom of Israel; large number of Jews exiled.

c.586 BCE Jerusalem is conquered and the Temple is destroyed. Mass deportation of Jews in the Babylonian captivity.

c.520-515 BCE The Temple is rebuilt.

c.167-160 BCE Hasmonean rebellion under Judah Maccabee.

164 BCE Jerusalem is liberated and the Temple is rededicated.

37-4 BCE Reign of Herod.

c.19 BCE The Temple is rebuilt.

66 AD/CE Jewish revolt against Rome.

70 Siege of Jerusalem; Destruction of the Temple by Romans. Direct Roman rule is imposed until 395. Beginning of the Jewish Diaspora. Beginning of the Jewish Diaspora.

73 Fall of Massada.

132-135 Bar Kochba War.

135 Jews are expelled from "Palestine", a name given to Judea by Rome.

395-638 Byzantine rule.

638 Arab Muslim armies conquer Jerusalem.

c. 636-1072 Arab rule.

1072-1099 Seljuq rule.

1099 Jerusalem captured by the Crusaders.

1099-1291 Crusader rule with interruptions.

1187 Jerusalem is captured by Saladin.

1291-1516 Mameluke rule.

C. 1517-1917 Ottoman Turkish rule.

1882-1903 First Aliya.

1894 Dreyfus trial in France.

1896 Publication of *Der Judenstaat* by Theodor Herzl.

1897 First Zionist Congress is held in Basle, Switzerland. The World Zionist Organization is established.

1904 Herzl dies.

1904-1914 Second Aliya.

1917 November 2 The Balfour Declaration is issued.

1919-1923 Third Aliya.

1920 The British Mandate over Palestine is granted at San Remo although it is not formalized until 1922. Herbert Samuel is appointed High Commissioner for Palestine. The Histadrut and Hagana are founded.

1922 July Palestine Mandate ratified by League of Nations.

1924-1928 Fourth Aliya.

1925 Hebrew University is inaugurated on Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem.

1929 Arab riots take place in Jerusalem and massacres occur in Hebron and Safed.

1929-1939 Fifth Aliya.

1935 The Revisionist movement, headed by Vladimir Zeev Jabotinsky, secedes from the World Zionist Organization and establishes the new Zionist Organization.

1937 Peel Commission Report; first proposal to partition Palestine..

1942 May Biltmore Program promulgated by Zionists at conference in New York.

1945 November Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry established.

1947 Great Britain turns the Palestine issue over to the United Nations. The United Nations Special Committee On Palestine (UNSCOP) examines the problem and recommends solutions.

November 29 The United Nations General Assembly adopts a resolution (UNGA Res 181 (II)) providing for an independent Jewish state in Palestine to be united economically with an independent Arab state. An international regime is to be established in Jerusalem. US and USSR support the partition plan.

1948 May 14 Proclamation of the independence of the State of Israel. US extends *de facto* recognition. Ben-Gurion becomes first Prime Minister of Israel.

May 15 The British Mandate for Palestine is terminated; Arab armies of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria invade and the first Arab-Israeli War (Israel's War of Independence) officially begins. The United States and the Soviet Union recognize Israel.

December 11 UNGA adopts Resolution 194.

1949 February 16 Chaim Weizmann is elected the first President of Israel.

February 24 Armistice Agreement with Egypt.

March 10 The first regular Government is established under David Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister.

March 23 Armistice Agreement with Lebanon.

April 3 Armistice Agreement with Jordan.

May 11 Israel becomes a member of the United Nations.

July 20 Armistice Agreement with Syria.

December Abdullah annexes that part of Palestine occupied by the Arab Legion (West Bank) and East Jerusalem. (Annexation ratified by Jordanian parliament in April 1950).

December 13 A resolution to transfer the Knesset and the Government to Jerusalem is adopted.

1953 Ben-Gurion resigns as Prime Minister. Moshe Sharett becomes Prime Minister.

1956 October 29 Israel moves against Egyptian fedayeen bases and prepares for attack in the Sinai Peninsula to eliminate commando bases. Israel invades Sinai. Sinai/Suez (second Arab-Israeli war) War begins.

November 5 France and the United Kingdom invade the Suez Canal Zone.

November 7 Egypt, France, and the United Kingdom accept the cease-fire.

1957 January 22 Israel evacuates all of Sinai except Gaza and Sharm El-sheikh.

March 1 Israel agrees to evacuate Gaza and Sharm el-Sheikh.

March 8 UNEF forces take over from Israel the garrisoning of Sharm al-Sheikh and the administration of the Gaza Strip.

1960 April 26 Israel's National Water Council approves a plan for laying a giant conduit to carry water from the Sea of Galilee to southern Israel.

May 23 Adolf Eichmann is kidnaped from Argentina for trial in Israel.

1961 April 11 The Eichmann Trial opens in Jerusalem.

1962 May 31 Adolf Eichmann is executed.

September 27 The Foreign Ministry announces that the United States has agreed to supply Israel with Hawk ground-to-air missiles for defense. First direct sale of significant American weapons to Israel.

1963 June 16 David Ben-Gurion resigns from his post as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense.

June 26 A new government, with Levi Eshkol as Prime Minister, takes office.

1964 January Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is created in Cairo. Ahmed Shukairi becomes first chairman.

1965 January 1 Fatah is established and launches its first attack against Israel

1967 April 7 During an air clash six Syrian MIG 21s are shot down by Israeli planes.

May 22/May 23 UAR President Gamal Abdul Nasser announces an Egyptian blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba, cutting off Israel's access to the Red Sea through the port of Eilat.

June 1 Prime Minister Levi Eshkol forms a broadly-based "National Unity Government" in which former Chief of Staff Moshe Dayan becomes Minister of Defense.

June 5 Hostilities commence between Israel and the Arab states in the Six Day (third Arab-Israeli) War.

June 10 The USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Israel. Other Soviet bloc European countries, except Romania, follow suit.

June 12 In a policy speech to parliament, Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol declares that Israel could not return to the prewar situation and demands that the Arabs make peace with Israel.

August-September Arab Summit Meeting at Khartoum, Sudan declares no recognition, no negotiation, and no peace with Israel.

November 22 The United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 242.

1969 The War of Attrition (the fourth Arab-Israeli War) begins along the Suez Canal.

March 7 Golda Meir becomes Prime Minister.

1970 August 7 The War of Attrition is ended by a cease-fire.

September Jordan civil war between armed forces and the PLO. PLO is ousted from Jordan by Hussein's army.

1972 May 30 Japanese gunmen, acting for the PFLP, shoot up Lod Airport.

September 5 Munich Olympics massacre of Israeli athletes by Black September terrorists.

1973 October 6 The fifth Arab-Israeli (Yom Kippur or Ramadan War) begins.

November The Agranat Commission established.

November 11 Israel-Egypt cease-fire is signed at Kilometer 101.

December 21 Geneva Peace Conference is convened.

1974 January 17 Egypt-Israel Disengagement Agreement is signed at Kilometer 101.

April 22 Yitzhak Rabin becomes Prime Minister.

May 31 Israel and Syria sign a Disengagement Agreement in Geneva.

October 28 Arab League summit meeting at Rabat, Morocco declares the PLO as "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people".

November 13 Yasser Arafat addresses the UN General Assembly. PLO is later granted observer status.

1975 September 4 Egypt and Israel sign Sinai II disengagement agreement.

November 10 United Nations General Assembly resolution declares Zionism to be a form of racism.

1976 July 4 Israeli commandos free hostages at Entebbe Airport, Uganda.

1977 April Rabin resigns as Prime Minister. Shimon Peres is selected as Labor Party leader.

May 17 Election for the Ninth Knesset. Likud, under the leadership of Menachem Begin, emerges as the largest party.

June 21 Begin forms the government coalition with himself as Prime Minister, the first non-Labor government in Israel.

November President Anwar Sadat of Egypt announces to the Egyptian National Assembly his willingness to visit Israel to discuss peace; the Israeli Knesset overwhelmingly approves an invitation to Sadat. Sadat arrives in Jerusalem and addresses the Israeli Knesset. Negotiations begin.

1978 March Following an attack on an Israeli bus, Israel launches (on March 14) Operation Litani against Palestinian bases in Lebanon.

September 5-17 Sadat, Begin, and Carter meet at the Summit at Camp David, Maryland. The Camp David Accords are signed on the 17<sup>th</sup> at the White House in Washington, DC.

December 10 Nobel Peace Prize is awarded jointly to Sadat and Begin

1979 March 26 The Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty is signed in Washington.



1980 February Egypt and Israel exchange ambassadors.

July 30 The Knesset adopts a Basic Law reaffirming united Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

1981 June 7 Israel destroys the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor near Baghdad.

June 30 Election for the Tenth Knesset. Likud secures the largest number of seats. A Begin coalition government secures a vote of confidence from the Knesset in August.

June 6 War in Lebanon (sixth Arab-Israeli war) begins.

November 30 The United States and Israel sign a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation.

December 14 Israel extends its "law and jurisdiction" to the Golan Heights.

1982 April 25 Israel completes its withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and returns it to Egypt.

June 6 Israel invades Lebanon. War in Lebanon (Operation Peace for Galilee). Israel launches an attempt to destroy PLO bases in Lebanon.

1983 May 17 Israel and Lebanon sign an agreement concluded with the assistance of United States Secretary of State George Shultz.

September 16 Menachem Begin resigns as Prime Minister.

October Yitzhak Shamir forms a new government and takes office as Prime Minister.

1984 March 5 Lebanon abrogates the May 17, 1983 agreement with Israel.

1985 January Israel announces its intent to withdraw unilaterally from Lebanon.

July The Israel Defense Forces completes its withdrawal from Lebanon. A security zone is established in southern Lebanon astride the Israeli-Lebanese frontier.

1987 December 8 An Israeli truck hits a Palestinian car in Gaza killing four people. Anti Israeli violence erupts throughout Gaza.

December 9 An Arab uprising (intifada) begins in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip challenges Israel's authority in the territories.

1988 February Hamas is created in Gaza

November 15 The Palestine National Council (PNC), meeting in Algiers, declares an independent Palestinian state and issues ambiguous statements concerning acceptance of UNSC Resolutions 242 and 338.

December 13 Arafat, at press conference, recognizes Israel's right to exist, accepts UNSC Res. 242 and 338, renounces terrorism. US announces that it will begin a dialogue with the PLO in Tunis.

December 22 Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir presents his coalition government to the Knesset. It is approved by a vote of 84 to 19 with three abstentions.

1989 March 15 Egypt takes control of Taba.

1990 January Soviet Jews begin to arrive in Israel in large numbers.

March 15 The Knesset passes a motion of no-confidence in the government led by Yitzhak Shamir by a vote of 60 to 55.

June 11 The Knesset approves Yitzhak Shamir's government composed of Likud and right-wing and religious parties.

June 20 President George Bush suspends the US dialogue with the PLO.

September 30 Consular relations are reestablished between Israel and the Soviet Union.

November 5 Rabbi Meir Kahane, leader of the Kach Party, is assassinated in New York.

November 25 The cabinet approves Gen. Ehud Barak to replace Lt. Gen. Dan Shomron as chief of staff of the IDF when Shomron's tenure ends in April 1991.

1991 October 18 Israel and the Soviet Union restore diplomatic relations.

October 30 Peace conference organized by the United States and the Soviet Union meets in Madrid, Spain.

December 10 Beginning of Washington rounds of bilateral Arab-Israeli negotiations.

December 16 United Nations General Assembly repeals the "Zionism is Racism" resolution.

1992 June 23 Election for the Thirteenth Knesset. Israel Labor Party wins under leadership of Yitzhak Rabin.

January 1993-February Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin discloses existence of Oslo talks to Peres, who in turn informs Rabin. Oslo negotiators begin drafting declaration of principles for interim Israel-PLO agreement.

March 23 Benjamin Netanyahu is elected leader of the Likud Party, replacing Yitzhak Shamir.

May Rabin agrees to upgrade Oslo talks to official level.

July 25 Israel launches bombardment of Hezbollah bases in southern Lebanon ("Operation Accountability"); US brokers cease-fire and agreement between Israel and Lebanon (acting on Hezbollah's behalf) to avoid firing on the other's civilian populations.

August 20 Israeli and PLO officials initial Declaration of Principles in Oslo.

August 30 Israel cabinet approves Declaration of Principles with no amendments allowed.

September 9 Rabin and Arafat exchange letters of mutual recognition on behalf of Israel and the PLO.

September 13 Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles is signed by Peres and the PLO's Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) on the White House lawn in Washington. Prime Minister Rabin and PLO leader Arafat shake hands.

September 14 Israel and Jordan sign Common Agenda for future negotiations. Rabin meets with King Hassan II in Morocco.

September 23 Knesset approves DOP by vote of 61-50 with 8 abstentions.

1994 April 29 Israel-PLO economic cooperation agreement signed in Paris.

May 4 Israel and the PLO sign the Cairo agreement for establishing self-rule in Gaza Strip and Jericho.

June 16 Israel and Vatican establish full diplomatic relations.

July 25 Washington Declaration on Israel-Jordan peace is signed; Rabin and King Hussein address joint session of US Congress.

August 3 Knesset, by vote of 77-9 with 4 abstentions, approves resolution reaffirming Jerusalem's status as the "eternal capital of Israel, and Israel alone".

August 29 "Early empowerment" agreement on transfer of civilian authority in parts of West Bank and Gaza Strip is signed.

October 26 Israel and Jordan sign Peace Treaty; King Hussein subsequently makes first official visit to Israel where he and Rabin formally exchange copies of the treaty.

November 27 Israel and Jordan establish diplomatic relations.

December IDF Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and his Syrian counterpart, Hikmat Shihabi, meet in Washington to discuss security arrangements for the Golan Heights and related matters.

December 10 Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat receive the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway.

December 26 Rabin becomes first Israeli prime minister to visit Persian Gulf Sultanate of Oman.

1995 March 14 Israel and Syria agree to resume direct peace talks involving Israel's Ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, and his Syrian counterpart, Walid al-Moualem.

October 24 US Congress passes "Jerusalem Embassy Relocation Act", requiring transfer of Embassy to Jerusalem by May 1999.

November 4 Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by Yigal Amir in Tel Aviv; Peres becomes Interim Prime Minister; inquiry headed by retired Supreme Court President Meir Shamgar finds serious lapse in security around Rabin but no evidence of conspiracy.

November 22 The Knesset votes its confidence in the new government of Shimon Peres by a vote of 62-8 with 32 abstentions.

1996 February 20 David Levy announces the establishment of his new political party, Gesher (Bridge).

May 29 In the first direct election of the prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu defeats Shimon Peres by less than 1% (50.4% to 49.5%),

though among Jewish voters there is an 11% differential (55.5% to 44.5%). Concurrent election to 14th Knesset is held.

1998 January 4 David Levy resigns as foreign minister and withdraws his Geshet faction from the governing coalition to protest stalemate in peace process and proposed budget cuts.

November 17 The Knesset ratifies the Wye River Memorandum by vote of 75-19, with 9 abstentions and 14 absent.

November 18 Foreign Minister Sharon and Palestinian Authority minister Abu-Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) formally launch final-status negotiations.

December 22 Dan Meridor quits Likud, announcing intention to run for prime minister as head of a new centrist political party. This proposed party ultimately is subsumed within the new Center Party headed by Yitzhak Mordechai.)

December 28 Ze'ev Binyamin Begin quits Likud, announcing intention to enter race for prime minister as head of New Herut (Herut Hahadasha) Party. This party subsequently is incorporated into new right-wing National Union coalition, with Begin as its candidate for prime minister.

1999 March 25 Azmi (Ahmed) Bishara becomes first Israeli Arab to declare his candidacy for Prime Minister.

May 15-16 On the eve of general elections, Azmi Bishara, Yitzhak Mordechai, and Ze'ev Binyamin Begin, withdraw from prime ministerial race, creating 2-way contest between Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak.

May 17 Israel Labor Party/One Israel leader Ehud Barak defeats the Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu in the direct election for Prime Minister, receiving 56.08% of the popular vote (1,791,020) compared to 43.92 (1,402,474) for Netanyahu. In elections for the 15<sup>th</sup> Knesset, One Israel wins 26 seats, Likud 19, and Shas 17.

July 6 The Knesset approves Ehud Barak's government and policy guidelines and he is sworn in as prime minister. Barak presents his seven party, 75-member governing coalition and its program before the Knesset for ratification; in his inaugural speech as Prime Minister, Barak urges Israel's Arab neighbors to resume pursuit of peace initiated by his mentor, Yitzhak Rabin. Labor MK Avraham Burg is elected speaker of the 15<sup>th</sup> Knesset.

September 2 Ariel Sharon is elected leader of the Likud Party.

September 4 Barak and Arafat sign agreement at Sharm el-Sheikh, to implement outstanding elements of the October 1998 Wye River Memorandum, a target date for completing final-status peace negotiations is set for September 2000.

September 13 Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian negotiator Abu Mazen formally launched the final status peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

October 28 Mauritania establishes diplomatic ties with Israel, becoming the third Arab country (after Egypt and Jordan) to do so.

November 8 Israel and the PLO begin permanent status talks in earnest in Ramallah.

December Evidence is uncovered of President Ezer Weizman's having received substantial financial gifts; Weizman resists growing pressure to resign.

December 8 President Clinton announces agreement of Israel and Syria to resume formal talks.

December 15-16 Barak and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa meet with Clinton in Washington.

2000 January 3-10 Barak and Sharaa and their respective delegations meet with U.S. mediators in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. Clinton presents a 7-page document designed to "bridge" differences between Israeli and Syrian positions on key issues, and to serve as a blueprint for a comprehensive peace treaty.

### **Bibliography – A Selected Guide to Further Reading**

The academic and scholarly literature on Israel is massive, although uneven in both areas and subjects covered and quality of analysis and style. The following selected list records some of the major and more useful works available for further reading.

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# JORDAN

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER

School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

## Self-Study Guide to Jordan

The **Self-Study Guide: Jordan** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Jordanian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by Dr. Jenab Tutunji, Adjunct Professor of Political Science, George Washington University. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Tutunji.

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First Edition

September 2002

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## Historical Timeline

Up to 8500 BC      Paleolithic Age, gradual settling and cultivating of hunting and gathering nomads.

8500–4500 BC      Neolithic Age, widespread agriculture, first large settlements and first pottery c. 5500 BC.

4500–3200 BC      Calcolithic Age, appearance of metal working.

3200–1950 BC      Early Bronze Age, emergence of “city states” surrounded by huge defenses and change to village and pastoral life.

- 1950–1550 BC Middle Bronze Age, re-emergence of urban life in strongly defended cities.
- 1550–1200 BC Late Bronze Age, continuance of city states and dominance by the Egyptian Empire.
- 1200–539 BC Iron Age, establishment of kingdoms of Edom, Moab and Ammon.
- c. 950 BC Israelites conquer region. United Israelite Monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon.
- 854 BC Assyrians invade region.
- 850 BC King Mesha of Moab gains control of the region.
- c. 580 BC Babylonians invade region. Jews deported to Babylon.
- c. 500 Nabataean Arab tribes establish presence in region.
- 539–332 BC Region falls under Persian Empire, rule by Persian governors until region is conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BC.
- 332–63 BC Hellenistic period., rule by Ptolemies and Seleucids.
- 63 BC–AD 324 Roman and Nabataean period.
- 63 BC Conquest by Roman General Pompey.
- 106 BC Nabataean kingdom, with capital at Petra, conquered by Rome. With the Roman conquest, Jordan becomes part of the Roman Province of Arabia.

- c. AD 200 Ghassanid Arab tribe establishes presence in region.
- AD 324–640 Byzantine period, official conversion to Christianity under Roman Emperor Constantine. Region experiences population explosion.
- AD 629–636 Arab Islamic conquest of the region.
- AD 661–750 Ummayyad Dynasty established, area ruled from Damascus which becomes seat of caliphate.
- AD 750–1258 Abbasid Dynasty rules vast Islamic empire from Baghdad.
- AD 945 Buyids, a dynasty of military leaders from the fringes of the Caspian Sea, seize power and rule from behind the throne in Baghdad
- AD c. 1071 Seljuk Turks rule in Baghdad while Abbasids remain titular caliphs. Centralized rule begins to disintegrate.
- AD 1099–1100 Crusader conquest, establishment of Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem which lasts from AD 1099 to 1291.
- AD 1187 Ayyubid Dynasty founded by Salah al-Din, who re-establishes Arab Muslim rule in Jordan after defeating the Crusaders at Karak. Ayyubids rule Syria until 1260.
- AD 1258 Baghdad sacked by Mongols. Abbasid dynasty ends.
- AD 1260 *Mamluk* army from Egypt prevents expansion of Mongols into Syria (and Jordan). *Mamluks* rule Syria until defeated by Ottomans.
- AD 1518 Ottomans conquer greater Syria.



AD 1831–1841 Egyptian Khediv Muhammad Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, conquers Syria, introduces administrative changes, but the Ottomans regain control in 1841.

AD 1867–1880 Wave of village settlement in Jordan involving local peasants.

AD 1880–1893 Ottomans extend direct rule to Jordan 1880-1890 and take direct control of northern Jordan, extending rule to Karak and southern Jordan in 1893.

AD 1887–1910 Second wave of village settlement in Jordan (until 1906) by Circassians, Chechens and Turkmen fleeing Russian persecution and massacres. Alarmed by this, Bedouin leaders encourage settlement on tribal lands by sharecroppers, constituting a third wave, ending in 1910.

1900–1908 Hijaz Railroad is built and runs through Jordan, connecting the western Arabian peninsula to Constantinople.

1910 Rebellion in Karak against encroachments of centralized Ottoman state in December 1910 is suppressed, but Karak remains frontier town in contrast to northern provinces which were incorporated into Ottoman domain.

1917–1918 Great Arab Revolt against the Ottomans. Forces of Sharif Hussein, accompanied by T.E. Lawrence, conquer Aqaba, but progress of the revolt in Jordan is stretched out from July 1917 to September 1918.

1918–1920 Transjordan ruled by Sharif Hussein's son Faisal from Damascus.

1920 San Remo Conference in April grants Britain mandate over

Iraq and Palestine and France mandate over Syria. Britain announces to tribal leaders in August that Transjordan is included in Palestine mandate, but *Um Qais* treaty is signed giving assurances Transjordan would not be colonized by Zionists. Faisal is declared King of Syria but is ousted by British.

1921                      British offer throne of Iraq to Faisal. Churchill meets with Faisal's brother, Abdullah, convinces him to give up claim to Iraq in exchange for Syria. On April 1, Abdullah declared amir of Transjordan.

1922                      Arab Legion, British officered Transjordan army, is founded.

1922                      Saudi invasion of Transjordan fails.

1924                      Second invasion by Saudi Arabia fails.

1927                      Saudi Arabia acknowledges in Treaty of Jidda that Ma'an and Aqaba are in fact part of Transjordan.

1928                      Anglo-Transjordanian agreement signed giving Britain special prerogatives. Organic Law promulgated. Legislative Council elected.

1930                      John Bagot Glubb appointed commander of Arab Legion.

1941                      Britain uses Arab Legion to help quell pro-Axis Gilani rebellion in Iraq.

1946                      Treaty of alliance with Britain recognizes Transjordan's nominal independence. Britain undertakes to defend Transjordan. Abdullah changes his title from amir to king.

1947                      P.M. Abul Huda and Glubb secure agreement of British

Foreign Secretary Bevin for Arab Legion to seize area allocated to Arabs under U.N. Partition Plan.

1948                      New Anglo-Transjordanian treaty signed reducing Britain's prerogatives but London keeps the use of two airbases and boosts its subsidy to the Arab Legion.

1948-49                  First Arab-Israeli war. Arab Legion secures control of West Bank, including Jerusalem. Jordan and Israel sign armistice agreement.

1950                      Parliamentary elections held in Transjordan and West Bank. Parliament then votes to unite the East and West Banks under the name of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under King Abdullah. Palestinians granted rights of citizenship.

1951                      King Abdullah assassinated. His eldest son, Talal, crowned king despite illness.

1952                      Parliament removes Talal from office due to incapacitation. His son, Hussein, becomes king but a regency council rules in his place for a few months because he is underage. 1952 constitution states Jordan is a hereditary constitutional monarchy.

1953                      King Hussein sworn into office and assumes duties.

1954                      Parliamentary elections.

1955                      Riots break out to prevent Jordan joining Baghdad Pact.

1956                      King Hussein relieves General Glubb of his duties. Army is "Arabized."

- 1956 Parliamentary elections.
- 1956–1957 Constitutional experiment. Nabulsi becomes Prime Minister because of support in Parliament and charts Arab nationalist policies in collision course with King. Coup attempt against King. Hussein dismisses Nabulsi and declares martial law. Jordan reverts to conservative policies.
- 1957 U.S. replaces Britain as source of military and financial support for Jordan.
- 1958 Jordan forms federation with Iraq. British troops sent to Jordan following revolution in Iraq and civil war in Lebanon. Federation breaks up.
- 1961 Parliamentary elections.
- 1962 Parliamentary elections.
- 1964 Palestine Liberation Organization created.
- 1967 Parliamentary elections.
- 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Israel occupies West Bank, including Jerusalem.
- 1970–1971 Jordanian army clashes with PLO. Syrian tanks enter Jordan but are repulsed. Army drives PLO guerrillas out of Jordan, never to return.
- 1973 Arab-Israeli war.
- 1974 Rabat Arab summit declares PLO sole legitimate

representative of the Palestinian people.

1974 King Hussein dissolves lower House of Parliament and suspends Parliament indefinitely.

1975 Beginning of decade of rapid, planned economic growth.

1978 National Consultative Council created.

1978 Camp David accords signed. Jordan joins other Arabs in severing diplomatic ties but maintains economic exchange with Egypt. Baghdad Arab summit pledges significant sums in aid to Jordan and other “confrontation states.”

1980 Iran-Iraq war begins. Jordan supports Iraq and enters into economic cooperation deals with Baghdad.

1980 Arab summit held in Amman.

1984 King dissolves National Consultative Council and recalls Parliament. By-elections in East Bank.

1984 Jordan resumes full diplomatic relations with Egypt.

1985 King Hussein and Yasser Arafat agree on framework for peace, sign agreement in February for joint diplomatic initiative, and acceptance of confederation with Jordan.

1986 King Hussein calls off dialogue with PLO in February.

1986 By-elections in East Bank.

1987 King Hussein and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres reach

agreement in London on international conference, but Prime Minister Shamir torpedoed Hussein-Peres accord.

1987 Arab summit in Amman brings about Arab reconciliation but emphasis on Iran-Iraq, not Palestinians.

1988 Jordan gives up responsibility for West Bank and cuts administrative links.

1988 Jordan joins Iraq, Egypt and North Yemen in forming Arab Cooperative Council.

1988 Jordan requests standby credit arrangement with the IMF and acquiesces to structural adjustment program.

1989 Riots break out in southern towns in protest against cuts in government subsidies. Demands for reform.

1989 Parliamentary elections. Return of the constitutional experiment in the form of “defensive democratization.”

1990 Following Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, 900,000 third country nationals flee Kuwait to Jordan which assists in massive repatriation. 240,000 Jordanian citizens return from Kuwait.

1990 U.N. economic sanctions on Iraq cause severe hardship in Jordan. Arab Cooperation Council incapacitated.

1991 Jordan refuses to join military coalition against Iraq, causing severe strain in relations with U.S.

1991 2000 civic leaders endorse National Charter on Jordanian

Political Life prepared by royal commission and it is signed by the King.

1993 Parliamentary elections.

1994 On June 7 Jordanian and Israeli delegates sign three “common-sub-agendas” in Washington; “Washington Declaration” signed by King Hussein and Israeli PM Rabin at White House on July 25; peace treaty signed on October 26.

1996 President Clinton designates Jordan a major non-NATO ally of the U.S. in November.

1997 Parliamentary elections

1999 King Hussein dies in early February.

2000 King Abdullah II crowned on June 9.

2001 Economic Consultative Council recommends major privatization drive.

2001 Congress ratifies free trade agreement signed with Jordan in 2000.

## Section I

# Geography

Was it destiny that made Jordan Israel’s eastern neighbor, giving it the longest border with Israel in comparison with any other country? The word destiny naturally comes to mind in view of the profound impact this accident of geography has had on Jordan’s history and politics. Many unavoidable

consequences have followed.

To the north lies Syria, to the east Iraq, and to the south Saudi Arabia. Along with Israel, these are Jordan's immediate neighbors. A visitor to Amman will find himself within easy reach of Damascus, which still retains some aspects of the ancient city that it is—particularly its medieval Islamic heritage—tucked away here and there, such as old covered souks or markets; the same can be said of Cairo, although the latter is really only accessible by air. The holy cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem are close by to the west. Lebanon, with which Jordan does not share a common border, but which is only 6 or 7 hours away by car, has a deserved reputation as a tourist attraction.

Most of the East Bank of the Jordan River consists of arid desert. Northern Jordan consists of a plateau, most of which is between 700 and 1,000 meters above sea level, which has a temperate climate and where the nights are cool, even in summer. Rainfall is light (although snow storms have become much more common than in the past), and most agriculture is rain-fed, except in the Jordan Valley. On the plateau, almost on the same parallel as Jerusalem, lies the capital Amman, a site once occupied by Rabbat Ammon in Biblical times, and later by the city of Philadelphia, relics of which can be seen in the amphitheater (now restored) in the middle of the downtown area.

This plateau slopes westwards down to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, at 400 meters below sea level, which is fed by the Jordan River. The Jordan River runs for about 160 kilometers from Lake Tiberias to the Dead Sea. The plateau slopes south as well, providing a spectacular panorama of colorful hills and valleys stretching mile after mile to distant horizons, leading to Petra, the ancient Nabatean city carved out of rose-colored rock, and further south to Aqaba, a port on the Red Sea where Jordan has a short stretch of coastline. A 380-kilometer-long rift valley runs from the Yarmuk River in the north to Aqaba in the extreme south. The highest point in Jordan is Jabal Ramm, which is 1,754 meters above sea level.

Jordan has an area of 89,326 square kilometers (34,489 square miles). The main cities are Amman (population 1.6 million); Irbid in the north (about 750,000); Zarqa, which lies east of Amman (about 625,000); and as-Salt, lying to the West of Amman on the road to the Dead Sea (about 275,000).

## **Section II**

# **History**

## **Archaeology and Antiquities of Jordan**



In archaeological terms, Jordan sits at the crossroads of the Near East. In ancient times, it served as a major communications and trade route, in contact with great empires whose capitals were far away. Its geographic location—east of the Jordan River, with major settlements dating from ancient times dotted along major trading routes between Arabia to the south and Syria in the north—made control of Jordan a strategic necessity. Each of the great empires has occupied this area in succession, each leaving their cultural, social, and political influences on the local populations, and more often than not, acquiring uniquely local interpretations in turn as expressed in local crafts and industries.

Jordan's archaeological history extends back in time to the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods—c. 1200000–8500 BC and c. 8500–4500 BC, respectively. Although there are only flint and basalt tools left behind from the Paleolithic period to indicate human settlement, the Neolithic period is more clearly marked by evidence of building, skeletal remains, clay statues and busts, along with evidence of small-scale trade in pottery, jewelry, and ancestor worship.

It was during this period that pottery originated and was systematically fashioned into clay vessels. The largest, most important Neolithic sites in Jordan today are at Ain Ghazal in Amman and Beidha in southern Jordan. In the 1990's, excavations at Ain Ghazal uncovered a number of figures constructed of clay surrounding bundled straw, depicting human forms with some facial detail. These early statues may have been part of a burial custom intended to represent deceased persons.

The Chalcolithic (copper-stone) period that followed from c. 4500–3200 BC saw the use of copper in the manufacture of tools. Agricultural communities developed in this period as well, with sheep and goat breeding and cultivation of wheat and barley. These more sociologically systematic activities led to the development of a more urban character by the end of that period.

Jawa, a town built by an agricultural community in the eastern desert, is an example of this new urban character of the Chalcolithic period. This town's remains show evidence of water collection and diversion to basins for animal and human use. By the Early Bronze Age (c. 3200–1950 BC), urban development also included defenses and fortifications, and the first "city-states" had come into being. Most famous of these are Bab edh-Dhra' (southern Dead Sea area) and Jericho in the Jordan Valley. These cities had massive walls, towers, and fortifications, intended as much to withstand earthquakes and other natural disasters as well as attacks by enemies.

Most of the Early Bronze Age towns were destroyed or abandoned by 2300 BC, giving way to the Middle Bronze Age, when people moved away from large sites on hills and settled in smaller villages. By the Late Bronze Age (c. 1950–1200 BC), there was a sharp decline in settled occupation. In about the 13th century BC, the area was invaded from the north by the Hyksos—said to be a military aristocracy from north Mesopotamia, though this is currently in dispute—who also went on to invade and conquer Egypt. The Hyksos influence was clearly seen in the new, distinctive type of fortifications they brought, exemplified at sites such as Amman (the Citadel), Irbid, Pella (Fahil, in the Jordan Valley), and Jericho.

During the Middle Bronze Age, crafts and local industries had advanced considerably. Copper, used originally during the Chalcolithic Age to make tools, was now mixed with tin to produce bronze to make

weapons and ornamentation. Pottery had also evolved with the invention of the potter's wheel to fashion sophisticated shapes.

Also during the Middle Bronze Age, contact with Egypt grew significantly. The Egyptian presence in Jordan can be seen in the numerous mentions in inscriptions found in various towns, as well as in artifacts of Egyptian or Egyptian-inspired origin.

The real change in Jordan during the Late Bronze Age occurred when the Egyptian pharaoh Tuthmosis III set up an empire in Canaan—straddling modern-day Palestine, Jordan, and Syria. This occurred in about the middle of the 13th century BC. Several hundred years later, during the reign of pharaoh Ramesses II, the Egyptians found themselves at war with the Hittites for control of Syria. The battles, lasting some 16 years, culminated in a peace treaty between the Egyptians and the Hittites in 1259 BC.

Considerable evidence of dealings, trade, and communication among the peoples of the Asiatic component of the Egyptian Empire and their African “home” are evident in many sites in the Canaanite city-states of that period. Important sites are Pella and Tell es-Sa'idiyeh in the Jordan Valley. Objects found at these two sites, as well as in Deir 'Alla, show clear Egyptian influence. During this period of relative peace, there was also significant trade between Jordan and several Mediterranean and Aegean city-states.

Recent excavations at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh unearthed some remarkable burial customs. There is evidence of some type of mummification and interesting use of pottery and bronze, used to cover or contain the bodies.

The end of the Late Bronze Age is marked by the collapse of many Near Eastern and Mediterranean kingdoms at the hands of the Sea Peoples—marauders probably from the Aegean and Anatolia—around 1200 BC. These included the Philistines, who settled on the coast of southern Palestine and later battled the Israelites. The Israelites had destroyed many towns in their conquest of the land of the Canaanites, including Jericho, Ai, and Hazor, and eventually overcame the Philistines to found a united Kingdom of Israel around 1000 BC.

Following this period, three new kingdoms arose in Jordan: Edom in the south, Moab in central Jordan, and Ammon in the north. These were the first kingdoms to develop in this area that went beyond city-states. The development from city-state to kingdom was probably made possible by the increased wealth in the region, attributed to growing trade in gold, spices, and precious metals. The wealth eventually attracted peripheral attacks from desert tribesmen and later conquest by Israelites, Aramaeans, and Assyrians. Eventually, the overall victors were the Assyrians, whose conquest of the area, including Israel, was accomplished by 721 BC. Ammon, Edom, and Moab retained their independence by buying off the Assyrians with tribute and enjoyed a period of relative prosperity.

The most important existing site of this period is at Buseirah in southern Jordan. Buseirah is the modern name of Bozrah, the capital of Edom. Bozrah was a substantial administrative center fortified by a town

wall. The city was divided into Upper and Lower Towns by an enclosure wall, with an “acropolis” in the Upper Town containing public buildings on an artificially built-up platform. An early 7th century building on this acropolis had an imposing entrance flanked by the plinths of two columns, the whole suggestive of a temple. The Lower Town is made up of “ordinary” residences. The capitals of Ammon and Moab—Rabbath Ammon and Dhiban, respectively—had similar layouts and features.

The Assyrian Empire fell in 612 BC to an alliance of Medes from Persia and the Chaldean kings of Babylonia. The Babylonian Empire lasted till 539 BC, when it fell to the Persians under Cyrus. This empire grew to become the largest ever known in the Near East, extending into Egypt in the west, Asia Minor in the north, and India in the east. Their clashes with the Greek states of Sparta and Athens are well known from the classic histories of Theucydides and Herodotus.

During the Persian Empire, the Ammonites, Edomites, and Moabites persisted under tutelage, with the Persians appointing an Ammonite governor for the area west of the Euphrates River. Locally, the Ammonites and Moabites frequently fought. The site of Tell Mazar in the Ammon territory, first constructed in the 8th century, was often destroyed and rebuilt as a result of these battles until the 4th century. Remains in this city suggest rooms surrounding central courtyards in houses that may have also been used for private industry. These include many domestic and industrial artifacts—utensils and such. During the late Persian occupation, many silos and other grain storage pits were built, either to support armies or for storage against the threat of famine.

In 330 BC, the Persian Empire gave way with Alexander the Great’s sack of Persepolis in Persia, ushering in the Hellenistic Period in the Near East. The Greeks founded new Hellenistic cities in Jordan, such as Um Qais, and renamed others, such as Amman (Philadelphia) and Jerash (Antioch). While Greek became the official language, the spoken language continued to be Aramaic.

The finest Hellenistic site in Jordan is “Iraq al-Amir,” in a valley just west of Amman. This site was the estate of the Tobiad family, the Ammonite governor’s family that reigned during the Persian Empire. One of the structures on this site is believed to be a temple because of the architecture and the finely sculpted lions and eagles.

During the Hellenistic period, a new Arabic-speaking people known as the Nabataeans were settling near Petra in southern Jordan. Thought to originate from Arabia, the Nabataeans were originally nomadic herdsmen and merchants who came to control the major trade routes between Arabia and Damascus. As traders, they handled trade in animals, spices, incense, iron, copper, fabrics, sugar, medicines, perfumes, and gold with far-flung markets in China, India, the Far East, Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome.

Famous for their imposing city Petra, the Nabataeans displayed great water engineering ability, irrigating their land with ingenious systems of dams and canals. Nabataea reached its peak in 9 BC–40 AD under King Aretas IV. In addition to the fine architecture found at Petra, other Nabataean sites are Khirbet et-Tannur, Wadi Rum, and Lehun in Jordan.

Petra pre-existed the Nabataeans—there is evidence of Bronze Age settlement there—as well as of the Edomites. After the Romans conquered the Near East during the first century AD, Petra maintained its independence, coming under Roman control almost 50 years later in 106 AD. The city continued to flourish under the Romans and well into the Christian period. Nevertheless, it remains most famous for the Nabataean remains and artifacts.

The Roman province of Arabia, which encompassed Jordan, came into being with Pompey's conquests of 64–63 AD. The Greek cities in Jordan—Philadelphia (Amman), Pella (Fahil), Gadara (Um Qais), and Gerasa (Jerash) formed 5 of the 10-city federation known as the Decapolis. These cities were laid out with colonnaded streets and were provided with theaters. Latin became the official language, while Greek remained the main spoken language of the educated elites. Aramaic continued to be the language spoken in the street.

Jerash is probably the best-preserved Roman provincial city in the Near East. The most current archaeological evidence suggests it dates from the 2nd century BC, with its golden age in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. It was designed by Roman architects and underwent expansions over several centuries. Among its monuments are theaters, a bath, a gymnasium, beautifully preserved, colonnaded streets, and temples to Zeus and Artemis. Jerash is located in a hilly, forested area northwest of Amman, an easy car ride away.

The major cities of the Roman period continued to flourish into the Byzantine period, which dates from 324 AD, when the emperor Constantine I founded Constantinople on the site of modern Istanbul as the eastern counterpart to Rome. A Christian community had already been in existence in Jordan since 66 AD, when the city of Pella had received fugitives from Jerusalem during the Jewish revolt against Rome. Under Byzantine control, the area and its Christian communities experienced a rise in prosperity and a population explosion. Many temples were destroyed or converted to churches. New churches were built everywhere; most were of the basilica type, with semi-circular apses to the east end of a church. Many of the churches had ornate mosaic floors with pictures of people, animals, and towns. Perhaps the most famous of these is the map of the Holy Land, an impressive Byzantine mosaic in a small church in Madaba, just a short drive south of Amman. Another famous site of floor mosaics is in the Church of the Deacon Thomas on Mt. Nebo, on a ridge overlooking the descent into the Jordan Valley just west of Madaba.

Jordan was conquered by the Bedouin armies of Islam that swept northwards from the Arabian Peninsula to defeat the Byzantines at a great battle on the Yarmuk River in 636 AD during the rule of Omar, the second *khalifah* (successor to the Prophet). In 661, after a brief period of rule from Mecca, Jordan came under the rule of the dynastic Umayyad caliphate, which moved the seat of government to Damascus. Jordan experienced a period of prosperity under the Umayyads, as it was close to the capital and was on the pilgrimage route to Mecca. It was during this period that Jordan acquired its Arabic name of al-Urdun.

The Umayyads did not destroy earlier cultural sites, and the major Byzantine cities continued to be occupied. Culturally, the major change was the replacement of Greek with Arabic as the main language, and the replacement of Christianity with Islam as the major religion. Christian communities continued to

exist after the major conversions, and churches continued to be built well into the 8th century.

The Ummayyad caliphs built a number of castles in the desert (all of which can be visited) at Mashatta, Kharana, Qastal, Tuba, Amra, and elsewhere. Although originally thought to have been built primarily as hunting lodges, these castles are now believed to be an important part of the frontier defensive line and were likely used as administrative outposts as well as residences of the Ummayyad rulers. These castles not only exemplify Ummayyad architecture, but also include many beautiful ceiling and wall frescos, representing scenes from nature as well as hunting and social scenes.

The Islamic dynasties that succeeded the Ummayyads had no direct impact on the architecture or artifacts of Jordan. The next major influence was the invasion of the European Crusaders, who wrested the area from Fatimid Egyptian control in 1099 and established the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Between 1099 and 1187, the Crusaders and Arab defenders built several castles running along strategic lookout points on a north-south axis from Anatolia to southern Jordan. The Crusader castles in Jordan are all in the southern region, at Kerak, Shobak, and Petra. In the north, the Arabs built castles at Ajlun, overlooking the Jordan Valley, and Salt, on the road to Jerusalem.

Salahuddin (Saladin), the Kurdish founder of the Ayyubid dynasty, finally defeated the Crusaders in 1187. From that time on, Jordan was again in Arab hands. Under the Ayyubids, and later the Mamluks, Jordan prospered because of its key geographic location between Egypt and Syria and its location on the pilgrimage route to Mecca. During this period, the castles were rebuilt, and a fort was added at Aqaba to aid pilgrims in their travels as well as to encourage trade and communications. Much later, the Ottomans continued constructing forts along the pilgrimage routes to protect pilgrims from raiding desert tribes of the Peninsula and to provide sources of food and water.

Modern Jordan has been the scene of both local and foreign archaeological activity since the early 20th century. By mid-century, Jordan had a fully active Department of Archaeology and Antiquities that worked to uncover and preserve archaeological sites. Foreign archaeological institutions play an important role, with centers in Jordan that attract archeologists from all over the world and help provide a lively exchange of information about discoveries and artifacts with academics, naturalists, and archeologists everywhere. Most notable among the foreign institutions active currently in Jordan are the American School of Oriental Research, the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, and the Swedish-Jordan Expeditions. The University of Florence and the University of Sydney also have teams currently at work in Jordan. All in all, there are between 50 and 75 excavations going on at various sites at one time—both in existing sites as well as in newly discovered sites.

## Suggested Bibliography for Further Reading

Information about excavations currently proceeding in Jordan can be found on the Internet at <http://archaeology.about.com/library/atlas/bljordan.htm>. There is an extensive bibliography on the archaeology and antiquities of Jordan, in addition to articles in various archaeological journals, such as *Biblical Archaeologist*, *Levant*, and the *Journal of Field Archaeology*. The short bibliography that follows

lists only books that have historical interest or that may be considered “classics” on the subject.

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### *Questions for Further Study*

- Archaeological evidence shows a rich history of pottery use and development in Jordan. How did the local artisans use local clays to make household utensils? What methods were used in Neolithic times to make statues and other items depicting human figures? (See Homes-Fredericq and Franken, *Pottery and Potters, Past and Present: 7000 Years of Ceramic Art in Jordan*, 1986.)
- What artifacts—pottery, jewelry, textiles—characterize the Islamic era in Jordan? (See Bienkowski, Piotr, *The Art of Jordan*. Wolfeboro Falls, U.S.A.: Alan Sutton Publishing Inc., 1991)

## **Modern History of Jordan Ottoman Period to 1910**

Jordan came under Ottoman control along with much of the Arab Middle East in 1518, their attention having been turned from their conquests in the Balkans. Until the 19th century, the Ottomans exercised little control of Transjordan, confining direct activity to sending occasional military patrols through the area to safeguard the pilgrimage route. Starting in the 1840s, the Ottoman plan to extend their authority encompassed the northern provinces of Jordan, centered around Irbid, Ajlun, and Salt. In 1868, this plan was expanded to include areas further south, originally centered around Ma'an, but later relocated to Karak.

The Ottomans realized that, in order to establish their authority in frontier zones like Jordan, certain administrative and demographic realities had to be changed on the ground. Among these was replacing local leadership with professional bureaucrats and establishing village settlements in agricultural areas. This in turn promoted higher productivity, generating tax revenues for the state. The new settlements thus established would be linked together and to regional markets by a road network. The Ottoman state thus came to integrate frontier districts through the extension of its bureaucratic network and linkage with regional markets.

The settlement policy that the Ottomans undertook was intended, in the first instance, to populate the lands between administrative centers with cultivators. In the 19th century, these administrative centers were largely in northern Jordan, abutting the southern Syrian districts, which were administered by Damascus, and the Levant districts administered by Jerusalem and Nablus. The settlement policy effectively developed a close link between community identity and the villages they established as well as affording them title to the land they cultivated.

Three distinct waves of village settlement in Jordan occurred between 1867 and 1910. The first, between 1867 and 1880, involved local peasants who radiated out from older settlements to establish new villages for reasons of economic gain or to resolve local disputes. The second wave spanned the years 1878 and 1906, and involved mostly refugee communities, including Circassians, Shishan (Chechens), and Turkmen. These were Muslim communities that had fled Tsarist Russian persecution and had sought protection from the Ottomans.

The third wave was partially a reaction to the second. Bedouin tribes had become alarmed at what they saw as expropriation of their traditional domain through resettlement of refugees. To counteract this, they encouraged settlement by sharecroppers on their lands in plantation villages. These "rented" villages also served as a framework for the bureaucratization of the land through registration and settlement title.

Subsequent developments resulting from the initial village settlements included the development of better and more extensive communications—roads and telegraph, as well as the Hijaz railway completed in 1908—and rapid urban development in towns located along major trade routes, such as Salt and Karak. Urban-based merchants from Damascus, Nablus, and Jerusalem gained significantly from the trade in Jordan's major surplus commodities—wheat and barley—which in turn had been made possible by the Ottoman village settlement policy. The effect was an unprecedented prosperity for both village and urban areas in northern Jordan.

The experience in Karak and points south took a different turn. The Ottomans took direct control of Karak in 1893, along with the southern portions of Jordan. In this area, the village settlement policy was not pursued diligently. Consequently, the demographic balance was not altered sufficiently to help develop stronger ties of loyalty to the sultan or the state, and local tribes were not motivated to register their land and obtain title. Strong loyalty to the state, as had resulted in the north, never took place. Instead, most Ottoman attempts to bureaucratize or otherwise extend direct administrative control in the region were met with various degrees of resistance.

In December 1910, the people of Karak led a violent but ill-fated revolt against the Ottomans. Earlier, the Young Turk Revolution had instigated a new centralizing initiative to impose a common rule of law across all the territories of the Ottoman Empire. In the frontier zones, this was manifested in a new intolerance for local particularism, and was expressed in swift and violent suppression of any dissent. Among the actions taken against local communities included demands for registering all citizens, confiscation of weapons, and forced conscription of young men.

The regional government representative in southern Syria requested that residents of Karak demonstrate their loyalty to the state by registering and turning in their weapons. The residents of Karak took this to be a precursor of a conscription campaign—as had happened in areas further north. The leading shaykh in Karak, Qadr al-Majali, meanwhile agitated to resist this request by the Committee for Union and Progress through rebellion. The actual revolt took place on December 4, when Ottoman census takers were attacked and killed, followed by an attack on Karak itself the following day. The revolt spread to Tafila and led to Bedouin raids on stations of the Hijaz Railway. The ensuing battle resulted in substantial loss of life and property in Karak, including the obliteration and burning of local government and municipal documents and attacking civilians in their homes. Although victorious in the short term, the insurgency was squelched with a vengeance just 10 days later by the Ottoman army sent to rescue besieged officials and their families.

In the wake of this revolt, the Ottomans reasserted their presence in Karak but allowed it to remain a frontier town. This was in contrast to the districts in northern Jordan. Ajlun and Salt had been incorporated into the Ottoman domain. Eight years later, at the conclusion of the first World War, the experience of Ottoman rule in northern Jordan made that region amenable to centralized government. However, this rebellion was an attempt by an outdated tribal system to defend itself against the encroachments of a centralized state, it was not an expression of Arab nationalism and should not be seen as the precursor for the Great Arab Revolt led by Sharif Hussein of Mecca.

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### *Questions for Further Study*

- Do you believe that the complex network of social and economic relations that characterized the inhabitants of Transjordan during the Islamic centuries can be reduced to a simple contraposition of desert and sown land, pastoralist and farmer, nomad and settler? (See Jeremy Johns listed above.)
- Historians of the Near East describe the Ottoman period between the early 16th century and the early 19th century as a time when few, if any, dramatic events took place in Transjordan and its environs. What does that tell us, and how did that relate to events and conditions in other Ottoman domains in the region? (See Eugene Rogan listed above.)
- What role did the ethnic and religious minorities play in Jordan's modern history? What lingering impact did they have on contemporary Jordan? (See Gubser, Peter Jordan, *Jordan: Crossroads of Middle Eastern Events*, 1983.)

## **Arab Revolt and the Founding of the Amirate of Transjordan**

Sharif Abdullah, the second of four sons of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, began his political career as a delegate to the Ottoman Parliament from Mecca. He came to act as his father's representative in negotiations with the Ottoman authorities and later with Great Britain. In February 1914 he met with Britain's plenipotentiary minister to Egypt, Lord Kitchener, and later with Ronald Storrs, the Oriental Secretary of the British consulate in Cairo. These meetings eventually led to the famous Hussein-McMahon correspondence, under which Sharif Hussein reached an understanding with Britain's representatives that he could count on Britain's support against the Turks, and he came to expect British help in creating an Arab kingdom in the Fertile Crescent, with some vague qualifications, over which he and his descendants would rule. These promises, of course, conflicted with the then still secret Sykes-Picot agreement and with the Balfour Declaration.

The forces of Sharif Hussein, accompanied by T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), recruited the support of the Huwaytat tribe in the south, and, with this help, succeeded in occupying the Port of Aqaba on the Red Sea. However, the course of the Arab Revolt in Transjordan was neither spectacular nor swift, lasting from July 1917 to September 1918. Tribes in the south tended to support Sharif Hussein's son Faisal in exchange for gold, driven primarily by food shortages and hunger, whereas tribes whose territory lay north of Karak in Transjordan and south of Damascus, where grain was more abundant, were less desperate and were inhibited from participation by the presence of the Turkish Fourth Army. These tribes preferred to straddle the fence until Faisal seemed assured of victory.<sup>[1]</sup> Ultimately, it was Allenby's victory that broke Turkey's military hold and swept Faisal into Damascus.

From November 1918 to July 1920, Transjordan formed part of the Arab Kingdom of Syria. As part of the post-war settlement at the San Remo Peace Conference in April 1920, France was given the mandate over Syria and Britain secured a mandate over Iraq and Palestine (the latter was only formalized by the League of Nations on September 23, 1922 and incorporated the Balfour Declaration). Britain's plan, a consequence of its promises to the Hashemites, was to make Abdullah, the second son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, King of Iraq, and Amir Faisal, the third son of Sharif Hussein, King of Syria. Prince Faisal had been acting as a military governor based in Damascus. He gained favor with the nationalists, and, in response to their insistence, refused to toe the line laid down by the French and the Zionists at the Peace Conference. The Syrian National Congress, which claimed to represent Palestine and Transjordan as well, proclaimed Faisal king in March 1920. The nationalists suffered a rapid military defeat in their confrontation with the French, and Faisal was ousted.

With the retreat of the Turkish armies, tribal violence broke out in Transjordan. Faisal's government in Damascus could not bring the situation under control. Herbert Samuel, the high commissioner in Jerusalem, proposed that British forces occupy the portion of Transjordan lying west of the Hijaz Railway. This may have been due to his sympathy with Zionist appeals to bring that area within the sphere of the Balfour Declaration. Fearing Syrian control of Transjordan after Faisal's departure, Whitehall decided on a move to keep the area, which it perceived as a link between Iraq and Egypt, under British authority. Samuel met with tribal leaders and notables from Karak, al-Balqa, and Salt in August 1920 and told them that Transjordan would be included in the British mandate over Palestine, allowing for a measure of autonomy in the 'Ajlun, Salt and Karak areas. The sheikhs of 'Ajlun, encouraged by members of the *Istiqlal Party* that supported Faisal, put forward a list of demands in September, including assurances that Transjordan would not be colonized by the Zionists. Major Somerset, acting for Samuel, signed the so-called Um Qais treaty, agreeing to these provisions.

Amidst the chaos, Samuel recruited members of the local Circassian population to form a troop of cavalry and machine gunners to send to Amman to control Bedouin raids on settled areas and to collect taxes. Later, Frederick Peake (to become Peake Pasha) expanded this force and turned it into the nucleus of the Arab Legion. In February 1921 Abdullah arrived in Ma'an in Transjordan, leading a force of Hijazi troops with the intention of restoring Faisal to the throne of Syria.

In December 1920, Britain created a Middle East Department within the Colonial Office under the direction of Winston Churchill, who was colonial secretary. Churchill organized a gathering of Britain's high commissioners for Iraq and Palestine and prominent Arabists in Cairo in March 1921, which, under Churchill's leadership, decided to offer the throne of Iraq to Faisal. From July 1920 to March 1921, Transjordan had been left without an indigenous government and fell under the authority of the British Mandate government in Palestine. Following the Cairo conference, Churchill met with Abdullah in Jerusalem and convinced him to give up his claim to the Iraqi throne in favor of his brother. Churchill also promised to use his good offices with France to attempt to convince Paris to accept Abdullah as King of Syria. In the interim, Abdullah was encouraged to remain in the southern part of Greater Syria east of the Jordan river (Transjordan) and to establish his own amirate with British help. On April 1, 1921 Abdullah was declared amir of Transjordan and was granted a monthly subsidy of 5,000 pounds Sterling.

Britain was represented by a permanent resident in Amman in lieu of a high commissioner who exercised a great deal of power and acted as a plenipotentiary ambassador and supervisor of governmental affairs and head of a team of advisors to the various government departments.

On February 20, 1928 an Anglo-Transjordanian agreement was signed confirming Britain's supreme authority and assigning special prerogatives to the British resident in the areas of legislation, foreign affairs, and fiscal policy. A subsequent amendment allowed the amir to appoint consular representatives in foreign countries. British subsidies increased from an average of 100,000 pounds Sterling in the 1920s to about 2 million pounds Sterling in the forties.

A small army was created in 1921 under Captain F.G. Peake and dubbed the Arab Legion. Peake was replaced by Major John Baggot Glubb (who later became a major general but was generally referred to as Glubb Pasha, a title bestowed on him by the amir). A Transjordanian Frontier Force was also set up under the 1928 treaty but fell under the command of the high commissioner for Palestine. In 1940 a Desert Mechanized Regiment was added to the Arab Legion, making the Legion one of the most effective fighting forces in the Arab world. The Arab Legion had about 40 British officers and was funded by subsidies from London. Because of this Amir, Abdullah was able to play a significant role in Palestine and Iraq and Syria which was out of proportion to Transjordan's size and resources.

The Legion proved its worth in defending the fledgling emirate against incursions by King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud in 1922 and a subsequent and more significant attack in 1924 (which was also directed against the Hijaz, where it was more successful). In 1925 Ibn Saud defeated Abdullah's elder brother Amir Ali, who had assumed the title of King of the Hijaz, and Ibn Saud claimed that the southern part of Transjordan, including Ma'an and the Port of Aqaba, was still part of the Hijaz; but Abdullah's forces established their presence in the Ma'an and Aqaba areas, claiming they had long been part of Transjordan. These areas were only formally incorporated into Transjordan under the 1927 Treaty of Jidda with Ibn Sa'ud.

The Arab Legion was used by the British during the Second World War against the Rashid Ali Gilani rebellion in Iraq and against the pro-Vichy regime in Syria. By 1948 the Arab Legion had grown into a force of about 10,000 and was to play a crucial role in saving a large part of Palestine and its Arab population from being incorporated in the emerging Jewish state.

The agreement with Britain was amended in 1941 but little changed in the pattern of British administrative and political control. In 1942 the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nuri as-Sa'id, floated the idea of a federation between Iraq and Greater Syria consisting of Syria, Lebanon, and Transjordan. This was vehemently opposed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon, which valued their republican status. In May 1941 British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden issued a statement favorable to the idea of Arab unity. Egyptian Prime Minister Nahas Pasha proposed the idea of a league of Arab states. Transjordan was one of the seven founding members of the Arab League in March 1945. On March 22, 1946, Amir Abdullah signed a treaty of alliance with Britain under which London recognized Transjordan's independence, diplomats were exchanged; Britain undertook to defend Transjordan against foreign aggression; to continue subsidies; and to and train the Arab Legion; and to maintain troops in the country. Both sides

agreed to consult on matters of foreign policy affecting their common interests. On April 25 of the same year, Abdullah assumed the title of king. In August 1947, the U.S.S.R. vetoed Jordan's admission to the United Nations on the grounds that it neither possessed true independence nor the requisite resources to be independent. On March 15, 1948, a new Anglo-Transjordanian treaty was signed that reduced the prerogatives assigned to Britain, but the latter continued its subsidies to the Arab Legion and retained two airbases in Amman and Mafraq. An Anglo-Transjordanian Joint Defense Board was established. In 1949 Britain increased its subsidy to 3.5 million pounds Sterling

Perhaps the most notable aspect of King Abdullah's reign is that he was a pragmatist with a vision. The vision was that of a united Fertile Crescent and Arabian Peninsula (or, at least the Hijaz) under Hashemite rule, and failing that, a greater Syria united under his rule, through which he was willing to include a homeland for the Jews enjoying autonomy but not full independence. Bowing to reality, Abdullah abandoned the idea of regaining the Hijaz, but he remained intent on enlisting the help of Syrian political refugees, former members of the Independence or Istiqlal Party, who had supported Faisal and the Hashemites, who flocked to Amman in droves, and whom he employed in his administration, to wrest Syria from the French. Even after Syrian independence, he continued to intrigue for the formation of a Greater Syria.

But Abdullah's vision dated back to the early part of the century; it preceded and was incompatible with more radical and populist notions of pan-Arabism, such as Ba'thism. It also exacerbated Arab rivalries, challenged the bids for hegemony of larger and more established Arab states, notably Egypt, and invited intrigues against him. Iraq, although ruled by Hashemites, often competed rather than cooperated with him under the regency of Abdul-Ilah. British residents, particularly St. John Philby and Henry Cox, drove a wedge between Abdullah and followers of the Istiqlal Party. After the death of his brother Faisal, Abdullah advocated a Fertile Crescent union under his personal leadership. However, the assassination of Abdel Rahman Shahbandar, a Syrian nationalist and loyal Abdullah supporter, in 1940 effectively signaled the demise of his base of support in Syria. Still, Abdullah brought up the subject of Greater Syria in July 1941, after the ouster of the Vichy government from Syria, when he declared the aim of his policy to be the union of Arab lands, and again in 1942 and 1944 and in speeches from the throne in 1946 and 1947, and introduced it as an Arab League agenda item in 1947. In 1943 and 1947, when Syrians were going to the polls, Abdullah appealed to them directly to accept unity under his leadership. Hopes were revived with the Husni al-Za'im coup in Syria in March 1949, seeing as Za'im initially favored a closer union with Jordan and Iraq; but he did an about face and started courting Egypt and Saudi Arabia. A few months later, Za'im was overthrown by Col. Hinnawi, who embraced the idea of a Fertile Crescent Union with the support of Nazim al-Qudsi's People's Party. The issue had become a high priority for the Syrian Constituent Assembly by the end of 1949, but a coup by Col. Adib Shishakli brought these plans to naught.

Abdullah has been described with a great deal of justification as a falcon trapped in a canary's cage. He sought to bend British influence to the task of achieving his brand of Arab unity, but Britain thought Abdullah was poorly placed to exercise pan-Arab leadership, and it was more concerned with not antagonizing Cairo and avoiding a break-up of the Arab League. However, Britain found itself cooperating with Abdullah as the mandate over Palestine drew to an end.

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## Questions for Further Study

1. What was the significance of the Hussein-McMahon Correspondence for the Arab Revolt under Sharif Hussein and the formation of Transjordan? (See Albert Hourani listed above, as well as *A Peace to End All Peace* listed above, for that question and for a general history of the creation of the modern Middle East. Also see Mary Wilson listed above.)
2. What were the motives that determined the attitudes of the Bedouin tribes in Transjordan towards the Arab Revolt? (See Tariq Tell listed above.)
3. How did Amir Abdullah establish himself in Transjordan? (See Mary Wilson listed above.)

## Section III

### Culture and Social Issues

The most recent published statistics of the population in Jordan date from 1999, which set the total

population of the East Bank at 4,839,000. This figure includes residents of Jordan, including Palestinians who have Jordanian passports and Palestinian refugees, but excludes Jordanians resident or working abroad, as well as Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship, who are residents of the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

In addition, Jordan hosts a substantial Palestinian refugee population that entered the East Bank in two major waves: in 1948 as a consequence of the creation of the State of Israel, and again in 1967 when Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza fled the Israeli occupation. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees in the Near East, about 224,000 people were admitted to the East Bank immediately after the 1967 war, joining the original 400,000 who had been refugees since 1948. By 1986, UNRWA cited 826,128 registered refugees living on the East Bank, 205,000 of them living in refugee camps. A recent estimate of the total Palestinian refugee population—including UNRWA-registered and non-registered—is 1.25 million.

United Nations statistics projected an annual growth of 3.6 percent in the early 1980's, rising to 4.11 percent from 1990 to 1995, with a steady decline to about 2.88 percent by 2020. These growth rates reflect both overall improved health care—leading to higher life expectancy—as well as a high birth rate of 6.0 births for each woman over the span of her reproductive years. This birth rate is expected to decline in 2000 to 4.2 births due to several factors. Women, particularly in urban areas, are deferring motherhood or practicing “spacing” of children. In addition, educated women have tended to marry slightly later than uneducated women and have tended to practice modern methods of contraception.

Jordan's population is largely concentrated in the northwest of the country, mostly in urban areas. The bulk of the population is centered in the governorate of Amman and the smaller urban areas of Irbid, Salt, and Zarqa. According to World Bank figures, some 70 percent of the population lives in urban areas. The rest are scattered in small towns and villages in the Jordan Valley, as well as in towns and villages strung along a north-south axis in ever-diminishing numbers, starting south of Amman and ending at Aqaba on the Red Sea.

Palestinian refugees live mostly in camps in or near major cities, including the capital. Although camps originally consisted of emergency shelters, they developed rapidly into units of concrete and galvanized steel structures, initially consisting of two rooms per family. Until the 1980's, refugees were allowed to own the structures—thus making it possible for them to expand their living quarters whenever they could afford to—but could not own the land where these structures were located. Once this became possible, improvements in these urban areas expanded as rapidly as the new and additional structures.

In addition to Palestinians and Palestinian refugees, Jordan is home to a number of ethnic and religious minorities. These include religious minorities—several Christian sects and denominations—as well as ethnic communities of Armenians, Circassians, and Shishans. While Jordan's official religion is Islam, the constitution, adopted in 1952, promulgates the basic rights of freedom and equality before the law for all citizens, regardless of race or religion. In practice, both religious and ethnic minorities enjoy free religious and cultural expression. The largest and oldest community is that of Jordan's Christians, who trace their origin to the earliest days of Christianity in the Near East. As is the case with all Christian sects

in Jordan, Christian communities apply their own church and religious laws to social affairs, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and other “personal status” laws.

Residents of towns and villages in agricultural areas, notably in the Jordan Valley and in the irrigated northwest, are mainly occupied in agriculture and animal husbandry. Jordan has experienced a steady decline in the population in these areas, as young people continuously seek better opportunities in the cities. In an attempt to reverse this migration, the government has encouraged development in the Jordan Valley. These plans have been somewhat successful, attracting substantial numbers back into the Valley.

About 2 to 3 percent of the population are nomadic and semi-nomadic Bedouins living mainly in the *badiya*, an area on the periphery of the cultivated lands edging the eastern desert, with a portion living in or around the Jordan Valley in the area near the northern city of Irbid.

The Bedouin as a social group are a constituent of the tribal system in Jordan that predominated before World War II and continues to play an important role in modern-day Jordan. The basic form of social organization in Transjordan was tribal, and social relations among various nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes and between them and villagers—many of whom were themselves tribally organized—were based on trade and the exchange of tribute for protection.

In 1983, Peter Gubser classified Jordanian tribes along a continuum of nomadic, semi-nomadic, semi-sedentary, and sedentary. Bedouins were a fully nomadic group whose livelihood was based on camel herding. Although Bedouins upheld a highly independent existence, they interacted with settled communities by trading animals and their products for goods they did not produce. Government policy has encouraged settlement by providing schooling, medical services, and the development of water resources. This has resulted in moving Bedouin communities more rapidly towards the sedentary end of the continuum. Despite the diminishing numbers of nomadic and semi-nomadic Bedouins, their tribal social structure, in its idealized form, continues to be adhered to.

Tribal social structure was based on the ramification of patrilineal ties among men. Within this structure, a preference for endogamy—marriage among paternal cousins in the first instance and then in descending levels of relatedness—is prevalent. Endogamy gives rise to a network of kin relations that are both maternal and paternal at the same time.

Tribes in Jordan were composed of groups of related families claiming descent from a supposed founding ancestor. Within this overall loyalty, descent from intermediate ancestors defined several levels of smaller groups within each tribe. The structure resembled a pyramid composed of ascending levels, each of which was both a political and social group. At some point, each unit automatically contained within it all units of the lower level. Despite the near-disappearance of the nomadic way of life, tribal social structure and organization have not been transformed drastically. Tribal organization actually played an important role in the settlement process, helping with land allocation, among other things. Leadership patterns have changed significantly, however, as government-appointed officials have assumed many of the tasks formerly associated with the position of shaykh. In the end, tribal social structure was weakened; individual titles to land, which can be rented or sold to outsiders, and individual employment dilutes

lineage solidarity and cohesiveness.

Observers in the 1980s noted that a process of detribalization was taking place in Jordan, whereby the impact of tribal affiliation on the individual's sense of identity was declining. Sedentarization and education were prime forces in this process. Smaller groups, such as the extended family and clan (*hamula*), were gradually replacing tribes as primary reference groups.

The *hamula* is the principle social structure for people who live in the villages and small towns of Jordan. In common with tribal structure, the *hamula* traces its origins to a common, relatively distant ancestor. The *hamula* ordinarily had a corporate identity; its members usually resided in a distinguishable quarter or neighborhood, and it acted in concert in village, and often regional, political affairs. The *hamula* was the repository of family honor and tended to be endogamous.

Immediate kin groups existed below the level of the *hamula* and above that of the household. In many cases, a group of closely related households, descendants of a relative closer than the founder of a *hamula*, formed entities called lineages or branches. A still smaller unit was the *luzum*, a close consultation group, usually composed of several brothers and their families.

Social control and politics in the village traditionally grew out of the interactions of kin groups at various levels. Social control over individual behavior was achieved through the process of socialization and a system that imposed sanctions for unacceptable behavior. Respected elder males from various *hamail* (plural of *hamula*) provided leadership in villages. They often made decisions by consensus. With the formation and consolidation of the state, traditional leaders lost some power, but they continued to mediate conflicts, and state officials often turned to them when dealing with village affairs. Nevertheless, other social changes have conspired to erode the structure, and consequently the power, of the traditional *hamail*. The decline in significance of agriculture as a way of life, and the migration of increasingly better-educated young people to the cities, has decreased the traditional elders' authority. Despite this trend, family relations and obligations remain strong. The young defer less frequently to their elders in decisions about life choices than has been the custom, but respect for parents and elders remains evident.

In the cities, *hamula* structure and dynamics is hardly in evidence and is overshadowed by the extended kin relationship dynamic. Until recently, extended families lived within the same household or within close proximity. Modern economic realities have made this less common, and more families are beginning to live in nuclear households.

Jordanians continue to rely on extended kin relations for a variety of purposes, including financial support; job information; social connections; access to strategic resources; marital partners; arrangements, protection, and support in the event of conflict; child care and domestic services; and emotional sustenance.

Formally, kinship was reckoned patrilineally. Because the family was central to social life, all children were expected to marry at the appropriate age. Marriage conferred status on both men and women, and



the birth of children further enhanced this status. This was particularly true for women, who then felt more secure in their marital households.

Traditionally, the individual subordinated his or her personal interests to those of the family. Typically, children lived with their parents, even as young adults, until they were married. Children were expected to defer to the wishes of their parents. Marriage was a family affair rather than a personal choice. In more traditional households (tribal or hamulas), arranged marriages were preferred. In the more modern urban areas, more and more young, educated adults are meeting in the workplace and initiating marriage proceedings themselves.

In Islam, marriage is a civil contract rather than a sacrament. Representatives of the bride's interests negotiate a marriage agreement with the groom's representatives. The future husband and wife must give their consent. Young men often suggest to their parents whom they want to marry. Although women do not initiate a marriage, they usually have the right to refuse a marriage partner of their parents' choice.

The social milieu in which a Jordanian lived significantly affected the position of the wife and her degree of autonomy. In rural agricultural areas and among the urban poor, women fulfilled important economic functions. Such women enjoyed a modicum of freedom in their comings and goings within the village or neighborhood. Although casual social contact between the sexes of the kind common in the West was infrequent, segregation of the sexes was less pronounced than in traditional towns.

Among the traditional urban bourgeoisie, women fulfilled fewer and less-important economic functions. Women's responsibilities were more confined to the home. Among the new urban middle class, women occupy a variety of positions, some of them contradictory. Some women of this class were educated and employed, and enjoyed a fair measure of mobility within society. Others, also educated and skilled, lived a more sheltered life with minimal mobility.

Status within the household varied considerably depending on sex, age, and type of household. In principle, men had greater autonomy than women. Their movements in public were freer and their personal decisions were more their own. Within the household, however, younger males were subject to the authority of older and more senior males, particularly in decisions about education, marriage and work. Older women exerted substantial authority and control over children and adolescents, the most powerless sector within a household.

Segregation by gender was tied closely to the concept of honor (*'ird*). In most Arab communities, honor inhered in the descent group—the family, and to some extent, the lineage or clan. Honor could be lost through the failure of sisters, wives, and daughters to behave properly (i.e., modestly) and through the failure of men to exert self-restraint over their emotions towards women. On the one hand, the segregation of women worked to minimize the chance that a family's honor would be lost or diminished. On the other hand, the education of women and their participation in a modern work force tended to erode the traditional concept of honor by promoting the mingling of sexes in public life.

Some of the most marked social changes have affected women's roles. In urban areas, young women have begun to demand greater freedom and equality than in the past, though traditional practices still broadly govern their lives. This may be largely attributed to women's educational achievements in the last 50 years and women's increased participation in the work force, giving them a greater degree of autonomy than ever experienced.

Jordan's experience with public education evolved from providing free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 15 to building three universities and encouraging the development of community and technical colleges. The latter were a recent development in response to the perceived need of specialized skills and technologies in the workplace—traditionally not available in the academic mainstream university curricula. In addition to the public education system, Jordan boasts numerous private schools, several private community/technical colleges, and at least one private university. While a few of the private schools were founded by missionaries, a number of newer schools are not associated with missionary or other philanthropic organizations.

In the 1980s, Jordan faced high rates of unemployment among educated young people, particularly in the professions of medicine, engineering, and teaching, as well as in skilled technical labor. Expansion of vocational and technical training helped counteract this trend, along with the development of 2-year community colleges that allowed students to earn transferable credits in short-term skill training for later university study.

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## Questions for Further Study

- What is the social impact of traditional tribal social behavior on urban and village (i.e., non-Bedouin) family relationships and behavior?
- What role does the informal sector play in the modern Jordanian economy? (See Miles Doan, "Class Differentiation and the Informal Sector in Amman, Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 24, 1 (February 1992), 27-38.)
- How has the economy changed the traditional role of Jordanian women in agriculturally productive areas and in urban areas? What differences, if any, exist between these evolving roles among women of different classes and educational levels in urban areas? (See Layne, Linda, *Home and Homeland: The Dialogics of Tribal and National Identities in Jordan*, 1994.)
- What health policies have been most instrumental in improving life expectancy for Jordanians, and what is the impact on Jordan's demographic profile?

## Section IV

### Economics

Jordan is a small and poor country with limited natural resources, a high birth rate, a small market that hampers investment, both domestic and foreign, and an underdeveloped economy. It has promising human resources, and Jordanian citizens working abroad, notably in the Gulf region, have helped compensate for chronic balance of trade deficits. Budgetary support and foreign aid (both U.S. and Arab) have also helped narrow down the deficits. Jordan has pursued a long-standing policy of soliciting economic benefits from political exchange; i.e., it has sought economic advantage from its political alliances, so that it can be said that the country depends on "strategic rents." However, Jordan suffers from regional economic downturns and from conflicts in the region; both inter-Arab and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts.

Whereas the Jordanian government is a staunch advocate of free enterprise, the government has assumed a large role in the ownership of very large enterprises, notably mineral extraction companies, whose financing needs (in the hundreds of millions of dollars) exceed the capabilities of the local private sector. The government has also long felt the need to involve itself due to the lack of adequate local entrepreneurial skills. The reasoning behind this is not fallacious,<sup>[2]</sup> however, and a series of 5-year economic development plans have produced remarkable results. By the late 1980s, Jordan had a mixed economy of about 40 semipublic corporations, of whose combined paid-up capital the government held a 40 percent share,<sup>[3]</sup> GDP growth averaged nearly 16.5 percent between 1972 and 1975, fell to a

respectable 8.5 percent between 1976 and 1979, and reached 18 percent in 1980, according to UN figures. Manufacturing has grown steadily, from 4 percent of GDP in 1970 to 15 percent by 1987. The share of agriculture has declined steadily. There is not enough water to satisfy the demands of household use, industry and agriculture simultaneously.

There have been several distortions in the Jordanian economy. In 1986, for example, the government consumed over 26 percent of GDP, which was the fourth highest figure in the non-communist world. Private consumption, at 87 percent of GDP, was among the highest in the world. Public and private consumption combined amounted to 113 percent more than GDP. The excess of imports over exports as a proportion of GDP was the highest in the world, at -44 percent. The government employed about 40 percent of the workforce (67 percent of all services sector employees) in the late 1980s but contributed only 18 percent of GDP. Public and private services have traditionally accounted for between 60 and 65 percent of GDP. [4] In 1996 the structure of gross domestic production was as follows: public administration and defense accounted for 18.6 percent of GDP; finance 18 percent; manufacturing 16.2 percent; transport and communications 13.9 percent; trade 11.3 percent; construction 8 percent; agriculture accounted for 5.5 percent of GDP; mining 3.6 percent; and other services 4.7 percent. [5] Mineral extractive industries, which formerly the public sector owned, account for the major share of valued added in manufacturing. Phosphates were long regarded as the kingdom's primary natural resource. Total phosphates production by the semi-publicly owned Jordan Phosphate Mines Company was 6.7 million tons in 1986; 5.7 million tons were exported as raw rock and the rest turned into fertilizer at the \$450-million facilities built by the government near the Port of Aqaba port, which turned out mono- and diammonium phosphates, phosphoric acid, and other chemicals. "Jordan was the third ranked phosphate exporter in the world, after Morocco and the United States, and it had the capacity to produce over 8 million tons annually. In 1986 phosphate sales generated US\$185 million in income, which made up 25 percent of export earnings and gave Jordan a 10 percent share in the world market." [6] The other principal mining industry was potash, produced at the semi-publicly owned Arab Potash Company's \$480-million facility on the Dead Sea.

Between 1972 and 1983 Jordan's GNP grew at an average of approximately 10 percent annually. This was made possible through Arab aid in the form of intergovernmental transfers which jumped from \$72 million in 1973 to \$1.2 billion (in 1981 dollars) at the 1978 Baghdad Arab summit. It has been argued that Arab aid, the remittances from over a third of a million Jordanians (mostly of Palestinian origin) working in the oil-producing Gulf region, and commodity exports were the principal components of Jordan's economic prosperity during the seventies and the early eighties. Remittances increased from \$15 million to \$900 million between 1970 and 1981, while commodity exports, mainly to the Gulf region, rose from \$58 million to \$735 million in the same period. These three components accounted for 84 percent of Jordan's GDP in 1981. [7]

However, during the mid-1980s, a producers' oil crisis led to a severe decline in oil revenues and intergovernmental transfers. Markets for Jordan's goods in the Gulf also dried up. A huge cement plant built near Aqaba, intended to supply the Saudi market, turned from an asset into a huge liability. Jordanian Cabinets, which had grown dependent on Arab aid, had become accustomed to turning a blind eye to the economy's structural weaknesses and borrowed money to make ends meet. At the end of 1987, GNP

shrank by 2.4 percent, and the ratio of debt to GNP rose to 70 percent. In 1988, servicing the national debt cost Jordan nearly \$900 million, and by 1989, the kingdom's debt burden had reached \$8.3 billion. Meanwhile, Jordan's special relationship with Iraq had also changed from an asset to a liability: Iraq owed Jordan \$600 million by the end of 1988. There were runs on the Jordanian dinar, which lost a third of its value during 6 months in 1988 (the dinar, which had an exchange rate of about 3 dollars in the seventies and early 1980s, was trading at about JD1.4 to the dollar in 2001). In April 1988, Jordan requested a standby credit arrangement with the IMF and had to acquiesce to a structural adjustment program. This required Jordan to reduce governmental spending and imports and to boost governmental revenues and exports. The medium-term macroeconomic goals were to register a 4 percent rate of economic growth by 1991; reduce inflation from 15 percent to 7 percent by 1993; and to wipe out the current account deficit by that year (including foreign budgetary support in the calculations).<sup>[8]</sup> Government subsidies for food items and exports had to be cut or eliminated.

Budgetary support from Gulf states which had run between \$550 million and \$1.3 billion a year during 1980–1989, fell to \$393 million in 1990 and \$164 million in 1991 following the Gulf War. Jordan, a rentier country (deriving a fixed income from returns on investments), had entered the post-rentier stage, which was to last from 1990 to 1994.

GNP for 1994–1998 in current prices were JD 4.246 billion, JD 4.56 billion, JD 4.711 billion, JD 4.946 billion, and JD 5.18 billion.

The following section examines the most recent economic developments in Jordan.

## GDP Growth

Economic growth, which was negative in real terms in 1998, scored a healthy rate of 3.1 percent in 1999 and 3.9 percent in 2000, according to government figures, despite the *intifada* <sup>[9]</sup> in the West Bank and Gaza, which has had severe repercussions for Jordan's tourism industry and has depressed foreign direct investment (FDI). The government hopes that GDP growth will continue at a real annual growth rate of 3.5 percent. Current per capita income is about \$1,700. The Economist Intelligence Unit predicts that GDP growth will be a more modest 2.8 percent in 2001, followed by 3.8 percent growth in 2002 and 4.4 percent in 2003.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Trade and Current Account Deficits

Despite the traditional chronic trade deficit, exacerbated by rising oil prices, the external current account balance recorded a surplus in 2000 due to U.N. payments to compensate countries negatively affected by the Gulf war, and in view of an increase in workers' remittances. The trade deficit for the first 4 months of 2001 was JD609.6 million (\$859.8 million).

The Economist Intelligence Unit expected exports to increase to \$2.1 billion and imports to increase as

well to \$4.4 billion, so that the trade deficit would rise by 7 percent in 2001 compared to 2000, increasing to \$ 2.3 billion; and then to \$ 2.5 billion in 2002 and \$2.7 billion in 2003. The EIU estimates the expected current account deficits to be 2 percent of GDP in 2001, amounting to a modest \$175 million; and to rise to 4.3 percent of GDP, equal to \$399 million in 2002; and the trend should continue with an increase to 4.4 percent of GDP, or \$438 million, in 2003.

## **Budgetary Deficit**<sup>[11]</sup>

The government's budget deficit still amounted to about 7 percent of GDP in 2000, but would be zero if income from privatization of government equities are included. The Central Bank's official foreign exchange reserves rose by \$800 million to \$2.8 billion by the end of 2000, which is sufficient to cover 8 months of imports, according to the Jordan Letter of Intent to the IMF. The plan is for the budget deficit to shrink to 3 percent of GDP before grants and to decline to zero by 2005 after grants, which would bring it down to figures similar to those accepted internally by the EU. The government is introducing a value added tax (VAT).

## **Debt Burden, Inflation, and the Exchange Rate**

External government debt amounted to 190 percent of GDP after the Gulf War but was whittled down to 81 percent of GDP by 2000, and the government hopes to bring it down to 50 percent of GDP by the end of 2006. Gross government debt was 101 percent of GDP at the end of 2000 and should be reduced to 65 percent of GDP by end of 2006, according to its letter of intent to the IMF; but this may be overly optimistic. The debt burden is still formidable and is a drag on the economy. The government currently has an external debt of \$7.2 billion.

The unemployment rate is 20 percent. Inflation is low and was running at an annual rate of 2.3 percent in September 2001 but should rise in 2002, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, in view of the anticipated expansion of public and private spending, a rise in world non-oil commodity prices, and a strong euro. The EIU estimated average consumer price inflation to be 2.8 percent in 2002, and 3.5 percent in 2003.<sup>[12]</sup>

The Jordan Dinar is nominally pegged at JD0.709 to the U.S. dollar.

Standard & Poors has revised upwards Jordan's long-term foreign currency issuer credit rating from stable to positive in view of the government's reduction of fiscal imbalances and the country's structural reform program. S&P "predicts that Jordan's accelerating reform programme should boost long-term growth prospects, improve the efficiency of the economy and enlarge the role of the private sector."<sup>[13]</sup> The U.S. credit rating agency noted that Jordan's total debt burden was still too high, amounting to 126 percent of GDP and interest payments were put at 4.8 percent of GDP.<sup>[14]</sup>

## **Economic Growth and the Government's Liberalization Plans**

Three slogans emerged from King Abdullah II's First Economic Forum in Aqaba where the King met with businessmen and government officials to formulate the broad lines of an economic development strategy: globalization, information technology and privatization. A Cabinet headed by Ali Abu Ragheb since June 2000 has been charged with overseeing economic reform, and the Cabinet was reshuffled in October 2001 to streamline it and introduce new blood. A 20-member Economic Consultancy Council, which is a policymaking body, was established by King Abdullah II in December 1999 to promote the development of information technology, tourism, fertilizers, and the service industry. But bureaucracy and vested interests still pose a hurdle to liberalization.

Jordan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in April 2000; this step, combined with the IMF structural adjustment plan, are serving to modernize the economy and the trend is to look to the private sector for innovation and growth. Among other things, WTO membership is expected to benefit the mining industry (potash, phosphates and fertilizers), which is responsible for 20 percent of export revenues. However, tariffs, which at one time reached as high as 120 percent, have come down to 30 percent and are expected to be reduced to 20 percent by 2011. WTO rules include trade-related investment measures (TRIMs), and Jordan now permits foreigners to own 100 percent of businesses in Jordan. However, the combined effect of the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza and the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001 have led to a decline in direct foreign investment (FDI) in Jordan from about \$600 million in 2000 to an estimated \$200 million in 2001.<sup>[15]</sup>

In 1997 Jordan signed a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement that aims to create a free-trade zone between the EU and Jordan by 2010 and to establish a framework for political, economic, trade, and financial cooperation. A groundbreaking U.S.- Jordanian Free Trade Agreement came into Force in December 2001. Under a previous arrangement made with the U.S. in 1996, Jordan has set up 5 qualifying industrial zones (QIZs) in various areas of the kingdom, and 25 more are in the pipeline. Goods can be exported to U.S. markets from QIZs free of customs duties and excise tax on condition that 35 percent of the value of the products is manufactured within the zone and 8 percent of the value of the product is Israeli made. These are meant to be a reward for Jordan's cooperation with the peace process. Incidentally, these zones employ a sizeable number of women, which has led to the economic empowerment of Jordanian women. Apparel exports, mainly from such zones, amounted to \$276 million in 1999. The QIZs have provided a boost for Jordan's exports, which were expected to rise by 11 percent in 2001, compared to the year 2000, but imports were expected to rise by 13 percent in the same period.

The current focus of the development effort is a 380-square-kilometer special economic zone (SEZ) in the Red Sea port of Aqaba, which was inaugurated by King Abdullah II on May 17, 2001. The zone will include a QIZ, which will benefit from customs exemptions, low taxes, and streamlined labor procedures. The government expects that it will attract foreign investors seeking to take advantage of duty-free access to the U.S. market and that it will lead to \$6 billion in investments and may even double per capita income by 2020.<sup>[16]</sup> This project has been criticized because it allows foreigners to purchase land, and it is feared that it might be a venue for Israeli infiltration of the economy. Government statements have stressed that this is baseless, and trade unions are said to be pleased with the prospect of 70,000 jobs being created. In June 2001, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) shortlisted six

companies to set up the master developer for the zone (which has been dubbed Aqaba Inc.), and bids were submitted near the end of August. Activities in the zone are to center on industry and tourism. ASEZA has been headed by former Tourism Minister Aqel Biltaji since the Cabinet reshuffle. The Authority will put up land and build infrastructural facilities and regulate activities in the zone. So far, the main investors are Jordan Projects for Tourism Development (JPTD, a joint venture by Zara Investment Company and Abu Jaber Investment Company), along with Egypt's Orascom Projects and Tourism Development.<sup>[17]</sup> JPTD began work on the marina area of the Tala Bay Resort in Aqaba in June 2001. The company has a 2.7 million-square-meter site on Aqaba's south beach.<sup>[18]</sup>

Jordan is trying to develop computer related skills among the young and teach English to students from a very early age. A Reach Initiative is meant to provide 30,000 information technology-related jobs within the next 5 years, and to advance to \$550 million in annual exports to Europe and the U.S. and to create \$150 million in foreign direct investment by 2004.

Global One Communications (Jordan), the leading local internet service provider, was bought by Jordan Telecom for \$12.8 million in January 2001. Meanwhile Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (Fastlink) is hoping to challenge Jordan Telecom's monopoly of fixed-line and international services and plans to invest \$130 million in telecommunications projects to help develop ASEZA.<sup>[19]</sup>

## Privatization

In January 2001, an ad hoc committee, which had been set up by the Economic Consultative Council (ECC) 4 months earlier, endorsed a plan for the privatization of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC); 69.3 percent of the equity is held by the Social Security Corporation.<sup>[20]</sup> JPMC lost JD80 million in 2000 and now has a cumulative debt of JD350 million, but did expect a profit of about JD1 million in 2001. The ECC also recommended the privatization of the other major mining company in Jordan, the Arab Potash Company (APC), which, unlike JPMC, is profitable. The government owns 52.9 percent of APC.

The ECC further recommended the privatization of Aqaba port under a plan by which port facilities and services would be sold off, but the government would retain ownership of the port and exercise a regulatory function. The public sector has invested JD400 million in the port, which is underutilized.

In addition, the ECC wants the postal service and power generation and distribution companies restructured and privatization to begin within a year. The latter include the Central Electric Power Generating Company, the Electric Distribution Company, and the Irbid District Electricity Company.<sup>[21]</sup>

The government is already engaged in privatizing a number of publicly held corporations. In 1998 the government sold a 33-percent stake in the Jordan Cement Factories Company; the following year France Telecom bought a 40-percent stake in Jordan Telecoms for \$508 million, and Jordan is now trying to sell off 49 percent of the shares of the Royal Jordanian Airlines, but this is encountering difficulties in view of the company's JD840 million debt. The National Assembly passed a privatization law in May 2000,



under which 15 percent of privatization revenues should be spent on infrastructural development or setting up a social safety net. The government announced plans for \$423 million in additional spending in 2001, partly in view of the 20-percent unemployment rate, but it is not clear where the money will come from.

## Pharmaceuticals

Jordan has a thriving pharmaceuticals industry, which produces about \$260 million a year in medicines and related products, of which \$180 million go to exports. The industry employs 8,000 people. Some Jordanian firms in this sector will experience difficulties as a result of intellectual property right protection under the WTO, but others are already operating under license.

## Tourism

Tourism, which now contributes 11 percent of GDP, enjoyed a big boost from the peace agreement with Israel, with the number of visitors growing by almost 50 percent during 1994-96. Over 100,000 Israelis visited Jordan in 1997. Forty four percent of investments in Jordan are in the tourism industry. The tourism sector has attracted JD424 million in investments over the 3-year period ending in 2000, 38 percent of which is foreign investment.<sup>[22]</sup> Jordan has 293 hotels with 16,600 rooms, most of them in Amman. However, the outbreak of the intifada and the deterioration of relations with Israel, alongside events in the U.S., has severely hurt package tours that take in Jordan, the holy places in the West Bank, and Israel. Tourism from Israel has also dried up. In November the Jordan issued \$250 million in long-term bonds, guaranteed by the central bank, to help the hotel industry, which was suffering from a severe liquidity crunch, to reschedule its debts. This was reportedly a first in the Arab world.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Amman Stock Exchange

The Amman Financial Market opened on January 1, 1978. All Jordanian public shareholding companies capitalized at over JD100,000 (about \$290,000, according to the exchange rate at the time) had to be listed, although smaller companies could also qualify. In addition to the shares of such companies, government and private corporate bonds, other securities, and debt instruments were traded on the market. Corporate bonds were quite rare, however.

In 1997, the Temporary Securities Law was enacted to restructure the market. The privately operated Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) was created; transactions were to be settled by the new Securities Depository Center; and an oversight and regulatory role was assigned to the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC).

A total of 134 companies were listed on the ASE in November 2000, with a total market capitalization of JD 3.4 billion. At the end of August 2000, foreign investment accounted for 42 percent of market capitalization, but only 6 percent was non-Arab portfolio investment. A few American and European emerging market funds tried to enter the market in the mid-nineties, but found the Amman Financial

Market ill prepared to handle their requirements. Only 20 percent of Jordanians own equity in the market. This is due to low incomes as well as the fact that mutual funds were only introduced recently in Jordan. The government does not issue treasury bills, but the monetary authorities have been issuing certificates of deposit that suck up liquidity at the expense of capital markets, indicating a lack of coordination among various agencies.<sup>[24]</sup>

Executive Chairman of the JSE Bassam Saket sees his organizations' task to be to prepare a new culture of investment and to ensure greater transparency and that disclosure requirements be observed. Many firms are still not complying. New rules governing trading and listing were introduced in 2000, and a brokers' guarantee fund was established. Electronic and remote trading were also introduced. There were hopes that the government would conduct privatization transactions through the ASE, but important deals, such as the Jordan Cement Factories Company and a 40-percent share in the Jordan Telecommunications Company, were sold off directly by the government.

The ASE general weighted price index, which stood at 167.4 in 1999, declined 15 percent during the first three quarters of 2000 and was not initially particularly affected by the outbreak of the intifada in October; nevertheless, it resumed its decline and closed the year at 133.1. The total value of trading for the year 2000 was JD334.5 million (\$472.3 million), down from \$549.4 million in 1999 and from \$655 million in 1998. Foreign investment declined in 2000, with a net outflow of \$16.6 million compared to a net inflow of \$21.8 million in 1999, but foreign investment still accounted for 41 percent of market capitalization.<sup>[25]</sup> By August 15, 2001, the index was up 13 percent since the beginning of the year, closing at 150.69 points following a rally in anticipation of favorable earnings reports by blue chip companies. The index did dip sharply after the tragic events of September 11 in the U.S., but by October 24 it had climbed back above pre-9/11 levels to reach a 20-month high as foreign funds grabbed up blue chip Arab Bank shares in anticipation of a share split early in 2002.

Arab Bank shares account for 40 percent of total market capitalization on ASE. The bank was founded in 1930 in Jerusalem. Management of the highly conservative Arab Bank changed hands this year, as Abdul Majid Shoman retired as CEO and his son, Abdul Hamid Shoman, who is also part of the conservative camp, took over as CEO and deputy chairman of the board. His uncle Khalid Shoman, who is known as something of a modernizer, resigned as deputy chairman. But observers noted that the Arab Bank was facing stiff competition and had to find new sources of noninterest income.

## **Recent Economic Cooperation With Egypt and Syria**

### **15-Year Gas Supply Deal With Egypt**

Jordan's Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry signed an agreement in June 2001 with al-Sharq Gas Company, which is based in Egypt, to supply Jordan with 1,000 million cubic meters of natural gas a year for 15 years, starting in 2003. There are plans to construct a 370 kilometer gas pipeline in Jordan from Aqaba to Khirbet al-Samra near Amman, where an independent power project (IPP) is to be located, and to other power plants as well. Arthur D. Little is the consultant for the project, and Tractebel of Belgium is negotiating a contract to build the IPP. The ministry was accepting tender bids in December 19, 2001

for the build-own-operate gas pipeline contract. The capacity of the pipeline will be 10,000 million cubic meters a year, with a view to extending the delivery of gas to Syria, Lebanon and perhaps Turkey as well. In December 2000, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon signed a memorandum of understanding for a regional gas pipeline.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Wahdeh Dam Project

Jordan has invited international contractors to prequalify for a contract to build a \$200 million, 100-meter dam in association with Jordanian and Syrian firms that will provide 50 million cubic meters of water from Syria to Jordan annually. The project, which has been delayed, is being financed by the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development in Kuwait, and the Jordanian government.<sup>[27]</sup>

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## Questions for further study

1. What economic changes do you think Jordan's membership in the WTO will bring in the long run?
2. In what ways do you think Jordan's economic progress is threatened by the new *intifada*?
3. What do you think are the prospects for the development of an information technology in Jordan?
4. Do you predict success for the privatization effort?
5. What do you think Jordan needs to do to attract foreign portfolio and direct investment?

## Section V

### Politics

By 1927, British officials had prepared a draft constitution for Transjordan based on the Iraqi constitution (also the handiwork of British civil servants), which unfortunately excluded some of the protections built into the Iraqi model, and was designed to be subservient to the prerogatives of the mandatory power built into the agreement with Amir Abdullah, placing ultimate control in the hands of the British representatives. Earlier, in 1923, a committee of Transjordanian officials had begun work on a constitution which, when work on it ended, resembled the British version but was not based on the supremacy of the agreement with Britain. The constitution created an elected unicameral legislature, an "executive council" or Cabinet that was not accountable to the legislative council and had no provisions for judicial review. Abdullah had to request a modification that allowed the legislative council to approve the budget. The British draft was promulgated in 1928. In response, an unofficial group of Transjordanians authored a National Pact that acknowledged the authority of the amir but would have made the Cabinet responsible to the national assembly. The National Pact was not adopted, but the issues it raised came to constitute a leitmotif in Jordanian political life.<sup>[28]</sup>

To placate Palestinian fears of autocratic Hashemite rule following the annexation of the West Bank, King Abdullah promised constitutional reform but did not follow through; he dissolved the first Parliament after the union because it proved to be obstructionist once its members found that these reforms were not forthcoming. King Abdullah was assassinated before new elections could be held.

## Parliament and the Struggle With the Crown

### The 1952 Constitution

The new Parliament or National Assembly (*Majlis al-Umma*) was in favor of radical constitutional revisions, and there was a constitutionalist bent to the Jordanian statesmen who were wielding power in the interregnum between Abdullah and Hussein. This made possible the adoption of a more liberal constitution. In 1951, the Cabinet submitted to Parliament a list of revisions to the constitution. Parliament and the government compromised on the principle that a simple majority was sufficient for a vote of no-confidence in the government. A High Court was established, as well as provisions for limited judicial review.

The issue of succession from Abdullah to Hussein is a very interesting chapter in Jordan's history. It provides a very rare example in the Middle East of commoners arranging the rules and procedures of succession to the monarchy so that a smooth transition was effected from King Abdullah to his eldest son, Talal, as an interim measure, until Talal's eldest son, Hussein, was old enough to ascend the throne. Talal, who was suffering from schizophrenia, was unfit to serve, but he was made king for a brief period to ensure the legitimacy of the succession. When the time came for him to abdicate, this was effected through proper parliamentary procedures, peacefully and according to the book.<sup>[29]</sup>

The 1952 constitution states that Jordan is a constitutional hereditary monarchy, based on primogeniture. Jordan has a bicameral Parliament (*Majlis al-Ummah*, loosely translated as National Assembly), consisting of an elected lower house (*Majlis al-Nuwwab* or House of Deputies) and a Senate or upper house (literally *Majlis al-A'yan* or House of Notables) appointed by the King. The King promulgates laws through royal decrees that must be cosigned by the Prime Minister or the Cabinet Member concerned. The King may veto legislation, and royal vetoes require two-thirds of each House of Parliament to override them. The King appoints the Prime Minister and the judges. He is supreme commander of the armed forces. Cabinets must submit their programs to the lower house for approval, which requires the approval of two-thirds of the members. Elections for the lower house are supposed to be held every 4 years by secret ballot. Women were enfranchised in 1973.

Jordanian laws are based on the principles of both Islamic law (the *shari'a*) and European laws, showing influences of Ottoman, French, and British law. Under the constitution, the judiciary is independent, and formerly this was largely true, but the independence of the courts have been gradually undermined. There are civil, religious, and special courts in Jordan. Civil courts exist at four levels: magistrate's courts, courts of first instance, courts of appeal, and a supreme court called the Court of Cassation. The King appoints the president of the seven-member Court of Cassation, who fills the function of chief justice.

Religious courts consist of *shari'a* courts for Muslims and ecclesiastical courts for Christians.

The constitution bars discrimination on the basis of race or religion; bans compulsory labor; and requires due process to be followed in the case of arrest, imprisonment, or confiscation of property. However, an order from the Prime Minister (rather than a court) may satisfy due process in the case of arrest. Freedom of opinion, the press, and worship are guaranteed within limits. Censorship, or rather self-censorship, of the press is often practiced, however. During the period of martial law (from 1967 to 1989), newspapers were often closed down by order of the government for a few days at a time as a financial penalty for violating censorship restrictions. The Ministry of Information (which no longer exists) often laid down general guidelines for the press. Television and radio are government owned and operated.

## King Hussein and the Constitutional Experiment

General elections were held on October 21, 1956 under the 1952 constitution and the Political Parties Law of 1955, according to which the Cabinet had the authority to license all political parties. These were the freest elections in the history of Jordan, before or since, under the explicit orders of the King. Given the change in the electorate due to the incorporation of the West Bank, it led to the victory of Arab nationalist parties, notably the National Socialist Party led by Sulaiman al-Nabulsi, which won 11 out of 40 seats in the lower house. There were 3 communists, 2 Ba'thists, 4 Muslim Brethren, 4 Arab Constitutionals, 2 other parties that won one seat apiece, and 14 independents. The pro-Nasserist Arab Nationalists (*qawmiyeen*) did not contest the elections and remained outside Parliament.

On 27 October 1956, Sulaiman Nabulsi was charged with forming a Cabinet, and he named a Ba'thist from the West Bank, Abdullah Rimawi, as minister of state for foreign affairs. The 11-man Cabinet included 7 National Socialists, 1 Ba'thist, and 1 communist. As one distinguished commentator put it: "Thus, of all the countries in the Arab East, Jordan became the first to have what it is customary to call a "popular front" government, i.e., a liberal-socialist-communist coalition which, in the Middle East context, was dedicated to the struggle against domestic conservatism and Western influences, while favoring closer links with the Arab countries and the Soviet bloc."<sup>[30]</sup> Amman became a center for pan-Arab conferences and Jordan played an important role in founding the Federation of Arab Labor Unions.

There was an irreconcilable conflict between the goals of Nabulsi and those of the King. Nabulsi, being a pan-Arabist, wanted to end what he perceived as the artificial existence of Jordan and unite with other Arab countries, most immediately, Syria. The new Prime Minister favored the replacement of Britain's subsidy with Arab aid, notably from Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Nabulsi also wanted to establish the principle of the independence of the Cabinet to formulate foreign policy.

The significance of what the government was attempting can be gleaned from a cabinet resolution read by Rimawi on February 26, 1957 defining Jordan's position at an upcoming conference. The resolution rejected the Eisenhower Doctrine (military and economic support for Middle East states whose independence was threatened by international communism) and upheld the principle of positive neutrality. The prelude to the government's audacious position on foreign policy issues was even more

striking: “We hereby announce . . . the Government’s policy . . . On this basis the government won the confidence of the Chamber of Deputies.”<sup>[31]</sup> The significance of this statement cannot be overestimated: “The inference that Jordan was a parliamentary state does not contradict the text of the 1952 constitution (amended in 1954), even though the constitution did not state that policymaking devolved on the ministers rather than on the King. But as everyone knew, this assumption negated all that Jordan had stood for as a body politic since its birth, and just as important, no officeholder had ever before dared to make it in public.”<sup>[32]</sup>

Jockeying between the King and the Cabinet continued. When the Cabinet retired the director of security and replaced him with their own man, Hussein acted. On April 10 he ordered Nabulsi to resign. By maintaining personal contacts with Cairo and Damascus, Hussein had managed to silence their hostility at a crucial time.

That was not the end of the constitutional experiment; the King was still willing to play along. But the next 3 weeks were a period of severe crisis. Army officers in Zarqa, east of Amman, had mounted a plot against the King with the connivance of the chief of staff, Ali Abu Nuwwar. Hussein managed to foil the plot bloodlessly through a demonstration of personal courage. Then, for the first time, he invited a Palestinian, Hussein Fakhry al-Khalidi, to form a Cabinet, which included Nabulsi as foreign minister. This Cabinet lasted 9 days but significantly allowed a Patriotic Congress to convene in Nablus in the West Bank on April 22. This was attended by the Qawmiyeen or Nasserists, the National Socialists, Ba’thists, and communists—in other words, all the opposition. The Muslim Brothers by this time were supporting the King. The congress issued a proclamation signed by 23 members of the lower house that espoused federation with Egypt and Syria, a purge of the administration, and respect for the constitution and called for a general strike and demonstrations on April 24. Some demonstrations took place accompanied by violent clashes between the leftists and the Muslim Brotherhood. Khalidi resigned, so none of the congress’ resolutions were carried out.

After soliciting and receiving assurances of American support, on the evening of April 24 the young King assembled a group of senior politicians among his grandfather’s supporters and sought and received their approval for a declaration of martial law. Shortly after midnight on April 25 martial law was declared. The King had exerted his authority and finally put an end to the constitutional experiment. Jordan would rely on U.S. aid. In effect, the United States had stepped into Britain’s shoes as Jordan’s sponsor.

This assertion of independence by Parliament and the Cabinet had been spectacular but short-lived, and it ended with a victory for King Hussein and the prerogatives of the crown (see detailed discussion of the international dimension of the challenge of Arab radicalism in the next section).

## Civil War of 1970–71

In 1964, Egyptian President Abdel Nasser was instrumental in creating the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was not entirely independent from the Arab regimes that had set it up and

financed it, and the Palestine Liberation Army, which consisted of regular brigades subject to regular military discipline, stationed in Syria and Egypt. Independent Palestinian organizations, such as the Palestine Liberation Movement (Fateh),<sup>[33]</sup> which was established in several stages ranging from the late fifties to the early sixties, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and its offshoot, the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP, later the DFLP), as well as many other small organizations, had already taken shape or were in the process of being formed. Following the defeat of Arab armies in the June 1967 war, their mission became to liberate their homeland, Palestine (now Israel), through guerrilla action.

Whereas conventional warfare worked to the Israeli army's advantage, guerrilla warfare, it was thought, was far better suited to Arab limitations and Israeli vulnerabilities. These organizations went through a soul-searching period in which theoretical debates took place concerning the nature of guerrilla warfare, wars of national liberation, people's wars, etc.<sup>[34]</sup> They hit upon the practice of guerrilla action (*al-'amal al-fida'i*), since guerrilla warfare was actually beyond their capabilities; but that did not prevent them from employing grandiose names such as "mass armed struggle" or "revolutionary war." A sanctuary or base for guerrilla operations against Israel was needed. The countries surrounding Israel—Jordan, Syria and Lebanon—were the natural choices, Jordan being preferred because it offered the longest border with Israel and because Palestinians constituted over half the population. Whereas Fateh espoused the doctrine of noninterference in the affairs of the regimes in the host countries, the Marxist organizations, the PFLP and the breakaway PDFLP were inspired by Vietnam and, in the case of the latter, the thoughts of Mao Zedong, to the extent that its founder, Nayef Hawatmeh, was satirized as Nayef Zedong by members of other organizations. To the PDFLP and the PFLP, Amman had to undergo an apotheosis as the Arab Hanoi or little Hanoi. Unfortunately these concepts were divorced from social, economic and political reality.

Palestinian nationalism (or more accurately protonationalism) and the emergence of Palestinian institutions were driven by "armed struggle." The principle of "armed struggle" shaped the form and function of Palestinian institutions. The proliferation of guerrilla organizations, and the ongoing formation of militias and administrative and decisionmaking institutions, however, created a dualism of power. "The guerrilla movement now had its own military police, security apparatus, revolutionary courts, information offices, media, trade union movement, and, of course, full-time armed forces and 'liberated zones' in the refugee camps."<sup>[35]</sup> The military and paramilitary bodies that emerged, designed as they were to further the goal of armed struggle, were incompatible with Jordanian sovereignty. Many of the men who staffed these organizations were recruited from refugee camps in Jordan; the Palestinian refugees could escape the dismal world of the camps and strive for a better future for themselves and their families by joining the guerrillas, those who sacrificed themselves for their people.

In April 1969, the guerrilla groups united to form the Palestine Armed Struggle Command, which, due to internal differences, excluded the PFLP. "In the years which followed 1969, Fateh strengthened its hold on all parts of the PLO apparatus, while Fateh's own native-born vigour and resilience expanded the PLO's hold over all aspects of Palestinian public life, knitting together the dispersed and demoralized Palestinian communities into a reformed and distinctive national group under the leadership of the PLO."<sup>[36]</sup>



The concentration of the presence of the *fida`iyeen* (guerrilla organizations dedicated to the liberation of Palestine) on Jordan soil, and the high percentage of Palestinians in the population, presented a challenge to the regime and to many indigenous Jordanians. The prospect of turning Amman into an Arab Hanoi was anathema to the regime. Nevertheless, it was difficult for King Hussein to resist support for efforts by the Palestinians to regain their homeland; and personally, the young King may well have been swept away initially by the tide of popular sentiment: at one point he said in a much publicized speech: "We are all *fida`iyeen*." Those words would come back to haunt him.

The guerrillas became contemptuous of the authority of the government, which was "reactionary" after all, and, according to the radicals, had to be superseded by something better, more progressive. Armed *fida`iyeen* started to throw their weight around under the presumption that they had the mantle of legitimacy. They flaunted their independence (and rebelliousness) and thought that the regime could not take them on for fear of the Arab reaction. The guerrillas had also infiltrated the armed forces, which had recruited many Palestinians alongside the traditional Bedouin troops, and thought they army would split in the event of a confrontation with the King.

As a final resort, the guerrillas thought they could count on Iraqi troops that had been stationed in Jordan following the war and had received assurances from Iraq's defense minister. The radical guerrilla groups, particularly the PDFLP and the PFLP, sought a confrontation with the authorities, and there was a debate among the radicals whether to maintain the duality of authority or to overthrow the regime. Fateh was against attempting to replace the government because it thought this would invite Israeli intervention, but this fear apparently did not daunt the less cautious and much weaker radicals (Fateh had a militia of around 10,000, whereas the PFLP and PDFLP commanded only a few hundred), and even Fateh commanders in Jordan were militants. The Marxist groups counted on Fateh to come to their aid in a showdown and acted recklessly. The Jordanian Communist Party split, with the majority supporting the radical Palestinians.

But the *fida`iyeen* lacked unity and discipline and their forces were not integrated. By contrast, the government was well organized and better capable of planning, its troops were more disciplined and better armed. Malcolm Kerr offers the following insight into the mentality of the elements within the army and the general population who were alienated by the methods and attitudes of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations: between 1968 and 1970 "they had built up a reservoir of special resentment against the arrogant attitudes of the Palestinians. The political tension was mixed closely with social differences between the proud men of tribal background, trained under the paternal eye of the British, whose whole life and livelihood had been based on loyal service to the Hashemite crown, and the slick urbanites, the socially mobile, ideologically facile, irreverent young men who led the resistance movement. Transposed on to the Jordanian stage, it was the police of Chicago or Paris face to face with student demonstrators."<sup>[37]</sup>

But fearing a split in the army, the government brought back Ma'n Abu Nuwwar (in keeping with the King's tradition of forgiving and coopting former adversaries) to reactivate the army's Mobilization and Moral Guidance Branch; a Special Branch (*shu'bah khassah*) consisting of loyal Bedouin recruits under

the command of the King's uncle, Sharif Nasir bin Jamil, and his cousin, Sharif Zeid bin Shaker, who commanded the armored brigades. The so-called Popular Resistance (*al-muqawamah al-sha'biyah*) was formed, which came under the direct command of the King. A third armored brigade was formed in 1969, and army strength increased from 60,000 to about 75,000. The King received the support of the southern tribes, indigenous East Bankers, and even Palestinian businessmen who perceived the need for law and order. The King met several times with tribal and clan leaders and rallied support in the army.

Clashes broke out in February 1970 and again in May and June. The PFLP tried to capture the radio station, and Fateh even fired rockets at one of the King's palaces. Still, Hussein tried to compromise on several occasions. On June 11, he offered Arafat the post of Prime Minister at the head of a Cabinet of the Fateh leader's choice. Arafat declined, but still a Cabinet was formed under 'Abdel Mun'im al-Rifa'I, and Mashhur Haditha replaced Sharif Nasir at the head of the army. Both new appointees enjoyed the trust of the Palestinian guerrillas.

On July 22, Abdel Nasser agreed to the Rogers Plan, involving a cease-fire in the war of attrition that had been going on in the Suez. Jordan concluded a cessation of hostilities agreement with Israel 4 days later. This sent alarm bells ringing at PLO headquarters, and the radicals started plotting a coup against Hussein. The PFLP came to believe that an offensive against the government would induce large segments of the population and the army to rally behind the rebels, on the model of the Bolshevik revolution,<sup>[38]</sup> and now advocated a direct assault on the monarchy in an overall offensive.<sup>[39]</sup> The King reinstated bin Shakir as army commander.

George Habash's PFLP had a penchant for "external operations," which generally meant hijackings, although Fateh frowned on this. On September 6, the PFLP hijacked a Pan Am flight, flew it to Cairo, and blew up the plane on the tarmac after evacuating the passengers. A Swissair aircraft and a TWA plane were also seized and flown to a desert air strip in Jordan, where a BOAC flight was also diverted 3 days later, and the passengers were held as hostages. The army surrounded the air strip. The PFLP's organ, *al-Hadaf*, announced the group's actions to be a blow at the peace process.<sup>[40]</sup> Arafat suspended the PFLP's membership in the PLO Central Committee. But the Palestinian leadership vacillated: "Fateh had long raised the slogan of noninterference in domestic Arab politics, but its problem (Salah) Khalaf summarized, was that it had in fact 'interfered, but not intervened', and 'defied [King] Husayn's authority without seriously trying to seize power.'"<sup>[41]</sup> On the other hand, some hawks, such as PLO "foreign minister" Faruq Qaddumi, thought the King was a "paper tiger" and could be toppled "in half an hour."<sup>[42]</sup>

Iraq warned Jordan against taking on the guerrillas and said it would intervene to defend the *fida'iyeen* and the refugee camps.<sup>[43]</sup> Again the King compromised. Mashhur Haditha was reinstated as army chief of staff, and the King had to intervene personally to prevent an attack on the guerrillas by mutinous troops. The King now faced a challenge from the right by East Jordanian hardliners who were ready to invite the King to step aside if he could not lead them against the guerrillas.<sup>[44]</sup> Finally, Fateh called for a "revolutionary nationalist government" on September 11.

Faced with these challenges, and by increasing hostility to the guerrillas from the indigenous East Bank population, which verged on the threat of rebellion against the King if he failed to act, Hussein acted. The Jordanian army began its offensive on September 17, massing between 30,000 and 35,000 troops in the Amman governorate. The government had a master plan to use the special Bedouin forces it had created to attack centers of guerrilla strength in Amman and to sever their ties with other cities, cutting off supplies and reinforcements. Iraq failed to intervene but Syria did, sending in a force of 200 tanks, which the King was able to defeat by deploying his air force while Syria failed to do so (see section under Foreign Affairs, below.)

Arab mediation led to several cease-fires, none of which endured. The government had set a course of action for itself, from which it was not ready to deviate unless the PLO was prepared to change its ways. Still, the King exhibited a willingness to compromise on several occasions, to appease both domestic and Arab criticism. There were many pauses in the offensive. A subsequent protocol on October 13 restored many of the former prerogatives and freedoms the guerrillas had enjoyed. The United States, which was clearly sympathetic to the King, resupplied Jordan with the equipment it had lost. The army resumed what has come to be termed a “creeping offensive.” By March 1971 the army regained Irbid; by April the guerrillas agreed to evacuate Amman and assembled their forces in ‘Ajlun. Government forces attacked and overran Palestinian positions in ‘Ajlun between July 13 and 16. The PLO left Jordan, never to return as an armed force.

The Palestine Red Crescent estimated a death toll of 3,650 and over 11,000 wounded even before the final assault, and the Palestinian guerrillas had lost their principal Arab sanctuary. Jordan was censured and ostracized for a while. Kerr offers a perceptive retrospective analysis: “Who had really won the civil war, and what did it signify? The violence was deeply disturbing to the Arab public, the more so because the victims were already the objects of general sympathy. King Hussein’s army had killed more Palestinians in 1970 than Moshe Dayan’s had done in 1967. The poignancy of this was not lost on Palestinians living in the West Bank under Israeli occupation. What did it foretell of prospects for them and their aspirations if they were ever returned to Hashemite sovereignty?”<sup>[45]</sup>

## **Return to Constitutional Government in 1989**

### **Defensive Democratization**

At the 1974 Rabat conference, the PLO was accepted by Arab governments as the sole legitimate representative of the PLO. This created a constitutional problem for Jordan: Was the West Bank still part of Jordan? In practice, the area was under Israeli occupation, and now the question of the legitimacy of representation had been raised. Who did West Bankers in the Jordanian Parliament represent? Could new elections be held? Should West Bank deputies vote on laws affecting the East Bank only?

Martial law had been declared in 1967 and remained in force until a new Parliament was formed after the 1989 elections. The official explanation for this situation is that war justified martial law, and the occupation of the West Bank prevented the holding of new elections there, and it would have been

unconstitutional to hold elections only in the East Bank, so that normal constitutional practices had to be suspended.

There have been five amendments to the 1952 constitution: in 1974, 1976, and 1984. The first two amendments allow the King to dismiss the Senate and to postpone lower house elections for a year. In 1974 the King dissolved the lower house and suspended Parliament indefinitely. In 1978, feeling the need for participation by the public in government, the King created an appointed body, the National Consultative Council, which debated laws and made recommendations to the government. This body had no legal powers or authority, but the government made a point of almost never going against the wishes of the NCC. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet regularly attended the weekly NCC sessions.

Writing in 1981, one scholar noted: “Although most of the laws that have been promulgated since the establishment of the Council have been initiated by the government, nevertheless, all of them have been deliberated in the appropriate Council committee, and then voted on and passed with or without amendment by the Council as a whole. Neither the government nor the King have so far vetoed any amendment recommended by the Council.” In response to a proposed amendment by a prominent NCC member, the following text was adopted: “Members can debate and offer advice on matters of public policy, each member having the right to question the Prime Minister or the concerned Cabinet minister on any such topic.”<sup>[46]</sup> Although strictly an advisory body, the NCC gathered authority as it went along.

In 1984, King Hussein dissolved the NCC and recalled the suspended Parliament. The 1976 amendment empowered the King to postpone parliamentary elections indefinitely, while the two 1984 amendments allowed elections to be held in the East Bank alone and empowered serving deputies to choose replacements for deputies who died in office, in order to fill vacant seats from the West Bank. Thus the government’s justification for the hiatus in parliamentary life was that circumstances beyond the government’s control had forced a situation upon it. In 1988, Jordan gave up responsibility for the West Bank, and it became sensible as well as constitutional to resume parliamentary life in the East Bank.

Other explanations stress economic factors, specifically the nature of Jordan as a rentier state and the need to respond to economic crises. One noted characteristic of rentier states is the depolitization of society: Since the state does not depend primarily on taxes to sustain the government’s budget, the operative maxim could be phrased as “no representation without taxation.” The state may be benevolent, but it is decidedly paternalistic. It tends to discourage the emergence of independent political parties and pluralist interest groups with the power to contest government policies.

By the end of the 1980s, strategic rents were drying up, and the government’s need to borrow from abroad had led to a budget deficit of \$8.3 billion. Per capita GNP had fallen by a quarter since 1985 to under \$1,500 in 1989; consumer spending had been declining since 1986; and remittances by Jordanians working abroad, which exceeded a billion dollars annually for about a decade up to 1987, had dropped to \$623 million by 1989 as a result of the Iran-Iraq war. The kingdom sought to reschedule its debts, and this led to a structural readjustment agreement with the IMF in 1988, which was initially kept secret, and included an austerity package involving reductions in government subsidies.

Subsequent government's had been ignoring the structural imbalances in the economy, and the public did not even know the full extent of the problem. The structural adjustment program called for price increases on petroleum products, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, soft drinks and detergents. Automobile registrations and licensing fees were increased. Subsidies on barley, bran, olive oil and powdered milk were reduced. The immediate objective was to reduce the budget deficit from 23.7 percent of GDP in 1988 to 19.6 percent in 1989.<sup>[47]</sup>

The program was met with public protests directed against both the austerity measures and governmental corruption. Riots broke out in the south in April 1989, beginning in Ma'an and spreading to surrounding areas. The unusual aspect of these riots was that they occurred in areas of traditional bedrock government support; the protesters were not radicals or leftists or Palestinian refugees but were East Bankers of Bedouin descent. Palestinian refugee camps remained quiet, and the largely Palestinian middle class and left-leaning professional associations were content to petition the crown to replace the government. The Muslim Brotherhood simplified the complex economic causes by placing the blame on governmental corruption. Zeid Rifa'i's government was forced to resign and was replaced by a Cabinet headed by Sharif Zeid Ibn Shaker, who was known for his integrity. Rifa'i had been known for his antiliberal policies and close control of the press, and the new Cabinet chose a path of liberalization to placate citizens who had to bear the burden of economic austerity.

The government responded to the clarion call of unrest among part of its core constituency with political liberalization.<sup>[48]</sup> The first parliamentary elections since the 1967 war were announced to be held before the end of 1989, and the King appointed a 60-member commission to draft a National Charter. Glenn Robinson has argued that these measures amounted to "defensive democratization," by the state, preemptive liberalization in view of anticipated demands for political reform, and not as a result of agitation by groups in civil society. "Defensive democratization, even in the absence of democratizing social pressure, is a state strategy to maintain the dominant political order in the face of severe state fiscal crisis. Such fiscal crises, particularly in rentier states, are only loosely related to general economic problems in a country."<sup>[49]</sup> Rents, derived from outside the country, dried up, leading to protests, and the King opted for a program of defensive democratization in order to forestall and preempt even more serious challenges to the crown further down the line without making fundamental changes in the structure of power and the elite.

While the liberalization is real in comparative terms, and may allow for the emergence of political parties and greater freedom of the press, the King maintains an ultimate veto power over policy issues. The function of Parliament, which was freely elected, was to sanction or legitimize government policies and give its blessings to the IMF's structural reforms.<sup>[50]</sup> Parliament was also needed to legitimize the peace agreement with Israel, which the King would have anticipated in view of his April 1987 agreement with Shimon Peres in a secret meeting in London to convene such a conference.<sup>[51]</sup> King Hussein had been saying since the late seventies that he wished there were a way for the public to participate in the decisionmaking process so that it would better understand the government's calculations and motives and so that citizens might share in the responsibility for the decisions rather than criticizing everything the government did while they maintained their distance. Ahmad al-Lawzi, who was Prime Minister during

the early seventies and had extensive experience as a Senator, believes that liberalization should in fact be dated back to 1984.<sup>[52]</sup> Although the elections were free, the rules of the electoral game were such as to minimize the influence of opponents of the regime, particularly during the 1993 elections.

The notion of defensive democratization is supported by Ryan. In a study of the Arab Cooperation Council, formed by Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and North Yemen on February 16, 1989 (see section on the ACC under Foreign Policy, below), Ryan argues that the Council primarily represented a format for economic cooperation and that Jordan had worked to create it in order to deal with the looming fiscal crisis. Although it antedated the unrest in the south, the Jordanian government could see the threat of unrest, although it may not have predicted where it was going to break out. At any rate, the intention was to shore up support for the regime by catering to the interests of the business elites, an important source of support for the regime, in the belief that economic stability would promote social peace.

Political liberalization and the ACC went hand in hand. "The liberalization effort, in fact, opened the way for interest groups to form together as informal policy coalitions in efforts to affect the policy process to a greater extent than before. These developments enhanced the role of the commercial bourgeoisie in particular, which found that some of its interests matched those of the Jordanian regime. One aspect of this policy convergence was the push for greater market access not only for Jordanian labor but also for Jordanian exports."<sup>[53]</sup> The export industry, in which Palestinian interests were well represented, stood to benefit, as did the construction industry, which provided a lucrative employment opportunity for retired army officers, and which sought foreign markets for the export of its services. Economic alliances and political liberalization offered an opportunity to coopt key groups in society.

According to Robinson, this move towards democratization is not in any imminent danger of getting out of hand, because the Palestinian economic elite are reticent about further liberalization that might work to the advantage of East Bankers and are content with the IMF-backed structural adjustment (which promotes privatization); the IMF plan preserves the position of the private sector dominated by Palestinian businessmen and firms, who may be threatened by attempts to redistribute resources towards the state sector, which is dominated by East Bankers.<sup>[54]</sup>

The lower house of Parliament was expanded to 80 seats, of which 68 seats were assigned to representatives of Muslims of Arab origin: nine for Christians, two for Circassians, and one seat was to be filled either by a Circassian or a Chechen.

Political parties had not been legalized before the 1989 elections, so the largest single bloc of seats went to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was the only organized group to contest the elections, but they could not run officially under the party name. Nevertheless, 20 Brethren and 12 other independent candidates affiliated with the Brotherhood were elected, adding up to 32 seats. Representatives of tribal groups and centrists won 35 seats. Thirteen leftists were elected, a remarkable change from the 1950s. The government now faced a problem: the combined strength of the Islamist and leftist candidates amounted to a parliamentary majority. The King called on Mudar Badran, who had good relations with the Brotherhood, to form a cabinet. Badran declared an amnesty for political prisoners; lifted harsh

controls on the press; and froze martial law. He chose to coopt the Islamists and formed a cabinet that included three independent Islamic deputies but no members of the Brotherhood. Parliament convened in November 1990. Badran reshuffled his Cabinet to include three Muslim Brethren, with the ministry of education going to one of them. The new minister of education announced that schools and school events would be strictly segregated according to sex. This meant that fathers could not attend the graduation of their daughters or mothers attend ceremonies for their sons. This went against Jordanian family values and offended the sensibilities of nonfundamentalist Jordanians and such a large section of the middle class that the minister was forced to resign.

Despite their parliamentary strength, the Islamic deputies were unable to impose their political agenda on the three subsequent Prime Ministers: Taher al-Masri, Zayd ibn Shaker, and Abdul Salam al-Majali. Parliament did endorse structural adjustment programs that had been agreed with the IMF, however. According to Robinson: "Parliament could only act within the political parameters set by the King and enforced by his chosen Prime Minister . . . Parliament had little real power to substantially change policies or course. In the end, Parliament's primary task was to legitimate King Hussein's political agenda."<sup>[55]</sup>

The National Charter, a truly progressive document, was approved by Parliament and signed by the King in June 1991. In line with the charter, political parties were legalized in September 1992. The Press and Publications law, which was enacted in April 1993, removed some restrictions on the press, but shackled press freedoms in other ways, such as prohibiting material that was offensive not only to the crown and the armed forces but to other Arab states, diplomats, etc. The conservative Parliament was more concerned with defamation than with press freedom. Apparently, the Muslim Brotherhood and tribal deputies did not favor an overly emancipated or outspoken press. The tame Jordanian press, however, failed to mount opposition to Jordan's 1994 peace agreement with Israel, opposition which the Brotherhood led. Of course, an important source of control of the press lay in the fact that the government indirectly owned 60 percent of the shares of *al-Ra'i* newspaper, 35 percent of *al-Dustur*, and 75 percent of *Sawt al-Sha'b*.

The government also retained the ability to circumvent parliamentary channels in certain areas. For example, the Cabinet enjoys the right, subject to the King's approval, to promulgate laws by decree when Parliament is out of session in "matters which admit of no delay." Such laws must be submitted to Parliament at the next session. However, there is an interesting nicety here: Instead of requiring Parliament to endorse the laws passed by decree, the constitution states that the law will remain valid unless it is repealed by Parliament.<sup>[56]</sup>

## Relations With the Islamists

The Muslim Brotherhood, while critical of corruption in government, had been an important source of domestic support for the government in its confrontations with leftists and radicals, as noted, during the Nabulsi episode. It has served as a counterweight not only to leftist groups, but also to more extremist Islamist organizations, such as *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*. East Bankers were the grass roots mainstay of

the Brotherhood, which included in its leadership scions of established political families. However, the Islamists were opposed to a peace agreement with Israel that involved full normalization and did not satisfy Palestinian national aspirations, as conservative Palestinians were rather well represented in the Brotherhood.

Following the 1989 liberalization, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself in a strong position to compete, because it was about the only group in Jordanian civil society that was organized and in a position to mobilize mass support, a strong advantage it enjoyed over other groups and newly formed parties. The Brotherhood and Islamic groups affiliated with it formed the Islamic Action Front (IAF). The government, wary of Islamist opposition to peace with Israel, sought to strengthen its hand against the IAF. In preparation for the 1993 elections, the Cabinet changed a rule that allowed voters to cast ballots for all the seats in a multiseat district, so that the new principle became “one-person, one vote.” This forced voters in such districts to choose between voting on a clan basis or an ideological one, thereby undermining support for IAF candidates. In addition, the existing electoral districts over-represented the southern regions of the country, which consisted predominantly of indigenous Jordanians, and tended to vote on a clan basis. The IAF threatened to boycott the elections but later relented. Voting on November 8, 1993 was fair and free; the government did not interfere in the elections, although it did manipulate voting rules to its advantage. The number of Islamic deputies in the new Parliament declined from 32 to 22, 16 of them members of the IAF.

Only 41 percent of all eligible voters and 54 percent of those registered to vote participated in the 1989 election, and 45 percent of eligible and 56 percent of registered voters participated in the 1993 elections. Nevertheless, Robinson remarks that “Jordan’s political-liberalization program, initiated in 1989, represents the longest sustained such opening in the Arab world today.”<sup>[57]</sup>

A very interesting point that Robinson makes is that the success of the IAF is linked to Palestinian politics. The IAF performed best in districts with a heavily Palestinian population. Islamic deputies also opposed the Madrid-Oslo peace process, which gave voice to Palestinian opposition to the process. But because of East Bank sensitivities about the disproportionate number of Palestinians among the business elite, East Bankers felt this should continue to be counterbalanced by overrepresentation of Palestinians in the bureaucracy and governmental institutions. Indigenous Jordanians also felt misgivings concerning the possibility that Palestinians may want to retain political rights in Jordan as well as enjoy rights in a Palestinian state that may emerge from the Oslo process, in which case Palestinians would be doubly enfranchised, so to speak.

Palestinians running as independents or as members of a leftist party aroused controversy, except in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood. “the Muslim Brotherhood is the only party in Jordan that effectively integrates Palestinian interests without the political baggage of Palestinian ethnicity. No other organization that overtly espouses a Palestinian nationalist agenda and that is seen to be a legitimate political player in Jordanian affairs by East Bankers exists (or has existed) in Jordan.”<sup>[58]</sup>

Satloff argues that there was a struggle between the traditionalists and “Young Turks” within the Brotherhood. The radicals have “urged the leadership to consolidate the ‘Palestinization of the



Brotherhood and have goaded the leadership into heightening the role that jihad against Israel has in the pantheon of Brotherhood political priorities.”<sup>[59]</sup> The radicals seem to have gained the upper hand, and have been bent on challenging the regime. The government has responded by encouraging the formation of a coalition of secular and leftist groups. “Most significantly, this has included the return of the Fatah wing of the PLO to domestic politics—with the regime’s blessing, no less. In mid-July [1990] the Jordanian Communist Party, Nayif Hawatmeh’s Jordanian People’s Democratic Party, George Habash’s Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and Fatah joined together to form the “Jordanian Arab National Democratic Coalition,” a political movement aimed at winning back the Palestinian support that had been ceded to the Islamists over the previous year.”<sup>[60]</sup>

The Jordanian government has also resorted to some underhanded tactics in its attempt to control the Islamists, in response to some of their legitimate complaints against corruption in government and the acceptance of kickbacks by senior politicians. A prominent Islamist, Laith Shubailat, was arrested on trumped up charges on more than one occasion for causing trouble on this issue. He was tried and convicted but pardoned by the King, who was seeking reconciliation.

Relations with the Islamic Resistance Movement ( Hamas ) were another sensitive issue. Hamas had been allowed to maintain spokesmen and representatives in Jordan. King Hussein even intervened with Israel when Mossad agents tried to assassinate the main Hamas representative in Jordan, Khalid Mishal, by injecting him with lethal poison on a street in Amman in September 1997. Infuriated, the King forced the Israeli government to provide the antidote and to release the invalid founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, who had been languishing in an Israeli prison for 8 years. However, in 1999 the government cracked down on Hamas, declared it illegal, and closed its offices in Jordan. Twenty-one members of the organization were arrested, and its chief representatives in Jordan, who were abroad, were prevented from returning. Later, most of them were pardoned and deported, along with four high-ranking members of the organization.

Most recently, the government said it had uncovered a plot by a group with connections to the al-Qa’ida organization, who were attempting subversion, and put them on trial.

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This includes information on the Jordanian constitution, the National Charter, NGOs in Jordan, and various material related to relations between Jordan and the European Community.

## Questions for Further Reading

1. What was the impact of the British mandate on Jordanian society and politics? (See Amadouny, Bocco and Tell, Kirkbride, Kingston, and Wilson, listed above.)
2. How was the transition from Abdullah to Hussein and the forced abdication of Talal brought about peacefully and constitutionally? (See Satloff for a thorough account and Kirkbride, above.)
3. To what extent did Jordan function as a constitutional monarchy? (See Brown, Khoury, Wiktorowicz, Robinson, and the two Satloff references above.)
4. How did the Palestinian presence in Jordan influence politics in the Nabulsi episode, the civil war of 1970, democratization since 1989, and in the question of peace with Israel? (See Dann, Sayigh, Robinson, Satloff and al-Khazendar, above. Al-Khazendar is the least scholarly, but covers some useful territory).
5. How do you perceive the Islamist challenge to the Jordanian regime? (See Robinson and the Satloff's "Jordan's Great Gamble.")
6. What do you think are the major challenges facing Jordanian politics in the near future?

## Section VI

### Foreign Affairs

Jordan's foreign policy is determined to a large extent by its size and economic resources, its geographic location and the politics and rivalries in the region, its population mix, and the pragmatic orientation of its

monarchs.

Jordan is a small country with limited economic resources. It stands in need of a powerful patron or ally and either economic aid or a relationship that allows it to collect economic rents, often in the form of budgetary support or open markets.

Jordan is surrounded by neighbors more powerful than itself: It is the Arab country with the longest border with Israel, its neighbor to the west; to the north lies Syria; to the east Iraq, to the south Saudi Arabia, and to the southwest Egypt, although there is no direct link with the last country. Jordan is therefore embroiled in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in inter-Arab rivalries; its stability has repeatedly been threatened by the forces of Arab and Palestinian nationalism. Slightly over half the population is of Palestinian origin, which leads to volatility, but this is offset by the pragmatic politics of the Hashemite dynasty that has ruled Jordan since its creation.

This pragmatism should be understood in the sense of a rational choice approach to policymaking: namely, the choice of the best policy alternative or the policy that maximizes benefits for the country and perhaps the regime. National security is the top priority, but when that is not threatened then economic security and budgetary support tend to rise to the top of the list. In other words, Jordan is a country of a type that generally conforms to traditional realist doctrine. Exceptions are few and are explainable in terms of domestic constraints. It is important to understand, nevertheless, that national security is not restricted to coping with external threats, but often involves considerations of domestic stability. Furthermore, one must also allow room for one other determinant of foreign policy: namely, the will of the sovereign, which almost invariably follows the rational course of action, but on rare and often crucial occasions, asserts itself in defiance of what a cautious policy choice would indicate, such as the decision by King Abdullah I to cooperate in the partition of Palestine, perhaps the decision by King Hussein to participate in the 1967 war, and his decision not to get involved in the Gulf War. Sometimes these decisions are ultimately imponderable because the long-term consequences of actions are unknown. It is significant, however, that when King Hussein was dying and had to make an irrevocable decision about who his successor was to be, he chose his son Abdullah, not least due to the fact that Abdullah had exhibited courage and determination, in place of his brother Hassan, who enjoyed considerable experience but tended to err on the side of caution. Personal courage and a willingness to challenge public opinion are qualities that Hussein felt were indispensable for a successful king

## **Relations With the Palestinians and Israel**

### **The 1948 Arab-Israeli War**

When King Abdullah's ambition to become King of Syria was thwarted (see section on History, above) his imagination was captured by Palestine. In May 1938, Abdullah had sent the Woodhead Commission of Inquiry (which was looking into the idea of partition,) a 12-point plan under which Transjordan and Palestine would become parts of a United Arab kingdom in which the Jews would enjoy autonomy and have proportional rights of representation; Jewish immigration would continue but be restricted; and the

British mandate would remain in force for another 10 years. Although this proposal was not accepted, it affords a good idea of King Abdullah's thinking. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to recommend the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs.

It has been pointed out that there were not one but two partition plans: one being the UN plan, the other the result of an understanding between the Zionists and Abdullah, under which a Jewish state would be created and the rest of Palestine annexed by Transjordan. The Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, under Hajj Amin al-Husseini, rejected the UN partition plan, and the Arab League offered its military help.

Abdullah knew that the *Haganah* (Israeli underground military organization) was quite capable of taking over the entire territory of Palestine unless the Arab Legion intervened—he did not place much trust in the other Arab states. But the Arab Legion was too small to dominate the entire country, and it had British officers and was financed by Britain. Logically, he concluded that he could not blatantly violate Britain's wishes. The best hope for the Arabs was for the Arab Legion to occupy that part of Palestine allotted to the Arabs and to avoid attacking the area set aside for the Jews because neither Britain nor the United Nations would countenance it. On the other hand, he did not wish to hand over the Arab area to Hajj Amin al-Husseini because he believed that an Arab state under the Mufti (Islamic state officials) would mean economic strangulation for Jordan and its annexation by Syria or Iraq or Saudi Arabia.<sup>[61]</sup> By contrast, Egypt wanted to prevent a union between Transjordan and the Arab portion of Palestine at all costs, and backed a government by the Mufti for that reason.

Abdullah had met or conferred with representatives of the Jewish Agency either directly and through intermediaries, including Golda Meir, the acting head of the political department in Moshe Sharett's absence, after the UN vote in 1947, whom he met again on May 10, 1948. He proposed an autonomous Jewish state as part of a kingdom over which he would rule. There was no written agreement and he never committed himself to an independent Jewish state, but his interlocutors felt that his acceptance of such a state, though unspoken, was unambiguous,<sup>[62]</sup> although doubts were to arise subsequently. There was no understanding concerning Jerusalem, which was to have been internationalized according to the UN plan.

Tewfiq Pasha Abul Huda, who had served as Abdullah's Prime Minister for much of the interwar period, was dispatched, along with Glubb Pasha, the head of the Arab Legion, to meet with British foreign secretary Ernest Bevin in London. The meeting took place on February 7, 1947 in secret without the knowledge of other members of the Jordanian delegation or the Cabinet. Abul Huda secured Bevin's approval for the entry of the Arab Legion into the area allocated for the Arabs under the Partition Plan. According to the record of the meeting, Bevin asked for clarification from Tewfiq Pasha that the Arab Legion would not enter the Jewish area. Glubb reported in his memoirs that Bevin commented concerning the entry of the Arab Legion under the stated circumstances: "It seems the obvious thing to do." Bevin cautioned Glubb that if the Jewish area were attacked, Britain would come under pressure to reconsider its subsidy to the Arab Legion and to reconsider the position of British officers seconded to the Legion.<sup>[63]</sup> The meeting represented a major turning point in British policy towards Palestine; from then on, Britain, which had declined to enforce the UN partition plan, cooperated closely with King Abdullah to engineer the expansion of his kingdom to most of the Arab area.

For David Ben Gurion (Prime Minister from 1948–53), King Abdullah's offer was not satisfactory, but it had the advantage of averting a war between the Haganah and the Arab Legion. Abdullah came under a lot of pressure from the Arab League to engage in and even lead an all out-war against the Jewish forces. He resisted demands to allow Arab forces to enter Palestine through Transjordan.

But the Arab Legion entered the zone allocated to the Arabs. Glubb followed an essentially defensive strategy in view of the small size of the forces under his command, but he was more aggressive in the case of Jerusalem, where he competed with Jewish forces for control of the old city and won. Other Arab armies, except for the Iraqis, suffered humiliating defeats. Abdullah was singled out by Arab League members, notably Egypt, as well as many Palestinians, for criticism for the loss of certain areas such as Lydda (Lod) and Ramlah, and he was accused of collaboration. Egypt tried to expel Transjordan from the Arab League and managed to pressure Abdullah into not signing a peace accord with Israel, although all combatants signed an armistice. Abdullah complained that he had only joined the Arab League to please Sir Alec Kirkbride, the British representative, and found himself having to cope with a series of ridiculous decisions by irresponsible politicians.<sup>[64]</sup>

The outcome of the intervention by the Arab Legion was that it was left in control of what came to be known as the West Bank of the Jordan. Abdullah wanted to annex the West Bank, but he sought an arrangement that would earn the consent of the Palestinian population and enjoy a significant measure of legitimacy. In September an all-Palestine government under the leadership of Hajj Amin and Ahmad Hilmi Pasha had been established in Gaza with Egyptian backing. It claimed to be the sole legitimate Arab government for Palestine. In October 5,000 delegates of Palestinian refugees met in Amman and asked for Abdullah's protection. In December Palestinian notables and political leaders from the West Bank convened the Congress of Jericho, which called for immediate union with Transjordan.

The Parliament in Amman approved this plan, and the West Bank was annexed. In March 1949 the military administration of the West Bank was terminated, and the area came under direct civil administrative control from Amman. On April 26, 1949 the country's official name became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the following May the King formed a Cabinet that included Palestinians. The Transjordanian Parliament was dissolved, and elections were set for April 1950 to elect a new Lower House of Parliament that would include 20 East Bank members and 20 members from the West Bank.

The elections were held on schedule, and King Abdullah appointed a new 20-seat upper house that included seven Palestinians. On April 24, both houses voted to unite the East and West Banks "without prejudicing the final settlement of Palestine's just cause." All residents of the West Bank and all Palestinian refugees in Jordan were given Jordanian citizenship.

King Abdullah was assassinated as he entered the Omari Mosque in the Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem for Friday prayers on July 20, 1951 with his grandson Hussein by his side. He had been branded a traitor and collaborator. The assassin belonged to the Hajj Amin al-Husseini organization, Sanctified

Struggle, but the Jordanian Cabinet was convinced that Egypt was involved in planning the assassination. Abdullah was succeeded briefly by his son, Talal, and then by his grandson Hussein. The conflict and competition between the Hashemites and Palestinian nationalists became a constant theme in Arab politics until the end of the century.

## The June 1967 War and Its Aftermath

The legacy of the quarrel between the Hashemites on the one side and Palestinian nationalists and Arab radicals on the other was to lead to the unmitigated catastrophe for the Arabs in the form of the June 5, 1967 war. The rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964 (which was essentially controlled by Egyptian President Abdel Nasser), under the leadership of Ahmad Shuqairi, opened up a vituperative verbal war over the airwaves, pitting Cairo and Damascus against Amman. The Arab Cold War was in full swing. Meanwhile, Fateh had begun commando raids against Israel, largely from Syrian territory but also from Jordan. Abdel Nasser concluded a mutual defense pact with Syria in 1966 in the hope of restraining the Ba'thist regime in Damascus.

Israel carried out a particularly cruel raid against the village of Samu' in Jordan in retaliation for Fateh's actions. The Palestinians and Arab radicals lambasted Hussein for not defending his Palestinian citizens against Israel, casting doubts on his nationalism. Jordan capitalized on the opportunity to taunt Egypt for not coming to its aid; in particular, Amman implied that Abdel Nasser was hiding behind the skirts of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) in Sinai and Gaza. On April 7 Israel shot down six Syrian MIGs over Mount Hermon. The Arabs became convinced that Israel meant to attack Syria. Hussein came under very harsh verbal attacks, and Egypt and Syria charged that the Hashemites were going to be responsible for another disaster by not forming a common front with the other Arab countries neighboring Israel.

The Voice of the Arabs in Cairo started taunting Jordanian soldiers, casting aspersions and questioning their honor. Shuqairi was in full cry. Hussein became convinced that if Jordan did not join its Arab brethren in their hour of need, the army might mutiny and go to war anyway; if not, he would be left holding the blame for another Arab defeat because Jordan remained on the sidelines. The Hashemite regime would not survive that. On May 30 he flew to Cairo and signed a bilateral defense pact with Egypt. An Egyptian general, Abdel Mun'im Riyad, was made commander of the Jordanian front. On June 5 war broke out, and the West Bank was lost.

Was King Hussein short sighted? He himself later said he was convinced the Arabs could not win. He no doubt hoped war would not break out; Abdel Nasser had decided not to instigate hostilities. Hussein may have thought that once hostilities broke out, Israel would find a pretext to occupy the West Bank regardless of what he did. Had Israel not fired the first shot, after all? Was he not bound to Egypt by a defense pact? On top of that, his honor was at stake. Ultimately, one has to agree that domestic political vulnerabilities were the driving force behind the King's decision.<sup>[65]</sup> As it was, he lost half his kingdom, but kept the other half.

Following the very humiliating Arab defeat, the PLO, Fateh, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and other *fida`iyeen* lamented the failure of regular Arab armies and decided that they had to pick up the torch. An entirely new approach, guerrilla warfare, was required, given the apparent invincibility of the Israeli army. Palestinian organizations began a series of raids into the West Bank with the intention of eventually establishing a presence in the Israeli-occupied territories. This was overly optimistic and they found themselves hard put defending themselves in their sanctuaries as Israel adopted a policy of punitive retaliation that was very costly to the host countries. On March 21, 1968 Israel decided to adopt a radical solution and wipe out a major base for Palestinian guerrilla activity in the town of Karameh in Jordan.

In what Israel dubbed “Operation Inferno,” 15,000 troops, supported by artillery, armor, and aircraft, crossed the Jordan River with the objective of eliminating the Karameh guerrilla base and its occupants. Since Israeli troops movements could not be kept secret, the guerrillas had advance warning. There were an estimated 300 to 400 *fida`iyeen* in the base, and to their credit, they chose to stand and fight, except for the PFLP, which withdrew its men in the face of the hopeless odds. Apart from the small force made up primarily of Fateh guerrillas, Israel faced the entire Jordanian First Infantry Division reinforced with armor, notably tanks, from the 60th armored brigade. The battle was joined, and the intervention of the Jordanian armed forces prevented Israel from achieving its objective. Israel actually appealed for a cease-fire in order to withdraw its forces, and Jordan refused, so they had to be withdrawn under fire.

The *fida`iyeen*, under the personal leadership of Yasser Arafat, fought bravely, but it was the intervention of the Jordanian army that prevented a total rout. Nevertheless, Fateh seized credit, and as relations with the Jordanian regime deteriorated, the Palestinian organizations assumed sole credit for the victory, which entered the annals of Palestinian political mythology.<sup>[66]</sup> The small force of guerrillas became heroes who set the standard of sacrifice (*fida*) for Palestinian nationalism. Their glory shed its glow on other guerrillas. Even the name of the base, Karameh (dignity), lent itself to the formation of myth.

There was a conscious attempt to mobilize the Palestinian masses and to give a new identity to the Palestinians in exile, notably those living in wretched refugee camps: Henceforth they could think of themselves not as hapless refugees but as freedom fighters. They would grasp their destiny in their own hands and move out from under the tutelage of Arab regimes. However, for the PFLP and particularly the PDFLP, the task could not be achieved without a transformation of the “reactionary” Arab regimes into “revolutionary” governments that would dedicate their resources to the battle for liberation. The guerrillas vastly exaggerated their achievements, engaging in actual fabrication at times to sustain their public image in the Arab world, particularly among Palestinians. The reality was that Israeli retaliation was exacting a huge toll; 100,000 farmers and villagers were driven out of the Jordan valley, and Israeli strikes had reached the outskirts of the important Jordanian towns of Irbid and Salt.

## Showdown With the PLO in 1970

The next major challenge to the authority of the crown came in the wake of the 1967 war and built up to a major confrontation between the government and the PLO in 1970. Jordan and Egypt had declared their



acceptance of Security Council resolution 242 of November 22, 1967 (which established provisions and principles that would lead to a solution of the conflict); Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and the PLO rejected it. An alliance of convenience was formed between Abdel Nasser and Hussein, both of whom were eager to regain territory lost in the war. A split arose within the Arab world as to the path to be pursued to undo the damage inflicted in 1967.

Traditional warfare had failed to resolve the deeply rooted conflict with Israel; the choice now was between diplomacy and a people's war of liberation (inspired by the successful Algerian struggle with France; those who supported this approach thought that the model would be exported to Palestine). Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya (until the overthrow of the monarchy in 1969) were concerned with the possibility that Egypt might drift closer into the arms of the Soviet Union and Jordan and farther away from the West.

At the Khartoum Arab summit in August 1967 (6 months before the Karameh battle), King Hussein and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia were reconciled with President Abdel Nasser, and Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Libya agreed to pay an annual subsidy of \$392 million to Jordan and Egypt, two-thirds of which was to go to the latter. In the December 1969 Rabat Arab summit, Abdel Nasser let it be known that Egypt would chart its own path toward the restoration of lost territory, given the unreadiness of other Arabs to fight Israel.

Palestinian guerrilla organizations established their own institutions and commanded their own militias in Jordan. They created a dual structure of authority in the country. The leftist organizations within the movement, the PFLP and the PDFLP sought out ways to challenge the authority of the Jordanian government. Hawatmeh, the leader of the PDFLP, advocated that Amman should come to play a role comparable to that of Hanoi in the Vietnam war. An incident between the commandos and the army in November 1968 was resolved on the basis of an agreement granting the *fida'iyeen* a measure of autonomy. Clashes between the *fida'iyeen* and the army became frequent and threatened to get out of hand in June 1970, but Hussein and Arafat concluded a cease-fire, which the PFLP sought to undermine. Fateh did not want to intervene in the affairs of host Arab countries, but was dragged into the quarrel.

An inter-Arab conciliation committee, headed by President Ja'far al-Numairi of Sudan, was established. On July 23, 1970, Egypt accepted the Rogers Plan, which was based on Security Council Resolution 242. Jordan and Israel followed suit. These events sounded alarm bells for the Palestinian guerrillas, and Arafat complained of a sell-out. Abdel Nasser closed down the outspoken Voice of Palestine Radio, which had been operating out of Cairo. On September 6, the PFLP carried out several hijackings, making use of a desert airfield in Jordan. Arab states voted for a Security Council resolution condemning the actions, and the PFLP was expelled from the Unified Command of the Palestinian Revolution. The group's leader, George Habash, went on an extended trip to North Korea.

Rightist groups in Jordan called for a showdown with the guerrillas. Abdel Nasser had advised Hussein against a confrontation with the Palestinian groups until after an understanding was reached with Israel on the implementation of resolution 242. The King tried to bring former Prime Minister Sulaiman Nabulsi out of retirement, but the latter refused on the grounds that he too opposed the Rogers initiative. By

September 11, 1970, even Fateh was ready for a confrontation, and called for a revolutionary nationalist government in Jordan (as explained in the section above under Politics); nevertheless, the Unified Command of the Palestinian Revolution signed a new agreement with the government on September 15 regulating the activities of the guerrillas. This was merely a bid by each to win public opinion over to its side; the Palestinians were preparing for a general strike that would be an invitation for King Hussein to step aside, a naïve expectation by the guerrillas, as they had clearly severely underestimated how far they had alienated indigenous Jordanians. A military government was formed on the 16th, and the Jordanian army began its offensive on September 17.

Iraqi had stationed forces in Jordan and had pledged to come to the aid of the PLO in the event of a showdown. However, when the Jordanian army moved against the *fida'iyeen*, Iraq simply moved its troops out of the way. Baghdad had received a message from the United States to keep out of the civil war in Jordan, according to President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr in a subsequent conversation with Fateh's Salah Khalaf.<sup>[67]</sup> In fact, President Nixon was quoted by the *Sun-Times* of Chicago on the evening of September 17 to the effect that the United States "was prepared to intervene directly in the Jordanian war should Syria and Iraq enter the conflict and tip the military balance against Government forces loyal to Hussein."<sup>[68]</sup> Syria, on the other hand, did intervene, sending two armored brigades and a mechanized infantry brigade under the command of its Ninth Infantry Division into northern Jordan on September 19 and 20 and engaged in fierce combat with the Jordanian 40th Armored Brigade. Syria also sent in battalions belonging to the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA, normally stationed in Syria), which reached Irbid by the 21st, but Syria claimed that only PLA units were involved.

King Hussein appealed to the United States for help. On the 20th, Secretary of State Rogers called on Syria to halt its "invasion" of Jordan." Still, it would be difficult to get U.S. troops into Jordan on time. Kissinger conferred with Yitzhak Rabin, then Israel's ambassador to Washington, and plans were laid for Israel to come to the King's aid. Israel threatened to use the Israeli air force against Syria. King Hussein was loath to be rescued by Israel and strongly preferred U.S. help. Eventually, the King decided to rely on his own resources and used his tiny air force against the Syrian armor. On September 20 and 21, 120 Syrian tanks were destroyed and Syria suffered 600 casualties. Hafez al-Assad, who was commander of the Syrian air force, decided not to commit his aircraft to the battle (and soon afterwards seized power in Damascus.) The Syrian threat had been dealt with successfully.

Abdel Nasser had cautioned the King against miscalculating, but the silence from Abdel Nasser had become deafening. Now he acted by sending PLA battalions stationed in Egypt to Syria in a largely symbolic gesture. Jordan accepted a cease-fire on September 25, but this was not immediately implemented. Abdel Nasser pressured Jordan to accept an Arab peacekeeping mission headed by President Numeiri of the Sudan. Kuwait and Libya suspended payment of aid to Jordan pledged at the Khartoum conference. Libya severed diplomatic relations with the kingdom. Numeiri flew to Amman but was not particularly successful in his mission, and, on returning to Cairo, accused the Jordanian government of waging "a war of extermination against the Palestinian people."<sup>[69]</sup> On September 25, President Abdel Nasser publicly complained of "the existence of a deliberate desire on the part of the Jordanian authorities not to respect the cease-fire . . . the total non-respect of all the promises made to us; the putting into effect of a plan aiming at the liquidation of the Palestinian resistance, despite all the

declarations to the contrary; the frightful carnage now under way in Jordan, in disrespect of all Arab and human principles.”<sup>[70]</sup> The King signed an agreement with Arafat in Cairo on September 27 at a mini-Arab summit arranged by Abdel Nasser. The Egyptian leader died the next day of a heart attack. .

Biding its time, the Jordanian army engaged in what has been termed a creeping offensive, and by July 1971 the last strongholds of the guerrillas had fallen. Meanwhile, the political landscape had changed. Abdel Nasser had been replaced by Anwar Sadat, and the adventuresome Salah Jadid and Nuriddin al-Atassi were replaced by the stable and cautious Assad in Syria. Relations between Jordan and Israel improved. “Jordan came to be treated as a regional partner of the United States . . . Aid and arms to these U.S. partners would serve as a substitute for a costly American military presence in the region or unpopular military intervention.”<sup>[71]</sup>

Syria, Iraq, Algeria and Libya severed relations and Syria and Iraq instituted a land and air blockade on Jordan. On March 15, King Hussein announced a plan to create a United Arab kingdom to include both the East and West Banks of the Jordan. In an interview with the Egyptian magazine *Rose al-Yusif* on August 16, 1971, Arafat expressed the opinion that King Hussein had launched the crackdown on the PLO in order to have a clear field for himself to negotiate peace terms with Israel.<sup>[72]</sup> Early in the following year, rumors of talks between King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir gave rise to fears that Israel and Jordan may settle on the 1968 Allon Plan. The DFLP, renamed the PDLFP (Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and other groups launched a sabotage campaign against Jordan from Syrian territory. In March, the Fateh Revolutionary Council established a Jordan Affairs Bureau under Salah Khalaf to organize an armed insurrection against the King; however, Jordanian intelligence was largely successful in mounting counteroperations, and by June this phase of conflict was over.

Wasfi al-Tal, the chief Jordanian hardliner who was serving as Prime Minister and apparently conspiring against the King,<sup>[73]</sup> was assassinated during a trip to Cairo in November 1971 by Black September, a secret organization that actually belonged to Fateh. In December, Black September tried to assassinate Jordan’s ambassador to London, Zaid Rifa’i. In January 1973 the Palestine National Congress abandoned its call for the overthrow of King Hussein. However, the following month Jordanian authorities captured a 17-man Black September team that had infiltrated into the country with orders to take the U.S. ambassador and Jordanian Prime Minister hostage or to attack the royal palace and the Parliament building. In March Black September tried to secure their release through an operation in Khartoum, involving an attack on the Saudi Embassy, which culminated in the deaths of two U.S. ambassadors and a Belgian diplomat.<sup>[74]</sup>

The PLO, which moved its base of operations to Lebanon, engaged in some heavy self-criticism for its failure in Jordan, notably its lack of effort at building solidarity with the East Bankers. Paradoxically, the PFLP and DFLP refused to shoulder any responsibility. In 1974, an Arab summit in Morocco recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

## **Pursuit of Peace: Enlisting the Partnership of the PLO**

The 1978 Camp David accord between Sadat and Begin alienated the rest of the Arab world, even the soft-liners blamed Egypt for acting without consulting its Arab friends, and there was a universal protest in the Arab world that without Egypt's weight on the Arab side of the scales, the imbalance of power with Israel had become insuperable. Jordan did not condemn the accord, but tried to distance itself from it while adopting a conciliatory position towards Cairo, maintaining trade relations with it (although it had followed the Arab consensus in formally breaking ties), and working slowly to form a basis for reintegrating Egypt into the Arab fold. Jordan had been promised \$1.25 billion in aid annually to help it stand fast against the temptation to follow in Egypt's footsteps. The PLO, in particular, regarded the accords as a disaster.

Israel's massive invasion of Lebanon in 1982 created problems for U.S. diplomacy. The resulting September 1982 Reagan Initiative opposed indefinite control of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel, but it also opposed the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Secretary of State George Shultz, who had replaced Alexander Haig, put together a plan involving Israeli territorial concessions (land for peace) and some form of self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan. Washington started courting Hussein to play the role of Israel's principal interlocutor. In December the King met with President Reagan and Shultz in Washington. Washington promised arms and the use of its leverage with Israel to freeze settlement activity. Hussein declared the initiative "the most courageous stand taken by an American administration ever since 1956."<sup>[75]</sup> He tried to drum up Arab support for the plan. However, the Arab reaction was the so-called Fez Plan, which, while indicating flexibility, followed the more traditional Arab line, based on a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Only Egypt and Jordan supported the Reagan Initiative, and Syria was vehemently opposed to Jordanian-PLO participation in peace talks, and openly challenged Arafat's leadership and sharply criticized Hussein.

King Hussein felt he was still constrained by the 1974 Rabat summit recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; he knew he would be exposed if he acted without the PLO. It was encouraging that Arafat was more willing now to cooperate with the U.S., since the organization had lost its base in Lebanon. Israel would not deal with the PLO, nor would the U.S. in view of promises made to Israel by Kissinger.

The PLO was invited to reopen a number of offices in Jordan, but no armed PLO presence was tolerated. The King made it clear he was not trying to displace the PLO leaders, and he proposed the formation of a joint delegation to any future peace talks and recommended a federation of the West Bank with Jordan as a feasible final settlement. Arafat understood that Hussein was an indispensable go-between with Washington, but the organization was split, with hardliners feeling definitely hostile to the King's diplomatic initiative. After all, the Black September organization (operating within the PLO) had only recently been assassinating Jordanian officials in revenge for 1970. Furthermore, there was rivalry between the PLO and Jordan in the West Bank, and each had been carefully cultivating its own base of support. Jordan cultivated its own clients and sympathizers among West Bank mayors. The Baghdad summit had set up a joint Palestinian-Jordanian committee to dispense \$150 million in aid to the West Bank and Gaza, which strengthened Jordan's position. In general, however, neither the King nor the leaders of the other organizations within the PLO commanded the loyalty of Palestinians in the occupied

territories as Arafat did. The leader of Fateh was ahead by a very wide margin when it came to public support.. On the other hand, some of the East Bank political elite did not cherish the prospect of the reintegration of the West Bank, and the King was advocating a federal union. Talks with the PLO dragged on for months, but the King broke them off in April 1983 as he despaired of forming a joint negotiating position.

Jordan restored full diplomatic relations with Egypt in September 1984. Amman found Egypt to be necessary to counterbalance Syria. As the Iran-Iraq war was bleeding Iraq dry, Jordan needed a strong ally against the anti-peace talks camp. Jordan hoped to form an alliance of “moderate” states, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Iraq. Meanwhile, the King worked to resume the dialogue with the PLO. In November 1984 Amman hosted a meeting of the Palestine National Congress, and the King urged acceptance of Security Council Resolution 242. In February 1985, the King and Arafat signed an agreement for a joint diplomatic initiative, which envisaged the formation of a joint delegation to peace talks to be based on the exchange of territory for peace. The agreement also included acceptance for confederation with Jordan. An Arab summit in Morocco in August failed to endorse the agreement, partly due to vehement opposition from Syria. In August 1985 the Reagan administration refused to meet with Palestinian members of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Furthermore, Jordan was aiming for an international peace conference, and the U.S. was opposed because it did not want to admit the Soviet Union into the game. Israel’s Labor and Likud parties both opposed the Hussein-Arafat accord. Nothing came of the agreement, and in February 1986 the King called off his dialogue with the PLO. The organization abrogated the agreement in April 1987. By that time, Washington had come to appreciate the King’s need for an international conference.

By the end of 1985, Shimon Peres, who had become Israel’s Prime Minister, began to make positive remarks about an international peace conference. This was encouraging to Hussein. The King’s calculations were that he needed either PLO or Syrian backing for a peace conference. In the mid-eighties, King Hussein had tried to improve relations with Syria because of a felt need for Arab support to initiate peace talks with Israel. In April 1985 he appointed Zeid Rifa’i, who had become identified as the architect of good relations with Syria, Prime Minister. In a letter to Rifa’I, which was published by the press on November 10, the King admitted Jordanian support for the violence perpetrated by the Muslim Brotherhood against the Syrian regime.<sup>[76]</sup> Jordan tried to mediate between Damascus and Baghdad.

The King also held secret contacts with Israeli leaders, which intensified in 1986. In April 1986 he met with Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Austria. In April 1987, the King held secret talks in London with Peres, who was Foreign Minister in the coalition Cabinet under Prime Minister Shamir. On April 11 agreement was reached concerning the rules governing an international conference, including provisions for three committees: a Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli committee; a Syrian-Israeli committee; and a Lebanese-Israeli committee.<sup>[77]</sup> The conference would be opened by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and attended by all regional actors who had accepted resolution 242. This was to facilitate the beginning of the negotiations and to lend legitimacy to them. The plenary sessions, however, could not veto the results of bilateral negotiations.

The King also sent an emissary to Secretary of State Shultz to inform him that Syria was prepared to

attend an international peace conference. However, Shamir rejected the agreement Peres had concluded. Later Shamir met with Hussein, and he informed Shultz that the meeting had allegedly gone well. Shultz consulted extensively with the Israelis and presented the outcome to the King, who rejected them, partly because he was about to host an Arab summit. The November 1987 Arab summit in Amman provided an opportunity to achieve reconciliation at the level of heads of state. However, the focus of the summit was the Iran-Iraq war land, not the Palestinian issue. Progress towards peace had to await the convening of the Geneva conference following the Gulf War. Shamir had torpedoed the Hussein-Peres accord, although it contained the germ of ideas that flowered later in the Madrid conference.

Much later, with the Oslo agreement in tatters following a year of Palestinian *intifada*, Shimon Peres was to appear before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on December 17, 2001. In the midst of recriminations, MK Moshe Arens, a Likud stalwart, took Peres to task because the latter had “brought Arafat and his cronies from Tunisia and imposed them on the local population. You [Peres] have to admit your mistake. All of Oslo was one big mistake.” To which Peres replied: “You and Shamir did the worst thing, canceling the London agreement with Hussein in 1987. We could have had an agreement with Hussein, but you in your zealotry and blindness did not allow it.”<sup>[78]</sup>

## Jordan-Israel Peace Agreement

Jordan had pursued peace talks with Israel for many years. Peace with Israel was thought to serve the strategic interests of the country, and King Hussein, who had long lamented the loss of the West Bank in 1967, had entertained ideas of undoing that catastrophe through negotiations. Although that ended when Jordan relinquished responsibility for the West Bank in 1988, King Hussein continued to feel compelled to do what he could to secure the return of the holy city of Jerusalem and the territory of the West Bank to Arab hands. When the Madrid Conference convened on October 30, 1991, a joint Jordanian–Palestinian delegation was in attendance alongside the Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli delegations. In Israel, the Labor Party led by Yitzhak Rabin won a stunning victory at the polls on June 23, 1992. Shamir, who opposed territorial concessions, was gone.

Progress was rather swift and not too difficult on the Jordanian-Israeli bilateral track at the negotiations, although there was stalemate with the Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese. Meanwhile, the PLO was conducting separate negotiations between January and August 1993 at Oslo, which led to the exchange of letters between Rabin and Arafat, the Declaration of Principles, and the Cairo agreement and Oslo II.

These developments presented both an opportunity and a challenge to Jordan. It was a challenge because Jordan had been left out in the cold; it was no longer needed as an intermediary, since the Palestinians and Israelis were dealing directly with each other. An important advantage had been lost, and possibly, along with it, Israel’s “Jordan Option.”<sup>[79]</sup> The opportunity was that Jordan was now free to proceed with a peace deal of its own, which it could not have done before. The PLO’s actions, unlike Sadat’s, legitimized Jordan’s conclusion of a separate peace agreement, even if the Oslo process did not yet fully work its course—recognition of Israel by the PLO was sufficient.

Jordan's actions can be seen as the rational pursuit of national interests, or the attempt to maximize advantage. The opportunity had presented itself, dramatically lowering the cost of an agreement. Economically, Jordan was strapped. The outcome of the Gulf war was disastrous for Jordan, and on top of that, the deficit in the government budget in 1991 was JD95 million, and the national debt had climbed to over \$8 billion. Riots broke out in the south in April 1989 in response to the IMF-inspired austerity measures. The liberalization measures and the return to constitutional government through the process of "defensive democratization" (as explained above in the section on Politics), kept the political coalition that backed the government in place and allowed the King to legitimate the peace treaty, sweetened by the promise of economic benefits to follow peace and the normalization of relations. Palestinian and Islamic opposition was contained.

Hussein and Rabin had met in London on May 19, 1994. On June 7, Jordanian and Israeli delegates signed three detailed "common-sub-agendas" in Washington. On July 6, King Hussein flew to Cairo to solicit President Mubarak's support. On July 18-19, Jordanian and Israeli negotiators met on the border between them and agreed on a number of economic projects. President Clinton was happy to sponsor the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel. The "Washington Declaration" was signed at the White House by the King and Rabin on July 25, 1994. King Hussein characterized this event as "the crowning achievement of all my years." Prime Minister Abdel Salam al-Majali initialed the first draft of the treaty on October 17 and he signed the peace treaty on October 26. The treaty was debated by both chambers of the National Assembly during November 5-8. Despite the displeasure of the Islamic Action Front, the leftists, and Arab nationalists, it was passed and was ratified by King Hussein on November 10, 1994.

## **Relations With Arab States**

### **Reign of King Hussein**

The incorporation of the West Bank and its Palestinian population into Jordan altered the nature and dynamics of domestic politics for the long run and of foreign policy for the next 14 years. Dissent from the new Parliament had caused Abdullah to dissolve the lower house in May 1951. But the new Parliament was assertive and eager for constitutional change. Some of the leading Jordanian politicians who had overseen the transition from Abdullah to Hussein, surviving Talal's brief but unstable reign, also appreciated the value of constitutional government. The constitution of 1952 marked the end of the patrimonial monarchy in the style of Abdullah and ushered in an era of (limited) parliamentary democracy and institutional government unparalleled in the history of the kingdom. It only lasted 5 years (although formal parliamentary life did not end in 1957), but it laid down the principles of popular participation in and contestation of governmental policies, principles which were then substantially shelved for 31 years between 1957 and 1989. Young King Hussein who was declared King in August 11, 1952 but ascended to the throne in May 1953 on reaching the age of 18 (by the Islamic calendar), learned a valuable lesson concerning the need to placate popular sentiment and the cost of opposing it.

The other important development lay outside the borders of Jordan: The July 1952 Free Officers coup in Egypt, which led to the rise of the Nasserist brand of Arab nationalism, and the growing assertiveness of

the Ba' thist brand of pan-Arabism in Syria. These were forces favoring Arab unity (which implied the merger of Jordan with Syria) and independence from former colonial ties (which threatened Jordan's relationship with Britain). After the Free Officers came to power in Egypt, conflictual relations with Jordan continued as balance-of-power politics continued, but dynastic rivalries gave way to ideological conflict. Abdel Nasser assumed the mantle of leadership of the Arab world. His ultimate goals were Arab unity and independence. He also dedicated himself to championing the Palestinian cause.

## **Beginning of the Arab Cold War 1952–58**

### **Baghdad Pact and Parting With Glubb**

The interplay of the above-mentioned forces set the stage for three important challenges to Hussein's rule and the stability of his regime during 1956-58. The first revolved around the issue of Arab independence from the former colonial powers. This concerned a move initiated in 1954 by Turkey and Pakistan, who entered into a treaty to form the nucleus of a defensive Northern Tier alliance against the Soviet Union that would form a bridge between NATO and SEATO. A Turkish-Iraqi alliance followed on February 24, 1955, which Britain joined on April 4. Scarcely 11 days later, President Abdel Nasser of Egypt attended a conference in Bandung with India's Nehru, China's Zhou Enlai, and Yugoslavia's Tito, which witnessed the birth of the nonalignment movement. Egypt sought liberation from its entanglement with Britain, and the door to friendship with the Socialist bloc was opened with Abdel Nasser's "Czech" arms deal in September 1955. Thus, two opposed trends vied for the allegiance of Arab states of the Middle East. Egypt signed mutual defense pacts with Syria (October 20, 1955) and Saudi Arabia (October 27, 1955), forming pincers around Jordan. Saudi Arabia's actions appear to be an anomaly, but are to be understood not in terms of global politics but through the lens of local rivalry between the house of Saud and the Hashemite dynasties in Iraq and Jordan. In fact, regional politics were at least as significant as the issue of Arab independence, seeing as Middle Eastern politics often revolved around the traditional rivalry between Egypt and Iraq. Personal competition between Abdel Nasser and Iraq's Nuri as-Sa'id also complicated the equation.

On January 12, 1955, Iraq and Turkey announced that they were about to conclude a military alliance and were inviting other countries to join what was to become known as the Baghdad Pact. Britain dispatched Sir Gerald Templer, chief of the imperial general staff, to Amman; Abdel Nasser countered by sending Egypt's chief of staff Abdel Hakim 'Amer and Colonel Anwar Sadat in December. The Egyptians were more persuasive and popular with the press. Nevertheless, the King formed a new Cabinet under Hazza' al-Majali, whose policy was to negotiate Jordan's accession to the Baghdad Pact. On December 16 rioting broke out against the new government's policy and escalated the following day, even extending to traditional bastions of support for the King. Majali resigned and the King dissolved Parliament, but that decision was reversed on January 5. Further riots followed, spurred on by the "Voice of the Arabs" radio broadcasts from Cairo (and it was charged, financed by Saudi Arabia), and martial law was declared and the army brought in to quell the riots, which grew quite violent, and were unprecedented in Jordanian history. On January 8, 1956 Samir al-Rifa'i, who had replaced Abul Huda as Jordan's perennial Prime Minister, formed a new cabinet and declared Jordan would not be joining the Baghdad Pact. On March 1, King Hussein dismissed Glubb Pasha, which put at risk the 12 million pound Sterling British subsidy, but



was greeted with unprecedented popular enthusiasm and received the blessings of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

This last move ended Jordan's status as a British dependency, marking its "emancipation from British tutelage."<sup>[80]</sup> This was also the beginning of Jordan's transition, shortly thereafter, to the status of an ally of the United States. Among other things, it led to the "Arabization" of the Arab Legion, which was renamed the Jordanian army, through the replacement of its British officers.

## Arab Radicals and the Turmoil of 1956–58

On 27 October 1956 Sulaiman Nabulsi was charged with forming a Cabinet. There was an irreconcilable conflict between the goals of Nabulsi and those of the King. The new Prime Minister was quoted by the *New York Times* as saying: "Jordan cannot live forever as Jordan."<sup>[81]</sup> Nabulsi wanted to dissolve the kingdom, which he, along with the Arab nationalists, regarded as an artificial entity, within a greater Arab union, most immediately with Syria. Hussein was attached to the independence and continued separate existence of Jordan.

A major task awaiting the new government was the renegotiation of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty. The problem that presented itself was the need for a foreign subsidy. One view on this, advocated by Samir al-Rifa'i, was to maintain some form of link with Britain that would allow for the continuation of the 12 million pounds sterling subsidy, perhaps for the lease of military bases. Nabulsi favored replacing the sum with an Arab subsidy, as this would encourage independence from the former colonial powers, which, not incidentally, were supporting Israel, and it would foster inter-Arab cooperation.<sup>[82]</sup> On January 19, 1957, an Arab Solidarity Agreement was signed under which Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria pledged to pay Jordan an annual subsidy of 12.5 million Egyptian pounds, roughly equal to the support Jordan had been receiving from Britain. The two Houses of Parliament approved the accord.

The previous day, a State Department release stated that Jordan had made informal contacts to inquire if Washington would increase its subsidy to the kingdom from \$8 million to an annual \$30 million, which would have been equal to the promised Arab subsidy. On January 5 the Eisenhower administration, which was worried about Soviet penetration of the Middle East, had announced a plan of military and economic support for Middle Eastern states whose independence was threatened by international communism and who had appealed to Washington for help. Congress passed the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine on March 7.

The significance of what the government was attempting can be gleaned from a cabinet resolution read by Rimawi on February 26, 1957 defining Jordan's position at an upcoming conference. The resolution rejected the Eisenhower Doctrine and upheld the principle of positive neutrality. The prelude to the government's audacious statement made the claim that the government, under the authority given it by Parliament, was empowered to formulate foreign policy, implying that the Cabinet could disregard the Crown's wishes.

On March 24 Nabulsi announced that Jordan wanted to extend diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China, and on April 3 he said he wanted full diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. A tug of war between the King and the Prime Minister characterized those fateful days. When the Cabinet retired the director of security and replaced him with their own man, Hussein acted, forcing Nabulsi to resign on April 10. By maintaining contacts with Cairo and Damascus, Hussein succeeded in keeping Abdel Nasser and Quwatly on the sidelines, and he even made a convert of King Saud, who was impressed by the King's anticommunist attitude.

The constitutional experiment was not yet over, and the next 3 weeks were a period of severe crisis. The King had to quash an army coup in the offing in order to save his throne (see section on politics for details.)

The King had been publicly blaming his troubles on the communists for the benefit of Washington and Saudi Arabia. According to Richard B. Parker, who served in the U.S. Embassy in Amman in the mid-fifties " . . . Hussein turned to the Americans. In a message passed through the second ranking CIA man in Amman, he said that he was prepared to impose martial law, suspend the constitution, and speak out forcefully against the Syrians and the Egyptians; he wanted to know if he could count on the United States if either Israel or the Soviet Union intervened. Dulles proposed to respond affirmatively . . ." [83] The United States also responded forcefully. Within 3 hours, the White House press secretary declared that President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles regarded "the independence and integrity of Jordan as vital." [84] The Sixth Fleet was already on its way to the eastern Mediterranean as a signal to the Soviets regarding both Lebanon and Jordan, and Dulles had informed Israeli ambassador Abba Eban of Washington's concerns. The next day, April 25, martial law was declared. The King had exerted his authority and finally put an end to the constitutional experiment. The U.S. had stepped into Britain's shoes, and Jordan had gained an ally in Saudi Arabia. Shortly thereafter, the dependable and astute Samir al-Rifa'i resumed the post of Prime Minister. Hussein emerged as the sole master of Jordan and stayed in that position until his death 32 years later.

## Union With Iraq and Its Breakup

On February 1, 1958, the merger of Syria and Egypt into the United Arab Republic was declared. Jordan joined with Iraq in a federal union on February 14, largely as a defensive measure. On July 14, a revolution led by General Abdel Karim Qassem overthrew the monarchy in Baghdad and wiped out the Iraqi branch of the Hashemites. The federation ceased to exist overnight. This was perceived in Washington and London as a major crisis, as the small states of Jordan and Lebanon appeared to be on the verge of being overwhelmed by pro-Moscow radical Arab nationalists and leftists. President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon, who had a local rebellion on his hands by the country's most senior Muslim leaders (whose electoral defeat he had cleverly engineered), appealed to the United States for help under the Eisenhower Doctrine. The United States responded by landing 14,000 troops in Lebanon, with the Sixth Fleet and its 70 ships standing by. British paratroopers landed in Jordan on July 17. Diplomacy was successful in defusing the crisis, and the U.S. discovered that Abdel Nasser was willing to cooperate. Washington ceased to perceive Egypt as an appendage to the U.S.S.R., and relations with Cairo actually

improved for several years.<sup>[85]</sup>

In September 1960, Jordanian Prime Minister Hazza' al-Majali was assassinated by plotters, who then sought refuge in Syria. The Arab Cold War was back on.

## **Pursuit of Economic Development and Strategic Rents, 1975–90 Alliances with Syria and Iraq**

From the mid-seventies to the early eighties, King Hussein concerned himself with alliance formation, improving relations with Jordan's neighbors and with economic development. As Crown Prince Hassan was fond of putting it, Jordan's policy could be summed up as "doing good things in bad times." Alliance formation was designed to secure economic cooperation; find markets for Jordan's products; or solicit economic grants from oil-producing countries. This was a period of low security threats, both internally and externally; under those circumstances the main aim of foreign policy became to secure budgetary support.

Brand argues that "foreign policy, in general, and alliance formation, in particular, may well constitute an integral part of the state-building or regime-consolidation process. In this way, national security at its most basic may, in fact, be budgetary security . . . Thus alignments and alliance decisions may be made, not to balance power or external threats as the realists and neorealists have long argued, but rather to help balance the budget . . . Thus, state or regime behavior may be described most accurately as budget stabilizing, stability promoting, or regime ensuring."<sup>[86]</sup>

This is a valuable insight, one with which most Jordanian analysts and even government officials would have readily agreed, with the proviso that it is not generalizable; in other words, in Jordan's case, national security and economic security go hand in hand; however, in the long run it may not be possible to satisfy both, in which case national security trumps economic security, or a way is found to satisfy both at the same time. Better put, national security issues determine where to look for economic and budgetary security, as we have seen in the several crises the country has gone through. If the same source (such as the U.S.) can satisfy both needs, all the better.

It is misleading to isolate a period in which national security concerns are not dominant and argue, for the sake of originality, that budgetary security is all important, as Brand does: "The Arab-Israeli conflict and the kingdom's large Palestinian community have certainly played a major role in shaping Jordan's history. But . . . other, more basic, factors have played a driving or *determining* role in the King's foreign policy decisions: without access to sufficient budgetary resources, *all else becomes a secondary consideration*."<sup>[87]</sup> This line of argument, while original, is misleading and in fact fallacious in the long run. Imagine King Hussein adopting this approach during the clash with the PLO in 1970 or the conflict with radical nationalists in the late 1950s. In both cases King Hussein chose courses of action dictated by national security (of the domestic variety, emphasizing regime survival) irrespective of whether they alienated (Arab) budgetary supporters.

It so happens that in both cases the King managed to locate a more satisfactory source of budgetary support (the United States) that was consistent with national security. There are no examples of Jordan preferring budgetary security to national security. On the other hand, during the Gulf War, Jordan prioritized national security (domestic stability) over budgetary security (aid from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the United States). Whereas one cannot pay the army or purchase the loyalty of Bedouin tribes with empty coffers, the state can borrow money to get through hard times, which could last for a few years (as in 1989-94), but the Jordanian state could disappear overnight if the regime neglects security considerations. The art of statecraft in Jordan is how to balance the dictates of security and economics, while prioritizing the first.

This is not to belittle the relevance of Brand's thesis for the time period in question, which suggests that one should not try to interpret Jordan's alliances in terms of local balance of power politics, but rather in terms of the need for lucrative economic exchange and budgetary support. Regional balancing in the interest of national security, although attempted on occasion (as in the 1958 federation with Iraq), was not particularly fruitful during the Cold War, as the superpowers could trump any combination of regional partners, and besides, tended to intervene to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between their clients. Furthermore, Israel's military power is such that inter-Arab alliances are not particularly effective if Israel enters the game, since that becomes the decisive factor from the military perspective. The optimal solution for Jordan was to maintain good relations with the United States, as that tended to diminish the Israeli threat, as we saw in 1970, for example. It also tended to encourage the cultivation of peaceful relations with Israel.

That is not to say Jordan was not free to seek regional alliances for economic or budgetary reasons; it certainly did that. Good examples are to be found in the rapprochement with Syria (1974-77) and with Iraq (1979-). But apart from budgetary considerations and national security, regional alliances were very useful to muster support for Jordan's political initiatives and provided important sources of legitimacy and political support, specially when Jordan faced formidable opposition from other Arab states or the PLO. This was part of the art of statecraft that Hussein had learnt from his mentor, King Abdullah. Whether Syria opposed, supported, or remained neutral to peace initiatives that Jordan considered vital sometimes made the difference between the failure and success of the King's enterprises, as did Abdel Nasser's public criticism or his silence during crucial periods during the Nabulsi episode and the showdown with the PLO in 1970, as mentioned previously. But this is political rather than military balancing.

But to return to the topic of economic advantage, diplomatic relations with Syria, broken over the showdown with the PLO in 1970, were resumed on October 4, 1973. Jordanian Prime Minister Zeid Rifa'i initiated contacts with President Assad in March 1975. Some joint cooperation committees were established, and a follow-up visit by King Hussein in April led to a more substantive accord on trade. Assad flew to Amman in August and a Higher Joint Committee headed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries was created. This helped convince Saudi Arabia to convene a meeting of donors in the Gulf to resolve the issue of unpaid aid pledges to Jordan at the 1974 Rabat summit. Jordanian and Syrian officials were meeting regularly, and by the beginning of 1977 there were press reports that a federation between the two countries was contemplated. This never came to pass, possibly due to Saudi opposition.

Nevertheless, the benefits of improved relations with Syria consisted of more sustained Gulf aid and economic exchange with Syria.

An example of Jordanian-Syrian joint ventures was an industrial holding company to fund joint manufacturing projects, which was to have a capital of \$60 million, to be augmented by loans worth \$120-\$180 from abroad.<sup>[88]</sup> A free-zone company was established, and cooperation was advancing in many fields, including the coordination of academic curricula.

However, relations between Syria and Jordan cooled while those between Jordan and Iraq improved. Iraq was capable of offering Jordan significantly greater economic advantage, grants, cheap oil, and markets for Jordanian goods. The Syrian regime began experiencing problems with Muslim fundamentalists, and relations between Damascus and Baghdad deteriorated sharply. Damascus first accused Amman of not doing enough to prevent saboteurs from entering Syria from Jordan, and by May 1980 Damascus was accusing Amman of supporting groups responsible for anti-regime violence in Syria. When Jordan found it could not maintain good relations with both, it chose Iraq because that relationship was more lucrative.<sup>[89]</sup>

Iraq was instrumental in securing other Arab aid for Jordan. The November 1978 Baghdad summit set up \$9 billion in aid for Egypt (\$5 billion), Syria (\$1.8 billion), Jordan (\$1.2 billion), the PLO (\$150 million), and the West Bank economy (\$150 million). Saudi Arabia pledged to pay \$1 billion a year. Saddam Hussein promised to make up for any shortfall in payments to Jordan, and itself pledged \$520 million for 10 years.

As war with Iran became more likely, Iraq wanted to establish a secure source of supplies through Aqaba on the Red Sea. In 1979, Iraq paid JD15 million for a road linking Aqaba with Azraq, a link on the road to Baghdad; ID3 million for the development of Aqaba Port; and another ID4 million for expanding the free zone there. Baghdad put up \$25 million to establish a joint land transport company. As the war progressed, Iraqi dependence on Aqaba increased. Jordanian firms were granted multimillion construction contracts in Iraq, and Baghdad informed the Jordanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry that it would buy virtually anything Jordan could export to it.<sup>[90]</sup>

At the beginning, Jordan received a substantial aid from Baghdad. But, as the war depleted Iraq's resources, the benefits declined. After the Gulf war, the Jordanian government found itself subsidizing Jordanian exports and services to Iraq. The main advantage that Baghdad continued to offer was to supply most of Jordan's petroleum needs at well below market prices. Despite the economic boycott of Iraq, the Security Council made special provisions allowing this trade to continue.

## **Eclipse of Jordan's Pan-Arab Role in 1988**

During the mid- to late eighties, Jordan's foreign policy had several goals: to enlist Palestinian support for a peace agreement, to shore up Arab support for Iraq in its war against Iran; and to restore good relations with Syria. At the 1987 Arab summit in Amman, King Hussein was able to push through a resolution of

support for Iraq against Iran, gaining the readmission of Egypt to the Arab fold while neutralizing opposition from Syria. The fact that the summit was held in the Jordanian capital and the success of Jordanian diplomacy was a triumph for King Hussein, which highlighted the central role Jordan was playing in Arab politics. It also altered traditional priorities by downgrading the importance of the Palestinian problem and promoting the conflict between Iraq and Iran to the top rank. This suited Jordan very well in view of the need to compensate for the decline in the strategic rents in the form of Arab aid it derived from supporting Iraq (which had declined with the drop in oil prices and needed to be reinvigorated) and trade with Iraq (which Iraq was having trouble paying for—a condition which may have been ameliorated through increased Arab aid to Iraq.) However, the winding down of the Iran-Iraq war upset these calculations.

Almost simultaneously, the first Palestinian *intifada* in the West Bank and Gaza Strip against Israeli occupation broke out at the end of 1987 and came to occupy center stage by 1988. In 1986 the King had broken off efforts to enlist PLO support for a peace conference leading to a federation of the regained Palestinian territory with Jordan. In 1987 Shamir had torpedoed the King's deal with Peres that could have led to a peace agreement. U.S. Secretary of State Shultz's initiative on March 1988, which allowed a central role for Jordan, had failed. An Arab League summit in Algiers in June 1988 restored the Palestinian issue to its former status as the foremost Arab cause, and the PLO circulated a document that affirmed its position as the legitimate interlocutor for the Palestinians in peace talks with Israel, a position that was endorsed by the summit. In a speech on July 31, King Hussein severed virtually all legal and administrative ties with the West Bank. Referring to the 1974 Rabat summit that had recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, the 1982 Fez summit that had endorsed the creation of an independent Palestinian state, and the 1950 text of the resolution that had united the West Bank with Jordan "without prejudice to the final settlement of the just cause of the Palestinian people," he declared that "Within this context we respect the wish of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to secede from us in an independent Palestinian state." The King added: "Since there is a general conviction that the struggle to liberate the occupied Palestinian land could be enhanced by dismantling the legal and administrative lines between the two banks, we have to fulfill our duty and do what is required of us."<sup>[91]</sup> This did not, however, affect Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin who remained an integral part of the state, the King added.

A good assessment of the significance of this act is provided by Satloff: "Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank brought to a close an era of fast-paced, high-profile political and diplomatic activity in the international arena. The end of the Iran-Iraq War and the onset of the *intifada* together deprived the kingdom of the environmental conditions that had allowed it to assume such an extroverted identity in the mid-1980s. Instead, the kingdom turned inwards, and a series of domestic problems that had been percolating beneath the surface inside the East Bank came to brew with the divorce from the West Bank. The economy topped the list."<sup>[92]</sup> (See section on Politics, above)

## Arab Cooperation Council: An Experiment in Integration

In addition to Iraq's military difficulties, the producer oil crisis in 1985-86 led to a shortfall in Arab aid to

Jordan. At the Baghdad summit, seven countries: Algeria, Libya, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates had pledged \$1.25 billion in annual aid to Jordan over a 10-year period. Algeria and Libya never paid, and by 1984 the contributions of Qatar and the UAE had become ad hoc. A year later Kuwait suspended its payments. Iraq had its own problems. Only Saudi Arabia met its obligations at the rate of about \$360 million a year. Total aid to Jordan in 1980 was \$1.3 billion, of which \$750 million was Arab money. Arab aid declined to \$670 million in 1983; \$320 million in 1984. By 1988, Jordan was receiving \$474 million in financial aid and another \$260 million in soft loans and development aid, for a total of \$734 million from all sources.

As aid to Jordan dried up with the decline in oil revenues in the mid- to late eighties, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and North Yemen convened in February 1989 to form the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), the main objective of which was to capitalize on gains from economic integration. Although this assemblage later constituted of joint defense pact, and issues such as “strategic depth” were considerations behind the formation of the alliance, these were secondary to economic considerations, particularly from Jordan’s perspective. Its purpose was to open up markets for Jordanian exports of goods and services and labor (notably to Iraq), such as pharmaceuticals, agricultural products, cement, and fertilizers, and to create opportunities abroad for Jordan’s construction firms in order to alleviate the country’s economic difficulties and consolidate the base of support for the regime. Although technically the ACC preceded the riots in southern Jordan that served as a stimulus for political liberalization (see section on Politics), it served the same policy objectives and can be seen as an attempt at preempting unrest. Economic cooperation involved establishing joint projects in manufacturing and agricultural production. Integration meant not only “cooperation in industry, agriculture, transportation, communications, and labor flow,” but also “greater coordination in social affairs, including education, health and cultural exchange.”<sup>[93]</sup> One dividend Jordan derived from the formation of the ACC was the resumption of aid from the Gulf countries as they grew concerned over the possible significance of the new alliance. The ACC was also envisaged as a nucleus for greater pan-Arab cooperation. Jordan did not seek to use the alliance against other Arab countries, in fact, it went to pains to reassure Syria that the alliance was not directed against it. That was not necessarily true of Iraq’s attitude. Egypt found that the ACC was instrumental in readmitting Iraq into the Arab fold at the 1989 summit in Amman. Unfortunately, Egypt and Iraq were somewhat distracted by the rivalry between them, which broke into open conflict with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and the outbreak of the Gulf war. The ACC collapsed under the weight of that war.

The lessons to be drawn from the ACC venture tend to reinforce Brand’s emphasis on the role of economics as a determinant of foreign policy. Ryan, however, offers a more balanced view of the interplay of the various state motives: the “examination of the rise and fall of the ACC suggests the need to move beyond standard military-security explanations of inter-state alliance dynamics, in order to incorporate a more complex model that takes into account domestic politics and political economy as key elements influencing policy makers. Jordan’s experience with the ACC underscores the importance of focusing on the changing dynamics of its domestic politics, as well as on the economic underpinnings of its regime stability.”<sup>[94]</sup> Incidentally, Ryan’s view, and to a certain extent Brand’s perspective too, are a reflection of the Jordanian insiders’ view; they are based to a large extent on the views of Jordanian functionaries derived from interviews with foreign ministry officials and former Cabinet Ministers and Prime Ministers.

Ryan goes on to remark that the demise of the ACC represents “the triumph of the Westphalian state system,”<sup>[95]</sup> meaning that the motive of individual state sovereignty tends to trump integrationist schemes and pan-Arab unity.

## **Relations With the United States**

### **Response to Arab Radicalism: The Beginning of the Relationship**

Relations between Jordan and the United States have proven to be enduring. They are based on the fact that Jordan has always been a pro-Western state, and, from Washington’s perspective, a force for moderation that is strategically located in relation to Israel. The West Bank, which is integral to any solution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, was part of Jordan from 1949 to 1988. Up until 1993, particularly as neither Israel nor the United States were willing to talk to the PLO, Jordan was the principal available interlocutor. Any resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute had to involve Jordan. In addition, Jordan exercised control over the activities of the PLO on its soil, which led to the bloody showdown in 1970. Even after signing its own peace treaty with Israel, Jordan has remained involved in the dispute as one of the only two Arab states able to mediate with Israel.

During the Cold War, Jordan was clearly in the Western camp. It bolstered the security of the oil-producing states and even lent its armed forces and the expertise of retired army officers to the maintenance of security in the Gulf and the suppression of a rebellion in Oman. That particular advantage that Jordan offered more or less ended with the Gulf War, although military cooperation with the United States has resumed since, and cooperation in intelligence matters between Washington and Amman appears to be strong. Despite occasional attempts by the United States to adopt a more positive relationship with Arab nationalism, at which times an alliance with Jordan may have seemed a liability to the development of better relations with Abdel Nasser’s Egypt, such reconciliation efforts with Cairo never got very far, and in the final analysis Egypt, Syria, and Iraq (after 1958) appeared to be far closer to Moscow than to Washington. Radical Arab nationalism was perceived as a threat to the conservative regimes in the Arabian Peninsula, and Jordan was instrumental in blunting the menace of that radicalism to Washington’s interests.

For Jordan’s part, the United States was a powerful patron, and an alliance with Washington was vital for Jordan’s national security needs on many occasions. Washington also provided much needed budgetary and military aid to Jordan, although financial aid from the U.S. paled in comparison with the support provided by Arab states in the Gulf during the seventies and eighties. Still, Jordan’s working relationship with Washington and its overall policy orientation was instrumental in securing aid from oil-producing states during that period. In general, the United States could offer a combination of military and financial support to Jordan that was unmatched.

The relationship between the United States and Jordan was first formed when King Hussein was casting about for a substitute for Britain. The Nabulsi government, in accordance with its ideological convictions,



sought to forge an agreement with Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia to compensate for the British subsidy (see section on the constitutional experiment under Politics and the section on Arab radicalism under Foreign Policy above.) Jordan was already receiving modest sums from the United States

On January 19, 1957 the agreement was signed. The day before Parliament endorsed the agreement, a State Department release said that Jordan had made informal contacts to inquire if Washington would increase its subsidy to the kingdom from \$8 million to an annual \$30 million, which would have been equal to the promised Arab subsidy. On January 5 the Eisenhower administration, which was worried about Soviet penetration of the Middle East, had announced a plan of military and economic support for Middle Eastern states whose independence was threatened by International Communism and who appealed to Washington for help. Congress passed the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine on March 7.

As the struggle with the Nabulsi cabinet progressed, the King had been publicly blaming his troubles on the communists for the benefit of Washington and Saudi Arabia. According to Richard B. Parker, who served in the U.S. embassy in Amman in the mid-fifties “ . . . Hussein turned to the Americans. In a message passed through the second-ranking CIA man in Amman, he said that he was prepared to impose martial law, suspend the constitution, and speak out forcefully against the Syrians and the Egyptians; he wanted to know if he could count on the United States if either Israel or the Soviet Union intervened. Dulles proposed to respond affirmatively . . .”<sup>[96]</sup> The United States also responded forcefully. Within 3 hours, the White House press secretary declared that President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles regarded “the independence and integrity of Jordan as vital.”<sup>[97]</sup> The Sixth Fleet was already on its way to the eastern Mediterranean as a signal to the Soviets regarding both Lebanon and Jordan, and Dulles had informed Israeli ambassador Abba Eban of Washington’s concerns. The next day, April 25, martial law was declared. The King had exerted his authority and finally put an end to the constitutional experiment.

On April 29 the U.S. made a much publicized \$10 million payment to Jordan (from funds under the control of the International Cooperation Administration, in other words, not from funds connected to the Eisenhower Doctrine). In June, the United States granted another \$10 million for the army and a further \$10 million in budgetary support<sup>[98]</sup> Saudi Arabia also paid its first installment of promised aid. Ironically, it was learned many years later that the CIA secretly began payment of millions of dollars to the King in early 1957.

Cooperation with the United States continued for the better part of those years. U.S. budgetary support increased to \$40 million in 1958; remained constant through 1963; and was gradually phased out by 1967. It resumed in 1971 and continued through 1990; was terminated during the Gulf War; and resumed a second time in 1994 after Jordan’s peace agreement with Israel. Jordan became one of only five countries to receive direct U.S. military assistance.

Courage and decisiveness were traits that Hussein demonstrated time and again alongside the pragmatism he had learned from his grandfather. This pragmatism dictated a close relationship with the United States, because Jordan needed protection (from Israel and other Arab states), and it needed aid. King Hussein’s style and personality were a factor in his relationship with the United States: “However we evaluate it,

there is one aspect of the policy process that stands out clearly: the importance of the personality factor on both sides. Eisenhower's avuncular response to Hussein's courage assured favorable replies to the King's request for help . . . There is a quality about Hussein that strikes a responsive chord in Washington . . . and that is about all he has had in the way of assets in the power game."<sup>[99]</sup>

One question that arises in relation to Jordan and the United States is: How can this square the fact that Washington had decided at the time that U.S. interests would best be served by cultivating the friendship and cooperation of Abdel Nasser and Arab nationalist forces and that Jordan was expendable? Specifically, National Security Council (NSC) directive 5280/1 of November 4, 1958 states:

"A. Recognizing that the indefinite continuance of Jordan's present political status has been rendered unrealistic by recent developments and that attempts on our part to support its continuance may also represent an obstacle to our establishing a working relationship with Arab nationalism . . .

D. Encourage such peaceful political adjustments by Jordan, including partition, absorption or internal political realignment , as appears desirable to the people of Jordan and as will permit improved relations with Jordan's Arab neighbors . . ."<sup>[100]</sup>

Parker offers a satisfactory answer to the Jekyll-and-Hyde aspect of this relationship: "I and former diplomats I contacted, who were intimately connected with U.S.-Jordanian relations at the time, recall that there was never any question of the unswerving support of the United States to King Hussein and the viability of Jordan. They commented that there were people who talked about the policy advocated in NSC 5820/1, but it was never seriously promoted as policy, even though Eisenhower signed off on it. This may say something about the relevance of NSC discussion to the policy followed on the ground."<sup>[101]</sup>

## The 1970 Crisis

As the showdown with the Palestinian guerrilla organizations operating in Jordan loomed, King Hussein again turned to the United States for help. (See section on the Civil War of 1970-71 under Politics and the section on the Showdown with the PLO in 1970 under Relations with the Palestinians and Israel under Foreign Affairs.)

First, Jordan needed help to neutralize Iraq. Later, when 200 Syrian tanks invaded the kingdom, Hussein issued a call for help to Washington. Iraq had stationed forces in Jordan and had pledged to come to the aid of the PLO in the event of a showdown. However, when the Jordanian army moved against the *fida'iyeen*, Iraq simply moved its troops out of the way. Baghdad had received a message from the United States to keep out of the civil war in Jordan, according to Iraqi President Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr in a conversation with Fateh's Salah Khalaf.<sup>[102]</sup> In fact, President Nixon was quoted by the *Sun-Times* of Chicago on the evening of September 17 to the effect that the United States "was prepared to intervene directly in the Jordanian war should Syria and Iraq enter the conflict and tip the military balance against Government forces loyal to Hussein."<sup>[103]</sup> Syria, on the other hand, did intervene, sending two armored

brigades and a mechanized infantry brigade under the command of its Ninth Infantry Division into northern Jordan on September 19 and 20 and engaged in fierce combat with the Jordanian 40th Armored Brigade. Syria also sent in battalions belonging to the Palestine Liberation Army (normally stationed in Syria), which reached the town of Irbid by the 21st, but Syria claimed that only PLA units were involved.

King Hussein appealed to the United States for help. From the perspective of Washington, “the Jordan crisis at its peak had much more to do with U.S.-Soviet relations than with the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Palestinians.”<sup>[104]</sup> The U.S. was disturbed by Israeli complaints that Abdel Nasser was violating the terms of the cease-fire on the Suez Canal, presumably with Soviet connivance. Relations between Washington and Tel Aviv were at a nadir in the spring of 1970, and the State Department viewed Israel as an obstacle to good relations with the Arab states. On the other hand, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger convinced Nixon that the U.S.S.R. was boosting its presence in Egypt and that this had to be stopped. Kissinger argued that Moscow must not be allowed to help Abdel Nasser regain the Sinai; that arming Israel would frustrate Moscow’s designs; and that Israel would be a valuable strategic ally of the United States in the region. Nixon had met with Israeli Premier Golda Meir on the 17th and promised her \$500 million in additional military aid and more F-4s. Now, he maintained, this attack on Jordan by another Soviet client required a response. Rather than rely on U.S. capabilities, which would have involved a costly delay, Kissinger turned to Israel. Perhaps his preferred option was to demonstrate the value of Israel to the United States.

The U.S. had already placed the 82nd Airborne Division on semi-alert status on September 10 in view of the hostage situation and had sent C-130s to Turkey. Ships of the Sixth Fleet had left port; the aircraft carrier Saratoga was ordered to the eastern Mediterranean; and the carrier JFK, stationed in the Atlantic, was ordered to the Mediterranean, as was the helicopter carrier the Guam, which was stationed in Norfolk. Now the alert status of the 82nd and the units in Germany was raised and the Sixth Fleet was ordered to proceed further east.

On September 20, Secretary of State Rogers called on Syria to halt its “invasion” of Jordan, and Under Secretary Sisco told the Soviet ambassador that the attack on Jordan “could lead to the broadening of the present conflict.”<sup>[105]</sup> Messages exchanged with the Soviet Union implied that Moscow was trying to restrain Syria. Still, it would be difficult to get U.S. forces into Jordan on time. Kissinger conferred with Yitzhak Rabin, then Israel’s ambassador to Washington, and plans were laid for Israel to come to the King’s aid. Israel and the U.S. arrived at a joint plan of action that was approved by Nixon on the 21st. Moshe Dayan threatened to unleash the Israeli air force against Syria. King Hussein, on the other hand, preferred to be rescued by the U.S. Eventually, the King decided to use his own tiny air force against the Syrian armor. On September 20 and 21, 120 Syrian tanks were destroyed and Syria suffered 600 casualties. The Syrian threat had been dealt with successfully.

“Jordan came to be treated as a regional partner of the United States. Jordan’s special task on behalf of American interests, in King Hussein’s view, would be to promote stability in the small oil-producing Arab states of the Gulf after the British departure at the end of 1971. Nixon and Kissinger gave the King some encouragement and boosted aid to Jordan accordingly. In true Nixon-doctrine style. Israel, Jordan, and Iran were emerging in official Washington’s view as regional peacekeepers. Aid and arms to these

U.S. partners would serve as a substitute for a costly American military presence in the region or unpopular military intervention.”[\[106\]](#)

## The Gulf War

When Iraq occupied Kuwait in the summer of 1990, the threat of war loomed. President Bush pushed Iraq’s president, Saddam Hussein, into a corner: He offered him a choice between military defeat or a humiliating retreat from Kuwait. King Hussein tried his best to find a diplomatic solution; he wanted to prevent a recourse to force at all costs, because he realized that a confrontation between the U.S. and Iraq would lead to the destruction of Iraq. He was looking for a solution that would allow Iraq to withdraw without losing face. His goal was to maintain Arab unity and keep lines of negotiation open. This failed, and the Arab world split, with Egypt and Syria joining the military alliance against Iraq and others supporting Iraq politically.

Of course, Jordan had a vested interest in trying to salvage the Arab Cooperation Council, an essentially economic alliance that included both Iraq and Egypt alongside Jordan and North Yemen, if possible. However, once the initial mediation efforts failed, it must have been obvious that Jordan stood to lose all the budgetary support it had been getting from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia if it did not line up on their side. Jordan tried to remain neutral and condemned the occupation of Kuwait, but it was accused of backing Iraq, since the Bush administration’s position seemed to allow no room for neutrality.

Jordan refused to allow Israel to use its air space to attack Iraq or to allow Iraq to move Scud missiles into Jordan to attack Israel or other states. There was tremendous pressure from public opinion in Jordan not to join the war against Iraq, partly because of the large percentage of Palestinians among the population who saw Saddam Hussein as their champion against Israel, and partly because of Jordanian business interests tied to Iraq. Iraq was the biggest customer for Jordan’s exports (23.2 percent) and its primary source of oil imports. On top of that, the force of Arab nationalism worked more to Iraq’s advantage than against it. But by not committing to the U.S.-led alliance, Jordan alienated not only the United States but also Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, whose largesse had kept government coffers filled for many years in the late seventies and the eighties.

Thus King Hussein believed that the destruction of Iraq went against Jordan’s long-term strategic interests, and he had wide domestic support for adopting a neutral position; in addition, domestic pressures also militated against his joining the anti-Iraq coalition.[\[107\]](#) In the final analysis, King Hussein’s gut instincts were not to join in the war against Iraq. Arguably, this was one of those situations where the personal preferences of the sovereign may have had a significant role to play, which would further restrict the generalizability of a monocausal economic explanation. Jordan had to suffer the consequences; the King was ostracized for years by the Kuwaitis and the Saudis, although relations with the U.S. improved dramatically after the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

Jordan also had to absorb the huge flood of (mainly expatriate) refugees from Kuwait and later from Iraq. In addition, tens of thousands of Jordanian citizens who had been working in the Gulf, notably in Kuwait

(most of them Palestinians), were expelled. This exacerbated the economic crisis, seeing as Jordan had been receiving almost \$1 billion a year in remittances from those workers. There was a time lag before the effect was felt, however, as many returning Jordanians also repatriated their life's savings with them. This fueled the construction industry in Jordan, as most of the money went into housing. But when it was exhausted, Jordan found itself heavily indebted and suffering from a high level of unemployment.

## Reconciliation

Thus the period from late 1990 to late 1993 was the nadir of relations between the United States and Jordan. President Bush was somewhat flexible, but members of Congress sought to punish Jordan. Congress suspended aid to Jordan in fiscal year 1991, and FY 1992 aid was also held (except for military training and food aid) up until 1993, and beginning in 1993, the U.S. President had to certify that Jordan was in compliance with the embargo against Iraq; that it supported the peace process with Israel; and that aid to Jordan was in the U.S. national interest, in order to satisfy the conditions attached to aid appropriation acts and for the aid to be released. The beginning of the Geneva peace talks after the war provided an avenue for cooperation between Washington and Amman, but it was really following the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Rabin and Arafat in Washington that Jordan started pushing hard for the conclusion of a peace agreement with Israel and for full rehabilitation with the U.S. President Clinton was pleased to do what he could to help produce the peace treaty that was signed in 1994. Since then, Washington has offered Jordan rewards and incentives to normalize relations with Israel. The stipulation that the President had to vouch for Jordan's good conduct were removed. Israel was instrumental in convincing Congress to write off most of Jordan's debts. Relations with the United States improved considerably after 1994.

U.S. aid to Jordan since 1951 through 1997 amounted to about \$3.9 billion, divided into \$2.1 billion in economic aid and \$1.8 billion in military aid.<sup>[108]</sup> In fiscal 1991, total U.S. aid to Jordan was a mere \$56.3 million; in 1992 it rose to \$70.6 million; it dropped to \$44.5 million in 1993; and to \$37.2 million in 1995. In 1996 total U.S. economic and military assistance rose to \$137.3 million; it increased further to \$152.1 million in 1997; to \$202.8 million in 1998; and amounted to \$198.1 million in 1999. Between 1994 and 1996, at the request of President Clinton, Congress appropriated \$401 million to go toward forgiving Jordan's debt of \$702 million to the United States. In 1996, the U.S. offered Jordan 16 F-16 fighters and 50 M60A3 tanks in military aid. These were paid for by an annual \$220 million allocation in the form of foreign assistance, and other hardware is being paid for through a special \$100 drawdown authority as part of the 1996 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act. President Clinton designated Jordan a major non-NATO ally of the United States as of November 1996, partly in recognition of King Hussein's services to the peace process.<sup>[109]</sup>

In 1997, the U.S. administration created a Middle East Peace and Stability Fund through which Jordan was granted an additional \$100 million in 1997. In 1998, Jordan received \$150 million in economic aid and \$75 million in military assistance. Washington has arranged for the creation of qualified industrial zones in Jordan from which goods that contain an Israeli-produced component can be shipped to the United States duty free. In September 2001 President Bush finally signed the trade agreement with Jordan

after it cleared Congress. The agreement, negotiated under the Clinton administration and signed in October 2000, did not have an easy passage through Congress because conservatives objected to provisions that set a precedent in establishing a connection between trade and environmental protection and trade and labor rights. Another novel feature of the agreement is that it covers electronic commerce. It also provides for the protection of intellectual property rights and contains procedures for dispute resolution. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) entered into force on December 17, 2001. Washington has also increased both financial and military aid to the kingdom.

## Section VII

### Reign of Abdullah II

King Hussein died at the age of 63 after a struggle with cancer on February 7, 1999. In January, he had named his oldest son Abdullah heir apparent to the throne instead of his brother Prince Hassan, who had been the crown prince since 1965 (Prince Hassan had been assigned that position because none of the King's sons was old enough to assume the duties of monarch). King Abdullah II was crowned on June 9. He faces a daunting task in steering the country through a minefield of regional and international conflicts.

The new King has embarked on a course of modernization and economic liberalization. He is more concerned with economic issues than his father and more savvy about them. Jordan joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in April 2000 and entered into a free trade agreement with the U.S., and another such agreement with the European Union (the second with the EU) is being finalized.

Maintaining good relations with the United States is one of the top priorities of Abdullah II, as is controlling the damage caused by the unraveling of the Oslo peace process and the crisis occasioned by the second *intifada* which broke out shortly after his first year as head of state and was still going strong a year later. The precipitous deterioration of relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government of Ariel Sharon is a major concern for the young monarch. Since over half the population of Jordan consists of Palestinians, Israel's recourse to combat tactics to quell the *intifada* from the very beginning, when it was still a form of civilian protest, has generated a great deal of resentment and popular indignation in the kingdom. Since the United States is perceived as being less than evenhanded in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, angry demonstrations have targeted the U.S. as well as the Israeli embassy in Amman, and riot police have had to be called out to protect the embassies and restore order.

Jordan has had to play a balancing act between the United States and Iraq, as well. Jordan has been at the forefront of countries calling for the easing of economic sanctions on Iraq in order to alleviate the suffering of the people of that country, which is keenly felt by the man in the street in Jordan. Before the economic sanctions were imposed on Iraq, Jordan was exporting about a billion dollars' worth of goods to Iraq; and since the end of the Gulf War Jordan has been granted special permission by the United

Nations to trade with Iraq. Half the oil that Jordan imports from its eastern neighbor comes at reduced prices, which amount to budgetary support for the kingdom. Trade with Iraq is very important to Jordan, and Amman has a vested interest in the economic revival of Iraq.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell has proposed “smart sanctions” against Iraq, which are designed to reduce the burden of suffering born by the Iraqi people, by lifting the economic sanctions, but this would involve the creation of a special fund under UN supervision into which all oil revenues would be deposited. Iraq opposes this as a perpetual infringement on its sovereignty and has threatened to cut off the supply of oil to Jordan (and Turkey and Syria) if its neighbors cooperate with the smart sanctions regime. That would amount to the elimination of Iraqi subsidized oil sales that are vital to Amman, which is coping with economic restructuring due to the burden of foreign debt. At the end of 2001, Iraq was supplying Jordan with \$650 million in crude oil (although at that point Jordan wanted to renegotiate the deal in view of the drop in international oil prices.)

On the other hand, the U.S. has pledged \$450 million in economic assistance and \$250 million in military aid to Jordan through 2001. There are also plans to reduce the size of the Jordanian army and turn it into an efficient rapid intervention force with the help of the U.S. Jordan stands to benefit a great deal from the access to the U.S. market afforded by the qualified industrial zones. This creates an additional dilemma, as goods produced in these zones qualify for special treatment only if they have an Israeli-produced component. The deterioration of relations with Israel will affect the QIZs.

Jordan may be too closely identified with the United States. The Hashemite kingdom has condemned the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S. more vehemently than any other Arab country, and it is prosecuting members of the al-Qa’ida organization for terrorist acts planned in Jordan. It has volunteered to send peacekeeping forces to Afghanistan. Jordan is a non-NATO ally of the United States, and in September 2001 Congress admitted it to a list of only four countries to sign a free-trade agreement with the U.S. To balance the perception that the King is toeing Washington’s line and to justify this relationship to the Jordanian public, the government needs the United States to intervene more forcefully and even handedly in the Palestinian-Israeli dispute and to ease the burden of suffering imposed on the Iraqi people by the Security Council’s economic embargo. Jordanians have been waiting for a long time for a “peace dividend” to materialize since signing the 1994 treaty with Israel. Their expectations are largely unmet.

Domestically, Abdullah II has increased the freedom of action of the country’s intelligence services in view of the domestic disturbances. Their interference is strongly resented by the public. However, as part of the King’s modernization drive, the Ministry of Information is being scrapped and replaced by a higher media council, which should have a positive effect on the freedom of expression. But will this lead to more vociferous opposition from the Islamist opposition, which includes many Palestinians in its ranks, and which is opposed to the normalization of relations with Israel?

Abdullah II has worked to improve relations with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Gulf. In this regard he has the advantage of not carrying the baggage of his father from the Gulf war.

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## Questions for Further Study

1. Do you think Jordan has indeed followed a rational course in foreign policy? What exceptions can you think of?

2. How important are budgetary support and economic advantage in determining the kingdom's foreign policies? (See Brand, Baram and Curtis (MEJ) above.)
3. What do you believe King Abdullah I's overall effect has been on the Palestinian problem? Did he lay the foundations of Jordan's relations with Israel? (See Shlaim and Glubb, above).
4. What would have happened if King Hussein had followed a more conciliatory policy towards Arab radicals inspired by Abdel Nasser and the Ba'th? (See Kerr and Dann, above).
5. Do you think King Hussein followed the best course in dealing with the PLO in 1970? (See Sayigh, Kerr and Quandt (1978) above).
6. Do you think King Hussein was truly adept at striking alliances and shifting alliance partners so as to derive strategic rents (economic or financial advantages from the exploitation of one's strategic position)? (See Brand, Ryan, Klieman, Sahlieh, A. Lesch and Quandt above.)
7. How would you characterize Jordan's relations with the United States? (See Parker, Satloff, Klieman, Quandt and Prados, above).
8. What causal effect would you assign to the personal preferences of King Abdullah I in the position Jordan adopted in relation to partition in 1948, and what role did King Hussein's own values play in determining Jordan's position in the Gulf War? (See A. Lesch.)
9. What do you think are the major problems which King Abdullah II will face? (See the Financial Times special supplement on Jordan).

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[1] Tariq Tell, "Guns, Gold and Grain: War and Food Supply in the Making of Transjordan" in Steven Heydemann (ed.), *War, Institutions and Social Change in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of Californian Press, 2000), p. 44-48.

[2] See the general argument, particularly the first three chapters of Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), although one would not venture to say that Jordan is the ideal variant of a developmentalist state. Evans does a good job of refuting the argument that states should simply not "meddle" in the economic sphere.

[3] *The Role of the Government, Jordan, A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Helen Chapin Metz (ed.)

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+jo0065\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+jo0065))

[4] See GDP by Sector, section 1 of 1, in *Jordan, A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Helen Chapin Metz (ed.)

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+jo0059\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+jo0059))

[5] Allowing for an error term of -2.1 percent.

[6] Natural Resources, section 1 of 1, in *Jordan, A Country Study*, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Helen Chapin Metz (ed.)

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+jo0086\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query2/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+jo0086))

[7] Robert Satloff, "Jordan's Great Gamble: Economic Crisis and Political Reform," in Henri Barkey (ed.), *The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) p. 130.

[8] Ibid, p. 137.

[9] *Intifada*-a popular uprising among Palestinian youths in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza directed against Israeli occupation forces.

[10] EIU Country Monitor (Jordan), 17 December 2001 (Internet).

[11] See IMF, Country's Policy Intentions Documents: Jordan-Letter of Intent, Memorandum on Economic and Financial Policies, and Technical Memorandum of Understanding, August 7, 2001. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/2001/jor/01/index.htm>

[12] EIU Country Monitor (Jordan), 17 Dec. 2001. (Internet).

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[14] Ibid.

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[16] FT Survey: Jordan, Stephanie Grey, "Strategy to boost investment potential," November 17, 2000,

- [17] “Bidders line up for Aqaba Inc.,” *MEED*, August 3, 2001, p. 16.
- [18] “Tala Bay work gets under way,” *MEED*, June 1, 2001, p. 16.
- [19] See *MEED* January 26, 2001, p. 18 and *MEED* June 29, 2001, p. 20.
- [20] See “Phosphate firm sell-off by end-2002,” *MEED*, June 22, 2001, p. 16.
- [21] “Consultative council boosts privatisation programme,” *MEED*, January 26, 2001, p. 18.
- [22] Stephanie Gray, F.T. Survey–Jordan: Feeling the pinch from unrest: TOURISM (Internet).
- [23] *Al-Hayat* (Arabic), November 16, 2001, p. 11.
- [24] Avi Machlis, “Pressing ahead with reform: Capital Markets,” *Financial Times Survey: Jordan*, Nov. 7, 2000 (Internet) <http://globalarchive.ft.com/globalarchive/articles.html?print=true&id=001107001515>
- [25] “Amman still struggling,” *Middle East Economic Digest (MEED)*, January 19, 2001, p. 30.
- [26] “Bidders line up for gas pipeline,” *MEED*, November 2, 2001, p. 18.
- [27] See *MEED*, June 1, 2001, p. 17 and *MEED*, May 5, 2000 under Tenders.
- [28] See Nathan J. Brown, *Constitutions in a Nonconstitutional World: Arab Basic Laws and the Prospects for Accountable Government* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001).
- [29] (For details of this episode, see Robert Satloff, *From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- [30] George Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 4<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 484.
- [31] Dann, Uriel, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955-1967* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 21.
- [32] Dann, p. 51.

[33] *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniya*—whose acronym in Arabic, spelled backwards, forms FTH, which is read Fat-h in Arabic (meaning conquest), and is often rendered Fateh in the vernacular, and Fatah by non-Arabic speakers.

[34] Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Washington, DC: The Institute of Palestine Studies and Oxford University Press) pp. 195-216.

[35] Sayigh, p. 244.

[36] Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp. 10-11.

[37] Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd a-Nasir and His Rivals* (London, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), third edition, p. 145.

[38] Sayigh, p. 255.

[39] Sayigh, p. 256.

[40] Sayigh, p. 257.

[41] Sayigh, p. 258.

[42] Sayigh, p. 259.

[43] Sayigh, p. 259.

[44] Sayigh, p. 260.

[45] Kerr, p. 151.

[46] See Nabeel A. Khoury, “The National Consultative Council of Jordan: A Study in Legislative Development,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13 (1981), p. 434.

[47] Robert Satloff, “Jordan’s Great Gamble: Economic Crisis and Political Reform,” in Henri Barkey (ed.), *The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), p. 138.

[48] Curtis R. Ryan, "Jordan in the Middle East Peace Process," in *The Middle East Peace Process*, Ilan Peleg (ed.), (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 166. The author bases his observation on an interview with the former speaker of parliament and leader of the Islamic Action Front, Abdul Latif 'Arabiyat.

[49] Glenn E. Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30 (1998), (387-410), p. 389.

[50] Robinson, p. 393.

[51] See Emilr Sahilyeh, "Jordan and the Palestinians," in William Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1988), p.303.

[52] Curtis R. Ryan, "Jordan and the Rise and Fall of the Arab Cooperation Council," *The Middle East Journal* 52, 3 (Summer 1998), p. 393 (ft).

[53] Curtis R. Ryan, "Jordan and the Rise and Fall of the Arab Cooperation Council," pp. 394-95.

[54] Robinson, p. 390.

[55] Robinson, p. 393.

[56] See the section on Jordan in the chapter on Arab monarchies in Nathan J. Brown, *Constitutions in a Nonconstitutional World: Arab Basic Laws and the Prospects for Accountable Government* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001).

[57] Robinson, p. 387.

[58] Robinson, p. 400.

[59] Robert Satloff, "Jordan's Great Gamble: Economic Crisis and Political Reform," in Henri Barkey (ed.), *The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 145.

[60] Ibid, p. 146.

[61] Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) p. 123.

[62] Shlaim, p. 142.

[63] Shlaim, pp. 132-140.

[64] Letter by Pirie-Gordon, quoted in Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan*.

[65] Janice Gross Stein, "The Security Dilemma in the Middle East: A Prognosis for the Decade Ahead," in B. Korani, P. Noble and R. Brynen (eds), *The Many Faces of National Security in the Arab World*, (St. Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 56-75.

[66] W. Andrew Terrill, "The Political Mythology of the Battle of Karamah," *The Middle East Journal*, 55, 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 91-111.

[67] Quoted in Sayigh, p. 265.

[68] Quoted in William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington and Berkeley: The Brookings Institution and the University of California Press, 1993).

[69] Quoted in Kerr, p. 150.

[70] Kerr, p. 150.

[71] Quandt, p. 111.

[72] Quoted in Sayigh, p. 308.

[73] Sayigh, p. 281.

[74] Sayigh, pp. 310-11.

[75] Sahliyeh, p. 293.

[76] Sahliyeh, Emile, "Jordan and the Palestinians," in Quandt, William B., (ed.) *The Middle East: Ten Years After Camp David* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988), p. 303.

[77] Israeli journalist Moshe Zak claims there were 39 accords between Israel and Jordan prior to the

1994 peace treaty. See “Thirty Years of Clandestine Meetings,” *Middle East Quarterly* (March, 1995), pp. 53-59.

[78] “Powell, Chirac seek leeway for Arafat,” *Ha’aretz*, December 18, 2001 (Internet edition) <http://www.haaretzdaily.com>

[79] See Aharon Klieman, “Israel’s ‘Jordanian Option’: A Post-Oslo Assessment,” in Peleg, Ilan (ed.), *The Middle East Peace Process: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998), pp. 179-95.

[80] Uriel Dann, *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.34.

[81] Quoted in Dann, p. 45.

[82] Satloff comments that on November 9, in an exchange with the U.S. military attaché in Amman, Chief of Staff Ali Abu Nuwwar solicited American aid in exchange for which he would be prepared to “guarantee” a declaration of martial law, the dissolution of Parliament, and a crackdown on communists. See Robert B. Satloff, “The Jekyll-and-Hyde Origins of the U.S.-Jordanian Strategic Relationship,” in *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, David W. Lesch, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), second edition, p. 117. This is very striking, given Abu Nuwwar’s Arab nationalistic reputation.

[83] Richard B. Parker, “The United States and King Hussein,” in *The Middle East and the United States: A Historical and Political Reassessment*, David W. Lesch, ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), second edition, p. 108.

[84] Quoted in Satloff, p. 121.

[85] See William B. Quandt, “Lebanon, 1958 and Jordan, 1970,” in Blechman, Barry and Stephen Kaplan, *Force without War* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1978).

[86] Laurie A. Brand, “Economics and Shifting Alliances: Jordan’s Relations with Syria and Iraq, 1975-81,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994), p. 394.

[87] Brand, p. 395 (emphasis added).

[88] Brand (IJMES), p. 400.



[89] Brand (IJMES), p. 402.

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[91] William B. Quandt (ed.), *The Middle East: Ten Years after Camp David* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1988) p. 496 (Appendix M).

[92] Robert Satloff, "Jordan's Great Gamble: Economic Crisis and Political Reform," in Henri Barkey (ed.), *The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 134.

[93] Curtis R. Ryan, "Jordan and the Rise and Fall of the Arab Cooperation Council," *The Middle East Journal* 52, 3 (Summer 1998), p. 396.

[94] Curtis R. Ryan, "Jordan and the Rise and Fall of the Arab Cooperation Council," p.400.

[95] Ibid.

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[97] Quoted in Satloff, p. 121.

[98] Parker, p.109.

[99] Parker, p. 111.

[100] Quoted in Satloff, pp. 123-24.

[101] Parker, note 28, p. 113.

[102] Quoted in Sayigh, p. 265.

[103] Quoted in William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington and Berkeley: The Brookings Institution and the University of California Press, 1993).

[104] Quandt, p. 94.

[105] Quandt, p.103.

[106] Quandt, p. 111.

[107] For a more detailed discussion, see Ann Mosely Lesch, “Contrasting Reactions to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Egypt, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians,” *The Middle East Journal*, 45, 1 (Winter 1991), pp. 30-50.

[108] Alfred Prados, “Jordan: U.S. Relations and Bilateral Issues,” Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, Congressional Research Service, the Library of Congress, CRS Issue Brief, updated May 1, 1998, (IB93085), p. 9.

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# *Laos*

## **A Self-Study Guide**



George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs  
Training Center

School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Laos* is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Laotian issues related to history, geography, culture, economics, government and politics, international relations and defense. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Laos is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the Bibliography. Most of the published material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or the major public libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide: Laos* was prepared by Dr. Arthur J. Dommen, a former foreign correspondent in Laos and historian of Indochina who lives in Bethesda, Maryland. He is the author of two books and many articles on Laos and has lectured on Laos at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. He has worked extensively with the archival materials in Record Group 59 and in the Nixon Presidential Materials at the National Archives II in College Park, Maryland, a good place to start for exploring the long and tortuous relationship of the United States and Laos. A selection of these documents can be found in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* volumes covering at this writing 1947-1968 (see Bibliography). But for longer Foreign Service Despatches and Airgrams reporting on political parties, election laws and results, economic trends, aspects of Lao society, Pathet Lao organization, and other matters the original documents should be consulted. Also, the “Yellow Books” of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) was an indispensable source on radio broadcasts relating to Laos until it ceased publishing these daily texts in the 1990's for budgetary reasons; fortunately, they are on microfilm and may be consulted at the Library of Congress.

The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of his own or documentary sources, and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

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August 2004

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## THE LAND

Laos (officially the Lao People's Democratic Republic; in Lao: SathalanaLat Paxathipatai Paxaxôn Lao) is a landlocked country located on the Indochinese Peninsula. It is bounded on the north by China, on the northeast and east by Vietnam, on the south by Cambodia, on the west by Thailand, and on the northwest by Myanmar (Burma). Laos extends about 650 miles (1,050 kilometers) from northwest to Southeast and has a total area of approximately 91,400 square miles (236,800 square kilometers). The capital is Vientiane (Lao: Viangchan).

Dominating the landscape of Laos are its inhospitable, forest-covered mountains, which in the north rise to a maximum elevation of 9,245 feet (2,818 meters) above sea level at Mount Bia (Lao: Phou Bia) and nearly everywhere make surface travel difficult and air travel dangerous, particularly in the rainy season. The principal mountain range lies along a northwest-southeast axis and forms part of the Annamese Cordillera, but secondary ranges abound.

Three notable landscape features of the interior of Laos may be mentioned. In the northern province of Xiangkhoang, the Plain of Jars (Lao: Thônġ Haihin; the name derived from large prehistoric stone jars littering the plain) consists of extensive rolling grasslands and provides a hub of communications. The central provinces of Bolikhamxay and Khammouan contain karst landscapes of caverns and severely eroded limestone pinnacles. Finally, in the south the Bolovens Plateau, at an elevation of about 3,600 feet, is covered by an open woodland and has generally fertile soil. The only extensive lowlands lie along the eastern bank of the Mekong River.

The general slope of the land is downhill from east to west, and all the major rivers—the Tha, Beng, Ou, Ngum, Kading, Bangfai, Banghiang, and Kong—are tributaries of the Mekong (Lao: Menan Kong). The Mekong flows generally southeast and south along and through western Laos on its way to the South China Sea, forming Laos's boundary with Myanmar and most of the border with Thailand. The course of the river itself is severely constricted by gorges in the north, but by the time it reaches Vientiane, its valley broadens and exposes wide areas to flooding when it breaches its banks. Near the Cambodian border, the Mekong forms a series of rapids and waterfalls. A few rivers in eastern Laos flow eastward through gaps in the Annamese Cordillera to reach the Gulf of Tonkin; the most important of these is the Ma, which rises in Xiangkhoang province and flows through Vietnam.

Soils in the floodplains are formed from alluvium deposited by rivers and are either sandy or sandy clay with light colors or sandy with gray or yellow colors; chemically, these are neutral to slightly acidic. Upland soils derived from crystalline, granite, schistose, or sandstone parent rocks generally are more acidic and much less fertile. Southern Laos contains areas of laterite (leached and iron-bearing) soils, as well as basaltic soils on the Bolovens Plateau.

Laos has the typical monsoon climate of the region, though the mountains provide some variations in temperature. During the rainy season (May to October), the winds of the southwest monsoon deposit an average rainfall of between 50 and 90 inches (1,300 and 2,300 millimeters),

with totals reaching 160 inches on the Bolovens Plateau. The dry season (November to April) is dominated by the northeast monsoon. Minimum temperatures average between 60 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit (16 and 21 degrees Centigrade) in the cool months of December through February, increasing to highs of more than 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 degrees Centigrade) in March and April, just prior to the onset of the rains. In the wet season the average temperature is 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Centigrade).

Laos has tropical rain forests of broad-leaved evergreens in the north and monsoon forests of mixed evergreens and deciduous trees in the south. In the monsoon forest areas the ground is covered with tall, coarse grass called *tranh*; the trees are mostly second growth, with an abundance of bamboo, scrub, and wild banana. The forests support a rich wildlife, including elephants, gaurs (wild oxen), deer, bears, tigers and leopards, monkeys, and a large variety of birds.

## **THE PEOPLE**

The population of Laos in 2003 was estimated at 5.66 million. Laos is predominantly rural and agricultural. More than 75% of the population was rural in 2002, living in villages ranging from ten to 200 households, or up to about 1,200 persons. The numerous isolated valley communities preserve a variety of different traditions and dialects. Villages usually are located close to rivers and roads that give people access to itinerant traders as well as to each other. Most villages are laid out around a main street or open area, farmlands being adjacent to the residential areas. Every village, if it can, has a Buddhist temple and supports at least one monk. The temple compound usually includes a public building that serves as a school and a meeting hall. Village leadership is usually divided, the headman having authority in secular matters and the monk in religious. The hill peoples usually are organized on tribal lines and live in smaller groupings. They are hunters and gatherers of forest products, as well as farmers, but their practice of shifting cultivation prevents them from establishing permanent settlements. Hill peoples living close to lowland areas tend to acquire the languages and cultures of their neighbors and to engage in limited trade with them; those living at higher elevations remain unacculturated.

Urban life in Laos is limited mainly to the capital, Vientiane, the former royal capital, Louangphrabang, and four or five other large towns. With the exception of Louangphrabang, which is hilly, all these towns are located in floodplains of the Mekong. Their populations are predominantly Lao, with smaller groups of Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indians. Compared with the cities of Thailand, Malaysia, or Vietnam, those of Laos are small and provincial.

Laos is an ethnically diverse country. Before the Indochina wars, sources commonly identified more than 60 different population groups. The 1985 census listed 47 such groups, some numbering only a few hundred persons. More recently, these peoples have been officially grouped under three names: Lao Loum ("lowland Lao"), Lao Theung ("Lao of the mountain slopes"), and Lao Soung ("Lao of the mountain tops"). Aside from this rather crude attempt to

"Laocize" minorities for political ends, such a grossly oversimplified scheme bears little relevance to the reality of these people's linguistic and cultural diversity, even if individuals in the remotest villages are taught today to identify themselves to visitors using this nomenclature. The language spoken by the Lao of Vientiane, for example, bears closer resemblance to that spoken by the Thai across the river than to those spoken by the Black Tai (Tai Dam) and Red Tai (Tai Deng) of Houaphan province, who are officially also Lao Loum but who would more accurately be called Lao-Tai. The Lao Loum also include the Tai Phuan of Xiangkhouang province, the Lue of Oudômxay province, and the Phu Tai of the south. Altogether, the Lao Loum comprised 66% of the population of Laos in 2000.

The Lao Theung are of Austroasiatic origin and are the indigenous inhabitants of Laos, having migrated northwards in prehistoric times. Ethnic groups within this broad category include the Kammu and Lamet in the north, the Katang and Makong in the center, and the Loven and Lawae in the far south. The Lao Theung comprised about 23% of the population in 2000.

The Lao Soung comprise Miao-Yao or Tibeto-Burmese speaking peoples who have continued to migrate into Laos from the north within the last two centuries, and made up about 10% of the population in 2000. Ethnic groups here include the Hmong (formerly called Meo or Miao), Man (or Mien or Yao), Akha and Lahu.

The predominant religion of Laos is Theravada Buddhism. Buddhism was the state religion of the Kingdom of Laos, and the organization of the community of monks and novices, the clergy (*sangha*), paralleled the political hierarchy. Today Buddhists constitute about 49% of the population, concentrated among the lowland Lao. About 42% of the population are animists, particularly concentrated among the Lao Theung and Lao Soung, although among lowland Lao there is both a certain syncretistic practice of, and tolerance for, animist customs. Christians constitute at most 1.5% of the population. Other minority religions include the Baha'i Faith, Islam, Mahayana Buddhism, and Confucianism.

In the constitution of the LPDR, freedom of religion is provided for; however, the government restricts this right in practice, particularly with respect to the minority religions. After some heavy-handed attempts in the aftermath of 1975 to take over the *sangha*, which it perceived as a rival grassroots organization, and the resultant flight of many monks abroad, the government has tread carefully. Although monks are still required to study Marxism-Leninism and attend certain party meetings, the government has patronized a revival of Buddhist culture and merit-making in recent years. At the same time, in spite of the regime's public opposition to "superstitious" beliefs, these practices and beliefs have gradually returned.

Laos has the lowest population density of any Southeast Asian country, with 61.9 persons per square mile (23.9 persons per square kilometer). Environmental factors make for a low average life expectancy, 52.0 years for males and 55.9 years for females. A high birth rate (36.0 per 1,000 population) is offset by a high infant mortality rate (90.8 per 1,000 population). Major causes of death are malaria, pneumonia, meningitis, diarrhea and tuberculosis. There has been a considerable out-migration of people from Laos since the mid-1970's, including most of the educated and professional elite. An estimated 250,000 migrated to the United States from 1975



to 1996, including about 130,000 Hmong. Approximately 100,000 migrated to other countries, including Australia and France. More than 28,900 Hmong and lowland Lao have repatriated to Laos. Some 3,500 of these came from China and the rest from Thailand.

Table 1–Area and population

Provinces	Capitals	Area (sq. mi.)	Area (sq. km.)	Population (1996 est.)
Attapu	Attapu	3,985	10,320	87,700
Bokeo	Houayxay	2,392	6,196	114,900
Bolikhamxay	Pakxan	5,739	14,863	164,900
Champasak	Pakxé	5,952	15,415	503,300
Houaphan	Xam Nua	6,371	16,500	247,300
Khammouan	Thakhek	6,299	16,315	275,400
Louangnamtha	Louangnamtha	3,600	9,325	115,200
Louangphrabang	Louangphrabang	6,515	16,875	367,200
Oudomxay	Xay	5,934	15,370	211,300
Phôngsali	Phôngsali	6,282	16,270	153,400
Salavan	Salavan	4,128	10,691	258,300
Savannakhét	Savannakhét	8,407	21,774	674,900
Special Region		2,743	7,105	54,200
Viangchan	Muang Phôn Hông	6,149	15,927	286,800
Xaignabouli	Xaignabouli	6,328	16,389	293,300
Xékong	Thong	2,959	7,665	64,200
Xiangkhouang	Phônssavan	6,131	15,880	201,200
Viangchan Municipal	Viangchan	1,514	3,920	531,800
TOTAL		91,429	236,800	4,605,300

## HISTORY

### Early Period

The original inhabitants of Laos were Austroasiatic peoples who lived by hunting and gathering before the advent of agriculture. Trading was an important source of livelihood from earliest times. Traders used routes through the mountains, especially following the rivers. The Lao excelled at river navigation using canoes, which brought products like gum benzoin, cardamom, sticklac, and many foods to the hinterland. Traders who specialized in overland routes were the Yunnanese, the Shans, and the Burmese, using mules and horses, oxen, and elephants as beasts of burden.

Later, following the scattering of the Yueh ruling class in southern China after 333 B.C., one branch of these migrant peoples settled in a mountain range known as the Ai Lao, which is taken as the origin of the term Lao. These people brought the dragon ancestor myth and associated tattoos, and in turn adopted the confederative organization of the settlements they found among the indigenous people, which were known by a term already related to the much later *muang*. The ancestral couple known by the names Pu Ne and Na Ne, whose round faces still appear in folkloric ceremonies, if they have any basis in historical fact, probably lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. A ruler, Khun Borom, is associated with the Lao legend of the creation of the world, which the Lao share with other people of the region like the Shan, and involves a huge gourd from which the commoners emerged. The current regime in Laos has connected its simplistic three-way ethnic categorization of the country to the gourd. As a 1996 publication of the Ministry of Information and Culture explains:

The gourd myth that has been told among the Lao illuminates historical realities with regard to the origins and national harmony in our country, Laos: The first group to be born are the Lao Theung; they are the eldest. Then, the Lao Loum followed, the younger of the two. And the last people are the Lao Soung, the youngest of the three.

From the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., there is evidence of a number of princely fiefdoms in central Laos based on wet rice cultivation and trading with the Menam valley and the coast of Vietnam. Theravada Buddhism reached Laos in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries through the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati centered on the lower Menam valley.

The 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries were marked by the contending powers of the Nan Chao kingdom in Yunnan and the Khmer kingdom of Kambuja-desa, which, under its ruler Indravarman I expanded north to establish an outpost at Xay Fong, site of present-day Vientiane. The then ruler of Vientiane, a man of high religious merit named Canthaphanit, moved north to Muang Sua, present-day Louangphrabang, where he had a long and peaceful reign. In the meantime, the seacoast kingdom of Champa, an enemy of the Khmers, expanded into southern Laos and maintained a presence on the banks of the Mekong until 1070.

### Lan Xang

A second expansion of Kambuja-desa at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century under Jayavarman VII brought brief Khmer suzerainty over Muang Sua. The invasion of the Mongols, who in 1253 destroyed Nan Chao, forced the Khmers to retreat and acknowledge Mongol suzerainty in 1285. Intending no doubt to consolidate their communications, which were threatened by Vietnamese

encroachments from the east, the Mongols arranged the kidnapping of two sons of the pretender to the throne of Muang Sua and sent them to Angkor, where the younger son, Fa Ngum, married one of the Khmer king's daughters. In 1349, Fa Ngum, at the head of a 10,000-man Khmer army, set out northbound on a series of conquests that would create a large kingdom, centered on the Mekong valley, to be known as Lan Xang. After a series of battles, Fa Ngum and his consort entered Muang Sua and were acclaimed by the population, whose ruler, Fa Ngum's father, had either committed suicide or fled. On June 24, 1354, Fa Ngum was crowned king at the future site of Vientiane, where he had won a victory over the local ruler. From his capital at Muang Sua, Fa Ngum reigned over a kingdom that extended on both banks of the Mekong from the border of China to that of Cambodia. Through relations of vassalage, he also extended his sway over principalities in the mountains adjoining Vietnam.

The first eight years of Fa Ngum's reign (1354-1362) appear to have passed uneventfully. Many Buddhist pagodas were constructed. This period was followed by six years of troubles (1362-1368). Fa Ngum's lamaistic Buddhism came into conflict with the gentler Theravada Buddhism espoused by the majority of his people. Forgetting the lesson of tolerance he had been taught as a young man, Fa Ngum severely repressed popular agitation that had anti-Mongol overtones, and many pagodas were torn down. A daughter of the ruler of Ayutthaya arrived at Muang Sua, as had been promised by her father, and became Fa Ngum's second wife. She arranged for a religious and cultural mission to come to the capital in 1373 and bring a hundreds-year-old statue of the Buddha from Sri Lanka, called the phrabang. In the same year, Fa Ngum, bowing to popular sentiment, withdrew and his son assumed the regency. He died in 1393. Mongol overlordship of the middle Mekong valley was at an end.

The kingdom founded by Fa Ngum lasted in its approximate borders for another 300 years. His descendants remained on the throne of Muang Sua, renamed Louangphrabang, for almost 600 years after his death. There were, to be sure, internal intrigue and external interventions during this long period, notably a massive Vietnamese invasion in 1478, followed by other invasions by the Siamese and Burmese. However, from 1633 to 1694, Lan Xang was ruled by a peaceful ruler, Souligna Vongsa, who brought stability and peace to the kingdom. It was during this period, regarded as Lan Xang's golden age, that European visitors first published accounts of Laos.

At Souligna Vongsa's death in 1694 the kingdom was left without a clear successor, and it split into three kingdoms. These were a reduced kingdom of Louangphrabang, a kingdom of Viangchan which included Vientiane and the surrounding area, and a kingdom of Champasak in the far south. The rulers of these three kingdoms, following personal ambition rather than statesmanlike motives, repeatedly appealed for foreign help from their Vietnamese, Siamese, and Burmese neighbors, leading eventually to the occupation of Viangchan by a Siamese army in 1779. The Siamese were now overlords of both banks of the Mekong. They enthroned Chao Nanthasen as ruler of Viangchan (1781-1792), but he earned the enmity of the Siamese by engaging in secret overtures to the Vietnamese, according to a treasure trove of official documents discovered in 1974 at the Vietnamese border post of Quy Hop. The Lao, for their part, were enraged by measures, which included tattooing, applied to the Lao who had been settled on the right bank by the Siamese after their first occupation of Viangchan. War broke out

anew when the Lao ruler, Chao Anou, after having failed to obtain relief by diplomacy, invaded the Khorat plateau. The Siamese marched again, overwhelmed Chao Anou's army, and occupied Viangchan again in 1827. This time the Siamese razed the capital and deported its entire population to the right bank. The Viangchan kingdom was no more. Sporadic resistance against the Siamese on the left bank continued for years, led for some time by the *latsavong*, or first prince of the old Viangchan kingdom.

Elsewhere the situation was hardly better. The kingdom of Louangphrabang had fallen into a pitiable state. Its ruler, Manta Thourath (1817-1836), was a vassal of Siam, which removed his viceroy, Oun Keo, to Bangkok as a hostage. Louangphrabang was able to maintain a precarious suzerainty over the Phuan principality centered in Xiangkhoang, where the Vietnamese under their emperor Minh Mang had also been active and had established a garrison in the fortified town of Khang Khay. Beginning in 1869 bands of warrior horsemen displaced from China after the failure of the Taiping rebellion wreaked havoc on the Plain of Jars. These were the Hos. Another people who arrived from southern China were the Hmong, who grew crops of dryland rice and maize at high elevations where they were not a threat to lowland dwellers. Further south, the Siamese installed outposts between the Mekong and the mountains, and removed entire villages to the right bank. Finally, the kingdom of Champasak was, like Louangphrabang, a vassal of Siam.

### The French Protectorate

The French established themselves in Vietnam in the 1850's. Their interest in Laos was mainly as a route to China and they stuck mainly to the rivers. The expedition of Ernest Doudart de Lagrée, which visited the ruins of Viangchan in April 1867 and that of Reinhart and Mourin d'Arfeuille in 1869, traveled up the Mekong and did not penetrate into the mountains. In the dry season of 1881-1882, however, an Alsatian missionary, Father Charles Blanck, who had been charged by his apostolic vicar with the task of evangelizing all the "savages" of the uncharted lands lying between Nghe An and the Mekong, traversed the mountainous region from Kam Keut in the south to Muang Ngan in the north. At Muang Ngan, Blanck met the ruler of the Phuan principality, Prince Khanti, who had taken refuge in a fort built by the Vietnamese in 1836 against the Siamese, the rest of his kingdom having been terrorized by the Hos. In an article published in Paris in 1884, Blanck wrote that the Phuan ruler had been a sub-vassal of Annam and had received the regalia of appointment from an Annamese mission. Blanck thus became the first French observer to report, on the basis of first-hand information, the relations of vassalage that bound a left-bank principality to Annam. His article may have alerted the French government to the possibilities flowing therefrom, as they had guaranteed Annam the integrity of its territorial domains, whatever these were. The French accordingly put a researcher to work in the very complete archives of the Hue court. The court, however, was occupied for the moment by the disorders left at the death of the childless emperor Tu Duc in the previous year. The unfortunate Khanti was arrested in 1886 and placed under house arrest in Bangkok, where he died in 1893.

The Siamese conducted campaigns against the Hos in northern Laos for five consecutive years beginning in 1882. The first three campaigns were half-hearted affairs, entrusted to armies

made up of peasant recruits who had to go home again by rice-planting season each year. The campaigns of 1885 and 1886, however, were more serious. A Siamese force advanced as far as Muang Thaeng (Dien Bien Phu). By 1887, the Hos had been put to rout.

In the midst of these campaigns, the French consul general in Bangkok notified the government in June 1885 that a vice-consul had been appointed and a vice-consulate would be created in Louangphrabang in accordance with a most-favored-nation rights clause contained in a Franco-Siamese treaty of 1856. The vice-consul, Auguste Pavie, an official of the Cambodian posts and telegraph service, was duly designated in December. A new Franco-Siamese convention of May 7, 1886 acknowledged the role of Siamese officials in Laos for purposes of administrative dealings without implying French recognition of Siamese claims to sovereignty. After numerous frustrations and delays, Pavie arrived in Louangphrabang on February 10, 1887, accompanied by 10 Cambodians and a Siamese “minder.”

The resident Siamese commissioners granted Pavie’s request for an audience with the aged king, Oun Kham. A few days later, the Siamese commander of the recent campaign arrived and paraded his army down the main street. He described to Pavie in glowing terms how the entire region was pacified, and how he had taken a large number of hostages as a guarantee against further troubles. Pavie had not gone far on an exploratory trip to the north when he was warned that the ruler of the Sipsong Chuthai principality, whose sons had been taken away by the Siamese, was on the warpath. He therefore returned to Louangphrabang, finding the Siamese had decamped. He was just in time to pluck the king to safety from the ransack of the town and the murder of the viceroy, Prince Souvanna Phouma, the son of Oun Keo. The grateful King told Pavie that, because Siamese protection had proved worthless, he wished to place his kingdom under French protection.

Urged on by a strong colonial lobby in Paris, the French in Indochina sent three armed columns across the mountains into central and southern Laos to evict the Siamese. In a classic example of gunboat diplomacy, the French sent two warships to force the passage of a fort at the mouth of the Menam and anchor in the river with their guns trained on the royal palace in Bangkok. The Siamese accepted a list of demands presented by the French, and under a treaty of amity between the two countries of October 3, 1893, Siam renounced all claim to territories on the left bank of the Mekong and to islands in the river. Thereupon, Pavie was able to grant the aged Oun Kham’s wish for a protectorate over his kingdom, and was present at the investiture of a new king and viceroy, Boun Khong, son of the murdered Souvanna Phouma, at Louangphrabang on April 19, 1895. The rest of France’s new possessions were to be administered by posted French officials called *résidents*, who were on an equal footing with the Lao provincial governors, or *chao khouengs*. Vientiane was made the administrative capital. Further conventions with Siam in 1904 and 1907 ceded to French control the right-bank territories of Xaignabouri and Bassac. With adjustments of the eastern border, about which arguments among French officials continued on grounds of ethnic affiliations, Laos came to assume the shape we know today.

### The Coming of Independence

The principal impact of World War II on Laos was the coming to power of the Pibul Songkram government in Thailand (the name adopted by Siam in June 1939) which, with secret Japanese backing, broadcast to the Lao to rise up against the French and mounted air raids on the towns along the Mekong. Under a peace convention of May 9, 1941, mediated by Japan (which had negotiated troop-stationing rights in Indochina in return for preservation of French sovereignty and administration), the Vichy government made territorial concessions to Thailand, including the ceding back of control over the portions of the right bank. In an attempt to assuage hard feelings, Marshal Henri Pétain signed a treaty with King Sisavang Vong on August 29, 1941, regularizing the protectorate and including Viangchan, Xiangkhoang, and Louang Namtha within the kingdom of Louangphrabang. The treaty also reinstated the position of viceroy, which had been abolished at Boun Khong's death in 1920.

The new viceroy, Prince Phetsarath (the son of Boun Khong by his second wife), was born in 1890. He prepared for a career in administration, and rose to the post of director of the Laotian civil service by 1919. In 1923 he was promoted by the governor general to be inspector of political and administrative affairs, and in this capacity organized a consultative assembly made up of district and province chiefs. He also reorganized the administrative system of the Buddhist clergy, or *sangha*, setting up a system of Pali schools for the education of monks. The French were eager to counter the pan-Thai irredentism propagated by the Pibul regime, and fostered Lao nationalism in the form of the Lao Nhay, or Lao Renovation Movement, which sought to provide Laos with its own personality with respect to its neighbors and to inculcate a sense of *patrie* (homeland).

Japanese troops moved into Pakxe, Savannakhet, and Thakhek on the evening of March 9, 1945, when Japan put an end to French administration all over Indochina. The following day they moved into Vientiane and Xiangkhoang. The Japanese quickly imprisoned French officials and their families. Hmong guerrillas operating under French command delayed the Japanese on the roads to Louangphrabang, where they did not arrive until April 7, after the French had gone. The Japanese suggested the king proclaim the independence of Laos, but Sisavang Vong demurred, replying that he had told French representatives to whom he had granted an audience that his attitude toward France would not change. Compelled by the Japanese, the king issued the proclamation demanded, but secretly entrusted Prince Kindavong, a younger half-brother of Phetsarath by Boun Khong's fifth wife, with the mission of representing him in Allied councils. The choice of collaborating with the Japanese or going into the jungle to join the active Franco-Laotian resistance, which was receiving supplies by air drops from B-24 Liberators of the British Force 136 flying from Assam in India, split many families of the Lao elite, including that of Phetsarath.

Upon the Japanese surrender, Phetsarath, in his capacity as prime minister and taking advantage of the isolation of Louangphrabang, sent out from Vientiane a telegram to all *chao khouengs* informing them that the king's independence proclamation was still in force. He followed this up with a message to the king requesting a royal proclamation of the unity of Laos. Receiving word of a royal proclamation that the French protectorate over the kingdom of Louangphrabang continued, and not having received a favorable reply to his request, Phetsarath took matters into his own hands, issuing a proclamation of unification and announcing that a

Congress of People's Representatives would soon meet to decide all political, economic and social questions. Bolstered by assurances of support from French representatives of Charles de Gaulle's provisional government parachuted into Laos, the king accused Phetsarath of exceeding his authority and stripped him of his position as prime minister and his title of viceroy. The king was also fearful of the consequences of the Allied decision at the Potsdam Conference to have Chinese Nationalist troops enter Indochina north of the 16<sup>th</sup> Parallel to receive the Japanese surrender. Family ties are always important in Laos, and Phetsarath's position was made delicate in that he was married to a sister of Sisavang Vong; in actual fact, Phetsarath's main quarrel appears to have been with the crown prince, Savang Vatthana. In the midst of these dramatic developments, a team of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS) landed at Vientiane from Kunming to report on the situation of Allied prisoners of war, and received petitions for Lao independence during its brief stay. The OSS team offered encouraging advice, but could promise nothing officially. The American position, communicated to De Gaulle by President Truman, was that the United States had raised no question concerning French sovereignty over Indochina.

Events in Vientiane now raced ahead. A provisional revolutionary government, called the Lao Issara, was proclaimed on October 12, a date still observed in Laos as the country's independence day. This government was composed of men whose families became prominent in Lao politics. The prime minister was Xieng Mao, the minister of interior and justice Chao Somsanith, the minister of finance Katay Don Sasorith, the minister of defense Sing Ratanassamay, the minister of education Nhouy Abhay, the minister of economy Oun Sananikone, and the minister of public works Prince Souvanna Phouma. A half-brother of Phetsarath by Boun Khong's sixth wife, Prince Souphanouvong, arrived from Vietnam, where he had been in touch with the Viet Minh (which had seized power in Hanoi in August), and was made minister of foreign affairs as well as commander in chief of a yet-nonexistent Lao independence army. Souphanouvong brought assurances of armed Viet Minh support against the French. Phetsarath himself, having announced his withdrawal from politics, became an adviser to the new government.

In an effort to give their government some semblance of legitimacy, the Lao Issara leaders hastily named a People's Committee of 34 members, which elected a Chamber of People's Representatives. This Chamber notified Sisavang Vong that, having failed to heed an ultimatum to abdicate, his "total destitution" had been voted. Franco-Laotian guerrillas, however, entered Savannakhet and moved north, reinforced by units of General Leclerc's expeditionary force in Saigon. Their advance met with stiff resistance at Thakhek from an entrenched mixed force of Viet Minh and Lao, and Souphanouvong himself was wounded by a strafing Spitfire and evacuated across the river before the French entered the town. The Lao Issara ministers abandoned Vientiane and moved to Louangphrabang where they implored the king to resume the throne, a request to which Sisavang Vong graciously acceded. A royal ordinance sanctioned the unity of Laos. The French entered the town as Phetsarath and the Lao Issara ministers fled across the river. The king then signed an ordinance declaring null and void all acts to which he had given his sanction under duress, and promised his people a democratic constitution.

With the French again in control, they took the first step to normalize the situation by establishing a Franco-Laotian joint commission in June 1946 to discuss future relationships. The commission produced a document confirming the existence of a unified Laos under sovereignty of the king of Louangphrabang, but in which the French retained major political, military and economic powers. A Franco-Siamese agreement signed in Washington on November 17, 1946, restored the right-bank territories to Laos. On December 15, 1946, in the face of guerrilla harassment in the form of raids from across the Mekong, 44 delegates to Laos's first popularly elected Constituent Assembly were chosen. Over the following months these delegates worked out, under French supervision, a constitution that was promulgated by Sisavang Vong on May 11, 1947, in fulfillment of his promise to his people. The constitution conferred equal citizenship upon all the races of Laos. The date became Laos's national day. On November 26, 1947, the 33 deputies of Laos's first National Assembly invested a government headed by Prince Souvannarath, a half-brother of Phetsarath by Boun Khong's fourth wife. France transferred its remaining powers. A modest royal army was formed, to be trained by the French. On February 7, 1950, the United States and Britain recognized Laos as a member of the French Union under the 1946 French constitution. Later that year, the United States opened a legation in Vientiane.

The Lao Issara exiles who had settled in Bangkok were having problems. First, a Thai government much less sympathetic than its predecessor to the anti-French resistance in Laos was brought to power in a *coup d'état*. Second, Phetsarath, still enjoying the position of supreme adviser, had a falling out with Souphanouvong over the latter's willingness to entertain close relations with the Viet Minh. The American historian Christopher Goscha, who has studied the archives in Hanoi, provides proof that the Viet Minh in this period were hoping to recruit Phetsarath to their cause. But Phetsarath was not only strongly anti-French, he was also anti-Vietnamese from his experience with the large numbers of Vietnamese with whom the French had staffed their administration in Laos, and he feared a Vietnamese takeover of the Lao Issara. Thus, when the French opened negotiations with the Bangkok exiles and offered an amnesty, the majority of the ministers accepted and flew back to Vientiane, leaving Phetsarath and Souphanouvong behind.

Souphanouvong was announced on the Viet Minh radio as presiding over a Lao resistance government formed at a congress held in the Viet Minh-held area of Vietnam in August 1950. This government included two Lao-Vietnamese *métis*, Kaysone Phomvihane and Nouhak Phoumsavan, as well as Phoumi Vongvichit and Tiao Souk Vongsak. Illustrative of the intended wide appeal of a new front also created by the congress, the Neo Lao Issara (Free Laos Front), was the naming of its militant wing as the Pathet Lao (Lao Nation). However, the reality of power remained with the Viet Minh, who made deep incursions into northern and central Laos in 1953 and 1954, stretching French airlift capacity to the limit.

In elections for a four-year term to the National Assembly held in August 1951, the Progressive Party, which had been formed by the returned Lao Issara ministers led by Xieng Mao, Katay Don Sasorith, and Prince Souvanna Phouma, a younger brother of Phetsarath, won 15 of 39 seats. A government headed by Souvanna Phouma, the first of many led by the prince who became Laos's indispensable man, was invested in November. Following further negotiations, the Lao signed a treaty of amity and association with France on October 22, 1953,



which removed the last strictures on independence. It was thus as the representative of a fully sovereign kingdom that a delegation from the royal government attended the 1954 Geneva Conference. The leader of this delegation, Foreign Minister Phoui Sananikone, declared that the royal government was prepared to offer integration of the Pathet Lao rebels into the body politic of Laos and guarantee them the rights and freedoms provided for in the constitution. Phoui also declared that Laos would not join any military alliance, allow foreign military bases, or request military aid “except for the purpose of its effective territorial defense.”

The armistice agreement for Laos, signed by the commander of French Union forces and the Viet Minh deputy defense minister, provided for the withdrawal of Viet Minh forces from Laos and the regrouping, “pending a political settlement, of the fighting units of Pathet Lao” in the border provinces of Houaphan and Phongsali. These favorable terms owed much to the diplomacy of Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, whose large delegation overshadowed the much smaller Viet Minh delegation headed by Pham Van Dong. These friendly relations appeared to be cemented in April 1955 when Zhou Enlai at the Bandung Conference brought together the Lao delegation and the North Vietnamese delegation and Zhou and Dong gave the Laotians verbal assurances of non-interference in a neutral Laos. With the prospect of renewed peace and unity, Laos became a member state of the United Nations in December 1955.

It should be pointed out that, in the wake of the Geneva Conference, all members of the Lao elite (with the exception of the king, whose views will be discussed below) saw negotiations as the only realistic means of dealing with the problem posed by the Pathet Lao. The consolidation of the Viet Minh in a viable state in North Vietnam made a military solution unrealistic, as the Pathet Lao, many of whose recruits were members of minority tribes inhabiting the border region, would slip across the border if pursued into a permanent sanctuary, only to infiltrate back through the mountains to resume their guerrilla war when conditions permitted.

Accordingly, the Lao elite in Vientiane fully expected, even before the negotiations began, that the settlement would include a coalition government integrating the Pathet Lao into the body politic. Such a solution would depend on a foreign policy of neutrality and good-neighborly relations with North Vietnam and China. Even when the negotiations proved much more arduous than foreseen, a coalition solution based on genuine sharing of power at all levels was still advocated by most Lao leaders. This approach to the problem, however, depended on two critical assumptions: (1) that the Pathet Lao were first and foremost loyal nationalists who had opposed the French rather than the agents of a Marxist-Leninist revolution led by the Vietnamese Communists; and (2) that Laos would be able to adhere to strict neutrality in foreign affairs. Later on, as they saw their country become a battleground anew, many among the nationalists would come to see these assumptions as having been misplaced.

### The First Coalition

Elections were held in December 1955, with 239 candidates contesting the 39 seats at stake. The Pathet Lao, seeing their advantage in stringing out the negotiations with the royal government that had begun at the end of 1954, boycotted the election. The Progressives again

emerged as the largest single party. The U.S. legation had been raised to embassy level following Geneva, and Ambassador Charles W. Yost warned that the Pathet Lao were embarked on a campaign of recruitment. The Eisenhower Administration was suspicious of neutralism in Southeast Asia, whether in a constitutional monarchy with democratic elections like Laos or in states ruled by one man like Prince Norodom Sihanouk and President Sukarno, and tended to equate neutralists with pro-Communists. On instructions from the State Department's Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs, Yost put the royal government on notice that any participation of Communists in the government, which he saw as inherent in the coalition strategy, would lead to a reconsideration of American support.

The investiture in March 1956 of a new government headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma as Prime Minister gave the signal for a renewed effort at negotiations. The Prime Minister believed that he could negotiate in good faith with his half-brother, Prince Souphanouvong, to achieve the political settlement foreseen at Geneva. There were many difficulties, however, created by the Pathet Lao claim that the armistice agreement gave them the exclusive right to administer the two provinces of Houaphan and Phongsali. An International Control Commission (ICC) had been established to supervise the implementation of the agreement. The Indian chairmen of the ICC in the post-1954 period successively avoided supporting the royal government's claim to sovereignty over the whole territory of Laos. Instead, the Indians consistently attempted to find compromises between the two sides, as if the two parties were on the same footing, and at other times declined to take a stand at all on such issues as requests for on-the-ground inspections, arguing that the ongoing direct negotiations took precedence over ICC interventions. It was not until 1956 that the Canadian delegation, in the face of objections from the Poles, forced through a resolution affirming the principle of sovereignty. Another difficulty were the *démarches* by the then U.S. Ambassador in Vientiane, J. Graham Parsons, who, in accordance with his instructions from Washington, fought against a coalition at every step and objected to Prince Souvanna Phouma's acceptance of invitations to visit Peking and Hanoi. Souvanna Phouma was determined to persevere, however, and by the end of 1956 the outlines of a settlement began to emerge.

On October 22, 1957, final agreement was reached on re-establishment of the royal administration of the two provinces, formation of a coalition government, and supplementary elections to the National Assembly to be held in May 1958. Souphanouvong symbolically returned to the royal authority in the person of Crown Prince Savang Vatthana, the administration of the two provinces. A governor from the Lao civil service was appointed in Houaphan and a Pathet Lao governor in Phongsali, each with a deputy of the opposing camp. Mayors and other provincial officials were equally divided between the two parties. Two Pathet Lao battalions, totaling 1,500 men, would be integrated into the royal army, with the remainder being sent home. Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit became ministers of the royal government.

A shock came when the political party formed by the Pathet Lao, the Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS) (Lao Patriotic Front), together with its ally, the Santiphab (Peace) Party, won two-thirds of the seats contested in the supplementary elections. During the electoral campaign, a main theme of the NLHS's propaganda was that U.S. aid went to create many institutions in the capital

but did not reach the villages. Laos at this point was receiving more U.S. aid per capita than any other country in the world. Certain abuses in the commercial import program were being investigated by Congress. But the election victory was mainly due to the failure of the old-line parties to agree on limiting the number of their candidates, thereby splitting their votes and allowing the NLHS candidate to win a seat with a minority of the total votes cast in many constituencies. The change in climate in the summer of 1958 was further marked by the announcement that with the holding of the elections the royal government had fulfilled its obligations under the Geneva Agreement, and had requested the adjournment *sine die* of the ICC. The establishment of diplomatic relations with Taipei and Saigon also set a precedent unwelcome in Peking and Hanoi.

A major concern of U.S. policymakers had been the inadequacy of training and equipping the royal army following the departure of all French troops except for a small training mission at Xenobong. Thus, without fanfare, the United States, in December 1955, established a disguised military mission in Vientiane, the Programs Evaluation Office (PEO), with staff whose names had been removed from the Pentagon's rosters of active service personnel. A possible threat soon appeared. North Vietnamese security forces in December 1958 occupied and claimed as their own a strategic sliver of territory abutting the Demilitarized Zone in the face of protests from Vientiane. This action coincided with the decision of the Vietnamese Communist Party to launch armed resistance against the government of South Vietnam. When then Ambassador Horace H. Smith showed Savang a message from the State Department declining to meet the crown prince's request for a guarantee of Laos's borders on grounds of imprecise demarcation and the complex history of the border areas, Savang told Smith bluntly he was dissatisfied with the reply. Savang claimed the maps establishing Laos's borders were precise and definite, but he accepted the U.S. right to decide whether or not to act in the matter. This incident was soon followed by the fleeing of the Pathet Lao battalions to the North Vietnam border, the resumption of guerrilla warfare during the summer of 1959, and an appeal by the royal government to the United Nations for a fact-finding mission, whose final report was, not surprisingly, inconclusive with respect to proof of foreign intervention. The government ordered the arrest of the NLHS deputies to the National Assembly. The first coalition was at an end.

### Toward Full-Scale War

In October 1959, Phetsarath and King Sisavang Vong died in Louangphrabang within two weeks of each other. Phetsarath had been allowed to return to Laos from Thailand and had his title of viceroy restored in the euphoria over national reconciliation leading to the coalition, but had played no further political role. Crown Prince Savang Vatthana immediately succeeded his father, but remained uncrowned, a propitious date for the coronation ceremony not being found.

With the mandate of Prime Minister Phoui Sananikone approaching its end in December 1959, General Phoumi Nosavan, an ambitious general, and his supporters in the Committee for Defense of the National Interest (CDNI), a group formed in 1958 reportedly with financing from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), moved to force the king to grant them power. They put on a show of force and Radio Vientiane broadcast communiqués alleging a Communist plot.

However, Smith and the ambassadors from the United Kingdom, France and Australia secured an audience with the king and stressed the need to observe constitutionality. The crisis passed, and an interim government headed by Kou Abhay took over until new elections could be organized. The events in Vientiane of those days smacked of the way in which General Sarit Thanarat, a cousin once removed of Phoumi's, had recently seized power in Thailand. Temporarily rebuffed, Phoumi bided his time as minister of defense in the new cabinet.

The elections held in April 1960 were so fraudulent as to bear condemnation by the Western powers. Changes had been made to the electoral law, financial support for anti-Communist candidates was arranged, civil servants were enlisted as campaign workers, and ballot tampering was widespread. Prince Souvanna Phouma was elected without fraud and became president of the new National Assembly. A new government headed by Chao Somsanith was invested in June. The NLHS had not been allowed to run candidates. The Front's deputies in prison outside Vientiane escaped on a dark, rainy night in May, following a plan prepared by the Front's chief for the province of Viangchan, for which he afterwards was awarded a medal. The king held Phoumi responsible for the escape, which worsened relations between the two.

The question of responsibility for training the royal army had led to differences between the French and the Americans. With De Gaulle in power in Paris once more, the French determined to resume their prerogative of training, which they had acquired at Geneva and had never surrendered. The differences were papered over in a temporary arrangement negotiated between Paris and Washington. On August 6, however, General Phoumi threatened the chief of the French military mission with a demand for the withdrawal of all French instructors. Encouragement in this course seems indicated by the fact that French military intelligence at Xeno had intercepted a message from Sarit to Phoumi urging him to seize power at all cost, according to a message from the French Embassy in Vientiane that I found in the archives of the Quai d'Orsay. On August 9, Captain Kong Le led his Second Paratroop Battalion, which happened to be in Vientiane between campaigns, in a real *coup d'état* against the royal government, whose ministers were away in Louangphrabang conferring with the king. Circumstantial evidence suggests that, rather than being a case of simple discontent on the part of Kong Le's soldiers, the action may have been planned between Phoumi and Kong Le as a way of Phoumi's seizing power. In that case, the plan went awry. Phoumi immediately flew from Louangphrabang, but unable to land anywhere in Laos, landed at Ubon, where he informed an emissary from the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok who met him that he planned to "straighten things out."

Negotiations between Vientiane and Louangphrabang followed in which the cabinet ministers tendered their resignation and were allowed to return to Vientiane. A new cabinet headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma was duly invested by the National Assembly and immediately offered conciliation to General Phoumi, who set up his headquarters in Savannakhet. General Phoumi, however, had solicited and received secret support from Sarit and U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Leonard Unger, the United States being unwilling to risk jeopardizing its close links with Sarit by rebuffing Phoumi's request. Aid to Phoumi was supported by a recommendation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington, and a channel to his

headquarters was opened through the PEO. Thailand immediately imposed a blockade on Vientiane.

In Vientiane, Ambassador Winthrop G. Brown, who had arrived at post only days before the *coup*, received cables from the State Department instructing him to find a way of getting rid of Kong Le. Prince Souvanna Phouma's government, having respected constitutionality, was recognized as legal by all governments except Thailand. Brown was placed in a difficult position by the Pentagon and CIA support for General Phoumi, but worked out a compromise with the prime minister to the effect that he would raise no objection to the aid so long as Phoumi did not use it against Vientiane. Phoumi on his U.S.-supplied radio transmitters was issuing a stream of communiqués alleging Pathet Lao threats to various royal army outposts around the country; these were false, as the Pathet Lao remained quiescent at this stage, and Phoumi with his new equipment took no action against them.

The stalemate continued thus for several weeks. A visit to Vientiane by former U.S. Ambassador Parsons, now Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, did nothing to dissuade Souvanna Phouma from his intention of opening negotiations with the NLHS with a view to restoring the coalition. Parsons perhaps had an exaggerated impression of Kong Le's power to influence events. The Pentagon, however, was thinking not just of finding a face-saving way for Kong Le to leave the scene. In a meeting with two high-level officials, Assistant Secretary of Defense John N. Irwin II and Vice Admiral Herbert D. Riley, chief of staff to the commander in chief Pacific, and a CIA representative in Ubon on October 17, General Phoumi received assurances that the United States was backing him "all the way." He opened his attack on Vientiane in the early days of December, using artillery fire freely, especially targeting the headquarters of the French military mission. Kong Le opened counterbattery fire using artillery pieces flown in to Wattay by Soviet Ilyushin-14's from Hanoi, further internationalizing the conflict. Hundreds of innocent civilians were killed. The American embassy was damaged. Ambassador Brown kept a diary, which is in the National Archives. Before the battle erupted, Prince Souvanna Phouma fled Vientiane to safety in Phnom Penh, although he and Prince Norodom Sihanouk had never been close.

Kong Le finally was forced to withdraw in good order up the Louangphrabang road. Soviet planes continued to airdrop supplies to his retreating column as it made its way northward to the Sala Phou Khoun junction and then turned eastwards toward the Plain of Jars. General Phoumi was slow to pursue, and by the time he mobilized his force it was too late to mount a defense of the Plain of Jars, where the Phoumist garrison with their PEO advisers had evacuated by air. The Plain was soon transformed into an armed camp by Kong Le's Neutralist troops and those of the Pathet Lao, who announced they had formed an alliance in support of Souvanna Phouma. The Prince maintained he had not resigned and was still Prime Minister. Early in the new year, he established his capital at Khang Khay, where he inaugurated the headquarters of his Neutralist Party (Phak Pen Kang). He was recognized as legal prime minister by all the Communist powers, and the Soviet Union, China and North Vietnam established missions at Khang Khay.

General Phoumi as Deputy Prime Minister formed a new government in Vientiane in early January with Prince Boun Oum of Champasak as Prime Minister. This government, after many debates and royal ordinances intended to regularize the actions of the past months, was duly invested. However, only the United States and Thailand accorded it formal recognition. The French position was that they were willing to work with the Boun Oum government as a de facto government but were unwilling to go to the extent of supporting that government as a juridically legal government. The French maintained their embassy in Vientiane, and Ambassador Pierre-Louis Falaize treated the situation as one where the government had simply left town. This forced him to resort to extraordinary means to communicate with Souvanna Phouma, such as traveling from Vientiane to Khang Khay via Phnom Penh, as General Phoumi did not allow any direct flights. Falaize and Brown formed an effective team together, working to tamp down the dangers of the situation as best they could. One of Brown's early concerns was to dissuade the Boun Oum government from appealing for Western military intervention; the kingdom, as a protocol state of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, was within its rights to appeal for assistance in the event of aggression.

As Brown and the State Department had been warning to little avail, the first days of January saw the commitment of significant numbers of North Vietnamese "volunteer" troops to the fighting for the first time. They joined Kong Le's troops in clearing Routes 7 and 13 as far south as Vang Vieng, compelling General Phoumi's ill-led troops to fall back in disarray. A number of PEO advisers were captured. Elsewhere, Tha Thom fell, followed by Laksao, Nhommarath, Mahaxay and Kam Keut. The general himself went nowhere near the fighting front. Marshal Sarit, after talking boldly about fighting the Communists in Laos, committed some security forces, who had a long history of association with the CIA, to advise and support Colonel Vang Pao, the leader of a Hmong guerrilla force operating on the fringes of the Plain of Jars. Taking advantage of split loyalties among the Hmong clans, the Pathet Lao had recruited a rival of Touby Lyfoung, the traditional Hmong leader in the French time, Faydang Lobliayao. Likewise, in the south the Pathet Lao adroitly enlisted the support of Sithon Kommadan, the son of a renowned rebel leader who had been killed by the French.

From his refuge in Phnom Penh, Souvanna Phouma wrote in February to President John F. Kennedy. The Prince had bitterly criticized Parsons in an earlier interview, but with the incoming of a fresh team in Washington, he hoped for more cordial relations. After some hesitation caused by concern for the impact on the beleaguered Boun Oum government, the administration responded to the overture, and in March Kennedy's ambassador at large, W. Averell Harriman, had tea with the prince on neutral ground at an official's house in New Delhi. The two men got along well. Souvanna Phouma recorded in his diary: "I believe I made a good impression on him." It was the beginning of a long friendship.

Following its defeats on the battlefield, the Boun Oum government lost little time in suing for a truce. The Neutralist radio station called for a meeting in the village of Ban Namone on the road between Vientiane and Louangphrabang. Like the truce-talks village of Kaesong in the Korean war, Ban Namone was 15 kilometers inside Communist-held territory. The radio instructed the Vientiane government to send an emissary under a white flag to meet a Pathet Lao representative near Ban Hin Heup on the front line. At this first meeting on May 1, a provisional

local ceasefire was put into effect. Two days later, one formal ceasefire order to the Pathet Lao forces was signed by General Khamtai Siphandon and another to the Neutralists was signed by Kong Le.

The talks began in the bamboo schoolhouse in the village of Ban Namone. The three delegations were headed by Pheng Phongsavan acting on behalf of the Souvanna Phouma government as chairman, Nouhak Phoumsavan for the Pathet Lao, and Sing Rattanasamay for the Boun Oum government. The delegations were flown in by helicopter. The atmosphere was convivial, with much exchange of news of families divided by the front line. But the Pathet Lao, with its strong backing from North Vietnam, was in a stronger position than it had ever been. At the same time, in faraway Geneva, an international conference convened under the leadership of the 1954 co-chairmen, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. The Kennedy Administration accepted only to participate in a 14-nation conference, of which Laos was one, but the Soviets insisted that the Ban Namone precedent be followed and the three Laotian factions, including the Pathet Lao, be seated. A face-saving formula, under which the issue of Laotian representation would be held in abeyance pending formation of an agreed government delegation, the participants would be free to recognize the Laotian government of their choosing in the meantime, and the conference would be allowed to go forward, was accepted all around. All Laos's neighboring states were represented at Geneva, as were the three ICC members and the co-chairmen, along with the United States and France.

### The Second Coalition

The powers who had gathered at Geneva put together in relatively short order the principal features of an agreement neutralizing Laos. What took longer, and delayed the signing of the agreement, was getting the Laotian factions to decide on the composition of a new provisional coalition government that would assume power until elections for a new National Assembly could be organized and a government invested. The talks at Ban Namone had ended in September, and it was up to the three princes (Souvanna Phouma, Souphanouvong and Boun Oum) to pursue the negotiations, which they did in Laos and in various world capitals. All the while sporadic violations of the ceasefire were occurring, the overall effect of which was to enlarge the territory under the control of the Pathet Lao and their North Vietnamese backers. Harriman, who headed the U.S. delegation, placed the blame for the delay on General Phoumi, whom he suspected of maneuvering to involve U.S. troops in Laos and with whom he soon lost all patience and in the end treated very roughly, even cutting aid to Phoumi's troops.

Finally, the three princes met on the Plain of Jars on June 12, 1962, and signed an agreement fixing the composition of the Provisional Government of National Union (PGNU) and setting the rules by which it would operate. General Phoumi and Souphanouvong were deputy prime ministers and the remainder of the cabinet seats were allocated according to a complicated formula that differentiated between the Khang Khay Neutralists and the Vientiane Neutralists. The three princes next gathered in Vientiane. While Boun Oum tendered his resignation to the king, Souvanna Phouma lunched informally with Ambassador Brown, who was preparing to leave Laos on completion of his two years. The same afternoon, Souvanna Phouma presented the PGNU to the king, and the traditional investiture ceremony was held at Wat Sisaket. With a

few contrivances, constitutionality had been preserved, in accordance with the king's expressed wish. The documents of the Geneva Conference were signed on July 23. They consisted of a Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos, which incorporated a PGNU statement to this effect (signed by the foreign ministers of 13 participants) and a Protocol comprising 20 articles dealing with the nuts and bolts of neutralizing Laos (signed by all 14 participants). But the second coalition was different in several respects from the first. It was a coalition at the top and not a coalition from top to bottom.

The PGNU being provisional, the three princes had agreed at one of their meetings in Zurich that "in the transition period" (length unspecified) to the formation of a permanent government, each faction would continue to exercise administration in the territory it controlled. This in effect gave the Pathet Lao exclusive control over a vast portion of Laos resulting from the fighting, and in which they had established their administration. The outcome was that the Prime Minister was prevented from traveling in the Pathet Lao-administered areas. Further, a "troika" provision for decision-making within the PGNU had also been written into the agreement by the three factions, vastly reducing Souvanna Phouma's freedom of action in even minor matters. This came as a particularly nasty surprise to the United States and its friends in the conference, because for months, Souvanna Phouma had been grandly assuring everyone that he would be able to handle all problems. The ICC, which was to resume its work of supervision of the implementation of the agreement, was so hamstrung by the clauses referring to its degree of autonomy and the approval of its reports to the co-chairmen that its effectiveness soon proved minimal. Furthermore, the modalities for integrating and demobilizing the armies of the three factions were left to the PGNU to sort out, without any mandate of authority to the ICC. With respect to the procedures for the withdrawal of foreign military personnel from Laos, the gap between expectations and reality was just as wide; in the end, the provisions for withdrawal were so ambiguous as to be virtually meaningless. While the United States withdrew its several hundred military personnel, North Vietnam made no transparent move to withdraw its "volunteers" (thought to number about 12,500), in spite of several visits to Hanoi by the Prime Minister, from which he invariably returned with "assurances" from the North Vietnamese leaders.

The last structural flaw concerned the seemingly unobjectionable undertaking in the Declaration by the signatories not to use the territory of Laos to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. In view of Hanoi's doctrinal insistence that Vietnam was a single country, it believed it had not signed away its inherent right to use the network of trails through eastern Laos, known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to transport war material into South Vietnam. (Hanoi's leaders, ever inventive, explained to their Pathet Lao allies that they were borrowing the Trail.) Finally, Harriman had reported early in the conference that he had been given assurances by the chief Soviet delegate, Georgi M. Pushkin, that Moscow would ensure compliance with the agreement by the Communist bloc in exchange for similar "policing" of its allies by the United States. The emerging Sino-Soviet conflict in the 1960's deprived Moscow of its ability to fulfill this pledge, as Khrushchev informed Harriman on a visit to Moscow. Pushkin himself died soon after the signing. Consequently, complaints of alleged violations of the agreement ended up on the desks of foreign offices in London and Moscow, where they remained unacted upon. When the delegates of Thailand and South Vietnam pointed out some of the flaws in the agreement and



intimated their intention not to sign, Harriman, with the anger for which he was well known, threatened them with dire consequences, and in the end they signed.

Cabinet meetings in Vientiane were marked by sharp exchanges among the three factions on the many issues of running day-to-day affairs. The Prime Minister received precious support for his stand in these arguments from the new U.S. Ambassador, Leonard Unger. Agreement was reached between the two men on continuing delivery of supplies to the Phoumist troops. As for the Neutralist army, concentrated on the Plain of Jars, it had been placed in dire straits by the siphoning off of its Soviet bloc supplies (which arrived by way of Hanoi) by the Pathet Lao. Accordingly, Souvanna Phouma and Unger agreed that the United States should make good the shortfall. The Hmong guerrillas under Vang Pao were also to be supplied, and for this purpose were to be considered members of the royal army. Many of the Hmong outposts could only be reached by air, and Unger arranged for the continuation of the operations of Air America after the deadline for foreign troop withdrawal had passed, with only the stricture that Air America would not be authorized to transport troops. Souvanna Phouma faced down Pathet Lao accusations, made to Tony Yared of The Associated Press by Phoumi Vongvichit among others, that Air America should be subject to the withdrawal of foreign forces provision and that the Hmong were “bandits” within the Pathet Lao zone of control. As there was no map showing the ceasefire lines, however, this argument was difficult to sustain, and the Hmong guerrillas continued to be a thorn in the side of the Pathet Lao. Another argument arose over the activities of the National Assembly, whose legality was not recognized by the Pathet Lao. Pulling itself together after nearly a year of inactivity, the Assembly began meeting again and receiving reports from the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Phoumi Nosavan. An important turning point in the standing of the Assembly came when it elected Phoui Sananikone as its president.

The issue that finally led to a showdown between Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao was the latter’s attempt to subvert the Neutralist army. By propaganda radio broadcasts and other means, the Pathet Lao induced a number of Neutralist officers to defect and join the Pathet Lao, calling them “Patriotic Neutralists.” In this, the Pathet Lao took their cue from the way Ho Chi Minh had succeeded in splitting the nationalist parties in his coalition government in Hanoi in 1946. Souvanna Phouma was well aware of this history, and he resented the Pathet Lao machinations on the Plain deeply. At the end of 1962 the dissidents were responsible for shooting down an Air America plane ferrying supplies to the Neutralists, and in early 1963 the situation was worsened by a series of retaliatory assassinations, including that of the coalition’s foreign minister, Quinim Pholsena. Souphanouvong and Phoumi Vongvichit used these acts as a pretext for withdrawing from Vientiane. Meanwhile, two junior ministers belonging to the Prime Minister’s own party fled to Phnom Penh. By April 1963, open warfare between Kong Le’s troops and the Pathet Lao and their North Vietnamese backers broke out on the Plain. The crisis was dramatized by an incident in which the Pathet Lao fired on two ICC helicopters that landed on the Plain. However, in the new ICC chairman, Avtar Singh, the Pathet Lao were dealing with someone who took his peacekeeping responsibilities seriously, and the ICC maintained a presence in the conflict zone, over the loud objections of the Polish delegate, Marek Thee, who later published a memoir boasting of his close liaison with Hanoi’s Laos specialists.

The situation on the Plain remained in an uneasy calm. But, after Souvanna Phouma's visits to Peking and Hanoi and the breakdown of a summit meeting of the factions on the Plain in April 1964, an attempted *coup d'état* by rightist officers in Vientiane upset the precarious balance. The rightists proclaimed themselves against the Geneva Agreement, against the coalition, against the ICC, and wanted to take the offensive against the Pathet Lao. They placed the Prime Minister under house arrest. Pheng Phongsavan took refuge in the Soviet embassy. The attempted *coup* was dismantled thanks to the intervention of Unger and the other Western ambassadors, who dissuaded Souvanna Phouma from making good on his threat to resign and informed the military officers involved that their seizure of power would mean the certain and immediate termination of Western support for the government. The rightists' timing had been poor, as the United States was trying to cope with the chaos caused by one *coup* attempt after another in South Vietnam following the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem the previous November. President Lyndon B. Johnson was heard at this time to make a famous expletive remark about these *coups*, and he was not about to see the chaos spread to Laos.

But the attempted *coup* and the adjustments the Prime Minister made to meet the complaints of the rightists, such as his move to merge the Neutralist army with the Phoumists, led to the Pathet Lao's adopting the position that the coalition had ceased to exist. General Phoumi, who had gradually lost influence within his own faction, left the scene shortly thereafter. Kong Le, for his part, also departed. He had been sadly disillusioned by the perfidy of the Pathet Lao and by the ever larger intervention of the North Vietnamese, and he despaired of Laos ever becoming a neutral state so long as the war escalated.

### Full-Scale War

Thus, despite a further futile round of negotiations among the three factions in Paris in August, the war began in earnest in the summer of 1964. French policy at this time was strongly influenced by the head of the Asia and Oceania desk at the Quai d'Orsay, Etienne Manac'h, who according to the Mitrokhin archive, had been in secret contact with the Soviet KGB since his posting in Turkey in 1942 and whose three volumes of memoirs reflect strong anti-American sentiment. The French began floating suggestions in diplomatic circles that the future of Laos depended on Souphanouvong, and the visits of the new French ambassador, Pierre Millet, to the Plain and his friendly discussions with Souphanouvong, no doubt on instructions from the Quai, displeased Unger's successor, William H. Sullivan. As a result, the French-American split continued.

The North Vietnamese rotated entire divisions into Laos during the dry season, and their presence now averaged 40,000 troops, both in the north and manning the Ho Chi Minh Trail in eastern Laos. The Neutralists were obliged to give up the last of their positions on the Plain, leaving the task of harassing the enemy as best they could to Vang Pao's Hmong. American air strikes against North Vietnamese positions in Laos also began in the summer of 1964, concurrently with the bombing of North Vietnam, by planes from bases in Thailand, South Vietnam, or aircraft carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin. The post-Khrushchev Soviet leaders, blithely ignoring their responsibility as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference, supplied North Vietnam with the trucks to keep the traffic on the Trail flowing. Special forces troops from South

Vietnam were landed across the border into Laos in raids to disrupt this traffic. Souvanna Phouma took the position that by adopting neutrality as its foreign policy a state did not forfeit the right of self-defense, and the royal government was within its rights to seek military assistance from the United States, an action that had the full support of the king.

On the U.S. side, there was no declaration of war or even a “Gulf of Tonkin Resolution,” but only Secretary of State Dean Rusk’s statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the United States considered that if the Geneva Agreement was broken by the other side, that relieved the United States of itself observing the agreement. The French nevertheless criticized the bombing as a violation. In spite of President De Gaulle’s Delphic pronouncements about the neutralization of Indochina, he could not see his way to support the one genuine neutralist government in Indochina. Souvanna Phouma could denounce Hanoi’s violations of the 1962 Geneva Agreement to the North Vietnamese ambassador in Vientiane and from the speaker’s podium at the United Nations General Assembly to which he traveled every year, in press conferences, and in white books showing photographs of captured North Vietnamese prisoners. Thus the United States, which had done its best to undermine Souvanna Phouma when the Pathet Lao were weak and could have been contained, if not defeated, by political action aimed at separating them from their foreign mentors, found itself waging war in Laos against the now-undisguised North Vietnamese aggression. Laos had become another front of the Vietnam War.

From 1965 to 1973, the war seesawed back and forth in northern Laos. It was a war characterized by short, but often very sharp, engagements fought between the two sides rather than by sweeping troop movements, but cruel nevertheless in view of the rudimentary facilities to evacuate and treat the wounded. The Hmong, particularly, suffered from the war, which was dubbed the “secret war” but which in fact was far from secret, as their front-line positions came under attack and they had to move their families to safety, abandoning their crops and livestock. Isolated outposts everywhere depended on the planes and helicopters of Air America to resupply food and ammunition and, in the worst cases, to escape under frontal assault by North Vietnamese regulars. A group of American fliers called the Ravens provided spotter coverage for Vang Pao’s tiny air force based at Long Chieng. The Hmong, in return, went to the rescue of countless downed American fliers, saving many of them from capture. The ground offensives and the bombing created refugees, whose number reached 378,800 in October 1973 and whose care in camps around Vientiane added to the burden on the royal government. Along the Trail, meanwhile, the bombing assumed huge proportions, eventually resulting in tonnages that exceeded World War II tonnages. The air campaign was directed by the air attaché’s office at the embassy in Vientiane. In cases where civilians became victims of air strikes by error, the embassy was rigorous in paying compensation.

During these years Souvanna Phouma, ever the optimist, puffing on his pipe, maintained vacant the cabinet seats allotted to the Pathet Lao, and by adroit contortions managed to preserve the framework of the PGNU. When the National Assembly, in one of its displays of its prerogatives, rejected his budget in debate in September 1966, he obtained a vote in the King’s Council dissolving the Assembly. Elections were held in 1967, and again on January 2, 1972, bringing in 41 new faces out of 59 deputies elected. The Pathet Lao, as usual boycotted the elections and called them illegal. The Prime Minister stayed in contact with Souphanouvong,

occasionally using the ICC and the Soviet and North Vietnamese ambassadors as messengers. Powerless to stop the war, he endured the attacks on his person of the Pathet Lao radio, which called him traitor, capitulationist, and tool of the U.S. aggressors, and a campaign of denigration by anti-war activists in the United States, many of them in academia, one of whom called him “a savage and voluntary Asian rightwinger.” This courageous figure, who never ceased opposing the subversion of his small country by an armed minority at the command of a foreign power, reminds one of Jan Masaryk, who was caught up in the dramatic events of Czechoslovakia twenty-seven years earlier. When asked for his reaction to a reported statement by Abram Chayes, an adviser to Senator George McGovern in the 1972 American presidential election, that if North Vietnam demanded it a Democratic administration would permit Souvanna Phouma to fall, the Prime Minister replied politely that it was under the Democratic administration of President Kennedy that the United States helped Laos to acquire the status of neutrality and that this implied a certain moral responsibility. But Souvanna Phouma was not partisan when it came to American politics. Informed by Ambassador Sullivan on the eve of the election that Richard Nixon might win, he said in that event he would resign, remembering his bitterness at the Eisenhower Administration’s treatment of him. Sullivan did his best to persuade him that candidate Nixon was a “new” Nixon.

### The Third Coalition

In October 1972, after a lapse of eight years, negotiations resumed between the royal government and the Pathet Lao. The latter referred to Souvanna Phouma’s party to the negotiations as the “Vientiane government,” a demeaning way to signify its refusal to recognize the authority of the king or the National Assembly. Souvanna Phouma successfully resisted a Pathet Lao attempt to introduce a “Patriotic Neutralist” delegation composed of officers who had defected from Kong Le on the Plain of Jars in 1963 as a separate party to the talks. Souvanna Phouma once again turned to Pheng Phongsavan, his old negotiator from the Ban Namone talks, as his chief negotiator. Phoumi Vongvichit was named “special adviser” to the Pathet Lao delegation, and these were the two men who signed the final agreement.

The timing of the resumption of talks coincided with the accord reached in the secret negotiations in Paris between President Nixon’s national security adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, and Hanoi politburo member Le Duc Tho for a draft peace agreement in Vietnam. The Paris draft included a clause on withdrawal of foreign troops from Laos. The government of South Vietnam, while not a party to the secret talks, had drawn Kissinger’s attention to the fact that a peace agreement in which North Vietnam would be permitted to maintain its troop presence in neighboring Laos after a ceasefire, an American troop withdrawal, and a political settlement involving elections in South Vietnam, would not be worth much. However, Kissinger failed to get the North Vietnamese to set a date certain for a foreign troop withdrawal from Laos. The North Vietnamese argued that they had to defer to the sovereignty of the Pathet Lao, who would decide if and when they wished their allies to withdraw. Souvanna Phouma instructed his ambassador in Paris to impress on the American negotiators the extreme importance of obtaining a commitment from the North Vietnamese to withdraw their troops from Laos. However, Article 20 of the Paris Peace Agreement, which was signed on January 27, 1973, made no mention of a deadline connected to the obligation of the signatories to withdraw their troops from Laos.

By then, the Laos negotiations had progressed quite far, with agreement to set up a new provisional coalition government representing two factions rather than three. Pheng Phongsavan kept the American Embassy informed of progress in the negotiations. In return, then Ambassador G. McMurtrie Godley kept the royal government up to date on issues of importance to the United States (such as the release of American prisoners and an accounting for the missing) that should be included in the draft text. The Agreement to Restore Peace and Reconciliation in Laos was signed on February 21, 1973. It provided for a ceasefire effective at noon on the following day covering all actions on the ground and in the air originating both within Laos and from foreign countries. The withdrawal of foreign forces from Laos was addressed in an article that stipulated they had to be withdrawn within sixty days of the date of establishment of the provisional coalition government. This was the closest Kissinger (in his talks in Hanoi earlier that month, in which Laos figured prominently) had been able to extract from his ever-smiling hosts a date for withdrawal. Also the parties were to furnish information on those missing in action.

In accordance with an unwritten understanding Kissinger had with Le Duc Tho to the effect that the release of American prisoners had to include all Indochina, the Pathet Lao released, in a ceremony at the Hanoi airport, nine captured Americans within the time allotted by the Paris Agreement for POW releases. This left the fate of the approximately 350 military and civilian personnel listed as captured or missing in Laos, of which 215 were lost under circumstances that the United States believed that some information should be available, a mystery.

With Phoumi Vongvichit absenting himself from Vientiane for months at a time, the Pathet Lao delayed the formation of the PGNU by linking it with military issues that they said had to be settled first, like the neutralization of the capitals Louangphrabang and Vientiane. In a new round of secret talks in Paris in May and June 1973 designed to “improve” the Paris Peace Agreement, Kissinger and Tho, who professed himself unable to commit his allies to anything, reached a written understanding stating that they “had been informed by the Laotian parties that the PGNU would be achieved by July 1.” Finally, on September 14, 1973, a protocol was signed by the chief negotiators providing for the structure, composition and functions of the PGNU and a National Political Consultative Council (NPCC). The PGNU and NPCC were finally formed on April 5, 1974, launching Laos’s third coalition government.

### The People’s Republic

When Phoui Sananikone sent his usual letter to the cabinet for transmittal to the king requesting the traditional royal presence at the opening session of the National Assembly on May 11, the Pathet Lao prevented action, citing the rule providing for unanimity of decision-making. In July, when seven deputies initiated a petition to be signed in the National Assembly building against the continued presence of North Vietnamese troops beyond the sixty-day deadline for withdrawal set by the Vientiane Agreement, Souvanna Phouma ordered the building cordoned off. He announced that the two sides in the PGNU had unanimously agreed to ask for dissolution of the Assembly. The next day, the Prime Minister suffered a heart attack,

incapacitating him for several months. The Pathet Lao effectively blocked the holding of new elections, required by the constitution. Thus, the last freely elected legislature passed into history.

On the Indochina battlefield in March 1975, North Vietnamese divisions from their well-established bases in southern Laos launched an attack on Ban Me Thuot in what was to be the launching of their final campaign to take over South Vietnam. This violated both Article 20 of the Paris Agreement and the withdrawal clause of the Vientiane Agreement. Later that month, the Laos ceasefire was violated at the road junction of Sala Phou Khoun as the Pathet Lao and their North Vietnamese backers drove southwards as far as Muong Kassy. As usual, the Pathet Lao claimed infringements of the ceasefire by “ultra-rightist reactionaries.” Vang Pao’s Hmong soldiers awaited their fate at their base of Long Chieng. The United States, having failed to react to the massive North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam, could hardly go to the defense of the Hmong, for to do so would re-involve the United States in the war and bring into question its sincerity in signing the Paris Agreement which had been praised by President Nixon as ending American involvement. A hastily improvised airlift of American planes evacuated 2,500 Hmong, including Vang Pao’s six wives and many of his officers, to safe haven in Thailand. Vang Pao was spirited away in great secrecy. Because he feared a stampede, Vang Pao’s CIA minder drove him out of the valley to a rendezvous with a waiting helicopter. About 40,000 Hmong, including soldiers, village headmen, and civil servants, were left behind, leaderless and without orders or instructions about how to care for themselves and their families in the new situation.

In Vientiane, a campaign of intimidation against rightist members of the government and officers of the royal army, who felt isolated by the departure of the last Americans from Phnom Penh and Saigon, gathered speed. Souvanna Phouma tried at first to ban the demonstrations, but then gave in and sided with their aims. On May 8, some 3,000 young people and teachers carrying placards and chanting staged a march past the American Embassy. Laotian and American guards could not get the gate shut, and several demonstrators climbed the fence. A few stones were thrown and an attempt was made to lower the flag, but a student leader sitting on the fence and Pathet Lao policemen, who patrolled the city under the neutralization terms of the Vientiane Agreement, shouted at the demonstrators to move on, and they obeyed. Five rightist cabinet members resigned after this. Demonstrators also took over the offices of the U.S. Agency for International Development. On June 26, AID closed its mission for the first time since 1951.

In spite of appeals from AID workers that Laotian colleagues and acquaintances were at risk as a result of these dramatic events, the embassy refused facilities for evacuation of non-Americans. Laotian officials and their families, abandoning their houses and belongings, fled by their own devices, hiring boats for nighttime river crossings or bribing Pathet Lao guards not to open fire. When non-essential staff and dependents had been evacuated, the American community, which had numbered more than a thousand, was reduced to a skeleton embassy staff of about one dozen. The Chargé d’Affaires, Christian A. Chapman, decided to maintain the embassy in the face of all provocations rather than close it, and his decision was approved in Washington. Chapman’s decision, in view of the uncertainty about how the new regime would

treat official Americans and the total control of the access to Vientiane by land, water, and air by the Pathet Lao and their foreign allies, was a courageous one. The previous year, an American tourist, Charles Dean, had been captured by the Pathet Lao and executed.

Armed Pathet Lao bands arrived in Pakxe and Savannakhet to take over law enforcement duties from rightists. On August 23, the Pathet Lao completed their seizure of local power with the takeover of the Vientiane city administration by a revolutionary committee. As 1975 drew to a close, signs multiplied that events were accelerating. In October, the NPCC established new screening procedures for electoral candidates that effectively eliminated all persons who had not supported the Pathet Lao. The NPCC also announced that elections to a new National Assembly would be held on April 4, 1976. In the last week of November, the NPCC and PGNU were convoked to meet at Vieng Sai, the Pathet Lao headquarters in Houaphan. While demonstrators in Vientiane demanded the end of the PGNU and the abolition of the monarchy, Souvanna Phouma and Souphanouvong flew to Louangphrabang and obtained the abdication of King Savang Vatthana “in response to the aspirations of Lao nationalities throughout the country.” A hastily convened National Congress of People’s Representatives met on December 1 and 2 in the deserted gymnasium of the former American school in Vientiane, at which the leaderships of the new state and government were proclaimed. Souphanouvong was President and Kaysone, who appeared for the first time in Vientiane, was Prime Minister. Laos had joined the socialist camp.

### The First Years of the LPDR

The new regime was under the control of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP), a Marxist-Leninist party that had been founded on March 22, 1955, in the post 1954 Geneva Conference period, but had hitherto remained clandestine. Its general secretary was Kaysone. The names of the other six members of the politburo were also made public for the first time. Important positions in the party and government overlapped so as to ensure complete compliance with the party’s decisions, reached at secret meetings of its central committee, which was made up of old-line revolutionary leaders. The first years were marked by the party’s steps to ensure control over the country and the people in whose name the revolution had been fought.

Ex-King Savang Vatthana never had anything to do with the new regime, so far as is known. He received the meaningless title of adviser to President Souphanouvong. He lived quietly in the royal palace in Louangphrabang as a private citizen until March 1977, when he, Queen Khamboui, and Crown Prince Say Vongsavang were spirited away by helicopter to Houaphan, officially for their own safety, but in reality to prevent the monarch from being used as a symbol of resistance to the regime. It was still a period of instability, and pockets of resistance, mainly among the Hmong, continued to operate. Imprisoned in Seminar Camp 01, the Crown Prince died on May 2, 1978, and the King eleven days later of starvation. The Crown Prince had insisted his father share their meager rations. The Queen died on December 12, 1981. All were buried in unmarked graves by a small stream outside the camp’s perimeter, according to an eyewitness. No official announcement of their deaths was made. More than a decade later, during an official visit to France in December 1989, Kaysone confirmed reports of the king’s death in an innocuous aside that attributed it to old age.

But the party did not dare abolish the Buddhist *sangha*, of which the king had been the supreme patron, although it did modify the traditional position of this body so as to shape it also into an instrument of control. In March 1979, the Venerable Thammayano, the 87-year-old *Sangha-raja* of Laos, the country's highest-ranking abbot, fled by floating across the Mekong on a raft of inflated tire tubes. After a few initial experiments on a local level in which monks were denounced as parasites threatened to cause popular agitation against the regime, monks were not directly ordered to work. But a monk was not eligible for a government rice ration unless he worked, by gardening or in some other productive task, such as teaching handicrafts or addressing meetings on behalf of the government. Ordinary monks were not forbidden to preach, but their sermons were commonly tape recorded and monitored for signs of dissidence. As a result of these pressures, the number of monks in Laos decreased sharply after 1975. Spirit worship continued, but its existence was officially denied.

The seminar camps were the centerpiece of the new regime's program for those it had defeated. The party's Marxist-Leninist dogma did not allow any respite in the class struggle, and those who had made themselves the lackeys of the foreign aggressors during the national liberation phase of the revolution or were members of the feudal class were the presumed saboteurs and subversives of the socialist phase that was just getting under way. As long as they remained free, they would spy on the security forces of the people's regime, and might even prepare the way for a return of the Americans. The work of building the camps had begun even before the proclamation of the LPDR. Known only by their numbers to the people who built and occupied them, there was Camp 01 at Sop Hao, Camp 03 near Na Kai, now given the Pali name Vieng Xai, meaning "Victorious Town," Camp 05 near Sam Teu, and Camps 04 and 06 near Muang Et, all in Houaphan. There was also a camp at Muang Khoua on the Nam Ou and other camps in the center and south. There are no official figures on the numbers sent for reeducation; the entire network of camps was kept a secret from the outside world with the only news of them being brought out by former inmates and their families. Published estimates have put the number variously at 30,000, 37,600, and 50,000.

In July 1975, the first groups of high-level officials of the old regime, including *chao khouengs* and *chao muangs*, were transported to the camp sites and set to work constructing them. They had received letters signed by Souvanna Phouma ordering them to attend an important meeting in Vientiane. They arrived in full dress uniform. After an overnight stay in Vientiane, they were flown to the Plain of Jars, where a festive atmosphere prevailed. The officials, about 70 in all, were given a party, with food and a movie, and with Vietnamese advisers present. They were then flown on to Houaphan, separated into small groups, and organized into work parties.

In August and September 1977, an incident occurred at Camp 05 in which a group of 26 "reactionary" high-ranking officials and military officers were accused of plotting a revolt and were arrested. They were taken away to Camp 01. They included Pheng Phongsavan, the minister who had signed the Vientiane Agreement; Touby Lyfoung, the Hmong leader; Soukhan Vilaysan, another of Souvanna Phouma's ministers who had been with him in the Lao Issara and had risen to be secretary-general of the Neutralist Party; and Generals Bounphone Maekthapharak and Ouane Ratikoun. All died there. Others were more fortunate. Tiao



Sisoumang Sisaleumsak, one of two ministers who had held Souvanna Phouma's government together at Khang Khay in the dark days of early 1961; General Sengsouvanh Souvannarath, who had taken command of the Neutralist army in 1966; and Sing Chanthakoummane, who as a young lieutenant in the Second Paratroop Battalion and had taken part in Kong Le's *coup*, were held in seminar camps for 15 years or more before being released. All resisted the efforts to indoctrinate them.

Souvanna Phouma accepted his fate calmly and with the dignity of adviser to the government whose title had been bestowed upon him. He did not end his life like Jan Masaryk who was pushed out of his bathroom window in the Czernin Palace in Prague in the dead of night by the goon squads of the new regime, but died a natural death of old age in 1984. He no doubt owed much to the tacit protection of his half-brother, who died in 1995.

Many Hmong fled south to make the hazardous crossing of the Mekong. Remnants of Vang Pao's army, determined to remain in Laos, took to the mountains once again, evading the Pathet Lao as best they could, and resisting with whatever weapons they had left. The government began a campaign of extermination against these remnants, using helicopters armed with biological weapons supplied by Hanoi from stockpiles in the Soviet Union's large biological warfare program.

Over the succeeding years, various groups using high-sounding names abroad have announced resistance activities against the LPDR. Some have invoked the backing of Vang Pao, others have said they were carrying on the struggle in the name of the royal family. The resistance has remained a shadowy affair. Occasionally bombs have exploded near markets in Vientiane, and buses have been ambushed on the Luangphabang road with loss of life, including those of foreign tourists. The political goals of such incidents, if any, have remained murky.

## Questions and Issues

1. Discuss how the American close relationship with Sarit constrained U.S. policy in Laos in the late 1950's, especially considering the broader history of Lao-Thai relations.
2. In the context of the Eisenhower Administration's suspicion of neutralist regimes in Southeast Asia, discuss the State Department's failure to cultivate Crown Prince Savang Vatthana's staunch anti-Communist sentiments, specifically the failure to respond positively to his request for a guarantee of Laos's borders on the pretext that these were undefined.
3. On the eve of the outbreak of full-scale war in Laos in the summer of 1964, what foreign country was in the best position to guarantee the independence of the Kingdom of Laos? What event, or series of events, prevented this country from assuming this role? Discuss in the light of postwar power relationships in the region.
4. Discuss the moral dilemmas raised by the Kennedy Administration's commitment to arm the Hmong in 1961 and the war's toll on Hmong fighters and their families.

## CULTURE

In areas that do not impinge on politics, the peoples of Laos carry on their everyday lives in much the same manner as they did before the advent of the new regime and its revolutionary rhetoric. The traditions of Buddhism and the *boun* (festival), which are historically associated with the village but now extend to urban life as well, dominate the lives of the lowland Lao. The merit-making ritual of giving alms to monks during their morning rounds never disappeared despite the regime's attempts in the early years to regulate it and to accuse the monks of being "parasitic" like the old "feudal classes."

Among the upland peoples, who are sometimes grouped under the collective descriptor "animist," traditional rituals also persist. The Hmong, for example, do not feel the same attachment to the village as a spatial or social unit in the way the lowland Lao do. To the Hmong, the primary foci of social identification are the household, the group of close relatives (*kwv tij*), and the clan, irrespective of any temporary or even permanent settlement. Their social identity is thus fixed through the concepts of patrilineal descent groups ("lineages" and clans), the actual units of which, however, are dispersed nowadays on a truly cosmopolitan scale. The Hmong are divided into about 18 clans. The Hmong cosmos is inhabited by a large number of different spirits (*dab*), the most important categories of which are household spirits, medicine spirits, nature spirits, and shamanic spirits. Among the Hmong, an important ritual is the celebration of the New Year, at which a chicken or pig is usually sacrificed to the household spirit, and whose altar (*dab xwm kab*), is usually placed on the wall opposite the main door.

The traditional ritual of the *baci*, in which strings are tied around someone's wrist (*mat kaen*), not to be removed for fear of bad luck, has indeed been elevated in Laos today to the place of a national custom. The *baci* is associated with transitions, namely births, marriage, entering the monkhood, going away, returning, New Year, and welcoming or bidding farewell to foreign guests. Official sanction to the *baci* ceremony was first given at the Lao New Year in 1980 when it was announced that the administrative committee of Vientiane province held a *baci* and those attending included the highest leaders of the LPDR. Today it retains an important place in state ceremonies of all kinds. This is the more ironic in that the structure of the ritual language contained in the ceremony is replete with royal references and style.

The official calendar of the LPDR contains the following holidays: New Year's Day (January 1), Pathet Lao Day (January 6), Army Day (January 20), Women's Day (March 8), Lao People's Revolutionary Party Day (March 22), Lao New Year (April 13-15), May Day, Children's Day (June 1), Lao Issara Day (August 13), Liberation Day (August 23), Freedom from the French Day (October 12), and National Day (December 2). These primarily affect state organization, the bureaucracy, and schools. For holidays celebrated by particular ethnic groups, the state grants leave to its officials concerned, who live mainly in the capital and urban areas. In rural areas, the traditional calendar centered on the *wats* and determined by the agricultural cycle remains in operation beyond the reach of the state.

Members of the household work the land together, although there is a separation by tasks. In wet rice cultivation (*naa*-cultivation), men do the plowing and preparation of the seedbed, controlling water flow to the fields, and threshing of the crop. Women do the transplanting and weeding, and are responsible for carrying the sheaves of rice to the threshing place. In upland rice cultivation (*hai*-cultivation), men handle the cutting and clearing of the fields, while women do the sowing and weeding. Activities in wet rice cultivation begin with the onset of the rains in April or May and end with harvesting in October and November. Activities in upland rice cultivation begin with burning off vegetation and clearing fields at the end of the dry season in February and March when the air is full of smoke; harvesting takes place in November. Cultivation of secondary crops is interspersed with rice cultivation; gardening on river banks, for example, follows the dropping of water levels at the end of the dry season.

In addition to strictly agricultural activities, the daily lives of rural people center around a number of other necessary activities, like fetching water from wells, often located near *wats*, and important economic enterprises like gathering and foraging. Among forest products are counted small game, birds and eggs, fruit, honey, spices, medicines, resins, latexes, dyes, fuel wood and charcoal, as well as structural materials like rattan, bamboo, wooden poles and various fibers. Gathering and home processing of forest products are importantly associated with women.

The receding into the past of the struggle against the imperialists and feudalists, the collapse of European communism, and the introduction of a mixed economy in which private initiative is encouraged, have all deprived of any meaning the construction of a socialist state in Laos as a goal worthy of attainment. Accordingly, the regime has had to seek alternate sources of legitimacy to Marxism-Leninism. Not surprisingly, this search has taken the form of a retraditionalized nationalism that is meaningful to the people.

In a move of great symbolism, the That Luang, or Grand Stupa, built originally by the 16th Century King Setthatirath and destroyed and pillaged several times, only to be rebuilt each time with loving care, replaced the hammer and sickle as the centerpiece of the national emblem over each ministry and on official documents and on a new 1,000-kip note in 1991, the year of the adoption of the new constitution. The That Luang, on the outskirts of Vientiane, is the site of the great fair and festival held every November between the thirteenth and fifteenth day of the twelfth month in the Buddhist calendar. On these days, thousands of people stream toward the stupa to pay homage. The king used to preside over the festival, but today it is the leading figures of the LPDR who officiate. In January 2003, a four-meter-high statue of Fa Ngum was formally unveiled at a ceremony in Vientiane at which a number of party leaders were in attendance and were observed to fall to their knees in veneration of the kingdom's founder. The day of the ceremony was a national holiday.

The New Year celebration in Louangphrabang, although shortened from two weeks under the old regime to three days now, still takes place with much pomp and color. The parading of the Prabang, the holy relic and palladium of the former kingdom Lan Xang, which was brought to the royal capital during the reign of its founder, Fa Ngum, remains a central feature. Government officials, dressed in *sampots* and led by the Foreign Minister and the Governor of the province, line up on the steps of the former royal palace, now a museum. After appropriate

rituals by members of the *sangha*, the Prabang is carried down the steps by attendants and placed in its palanquin for the procession to Wat May amid crowds lining the streets. The That Luang festival has always included a traditional game of hockey (*tiki*). It is played with bamboo sticks and a ball made of roots. In its effort to keep up with the outside world, traditional contests like this one, as well as the boat races on the Mekong, have been "modernized." Football has become a popular spectator sport. Laos has participated in the summer Olympic Games.

The replacement of the hammer and sickle as official emblem has also coincided with: (1) the overhaul of billboards that used to proclaim the glory of socialist construction, (2) the allowing of the loudspeakers that used to blare out propaganda from telephone poles in the capital to fall into gentle dereliction, and (3) a concerted attempt to present the regime's leaders as being good fathers, acquirers of merit, and supporters of Buddhism who are entitled to receive high Buddhist funeral ceremonies--in short, more human beings than the stylized portraits of heroic and seemingly immortal leaders of the recent past. The current attempt to re-legitimize the regime bears many of the marks of a scissors-and-paste effort with its selective evocation of the six centuries of the Lao monarchy. It also raises interesting questions about the justification of the 30-year-long struggle for power by the party, and all the sacrifices that it entailed.

The press and broadcasting, plus now the Internet, are judged by the regime to be in the sphere of political activity and thus are subject to control. In a country that used to have many newspapers identified with contending political parties and factions, there is today a severe limitation on publishing. Total circulation of daily newspapers in 2000 was about 21,000. The largest circulating daily newspaper is the party's official organ, *Pasason*, published in Vientiane. The party's quarterly journal, also published in Vientiane, is *Aloun Mai*. The official news agency is Khaosan Pathet Lao (KPL). Radio broadcasting is by far the most widespread medium of mass communication. The National Radio of Laos broadcasts in a number of languages, principally Lao, English, and French. Not subject to government control are the Lao-language broadcasts of the BBC, the Voice of America, and Radio Free Asia, which contain news of events in Laos. There is also a government-run television station, which competes with Thai television stations broadcasting from across the river. Laotian sensitivity to the latter was indicated on May 14, 2004, when the Ministry of Information and Culture issued an order prohibiting all Thai television channels and videos from being shown in public places like airports, bus stations, hotels, restaurants and markets.

## Questions and Issues

1. The anthropologist Carol Ireson has studied the economic role that forest products play in the well-being of women in rural Laos. Fishing is also an important economic activity. Discuss the social effects of deforestation and large-scale development schemes like hydropower projects.

## SOCIAL ISSUES

In the past, the teaching in Laos of much cultural lore and reading and writing took place in Buddhist *wats* and was available only to men. The French introduced modern education into Laos with the opening in 1902 of elementary schools in Vientiane and Luang Prabang. By 1969/1970, there were about 200,000 elementary public school pupils and another 25,000 private school pupils. A 1968 study concluded that the rate of literacy, defined as the fourth-grade reading level, among men between 14 and 45 years of age was 50 to 60%. The rate among women between 14 and 35 was about 25%. In the youngest age group surveyed, 14-24 years of age, the literacy rate was 75% for men and 29% for women. Figures for 1995 show that overall literacy for the population over 15 years of age was 56.6%, with the rate for men being 69.4% and for women 44.4%. There were reported to be 7,896 schools for primary age (6-10) children with a total enrollment of 786,335 students in 1996-1997.

The new regime's primary concern in education was political, and the main objective was to spread knowledge of the party's policies. Political education became an important part of the curriculum in schools and other institutions. Party cadres led sessions at every level in which attacks on the old "neo-colonial" regime and American imperialism, celebrations of the patriotic struggle for independence, and exhortations to defend the country against "traitors" and to build socialism featured prominently. Most books dating from the old regime were destroyed, foreign books were no longer available, and the standard text published by the Committee for Social Science Research of the Ministry of Education in 1989 (the three-volume *History of Laos from 1893 to the Present*), renders the country's modern history simply as a struggle for independence led by the party against foreign aggressors and their local puppets. Historical research outside this very narrow scope was discouraged by equating it with opposition to the LPDR.

With the collapse of communism in Europe and the return to Laos of young people who had been sent to Eastern Europe for higher education, a reassessment occurred and the education system was reoriented. In higher education, the biggest reform was to reorient language training from Russian and East European languages to English and French. Then textbooks were revised. The standard history text was rewritten to tone down ideological rhetoric. Since 1994 new primary texts have begun to appear with important changes in subject matter. A new third grade reader omits mention of socialism, and a new fifth grade reader emphasizes serving the people in peacetime rather than extolling wartime heroism. Stories emphasizing the importance of respecting teachers and elders, of being a well behaved family member and a good citizen, and of observing good hygiene, as well as animal stories intended to convey moral lessons had never quite disappeared, but are now given greater space. A new curriculum discouraging the rote learning associated with the system followed after 1975 came into operation throughout Laos in September 1996. A new university was inaugurated in November 1996 years after the break-up of the royal government's university by the new regime.

Despite some hopeful signs, the education system of the LPDR still suffers from the backwardness manifest in inadequate teacher training and facilities stemming from inadequate investment in schools and educational human capital on the part of the government for many years running. Building village schools has never appeared as attractive to the ministries in Vientiane as large, centralized, capital-intensive development projects, whether in the field of agriculture or industry. The majority of the young people in Laos today have only an imperfect

knowledge of their country and the world beyond the borders. This is particularly true of the history of the former regime and of the kings of the ancient past. Whatever they know comes from what their parents and elders may have told them. However, it is in the schools where young people first come in contact with the state, where they salute the flag and sing the national anthem, and where they see the photographs of their current rulers. This knowledge, while imperfect, does enable them to identify themselves as the "Lao" of the "Lao People's Democratic Republic." This is, in the final analysis, what their government wants.

Medical care is also limited by inadequate communication networks and lack of human and financial resources devoted to the health sector. In 1996, there were 1,167 physicians for the whole country (1 per 4,115 inhabitants) and 10,364 hospital beds.

HIV/AIDS prevalence has remained low in the LPDR, with estimates of around 0.05% of the total population. Findings of the national second-generation surveillance in 2000-2001 showed that 6 of 811 (0.9%) female service workers in entertainment sites were HIV positive. Another study involving 108 female sex workers showed a total STI infection rate of 54%, which is higher than anywhere else in Southeast Asia. Although much of Southeast Asia was adversely affected by the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), there were no reported cases of the illness in Laos.

## Questions and Issues

1. Discuss the present-day prospects for educating young Laotians in the history of their country.

## ECONOMICS

Laos is included on the United Nations list of the world's least developed countries. The urban-based, free market economy of the years 1954-1975 was sustained by large amounts of foreign, notably U.S., aid, with the Chinese minority playing an important commercial role in

what was essentially a small urban-based monetary economy. In 1975 the new regime, with its Marxist-Leninist doctrine and support from the Soviet bloc, attempted to replace this economy with a socialist one. The attempt was a failure and led to severe disruptions, especially in rural areas with the attempt to collectivize agriculture. The attempt to instill socialism was abandoned in 1986 when private markets were introduced. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the sources of aid shifted once again. The economy today may accurately be described as post-socialist, and comprises state and private sectors co-existing side by side. In 2003, the Constitution was revised to formally recognize private property and the legitimate activity of the private sector on an equal footing with the state enterprise sector. The country is still heavily dependent on foreign aid and investment. A large number of nongovernmental organizations, including some from the United States, have been assisting the government, mainly in the fields of rural development and public health.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2001 was estimated at US\$1.6 billion, making GDP per capita about US\$300.

Laos has mineral resources of iron, copper, manganese, lead, gold, silver, tin, gypsum, oil, and natural gas. Tin has been mined commercially since colonial times, and gypsum has become important; the other minerals have been worked only in primitive and unsystematic ways. There are in fact over 500 recorded mineral occurrences distributed more or less evenly over the whole country. Foreign companies have shown interest in exploration and development of minerals, including barite, gold ores, precious stones, and oil and natural gas. Laos also has considerable hydroelectric power potential. Laos's forest resources have also provided for several important wood processing industries, although timber extraction has been periodically banned by the government for environmental reasons.

Agriculture is by far the principal occupation in Laos and in 2001 contributed 50.9% of GDP and employed three-fourths of the labor force. With an estimated land area of 23.68 million hectares, fewer than one million hectares, or less than 4%, are cultivated. Rice accounts for about 80% of cultivated land, including about 422,000 hectares of lowland wet rice and about 223,000 hectares of upland rice. In addition, about 800,000 hectares are used for pasture or contain ponds for pisciculture (i.e., fish reared by artificial means). Agricultural production is subject to large year-to-year fluctuations due to weather; alternating droughts and floods have severely affected lowland wet rice production in particular.

Rice yields are low, averaging about 2.25 tons per hectares, reflecting the absence of high-yielding varieties and the low use of other inputs like fertilizer. In upland rice production, no modern inputs are used at all, the soil being fertilized by the residues of vegetation cleared and burned off to establish the field, or swidden, and the crop is entirely rainfed.

Principal non-rice crops include cardamom, coffee, cotton, fruit, maize, mung beans, peanuts, soybeans, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, tobacco and vegetables. The only crop produced for export in substantial quantities is coffee, grown mainly on the Bolovens Plateau. Opium is also produced in hill areas, although opium poppy cultivation for export is illegal. Today, Laos

remains the third largest producer of opium after Afghanistan and Myanmar, producing about 180 metric tons in 2002.

The main activities of the country's small manufacturing sector, which accounts for about 18% of GDP, are food processing (rice milling and beverage production), saw milling, manufacture of building materials, production of a variety of light consumer goods (small tools, cigarettes, detergents, insecticides, matches, rubber footwear, salt, and clothing), and more recently a thriving garment export sector accounting for 26% of exports in value. Energy production, entirely in the hands of the state, is important for export. Electricity produced from dams on the Ngum River north of Vientiane and at Xeset near Salavan in the south and sold to Thailand accounts for 32% of exports in value. Four additional projects are under construction and a further eleven projects are being assessed for their environmental effects. However, criticism of international donors for construction of big dams and their effects on human, fauna and flora populations, as well as their economic viability, has slowed the planning process. The Asian economic crisis beginning in 1997 also reduced Thailand's demand for electric power. In Laos, the debate has centered on the Nam Theun 2, a projected dam on the Na Kay plateau in central Laos. Handicrafts also provide an important source of income generation. Further development of the mineral sector is contingent upon the willingness of private companies to invest; lack of adequate data, a trained labor force, dependable infrastructure, and legislation are inhibiting factors here. The sale of aircraft overflight rights is a major contributor to foreign exchange earnings.

Laos's main sources of imports in 2000 were Thailand (52.0%), Vietnam (26.5%), China (5.7%), Singapore (3.3%), and Japan (1.5%). Laos's main export destinations are Vietnam (41.5%), Thailand (14.8%), France (6.1%), Germany (4.6%), and Belgium (2.2%).

Until March 1988 the government controlled all banking activities. In that month Decree 11 on the reform of the banking system was passed, separating commercial bank functions from state bank functions. The Vientiane branch of the old State Bank became the central monetary agency. In June 1990, the Central Banking Law was passed, establishing the Central Bank to replace the State Bank. Under this law, the Central Bank assumed responsibility for regulation and supervision of commercial and regional banks; maintenance of foreign exchange reserves; issuance and supervision of money for circulation; licensing, supervision, and regulation of financial services; and management of the monetary and credit system. Other branches of the former State Bank were transformed into autonomous commercial banks to promote private investment. By 1991, Laos had seven commercial banks, including some joint Lao-Thai ventures. Responsibility for the debts of state-owned enterprises was transferred to the commercial banks, giving them enormous liquidity problems. To alleviate these, the government in 1989 allowed foreign banks to begin operations in Laos. The value of Laos's currency, the kip, declined by half in 1998 alone as a result of the Asian economic crisis. Tourism has been a growing sector, appealing mainly to Thailand, but also to Europe, the United States, and other foreign countries.

Laos still has a rather primitive transportation network. Rivers and roads are the main avenues of communication, supplemented by air transport. Of an estimated 13,494 miles



(21,716 kilometers) of roads, 24 percent are paved and 30 percent gravel, although passage on even the main roads during the rainy season is often difficult. In 1996 there were 16,320 passenger cars and 4,200 trucks and buses. There are about 4,600 kilometers of navigable waterways, including 1,330 kilometers of the 2,030 kilometers of the Mekong in Laos.

Navigability of the Mekong for international commerce is impeded by the Khone Falls, a series of interlocking falls and cataracts spread across some 11 kilometers near the border with Cambodia, and by smaller falls on the river between Vientiane and the China border. Both public and private trade associations handle river traffic. Lao Airlines, the national airline, services domestic and foreign points from Wattai Airport at Vientiane.

Telecommunications have seen a remarkable improvement of their capacity in recent years. There is an Internet server in Vientiane, but it is subject to strict government control. There were 18,000 Internet users in 2002. The country also had 15,000 personal computers and 55,200 cellular telephone subscribers in that year.

## Questions and Issues

1. Laos has accumulated considerable experience over the past three decades in the design of projects and programs aimed at reducing opium poppy production. Nevertheless, the problem persists, proving that it knows no ideological boundaries. Discuss some of the factors involved.

## GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Since its establishment in December 1975, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been effectively controlled by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. This self-described Marxist-Leninist party, in alliance with the Vietnamese party, secretly led the revolution that ended in the seizure of state power and the abolition of the monarchy. Top government positions are held by high-ranking party members, who constitute a Central Committee with a Politburo at the head. The current president of the LPDR, Khamtai Siphandon, is also general secretary of the party.

The LPDR constitution adopted in 1991 states in Article 3 that the “people’s rights to be the masters of the country are exercised and ensured through the functioning of the political system with the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party as its leading organ.”

The main institutions of the LPDR today, besides the cabinet, are an array of mass organizations, led by the Lao Front for National Construction; the National Assembly, whose members are elected to five-year terms; and a judicial system headed by a Supreme People's Court. These institutions are subject to party control and have an interesting history. In view of the confusion caused by the not unnatural tendency of Western scholars to assume that when Marxist-Leninist regimes like the LPDR speak of elections they are speaking of the kind of elections familiar to Westerners, it is extremely important to analyze what the regimes themselves say about elections. The election law of the LPDR adopted in 1991 states in Article 2 under Chapter I “Overall Principles”:

All Lao citizens, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, social status, domicile, or professions, who are 18 years and older, have the right to cast votes; and those who are 21 years and older, have the right to stand as candidates for the election as members of the National Assembly.

In Article 7 under Chapter II dealing with candidates standing for election, the law states:

Candidates standing for election as members of the National Assembly must be fully qualified, as follows: by having a patriotic spirit, and a spirit of cherishing the popular democratic system and fulfilling responsible tasks; by maintaining a certain level of knowledge on the party’s line and policies and the state’s laws, and being capable of putting them into actual practice; by gaining trust from the people; and having good health.

In Article 8, the law further specifies:

The Lao Front for National Construction and other mass organizations, with the coordination of the electoral committees and various state and party organizations of various services at various levels, are in charge of proposing and confirming names of the candidates for the election as members of the National Assembly.

In Article 9, the law states that “documents of verification” for each candidate must be submitted to the national-level electoral committee not later than 14 days before election day. These documents include, notably, besides birth date the date of joining the revolution. The effect of these conditions is to disqualify any candidate who has not demonstrated a patriotic spirit by joining the revolution. Obviously, the earlier the date of joining the revolution the higher the candidate’s qualifications are considered, and for those too young to have taken part in the national liberation struggle (1950-1975) joining the revolution means serving meritoriously in one of the party’s front organizations, such as the ones for school-age children and revolutionary youth.

The difference in these qualifications with those of Western-style elections will be obvious, and there is not the slightest chance that the LPDR's election law will suddenly be transformed into a liberal election law, whatever Laotian exile groups may think. For Marxist-Leninists, it is a matter of dogma that defining voters and candidates for election who are patriotic is their prerogative. That this question of who votes and who gets to be a candidate must be left ambiguous in the party's propaganda during the struggle to seize state power is a source of the confusion among Western observers.

The LPDR's first attempt to institutionalize some sort of mandate from the people it claimed to represent was the Supreme People's Assembly, which was not elected at all but was appointed by the National Congress on December 2, 1975. Its twice-yearly meetings were reported in the controlled press, but it rapidly faded into obscurity. Perhaps because the regime wished to bolster its popular credentials, it suddenly announced in 1988 that elections would be held for a new SPA. Elections were held on June 26, 1988 for 2,410 seats on district-level people's councils, and on November 20, 1988 for 651 seats on province-level people's councils. On March 26, 1989 elections were held for 79 seats on the SPA. The second SPA had as its task the completion of the draft constitution, preparations for which had been talked about for years. The constitution was at last approved by the SPA on August 15, 1991 and was officially adopted. The leading role of the party, enshrined in the constitution, was manifest in the fact that 65 of the 79 members of the SPA were party members. Elections for the third SPA, now renamed the National Assembly, were held on December 20, 1992, with the participation of 93.3% of eligible voters. Elections to the National Assembly were also held in 1997 and 2002.

Two significant trends emerged in LPDR politics in the postwar period. The first was the preponderance of the military in positions of power in the party and government. By 1994, the party leader and prime minister, the ministers of national defense, interior, and agriculture and forestry, and the chairman of the National Assembly were all generals. The other trend was the noticeable under-representation of ethnic minorities in government-controlled institutions. This was somewhat surprising in view of the important role played by ethnic minorities during the struggle for power, which might have argued for their representation at least commensurate with their population numbers. Official explanations of this phenomenon are hard to find. However, the authors of the previously-cited 1996 official history draw the conclusion that "The specificity of the living conditions and the relations between various ethnic groups engender favorable conditions for national harmony" and refer to "the population of Laos, with the Lao-Thai speaking community [i.e. the ethnic Lao] as its core, in a multi-ethnic structure."

The country is divided into 16 provinces, one municipality, and one special region (see Table 1). Provincial governors wield considerable power and enjoy a large measure of autonomy in such matters as approval of economic development projects. Decree 64 of April 23, 2003, established committees for investment and cooperation at the provincial level, which were authorized to license foreign investment projects valued at \$2 million or less.

## **Questions and Issues**

1. The National Assembly is the institution of the LPDR that is most likely to bring about new ways of doing things in the LPDR. Do you agree or disagree? Discuss your reasons.

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

The last American ambassador to the Kingdom of Laos, Charles S. Whitehouse, departed on reassignment in April 1975. The embassy remained open with a Chargé d'Affaires and a skeleton staff. Ambassadorial relations with the LPDR were not restored until 1992. The first U.S. ambassador to the LPDR was Charles B. Salmon, Jr.

The normalization of relations represented by the naming of an ambassador followed positive steps to resolve two issues of vital importance to the United States, which were pressed by many visiting delegations to Vientiane. The first of these was the POW/MIA issue, on which the LPDR's agreement in 1984 to start hosting search parties for U.S.-financed on-site excavations of aircraft loss sites was a breakthrough. On POW's, no similar progress was registered, however. The LPDR's repeated affirmation that it was not holding any POW's was reluctantly accepted as fact. The harsh conditions in which American prisoners endured during the war made long survival unlikely in any case, even disregarding the fact that the Pathet Lao regarded such prisoners as criminals and denied them the application of the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. In spite of many rumors, often propagated by unscrupulous individuals seeking pecuniary gain, no POW's ever emerged from the jungles of Laos after 1975.

The second issue of importance was the drug issue. By war's end, Laos had become a major producer and exporter of opium and heroin, much of which found its way to the United States. To meet this illegal trade, the United States in the postwar years financed a series of projects designed to offer Laotian farmers alternative sources of crop revenue. Some of these joint projects, as other development projects, were implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGO's).

An issue of importance to the LPDR is the removal of unexploded ordnance left over from the war. More than 12,000 people, many of them children, are estimated to have lost their lives due to explosions of ordnance littering the countryside. The United States has contributed to efforts to remove such ordnance.

The United States responded quickly and generously to the exodus from Laos provoked by the coming to power of the LPDR. These people, who had tied their lives to the royal government and its American backers and who saw little future for themselves under a regime that made class struggle and the distinction between patriots and lackeys of foreign imperialists its hallmark, began new lives relatively easily thanks to their education and their professional skills. Their children acquired American citizenship and went into professions in the United States, including the military, and a son of the Na Champask family was among the soldiers

killed in Iraq in 2004. The first wave of Laotian refugees was followed by a second composed largely of rural people with little or no education but who saw no hope for themselves and their families under the exploitative agricultural policies instituted by the new regime soon after its takeover with the aim of turning Laos into a proletarian dictatorship on the Marxist-Leninist model. Many among this second wave, either because they lacked qualifications for resettlement or because they feared journeying to a strange land, remained bottled up in camps along Thailand's river border with Laos.

Strong family ties, particularly among the Hmong, eased the resettlement process. Large and cohesive Hmong communities sprang up in California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and other states. The continuing resistance of the Hmong who remained in Laos, however, created a major political problem for Thailand and the United States, which were seeking to improve relations with the LPDR. The LPDR's campaign to eliminate the resistance produced a continuing flow of asylum seekers across the river. Anti-Communist Hmong in the United States raised funds among the expatriates and funneled them to Thailand where they served to finance armed resistance activities across the river. These activities reached a peak in the early 1990's, and the backflow of Hmong seeking escape from the fighting in Laos strained the resources of the Thai government.

From 1992 to 1994, following a tripartite agreement among the LPDR, Thailand, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for repatriation of the Hmong in Thailand, the State Department spent nearly \$3 million to send Lao and Hmong refugees back to Laos. The living conditions of the repatriates were difficult to verify on the ground. Several prominent Hmong who voluntarily returned to Laos in those years disappeared. In 1994, the Thai government announced its intention to close the last camp along the border, at Ban Napho, which, according to one Congressional report, had assumed the aspect of a concentration camp. The Pathet Lao had seized intact the personnel files of Vang Pao's army in Long Chieng;, without orders to destroy them, the officer in charge of the files had simply locked them and pocketed the keys when he left the valley. And of course from the LPDR's viewpoint there was no statute of limitations on crimes against the people. Thus, thirty year after the end of the war the Hmong in the camp were still bearing its tragic consequences. The problem was compounded by the fact that the UNHCR personnel responsible for screening inmates were mainly young people who lacked any background in the history of the thirty-years war. They screened out thousands, making them automatically ineligible for resettlement, even if they had been willing to go to strange lands. Accordingly, many Hmong broke out of the camp, fleeing to the hills of northern Thailand or to a temple at Saraburi, Wat Tham Krabok, which seemed to offer sanctuary. By 2004, some 20,000 Hmong and Lao were living in squalid conditions and under tight security at Wat Tham Krabok. An agreement in December 2003 to make an exception and admit 15,000 of the refugees at the temple for resettlement in the United States was welcomed by Hmong leaders in the United States.

Although the Kennedy Administration's decision in January 1961 to arm the Hmong (one of its first actions on taking office) was not written into a formal commitment, the participation of succeeding administrations in attempts to repatriate Hmong refugees left stranded in exile raised moral issues. This was particularly the case with the Hmong, who had been abandoned

literally from one day to the next by the CIA, which managed the program to support the “secret war” from its Langley headquarters. The CIA station chief in Laos, who went on to become the division chief managing the program at CIA headquarters at the time the abandonment occurred, had been awarded the Order of the Million Elephants, Laos’s highest honor for a foreigner, by King Savang Vatthana.

Over the years in Washington, the Hmong veterans of the Laos war and their families adopted the American custom of organizing themselves to lobby Congress on the plight of refugees and on other matters of concern, such as passage of a bill in Congress at the initiative of the Bush Administration seeking to grant Normalized Trade Relations (NTR) to the LPDR, a move favored by American business leaders.

As the LPDR skillfully managed its bilateral relations with the United States, it also moved in the direction of becoming a responsible member of the community of nations in the post-Cold War period. The LPDR inherited Laos’s seat at the United Nations. It joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1997, and expects to host the ASEAN summit in Vientiane in December 2004. In a move to meet criticisms from human rights groups, the LPDR introduced in 2002 a decree intended to formally protect religious freedom.

Thailand moved rapidly to improve its relations with the LPDR in the late 1970's following a change of government in Bangkok. However, political relations continued to be strained by a border dispute (in fact, a dispute over old French maps of the border dating back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), which led to clashes in the 1980's, and by the continuing armed resistance. In an attack on an immigration checkpoint at Ban Vang Tao ethnic Lao rebels briefly hoisted the royal flag before falling back on their base in Thailand. The LPDR exerted heavy pressure on the royal Thai government to extradite 16 Lao who had taken part in the attack. The Thai courts ruled that the 16 should be granted political asylum. However, the 16 were returned to the LPDR in the dark of the early morning of July 4, 2004.

Relations with Vietnam are based on mutual security concerns and reflect the legacy of the close ties during 30 years of war in Indochina from 1945 to 1975. Observances of important anniversaries, such as the founding date of the party, and exchanges of delegations are marked by joint communiqués extolling the “relation of friendship and special unity between Vietnam and Laos.” This relation is said to be an “objective law.” Historically, Cambodia has also been included in this triangular relationship.

With the People’s Republic of China relations also continue on a close and friendly course, with numerous exchanges of visits. China also has a more dominant commercial role in Laos than does Vietnam.

The LPDR maintains friendly ties to Myanmar (Burma), whose leaders see eye-to-eye with those of the LPDR on the need to repress internal political dissent. Another state with which the LPDR maintains close relations is the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea).

An agreement with Russia on restructuring the LPDR's debt levels was agreed during Prime Minister Bounyang Vorachit's visit to Moscow in 2003. The debt was accumulated during the immediate post-1975 years when the Soviet Union was the LPDR's main foreign aid donor. The agreement principally entails a 70% write-down in the aggregate debt level, to the equivalent of US\$380 million, and thereby effectively reduces the LPDR's aggregate long-term debt burden by about half.

### **Questions and Issues**

1. Laos's relations with the six countries that adjoin it reflect the impact of history as well as of ideological differences and similarities. Discuss.

## TIMELINE

- 1354 - Fa Ngum crowned ruler of Kingdom of Lan Xang.
- 1478 - Vietnamese invasion.
- 1713 - Lan Xang splits into three: Louangphrabang, Viangchan, Champasak.
- 1779 - First occupation of Viangchan by Siamese.
- 1827 - Second occupation of Viangchan by Siamese.
- 1887 - Louangphrabang destroyed, King Oun Kham requests French protectorate.
- 1893 - October 3: Siam gives up left bank of Mekong under Franco-Siamese treaty.
- 1895 - April 19: French protectorate of Kingdom of Louangphrabang declared; French administer rest of Laos directly.
- 1941 - May 9: Convention signed ceding right-bank territories back to Thailand.
- 1941 - August 29: King Sisavang Vong signs treaty of protectorate with France.
- 1945 - March 9: Japanese occupy towns of Laos; Franco-Laotian resistance movement develops; Sisavang Vong quarrels with Prince Phetsarath, viceroy.
- 1945 - September: OSS mission lands at Vientiane to investigate POW situation.
- 1945 - October 12: Lao Issara government formed in Vientiane.
- 1946 - French reoccupy Laos, Lao Issara government flees to Thailand.
- 1946 - November 17: Franco-Siamese agreement restores right bank territories to Laos.
- 1946 - December 15: Constituent Assembly meets.
- 1947 - May 11: Sisavang Vong promulgates constitution unifying Laos under his rule.
- 1949 - Lao Issara government in exile breaks up, most return to Vientiane under French amnesty.
- 1950 - February 7: U.S., UK recognize Kingdom of Laos as member of French Union.



- 1950 - August: Prince Souphanouvong announces Lao resistance government (Pathet Lao) supported by Viet Minh.
- 1951 - August: Elections for National Assembly.
- 1953 - Viet Minh invade Laos.
- 1953 - October 22: France signs treaty conferring full sovereignty on Kingdom of Laos.
- 1954 - Viet Minh again invade Laos; Geneva Agreement signed covering Laos; royal government declares its readiness to reintegrate Pathet Lao.
- 1955 - April: Laos attends Asian-African Conference at Bandung.
- 1955 - June: Negotiations open between royal government and Pathet Lao.
- 1955 - December 14: Laos becomes a member of the United Nations.
- 1955 - December 25: Elections for National Assembly; U.S. establishes PEO to provide assistance to royal army.
- 1957 - October 22: Agreement reached for first coalition government with Prince Souvanna Phouma as prime minister.
- 1958 - May: NLHS, political party of Pathet Lao, wins seats in supplementary elections for National Assembly.
- 1958 - December: North Vietnamese occupy territory abutting DMZ; royal government protests.
- 1959 - NLHS deputies arrested, guerrilla war resumes on North Vietnam border.
- 1959 - December: Deaths of Phetsarath and Sisavang Vong, Savang Vatthana ascends throne.
- 1959 - December: Government crisis; king intervenes at urging of Western ambassadors; caretaker government formed.
- 1960 - April 24: Elections for National Assembly, considered fraudulent.
- 1960 - August 9: *Coup d'état* in Vientiane led by Captain Kong Le; new government headed by Prince Souvanna Phouma invested..
- 1960 - December: In battle of Vientiane, Kong Le driven out.

- 1961 - January: Prince Boun Oum and General Phoumi Nosavan form government backed by U.S., Thailand; Kong Le allies his force with Opathet Lao, captured Plain of Jars.
- 1961 - North Vietnamese take part in fighting; truce talks open at Ban Namone; 14-nation conference opens in Geneva; neutralization backed by Kennedy Administration.
- 1962 - June 12: Three princes reach agreement, second coalition government invested with Souvanna Phouma as prime minister.
- 1962 - July 23: Geneva Agreement signed.
- 1962 - November: U.S. transport plane shot down at Plain of Jars, anti-aircraft crew revealed to be dissident Neutralists.
- 1963 - April: Fighting breaks out between Neutralists and Pathet Lao on Plain of Jars; foreign minister assassinated in Vientiane.
- 1964 - April: Attempted *coup d'état* in Vientiane by rightist officers.
- 1964 - August: Attempted negotiations fail; U.S. air strikes begin at royal government's request.
- 1967 - January 1: Elections for National Assembly.
- 1972 - January 2: Elections for National Assembly.
- 1972 - October: Negotiations between royal government and Pathet Lao open in Vientiane.
- 1973 - February 21: Vientiane Agreement signed, ceasefire takes effect.
- 1973 - March: Pathet Lao release nine U.S. POW's in ceremony at Hanoi airport.
- 1973 - September 14: Protocol signed in Vientiane giving effect to Vientiane Agreement.
- 1974 - April 5: Third coalition government invested with Prince Souvanna Phouma as prime minister.
- 1975 - March: Fighting breaks out, violating ceasefire.
- 1975 - May: Anti-government demonstrations, orchestrated by Pathet Lao, in Vientiane.
- 1975 - June 26: U.S. AID mission closes.
- 1975 - August 23: Pathet Lao complete takeover of principal Laotian towns.

- 1975 - December 1-2: National Congress of People's Representatives meets in Vientiane, LPDR proclaimed, King Savang Vatthana abdicates, Souphanouvong becomes president.
- 1977 - July: LPDR and Vietnam sign 25-Year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.
- 1984 - Death of Prince Souvanna Phouma.
- 1986 – Private markets introduced in the economy at the Fourth Party Congress.
- 1988 - June 26: Elections for district-level people's councils.
- 1988 - November 20: Elections for province-level people's councils.
- 1989 - March 26: Elections for Supreme People's Assembly.
- 1991 - August 15: Constitution adopted.
- 1992 - December 20: Elections for first National Assembly.
- 1994 - April: Friendship Bridge across the Mekong with Thailand opened.
- 1997 - Elections for Second National Assembly.
- 1997 - July: Laos becomes full member of ASEAN.
- 2002 – February: Elections for Third National Assembly.

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# **LIBERIA**

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



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The **Self Study Guide for Liberia** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Liberian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The guide should serve as an introductory self-study resource. The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this guide was prepared by Ambassador Robert E. Gribbin. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Ambassador Gribbin. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are public domain, from sites that explicitly say “can be used for non-profit or educational use,” or are from the author’s own materials.

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First Edition  
October 2003

# **Liberia Self Study Guide**

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## **Liberia Time Line**

- 1815 - The American Colonization Society formed in the United States with the objective of resettling freed slaves in Africa.
- 1822 - USN Captain Stockton secures land at Cape Mesurado; the first settlers arrive.
- 1847 - Americo-Liberians declare the independent state of Liberia with its capital in Monrovia.
- 1862 - Liberia recognized by the United States.
- 1926 - Firestone rubber plantations established.
- 1943 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt stops by after the Casablanca Conference.
- 1944 - William Tubman elected President of Liberia.
- 1971 - William Tolbert replaces Tubman, begins reforms and liberalizations.
- 1980 - Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe leads a coup d'etat that puts native people into power for the first time; Doe's rule deteriorates into corruption and violence.
- 1985 - Doe wins a rigged election; result endorsed by the international community.
- 1989 - Charles Taylor leads a Christmas Eve invasion by rebels of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL); Liberia's civil war begins.
- 1990 - Fighting in Monrovia causes death and destruction; U.S.Embassy evacuated; Doe's murder by rebels videotaped; West African ECOMOG force arrives to restore order.
- 1992 - Interim Government of Liberia led by Professor Amos Sawyer, backed by ECOMOG controls Monrovia; Taylor reigns over "Greater Liberia."
- 1995 - Warlords form a council in Monrovia to rule until elections.
- 1997 - Charles Taylor elected President.
- 2001 - Taylor and Liberia sanctioned by the United Nations; arms embargo imposed, sale of diamonds banned and leadership travel prohibited.
- 2002 - Rebels from LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) expand insurgent activities in the northwest.
- 2003 - Taylor indicted for war crimes by Sierra Leone's Special Court; LURD and MODEL rebels push Taylor's forces back into Monrovia; Peace talks ensue in Accra; ECOWAS mobilized to insert peacekeepers with U.S. support; Taylor resigns and departs to Nigeria.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Liberia is a land of unrealized dreams and dashed expectations. Almost everything that could have gone wrong there during the last twenty years has. Anarchy and unrestrained violence characterized politics, which concomitantly accompanied a downward economic and social spiral. Public executions on the beach, drug crazed young thugs sporting Mickey Mouse masks terrorizing citizens at road blocks, rampant theft of national resources, corruption, nepotism, abuse of human rights, tribalism, blood diamonds and warlords; are all images of contemporary Liberia. Sadly, the nation today is a shadow of its former self and, even worse, only a vague image of what it might have been. Yet, despite all its pains, Liberia remains a land of hope. The people, both at home and abroad, hope that political violence, tarnished institutions and a collapsed economy can somehow be reversed and that all Liberians – many for the first time – will be able to participate fully in national life. Although hope may give succor to patriots, reality is that the situation is desperate and under current circumstances only likely to improve marginally, if at all.

Why has Liberia stumbled so badly? What factors gave rise to the current crisis? Who is to blame? What needs to be fixed? Is there any real basis for hope? These are among the topics that will be addressed in this study guide. We will look at the country's unique history of founding by freed slaves from America, its "special relationship" with the United States, its fractured ties with neighboring African states, its failing extractive economy and finally its own indigenous revolution against the ruling oligarchy and the subsequent descent into despair. We will look at warlords and discover how they rule through manipulation, intimidation and sheer terror. We will also identify positive elements and strengths in Liberian society that offer encouragement that the underlying resilience of the people might yet prevail.

## The Setting

Liberia sits on the underside of the hump of West Africa. It possesses 370 miles of coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. It is well in the tropics and suitably fits the western image of Africa - a wet, lush, jungle-like terrain. Although there are distinctive wet and dry seasons, Monrovia, the capital, receives 180 inches of rain a year. Rainfall tapers off slightly as one moves inland or eastward along the coast to only about 100 inches a year (Washington, in comparison, gets 30 inches). Humidity averages between 70 and 90 percent.

In size the country occupies 43,000 square miles. It is about the size of Tennessee. The coastal plain gives way to an inland plateau broken with hills and valleys that ultimately rises to the small mountains of Guinea highlands whose crests reach 4,000 feet and which form the border with Guinea. Nine rivers, none of which are navigable for any distance, drain directly into the sea. The Mano River in the west forms the boundary with Sierra Leone and the Cavalla River in the east constitutes the border with the Cote

d'Ivoire. Liberia's ports of Monrovia and Buchanan sit at the mouths of the Saint Paul and the Saint John rivers respectively. The nine parallel river valleys each running from northeast to southwest constituted effective barriers to east/west road and rail construction, a situation that prevails today. Roads tend to run upcountry rather than along the coast. Thus travel from Monrovia to Greenville in the southeast or Harper, near the Ivorian border, requires a long interior loop. Liberia's two rail lines, both of which are currently inoperative, were built to export iron ore; one from Bomi Hills to Monrovia and the other from Yekepa on the Guinea border to Buchanan.

Initially all of Liberia was covered in dense forest. Gradually forest gave way to human habitation, first to traditional villages and their surrounding agricultural lands and then to plantations. Food crops include upland rice, cassava, yams, taro, peanuts and various vegetables. Plantation crops include rubber, coffee and cocoa. Much of Liberia today reflects these uses. Over a million acres are devoted to rubber production. Beginning in the last century the forest was also harvested for timber for export. This exploitation turned into a major industry that continues apace. However, small areas are being preserved as national parks in order to protect unique species of plants and animals, including pygmy hippopotamus and chimpanzees.

## **The People**

The population of Liberia is estimated at about 3 million. In addition to the Americo-Liberians, who are descendants of the freed black slaves who colonized the area and who never numbered more than five percent of the population, over a dozen separate ethnic groups reside in Liberia. They include Kpelle, Kissi, Kru, Mandingo, Bassaa, Gio, Krahn, Mano and Mende among others. Although they live in close proximity with one another, affinity or antipathy between tribes is a traditional function of kinship, territory and cultural similarity. Historically some groups have gotten along with each other and contested against others. All groups are fairly distinct and take pride in their language and customs. Tribal identities are an understandable reality in modern African politics, but in Liberia's case have also become the basis for the conflict.

About a quarter of Liberians are Christian and about a quarter are Muslim. The remainder do not profess any world faith, but continue to practice ancestral beliefs. Thus, the role of traditional leaders, both secular and religious, is important. Religious orientation also factors into political differences.

On account of political violence during recent years, the population of Monrovia mushroomed several fold to about half a million. Elsewhere within the country tens of thousands of people are displaced. Neither the city's nor the nation's infrastructure is able to cope effectively with such a surge. Thousands more have fled to neighboring countries. Living conditions have deteriorated nation wide as evidenced by lower school attendance rates and the virtual disappearance of rural health services. The first prerequisite for re-establishment of social services is peace and the second is finding the resources necessary. Most peoples' hopes for the resumption of "normal" life are predicated on achievement of these two objectives.

### **Issues to consider:**

1. What are the initial images you conjure up when thinking about Liberia? Are they ones of poverty and underdevelopment? Traditional culture relatively untouched by the outside world? A staid urban society governed by 19<sup>th</sup> century American values? Or a land of terror and conflict run by warlords run amok? What else?
2. Geography, which either separates or unites people, plays an important role in shaping a nation's economy and polity. Keep this in mind as we study Liberia. How has the relative isolation – one from another – of Liberia's tribes and their exclusion from the modern economy for over a century contributed to current difficulties?
3. When learning about Liberia, think about blame. Who bears the blame for the tragedy of Liberia?

### **Web Sites:**

[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/li.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/li.html) Solid statistical information about Liberia.

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Nelson, Harold D., editor. Liberia, a Country Study. Washington: Foreign Area Studies, American University, 1985. [DT 627.A5 1985] Part of the series of USG commissioned country studies, although now out of date, the geographical and historical data remain valid.

Boley, G.E. Saigbe. Liberia: The Rise and Fall of the First Republic. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. [DT631.B65]

## Chapter 2

### Colonization

Liberia's origins lie in the United States in the early 1800s. Slavery was, of course, prevalent in the South, but the number of freed slaves was slowly growing. The system had no place for them. In fact, they constituted a threat to an orderly society of owners and slaves. Following the establishment of a colony for freed blacks in Sierra Leone in 1786 by British philanthropists and the independence of Haiti in 1804 an idea began to percolate in America to the effect that returning freed Negroes to Africa would solve a number of looming issues. The idea was attractive to different elements of society for different reasons. Many slave owners wanted the freedmen removed from their midst. Other slave owners saw colonization as a humane method to manumit their slaves without antagonizing their neighbors. Racial theorists judged that removal of blacks was the only way to maintain white racial purity. Abolitionists saw colonization as a means of freeing slaves. Christians saw colonization as a mechanism to spread the faith to the heathen of Africa. Freed blacks themselves viewed departure as an opportunity that would by far surpass their plight and poverty in America. Slaves jumped at the chance to be free, even on the condition of departure for Africa. Thus for a variety of reasons, the idea of returning Negroes to Africa found fertile ground in early America.

#### Back to Africa

In 1816 a group of prominent Virginians led by Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Bushrod Washington, George's nephew, formed the American Society for the Colonization of Free People of Color, later shortened to the American Colonization Society. The society secured a grant of \$100,000 from Congress and sent a team to West Africa to secure land for a colony. Searching east of Sierra Leone, Eppharim Bacon and the Rev. Andrus were not initially successful in negotiating with local chiefs, but in 1821 U.S. Navy Captain Stockton of the *Alligator* (whose wreck in the Florida Keys is a national historical site) compelled Chiefs George and Peter at Cape Mesurado to sign a treaty establishing the desired colony. The first colonists soon named the settlement Monrovia in honor of President James Monroe.

Over the next thirty years thousands of black Americans left for Liberia. Although the American Society for Colonization supervised and governed Liberia, most funding for settlers came from state affiliates since the U.S. Congress refused to grant further funds for the undertaking. Societies in Virginia, Maryland, Mississippi, New York and Pennsylvania subsidized new colonists, who in some instances founded settlements - Harper by Maryland, Greenville by Mississippi - that were independent of Monrovia and not incorporated into Liberia as such for fifty or more years. By 1867 a total of 12,097 persons had been transported to Liberia from America. In addition almost 6,000 Africans seized from slave ships in the Atlantic were also landed at Monrovia. The settlers from America became known as "Americo-Liberians" and those from Atlantic slave ships, "Congos." By the 1980s the term "Congos" was used by indigenous people to refer to both groups.



Life for American settlers in Africa was harsh. Many died from tropical diseases and some from early conflict with local tribesmen. Additionally, the Americo-Liberians had no understanding of tropical agriculture and few ideas of how to build a flourishing society. Coming from several generations in America, they were no longer African by culture. So essentially, they reproduced the society they knew, that of the ante bellum South. Each settler was granted ninety acres upon which to build a dwelling. They introduced plantation agriculture and used “Congos” or local tribesmen for labor. Education, proper dress – they abhorred native nakedness – and firm Christian beliefs became the mainstays of society. Over the years the gulf between the two groups- Americo-Liberian settlers on one hand and native tribes people on the other widened and jelled into a system of exploitation of the latter group by the former. Political, economic and commercial power rested within an oligarchy of settler families and was maintained by family links and social ties, including Masonic lodges. The elite proclaimed a national slogan of “Love of Liberty Brought Us Here,” but they shared no liberty with the native inhabitants. Instead a code of separation was observed. Tribesmen were deemed to be heathen savages suitable only for manual labor and to be kept in line by force of arms.

In early years Liberia was run by white men, ministers of the cloth by training, appointed by the American Colonization Society, but in 1841 Joseph Jenkins Roberts took over management of the territory’s affairs. Since Liberia was not technically a colony of the United States, and besides was operated by Negroes, nearby colonial powers – Britain, France and Germany - and their citizens cast covetous eyes on the region. Encroachments and blatant non-observance of Society authority occurred. However, in 1843 U.S. Secretary of State Upshur informed his British counterpart that the U.S. objected to any “despoiling” of Liberian territory. U.S. Naval squadrons operating in the Atlantic gave substance to the Secretary’s pronouncement and the Europeans kept their distance.

### **Independence Declared**

The lack of territorial sovereignty under the ACS and the continued threat of a British takeover led the Americo-Liberian elite to declare independence in 1847. Joseph Jenkins Roberts became the first president. Ironically Britain recognized Liberia in 1851, but the U.S. – on account of rising tensions that would lead to civil war, especially the desire not to have a Negro ambassador in Washington – did not recognize the new nation of Liberia until 1862.

Liberia’s economy was fragile and the new government was barely able to make ends meet. In 1871 President Roye negotiated a \$500,000 loan from England on terrible terms, then pocketed much of what was borrowed. He was impeached and removed. Then probably murdered. Again in 1906 Liberia was grievously in the red and sought foreign help. U.S. President Taft sent a Commission of Inquiry that indeed found much malfeasance. In what was perhaps the first restructuring conditionality levied upon Africa, the Commission recommended budgetary and financial reforms, a take-over of customs by the U.S. in exchange for a loan, training of an effective police force and the

establishment of a U.S. Navy coaling station in exchange for a loan. Ultimately, the U.S. did not take over customs, but other reforms were partially implemented. Throughout this era Liberia suffered in comparison to her colonial neighbors where France and Britain financed roads, railways and ports, not to mention a few schools and hospitals. Liberia also faced a continual series of native uprisings for which the police – there were no colonial troops available - were inadequate to quell. On at least two such occasions in 1871 and again in 1915, U.S. naval warships arrived with soldiers to re-enforce Monrovia's rule of the hinterlands.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. We have listed some of the motivations for sending slaves back to Africa, but have skirted the question of was it moral or ethical? While we ought not to make judgments of the previous times based on current mores, what do you think? Do you see similar sorts of issues arising in contemporary immigration issues?

### **Web sites:**

[www.prodigy.net/jkess3/History.html](http://www.prodigy.net/jkess3/History.html) is an excellent site that covers Liberia history in a lively and readable fashion, with much emphasis on revealing anecdotes.

[www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam002.html](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam002.html) contains lots of interesting detail on the American Colonization Society.

[www.geocities.com/athens/atrium/3770/](http://www.geocities.com/athens/atrium/3770/) Another good history site.

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Liebenow, J.Gus. Liberia - The Quest for Democracy. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. [DT 631.L53] This is the most comprehensive and best documented history of Liberia from its origins up into the Doe years.

Reef, Catherine. This Our Dark Country: The American Settlers of Liberia. New York: Clarion, 2002. Almost a coffee table book, this volume contains many interesting old photographs.

## Chapter 3

### The Early Twentieth Century

By the 1920s Liberia's financial situation was again desperate, but this time the private sector came to the rescue. Harvey Firestone, a newly minted American industrial baron, was looking to break the British monopoly on rubber, which came mostly from Malaysia. He scoured the world and decided that Liberia was well suited from soil, climatic and labor perspectives to grow rubber. Also, it was no one's colony, so was politically unencumbered. In exchange for securing a \$5 million loan to the government up front plus annual rents, plus a promise to build a modern port, Firestone obtained a concession of a million acres and a guarantee of 50,000 labors per year. Thenceforth Liberia and Firestone names were forever intertwined.

Firestone proved to be a cash cow for the government and a relatively good citizen to boot, at least under the terms of the day. While it never overpaid its workers, it did provide health services and housing for many of them and schools for their children. And it did progressively better over time.

#### Forced Labor

The labor crisis that nearly destroyed Liberia had to do with the Spanish island of Fernando Po (part of Equatorial Guinea today). In the 1920s labor was badly needed there for sugar and coffee plantations. For several years since World War I, Americo-Liberian elites including President King, Allen Yancy, who was to become Vice President and Secretary of State Edwin James Barclay had been privately contracting for labor for the island. They began to use the coercive powers of the state to fulfill their quotas. Young men were taken by force and shipped away, never to return. Non-compliant villages were burned and their chiefs beaten. The feared Frontier Forces and government-backed thugs ensured that quotas were met. It was reminiscent of the slave trade. Foreign missionaries as well as conscientious Liberian administrators brought abuses to light and an international scandal ensued.

The outcry brought Liberia to the world's attention. Racist critics reveled in the fact that a black ruled state in Africa – one of only three black run nations in the world – was engaged in slavery. Humanitarians urged a quick end to the abuses and justice for the perpetrators. The League of Nations established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate. (In retrospect the Commission should be viewed as a precedent setting multinational human rights investigation – the precursor of today's *special rapporteurs* empowered by the UN Commission on Human Rights.) The Commission found the facts of the case to be as stated: an abusive forced labor system deprived thousands of young Liberians of their basic rights. But the Commission went much further; it recommended basic policy reforms that, if implemented, would radically change how Liberia dealt with its indigenous citizens. The Commission urged that primary schools be established for the tribes, that the authority of traditional chiefs be re-established, that the civil service be

reorganized on a merit basis and that the government better train and control its police force.

As a result of the investigation President King and Vice President Yancey were forced to resign. However, Edwin James Barclay, formerly the Secretary of State, who too bore some of the responsibility for the labor scandal succeeded them in power. The standard bearer of the True Whig party, Barclay narrowly won election over more reform-minded candidates. Only Americo-Liberian men - at most only one to two percent of the total population - had the right to vote, so the results were certainly not representative of the nation's sentiment, even if that could have been measured. Nonetheless, President Barclay promised to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. He did squash egregious labor recruitment, but other reforms languished.

In the United States in the 1920s the Pan African movement spearheaded by Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Dubois and others was drawing attention and adherents. Among its precepts was a back-to-Africa call. Americo-Liberians in Monrovia feared an influx of new immigrants so adopted a constitutional amendment that precluded non-Liberian born citizens from holding high office. This amendment, by showing that newcomers would not be welcome, effectively deterred new immigration and preserved the Liberian fiefdom from external challenge.

Up into the 1930s, as Monrovia sought to expand its control of the interior, the government's heavy handed tactics and oppressive demands were resented and rejected by tribesmen, often by force of arms. A series of skirmishes and depredations ensued, some of the most rebellious of which were called the Kru wars. Government forces were ultimately victorious and by the beginning of World War II, all of Liberia was finally under the firm authority of Monrovia.

### **Tubman's Rise to Power**

In the early 1940s, in an attempt to widen the governing circle from a very narrow set of families, President Barclay brought a bright young man named William V.S. Tubman into government. Tubman was from the second or third circle of Americo-Liberians; folks who had mixed more in the multiethnic stew of the growing nation. Tubman was nonetheless a loyal Americo-Liberian, member of the right Church, Masonic Lodge, etc. In 1944, presumably judging that Tubman would be the most easily manipulated of possible candidates, the True Whig old guard ran him for the presidency. Tubman, however, proved to be his own man from the very beginning. He campaigned on a platform of "assimilation and unity." Once elected, he redeemed his promise of a new deal for the native peoples. He delivered new freedoms, the franchise, educational and training opportunities. By creating new counties in the north - Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Bong and Lofa - tribesmen entered the Legislature for the first time as participants. Tubman would later extend voting rights to women.

President Tubman reigned for 32 years. He led Liberia from the doldrums of neglect into a bit role as a World War II and Cold War player. He presided over the nation's destiny when the winds of political liberation and independence swept across Africa. He carefully kept the most radical influences at bay. Personally conservative and always cognizant that his real constituency lay in the oligarchy of Americo-Liberian families, nonetheless, Tubman was enough of a politician to open progressively additional opportunities for tribesmen to participate in national life. Additionally, he had the luck to preside over the epoch when iron ore was found and exploited. Those riches immeasurably enhanced his personal political power as well as national security. A leadership cult grew up around him. Throughout Tubman measured others by one criterion: loyalty. He remained supreme and those retainers whose loyalty never faltered prospered, but woe to those who challenged his leadership. Not that he condoned or used violence to enforce his will, but rather that he controlled political and economic opportunities.

Tubman was bolstered by augmented official American interest. During WWII the USG built the harbor that Firestone had long promised as well as a modern airfield near Harbel, about forty miles from Monrovia. During the cold war years Liberia was a reliable American ally in the confrontation with the Soviet Union in the United Nations as well as in Africa. By the 1960s the U.S. presence in Monrovia expanded to include a large embassy with regional communication and intelligence responsibilities, the VOA transmitter site for Africa and an Omega maritime navigation antenna (still the tallest manmade structure in Africa). American investment via Firestone was augmented by majority ownership of LAMCO, the chief exploiter of iron ore. There is no doubt that ideological and commercial concerns figured most prominently in U.S. policy towards Liberia during this era. Tubman, like counterparts throughout Latin America, was "our" dictator.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. Think of the irony that Liberia, founded by immigrants from America, effectively rejected further new immigrants in the 1920s. Had the nation's relative isolation and inner focused political system become so selfish that new influences and people were feared?
2. President Tubman was the man for the times. He certainly laid the groundwork for the development of a more modern state and he presided over what were probably Liberia's best years. Yet the seeds of future disasters were inherent in his administration. What were they?

### **Web Sites:**

[www.africawithin.com/tour/liberia/hist\\_gov1.htm](http://www.africawithin.com/tour/liberia/hist_gov1.htm) A good history site that starts with a photograph of President F.D. Roosevelt.

[www.barutiwa.com/cgi-bin/bms/publish/article\\_39.shtml](http://www.barutiwa.com/cgi-bin/bms/publish/article_39.shtml) A biography of William Tubman

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Gershoni, Yekutiel. Black Colonialism: The Americo-Liberian Struggle for the Hinterland. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985. [DT 634.G47] A straightforward account of Liberia's first rulers with emphasis on the 1900-1930 period during which the internal "colonialism" was most pronounced and relations with the U.S. and European powers quite complex.

## Chapter 4

### The Extractive Economy

Liberia's economy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was chiefly subsistence. Slaving died out about mid-century just as the territory declared its nationhood in 1847. Slavery was an anathema to the settlers from their first days, but it had figured in the activities of the interior tribes. Easy sources of ivory and gold were also depleted. Americo-Liberians replicated economically as well as socially and politically the systems they knew from America. Those systems comprised plantation agriculture and mercantile trade. Crops grown for export included palm oil and over time coffee and cocoa. Camwood and tortoise shell were also collected for export. However, overall the oppressive climate, difficulty of internal movement, the lack of sufficient labor and limited markets conspired to keep Liberia only limping along economically. In contrast to neighboring French and British colonies that towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century benefited from capital improvements, mainly railways, financed (usually at a loss) by the metropole, Liberia enjoyed no such largess from the United States.

#### Rubber

World War I brought few benefits to Liberia, but after the war as the industrialized economies took off, the need for raw materials expanded. The American tire company Firestone searched the world for suitable land and climate for rubber production. It chose Liberia for a major operation, imported the right variety of rubber tree from Southeast Asia and began production in 1926. Rubber gave Liberia new economic hope. Although firmly in the hands of the American parent company, revenues from rubber production accrued to the government and provided the wherewithal, for the first time, to improve the national infrastructure. Iron ore deposits were also discovered. Exploitation of them, along with railways to reach them, began after WWII. The war also directed American government attention to Liberia, the result of which was construction of a major airfield, Roberts Field, near Harbel and building the port of Monrovia. Monrovia was not blessed with a good natural harbor, so laying of a vast breakwater to enclose new wharves was necessary. It was hoped that Monrovia might become an important transshipment point for the west coast of Africa.

Rubber and iron became the mainstays of the economy in the fifties, sixties and seventies. Liberia also opened a ship registry that permitted ship owners to use Liberia as a flag of convenience in order to escape onerous taxes or operating conditions – usually mandatory labor regulations - imposed by their home states. Liberia was careful to ensure that ships under its flag met universal safety regulations. Structurally, Liberia's economy was considered to be an enclave economy. That is, those in the enclave of rubber, iron and ships including the government and those dependent on it prospered whereas others – the vast bulk of the population simply were not involved. By and large the wealth of the country was extracted to the benefit of external owners and a small local elite. A merchant class composed of Lebanese and other expatriates expanded their control of daily commerce. The majority of the population engaged in some cash

cropping, but mostly lived subsistence lives growing rice as their chief food. The economic disparity between the haves and the have-nots was great and certainly factored in the social and political cleavages that were to occur.

### **Poised for Growth or Failure?**

By 1960 when most of the rest of Africa became independent, Liberia was functioning well. Per capita income was over \$100, which placed it in the upper ranks of African states. Other minerals were being discovered notably diamonds and gold which along with timber would begin to figure in export statistics. Unlike neighboring states, having experienced no independence euphoria and transfer of power from colonial authorities to indigenous peoples, Liberia also escaped the inflationary cost of new government. Then too, Liberia also did not benefit from injections of foreign assistance linked to newly acquired independence. It just plodded along. However, new ideas about economic and social responsibility permeated even Liberia in the post-independence era and efforts were undertaken to improve social services such as the health and educational systems. As the economy expanded it was necessary to educate and bring into the mainstream children of the indigenous peoples. Obviously, this had been slowly happening for decades, but as those folks matured they too began to think about throwing off the “colonial” yoke of the Americo-Liberians.

Driven by enclave exports, Liberia’s economy expanded slowly in the seventies. Government spending became more ostentatious culminating in a construction binge related to Monrovia’s hosting of the OAU summit in 1979. Under the rubric of economic development, external lenders and donors, especially the United States, helped finance an expanded portfolio of projects – including some straightforward budgetary support. Warning signs were evident that without greater diversification and participation of a greater percentage of the population in modern economic activities that Liberia’s economy could not be sustained.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. The nations of Africa that harbor vast mineral riches – especially oil in Nigeria, Angola, Congo (Brazzaville) and Gabon, but also including copper and precious metals, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe – have not been very successful in investing their wealth for the benefit of their citizens. Liberia too is guilty of non-performance. What common factors do you see in these failures? Corruption? External ownership? Financial naiveté?
2. Is it fair for the west to ask that Africa redistribute national wealth? If so, why? Has that ever been done in the United States?

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## Chapter 5

### Tolbert to Doe

William Tolbert took over the presidency in 1971 and served until murdered in 1980. Being president was not a revelation for Tolbert; he had served as vice-president for the previous 19 years. He was, nonetheless, more modern and better attuned to the needs of the nation; especially the still poorly represented and poorly regarded native peoples. Tolbert was a mild populist. Although thoroughly Americo-Liberian, he spoke Kpelle and reached out to masses. He equalized salaries, which raised the status of native people. He lowered the voting age to 18 and reined back on the blatant nepotism that characterized settler control. He was aware that the changes that independence wrought in other African states, essentially the empowerment of the people, had not occurred in Liberia. While he sought to be more progressive, he was basically conservative and caught even more in the interlocking web of Americo-Liberian relationships that had defined Liberia's politics for 150 years.

Since the 1960s, not particularly because of either Tubman or Tolbert, but more on account of the simple evolution of society and the economy, a growing number of indigenous people were brought into the governing system. First this happened through education. Settler families had a long tradition of adopting (and fathering) children who with their mixed parentage expanded the settler class. The most elite families sent their children abroad to school, but missionary run and other church schools catered to thousands of others. Before long higher education, accomplished at Episcopal run Cuttington College or at the University of Liberia, was no longer a monopoly of the ruling class. Country sons and a few daughters joined the nation's intellectuals. While most were content to be absorbed into the ruling order, they displayed skepticism about it and many agitated for change. Because overt political opposition was squashed, revolutionary thinkers operated through "movements." Two radical organizations, the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) and the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL), both born in the seventies, grouped reformers and revolutionaries who sought reorientation of the paternalistic system of the True Whig Party, including a more independent foreign policy, i.e. a shift away from lockstep with the U.S. to policies more in line with other African states.

#### Pressure on the Oligarchy

In addition to increasing political agitation, the seventies also brought a downturn in the economy. The oil shock of 1973 registered as did lowered production of iron ore as the deposit began to play out. Government spending, however, continued apace. Lower revenues and higher outlays were incompatible and the pain was felt – especially for urban dwellers in the wage sector. Tolbert's effort to counter his critics including a less U.S. oriented foreign policy antagonized the U.S., but generated little new local support.

Liberia volunteered to host the Organization of African Unity summit meeting in 1979. In accordance with continental custom this meant an enormous outlay of public

funds for new buildings, villas for chiefs-of-state and public works. Although proud that Africa's spotlight would fall on them, Liberians found the consequences to be devastatingly inflationary. This was manifested in April 1979 when the price of rice, Liberia's staple food, was raised. This was doubly galling because the Tolbert family controlled much of the rice trade. Protest riots occurred on April 14 in Monrovia followed by widespread looting. This event demonstrated the vulnerability of the regime and encouraged opponents to continue to muster support by tapping long-standing grievances. A sense of inevitable change arose, but the Tolbert machine tottered on. Coup rumors were ripe in the days leading up to the first anniversary of the rice riots and, in fact, one did occur.

## **Revolution**

On April 12, 1980 a group of seventeen soldiers, including Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, Sergeant Thomas Quiwonkpa and Sergeant Weh Syen raided the executive mansion where they unexpectedly found President Tolbert (he usually spent the night at his farm). Tolbert was butchered in cold blood. Ten days later, thirteen members of his government were stripped to their underwear, staked to posts on the beach and executed. The days of settler oligarchy were over. The new rulers were tribesmen from the interior. By and large the population rejoiced at the change. Radical intellectuals tooted it as Liberia's genuine revolution and saw in it the coming democratic empowerment of the people. These intellectuals made common cause with their country brothers, whom they saw as the muscle for their political philosophies.

The soldiers, however, did not reciprocate. They tasted power and enjoyed it. Samuel Doe soon emerged as Chairman of the People Redemption Council (PRC). The junta's initially brutality, lack of goals and subsequent internal divisions led to instability. Doe intuitively grasped that a pro-American stance would position him well against rivals Weh Syen and Quiwonkpa. Over the next few years – during the height of the cold war - Doe became ardently pro-American and subsequently reaped the benefits of U.S. support.

Doe also quickly began to play on tribal considerations as a key mechanism to hold and expand power. Some of this orientation to tribalism was ingrained. All country Liberians maintained connections to the village. Even though distant because of government service, migration to the city or contract labor, men were expected to provide projects and patronage to the home folks as they were able. Doe and other members of the PRC gravitated to this tradition and to those they could trust. The political/economic/social struggle was no longer couched in terms of indigenous people collectively versus settler elites, but in terms of tribal contests among the native people for the largest share of the pie. Securing access to be pie became bitter and very violent. Doe assembled a Krahn entourage to protect him. During his ten years in office, Doe had killed or exiled all but a handful of the seventeen who formed the initial PRC junta. He claimed that more than thirty-five assassination plots were aimed at him and that God had intervened on many occasions to save his life. Such claims of invincibility convinced many Liberians that Doe did indeed possess mystical protection.

## **Political Tribalism**

Doe rallied his Krahn tribesman against his enemies, most especially Thomas Quiwonkpa, a Gio tribesman, who having been chased into exile by Doe in 1982 returned in 1983 at the head of an insurgent force. Quiwonkpa's raid against Yekepa town in Nimba County unleashed retaliatory actions by Krahn forces aimed indiscriminately at Gio and Mano ethnic groups. From the perspective of historical hindsight, this marked the beginning of Liberia's civil war that over the next twenty-three years – off and on – would engulf the nation.

A watershed event that alienated the educated elite against Doe occurred in August 1984. While Doe was readying a new constitution that would reauthorize active politics, President of the University of Liberia Amos Sawyer publicly and artfully suggested that Doe resign to facilitate new elections. In response the army cordoned off the University. Sawyer and other faculty members were arrested. In demonstrations that followed, students were beaten, raped and killed. This event caused a irrevocable split as many who had supported Doe or at least been neutral towards him, now turned unabashedly against him.

Doe's record as chief executive was deplorable. He had little notion of how to govern. He readily co-opted the civil service, but the corruption and patronage ingrained in it only became more pronounced with the intrusion of tribalism. A succession of American ambassadors strove to educate Doe in the modalities of both domestic and foreign policy, but aside from confirming his firm adherence to U.S. positions – anti-Soviet, pro-Israeli, anti-Libya – achieved little success. Under the Reagan Administration's view of the world that was enough. Money flowed. Some funds were earmarked for development, but Doe's military, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) received weapons, munitions and other equipment. Those weapons certainly helped put down coups and otherwise sustain operations against a variety of insurgent forces. U.S. aid during the Doe era totaled over \$500 million. However, in addition to economic and military support, the mere fact that the U.S. backed Doe – despite his obvious flaws – intimidated what might have been more legitimate opposition. The culminating affront was the 1985 election, which Doe stole, finally claiming a victory of 50.9 percent. The U.S. endorsed the result.

Following the election in November 1985 Quiwonkpa led a group of insurgents into Monrovia where they briefly held sway to much public jubilation. However, having been tipped off, perhaps by the U.S. embassy, Doe's forces regrouped and overwhelmed the invaders. Quiwonkpa's corpse was mutilated and a retaliatory blood bath against "Gio men" ensued. Thousands were slaughtered. In order to balance the ethnic equation the Doe regime made alliances with the Mandingo people from Liberia's northwest. Like the Americo-Liberians, the Mandingo were mostly migrants. However, they came from the Sahalean region to the north. They were Muslim traders and relatively wealthy. Foremost, they had no vested territory, but were scattered among other people. Both the Krahn and Mandingo saw their alliance as one of opportunity and they combined efforts

against the Gio and others. Even though its economic fortunes declined, its administration corrupt, its popular support minimal and its U.S. backing slipping, the Doe regime retained power through application of violence. There was no immediate threat to Doe, but preparations were being laid.

Charles Taylor seized control of Quiwonkpa's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in 1985. Taylor himself was an enigmatic figure. Son of settler father and a native mother, Taylor spent the seventies in the U.S. receiving a university education. He returned to Monrovia in 1980 and inveigled from Chairman Doe the position of chief of the General Services Administration, the organization that had responsibility to procure and purchase items for the government of Liberia. It was a lucrative post, but full of intrigue as personalities clamored for lucre. Reading the writing on the wall, Taylor fled only later to be charged by the government with the embezzlement of \$600,000. Taylor was arrested in Massachusetts on that charge at the request of the government of Liberia and held for deportation. He spent 16 months in detention before escaping under murky circumstances in September 1985. Over the next few years, he pitched up in Ghana, where he was twice briefly imprisoned, Cote d'Ivoire, where he touched base with Liberian exiles, Burkina Faso, where he made friends with Blaise Compoare (soon to become president) and Libya, where he oversaw the training of about a hundred NPFL fighters led by Prince Johnson.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. Was revolution inevitable? Was Doe automatically the leader? President Tolbert tried to ride the cyclone, but his reforms – even if he wanted to do more, he was constrained by the Americo-Liberian oligarchy – were inadequate. Is he to blame? Even if change was pre-ordained, why Doe – the worst choice? Why didn't more reasonable leaders do more? Are they to blame? America gets lots of blame for Doe, but we will look at that in a separate chapter.

2. Tribalism rears its ugly head even uglier during the Doe years. African leaders know that politics is not just about common ideals and goals, it is about identity. Identity in Africa means tribe, particularly as group leaders maneuver to obtain as much of the national pie that they can for themselves and their followers. Tribalism is a key, perhaps the key factor in Liberia's 23 years of civil war.

### **Web sites:**

[www.vanderkraaij.net/FPM/LiberiaOnTheNet/WilliamTolbert.htm](http://www.vanderkraaij.net/FPM/LiberiaOnTheNet/WilliamTolbert.htm) A biography of President Tolbert.

[www.vanderkraaij.net/FPM/LiberiaOnTheNet/SamuelKDoe.htm](http://www.vanderkraaij.net/FPM/LiberiaOnTheNet/SamuelKDoe.htm) A sketch of President Doe

**Bibliography:**

Hubbard, Mark. The Liberian Civil War. London: Frank Case Publications, 1998. [DT 636.5.H83] A journalist's description of the civil war. Hubbard gives good sketches of Taylor's pre-invasion years. Hubbard reports on atrocities of war and details Doe's murder. The latter chapters about fighting in Monrovia are best understood after you have lived in the city a while.

Fitzgerald, Mary Anne. Journeys from Samburu. New York: Viking Press, 1993. [DT 352.F58] See the chapter on Liberia for a first hand account of events of the early 1990s.

## Chapter 6

### Civil War in Earnest

Charles Taylor's force of about 100 Libyan trained NPFL soldiers crept across the Cote d'Ivoire border on Christmas Eve 1989 to seize the town of Butuno in Nimba County. Although it seems that this was to be part of a multi-phased invasion, only the Butuno event succeeded. Taylor's announced intent – he spoke regularly over the BBC – was to oust Doe and to free the Liberian people from his tyranny. Taylor's political/military genius, if it could be called that, was to couch the civil war in ethnic terms, i.e. a struggle against the Krahn, Doe and all the oppression they had wreaked on the Gio, Mano and other peoples. This call appealed to the citizenry, especially in non-Krahn regions, all of whom had felt Doe induced terror or lack of opportunities as impediments to their lives. Taylor also skillfully marshaled traditional authorities to the NPFL cause. Zoes (religious chiefs), chiefs and elders accepted the necessity for the struggle. Some leaders saw the cause as righteous, others were intimidated by peers and others still were bought off – or a combination of all three motivations. In any case traditional leaders joined the effort and with them came their communities, including youth who were instrumental as fighters.

Throughout the hinterland, the NPFL made progress. Although there was a hard-core base of real soldiers, most of the NPFL troops were a rag tag collection of new recruits with only minimal training. They were, however, fairly well armed because weaponry from Burkina Faso and Libya traced clandestine routes to the front. NPFL fighters were often barely more than children, uneducated and poorly disciplined. They frequently dressed bizarrely in women's attire, wigs or masks believing that such masquerading rendered them more powerful as well as invulnerable to enemy fire. Such fighters employed many talismans and other protections, including cannibalism. Their cruelty was widely reported as they tortured and mutilated victims, disemboweled pregnant women (often betting ahead of time on the sex of the fetus) and killed indiscriminately. The fact that such a force could quickly overrun Liberia said something about them and the fear they inspired, but it also said that the regular army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) were woefully inept.

#### **Doe's Forces Collapse**

If the premise that the AFL ever was a satisfactory military establishment, that occurred prior to Doe's 1980 coup d'etat. Since then the AFL was riven with factionalism and violence that characterized Doe's progressive elimination of all opposition, real or imaginary. By late 1989, the AFL was poorly armed (only the elite presidential guard had a full inventory of weapons and ammunition), poorly organized, poorly deployed and poorly led. It was a military best equipped to terrorize innocent civilians – a task that it did well. Thus, the AFL posed little real opposition to the NPFL's steamroll over ninety-five percent of the nation. By July 1990 NPFL troops were poised to attack Monrovia. Libyan-trained elements led by Prince (just a name, not a title) Johnson encircled the city from the west while Taylor's forces approached from the north

and east. Soon the rebels entered the city where fighting intensified. Prince Johnson, who had been operating independently of Taylor, seized Bushrod Island, the port and the western approaches. Taylor's forces, commanded by former U.S. Marine Elmer Johnson, came into Sinkor (the eastern section of Monrovia) from the east. Doe's troops were squeezed back onto capital hill and the executive mansion. Before they left Sinkor, an AFL detachment under Captain Tally Yonbu attacked the 2,000 civilians who had taken refuge in St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Sinkor and in an orgy of death killed about 600 of them.

### **U.S. Embassy Evacuated**

A U.S. Naval squadron with 2,000 marines embarked stood offshore for two months during the carnage in Monrovia, but only evacuated U.S. and third country nations when the strife became too egregious. American diplomats tried to negotiate cease-fires and to arrange a suitable exit for President Doe. Taylor did accept to halt his advance in the expectation that Doe's departure would be arranged. Doe repeatedly agreed to depart, but always reneged on actually doing so. Meanwhile, Prince Johnson broke away from Taylor and declared the establishment of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). Monrovia settled into three bristling armed camps.

### **Video Taped Torture**

Since the U.S. itself would not intervene, it prevailed upon the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to mount a peacekeeping operation. The resulting force was dubbed Economic Community of West African States Cease Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The first elements of the largely Nigerian force deployed to Monrovia via sea in early September and set up headquarters, with Prince Johnson's blessing, inside the free port. On September 9, 1990, apparently with the hope of allying with newly arrived ECOMOG chief General Quainoo, President Doe decided to pay a visit to ECOMOG headquarters at the port. ECOMOG soldiers disarmed Doe's security contingent, but were overwhelmed by an INPFL patrol that soon arrived. Prince Johnson gleefully took Doe into custody and had him tortured while being video taped. Doe's ear was cut off and the tape apparently shows Johnson taking a bite out of it. Badly beaten, Doe died within several hours. His mutilated corpse was displayed in the city as clear evidence of his demise.

ECOMOG's mission was to secure the country so that an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) could be established to stabilize Liberia prior to truly democratic elections. IGNU was created in October 1990 with Professor Amos Sawyer as President. With Doe's death, the dissolution of what remained of the AFL and Prince Johnson's forces well contained in the ECOMOG zone, ECOMOG consolidated security throughout most of Monrovia. The problem was that Taylor never accepted the ECOMOG mission and he roundly rejected the IGNU. Forced from the city, Taylor retreated to "Greater Liberia," i.e. everything but Monrovia, which he governed from Buchanan or Harbel. It was during this exile that Taylor perfected his warlord techniques: quick recourse to violence, use of tribalism, control of zoes and chiefs, fanatical loyalty and, on the

economic side, the system of direct payments to him personally – not to any government - for exploitation of natural resources of rubber, timber and diamonds. With regard to such exploitation, there were plenty of available partners. Long-term Lebanese and Indian merchants, plus a host of unsavory businessmen eagerly competed for favor. Payoffs were cheaper than taxes.

By October 1992 Taylor was ready to try again to seize Monrovia. His attack dubbed “Operation Octopus” caught ECOMOG unprepared and nearly succeeded. Some of Prince Johnson’s IPNFL forces joined the attackers. The city was shelled by mortars and rockets, but ECOMOG troops reinforced by revived AFL soldiers and supported by Nigerian air power regained the initiative and retook lost ground. ECOMOG was emboldened by its success and began a process of gradually expanding its territorial control. Since 1990 the war settled into a pattern of ECOMOG/AFL/IPNFL versus Charles Taylor. ECOMOG, however, had a limited mandate. Its leaders and troops were not enthusiastic about real fighting. They preferred not to confront the enemy, but instead to profit –usually personally – from the circumstances. Before long the West African forces were engaged in a wide variety of questionable activity – protection, arms dealing (to all comers), abuse of humanitarian goods, black market sales and the like.

Elsewhere in Liberia other warlords emerged. Most notable was the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), which soon split into a Krahn faction led by Roosevelt Johnson and a Mandingo one led by Alhaji Kromah. The two ULIMOs encroached on NPFL turf in the northwest. Along the southeastern coast still another faction, the Liberian Peace Council (LPC) led by George Boley challenged Taylor’s control. Clearly the nation was falling to pieces, but by 1994 the prospects for peace brightened on account of a series of meetings, conferences and regional mediations designed to construct a framework for elections. When Sani Abacha replaced Nigerian President Babangida in 1993, Nigerian animosity towards Taylor (and he towards them) declined. A United Nations observer force (UNOMIL) was created in 1993 to oversee the implementation of the Abuja peace accords (the thirteenth such agreement since 1980).

### **City Pillaged Again**

In mid 1995 Taylor and other warlords came to Monrovia, which was still controlled by ECOMOG, to constitute a Council of State. The city was understandably tense with various warlord contingents moving about and there was much political maneuvering among the politicians. Taylor apparently convinced ULIMO-J leader Johnson to resist ECOMOG disarmament deadlines. This led to a pitched battle at Tubmanburg in December 1995 during which Nigerian forces lost several armored vehicles and artillery pieces. Soon after, seizing on factional unrest and murders in the capital, Taylor declared that his forces would restore peace. Under that rubric and called “Operation Pay Yourself” by the fighters, NPFL troops began to sack and pillage Monrovia. Thousands of innocents and supposed enemies died in the fighting. Humanitarian organization offices, homes and vehicles were looted. U.S. embassy personnel were evacuated again. ECOMOG personnel were unwilling or unable to halt the violence. When it ran its course, the city and much of the countryside was again



under Taylor's sway. Under these circumstances elections took place a year later in July 1997. Taylor's only serious opponent was Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, who while she appealed to intellectuals and remnants of the True Whig constituency, had little attraction for rural voters. In sum, Liberians voted, probably out of fear, for peace. They voted for Taylor, knowing full well that if he did not win, then civil war would surely resume.

The 1997 election brought relief and a sense of normalcy to the beleaguered land, but there was no rush by the international community to reengage to help rebuild the shattered economy. No one trusted Taylor who was widely viewed as a clever, ruthless warlord who had shot his way to power. Humanitarian activities that had been badly set back by "Operation Pay Yourself" slowly resumed, however, and they provided some succor to the severely affected.

### **Warlord Taylor's Style**

Taylor ruled as he had for years through cronies, loyal sycophants, and trusted retainers. He proclaimed his tribal connections by taking the name "Ghankay" that reaffirmed his standing with zoes and chiefs. He used patronage and rewards to keep them in his debt. Whereas Doe had made the Krahn tribe supreme, Taylor's accession marked the rise of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. Once in the presidency Taylor inherited the national army, the AFL – his long-term enemy. He did not disband the institution, he merely ignored it. Military and police power were vested in his NPFL militia, especially the Anti-Terrorist Unit composed of the most brutal loyal fighters. There are no Constitutional provisions for private armies so technically the ATU and other security elements of the NPFL operated outside the realm of law.

Liberia's once competent civil service was in shambles. Political patronage and graft rather than merit had become the criteria for survival. Institutions of government including Parliament and the courts were also driven by selfish and political considerations. Civil society too was in disarray. However, the bar and journalist associations continued to struggle valiantly to keep an independent voice, but critics were regularly silenced by intimidation, imprisonment or assassination. Church leaders had throughout the decades of civil war tried to provide a moral compass for the nation and they kept to that worthwhile goal, but they too were conditioned not to be unduly strident, especially when criticizing anyone with power.

While government revenues rebounded slightly with relative peace, collection mechanisms had become corrupted and much of the economy operated outside the formal sector. Taylor continued the practice of having exploiters of timber and diamonds settle with him directly rather than via government agencies. The regular stream of revenue from Liberia's ship registry, at the insistence of the international community, was audited and devoted purely to legitimate national obligations, similarly with payments for rubber exports. Despite such income, the government is for practical purposes bankrupt and without any recourse to legitimate international financing.

## **External Adventures**

Taylor's involvement in Sierra Leone's civil war has come back to haunt him. Taylor met Foday Sankoh, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Liberia in 1989 and provided him with support during Sierra Leone's civil war beginning in 1991. Additionally, Taylor marketed diamonds secured from Sierra Leone's diamond fields. He then provided weaponry and munitions that permitted the brutal civil war in neighboring Sierra Leone to flourish. Taylor permitted RUF rebels to use Liberian territory and provided them refuge when their fortunes waned. For these activities Taylor was sanctioned by the UN Security Council in May 2001. Accused of trafficking in blood diamonds he was branded an international pariah and prohibited from international travel. The Security Council also imposed an arms embargo on Liberia designed to curb Taylor's disruptive activities in the sub-region. In addition in May 2003, Taylor was formally indicted for war crimes by the Sierra Leone tribunal. Obviously this is embarrassing to Taylor, but it also has ramifications for Liberia in that it poisons all international dealings with the nation.

In 2002 another Liberian organization, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) emerged to challenge Taylor's rule. LURD is the lineal descendent of ULIMO-K and counts Alhaji Kromah among its leaders. LURD engaged in insurgent tactics in Liberia's northwest where it controls territory and extended its reach to Monrovia's outer suburbs. In 2003 MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia) yet another warlord type organization manifested itself in the southeast. By mid-year the two fighting groups were converging on Monrovia, displacing citizens and causing expatriate evacuations. Charles Taylor felt the pressure. As is the pattern, a series of regional peace talks have outlined proposals for peaceful settlement of conflict, including a key provision that Taylor step down as president before the end of the year.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. We told the story of Liberia's civil wars in terms of personalities because history is obviously recorded in that fashion, yet the Does and Taylors of Liberia are sadly not unique. Other warlords have played in the saga and new ones- Sekou Conneh of LURD, for example – are waiting in the wings. There are no guarantees that the next one will be an improvement. The question then becomes how to break the cycle?
2. Along with war, Liberia has also given diplomacy a poor reputation. It took thirteen agreements before the Abuja Accords finally led to the 1997 elections. The 2003 all party peace talks in Accra mediated by former Nigerian President General Abubakar began in mid-June and continued into August. Truly, every group wanted to win at the table what could not be won on the ground. Traditional political parties and exiles, neither of whom were involved directly in the fighting, combined forces to out maneuver the less sophisticated (and less desirable) warlord delegations, but since the fighters fight, they must be satisfied with any agreement if it is to have a chance of success.

**Web sites:**

[www.gis.net/~toadoll/](http://www.gis.net/~toadoll/) The “Liberian Connection” a government of Liberia sponsored web site that gives its side of the story - very upbeat slick public relations.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2963086.stm>

<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/06/10/liberia.taylor/> Profiles of Charles Taylor.

**Bibliography:**

Nass, Major I.A. A Study in International Conflict – The Liberian Crisis and the West African Peace Initiative. Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 2000. [DT 636.5 N37 2000] A sympathetic look at ECOMOG by one of its field commanders.

Ellis, Stephen. The Mask of Anarchy. London: Hurst and Company, 1999. [DT636.5 E45] This book provides an excellent and accurate recounting of events, but also terrific insight into Liberian society and why warlords can flourish.

## Chapter 7

### Economic Downslide

The economic downturn coincided with political change. By the 1980s iron exploitation was no longer profitable and exports began to fall. Rubber production leveled off. Master Sergeant Doe who took over via coup d'etat in 1979 offered little in the way of confidence to economic players and nothing to potential investors. It soon became evident that Doe had no economic plans, but rather intended to milk the nation's resources for his and his Krahn tribesmen's benefit. Some of the educated economic and political elites began to exit – they were only the first in a long-running brain drain that has siphoned many of Liberia's most capable citizens into exile.

Doe's misrule and mismanagement of the economy – despite U.S. Cold War motivated efforts to prop it up – drove the economy downward. Iron ore production stopped and then civil conflict brought much rubber collection activities to a halt as well. From 1990 just after Charles Taylor's invasion, civil strife that led to the partition of Liberia into zones controlled by various warlords, meant that the economy stalled. Easily exploited items such as diamonds and timber became the mainstays of Taylor's military machine. With Taylor's election to the presidency in 1997, the return of relative peace permitted resumption of Firestone's production and export activities. Life in most rural areas returned to normal – except the northwest that has experienced insurgent warfare organized by the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy).

Liberia's economy today is stalled at a low level (GDP per capita \$170). The prospects for respectable growth in the short term are non-existent and dim over the longer haul. Rubber production is expected to decrease as producing trees age and few seedlings are planted. By definition timber resources are finite and trees are being harvested without provisions for re-planting. Gold and diamonds are mined as artisanal products, and while industrial production hopes are high, the reality of that is years into the future; similarly for hopes for petroleum riches offshore. Liberia's manufacturing sector plus its once thriving commercial sector were badly damaged by war, pillage and neglect. Liberia's infrastructure has crumbled. There is no electricity or water in Monrovia. Roads nationwide are in a dismal state of repair.

Taylor's approach to economics has been essentially to look after himself first. He discovered in his warlord days he could reap the profits from exports as if he were the government. Consequently, he sold timber on the "gray" market to Taiwan and France. He cornered the diamond trade, first from Liberia and subsequently from Sierra Leone. He used the proceeds from these operations to buy arms and to pay his troops. Once in government he did not re-orient these economic arrangements so that the government of Liberia might properly tax, control and manage national resources. As a result, President Taylor has done well, but the state is bankrupt.

## **No Aid for Tyrants**

International assistance is small. Western donors and the UN family copy the U.S. in providing mostly humanitarian aid and channeling that through NGOs. No donor or IFI has any major project underway or in the planning state. The World Bank and IMF have halted programs. Capping off international concerns is the UN sanctions regime currently in place. Although carefully targeted at impeding arms transfers, outlawing blood diamonds and embarrassing senior personnel by prohibiting travel, sanctions also send a strong “hands-off” message to the world.

Not surprisingly in light of the economic turmoil, government revenues have shrunk, while spending, especially on defense, has risen. The resulting deficit is ignored. It is essentially financed over the short term by non-payment of obligations – salaries, debts, etc. because Liberia has little recourse to legitimate international borrowing. Of course the financial crisis makes the government vulnerable and renders the overall crisis more severe. Other than squeezing the orange harder - and pocketing most of what leaks out – the government has no clear idea of how to escape from the downward spiral.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. Most of the Americo-Liberians, and virtually all of the elite, have left Liberia for refuge and greener pastures in the U.S., Europe or elsewhere in West Africa. This brain drain has robbed Liberia of its most able people. What are the consequences of this loss? Will Liberia be able to rebuild without them? Should they be urged to return if peace is restored?
2. Sanctions are imposed usually in order to achieve a political objective, in Liberia’s case to express distain with and to punish Charles Taylor for destabilizing Sierra Leone. On the other hand, sanctions are often said to have a deleterious impact on innocent civilians. Are innocents directly harmed by sanctions on Liberia? Indirectly?

### **Web sites:**

[www.imf.org/external/country/LBR/index.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/country/LBR/index.htm)

[www.newafrica.com](http://www.newafrica.com) Follow the “economy” link to Liberia.

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Dolo, Emmanuel. Democracy versus Dictatorship: the Quest for Freedom and Justice in Africa’s Oldest Republic. London: University Press of America, 1996. [DT 36.2 D65]  
See the discussion of nepotism, corruption and the lack of accountability.

## Chapter 8

### Culture, Society and Witchcraft

What was it about Liberian society that permitted the culture of violence to flourish? Clearly there were elements conducive to the rise of warlords, but were they aberrations or more deeply rooted in everyday life?

Historically tribalism as thought of in current political science, that is an overarching identity that groups people together on the basis of culture, language and custom in order to pursue political goals, did not exist in Liberia. Rather many hundreds or more individual villages were governed by elders, sometimes chiefs. Although the people of the hinterlands displayed characteristics that have come to define tribes, especially languages, they themselves were not much aware of those factors. Instead they defined themselves by lineage, clan and village. Inter-ethnic competition was the rule rather than rivalry with distant strangers. In general terms the people of the east – nowadays the Krahn, Grebo, Kru and Sapo (largely defined by language) lived village by village without wider political links and without much hierarchical rule, even within the villages. Age group sets tended to have responsibility for specific functions. Other tribal groups – the Bassa, Kappelle, Manno and Gio – displayed greater hierarchical organization, particularly on the religious side. With them secret initiation societies, the Poro, for men, and the Sande, for women were directed by traditional religious leaders called Zoes. Actually the societies were only secret from those who were not yet initiated or from the other gender. They were not selective. All boys and girls participated. At the age of puberty they went off to special bush camps where they learned more of the traditions and beliefs of their ethnic group. Initiations involved some hardship and some physical trials. Masks, which manifested various spirits, especially the powerful spirit of the forest were intrinsic to the process. A hundred years ago bush school took several years, but in more modern times it is a function of months. Upon return from the bush camps, the youths were deemed to be adults entitled to full rights, marriage for example, in society.

#### The Spirit World

In general indigenous Liberians believe in two worlds: a spirit world of unseen forces and the outward visible world of everyday life. They judge that influences move back and forth between the planes and that there are always explanations for events. Nothing just happens. The mystery is to try to determine why or to try to influence outcomes. Spirits on their own, especially the major spirit of the forest – called the bush devil by Christian missionaries - are not necessarily intrinsically good or evil, but can have favorable or unfavorable consequences depending on the circumstances. Thus, spirits are to be warily considered, properly placated and respected. Even the onslaught of world religions of Christianity and Islam that promulgate monotheistic views are not incompatible with traditional beliefs. In fact, many Liberians have a foot in both camps. They go to church or mosque, but still respect the old ways.

Offerings or sacrifices are methods of placating the spirits or of assuring a better outcome. The ultimate sacrifice is human. In war or conflict when killing occurred, the victor could take on the power of his enemy by ingesting part of his body, his heart or his liver, and thus his spirit. This aspect of traditional beliefs appears to have been rarely practiced, but the idea was always there. However, when civil warfare raged from 1990 onwards, many fighters, especially their leaders who sought to solidify control of their troops, reportedly engaged in the practice. An even more clandestine practice, that of ritual killing, is also regularly reported in Liberia. In some areas – especially in the southeast - this has meant the abduction of children for this purpose, but during the heyday of violence witchdoctors, called “heartmen” are reportedly to have scrutinized potential victims prior to ripping their living hearts from their bodies. He who commissioned the deed then consumed such hearts in whole or part. Again the power of the dead was transferred to the living, but also this was a mighty means of intimidating inferiors by enhancing one’s reputation. Obviously the climate of violence, which so reduced the value of life was conducive to the commercialization of ritual killing via the heartmen.

### **Tradition or Aberration?**

During the civil war several elements from traditional culture could be readily discerned among the contesting armies. First was the utilization of youths. Liberia was not the first conflict zone where child soldiers held sway, but it was certainly among the most notorious. Charles Taylor claimed that his “Small Boy Units” were composed of war orphans who joined his forces in order to have “family.” There is undoubtedly an element of truth in that, but child soldiers were loyal, fearless and unlikely to challenge the leadership. Consequently, they were good front line fodder. Youth were available not just because they were orphans, but also because traditional village controls were dissolving. Many elders interviewed about the phenomena of child soldiers lamented that children no longer respected the old ways. They were correct; things began to fall apart generations ago when youths were dragooned into forced labor on rubber plantations. Education, migration to the towns and cities and a growing taste for modern consumer products added to the disillusionment with village life and the erosion of age-old strictures. The civil war provided opportunities for youths to see a wider world. The incentive for most was not the war itself or the political goals of its leaders, but the adventure and the prospects for personal gain via roadblocks, intimidation, looting or payment after victory. Since traditional warfare was for plunder – mostly for women and livestock – this motivation was understood. Although perhaps over several hundred thousand Liberians served at one time or another in this or that warlord’s army, most were half-hearted part-time soldiers who came and went. Often the bulk of these ranks did so with the blessing of their elders who were more susceptible to the political, i.e. appeals to tribalism, or other blandishments offered by the warlords. Many of the fighters, however, became disillusioned by the violence and sought to return to regular lives. Sadly many others were caught up in it and subsequently lost any sense of morality or ethics that they might have earlier imbibed.

In 1990 international reporting from Liberia made mention of the bizarre dress of rebel irregulars. Youths dressed in wedding gowns, rubber Mickey Mouse masks, or sporting outlandish wigs waved their AK-47s in journalists' faces. Others appeared with faces painted white. Rather than aberrations, such masquerading and masking grew very much from the culture of the spirit world. When so decked out, the individual was protected from having to assume responsibilities for his actions and also from devious actions of others. As the decade wore on, the ruthless and brutal children shifted more to Ray Bans, tennis shoes, fatigues and other accouterments from American popular culture. They were enamored of the violence displayed in inner city Hollywood movies and in the Kung Fu exports from Asia.

Warlord Charles Taylor was adept at securing the support of traditional leaders. The independent or loosely associated villages that existed prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century arrival of freed slaves, gradually came under the authority of the settler government based at Monrovia. Often times this submission was coercive and maintained by force of arms, but by the mid-twentieth century Monrovia's control was reality. Rule was effected both by sending administrators from the capital, but also by patronage appointments of locals to positions of power. Even though the native peoples were largely excluded from national politics, they had ample scope to connive and inveigle at their local level. The chief opportunity there was via a nominated position. Chiefs had the responsibility of collecting taxes, including the hated hut tax, but also were expressly permitted to withhold a percentage of revenues as salary and for local purposes. Many such persons ingratiated themselves with True Whig administrations and became rich in the process.

During his presidency Doe did not solidify ties with rural leaders, but instead antagonized them, especially the non-Krahn. Taylor, in turn, played his anti-Krahn card well and solidified the support of the tribal chiefs and religious leaders. They, in turn, were instrumental in delivering the up-country vote to Taylor in the 1997 election.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. Violence has plagued Liberia for a generation. A whole generation has grown up knowing only sporadic war, internal displacement, food shortages, disrupted schooling, and roadblocks run by arrogant youths. Many have been afflicted by rape, abuse and death. When a culture of violence has wormed its way so deeply into a national psyche, can the society be healed? Similarly can those who have only practiced violence as a way of life- child soldiers and other fighters who have binged on drugs and alcohol to sustain atrocities and conflict – be reformed? If so, what will this take?



**Web sites:**

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/06/23/wliber23.xml> A news story alleging that Taylor has “turned back to cannibalism.”

<http://www.rnw.nl/en/liberia/> A summary of the child soldier problem.

[www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,982083,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,982083,00.html) A news report of child soldiers in action.

[www.child-soldiers.org/](http://www.child-soldiers.org/) - 2k Web site of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.

**Bibliography:**

Ellis. op.cit. This is an excellent discussion of the role of traditional beliefs and practices and their impact on contemporary attitudes and actions.

## Chapter 9

### **The Modern Order: Religion and Civil Society**

Modern religion is a force to be reckoned with in contemporary Liberia. Remember that spreading the Gospel was a key motivating factor in the establishment of the colony. Not only were the settlers imbued with Christian virtues as a necessity for civilized life, they insisted that the church, clothes and an education was the only path by which natives could aspire to join their ranks. American and some European missionaries arrived to ensure the adherence to the faith by the settlers, but also to spread the word to the heathens. They achieved good success. Many thousand natives soon professed the cross and began to profit from the educational and health services provided by the missionaries. More than anything else, Christianity provided the path by which native peoples became assimilated into settler culture.

Even though the barbarism of the civil war was an affront to Christian doctrine, the churches soldiered on attempting to use their good offices to militate conflict. While this had little demonstrable effect on the course of the war, churches undoubtedly provided solace to its many victims. Mainline American Protestant denominations Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians and Lutheran plus the Roman Catholic Church are widespread and were the mainstays of the settler community. They are increasingly joined by Evangelical congregations that appeal to more recent converts, especially those seeking redemption after the war. Charles Taylor, for example, is a professed born again Christian.

With the collapse of government and government services nationwide, the people rely even more on churches as the purveyors of education and health care. To their credit churches have stepped forward to do what they can.

#### **Islam**

Islam too spread readily in Liberia throughout the last century. Mandingo traders brought the Koran with them when migrating south. People in small communities throughout the nation, but especially in the northwest have subsequently adopted Islam. Sadly, religious and political cleavages tend to follow the same divisions. Many LURD adherents, for example, are Mandingo and thus Muslim. The extent to which religion becomes a political issue in a post-Taylor Liberia remains to be seen.

#### **Masons**

In addition to Christianity, a mainstay of Americo-Liberian society was membership in the Masonic Lodge. Such memberships provided the ruling elite expanded connections and relationships within their controlling oligarchy. In fact, Masonic identity ironically substituted for the tribal identity that the Americo-Liberians had long lost and avidly distained. There is little evidence of a vibrant Masonic system in Liberia today,

but the ruins of Africa's largest Masonic shrine brood over Mamba Point hill as a relic to this bygone era.

### **Civil Society**

In contemporary Liberia the associations of civil society loom importantly in national life. Trade unions, women's groups, bar associations, journalists' associations, regional groups, human rights activists, market ladies, football clubs and benevolent associations have sprung up by the hundreds. Obviously they fill needs in society for cooperative undertakings to focus on legitimate issues such as violence against women or children's rights, but such groups also offer employment opportunities enhanced by the possibility of obtaining external grants. In a like fashion, hundreds of store-front churches cater to the spiritual needs of their congregations. Like the established churches, many such religious groups have successfully linked up to overseas sources of support. Finally, political parties compliment the constellation of active local organizations. Seventeen parties, for example, were represented at the Accra peace talks. Several of the parties are large with national constituencies, but others are small linked only to prominent personalities. As with other organizations, political parties also seek to establish links with overseas partners for training, equipment, conferences and travel.

In the aftermath of civil war competent civil administration and the rule of law have evaporated, in their stead are corruption and nepotism. Infrastructure has collapsed and the economy has failed. Poverty is overwhelming. Disease is rampant. The political system has degenerated into ethnic strife and warlord gangs have the run of the streets. Truly Liberia is a failed state. The challenge for Liberians and for the international community is to create from this rubbish a system conducive to security, peace and a long slow climb towards prosperity. The alternative is a vortex of violence and anarchy that will destabilize the entire West African region and provide a base of operations for malefactors of all sorts – criminals, terrorists, hoodlums, opportunists and their ilk.

### **Issues to Consider:**

1. Modern religions, that is Christianity and Islam, preach accommodation and understanding. However, the savagery that has been unleashed in Liberia seems to carry atavistic roots incompatible with the thesis of "love thy neighbors." While we can explain actions in terms of traditional beliefs, such explanations do not justify such violence. Who is to blame here?
2. Coping, making do, and finding a bright side in the face of despair is a skill that many Liberians have elevated to an art. Yet it is still a dog eat dog existence. Part of the rehabilitation of Liberia will require optimism, but also an ability to incorporate personal concerns into a quest for the greater good. Will the people be up to that challenge?

**Web sites:**

<http://members.aol.com/Liberia99/>. A civil society site that lists hundreds of articles and opinions about getting rid of Taylor and fixing Liberia.

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Williams, Gabriel I.H. Liberia: The Heart of Darkness, New York: Trafford Publishers, 2002. The call for Liberians to rally around for peace and democracy – this time in book form.

## Chapter 10

### Regional and International Considerations

As noted previously in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Liberia was coveted by European colonial powers that were held at bay by the United States. Nonetheless, surrounding territories became either French (Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea) or British (Sierra Leone) colonies. Liberia was a black ruled republic, but as we have noted, not an African ruled state. Thus, Liberia had little natural appeal to the early generations of African nationalists. Liberia was firmly in the lock of the conservative True Whig Party whose American slave descendants frowned upon any challenges to the system. Additionally, perhaps fearing for its own standing with the U.S. and European powers, Liberia made no effort to reach out to these budding continental politicians. Consequently, leaders like Kwame Nkrumah from Gold Coast (now Ghana) and Nnamdi Azikwe of Nigeria found no support or succor for their independence efforts in West Africa's only black-ruled state. So when independence did sweep across the region in 1960, Liberia was largely irrelevant to the process. In fact, Liberia's indigenous people had to wait another twenty years prior to realizing their majority role in the nation's political affairs. However, Liberia did stand firm from the very beginning in opposition to apartheid in South Africa. And during the Cold War era of the early sixties was a voice of moderation suggesting to new African states that the western model of capitalism and democracy ought not to be discarded out of hand. In this same vein Liberia played a constructive role in the founding of the Organization of African Unity.

#### Cold War Policies

By the 1970s, however, most of Africa saw Tolbert as a dinosaur, but in accordance with the OAU principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations were not inclined to any action. Nonetheless, African leaders were startled and embarrassed by the brutal murder of Tolbert and the public executions of his ministers. Consequently, they largely ostracized President Doe seeing in him the worst example of pathetic inept leadership. President Houphouet Boigny of the neighboring Ivory Coast was especially irritated with Doe's actions because his adopted child's husband (Tolbert's nephew) was killed in the takeover. The cold war stakes for Doe were won by the U.S., but by the nineteen eighties, the Soviet Union was not interested in new African clients. Libya, however, was and saw anti-Doe plots as a useful means to challenge America and Israel (which trained Doe's elite presidential guard). Thus, Libya opened its military/political camps to anti-Doe elements. Most prominent among them were Charles Taylor's NPFL troops. Other radical minded leaders, especially Blaise Compaore who killed incumbent President Thomas Sankara and took over in Burkina Faso, also was a stalwart Taylor supporter. He became the mechanism by which Libyan financed arms were funneled to the NPFL. Cote d'Ivoire too, influenced by Houphouet's disdain for Doe permitted weapons clandestinely to transit its territory. Finally, France, which was always aware of relative Francophone versus Anglophone influences in West Africa, was quietly supportive of anti-Doe moves. On the other hand, Doe established a solid relationship with President Babangida of Nigeria that solidified his Anglophone

credentials. Thus the stage was well set for lots of international intrigue when the Liberian civil war began in 1990.

As the Cold War waned, by 1989 the U.S. was distancing itself from President Doe, but not inclined to play any king-making role. Then, as previously, the U.S. opted for constitutional change via elections. Taylor was relatively unknown, but what was known – a Libyan backed escaped criminal – did not recommended him. When Taylor proved so able in the first months of the war, the U.S. and Nigerian counter weight to him was ECOMOG and the Interim Government of National Unity led by Amos Sawyer. ECOMOG was created to impose the constitutional solution, but the force itself soon became part of the problem. By 1992 the civil war had become a stand off between ECOMOG, i.e. Nigeria, and Taylor. That stalemate was not to be broken until Sani Abacha became Nigeria's president in 1993.

### **Destabilizing Neighbors**

Meanwhile Taylor too was sowing a bit of regional dissension. He transshipped weapons and munitions to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone beginning in 1991 both in recompense for diamonds that he marketed for them, but also so as to create a diversion for ECOMOG and a little payback for Nigeria. On account of Sierra Leone's civil war, tens of thousands of refugees sought safety in Liberia. They were (and are) housed in refugee camps that are often adjacent to camps for Liberia's tens of thousands of internally displaced persons. However, to the east and north, tens of thousands of Liberians ethnic Krahn and Mandingos crossed to the Cote d'Ivoire or Guinea respectively to find safety from NPFL thugs. As the tables have turned again in the region in 2003, those tribesmen have become the forces for LURD and MODEL.

Liberia is also apparently involved in the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire. Houphouet was replaced constitutionally by Henri Bedie who was then ousted in a coup by Robert Guei (from the area of his nation near the Liberian border, General Guei had ethnic ties to the Gio people who are key Taylor supporters). Guei, in turn was replaced by Laurent Gbagbo in a 2000 election. In late 2002 northern Ivoirian troops mutinied and subsequently took control of half of their country. The mutineers had support from Burkina Faso and certainly numbered in their ranks some Liberian soldiers-of-fortune. In 2003, however, a second rebel group arose in Cote d'Ivoire with links to the late General Guei, who was killed in Abidjan during the outbreak of fighting in September 2002. It is presumed that Taylor provided clandestine support to those rebels.

### **UN Sanctions**

On account of his activities to support the RUF, the Sierra Leone rebel group that became infamous for severing the limbs of innocents, the United Nations Security Council levied sanctions against President Taylor and his key cadre of NPFL supporters. They were singled out by name and forbidden to travel internationally. The sale of diamonds, many of which were smuggled out of Sierra Leone for the purchase of arms, was banned and an arms embargo imposed. However, the Council declined to prohibit

the export of Liberian timber (most exports are to Taiwan and France), the sanction that many believed would irreparably cripple the NPFL regime. In May of 2003, the Sierra Leone Tribunal indicted Taylor for war crimes. This combination of censures indeed intensified the pressure on Taylor to step down.

**Issues to Consider:**

1. The Liberian crisis does not operate in a vacuum. There are many cross border tribal and political links and consequent much clandestine maneuvering. Indeed there is often a bit more to any situation than meets the eye. Warlords inside Liberia receive support from neighboring states and in turn support allies there. Motivating factors include greed, tribalism, world politics and even ideology. How do these factors ensure that the cycle of violence continues?

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## **Chapter 11**

### **Liberia in 2003**

The current crisis began building anew in early 2003. Essentially, it arises from discontent with Charles Taylor as manifested militarily by the organization Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and later on by MODEL (pronounced “Mo-dell” – Movement for Democracy in Liberia.) Each of the two groups is the lineal descendant of a previous warlord/tribal groups. LURD has a Mandingo orientation that comes from ULIMO-K of the earlier civil war and MODEL groups many Krahn who were previously aligned with Master Sergeant Doe. Their respective tribal orientations are reflected in their territory. LURD moved towards Monrovia from the northwest and MODEL from the southeast. Each group in turn also enlisted external support; LURD from Guinea and MODEL from the Cote d’Ivoire. Such support has to be viewed as “payback” from those states to Taylor who constantly maneuvered against them.

By late April the insurgents had taken great swaths of territory and were pushing hard on the capital. Taylor’s theretofore vaunted Anti-Terrorist Unit and the Armed Forces of Liberia offered little resistance as they fell back on Monrovia. The Special Court in Sierra Leone indicted Taylor for war crimes in May. Even though he was in Accra, Ghana when the announcement was made, he was permitted to return to Liberia unimpeded. However, the pressure on him to leave office intensified considerably, both from within because opponents recognized his vulnerability and supporters saw the writing on the wall. From without, West African chiefs-of-state collectively advised him to resign. Taylor indicated that he might step down for the good of the nation. That admission coupled with his considerably weaker position – both militarily and politically – kicked off a double track process designed to oust him from office.

#### **Attack on Monrovia**

First LURD and MODEL redoubled their efforts to seize Monrovia by force in order to install themselves in power. By July LURD pushed into the western suburbs of the city, crossed the Po River, occupied Bushrod Island and the Freeport. The Government of Liberia forces resisted these incursions. Fighting between the two was fierce, particularly at the bridges across the St. Paul and Mesurado Rivers to downtown Monrovia. Despite LURD use of mortars - virtually all rounds from those guns fell indiscriminately on civilian targets, including within the U.S. Embassy compound – it was not successful in entering the central city. Similarly, LURD moves to encircle Monrovia and cut the road to Gbarnga were not successful.

In the course of this fighting thousands of persons – mostly non-combatants – were killed or injured. Bullets bounced indiscriminately around and mortar shells – preponderantly from LURD positions - rained down from the sky. The city was already swollen to over a million; about 600,000 of them internally displaced people from the long series of wars. With LURD’s capture of the Freeport and the food supplies there – both commercial and for relief purposes – the price of food tripled. Similarly, warfare



cut the daily flow of foodstuffs from surrounding farms to city markets. During the same period the half-working water supply system for the city was irreparably damaged. International relief personnel evacuated and their good works with victims of war – food, health services, etc. – halted. Monrovia’s medical infrastructure that was already near the point of collapse due to neglect and shortage of personnel was further strained by the carnage and overwhelmed by disease. Dozens of dead bodies rotted where they fell or in makeshift morgues. Cases of cholera were reported. Citizens cowered in their homes, sought refuge in churches, stadiums, and the U.S. embassy’s Greystone housing compounds, but nowhere were there guaranteed protection from violence.

Meanwhile MODEL had consolidated its control of the far southeast, but in order to improve its bargaining position in late July, Model forces captured the key port of Buchanan. Taylor’s forces (like Doe’s before him), probably several thousand fighters at the most, were squeezed from both sides into Monrovia. None of the combatant forces displayed much flair for battle or organized warfare, although all of them were competent killers, raiders and looters. Both LURD attacks and Taylor’s responses seemed to be driven by ammunition supplies. Whatever side had the goods went on the offensive.

### **Peace Talks**

The second track of the effort to oust Taylor was political. The three combatant groups –LURD, MODEL and GOL (government of Liberia) – joined by civil society and political party representatives convened in Accra under the aegis of ECOWAS to sign a cease-fire and to organize an orderly transition to a post Taylor era. ECOWAS mediator Nigerian General Abubakar led the delegates to an early acceptance of a cease-fire, which was continuously broken by the fighters, and a long thrashing through of political arrangements through which all parties would share power as Liberia evolved to a truly democratic state. Although the general framework was a government along the lines of the existing constitution, the all-consuming details would determine the nexus of power. The rebel delegates especially did not wish to give up at the conference table what they might win on the ground. The GOL, i.e. Taylor’s cohorts, sought to protect their influence and the others maneuvered for personal and political places in the new raiment.

### **ECOWAS Action**

The anguish of Liberia as it slid yet again into the maw of violence and despair was felt in the region and indeed around the globe. Liberia’s neighbors through their collective organization ECOWAS decided to act. With the blessing, encouragement and support of the United States, European nations and the United Nations, ECOWAS mounted a peacekeeping force dubbed ECOMIL. Deployment of the first Nigerian units of that force began on August 4. Ghanaian, Malian and Senegalese troops would later join. ECOMIL’s objectives were to occupy Roberts Field airport and the Freeport, supervise the cease-fire – which the belligerents agreed to honor once the force was in place - and protect the initial transition government. Charles Taylor to vowed that he would resign as president on August 11.

The United States indicated that it would actively support ECOMIL and indeed American interest helped convince ECOWAS to move ahead. However, long unanswered was the question of whether American combat troops would actually participate in the effort on Liberian soil. President Bush cautioned in July that Taylor's departure was a necessary condition. By early August a U.S. Naval task force was offshore. Elsewhere in the region, U.S. military personnel and contractors helped plan, prepare, train, equip and transport ECOMIL forces.

On August 11, under the stern eyes of ECOWAS Chairman President Kufuor of Ghana and other African leaders, Taylor did resign. Vice President Moses Blah was sworn in as president and will serve until the transition government takes over. Taylor departed that same afternoon for Nigeria. Taylor's departure led immediately to the U.S. Naval Task force popping up on the horizon. U.S. aircraft dominated the skies and 200 Marines arrived ashore. They helped secure Roberts Field Airport; embedded liaison teams within ECOMIL units, and helped assess the state of the port. Meanwhile, the ECOMIL force continued to grow as a second Nigerian battalion arrived and a mixed Ghanaian, Senegalese, Malian battalion followed. The joy of Taylor's departure coupled with hard negotiating on the ground by U.S. Ambassador John Blaney and the ECOMIL commander succeeded in agreement for LURD forces to withdraw from the Free Port on Bushrod Island.

Taylor's departure also energized the peace talks in Accra. Mediator Abubakar and President Kufuor facilitated a final peace agreement that was signed by all parties on August 18. The agreement provided for a transition government to be installed on October 14 led by persons not associated with the belligerents. Businessman Gyude Bryant was chosen Chairman Wesley Johnson Vice Chairman. Warring parties, however, were allocated various cabinet positions and seats in Parliament. By late August 2003, plans were advancing to blue hat ECOMIL on October 1 and place it under UN control.

As this Self Study Guide goes to press in early October 2003, the situation in long-tortured Liberia remains tense and fluid, with its future far from certain. We have seen the August 18, 2003 Comprehensive Peace Accord, the deployment of ECOMIL forces, the September authorization of a UN peacekeeping operation (via UNSCR 1509), and the departure of the U.S. military presence as of October 1. In spite of these events, low-intensity fighting between rebel and government forces, particularly involving irregulars (militias) of the parties to the conflict, continues to flare up in various parts of the countryside.

The "Love of Liberty" may have brought freed American slaves to the West African coast in 1822, with Americo-Liberians declaring in 1847 the independent state of Liberia with its capital in Monrovia. It remains to be seen, however, just when the many fine and decent Liberians of today, scores now huddled in fear amongst the rocky outcroppings and disease-ridden squalor of Monrovia, will again be able to experience the peace, security, and happiness which are so overdue in their bleeding country.

**Issues to Consider:**

1. The International community responded very slowly to the crisis and much blame for inaction or failure to move ahead more quickly was assigned to the U.S. The U.S. in turn moved hesitantly, preferring that ECOWAS, under-funded, under-equipped and poorly prepared for real peacekeeping duties, step to the fore. African leaders picked up the ball and have pressed ahead, ever hopeful that the U.S. will join more fully in the execution of the operation. What are the policy merits of greater involvement? Both for Liberia itself and for U.S. relations elsewhere in Africa? What are the relative merits of less involvement?

**Web sites:**

[www.allafrica.com](http://www.allafrica.com) for the latest news.

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# MALAYSIA SELF-STUDY GUIDE



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER

School of Professional and Area Studies

Foreign Service Institute

U.S. Department of State

The Self-Study Guide: Malaysia is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Malaysian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The guide should serve as an introductory self-study resource. The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this guide.

The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this guide was prepared by Dr. Pamela Sodhy, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University and a former Associate Professor of History at the National University of Malaysia. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Sodhy. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are public domain, from sites that explicitly say “can be used for non-profit or educational use”, or are from the author’s own materials.

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First Edition  
October 2002

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**Pre-Colonial Period**

Indianization in Malayan area	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> centuries C.E.
The Coming of Islam	11 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> centuries C.E.
The Malacca Sultanate	1400 – 1511

**Colonial Period to World War II**

Portuguese Rule in Malaya	1511 – 1641
Dutch Rule in Malaya	1641 – 1780s
British Rule in Malaya to the Start of World War II	1786-1942
Founding of Penang	1786
Cession by Kedah of Province Wellesley to British	1800
Founding of Singapore	1819
Anglo-Dutch Treaty defining British and Dutch spheres	1824
Formation of the Straits Settlements	1826
Colonial Office administration of the Straits Settlements	1867
Pangkor Treaty	1874
British Residential System	1874
Federated Malay States (FMS)	1896



First Rulers' Conference (Durbar)	1897
Siam's transfer of the four Northern Malay States to Britain	1909
Unfederated Malay States (UFMS)	1909
Johore receives a British advisor	1914
Malayan Census	1921
Early Malay Nationalism --- the Singapore Malay Union	1926
Malayan Census	1931
Start of Decentralization Measures by the British	1930
First Annual Conference of the Pan-Malayan Malay Associations	1939
Fall of Singapore to the Japanese	1942
British Rule in Sarawak to the Start of World War II	1839-1942
Brunei's cession of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Division of Sarawak to James Brooke	1839
Brunei's appointment of Brooke as Rajah and Governor of Sarawak	1841
Brunei's confirmation of James Brooke as Rajah in perpetuity	1847
Brunei's cession of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Division of Sarawak to James Brooke	1852
Brunei's cession of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Division of Sarawak to James Brooke	1861
Death of James Brooke & start of Charles Brooke's rule as Rajah	1868
Purchase of Brunei's Baram District as the 4 <sup>th</sup> Division of Sarawak	1882
Sarawak as a British Protectorate	1888
Acquisition of the Limbang District as Sarawak's 5 <sup>th</sup> Division	1890

Purchase of territory from the British North Borneo Company	1905
Britain's recognition of Limbang as a part of Sarawak	1916
Start of Charles Vyner Brooke's rule as Rajah	1916
Appointment of a Chief Secretary for Sarawak	1923
Drafting of Constitution for Sarawak	1941
Fall of Sarawak to the Japanese	1942
British Rule in Sabah to World War II	1881- 1942
Establishment of the American Trading Company	1865
Brunei's cession of land to the American Trading Company	1877
Treaty between the Sultan of Sulu & the American Trading Company	1878
Formation of the British North Borneo Company	1881
Establishment of an Advisory Council	1883
Sabah as a British Protectorate	1888
Handover of the island of Labuan to the British North Borneo Company	1888
The Mat Salleh Rebellion	1895-1900
Sale of land to Sarawak by the British North Borneo Company	1905
Formation of Native Chiefs' Advisory Council	1934
Enlightened Governorship of Douglas Jardine	1934-1937
Restriction of Chinese Emigration to Sabah	1937
Fall of Sabah to the Japanese	1942

## World War II

## The Japanese Occupation in Malaya, Sabah, &amp; Sarawak

1942 – 1945

**Post-War Developments in Malaya to Independence in 1957**

British Military Administration (BMA)	1945
Founding of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC)	1945
Siam's Return of Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, & Kedah to Malaya	1946
Malayan Union Proposal	1946
Founding of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO)	1946
Federation of Malaya Agreement	1948
Start of the Emergency against Communist Insurgency	1948
The Communities Liaison Committee	1949
Founding of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA)	1949
The Briggs Plan for resettlement of Chinese villagers	1950
Murder of Sir Henry Gurney, British High Commissioner	1951
The Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections	1952
The Alliance Victory in the General Elections	1955
Independence Day	August 31, 1957

**Post-War Developments in Sarawak to Independence in 1963**

Sarawak declared a Crown Colony	1946
Assassination of Governor Duncan Stewart	1949
New Constitution	1956

The Cobbold Commission 1956

Entry into Malaysia 1963

## **Post-War Developments in Sabah to Independence in 1963**

Sabah declared a Crown Colony 1946

The Cobbold Commission 1962

Entry into Malaysia 1963

## **The Post-Colonial Period in Malaysia**

The Premiership of Tunku Abdul Rahman 1957-1970

Official end of the Emergency 1960

Malaya's membership in the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) 1961

Discussions on the proposed Federation of Malaysia Plan 1961-1963

Cobbold Commission on Sabah & Sarawak 1962

Formation of the Federation of Malaysia September 16, 1963

Indonesia's Confrontation Policy against Malaysia 1963-1966

The Sabah Claim by the Philippines 1963

Singapore's Withdrawal from the Federation of Malaysia 1965

Formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) 1967

Race Riots Friday, May 13, 1969

Publication of The Malay Dilemma, by Dr. Mahathir Mohammad 1970

Resignation of Tunku Abdul Rahman 1970

<b>The Premiership of Tun Abdul Razak</b>	<b>1970-1976</b>
The National Operations Council	1969-1971
Amendments to the Constitution	1971
The New Economic Policy (NEP)	1971
Concept of SEA as a “Zone of Peace, Freedom & Neutrality (ZOPFAN)”	1971
Islamization Policy	1970-1975
Founding of the Islamic Youth Movement by Anwar Ibrahim	1971
Anti-government demonstrations by University of Malaya students	1974
The Alliance Party’s name change to the National Front	1974
Illness of Tun Abdul Razak	1975-1976
<b>The Premiership of Tun Hussein Onn</b>	<b>1976-1981</b>
Appointment of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as the Deputy Premier	1976
The Vietnamese Refugees problem	1976-1981
Continuation of Islamization policy	1976-1981
ASEAN policy	1976-1981
<b>The Premiership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad</b>	<b>1981–present</b>
The “Look East Policy”	1981
Economic recession	mid-1980s
The Memali Incident	1986
Resignation of Deputy Premier, Musa Hitam	1986

Resignation from cabinet of Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah	1987
Government crackdown on opposition forces	1987
The East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC) proposal	1990
The New Development Policy (NDP)	1991
Final Repatriation of Vietnamese Refugees	1996
The Asian Financial Crisis	1997
Malaysia's Hosting of the 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of ASEAN	1997
Sacking of Anwar Ibrahim	1998
Malaysia's 10 <sup>th</sup> General Elections	1999
Terrorist Concerns	2001
Announcement of Retirement in October 2003	2002

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this self-study guide is to provide basic background information on Malaysia for persons being assigned there. The guide tries to present the information in a way that individuals can obtain a better understanding of the country and, as a result, have a more productive and pleasant tour of duty. You are encouraged to think about the questions raised at the end of each section and pursue those that interest you, drawing on resource materials cited in the paper. Various websites that contain current information relevant to many of the questions raised below follow at the end of the paper.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE**

### **THE TERM MALAYSIA**

The term Malaysia has been in common usage from September 16, 1963 when the eleven states of

Peninsular Malaya -- Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pulau Penang, Selangor, and Terengganu -- federated with Singapore and the two North Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak to form the Federation of Malaysia. The Federation, however, no longer includes Singapore as it withdrew in August 1965 to become an independent republic. Malaysia now encompasses the present thirteen states in the Federation and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan. The term Malaysia was first coined in the 1830s to describe a geographical region comprising the Malay peninsular, Singapore, Borneo, Sumatra, and Java. In the twentieth century, the term was also used in reference to the Malays, the main indigenous group in the region. For example, in 1937 the American scholar, Rupert Emerson, when writing on both Malaya and Indonesia, chose Malaysia as the title for his book

## LOCATION AND SIZE

Malaysia lies near the equator between latitudes 1° and 7° North and longitudes 100° and 119° East. Throughout its history, the nation has occupied a very central and strategic location in Southeast Asia as it is situated not only between India and China but also across the shortest sea routes from Europe and the Middle East to China and the rest of East Asia. In early times, for travel and trade between China and India, travelers and traders had to go either across the Malay Peninsula or around it through the Strait of Malacca. This strait borders the entire west coast of Peninsula Malaysia. From ancient times to the present, the Strait of Malacca has served as the main sea route for travel from Europe to China. For instance, when Malaysia was a part of the early Indianized states of Srivijaya and Majapahit, these maritime empires based their power and wealth on their control of the Strait of Malacca, in ways that included the exaction of tolls and duties from passing ships. During the early period of Western colonialism in Southeast Asia, Malaysia also featured in the lucrative spice trade as cargoes of spices bound for sale in the Middle East and Europe were shipped through the Strait of Malacca. When the British colonized the Malaysian area, they too used the Strait of Malacca as a vital waterway for their exports of primary commodities, like rubber and tin, to Britain and Europe. Moreover, for strategic and economic reasons, the British made the then Malayan island of Singapore, at the southernmost point of the Strait of Malacca, as their chief naval base and main port in Southeast Asia. At present, the oil that is shipped from the Middle East to Japan also goes through the Strait of Malacca to reach its destination.

Regarding the size of Malaysia, together the two sections -- Peninsular Malaysia and the North Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak -- occupy an area of about 130,000 square miles. This area is ten times the size of Taiwan and larger than the two Koreas combined. In length, Peninsular Malaya is roughly 500 miles long, while Sabah and Sarawak extend over a distance of 750 miles. At their closest point, the two sections are separated by about 400 miles of the South China Sea. Despite this physical separation, however, they share much geographical unity as both sections are on the Sunda Shelf, a shallow ocean platform that is only 120 feet deep and very rich in marine resources. In addition, they share many similarities in flora and fauna.

As for borders, to its north Malaysia shares a short mountainous common border of about 250 miles with Thailand at the Kra Isthmus while to the south it is linked by causeway to Singapore. To its west, across the Strait of Malacca, Malaysia faces the Indonesian island of Sumatra for about 500 miles. To its east, in

Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia shares a long rugged common border of 900 miles with the Indonesian territory of Kalimantan. Malaysia also has a sea border of about 375 miles with the Philippines at Sabah. As for the distance between Malaysia and some of its neighbors, Vietnam is 225 miles northeast of Kota Bharu while Burma and Cambodia are within 300 miles to the north and Australia is 1,200 miles to the south.

## **IMPORTANT PHYSICAL FEATURES**

The landform of Malaysia, in both the peninsula and the North Borneo states, is characterized by coastal plains giving way to a rugged mountainous interior. Over half the nation is covered by mountainous terrain. In the center of Peninsular Malaysia is a long, narrow, steep mountain chain, the Central Range, which extends 300 miles from the Thai border to Tampin, near Malacca. Another mountainous range, covering most of upper Kelantan, inland Terengganu, and Pahang, includes Gunung Tahan, the peninsula's highest peak at 7,186 feet above sea-level. In the interior of Borneo is the Western Cordillera and Border Range, which extends for 500 miles into Indonesia's Kalimantan region. In Sabah, this range is known as the Crocker Range, and it includes Malaysia's highest mountain, Mount Kinabalu, which stands at 13,455 feet. Mount Kinabalu is also the highest point in Southeast Asia. In Sarawak, with its lower mountain ranges, the highest point is Gunung Murud at 7,950 feet.

Along the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia from Perlis to Johor is a continuous coastal alluvial plain. The peninsula's east coast also has a lowland plain, but it is narrower, due to the Terengganu highlands. In Sabah and Sarawak, as in the peninsula, low-lying alluvial plains form a belt along the coast. Because the interior mountains have acted as a barrier to population movement, the coastal lowlands have served as the main sites of settlement in Malaysia.

The first political centers were formed on the rivers, which have their headwaters in the inland ranges. Most of the peninsula states derive their names from the main rivers. Pahang, for instance, derives its name from the Pahang River. In Sabah and Sarawak, the main rivers flow down to the sea from the highlands of the interior. The largest rivers are the Rejang in Sarawak and the Kinabatangan in Sabah. Peninsular Malaysia has a dense network of rivers and streams, but there is no single river dominating the drainage pattern. Its longest river, the Pahang River, is only 270 miles long, while the Perak River, which drains most of the northwestern area, is 170 miles long. Peninsular Malaysia's rivers and streams all flow into the surrounding seas as there are no internal areas of drainage. The peninsula has only one large natural lake, Lake Chini, which is located 50 miles from the mouth of the Pahang River. Tasek Bera is an elongated swamp whose boundaries are extended during the rainy northeastern monsoon, while Chendorah Lake is the result of the damming of the upper course of the Perak River for the generation of hydroelectric power.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND LAND**

Malaysia has extensive natural resources. In early times, its most important natural resources were its forest products – the aromatic woods, the resins, gums, rattans, and camphor. Later, the rain forests also became valuable for their production of high quality timber, useful palms, edible plants, and fruits.



Although the land was not generally fertile, it yielded important metals, such as gold, iron, and tin. Malaysia was well known in ancient times for its gold deposits, earning the name of the “Golden Khersonese” from Greek geographers. The tradition of yellow as a royal color can be traced to the popular use of gold for decoration and ornament in the early Malay courts. Tin was mined in Malaysia as early as the fifth century when it was exported to India. The tin was then mainly panned from the rivers. In Sarawak, iron and gold were mined as early as the seventh century. Malaysia is also rich in marine resources. The Strait of Malacca remains one of the best fishing grounds in the world. The Strait and the seas around Malaysia have plentiful supplies of fish, sharks, shrimp, sea cucumbers, edible seaweed, lobsters, and other shellfish. Some of Malaysia’s limestone caves also provide a Chinese culinary delicacy called bird’s nests, which is derived from the coagulated bird saliva found in the nests in the caves.

Under British colonialism, Malaysia became the world’s largest producer and exporter of rubber, tin, and palm oil. Other important exports included cocoa, pepper, timber and wood products. Malaysia remains the world’s largest producer and exporter of palm oil, but its rubber and tin exports have declined. After independence and with the production of oil, petroleum has become Malaysia’s largest earner of foreign exchange. Timber is now the nation’s second largest export. Other crops of significance include coconut, pineapples, sago, coffee, tea, and groundnuts. In recent years, the export of local fruits has also increased.

## CLIMATE

Malaysia is subject to maritime influences and the interplay of wind systems originating in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. These wind systems are known as the southwest and the northeast monsoons, and they give Malaysia its two seasons. The southwest monsoon prevails from May to September and brings heavy rainfall to the mountainous regions. For example, the mountains of northern Perak, such as Maxwell Hill, get over 200 inches a year, while the average annual rainfall for the nation is 100 inches. For the remaining areas of the country, however, this season marks a relatively dry period, with July usually as the driest month. The northeast monsoon lasts from October to April and brings the most rain. It begins by hitting the north and east coasts of Malaysia, bringing more than 120 inches of rain to the east coast of Malaysia, to all of Sarawak, and to most of Sabah. Floods are common throughout these months of the northeast monsoon. In Sarawak, this season is called *Landas*, meaning one of floods.

On the whole, Malaysia has no marked dry season, although some regional variation exists. The temperature stays mostly constant, except at cooler high altitudes, at around 80 ° F, rarely going above 90° in the day or below 70° at night. The almost daily rains keep the temperature down. The humidity, however, is high, averaging about 85%. The climate can be summed up as being uniformly warm, humid, and wet.

## VEGETATION

About 70% of Malaysia is covered with tropical rain forest, the natural vegetation in a region with an equatorial climate. The high temperatures and relatively evenly distributed rainfall provide ideal

conditions for uninterrupted plant growth. The rain forest shows some variety according to locality. The main types of vegetation under the tropical rain forest can be classified as follows: mangrove forest; beach forest; freshwater swamp forest; lowland rainforest; sub-montane forest; and montane forest. Of these, lowland tropical rainforest covers the largest area. Some modifications in vegetation do take place due to the nature of the soil, depending on whether it is sandy or lateritic, dry and well-drained, or swampy and prone to flooding. For instance, the rain forest found in the steep limestone hills of Perak and the Kinta Valley varies from that in the ordinary lowland forest in that the plant species adapt themselves to the soil as well as to the dry conditions. Likewise, in the swampy areas prone to flooding, mangrove swamp forests and peat swamp forests can be found. The mangrove trees thrive in the tidal mudflats of the deltas.

## **NATIONAL PARKS**

Regarding national parks, near Kuala Lumpur is Templer Park, which is primarily a tropical rain forest. Another much larger national park is Taman Negara, a game reserve which extends into three states: Pahang, Kelantan, and Terengganu. The wildlife there includes the following animals: elephants, tigers, tapirs, wild pigs, bearded pigs, mouse-deers, and leopards. The park also has numerous types of reptiles, birds, and insects. Within Taman Negara is Gunung Tahan, Peninsular Malaysia's highest peak. In Sarawak, Malaysia's largest state, is Bako National Park, a primary forest near Kuching famous for its wide variety of flora and wildlife unique to the region. Sarawak also has the Gunung Mulu National Park, with its many caves and limestone pinnacles, and the Lambir Hills National Park with its waterfalls, bathing pools, and rich tropical rain forest. Yet another park in Sarawak is the Niah National Park, famous for its edible bird's nests, which are harvested from the ceiling of the caves by men climbing up bamboo poles. Getting to this park requires the use of air, land, and sea travel. In Sabah, Malaysia's second largest state, can be found Kinabalu Park, a reserve with a very diverse range of flora and fauna, including the pitcher plant and the largest flower in the world, the Rafflesia. Moreover, Sabah has the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, made up of five islands with white, sandy beaches, coral reefs, and rich marine life. Sabah and Sarawak are also the home of the manlike ape known as the orang utan ("person of the jungle" in Malay). Both states have facilities to care for orang utans that have strayed into logging camps or been rescued from captivity. These include the Orang Utan Sanctuary at Sipilok Forest Reserve near Sandakan in Sabah and the Semenggoh Rehabilitation Center near Kuching in Sarawak.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- **What is strategic about Malaysia's geographical location in Southeast Asia?**
- In pre-colonial and colonial times, besides strategic location, what other factors accounted for the interest in Malaya by India, China, and Western colonial powers like Portugal, Holland, and Britain?
- How might the tropical rain forest have aided the Communists during the Emergency, the fight against Communist insurgency from 1948 to 1960?

- Why do nations have national parks? What purpose do these parks serve in Malaysia?

## Resource Materials for Further Study

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# HISTORY

## EARLY HISTORY

Little is known with certainty about Malaysia's early history before the 15<sup>th</sup> century due to the paucity of written records or physical remains. Stories exist, however, of the Malay peninsula as a land of gold, as part of the Golden Khersonese. Some scholars believe that the earliest organized states first emerged in the northern part of the country, with indigenous traditions that included animism, ancestral worship, the belief in cosmic rules governing the composition of the court, kingship based on custom or *adat*, and the

use of certain customs at court, such as special music. Other indigenous traditions include: the use of pole houses or houses on stilts; the wearing of the *sarong* (cotton sheath); the chewing of betel-nut; the growing of *padi* (rice) and fruit crops; navigation skills; weaving; top-making; kite-making; crafting items from iron, tin, bronze, silver, and gold; and the use of cock-fighting as a form of entertainment.

Then came Indianization, a process of Indian cultural infiltration that impacted Southeast Asia from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. until around the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Indianization saw the spread of the Hindu and Buddhist religions and Indian influence on architecture, sculpture, languages, scripts, literary works, and dance styles. Indian administrative laws and the concept of divine kingship were also adopted. The Malayan area, at different periods of Indianization, comprised part of the maritime empires of Funan (based in Indochina), Srivijaya (based in Sumatra), and Majaphit (based in Java). Chinese and Arab records also indicate that Malaysia was part of the Indianized states of Langkasuka, Tambralinga, and Chih-T'u. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, some northern Malay states fell under the control of Siam before Indianization eventually gave way to the coming of Islam by the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## THE COMING OF ISLAM

After originating in Arabia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic religion made little impact initially in Southeast Asia even though Arab traders dominated the region's carrying trade by the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Early Islam was unappealing because its tenets and practices went against indigenous traditions. For example, it demanded allegiance to one god and stressed self-reliance, whereas Southeast Asians believed in a multitude of gods and in the propitiation of spirits through rituals and ceremonies. Moreover, Islam had no religious hierarchy, placed women in an inferior position to men, and stressed harsh punishments like mutilation and death, whereas Southeast Asian society included a ceremonial or religious hierarchy to bolster the king's power, allowed women positions of influence, and settled conflict through arbitration or the payment of compensation for injuries.

Islam was spread to Java and Champa by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but made little progress in Southeast Asia until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest evidence of Islam in Malaysia is an inscription dating from 1303, found at Kuala Barang, Terengganu. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, Islam had become the main religion in insular Southeast Asia, as a result of developments in the Islamic world and changes in Southeast Asia, which included the fall of the Baghdad Caliphate to the Mongols in 1258, the important role of the Sufis as mystic religious leaders in the regeneration of Islam, and the rise of strong, self-reliant Southeast Asian rulers at ease with male dominance. The Sufis made Islam more acceptable by synthesizing it with animist and Indic beliefs and by combining Islamic teachings with magic and healing. They made many new converts in their travels to India and Southeast Asia.

Islam's spread in Southeast Asia reached a turning point in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the Indian state of Gujerat fell under Islamic rule. Gujerati merchants then helped in spreading Islam to Southeast Asia. The Islamic religion spread calmly and quickly throughout insular Southeast Asia through missionary work, trade, and marriage alliances. Besides blending in with local customs, Islam's teachings were simple, its five tenets being the profession of faith, prayer five times a day, fasting during the month of Ramadan,

performing the haj, and giving alms to the poor. Moreover, conversion was easy, the religion was egalitarian in nature, the promise of salvation was not dependent on caste or class, and Islam offered the shared concept of brotherhood and ties with a higher civilization. Factors accelerating the spread of Islam included the development of Malacca as a center for the spread of Islam and the threat posed by Christianity.

## THE MALACCA SULTANATE

Malaysian history may be said to date from the period of the Malacca Sultanate, founded around 1400. The Malacca Sultanate also represents the Golden Age of Malayan history, when Malacca was the seat of empire, an important Islamic religious center, and a rich and powerful entrepot. For Malays, this indigenous maritime empire evokes pride in race, religion, and culture.

Records reveal that Malacca was founded by Parameswara, a Srivijayan prince who fled Palembang, Sumatra, to escape attacks from the Majapahit empire based in Java. He first sought refuge on the island of Temasik, now Singapore, by driving out its ruler, a vassal of Siam, but he was himself driven out by the Siamese. He then sought refuge at an *orang laut* (sea people) village at Malacca. According to legend, he named it Malacca either after the *Malaka* tree, under which he rested, or after the Arab word, *malakat*, for mart. Although Malacca's land was infertile, he chose to settle there because it was on the trade winds system, its harbor was sheltered from monsoons, and it had a good command over shipping, being situated on the narrowest point in the Malacca Straits. With support from the orang laut, he established control and made Malacca safer for trade by fighting piracy in the area. The town grew further after Parameswara sought Siamese protection and allied himself with China. The Chinese navy sent several trade missions to Malacca, and the Chinese emperor bestowed titles and honors, including acknowledgment of Parameswara as a vassal king in 1409. In 1411, Parameswara accompanied Admiral Cheng Ho to China with an entourage of 500 to pay obeisance to the emperor. The Chinese connection gave Malacca protection against Siam and led to its becoming a port favored by the Chinese.

Further growth resulted when Malacca's ruler and inhabitants converted to Islam under Iskandar Shah, believed to be either Parameswara or his son. This conversion took place with Parameswara's marriage to the daughter of the newly converted Muslim Sultan of Pasai, in Sumatra, who demanded conversion from the Malacca ruler. According to Malay historical records known as the *Malay Annals*, this acceptance of Islam marks a watershed in Malacca's history. With more conversions taking place in Malacca among the elite, soldiers, and slaves, the city soon became a seat of Muslim learning, attracting Muslim scholars from around the area. With Islam came the practice of polygamy, a more patriarchal society, and a lower status for women.

Malacca reached the height of its power in the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century when it enjoyed political, economic, cultural, and religious importance. Politically, Malacca was the seat of an empire that stretched over peninsular Malaya, the islands to the south, and parts of Sumatra. With its strong army and a fleet that controlled the strategic Straits of Malacca, it followed an expansionist policy. This was especially so during the time of Tun Perak, a great Malay warrior and statesman, whom the *Malay Annals* describe as the "brains of Malacca's imperialistic policy for three reigns". Under him, the Sultanate seized Pahang,

then a vassal of Siam, and expanded the empire to include Kelantan, Kedah, the Riau and Lingga archipelagos, the island of Singapore, and states along the northern Sumatran coast, such as Rokan, Siak, Kampar, and Indragiri. By the reign of Malacca's last ruler, Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488–1511), the empire comprised all of peninsular Malaysia and the state of Patani, now part of Thailand. As tributaries of Malacca, all these areas embraced Islam, giving cohesion to the Sultanate. Sultan Mahmud Shah rejected the overlordship of both Ayudhya in Siam and Majapahit in Java while continuing to acknowledge the suzerainty of China.

Malacca was also well administered. At the apex of power was the Sultan, who had a social covenant with his subjects, whereby he was not to shame them while they were not to be disloyal to him. The Sultan was assisted by four main officials. In order of importance, they were: the *Bendahara* or Chief Minister; the *Bendahari* or Treasurer in charge of all financial matters; the *Temenggong*, in charge of law and order; and the *Laksamana*, in charge of the military and the navy. Among Malacca's greatest Bendaharas was Tun Perak. There were also lesser officials, such as the *Shahbandar* or harbor master, who managed the marketplace and warehouses; checked the weights, measures, and coinage; and settled disputes between merchants and ship captains or between trading communities. Together, these top administrators reached decisions through consensus or *muafakat*, a practice continued to this day by the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Economically, Malacca became the best port and emporium in Southeast Asia within fifty years of its founding. Rich and prosperous, it became the successor of Srivijaya and outdid it in trade. It had goods from the East and West and traders from the Middle East, India, and the Far East. These goods included spices, such as pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and mace; cotton piece goods; gold; tin; silk; birds' nests; medicines; sandalwood; pearls; porcelain; and musk. Malacca became the main collecting center, redistributing center, and purchasing point for goods. By 1512, its population had climbed to 100,000. Other reasons for Malacca's economic success included: its excellent underground warehouses safe from fire; its ability to assure the safety of traders within the Straits, due to protection provided by its loyal orang laut supporters; its codified laws and efficient legal and administrative system; and its just rulers. It also had four harbor masters or shahbandars who represented the main groups of traders from Gujerat, Java, Bengal, and China. According to Tome Pires, a young Portuguese official in Malacca: "Whoever controls Malacca has his hand at the throat of Venice" and "Malacca is a city made for merchandize".

Culturally, Malacca was also a leading state with pomp and ceremony at court. Court life and culture were a mixture of indigenous traditions, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, and Islamic elements. For example, certain colors like yellow could only be used by the royalty, court etiquette and coronation ceremonies reflected Indianized beliefs, and all members of the royal family were of the Islamic faith. The language used at court was Malay, the *lingua franca* in insular Southeast Asia.

As for religious importance, Malacca became a seat of Muslim learning and was also a religious center from which Islam was spread to other areas, such as to Brunei, through close trade and political relations, and to Java, through Malacca merchants who bought rice from Java. From Malacca, Islam also spread to other parts of Malaysia: for instance to Pahang, where its first ruler was a son of the Sultan of Malacca, and to Trengganu, which accepted Islam on becoming a vassal state. The Malacca rulers saw in Islam a

political instrument of much value: it could be used as a cohesive force, or to form an alliance or community with other Islamic states, or as a political weapon against Buddhist Siam.

By the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, Malacca faced internal decay in various forms: - - weak leadership; corrupt practices among the ruling elite; rivals to the throne; murders of leaders; and factional disputes between Muslim Tamils and Malay nobility. In addition to the internal threats, there was a major external threat -- in the form of the Portuguese.

## **PORTUGUESE RULE**

The Portuguese conquered Malacca on August 10, 1511, after a siege of about a month. It was their third attempt since 1509. Despite brave resistance from Sultan Mahmud, the Portuguese finally succeeded with superior firepower, greater naval strength, and help from some of Malacca's Chinese and Indian inhabitants. Sultan Mahmud was forced to flee to Pahang and from there to Bentan in the Riau Archipelago, where he tried unsuccessfully on numerous occasions to recapture Malacca. He then fled to Sumatra, where he died in 1528. While he failed to restore the Malacca Sultanate, certain features of the Sultanate were retained in other parts of the country, as in the states of Perak and Johore, where two of his sons became the Sultans, and in Pahang, through marriage connections. Of these states, Johore became the main successor to the Malacca empire and challenged Portuguese power.

Portuguese aims in Southeast Asia can be summarized as "Gold, God, and Glory". They wanted to make fortunes, spread the Catholic faith, and bring glory to their King, who sponsored their overseas voyages. Their religious goals were partly aimed against the Muslims, as they had experienced centuries of Moorish rule in Iberia. On the economic front, rather than remain as middlemen in the spice trade, they wished to control the spice trade at its source and thus make huge profits. To do so, it was vital that they control the strategic Strait of Malacca sea lane and capture Malacca, then Southeast Asia's most important port and the collecting point for the spice trade. Portugal's role in the Far East had been sanctioned by the Papal Edict of 1493, which divided the world between Spain and Portugal along the line west of the island of Azores in the North Atlantic Ocean; Portugal was allowed exclusive rights in Asia and Africa east of the line, while Spain had rights west of the line, which restricted it to the Americas.

During Portuguese rule in Malacca, their main interest was trade, and their power was confined mainly to the town area. They built their *A Formosa* fort at Malacca and several churches, the remains of which still exist. Their use of force, when trying to convert the local people, caused resentment and united the Muslims. Some intermarriage took place, and the descendants from these unions form a small but distinct community that retains not only the Catholic religion, but also Portuguese customs, dances, language, attire, and cuisine. The Portuguese failed to establish a monopoly of the spice trade. Throughout their rule, they met with much opposition -- from Sultan Mahmud Shah and his followers, from the Muslim inhabitants and traders, and from states like Johore, Aceh and Java, their rivals in trade. With their shortage of manpower and lack of welfare facilities, the Portuguese eventually lost control of Malacca to their Dutch rivals by 1641, after 130 years of rule.

## DUTCH RULE

The Dutch conquest of Malacca began in August 1640 and ended in January 1641. Thereafter, the Dutch controlled the Straits of Malacca and ruled Malacca to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when they were replaced by the British. In capturing Malacca from the Portuguese, the Dutch received help from Johore, which viewed the Dutch as a useful ally against their main enemies, the Portuguese and the Acehnese. Johore assisted the Dutch by providing transportation facilities, defenses against Portuguese attacks, and moral support. Not only did this support eliminate the Portuguese threat, but Johore also received special trading privileges at Malacca, protection against Aceh, and Dutch mediation in a peace treaty between Johore and Aceh in 1641.

In going to Southeast Asia, the Dutch were motivated mainly by economic factors. Like the Portuguese, they wanted to control the spice trade at its source. Unlike the Portuguese, however, the Dutch sponsored their colonial venture through their United East India Company, a corporate enterprise founded in 1602 with very wide powers, including the right to conclude treaties, make war, and dispense justice. The Dutch soon made Batavia their center of power, neglecting the port of Malacca which fell into decline under Dutch rule. Many Dutch residents then moved to Batavia, while those remaining established a Protestant church. There were few conversions to the Protestant faith, and Dutch impact on Malacca was less than that of the Portuguese. Dutch remains in Malacca include some administrative buildings and a church. The Dutch showed some interest in the tin trade and set up a trading post for tin in Pahang.

Meanwhile, Johore's power was revived under Dutch rule as the Dutch focused their attentions on the Indonesian islands. When Johore superceded Malacca in trade, Dutch officials in Malacca urged that Johore be destroyed, but their superiors in Batavia refused as they wanted Batavia as the center for Dutch trade in Asia. Hence, Johore sent missions directly to Batavia, and Dutch officials at Batavia often sided with Johore against Dutch officials at Malacca. Johore's fortunes rose until its Laksamana became more powerful than the Bendahara and began to rival the Sultan for power. Conditions then worsened for Johore: its Laksamana lost power, while its Bendahara regained power and became regent to the young ruler, Sultan Mahmud Shah. This king turned out to be a weak and cruel ruler whose reign saw a rise in piracy, a decline in trade, and problems with his nobles. Sultan Mahmud Shah's cruel actions eventually prompted some nobles to kill him in 1699, an act of regicide that further reduced Johore's power.

As Johore's power declined, the Dutch faced increasing opposition from two growing communities -- the Minangkabaus from Sumatra and the Bugis from the Celebes. While the Minangkabaus resented Western intrusion, the Bugis were angry with having been displaced by the Dutch from the region's carrying trade. Dutch rule weakened and eventually came to an end with the coming of the British to the Malayan area by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before the British replaced the Dutch, however, there was some cooperation between them, as in 1795 when France overran the Netherlands and planned to use Dutch ports in the East. To prevent French control, the British made an arrangement with the exiled Dutch government to take temporary control of strategic Dutch possessions. Hence, the British East India Company (EIC), founded in 1600, occupied Malacca in 1795, the Moluccas in 1796, and Java in 1811, but returned them to the Dutch by 1818. By then, the Dutch EIC had ended in bankruptcy, its possessions had been taken



over by the Dutch government, and the British era in the Malayan area had begun.

## **BRITISH RULE TO THE START OF WORLD WAR II**

The British came to the Malayan area mainly for political and economic reasons. They wanted to obtain coaling and naval stations, to gain advantages over rivals like the Dutch and the French, and to spread British power and influence. They also wanted access to raw materials and markets for their goods. Social considerations, such as the “white man’s burden”, and religious reasons, were less important. Like the Dutch, the British had a corporate enterprise in the form of the EIC, which was based in India. With the help of Francis Light, a British merchant captain, in 1786 the EIC secured the island of Penang from the Sultan of Kedah for use as a British naval base. In return, the Sultan received British help against the state of Selangor. In 1800, he also allowed the EIC the use of Province Wellesley, the territory on the mainland opposite Penang. By 1819, however, the British were more keen on the island of Singapore as their naval base as it enjoyed a more central and strategic position than Penang. That year, an EIC official, Thomas Stamford Raffles, obtained Singapore for the British after signing an agreement with Johore that gave annual allowances to its Temenggong and its Sultan. From the start, the British made Singapore a free port, attracting the Chinese and other traders. The Chinese flocked to Singapore, soon outnumbering the Malay population. The British then signed another treaty with Johore, which ceded Singapore to them in perpetuity.

The Dutch, however, were angry with Raffles’ acquisition of Singapore as it infringed on their treaty rights in the Riau-Johore region. In 1824, to settle their rivalry in the East and to consolidate their friendship in Europe, the two nations signed the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, which demarcated their respective spheres of influence. Accordingly, the Dutch withdrew their objections to the British occupation of Singapore, ceded Malacca to the EIC, and agreed not to interfere in the Malayan area. In return, the British ceded Bencoolen in Sumatra to the Dutch and agreed not to establish treaties with rulers south of Singapore. In 1826, with their power firmly established in the Malayan area, the British united Singapore, Penang, and Malacca as the Straits Settlements and administered them from India, an arrangement that continued until 1867. Henceforth, they were administered from Colonial Office in London until 1874, when the British government took over the functions of the EIC.

In Malaya, Britain followed a policy of non-intervention until 1874, when it changed its policy to intervention. The following reasons prompted the change: fear of other European intervention in the Malay states; the need to deal with piracy, secret societies, and succession disputes; the petitions of British merchants in Singapore for British intervention; and the 1873 petition of Chinese merchants urging greater British involvement in the country. Britain’s new policy was reflected in the Pangkor Treaty of January 1874 between the Perak chiefs and the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Andrew Clarke, which established the British Residential System in Malaya. The Sultan of Perak agreed to accept a British Resident “whose advice must be asked and acted upon in all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom”. In return, Britain agreed to protect Perak against its internal and external enemies.

In February 1874, Governor Clarke extended the Residential System to Selangor, on the grounds that

piracy had to be curbed. In April the same year, Sungei Ujong, a part of Negri Sembilan, accepted a British Resident. By 1889, the whole state of Negri Sembilan had accepted the Residential System. In 1888, Pahang also accepted a British Resident. In the meantime, in November 1875 the first Resident of Perak, J.W.W. Birch, was hacked to death while bathing, leading the British to rush in troops from India and Hong Kong to fight the “Perak War”. He was killed by several Malay chiefs for having ignored their prerogatives and their means of livelihood when he instituted new proposals for revenue collection and judicial administration. His reforms caused loss of prestige to the Sultan and the chiefs, plus reductions in their feudal dues. Three Malay chiefs involved in the killing were captured and executed, while the Sultan was exiled to Seychelles. A new Sultan was appointed, but the Resident thereafter held the real power, although that power was not clearly defined.

Other British Residents fared better than Birch as they were less arrogant, more knowledgeable about local customs and traditions, and could speak the Malay language. A popular Resident was Frank Swettenham, who wrote a memorandum in 1893 advocating unity of administration and centralization of power for the four Malay states, Perak, Selangor, Pahang, and Negri Sembilan, which had accepted the Residential System. He recommended uniformity in the judicial system, fiscal policy, and land legislation. Based on his memorandum, the British established the Federated Malay States (FMS) in 1895, with him as the first Resident-General. In 1897, the Sultans of the four states in the FMS held their first Rulers’ Conference (Durbar) in the royal town of Kuala Kangsar in Perak. Their power, however, was more in theory than in practice, and they resented this.

In 1909, several important developments took place in British Malaya. For example, Siam transferred back to Malaya the four northern Malay states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, and Trengganu in return for a British loan for a railway line and the giving up of British extraterritorial claims in Siam. These states then became the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS), and a British High Commissioner was appointed to oversee them. Unlike the FMS, the UFMS had less Western influence, kept to more traditional ways, and experienced less economic development. In 1909, the British also changed the post of Resident-General to that of Chief Secretary and created the Federal Legislative Council, which caused the Sultans to lose more power.

In exploiting the country’s natural resources, the British tried to enlist Malay help, but they met with resistance for reasons that included Malay resentment of British rule, their preferring to retain their traditional lifestyles as farmers and fishermen, and their wanting to follow the Koran’s instructions to lead simple, non-materialistic lives. To get the labor they needed, the British brought in laborers from China and India, using their clout in both countries. The Chinese worked mainly in the tin mines and the Indians in the rubber estates, although some Indians also served in administrative positions. The Chinese came mainly from the two southern Chinese provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien, where dismal economic conditions motivated poor workers to seek better opportunities in Malaya. The main wave of Chinese laborers came after the founding of Singapore in 1819. The major wave of Indian laborers began in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued until the 1930s. Until 1910, Indian laborers came as indentured workers, after which they came through a quasi-indentured system called the *kangany* system, whereby the *kangany* got a commission for each recruited laborer.

With the immigrant labor, the British were able to export large quantities of tin and rubber. Tin was the major revenue earner for the British until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when rubber, introduced from Brazil, became more important due to the demand for rubber in the electrical and motor car industries. Rubber also supplanted earlier commercial crops like coffee, pepper, and sugar. The Chinese and Indians came as transient workers, but many chose to remain in the country. As a result, British colonialism led to a plural society and to ethnic tensions, especially between the Malays and the Chinese. The Indians posed less of a threat as their numbers were smaller. Malay-Chinese tensions had their roots in the economic imbalance from British colonialism. Some Chinese rose from very humble beginning to become extremely wealthy, amassing fortunes from the import and export trade and from property deals. The Chinese had few political rights, but many economic opportunities. On the other hand, the Malays, particularly those in the rural areas, found themselves being left behind economically.

In dealing with a plural society, the British resorted to a policy of “divide and rule”, with political power to the Malays, economic power to the Chinese, and administrative power to the Indians. British colonial rule included some “special rights” for the Malays, such as support for Malay land rights and Malay education and favorable quotas for their recruitment into the civil service and for certain business licenses. Educational facilities, however, were poor for Malays until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and not enough training or safeguards were provided to them on the economic level, increasing the economic disparity between them and the Chinese. As more Chinese workers flowed in, security concerns also increased as they came with their secret societies and their problems with crime and opium addiction.

The Malays became increasingly concerned about the racial composition of the country when the 1921 Census revealed that Malaya was made up of 49 percent Malays, 36 percent Chinese, and 14 percent Indians. These concerns turned to alarm when the 1931 Census disclosed that Malay figures had dropped to 35 percent, while that of the Chinese and Indians had risen to 42 percent and 22 percent, respectively. In Singapore, the Chinese already made up 75 percent of the population, with the Malays at 15 percent and the Indians at around 10 percent. Not surprisingly, the Malays called for a “Malaya for the Malays” and urged the British to restrict Chinese and Indian immigration.

Hence, in the 1930s, the British carried out decentralization measures to recognize Malaya as a Malay country, despite opposition from British and Chinese business interests. Accordingly, Chinese immigration was restricted under new quotas, power was transferred from the federal government to the state government, the post of Chief Secretary was abolished in 1935 in favor of the more junior post of Federal Secretary, and the Sultans were given a more active role. Nationalism in Malaya was confined mainly to the Malays as the Chinese had loyalties to China and the Indians to India. Malay nationalism was influenced by the Islamic Reform Movement in the Middle East and by events in Indonesia. In the early 1900s, the reformist *Kaum Muda* (Young Community) Movement was formed, and in 1926 the Singapore Malay Union was established with branches in Penang and Malacca. In 1939, the Pan-Malayan Malay Associations held its first annual conference in Kuala Lumpur, a meeting noted for its anti-British and anti-Chinese themes. By 1941, more Malays wanted self-rule but Malaya, then comprising the FMS, UFMS, and the Straits Settlements, was still firmly under British control.

In the case of Sarawak and Sabah, their experience under British colonial rule was different. Sarawak was

ruled by the Brooke family from 1841 to 1945, while Sabah, then known as North Borneo, was ruled by the British North Borneo Company from 1881 to 1945. James Brooke, an English adventurer, obtained the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei in 1839 after helping the Sultan in a rebellion by the Land Dyaks. In 1841, the Sultan appointed Brooke as the Rajah and Governor of Sarawak. This appointment pleased British merchants in Singapore as it opened up trade opportunities. In 1847, the Sultan of Brunei was forced to confirm Brooke's status as Rajah in perpetuity, to cede the island of Labuan to the British, and to sign another treaty undertaking not to cede any territory without British approval. When Brooke visited England, he was knighted, appointed Governor of Labuan Crown Colony, and Consul General for Brunei.

Brooke became known as the "White Rajah" and used his own funds to administer Sarawak. He received official backing from the British authorities and was allowed to use the British Navy to fight piracy. His rule was paternalistic and informal, based on consultations with the local chiefs. He made use of local laws and customs and tried to protect the natives from undesirable outside influences, Western and Chinese. When his agent in London, Henry Wise, formed a company to exploit Sarawak and Sabah, Brooke severed ties. He expected devotion from his subjects and from his nephews, Brooke Johnson and Charles Johnson. But Brooke was not a good financier, and his fortune soon ran out, leaving Sarawak in debt.

Brooke expanded his kingdom in 1852 when he obtained the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei. In 1854, he was cleared of wrongdoing by an official Commission of Inquiry after his former agent, Wise, accused him of having used the Royal Navy to slaughter harmless natives. In the mid-1850s, he also faced problems from Singapore merchants, who wished to exploit the area, and from the Chinese, who resented his opposition to the opium trade, his suppression of secret societies, and his restrictions on their entry into Sarawak. He expanded his territory further when he obtained the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei in 1861. By then, however, his health had deteriorated. His original heir was his nephew, Brooke Johnson, but after a fight he made another nephew, Charles Johnson, his new heir. In 1862, Charles changed his surname to Brooke and in 1868 became the new "White Rajah" upon his uncle's death.

That year, Charles tried to purchase the Baram district from Brunei, but was prevented from doing so by British authorities who invoked the 1847 treaty. In 1874, when Charles proposed that the British should either take Brunei or put it under Sarawak's protection, the British also rejected this out of concern for Brunei. Meanwhile, his frugality enabled him to pay off Sarawak's debts. Under him, each of Sarawak's three divisions was administered by a British Resident who was assisted by an Assistant Resident and by district chiefs, British or Malay. The Residents also held councils: the Supreme Council and the State Council. In 1880, to meet the labor shortage, Charles provided funds for Chinese emigration, but prevented their control of the economy. After establishing primary schools in 1883, he added secondary schools and mission schools. In 1882, the British allowed him to buy the Baram district from Brunei, due to fears of foreign threats at a time when the Sultan of Brunei was very old. Hence, under Charles, the Baram district became the 4<sup>th</sup> Division of Sarawak.

In 1888, the British also made Sarawak a British protectorate, along with Sabah and Brunei, in order to prevent Brunei from being swallowed up by either Sarawak or Sabah. In 1890, when the local chiefs of the Limbang district of Brunei asked Charles to rescue them from Brunei's misrule, he readily obliged and ended up making Limbang the 5<sup>th</sup> Division of Sarawak. The Sultan of Brunei, however, did not acknowledge the cession and also did not take up the offer of compensation by London. Brunei continues to claim Limbang, and this territory remains a contentious issue in Brunei-Malaysia relations. Britain nevertheless recognized Limbang as a part of Sarawak in 1916. Meanwhile, in 1905, due to financial problems, the British North Borneo Company sold a part of its territory to Sarawak.

Sarawak's next ruler was Charles' son, Vyner Brooke, who succeeded his father in 1916 and ruled until the outbreak of war in 1941. He became the last White Rajah of Sarawak. Unlike his father, he was extravagant, lacked strength of character, and delegated most of his responsibilities to his more dependable younger brother, Bertram. Under Vyner, Sarawak continued to experience little economic growth due to the Brooke family's reluctance to open up the country to capitalist exploitation. He appointed a Chief Secretary for Sarawak in 1923, a Secretary for Chinese Affairs in 1929, and a Chief Justice in 1930. In 1941, Vyner also commissioned the drafting of a Constitution to mark the centennial of Brooke rule and to pave the way for eventual representative government. Major opposition to the constitution, however, came from Bertram and from Bertram's son, Anthony, who saw the measure as an attempt to exclude them from ruling Sarawak. Anthony hoped to become the next White Rajah as he had held several important government positions and as his uncle had no male heirs. They had a falling out, however, over Vyner's appointment of a new Chief Secretary for Sarawak.

As for Sabah, in 1865, as a counterweight to British influence, the Sultan of Brunei had granted this territory to an American, Charles Lee Moses, who arrived in Brunei in 1864 as the U.S. Consul. Moses got a ten-year lease to Sabah and established a U.S. Consulate in 1865. He obtained support from American and Chinese businessmen in Hong Kong who formed the American Trading Company. This venture, however, was unsuccessful and was abandoned in 1866, while the American Consulate was closed in 1868. In 1875, the Austrian Consul, Baron von Overbeck, bought over the American Trading Company, with the help of his English partner, John Dent.

Through a treaty in 1877, the Sultan of Brunei gave the American Trading Company sovereignty over Sabah in return for an annual payment. Since the Sultan of Sulu, a former vassal of the Sultan of Brunei, also claimed Sabah, Overbeck, Dent made another agreement with him in 1878, giving him a smaller annual payment to ensure their title. In 1881, Dent bought over Overbeck's share in the American Trading Company. The British Government then gave him a royal charter to form the British North Borneo Company, in part because of the threat of growing German and French interest in the area. Under the charter, the Company could administer Sabah so long as it gave facilities to the British navy, did not interfere in local customs and religion, and did not transfer its rights without the British Government's approval. The Company did not have a monopoly on trade.

In 1888, the British declared Brunei, Sabah, and Sarawak as British Protectorates, to prevent any takeover of Brunei, and made the Governor of the Straits Settlements also the High Commissioner for Brunei and the Agent for Sabah and Sarawak. In 1894, because Sabah faced financial problems, negotiations were

held to transfer Sabah to Rajah Brooke, but these plans fell through. The Company's directors then rushed through a hastily conceived program for economic development that resulted in the removal of many experienced colonial officials. In 1895, the Company appointed a new Governor, Leicester Beaufort, a London lawyer, but his five years in office further drained financial resources. His term was marked by extravagance, including his ambitious railroad project which required new and unpopular taxes. The year 1895 also saw the appointment in London of W.C. Cowie as the Managing Director of the British North Borneo Company, a position that he held until his death in 1910.

In 1900, the Company reverted to appointing an official from the Malayan Civil Service as Governor, but the Directors of the Company, especially Cowie, continued to interfere. For example, the Directors removed Governor Ernest Birch when he suggested that the Colonial Office should convert Sabah into a Crown Colony to save it from their meddling. Cowie's death led to less interference and to mainly Colonial Office supervision. In 1905, for financial reasons, the Company was forced to sell land to Sarawak. In the 1920s, some provision was made for vernacular education for the indigenous Malays, Dyaks, and Kadazans. The years from 1934 to 1937 saw the enlightened rule of Governor Douglas Jardine; he created a Native Chiefs' Advisory Council and also made advances in health and educational services. As for local reaction to Company rule, the Kadazans (Dusuns), the largest and most settled group, gave little resistance. The semi-nomadic Muruts staged a local revolt in 1915, but they soon accepted Company rule. Trouble came from the restless and aggressive Muslims on the coast, such as the Bajaus, the Sulus, and the Illanuns from the Philippines. In 1895, Mat Salleh, a part Sulu and part Bajau chief, led a rebellion which lasted until 1900 when he was killed.

Regarding economic development, this was initially concentrated in the Northeast with tobacco plantations from the 1880s. Then the West coast became more important when rubber was introduced in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The West coast also had better transportation facilities. When Sabah experienced a labor shortage, the Company tried to recruit Chinese labor through Hong Kong, but was unsuccessful as most immigrants wanted to be traders, not agricultural laborers. Those who came returned to China. Only after 1903 did the Chinese settle in larger numbers. In 1937, however, the Company restricted Chinese emigration to Sabah, in part because of local resentment towards them. There was little profit from Sabah for the Company -- it paid no dividends in its first 20 years and produced a return of 5 percent in 1909. By 1941, due to poor communications, the labor shortage, and problems with Company policy, profits had fallen to 2 percent.

## **THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION**

With the outbreak of World War II, the Japanese began implementing their plan for a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" to rule East and Southeast Asia. To conquer the Malayan area, they attacked from the north through Thailand, surprising the British, who were waiting to fight them at sea off Singapore. This attack on Malaya, on the night of December 7-8, 1941, coincided with their attacks on Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, and Hong Kong. A Japanese subsidiary force landed at Kota Bharu and put the airfield out of action, while the main army landed in southern Thailand for the invasion of Kedah. Thereafter, they seized the northern Malayan airfields and sank the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*. Singapore fell on February 15, 1942, despite attempts to rally the local population for defense. The Japanese also took

over the Borneo territories with little resistance.

The Japanese interned all British officials, but treated the Malays as potential allies who could be useful to them, releasing Malay leaders whom the British had imprisoned and promoting several Malay officials to higher bureaucratic positions under Japanese state governors. With the Malay royalty, at first the Japanese wanted to substitute loyalty to the Malay rulers with loyalty to the Japanese emperor, so they cut the royal pensions, lessened the Sultans' powers, and suspended the state councils. But when they realized that the Sultans could be helpful allies, they restored their pensions and enhanced their authority on Malay religion and customs. The Japanese had mixed attitudes towards the Chinese; some were treated very harshly, while others were considered important business partners. In Singapore, the Japanese killed thousands of Chinese males and demanded a "donation" of Straits \$50 million from the Chinese community. The Indians were treated less harshly as the Japanese planned to use them for ending British colonial rule in India. Strong resistance to Japanese rule came from the Chinese, who formed the bulk of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). The core of the MPAJA was the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM).

As in other areas in Southeast Asia, the Japanese harnessed the economy to their war effort, causing food shortages that led to runaway inflation, ill health, and starvation. Victims of the Japanese included local women who were forced to become "comfort women" or sexual slaves. In the closing months of the war, the Japanese ordered Malay police and auxiliary units against the MPAJA in retaliation for executions of Malays as pro-Japanese collaborators. The Japanese Occupation ended in August 1945 with the defeat of Japan by the Allied Powers. Since President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Trusteeship Plan to de-colonize Southeast Asia after the war did not materialize, due to opposition from Britain and France and the need for Allied cooperation in Europe for the war effort, the British returned to Malaya after the war.

## **BRITISH RULE AFTER WORLD WAR II TO INDEPENDENCE**

The British Military Administration (BMA) was established in 1945, and it lasted until April 1946, when civilian rule was restored. The BMA was marked by the return of the four northern Malay states by Thailand and by communal clashes between the Malays and Chinese in several parts of Malaya over their different loyalties during the war.

In 1946, since the British wished to create a more unified Malayan state, they proposed the Malayan Union Plan for administrative efficiency and national cohesion. Singapore was excluded, however, because of its large Chinese population and its status as the main British naval base in Southeast Asia. The Malayan Union Plan was officially implemented on April 1, 1946, and two major provisions were the ceremonial role for the Sultans and equal citizenship for all based on birth and naturalization. Both provisions angered the Malays as they reflected a drastic change from Britain's pro-Malay policy during the pre-war years. This policy change by the British was prompted in part by the Malay-Japanese wartime collaboration and by the help the Chinese had rendered in fighting the Japanese.

Malay protests against the Malayan Union Plan led to the formation of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in March 1946, with Dato' Onn bin Ja'afar as president. The Malays also made

appeals to former colonial officials in Britain to scrap the Malayan Union proposal. These measures worked for the British replaced the Malayan Union Plan with the Federation of Malaya Agreement on February 1, 1948, which restored the Sultans to their former position and made citizenship more stringent for the non-Malays.

Meanwhile, the post-war years saw growing anti-communist sentiment in Malaya. The MCP went underground in 1948 and began an all-out war to replace the British in Malaya. Its Malayan Races Liberation Army tried to subvert the economy by disrupting the rubber plantations and the tin mines, the sources of Malaya's wealth. After the MCP had changed its policy from labor agitation to armed revolt, the British officially proclaimed a State of Emergency on June 18, 1948, a fight that was to last twelve years. To fight the communists who operated mainly from the jungle and who relied on the support of Chinese villagers for supplies of food, information, and recruits, the British implemented the "Briggs Plan", drawn up by General Harold Briggs the commander of the counterinsurgency forces. Under this plan, Chinese villagers were resettled in New Villages and closely monitored by an effective police force to prevent them from aiding the communists.

The plan was so successful that it was copied in South Vietnam as the strategic hamlets plan. The analogy, however, was flawed, and it failed in Vietnam as those resettled there were indigenous Vietnamese with roots to the soil and not vulnerable, immigrant Chinese as in Malaya. For the British, the first three years of the Emergency were difficult, with setbacks that included the October 1951 assassination of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. The second phase from 1952 to 1954, under General Sir Gerald Templer, who served as both High Commissioner and Director of Operations, was more successful as more communist guerrillas surrendered than remained in the jungle. This phase ended with the abortive peace talks at Baling in 1955 between Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Malayan Chief Minister, and Chin Peng, the Communist leader.

The early years of the Emergency also saw agitation for self-rule. Although the British had promised eventual self-rule in the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement, they said they could not grant it until two obstacles had been overcome -- the communal strife, especially between the Malays and the Chinese, and the communist problem, which threatened security. In 1949, to foster inter-ethnic harmony, the British established the Communities Liaison Committee, which stressed liberal citizenship laws for the Chinese in return for Chinese economic assistance to the Malays. The British also encouraged the establishment of a political party for the Chinese as the Malays already had UMNO and the Indians their Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) since 1945. As a result, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed in 1949, comprising mainly wealthy English-speaking Chinese with strong ties to the British.

Meanwhile, a new leader arose among the Malays -- Tunku Abdul Rahman, a prince from Kedah and a law graduate from Cambridge University. He became the leader of UMNO when Dato' Onn Ja'afar resigned in 1951 to form his new inter-racial Independence of Malaya Party, after failing to convert UMNO into a multi-ethnic political party. In 1952, the Tunku suggested that UMNO and the MCA team up in the Municipal elections in Kuala Lumpur, by running Malay candidates in Malay wards and Chinese candidates in Chinese wards. Calling themselves the Alliance, they won the elections, defeating the IMP. In October 1954, the MIC joined the Alliance, and together they contested the 1955 elections for



a federal legislature, winning 51 of the 52 seats contested. This show of inter-racial solidarity helped pave the way for independence. In January 1956, the Tunku led an Alliance delegation to London, and independence was scheduled for August 31, 1957. In preparation for independence, a Constitutional Commission, made up of Commonwealth judges, drafted a new constitution for the nation that embodied many compromises to resolve contentious issues, like citizenship, the state religion, the national language, the status of the rulers, and the special rights for the Malays.

In Sarawak and Sabah, after the war the British resumed control of the Borneo territories with the help of Australian forces. A brief period of British Military Administration was followed by political reorganization. In Sarawak, Raja Vyner Brooke ceded his state to the British Crown, as he was unable to undertake the immense task of post-war rehabilitation and recovery. His brother and nephew, however, opposed this move, as did many of the Malay chiefs who feared a loss of status with the change in government. Britain then sent a Parliamentary Commission to Sarawak, and it reported that the majority of the people favored the transfer to the British Crown. Hence, Sarawak became a British Crown Colony in July 1946, administered by a Governor, who was assisted by an executive council, known as the Supreme Council, and by a legislature, called the Council Negri. But the Sarawak Malay Association continued to campaign against the cession and was behind the fatal stabbing of the second British Governor, Duncan Stewart, in December 1949. Other developments to 1957 included the 1951 relinquishment of claims to Sarawak by Anthony Brooke and the new Constitution of 1957 that Britain granted to Sarawak.

In the case of Sabah, the British Government bought over the British North Borneo Company after the war in order to undertake recovery and rehabilitation work. Sabah thus became a British Crown colony in July 1946 and was administered by a Governor assisted by an advisory council. The island of Labuan was included in Sabah, and Sabah's capital was transferred from Sandakan to Jesselton, now Kota Kinabalu. Political development was a slow and uncertain process in Sabah, due to British policy and to disunity among the various indigenous groups. Only in 1950 was a Legislative Council established, while local authorities were introduced in 1952. In the mid-1950s, Sabah's most important political leaders were Mustapha Harun, a Muslim Sulu chief, and Donald Stephens, a Christian Kadazan.

## **THE PREMIERSHIP OF TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN**

As the nation's first premier, Tunku Abdul Rahman was praised for having obtained independence without any bloodshed. His early years witnessed the following developments: "Malayanization", when British officials were replaced by local counterparts; the signing of an Anglo-Malayan Defence Treaty; the holding of the 1959 general elections, which the Alliance Party won; the end of the Emergency in August 1960; and Malaya's membership in the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961 with Thailand and the Philippines for economic cooperation. The Tunku's premiership coincided with the third and final phase of the Emergency, the mopping-up operations to deal with remaining communist terrorists. By 1960, around 500 terrorists remained, seeking refuge at the Thai-Malaysian border which became their base of operations. The Tunku also handed over to the South Vietnamese army some of the military equipment used during the Emergency, such as armored vehicles. During this period, roads were renamed, and English was used less, while the Malay language and Islam were promoted by the

government.

By 1961, there was also talk between the Tunku and the British about federating with Singapore, which had gained its independence from Britain in 1959, and with the British territories of Brunei, Sabah, and Sarawak to form a larger political entity. The British saw federation as a de-colonization measure for the Borneo territories, that would relieve it of further colonial responsibility in Southeast Asia and provide a way to deal with the communist problem in Singapore. Moreover, federation was also a way to balance Singapore's large Chinese population with Malaya's multi-racial society, as the inclusion of Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei would add more Malay and indigenous peoples and thus ensure that Malays would remain in the majority.

When the Tunku announced the merger plan on May 27, 1961, he faced opposition from anti-merger groups in Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak. In Singapore, a referendum was held in September 1962, and it was won by Lee Kuan Yew's pro-merger party, despite strong socialist opposition. The arrangements for federation included Singapore's acceptance of special rights for the Malays and under-representation in the House of Representatives, in exchange for keeping most of its revenue and autonomy in education and labor matters. In the case of Sabah and Sarawak, British and Malayan officials agreed to set up a British-Malayan Commission to assess the views of the peoples of both states. Therefore, from February to mid-April, 1962, a five-man Commission of Inquiry, known as the Cobbold Commission, assessed views in Sabah and Sarawak, interviewing 4,000 people and considering 2,200 written submissions. Its August 1962 report concluded that the people of Sabah and Sarawak favored federation. These two states, however, asked for special concessions. These compromises became known as the "20 Points" and included the following: control over immigration, English as the medium of instruction, freedom of religion, special privileges for indigenous peoples, and certain financial arrangements. Meanwhile, elections were introduced in Sarawak in 1959 and in Sabah in 1962 on the eve of the formation of Malaysia.

As for Brunei, at first its Sultan favored federation, but he changed his mind after the December 1962 revolt, led by A.M. Azahari, showed anti-merger sentiment. Two other reasons contributed to the Sultan's change of mind -- his misgivings about sharing his state's resources with less well-to-do neighbors and his increasing concern that he might not be chosen as Malaysia's first paramount ruler. The Azahari revolt was backed by the Philippines, because of its claim that Sabah was leased and not ceded to the British by the Sultan of Sulu and therefore still belonged to the Philippines. The revolt was also backed by Indonesia, as President Sukarno claimed that merger was a neo-colonialist plot by Britain to maintain its power in the region.

Meanwhile, in June 1963 it appeared that the representatives of Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines might reach some agreement on the merger plan when they agreed on two matters. One was the creation of a consultative arrangement for collective defense within the framework of a new regional organization for Muslim brotherhood, called MAPHILINDO. The second matter was agreement on submitting the Borneo problem to the UN for an assessment of the wishes of the people of the two Borneo states. However, MAPHILINDO soon fell apart when the Tunku signed a final agreement with Britain on July 9, 1963, setting August 31 as the date for Malaysia's formation before the UN commission had completed

its report. Because Sukarno was furious, a summit meeting was held in late July in Manila at which the Tunku agreed to postpone federation for two weeks to allow completion of the UN report.

Although the UN report disclosed that two-thirds of the population of Sabah and Sarawak favored federation, both Indonesia and the Philippines rejected these findings and broke off diplomatic relations. Malaysia went ahead and celebrated the proclamation of Malaysia Day on September 16, 1963. In Sabah that day, Tun Dato Mustapha bin Datu Harun was installed as the first Yang di-Pertua Negeri, with Datuk Donald Stephens as Chief Minister. Indonesia soon launched a Confrontation policy that lasted from 1963 to 1966, during which there were incidents on the borders of both countries and acts of sabotage and terrorism.

In the midst of the Confrontation crisis, the Tunku was forced to deal with another crisis --- an internal one with Singapore, revolving around special rights for the Malays. As leader of the People's Action Party (PAP), Singapore's premier Lee Kuan Yew called for a "Malaysian Malaysia", where "the state is not identified with the supremacy, well-being and interests of any one community or race". This led the Tunku to ask for Singapore's withdrawal from Malaysia, which took place on August 9, 1965 when Singapore became an independent nation. Meanwhile, Britain, with the aid of Australia and New Zealand, defended Malaysia during Indonesia's Confrontation. Confrontation finally ended with the coming to power of General Suharto, who replaced Sukarno as president soon after the September 1965 coup. Under Suharto, a peace treaty between the two countries was signed on August 11, 1966. Earlier, in June 1966, the Philippines had resumed diplomatic relations with Malaysia.

These peaceful developments paved the way for the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. This historic event occurred under the Tunku's watch, as did the tragic race riots of May 1969, after the general elections which witnessed the Democratic Action Party (DAP), an offshoot of the PAP, calling for the abolition of special rights for the Malays. Although the Alliance Party won those elections, it lost more votes to the opposition than expected. When the opposition party supporters, mainly Chinese, held rallies and parades in Kuala Lumpur to celebrate their gains, violence broke out between the Malays and Chinese. Each side later claimed that the other side had started the riots. The race riots continued for nearly two weeks, claiming hundreds of lives, mainly Chinese and Indian. The government quickly declared a state of emergency, suspended the Constitution and Parliament, postponed elections in Sabah and Sarawak indefinitely, and established a National Operations Council (NOC), with the deputy premier, Tun Abdul Razak, as director.

The race riots led to the Tunku's fall from power. Many Malays, including the present premier, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, called on him to resign as premier and as President of UMNO. Criticisms against the Tunku included allegations that he had given in too much to Chinese demands. The Tunku then expelled Mahathir from UMNO in 1969 for breach of party discipline. Mahathir used this time out of active politics to write his controversial book, *The Malay Dilemma*, which criticized the Tunku's leadership and called for affirmative action to help the Malays. His book was published in 1970, but banned the same year by the Tunku. In September 1970, the Tunku himself was forced to resign as premier and was succeeded by his deputy.

## THE PREMIERSHIP OF TUN ABDUL RAZAK.

Like the Tunku, Tun Razak was trained as a lawyer in England. He was also of aristocratic background, as his father had been one of four major chiefs in Pahang. Much younger than the Tunku, he was in part groomed for political power by the Tunku. They had a falling out, however, after the race riots. Under Razak, the government became more assertive of Malay rights, especially after a study of the causes of the May 1969 riots concluded that Malay grievances and resentments had to be addressed and resolved. Accordingly, the NOC amended the Sedition Act of 1948 to prohibit public questioning of sensitive issues, such of the special status of the Malays, the powers of the Malay rulers, the status of Malay as the national language, and the citizenship laws, especially with regard to the non-Malays. Other amendments declared that persons violating these provisions could be barred from public office for five years and that associations challenging Malay rights could be dissolved. Under Razak, the *Rukun Negara*, or National Ideology, was also drafted, stressing five principles: belief in God; loyalty to the king and country; upholding the Constitution; the rule of law; and good behavior and morality. Proclaimed on August 31, 1970 by the Paramount Ruler, the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*, it was aimed at restraining the demands of ethnic chauvinists.

Emergency rule lasted until February 20, 1971, when the NOC was dissolved and parliamentary government was reestablished. Parliament then amended the Malaysian Constitution to incorporate the prohibition, even in Parliament, against public discussion of sensitive issues. To address ethnic and social inequalities, another constitutional amendment gave the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the power to reserve academic places for Malays in institutions of higher learning in courses where the number of Malays was disproportionately low. Razak's new government possessed enlarged powers as the Rukunegara ideology, the Sedition Ordinance, and the "sensitive issues" amendments were added to earlier powers, such as that to issue emergency decrees, to use the Internal Security Act (ISA) to detain persons who might be security threats, to suspend state constitutions, to allocate federal revenues to states, and to allocate patronage in return for political support. Another change under Razak was the enhanced role of UMNO as the base for the nation's political system, with the other parties in the Alliance coalition providing peripheral support. UMNO and the Malays held pre-eminent positions under his administration. His key cabinet posts were held by Malays from UMNO, except for Tan Siew Sin, President of the MCA, who served as Minister of Finance. Loyal Malay supporters of the Tunku were missing, however, as Razak had eased them out of power. On the other hand, opponents of the Tunku, like Dr. Mahathir and Musa Hitam who were both expelled from UMNO in 1970, were readmitted and given high office.

In 1971, Razak implemented the New Economic Policy (NEP), which became the foundation for the nation's economic and social policy for twenty years. The NEP's two-pronged objectives and goals were stated in the Second Malaysia Plan presented to Parliament Congress in July 1971: -- to reduce and eradicate poverty by raising income levels and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians, irrespective of race, and to restructure Malaysian society in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function. The second aim, which became more urgent for helping the Malays, involved the modernization of the rural areas, more urban activities, and the creation of a Malay industrial and commercial community. The government aimed by 1990 to achieve 30% Malay ownership

and participation in all commercial and industrial activities. Many quasi-public bodies were formed to provide special assistance programs for the Malays, who received the most help in the public services, in education, in private sector employment, ownership of share capital, and corporate management.

Besides serving as premier, Razak was Minister of Defense, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and President of UMNO. His deputy, Dr. Ismail bin Abdul Rahman, served as Deputy President of UMNO, Minister of Home Affairs, and Minister of Trade and Industry. Another very powerful member of the Razak administration was Ghazali Shafie, the Minister with Special Functions and the Minister of Information. When Dr. Ismail died suddenly of a heart attack in August 1973, Razak appointed Hussein Onn, the then Minister of Education, as his new deputy. Hussein Onn was not only the son of Dato Onn Ja'afar, the founder of UMNO, but also Razak's brother-in-law, as their wives were sisters. With Hussein Onn's promotion, Razak appointed Dr. Mahathir, by then an UMNO Supreme Council member since 1972, as the new Minister of Education.

Under Razak, the Alliance Party built a wider and more stable base of political support and became the *Barisan Nasional*, or National Front, in 1974. This was done to reduce ethnic conflict and to help realize the goals of the NEP. Over a number of years, he made efforts to incorporate the more accommodating of the opposition parties on the state and federal levels. In Sabah, which was under Chief Minister Mustafa Harun, he succeeded in getting the United Sabah National Organization and the Sabah Chinese Association into the Sabah Alliance, which went on to win the June 1970 state elections. In Sarawak, Razak worked out a coalition government under Abdul Rahman Ya'akub that included Party Bumiputra (Malay-based), Sarawak United People's Party (Chinese-based), and Party Pesaka (Iban-based). This federally backed coalition won the June 1970 elections in Sarawak, and Abdul Rahman Ya'akub became Chief Minister. On Peninsular Malaysia, Razak incorporated two mainly non-Malay parties -- the Gerakan Party and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) -- and the Malay-based Partai Islam (PAS) into the National Front.

Under Razak, legislation was also introduced to make Kuala Lumpur a federal territory, to be governed directly by the federal government. This legislation went into effect on February 1, 1974, allowing for greater administrative efficiency, but also working against the DAP in that it isolated the non-Malay voters in the country's largest urban area. The broader based National Front then won the 1974 general elections. However, there were also student disturbances that year from radical university students unhappy with the failure of the NEP to eradicate poverty, as in the rural area near Johore Bahru, where squatters were evicted to make way for a land development scheme, and in the Baling area of Kedah, where peasants were alleged to be starving. Among the student leaders arrested under the ISA was Anwar Ibrahim, the President and founder of the Islamic Youth Movement, known by its Malay acronym, ABIM.

Also under Razak, Malaysia proposed the neutralization of Southeast Asia to avoid great power conflicts in the region. This proposal was endorsed by ASEAN in 1971 as the concept of "Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality" (ZOPFAN). This Malaysian contribution, ASEAN's first foreign policy initiative, was used yearly in UN resolutions by ASEAN during its diplomatic offensive against Vietnam's invasion and occupation of Cambodia from 1979 to 1989. Malaysia also became the

first ASEAN nation to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1974. This was a departure from the Tunku's strongly pro-West and anti-communist stand. Meanwhile, the ties with Islamic countries, begun by the Tunku, were further strengthened, with Malaysia sponsoring the Fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1974. On the domestic front, Malaysia also followed a policy of Islamization under Razak, to foster Muslim brotherhood and to fight communism.

By 1975, however, Razak had become very ill. He had leukemia, but his illness was kept a secret until his death on January 14, 1976. He was succeeded by his deputy, Tun Hussein Onn.

## **THE PREMIERSHIP OF TUN HUSSEIN ONN**

Like both his predecessors in office, Tun Hussein Onn came from an aristocratic background and was trained as a lawyer in England. Unlike them, however, he did not have as strong a political base, as he had left UMNO in 1951 with his father, Dato Onn bin Ja'afar, and only rejoined in 1969. He also began in poorer health, as he had suffered a prior heart attack. Upon assuming office as Malaysia's third Prime Minister, he faced rising apprehension in Southeast Asia about the spread of communism, as the whole of Indochina had fallen to Communism in 1975. In Indochina the "domino theory" had materialized. The ASEAN states were galvanized into action and held their first summit at Bali in 1976 where three important documents were signed: The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, the ASEAN Concord, and the agreement to form an ASEAN Secretariat. To strengthen themselves, the ASEAN leaders also focused on improving their trade, both intra-ASEAN and extra-ASEAN. Thus, under Hussein Onn, more cooperation took place between Malaysia and its ASEAN partners. It was also under his administration that Malaysia hosted ASEAN's second summit in Kuala Lumpur in 1977.

Hussein Onn continued Tun Razak's ASEAN policy and strengthened it. He did the same with Razak's other main policies, such as the NEP, which was geared to improving the economic position of the Malays. Hence, more educational opportunities were extended to the Malays, including government scholarships to educational institutions abroad. Because of rising costs at British universities and quotas on foreign students, Malaysia began sending more students to American universities. As with Razak, emphasis was also placed on economic growth as the cornerstone for other government policies. The Third Malaysia Plan, 1976-80, under Hussein Onn's administration, achieved a growth rate of 8.6 percent. Under him, the transfer of corporate ownership to bumiputras was also speeded up. Another policy from the Razak period that Hussein Onn continued was the stress on Islamization to unite the Malays and to fight communism. This policy led to a closer identification with the Middle East, to larger numbers of students being sent there, and to more missionary activity by Muslim groups. Consequences from this policy included the rise of Islamic revival movements, greater polarization of the races, more conservative dress styles among Muslim women, and more conversions to Islam among the non-Malays. Among the Islamic revival movements, some were deemed as "deviationist" and banned, for example the Ahmadiyah movement, based in Pakistan, and some sufi and mystical sects claiming mystical powers and practising black magic, such as the Qadiani Sect, Muhammadiyyah Tariqah, and Tarikat Mufaridiyah.

As his deputy, Hussein Onn chose Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who had been elected as one of three UMNO Vice-Presidents in 1975. In June 1979, Mahathir attracted worldwide attention when he was quoted as

saying that Malaysia would shoot on sight Vietnamese refugees attempting to land in the country. He later claimed that he had been misquoted, but his statement nevertheless led to a quick reduction in refugee arrivals. That year, Malaysia had over 70,000 Vietnamese refugees cramped at Pulau Bidong, an small island refugee camp off Terengganu. With other ASEAN states, Malaysia called for Vietnam to stop the flow of refugees, for the resettlement process to be speeded up, and for the establishment of more refugee processing centers.

Besides the Vietnamese refugee problem, Hussein Onn had to deal with factional rivalries within UMNO. His critics included the Tunku, who wrote weekly critical commentaries of Malaysian political affairs, and Harun Idris, the President of UMNO Youth, who was convicted of corruption and sentenced to a two-year prison term. He also had to deal with the MCA proposal to set up a privately funded university, “Merdeka University”, to preserve Chinese education and to provide university education for Chinese students unable to gain entry into Malaysian universities because of the bumiputra quota system. In 1978, this proposal was rejected by the UMNO General Assembly and by Hussein Onn. In addition, there was the Kelantan crisis where, despite the coalition between PAS and UMNO in the 1974 elections, rivalries existed over power and public policy. This crisis began as a land problem between PAS members regarding lucrative timber and mineral concessions. When it escalated into violence, Hussein Onn declared an emergency and sent Dr. Mahathir to offer a peace formula. The peace formula, however, was rejected, as was a second peace formula. Hussein Onn then imposed emergency rule over Kelantan for three months to stabilize the political situation before calling for new elections in March 1978. The elections then ended as a victory for UMNO and its new Berjasa partner.

Hussein Onn also had to contend with politics in Sabah and Sarawak. In Sarawak, the National Front relied on the skillful leadership of Abdul Rahman Ya’akub, who headed the minority Partai Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu, which was mainly Malay-Muslim. Abdul Rahman Ya’akub had become Chief Minister of Sarawak in 1970 with federal support. He soon controlled a wide Malay-native-Chinese coalition and created a stable government by playing off the coalition partners against each other. In 1974, he brought into the Sarawak National Front the state’s largest party, the Sarawak National Party (SNAP), which represented the interests of most of the interior native peoples. In the 1978 general elections, he kept the coalition together, in spite of internal strains along native-Chinese and native-Malay/Muslim lines and despite the withdrawal from his party of a Malay faction. This breakaway faction revealed old conflicts between urban and rural Malays in Sarawak and became one of four opposition parties in the 1978 elections.

In 1976, the political scene in Sabah was more contentious because of strong rivalry for power between the former Chief Minister Mustapha Harun, who had “resigned” in 1976 after 9 years in power, and the new Chief Minister Faud Stephens, leader of Berjaya government. Faud Stephens was the new name for Donald Stephens, who had converted to the Islamic faith. The threat of civil violence loomed large as Mustapha planned to regain power. Earlier, he had allowed the illegal immigration of Filipinos and Indonesians to Sabah to increase the Malay-Muslim element espoused by his USNO party. His supporters also carried out bombing incidents in 1976 in attempts to get the federal government to declare emergency rule that could lead to his return to power. Instead, the government arrested thousands of his supporters. Meanwhile, Faud Stephens was killed in a plane crash on June 6, 1976 and was succeeded by

Harris Salleh, the Deputy Chief Minister and a founding leader of Berjaya. Harris was able to establish control, to implement development programs, and to provide political stability. Ethnic tensions still persisted, however, as did resentments on the part of USNO members, even after the National Front readmitted USNO prior to the 1978 general elections.

Hussein Onn then led the National Front to victory in the 1978 general elections, defeating PAS and the DAP, its main opponents. By December 1980, however, he was ill with heart trouble and had to have a coronary bypass operation in England in February 1981. He retired officially on July 16, 1981 and was succeeded by his deputy, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

## **THE PREMIERSHIP OF DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD**

The present premier differs from his predecessors in several ways. While they came from an elitist background and studied abroad in England, he is from a middle class background and was educated locally, at the University of Malaya in Singapore. While they pursued studies in law, he studied medicine. Whereas his predecessors maintained cordial relations with the former colonial power, to the point of being labeled as “Anglophiles”, he has at times spoken out bluntly and critically against Britain and other Western nations, to the point of being called “anti-West”. He has also stirred more controversy, at home and abroad. Moreover, he has served as premier far longer than any of them.

Perhaps the most distinguishing difference, however, is that he has proved himself to be Malaysia’s most visionary leader. He has devised bold visions for his country, formulated plans for their realization, and brought them to fruition. He has persisted with these plans despite criticism, opposition, and delays. His most prominent idea is probably his “Vision 2020” plan, introduced in 1991, which aims at Malaysia becoming a fully industrialized country by that date. Meanwhile, as a result of his vision and drive, Malaysia has already achieved significant economic growth and prosperity at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and is regarded as a vibrant, modern, and progressive nation. It is also seen as a moderate Islamic country.

Mahathir’s two decades in power have not always gone smoothly, however. There have, for example, been several changes with his deputy premier. His first deputy was Musa Hitam, a former Minister of Education, who served from 1981 until 1986, when he resigned due to differences with the premier. Mahathir then chose a veteran Malay politician, Ghafar Baba, as his deputy, but replaced him in 1993 with the more dynamic Anwar Ibrahim, who by then was already Minister of Finance. But in 1998, the premier sacked Anwar on charges of corruption and sexual misconduct, an action that shocked and divided the Malays. As Anwar’s replacement, he appointed Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the former Foreign Minister.

Dr. Mahathir has also faced other clashes. In his first decade in power, he clashed with the Malay rulers when he tried to limit their powers. In 1983, to continue Hussein Onn’s policy of concentrating power at the center, he introduced legislation to amend the Malaysian Constitution by limiting to 15 days the right of the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* to delay assent to new legislation and transferring the power to declare a state of emergency from the King to the premier. After much bitter controversy, a compromise bill was



passed in 1984 whereby the King could delay new federal legislation for up to 60 days and could only declare an emergency on the advice of the cabinet. This was a victory for Mahathir, as it strengthened his position vis-à-vis the Malay rulers. His first years were also marked by disputes with Britain over fee increases in universities and the ending of British preferential trade benefits for Malaysia. This led him to launch a “Buy British Last” policy in 1981, and it lasted until March 1983.

Mahathir’s first decade as premier was also marked by other important developments. He began his premiership with measures to improve government productivity and efficiency, using the slogan “Clean, Efficient, and Trustworthy”, to achieve the NEP aims in a shorter time and with less waste. He also lifted the ban on his controversial book, *The Malay Dilemma*, and released many detainees from prison. To strengthen UMNO against PAS, he invited Anwar Ibrahim to join UMNO just before the elections in April 1982. His National Front then won a landslide victory in those elections, after which he put Anwar Ibrahim in charge of Islamic Affairs to promote the religion. To ensure that the racial restructuring objectives of the NEP would be achieved by the 1990 timetable, he focused on foreign investments and foreign trade and decided that the government needed to secure a controlling interest in several main British corporations operating in the major resource sectors of the Malaysian economy. Using stock market purchases, the Malaysian Government began to control some of the established British corporations in Malaysia, such as the Guthrie Corporation, Sime Darby, Dunlop, and Harrisons & Crosfield. Ownership of these corporations was then transferred to Bumiputra trust agencies and managed by the main parties in the National Front, especially UMNO. In addition, he called for business-government cooperation with his “Malaysia Incorporated” idea and for privatization, whereby government services and enterprises were transferred to the private sector to make it the main engine of growth.

Dr. Mahathir then led the National Front to a victory in the 1986 general elections. However, he faced problems on the economic front in the mid-1980s with a recession, due in part to the fall in commodity prices. He also faced problems in Sabah and Sarawak, because of the economic recession and because of resentment of Malay domination in politics. In Sabah, with the fall in timber prices, there was growing criticism against the authoritarian government of Chief Minister Harris. The Kadazans and Chinese criticized the Islamization policy of Harris, his pro-Muslim policy in government appointments, and his transferring Labuan island to the federal government without compensation. In the state elections of April 1985, to Mahathir’s embarrassment, Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) defeated the Berjaya government of Harris, with the result that the PBS Kadazan leader, Joseph Pairin Kitingan, replaced Harris as Chief Minister. Although Pairin refused at first to share power with a coalition government, he eventually joined the National Front.

In Sarawak, where the Malays dominated political life and the economy even though they made up one-third of the population, Abdul Rahman Yakub led a coalition government for twelve years, until he handed over authority to his protégé and nephew, Taib Mahmud, in 1981. Meanwhile, the Malays, Melanau, and Chinese profited from the timber boom, while the Ibans went further below the poverty line due to their lack of political power, their fragmentation, and traditional rivalries. When the timber boom ended, problems appeared in the main Malay-Melanau, Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu, while the Ibans began to unite to fight for a fairer deal for themselves. In 1983, a split within the Sarawak

National Party led to the formation of the first exclusively Dyak party, Parti Bangsa Dyak Sarawak, which joined the National Front. While the National Front won the 1983 Sarawak state elections, a bitter feud developed between Taib Mahmud and his uncle. Taib was accused of nepotism and of favoring Chinese businessmen. By 1987, a group had formed around Abdul Rahman Yakub and they wanted Taib's resignation. Taib appealed to the central government for help but Dr. Mahatir said it was a state and not federal matter. Taib then called for elections, which he won narrowly.

Meanwhile, within the MCA, there were leadership problems and discontent over Chinese education, due to the decline in the number of Mandarin-medium secondary schools. There were also problems within UMNO over Dr. Mahathir's authoritarian style of leadership. After Musa Hitam resigned as deputy premier in 1986, he supported Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah in challenging Mahathir as leader of UMNO. For security reasons, in 1987 the government arrested over a hundred people, including some members of the National Front. More problems arose in 1988, when the Malaysian high court declared that UMNO was an illegal society and Mahathir was forced to form a new party, UMNO Baru or New UMNO. May 1988 also saw Mahathir's controversial dismissal of the outspoken Chief Justice.

Dr. Mahathir's second decade as premier witnessed more important developments. It began with his controversial EAEC proposal in 1990 to counter economic blocs in the West. The same year saw Mahathir defeating his opponents in the 1990 General Elections -- PAS and Razaleigh's Semangat '46 lost to the National Front, which retained its two-thirds majority in Parliament. The next year saw the end of the NEP after 20 years and its replacement with the New Development Policy (NDP), which placed less emphasis on quotas and race. In 1993, the premier picked Anwar Ibrahim to be his new deputy premier, by-passing his then deputy. In 1994, the Constitutional Amendment Act was passed, reducing the King's powers as he was only to act on the advice of the government. The amendment removed the King's power to block legislation by withholding assent. Critics of the amendment claimed it was a setback for democracy as it strengthened executive power, while the government argued that the King is a constitutional monarch and must act on the advice of the government. This amendment followed revelations in 1992 that there had been abuse of power by the monarch. In 1995, general elections were held again, and the National Front scored another victory, although the PAS-Semangat coalition retained power in Kelantan. Meanwhile, there were problems with federal-state relations, especially with Sabah and Kelantan. Tensions arose too with Australia over negative depictions of Malaysia in films and television programs.

On the whole, however, Malaysia did well, enjoying a high annual economic growth rate of around 9 percent before the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. It had companies around the world in Africa, China, Central Asia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia and had big projects at home, including the Multi-Media Super Corridor project and a plan to develop Malaysia as a regional educational center. Dr. Mahathir also served as chair of the Group of 15 for South-South cooperation while a Malaysian served as President of the 51<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. Moreover, Malaysia was to chair the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of ASEAN.

The ASEAN Meeting, however, was a let-down as it coincided with the fall in the Thai and Indonesian currencies. Dr. Mahathir then stirred controversy when he blamed George Soros and other currency

speculators for causing the 1997 financial crisis. Meanwhile, the Malaysian ringgit fell by about 40%, the stock market and property values also dropped, while the prices of food items went up. Growth rate forecasts were adjusted from plus 9 percent to minus 1 percent. With the layoff of more workers, foreign and domestic, there was a rise in unemployment. Malaysia went on an austerity drive, cutting salaries and allowances, scaling back on projects except for the Multi-Media Super Corridor, embarking on a “Buy Malaysia” campaign, and sending less government-sponsored students for studies overseas. It also repatriated foreign workers and took steps against illegal immigrants.

Other problems in 1997 included low rubber prices; the drought which led to water rationing; the haze from forest fires in Indonesia, which adversely affected the environment and tourism and raised health concerns; and a scare about a virus which caused the deaths of some humans and horses but mainly pigs. There was fear too of social and political unrest and thus great concern when, in March 1998, fighting broke out in Penang between Hindus and Muslims over a Hindu shrine situated near a mosque. Tensions had arisen over the proximity of the two sites of worship and over plans to move the Hindu shrine. Police used tear gas to break up the fights, and the matter was resolved when the Hindus agreed to move the shrine to a different site. There was also talk of a rift between Dr. Mahathir and Anwar Ibrahim, and a book was circulated containing reasons why Anwar should not become the next premier. The rift, however, was denied by both parties until the announcement in September 1998 that the deputy premier had been sacked from his position due to corruption and sexual misconduct. Anwar had been sacked after refusing to resign.

This shocking development polarized the Malaysian population, especially the Malays, into two camps. With his supporters, Anwar held anti-government demonstrations that led to his arrest in September and eventually to his two court trials. In 1999, a controversial political satire on the Mahathir-Anwar clash was published, written by Shannon Ahmad, a literary figure of national prominence. Dr. Mahathir continued to face criticism from within the country and abroad for his harsh treatment of Anwar. General elections were then held with very short notice in November 1999 and won by the National Front, despite a strong showing by the opposition forces which banded together in a coalition party made up of Anwar’s party, the National Justice Party led by his wife, PAS, and the DAP. The Chinese vote for Mahathir helped to decide the results in his favor.

Since then, Malaysia has made a quick recovery from the financial crisis, the Anwar problem has abated, and Dr. Mahathir is enjoying support within the country and abroad. There have, however, been several security concerns. One was the hostage crisis at Sipadan in April 2000 when 21 tourists, including Malaysians, were kidnapped by members of the Abu Sayyaf, one of two Moro groups in the Philippines fighting for an independent Muslim homeland. The Abu Sayyaf brought the hostages to Jolo in the Philippines and demanded a ransom of US\$1 million for the release of each hostage. Another security concern revolved around the Al-Ma’unah cult in Malaysia which carried out a gun heist in 2001. This group has connections with the Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMN), which in turn is believed to have connections with the Al Qaeda terrorists. Since the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, attention has focused on connections between the terrorists and their possible links with Malaysia.

Yet another security concern was the March 2001 clash between some Malays and Indians in Kampong

Medan near Kuala Lumpur in which six people lost their lives. This clash had racial, social, and economic overtones. It began with a fight between two households – one Malay, celebrating a wedding, and the other Indian, preparing for the burial of a family member. The fight escalated when a drunken motorcyclist kicked some chairs in the temporary shed erected for the wedding party and when the windscreen of an Indian businessman’s car was shattered by a catapult. Armed gangs then roamed the neighborhood, slashing people, and killing five Indians and an Indonesian construction worker mistaken as an Indian. That month, other incidents against Indians followed the earlier clashes. Complicating race relations since then has been rising Chinese and Indian dissatisfaction within the National Front, as they want equal rights for all the races. The non-Malays are also concerned about the calls by PAS for an Islamic state.

In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Dr. Mahathir is placing more emphasis on information technology (IT). Instead of manually skilled workers, he now wants knowledge workers. His MSC project encompasses Kuala Lumpur, the new administrative capital of Putrajaya, the new Cybercity called Cberjaya, and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Within the MSC, there are new cyber laws, policies, and practices and a state of the art communication infrastructure. He has provided special incentives for world class international companies involved in IT and multimedia to locate their R&D operations, content production, field experiments, and high tech manufacturing in the MSC. These efforts have resulted in more investments in Malaysia. Local IT companies are also located in the MSC, enhancing Malaysia’s industrial capacity in IT. In addition, a Multimedia University has been established to train the knowledge workers required by the IT firms operating in the area. The Malaysian educational system has also been revamped to have “Smart Schools”, which stress “knowledge education” for IT. There is also the Vision Development Policy to replace the NEP and its successor, the NDP, to continue affirmative action for the Malays in a ten-year long program.

In June 2002, Dr. Mahathir surprised the nation with his announcement that he would step down as premier in October 2003. His designated successor is his present deputy premier, Abdullah Ahmad Bawadi.

### **Self -Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- What are some indigenous traditions of Peninsular Malaysia? How did Indianization impact the country?
- When, why, and how did Islam spread to Southeast Asia?
- How was Malacca founded? What is the importance of the Malacca Sultanate in Malaysia’s history on the political, economic, and religious levels?
- Why did the Portuguese conquer Malacca in 1511? What were some features of Portuguese rule?

- Why and how did the Dutch defeat the Portuguese at Malacca in 1641? What were some developments during the Dutch rule in Peninsular Malaysia?
- What were British motives in colonizing Peninsular Malaysia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century? How did they acquire Penang and Singapore?
- What is the significance of the Pangkor Treaty of 1874?
- How did the British extend their rule throughout Peninsular Malaysia and to Sarawak and Sabah until the outbreak of WWII?
- How did the British create a plural society in Peninsular Malaysia? Until 1945, what were some consequences from having created a plural society?
- How did the Japanese Occupation impact the Malaysian area?
- Trace the important post-war developments in Malaysia until independence in 1957?
- What major challenges did Tunku Abdul Rahman face during his premiership from 1957 to 1960?
- What major themes characterize the administrations of Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn?
- Discuss major developments in Malaysian history during the administration of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.
- What do you consider to be the main achievements of Dr. Mahathir's administration?

How does he differ from the earlier premiers?

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# POPULATION AND CULTURE

## POPULATION

As of mid-2002, Malaysia had a population of around 24.3 million people, with 57 percent living in the urban areas. As noted in the Europa World Year Book 2002, the majority of the people are found on Peninsular Malaysia, as Sabah and Sarawak each have a population of under 3 million. According to the World Almanac and Book of Facts 2002, the population density is 175 per square mile, and life expectancy is 68.48 for males and 73.92 for females. The World Factbook, prepared by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), lists the population growth rate as 1.96 percent for 2001.

## ETHNIC GROUPS

As a multiracial society, Malaysia has many ethnic groups. On the peninsula, the country's ethnic balance is roughly 62 percent Malay, 28 percent Chinese, and 8 percent Indian. The remaining 2 percent include Eurasians, Thais, Indonesians, Filipinos, Bangladeshis and other small nationality groups. Within the Malay category are the aborigines ("*orang asli*"), of which the largest groups are the Semai and Temiars while smaller groups include the Jakun, the Semelai, and the Negrito. In Sabah and Sarawak, there is even more ethnic diversity. In Sabah, the indigenous (*pribumi*) category is made up of the Kadazan-Dusuns (the largest at 33 percent), the Muruts, the Bajaus, and the Malays. In Sarawak, the main indigenous groups are as follows: Iban (29.6 percent); Malay (20.7 percent); Bidayuh or Land Dyaks (6.4 percent); Melanau (5.8 percent); and Orang Ulu (5.4 percent). The non-indigenous population in Sabah includes the Chinese, who form around 29 percent of the population.

According to the Malaysian Constitution, to be identified as a Malay one must profess Islam, follow Malay custom, habitually speak Malay, and follow certain conditions of birth. To be a Malay is also to be a "*bumiputra*", a term which literally means "son of the soil". This "*bumiputra*" term is now used to denote the Malays, the *orang asli*, and the indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak.

If the Malays and the other indigenous groups are heterogeneous, so are the Chinese and Indians. With regard to the Chinese in Peninsular Malaysia, the main groups are the Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka (Khek), and the Teochius. In Sabah, they are the Hakka, Cantonese, and Hokkien, while in Sarawak they are the Foochow and the Hakka. As for the Indians, the following are their main groups: Tamils, Telegus, Malayalams, Punjabis, Sikhs, Hindus, and Gujeratis.

## LANGUAGES



Because of the multi-ethnic composition of the population, many languages are used in Malaysia. The four main languages, however, are Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*), Chinese, Tamil, and English, of which the most important is Malay, the mother tongue of the Malays. Malay serves as the National Language and is the medium of instruction in schools and institutions of higher learning. In 1967, Malay also became Malaysia's official language, following the passing of the National Language Act by Parliament. Although Malay is the official language in government administration, English is widely used in commerce and industry and among members of the urban middle class. English is presently making a comeback in Malaysian schools since the government declared in mid-2002 that math and science subjects will soon be taught in English, in line with Malaysia's "2020 Vision" policy of becoming a fully developed nation by that date.

The Malay language has different dialects, with variations in the use of words and in the intonation. For example, the Malay spoken in Kelantan is somewhat different from that spoken in Johore. There are also differences with court Malay, the Malay that is spoken to members of the royal family. Out of deference, commoners must use special words and terms with members of royalty. For example, a commoner speaking to a ruler (Sultan) would refer to himself as a "*hamba*", which literally translates as "slave", but is really meant to signify a person of lesser rank. As for the Malay script, an Arabic script, called *Jawi*, is taught in schools, while a romanized Malay script, known as *Rumi*, has become the official form.

Among the orang asli, the various groups have their own mother tongue, sometimes with several dialects. Likewise, the various indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak have their own languages. As a result, Malay often serves as the inter-ethnic medium of communication among the indigenous peoples of Malaysia. In Sabah, the languages of the indigenous peoples include the following: Rungus, Kadazan, Murut, Bisayah, Paitan, Bajau, Suluh, Illanun, and Lun Dayah. In Sarawak, the following are the main languages of the indigenous groups: Melanau, Bidayah, Penan, Kayan, Kenyah, Nawai, Iban, Kelabit, and Lun Bawang.

With the Malaysian Chinese, Mandarin is the language of instruction in all Chinese schools, and it also serves as the form of written Chinese used by speakers of all Chinese dialects. The most important Chinese dialects used in Malaysia are Cantonese, Hokkien, Hakka, Foochow, Teochiew, and Hainanese. Many Chinese are fluent in several dialects. While Cantonese is the most common dialect in Kuala Lumpur, it is Hokkien in Penang, Hakka in Sabah, and Foochow and Hakka in Sarawak. With the Malaysian Indians, Tamil is the mother tongue for the majority of them. Other common Indian dialects used in Malaysia include Telegu, Malayalam, Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu.

## **RELIGION**

As stated in the Malaysian Constitution, Islam is the official religion, but freedom of worship is allowed. The Malay Sultan is the religious head in all the states except Penang and Malacca, where the religious head is the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*. Each state has a council of religion to advise the state government on religious matters. However, there is also a National Council for Islamic Affairs to decide on Islamic ceremonies and observances for the whole nation.

With the Malays, religion correlates closely with ethnicity in that the Malays adhere to Islam and there are very few cases of apostasy. State laws also forbid the propagation of any other religion to Muslims. In marriages between Malays and non-Malays, it is customary for the non-Malay partner to convert to the Islamic faith and for the children from these unions to be raised as Muslims.

Among the *orang asli* groups in Peninsular Malaysia and the indigenous communities groups in Sabah and Sarawak, there are many animists, although in recent years many have converted to the Muslim faith. There are also Christians among the *orang asli* and indigenous peoples of Sabah and Sarawak, the result of the work of early Western missionaries in the area. Some of these Christians are able to trace the conversion of their families over several generations.

In the case of the Chinese, most of them are Buddhists or Taoists although there are also Muslims and Christians among them. As for the Indians, most are of the Hindu faith while others are Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, or Christian. The small Eurasian population is mostly Christian, made up of both Catholics and Protestants. Catholic churches date back to the time of Portuguese rule and can be found in Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu and other big towns. Protestant influence came with Dutch rule and increased under British colonialism. Protestant churches can also be found in the main towns throughout Malaysia. The main Protestant denominations are Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist.

On the whole, Muslims account for 60 percent of the population of Peninsular Malaysia, 50 percent of that of Sabah and only one-third of that of Sarawak. On the other hand, while Christians make up only 2 percent of the population of Peninsular Malaysia, they account for 27 percent in Sabah and 29 percent in Sarawak.

## **ART, MUSIC, LITERATURE, AND FOOD**

With its multi-ethnic population, Malaysia enjoys a diversity of art forms. These include: wood carvings by the *orang asli*, the Malays, and the indigenous groups in Sabah and Sarawak; handwoven cloth, inlaid with gold or silver ( *kain songket*), by the Malays; fabric-weaving by the Ibans; beadworks in Sabah and Sarawak; sleeping mats by the Penans; and *batik* production by several indigenous groups. There is also pottery with indigenous motifs from Sarawak; basket-making, using bamboo and rattan, throughout the country; and the making of tops, kites, the *kris* (Malay ceremonial dagger), ornaments, and jewellery by skilled Malay craftsmen. In addition, one can find batik and oil paintings; Malay and Chinese works of calligraphy; tribal artifacts and jewelry; and antique furniture, especially in the historic town of Malacca.

In the case of Malaysian music, the dominant music is that by the Malays, although there is also Chinese opera, Indian classical music, and other non-Malay music. Traditional music forms among the Malays include religious songs and chants and the singing of songs set in a certain verse-style known as “*pantun*”. Among traditional musical instruments, the basic one is the drum, of which there are over a dozen types. There are also the percussion instruments, the wind and string instruments, and the ensembles, made up of the *nobat* and *gamelan* orchestras. Several of the Malay states have the *nobat* orchestra, a special royal orchestra for state ceremonial occasions, with four or five members who use drums, a flute,

a trumpet, and a gong.

With regard to Malaysian literature, a developing field, the main bulk is in the Malay language. The Language and Literary Agency (*Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka*) oversees the development and promotion of Malay literature and is the nation's largest publisher. Early Malay literature contains Sanskrit and Arabic literary traditions, as court poetry used these scripts. Some Malay poets and short story writers also used the Arabic script as late as the 1950s. One traditional form of Malay literature is the *pantun*, with its highly structured rhyming quatrain containing internal rhymes and nuances and with its message in the final two lines. The *pantun* is still used in contemporary songs and poetry. Another traditional form is the *syair*, also tightly structured, but longer, and used in connection with history or a story. Yet another traditional form is the *hikayat*, which is a court-based prose form that relates historical and legendary events. Both the *syair* and *hikayat* are meant to be recited rather than read silently. All three traditional forms rely on oral traditions.

With British colonialism came new forms of literature, as seen in the works of Munshi Abdullah or Abdullah bin Abdul-Kadir, who had British employers. His *Tales of Abdullah's Voyage (Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah)*, about his travels, and his *The Hikayat Abdullah (1848)*, his autobiography, use Western literary forms and show his personal viewpoint when discussing Malay society and politics. His autobiography is regarded as marking the beginnings of contemporary Malay literature. By the 1920s and 1930s, the Malay press regularly published poetry and serialized short stories and novels, but it was only after WWII that the Malay literary movement began with the gathering of nationalist writers in Singapore. These young Malay writers, who wrote works dealing with social idealism and political commitment, became known as the Generation of '50s Writers (*ASAS '50*). The most well known among them include Usman Awang, A. Samad Said, and Keris Mas. Usman Awang is noted for his poetry, short stories, and plays, most of which deal with the struggles of the oppressed. A. Samad Said's novels, poems, short stories, and essays include his famous novel *Salina* (1961), which examines Malay social values and behavior in postwar Singapore through the eyes of a prostitute. Shannon Ahmad is best known for his short stories and novels, which deal with the life of rural Malays in the north, who have to deal with both a difficult agricultural landscape and an unequal society. More recently, he gained attention as the writer of a very controversial political satire on the Mahathir-Anwar split.

As for food, Malaysia is a gourmet's paradise. The main types of food are Malay, Chinese, and Indian, but one can also find other cuisine, including Western, Filipino, and Japanese. Malay food is spicy and fragrant, with many dishes using coconut milk. With Chinese food, there is a great deal of choice as the styles of cooking range from Hokkien, Szechuan, Teochew, to Cantonese. Indian food also offers considerable variety as one can choose South Indian, North Indian, or vegetarian cuisine. At public functions involving meals, chicken and lamb are usually served as meat dishes because of Islamic dietary restrictions on pork and Hindu dietary restrictions on beef. Most hotels, restaurants, and dining establishments in Malaysia also have signs stating that the food served is "*halal*", which means with meats from animals slaughtered the Muslim way.

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Malaysia celebrates many national holidays to mark mainly national events and the religious festivals of its major ethnic groups. The national events are Independence Day or National Day, which is celebrated on August 31, and the official birthday of the Yang di-Pertuan Agung or Paramount Ruler, celebrated on the first Saturday of June.

National holidays connected with the Islamic faith include the following: the Muslim New Year (*Ma'al Hijrah*); *Hari Raya Puasa* (*Aidil Fitri*), which concludes a month of daily fasting; *Hari Raya Haji* (*Idil Adha*), which is celebrated on the twelfth day of the third moon of the Muslim calendar when Muslims perform the last phase of the holy pilgrimage in Mecca; and the birthday of the Prophet Mohamad, which falls on the twelfth day of the third moon of the Muslim calendar.

*Hari Raya Puasa* is a two-day national holiday, as is Chinese New Year, which is celebrated on the first day of the first moon on the Chinese lunar calendar around January or February. For the Buddhists in the population, there is the Wesak Day holiday in May to celebrate Buddha's birthday, the most important day in the Buddhist calendar. For Hindus, there is Deepavali, the festival of lights, which is celebrated in November to mark the victory of good over evil when Lord Krishna triumphed over a demon king. In early January or February, Hindus also celebrate the religious festival of Thaipusam, which commemorates the birthday of Lord Subramaniam, when some devotees undergo rites of penance. As for Malaysian Christians, they celebrate Christmas Day, another national holiday. For the people of Sarawak, there is also Gawai Day or Dayak Festival Day, which is celebrated on June 1. Other national holidays are Labor Day, on May 1, and New Year's Day, on January 1. Each Malaysian state also observes the birthday of its Ruler as a public holiday. Moreover, Federal Territory Day on February 1 is a holiday in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- How did British colonialism transform Peninsula Malaysia from being a land of the Malays into a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country?
- Name the main ethnic groups in Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak, and Sabah.
- What are the main religions in Malaysia? What ethnic groups are followers of these religions?
- What are some strengths of a multi-racial society such as Malaysia?
- What are some inherent challenges within a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation like Malaysia?
- What factors foster national unity in a nation? How can national unity be strengthened in a nation such as Malaysia?
- Discuss the richness of Malaysian arts, music, and literature.

- In what ways is Malaysia a gourmet's paradise?
- How do Malaysia's national holidays reflect the nation's multi-racial and multi-religious population?

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## **SOCIAL ISSUES**

### **CLASS STRUCTURE**

During pre-colonial times, a feudalistic system existed among the Malays, with the Sultan at the apex of the power structure and the peasants at the bottom. Power depended on lineage, land holdings, material wealth, and supporters or followers. During British colonialism, part of this class structure remained as the British preserved the sultanate, even though they instituted the residential system, which gave the British Resident power in all administrative matters, except those touching upon Malay customs and religion. These two areas of Malay life continued to be under the control of the Malay ruler throughout British rule. After independence in 1957, when the country became a constitutional monarchy, the vestiges of class structure became less prominent. At present, they have mostly disappeared, except at court where royalty, rank, and protocol remain very important. At present, one's social standing in Malaysia is based more on economic means and occupation than on birth.

Among the non-Malays, class structure is less rigid, although some view the special rights in the Constitution as a form of class structure. Among the Indians in Malaysia, most have not adhered to the Hindu caste system. In general, one can argue that there is an upper class, a middle class, and a lower class in Malaysia, but this classification is based more on economic standing than on lineage. In any case, the middle class is the largest grouping, and the Malaysian Government has been working on creating a more equitable society through the NEP and its successors, the New Development Policy (NDP) and the Vision Development Policy (2001-2010).

### **FAMILY LIFE**

Family life in Malaysia depends on several variables, such as ethnicity, religion, rural or urban setting, and economic means. It is therefore difficult to generalize about family life. On the whole, however, it can be safely surmised that extended families played a very important role in pre-independent Malaysia but a smaller role since independence due to numerous changes, including the migration of people from rural to urban areas for better job opportunities. At present, nuclear families are the dominant unit, especially in urban centers, while in rural areas extended families continue to play a significant role. In nuclear families, both husband and wife usually work and depend on maids, babysitters, or childcare centers to help them take care of their young children. In urban areas, family life is often more complex, with the many opportunities for extracurricular activities for children after school and for adults after work.

Family dwellings in Malaysia also vary a great deal, from simple houses on stilts in the rural areas to apartments, condominiums, linkhouses, single family homes, and palatial abodes in the towns and cities. In Sabah, dwellings called “longhouses” are still found in the northern and interior parts. Each longhouse is divided into apartments for individual families, but they share common areas.

Despite the rise in nuclear families, most Malaysian families tend to take care of their aged parents rather than send them to old folk homes. They usually do so by sharing this responsibility between family members, with siblings taking turns to house them. With Chinese families, the usual custom is for the eldest son to play the main role in taking care of the old parent or surviving parent. Most Malaysian families also help relatives who are in need. In most Malaysian families, the young people live with their parents before marriage, although at present a growing number, especially in the cities, prefer to live on their own or to share housing with friends once they begin working.

As for marriage in Malaysia, there are now less cases of arranged marriages than in previous years. Couples are also marrying at a later age. The marriage ceremony is usually an elaborate affair and the wedding feast can drain a family financially. Among the rural Malays, a whole village often helps in preparing the wedding feast. Certain wedding traditions and customs are observed by each race. In the towns and cities, the wedding receptions are usually catered events in the form of dinners at homes, or public halls, or restaurants. It is a custom among traditional Chinese families to provide a nine-course or ten-course dinner as a wedding feast for friends, relatives, and other guests. Inter-racial marriages are increasing, and the non-Malay partner in Malay-non-Malay unions converts to the Islamic faith. Divorce is a relatively easy process among the Malays. While divorce occurs among all the races, it is especially frowned upon by the Chinese because of the importance placed on the family unit.

## **GENDER**

The Malaysian Government pays equal wages to men and women for their work. In recent years, the government has also established a Ministry for Women’s Affairs to cater to women’s issues and to mainstream women’s concerns into national development. Women now head about 17 percent of all households in Malaysia. Many Malaysian women do hold high office in the government. However, in the private sector, advancement for women has met with more obstacles, and wages for women tend to be

lower than that for men. Regional differences also exist in the status of women, especially between those in Peninsular Malaysia and those in Sabah and Sarawak, due to ethnic, historic, and economic reasons. As the 7<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan shows, the government is working on improving the position of women in the family, community, and workplace. There is growing concern, for example, about their under-representation at higher levels of employment and about the lack of sufficient child care facilities to support the female labor force. There is also concern that since women make up the bulk of the workforce in the textile and electronics industries they are more vulnerable to retrenchment. In both these industries, two-thirds of the workers retrenched have been women. To survive, some of these women have been forced to become petty traders or to enter the food catering business.

Gender issues crop up in Malaysian families in various ways. For example, among the Chinese there is a preference for male children since they carry the family name. Among traditional Indian families, boys are also often preferred to girls as these families still use the dowry system for girls. Yet, among some Malays, like the Minangkabaus in Negri Sembilan, a matrilineal system called *adat perpatih* is followed. Negri Sembilan is the only state in Malaysia having the matrilineal system.

## **HEALTH AND WELFARE**

One consequence of British colonialism was the introduction of modern medical care, aimed primarily at helping the European population but with some indirect benefits for the local population. Diseases, which were largely controlled under British rule, included malaria, beri-beri, cholera, and tuberculosis. By the 1930s, more attention was paid to health issues, due to rising concern about the moral responsibility that should accompany colonialism.

More progress in health services occurred after independence with the stress on rural development and with improvements in medical, dental, and other health services. To meet the staff demands of the country's expanding health services, the government established more training schools for nurses, hospital assistants, radiographers, dispensers, inspectors, and laboratory technologists. It also established medical schools to train doctors, for example at the University of Malaya, the National University of Malaysia, and the Science University. The teaching hospitals attached to these universities are now capable of performing complicated heart and other surgeries. Presently, Malaysia has become a provider of medical services to Third World nations, such as Cambodia.

By 1991, Malaysia's Ministry of Health was pushing a Healthy Lifestyle Campaign and working to support preventive and curative health programs. Throughout the country, medical treatment is provided by hospitals, dispensaries, and clinics, using modern equipment, medicines, and techniques. Disease control extends to both communicable and non-communicable diseases. One of the latest diseases to be added to the list of notifiable diseases is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In addition, the government runs programs on maternal and child health, nutrition, school health, environmental sanitation, industrial health, hygiene, and water fluoridation. Dental services are also provided, as are counseling and psychiatric facilities. In the rural areas, there are mobile health teams to provide health services. Malaysia also has a National Pharmaceutical Control Laboratory to keep a check on imported and locally manufactured drugs.



On the private level, Malaysia also has several top-rate hospitals, such as Pantai Medical Center and Subang Medical Center in the Kuala Lumpur vicinity. Moreover, there are numerous private clinics, nursing care facilities, dental clinics, and other medical establishments. In addition, there are the various shops for Chinese, Indian, and traditional medicines. Malaysians thus have a very wide choice in medical care.

As for social welfare, this is the joint responsibility of the federal and state governments. The welfare services provide care for the following groups in the population: the handicapped, the aged, the chronically ill, beggars and vagrants, women and children, juvenile delinquents, and drug addicts. The state governments are responsible for general welfare and relief services. Most state governments are also in charge of the reform programs for juvenile delinquents, but in Sabah and Sarawak these services come under the jurisdiction of the federal government. Voluntary agencies in the country help the state and federal governments to run some of the welfare programs, with grants-in-aid from the federal government through the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development. Many of these voluntary agencies are church or religious groups or non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Social security measures in Malaysia include an Employment Injury Insurance Scheme, which provides medical and cash benefits to injured workers, and an Invalidity Pension Scheme, which provides protection to employees against invalidity due to disease or injury from any cause. The government plans to eventually extend social security benefits to the self-employed, especially fishermen and farmers. Other supplementary social security provisions are the Employees' Provident Fund, a pension scheme for government employees, free medical benefits for those unable to pay, and medical benefits for workers under the Labor Code.

On the whole, the country has had a good record on poverty reduction. According to the Asian Development Bank's December 1999 "Country Assistance Plan (2000-2002)" for Malaysia, the incidence of poverty in Peninsular Malaysia fell from 49.3 percent in 1970 to 9.6 percent in 1995 and 6.8 percent in 1997. Poverty is also mainly a rural phenomenon with the poorest states in the nation being Kelantan, Trengganu, Sabah, Kedah, and Perlis.

## **EDUCATION**

Under British colonialism, there were the Islamic schools, the mission schools run by Western missionaries, the private schools managed by the different races, and the government schools. There were thus religious schools, Malay schools, Indian schools, Chinese schools, and English schools. In 1956, a year before independence, the task of developing a national system of education fell on the then designated Minister of Education, Tun Razak, who drafted a report bearing his name. The Razak Report, implemented in 1957, declared education as the key to unity and economic progress and stressed that resources had to be channeled into its various aspects, such as teacher training, new school buildings, and the teaching of subjects in science and technology for modernization and progress. The Report also stated that although cultural differences among the races could be preserved by allowing the continuation of Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English schools, a national language had to be taught in all the schools.

The 1957 Constitution had declared Malay as the national language, with the provision that English could be used for official purposes for a period of ten years, after which Malay would be the sole official language. In 1960, the Rahman Talib Report was passed, calling for the abolition of Chinese-medium secondary education in national-type schools. The Education Act of 1961 implemented this report. In 1967, a National Language Bill was passed recognizing Malay as the national language, but allowing English to be used in an official capacity. Meanwhile, the government started substituting Malay for English as the main medium of instruction in all lower and mid-level secondary schools. The language issue thus became a contentious one, especially in Peninsular Malaysia in the 1960s and 1970s. In Sabah and Sarawak, this issue was less contentious as the retention of English and the slower introduction of Malay had been conditions of entry into the Federation. Sabah made the national language the only official medium of communication in September 1973, while Sarawak decided to retain English until 1980.

Throughout this period, Razak's advice about the importance of education was followed as Malaysia continues to give high priority to education. Education receives 5.8 percent of the Gross Domestic Budget (GDP) or 17 percent of the national budget, the highest financial allocation after defense. The Malaysian Government continues to view education as a priority investment for the country's future.

Formal school education in Malaysia is now made up of six years of primary school, three years of lower secondary school, two years of upper secondary school, and two years of pre-university education. This education is provided without charge, and Malay, the national language, is the medium of instruction, while English is a compulsory subject. Upon completion of primary school, students are automatically promoted to a secondary school, where Malay is the medium of instruction. At the end of the third year, students take the Lower Secondary Assessment for entrance into the upper secondary school. Students then follow a general education syllabus where courses with an arts, science, or technical orientation are offered, after which they take the Malaysian Certificate of Education Examination. The roughly seven percent who attend technical schools sit for the Malaysian Certificate of Education (Vocational) Examination. About 15 percent of secondary school graduates enter the two-year pre-university program, which prepares them for the Higher School Certificate Examination for entry into university.

Tertiary education at the many colleges, polytechnics, and universities takes another two to five years, depending on the course. This tertiary education at government-funded institutions of higher learning is provided at a nominal fee, and the medium of instruction is Malay. There are also many privately funded colleges where English is the medium of instruction. Some of these colleges have "twinning programs" with overseas universities, whereby a Malaysian student can study locally for two years to earn an Associate Degree before transferring overseas to the twinning institution to complete the program and earn a foreign degree. Many non-Malay students, unable to gain admission into the local universities, attend such colleges.

Latest developments in Malaysian education include Dr. Mahathir's emphasis on having "smart schools" to foster computer literacy among school children. He also wants to encourage creativity among school children and to help them have a better command of the English language. To reach the second goal, Dr.

Mahathir announced in mid-2002 a comeback for English in schools, to begin with the teaching of math and science subjects in English. Meanwhile, he is also building up Malaysia as a center of academic excellence. With the rapid growth of private schools and private and government colleges and universities, Malaysia has already become a provider of educational services for the whole region. In recognition of Malaysia's new role, ASEAN recently chose Malaysia as the site for its proposed ASEAN University.

## **LABOR FORCE**

In the first decade after independence, the majority of the labor force was engaged in agriculture, but this has since changed with the emphasis by the Malaysian Government on industrialization. At present, most of the labor force is engaged in manufacturing industries, with manufactured goods making up over 80 percent of Malaysia's exports. Since these industries are labor-intensive, Malaysia has had to rely on foreign workers. The shortage of labor is especially marked in the plantation, construction, manufacturing, and the services sectors of the Malaysian economy. The foreign workers, male and female, come mainly from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Bangladesh, where wages are much lower. Many foreign female workers work in textile and electronic plants or as maids in homes. Although most foreign workers enter the country legally, some do so illegally. By 2002, Malaysia had over two million foreign workers, legal and illegal. In mid-2002, the Malaysian Government took action against illegal workers, forcing their deportation. Some of these illegal immigrants later complained of ill treatment, leading their governments to file official complaints.

In certain industries, such as the construction and plantation industries, there are more male than female workers. On the other hand, in the electronics and textile industries there are more women than men workers. Wages in the private sector are not equal for men and women workers, unlike the government sector which gives equal pay for equal work

The Ministry of Human Resources is responsible for coordinating manpower planning for the private sector, to ensure that the nation has a supply of multi-skilled, disciplined, and productive workers and that the Vision 2020 plan will be achieved. A Human Resources Development Fund was established in November 1992 to promote training for advanced skills to meet the new technological changes and industrial requirements. Besides the Workmen's Compensation Act (1952), there is the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act (1966) to regulate the employment of young people, and the Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act (1990) to stipulate all the conditions that must be met, such as nurseries for children under the age of three, if the workers collectively have more than ten children. In addition, the Ministry of Human Resources carries out both industrial safety inspections to check machinery and industrial hygiene inspections to detect and assess stress and health hazards at work. The Ministry also has a Department of Trade Union Affairs to promote the development of a democratic and responsible trade union movement.

### **Self- Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- What are some similarities and differences in family life among the major ethnic groups in Malaysia?
- How can gender equality be improved in Malaysia?
- What are some interesting aspects of Malaysia's health care system?
- What strides have been made in the educational field since independence in 1957?
- In Malaysia, in what ways can education be regarded as an investment for the future?
- What are some main welfare services that the Malaysian Government provides to its peoples? What more should be done to help the poor?
- Why has Malaysia turned to foreign labor? What are some issues that can arise with regard to reliance on foreign labor?
- What are some protective measures for workers in Malaysia?

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# ECONOMY

## THE FIVE-YEAR PLANS

So far, there have been ten five-year plans -- two Malaya Plans from 1955 to 1965 and eight Malaysia Plans from 1966 to the present. Both the Malaya Plans had the following aims: economic growth; the reduction of economic disparity among the ethnic groups; and the creation of more employment opportunities. The First Malaya Plan (1955-60) stressed the replanting of rubber trees; industrialization through a Pioneer Industries policy; improvement of transportation; and the introduction of universal primary education. It helped the country record an economic growth rate of 4.5 percent from World War II to 1960 and was considered a success. The Second Malaya Plan (1960-65) dealt with remaining problems, such as the high population growth rate, the undeveloped rural areas, and the need for diversification of the economy to reduce dependence on rubber and tin exports. Its focus on rural development was helped by the Federal Land Development Authority (FLDA), which gave land to the landless, and the Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA), known in Malay as the Majlis Amanah Ra'ayat (MARA), which encouraged business enterprise among the rural Malays. This plan helped record a higher growth rate of 6.5 percent.

Despite impressive economic growth, however, poverty and unemployment persisted in the rural areas. Hence, the First Malaysia Plan (1966-70) continued to stress rural development. The Plan also focused on economic growth and on the diversification of the economy to include palm oil, timber, and manufacturing. The Plan called for manufacturing to be aided by import substitution and for poverty to be reduced by better paying jobs for the Malays. The Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department played a major role in formulating this and subsequent Malaysia Plans. In 1970, 78.4 percent of Malaysia's exports came from rubber, tin, timber, palm oil and petroleum, while only 11.9 percent came from manufacturing. Import-substitution industrialization had a limited effect, because of Malaysia's very small domestic market.

With poverty among rural Malays remaining a serious problem and with the outbreak of race riots in 1969, the Second Malaysia Plan (1971-75) incorporated the aims of the 1971 NEP: -- to reduce and eradicate poverty by increasing income levels and employment opportunities for all irrespective of race and to accelerate the process of restructuring Malaysian society to correct economic and geographical imbalances. One imbalance then was the concentration of Malays and other indigenous groups in the subsistence agricultural sector of the economy and the concentration of the non-Malays, especially the Chinese, in the modern rural and urban sectors. The Second Malaysia Plan also called for an expanded secondary industry base, with the west coast Peninsular states focusing on manufacturing; the Borneo states, Pahang, Kelantan, Johore, Terengganu, and Perak on forestry; and the states of Pahang, Johore, Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, Perak, and Negeri Sembilan on agriculture and land development.

In 1973, the mid-term review of the Second Malaysia Plan included the Outline Perspective Plan (OPP), 1971-1990, within which the objectives of the NEP were to be realized. By 1975, Malaysia had a growth rate of 7.4 percent per annum.

The Third Malaysia Plan (1976-80) continued these aims, emphasizing manufacturing and an urban-industrial strategy in the belief that urban growth would hasten industrial activity. This strategy spread urban development more evenly throughout Malaysia. The Fourth Malaysia Plan (1981-85) sought to further develop the east coast and the infrastructure linking the rural areas to the towns. This plan also mirrored a shift in industrial policy, from labor-intensive industries to capital and technology-based industries. Accordingly, the states were assigned economic functions, such as high technology to Penang; mining and manufacturing to Perak; agriculture, mining, and manufacturing to Perlis and Kedah; industrialization to Selangor, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan, and Malacca; agriculture and industrialization to Johor; forestry, agriculture, and some manufacturing to Pahang; and petroleum, gas, and heavy industry to Terengganu.

With the economic recession in the mid-1980s, the Fifth Malaysia Plan (1986-90) made further changes. Rather than an emphasis on states, it focused on regions and created six -- four in Peninsular Malaysia and two in Sabah and Sarawak. The Plan fostered the growth of joint industrial development within the regions and the creation of secondary growth centers through private sector collaboration. The Industrial Master Plan (IMP) of 1986-89 also sought to further develop the manufacturing sector, to maximize the exploitation of natural resources, and to establish the foundations for *bumiputra* participation in an advanced industrial society. Meanwhile, agriculture's share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

dropped from 31 percent in 1970 to 19 percent by 1990, while manufacturing's share rose from 13 percent in 1970 to 44 percent by 1990.

By 1990, with the end of the NEP, the EPU drafted the Second OPP that became the basis for the New Development Policy (NDP), which replaced the NEP. The NDP continued the NEP's stress on stable growth, balanced development, ethnic harmony, and the removal of social and economic imbalances in society. The Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-95), in line with the Second OPP and the NDP, was geared towards these common goals. Like the NDP, it placed greater attention on quality, requiring stricter standards for bumiputra candidates in business positions and for their products and services. By then, however, a problem was "crony capitalism", arising from personal links between the private sector and government leaders. This led, in turn, to a widening gap between the lower and middle classes and the very wealthy upper class.

Under the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000), the average annual GDP growth rate was targetted at 8.6 percent. The plan's major aim was to upgrade the economy and to make a strategic shift from low-skill, low value-added output to high-skill, high value-added output. Accordingly, improved vocational training was emphasized, to be further developed through the Human Resources Development Council and through more opportunities within tertiary education. The university system was also to be commercialized and partly privatized. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, however, put a spanner in the works; the Malaysian economy declined by 7.5 percent in 1998. Then it rebounded by mid-1999, posting a growth rate of 5.4 percent that year. Since then, the economy has continued to improve. Meanwhile, manufacturing has continued to dominate the export sector, with electrical and electronic products accounting for 57.1 percent of total export earnings in 1999.

The Government announced the Eighth Malaysia Plan (2002-2005) in April 2001. Its aims are: to shift the growth strategy from input-driven to knowledge-driven; to hasten structural transformation within the manufacturing and services sectors; and to strengthen socio-economic stability through the equitable distribution of income and wealth. This plans envisions a yearly growth rate of 7.5 percent, with the main engines of growth being the manufacturing and services sectors. The same year, the government introduced the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) for 2001-10, a ten-year development program aimed at creating a resilient and competitive economy.

## **THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY**

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in 1971 in the aftermath of the 1969 racial riots. Its aims were twofold: "eradicating poverty irrespective of race" and "restructuring society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function". These aims were to be achieved by 1990, when Malays and other indigenous groups were to "own and manage at least 30 percent of the total commercial and industrial activities of the country in all categories and scales of operation and become full partners in the economic life of the nation". The objectives of the NEP were to be achieved within the First Outline Perspective Plan (OPP1) drawn up by the government for the 1971-1990 period.

The implementation of the NEP saw more emphasis being placed on the restructuring of society

than on poverty eradication. The NEP has been both praised and criticized. It has been praised for raising the living standards of the rural population, but criticized for insufficient help to the very poor and for not always awarding scholarships to the neediest students. Some also believe it spoiled the Malays. There are conflicting views too about the extent to which the 30 percent bumiputra equity ownership was achieved. There are also allegations that the transfer of state assets to bumiputra ownership created a wealthy elite within the Malay community, causing greater income disparity within that community than in other ethnic groups.

## **THE NEW DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The New Development Policy (NDP) replaced the NEP in 1991 and formed the basis of Dr. Mahathir's Vision 2020 plan for Malaysia to become an industrialized society. Its macroeconomic and social targets were listed in the Second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP2) for the 1991-2000 period. While the NDP continued the NEP's goals of eradicating poverty and restructuring society, it had a slightly different focus in that it placed less stress on racially-based economic and social engineering and more emphasis on national unity. It kept the 30 percent target for *bumiputra* corporate ownership, but set no deadline for its achievement. Instead, it emphasized the development of skills to promote the consolidation of *bumiputra* wealth. It aimed at attaining balanced development so as to create a more united and just society.

## **THE VISION 20/20 PLAN**

This plan is perhaps the most visionary of Dr. Mahathir's ideas. Introduced in 1991, it has been adopted in principle by other countries and organizations, including ASEAN. According to Mahathir, the year 2020 represents the deadline for Malaysia to become a fully developed and industrialized nation. To him, by then it "must be a nation that is fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically, and culturally". The nine strategic objectives or challenges set out by Vision 2020 are as follows: establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny; creating a liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian society; fostering and developing a mature democratic society; establishing a fully moral and ethical society; establishing a mature, liberal, and tolerant society; establishing a scientific and progressive society; establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture; ensuring an economically just society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation; and establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

## **AGRICULTURE**

Agriculture's share of total export earnings has declined in recent years. Whereas rubber used to be the principal export since colonial times, making up half of the country's exports in 1961, it no longer commands this position. In 1989, palm oil replaced rubber as the second largest export earner after petroleum. The rubber industry has been adversely affected by depressed prices, labor shortages, and the reduction in cultivated area. Much of the rubber land has been replanted with other crops, especially oil



palm. Despite the continued decline in production, Malaysia is presently the world's third largest producer and net exporter of rubber, after Thailand and Indonesia.

In the case of palm oil, introduced in the 1960s to diversify the economy, Malaysia has become the world's largest producer and exporter of this commodity, accounting for half of the world's production in 1998 and nearly two-thirds of international trade in palm oil. As with rubber, the bulk of crude palm oil comes from Peninsular Malaysia. In 1975, the government changed from just planting and exporting crude palm oil to also producing, refining, manufacturing, and selling oil-based products, thus leading to more palm oil mills, more palm oil refineries, and an expanding oleochemical industry in the country. The government also promoted the use of palm oil in food production in various parts of the world. When labor shortages became a serious problem, estates had to turn to migrant foreign labor, which sometimes made up 70 percent of the work-force.

Meanwhile, timber has become one of Malaysia's main exports, with Sarawak accounting for 49 percent of total production, Sabah for 23 percent, and Peninsular Malaysia for 24 percent. Another main export is cocoa, which is Malaysia's fourth most important agricultural export after palm oil, timber, and rubber. Other agricultural exports include pepper and fruits. Malaysia is now the world's fifth largest producer of pepper, which is mainly grown in Sarawak. As for rice, Malaysia is about 75 percent self-sufficient, while in fisheries it is about 91 percent self-sufficient.

## INDUSTRY

Upon independence in 1957, Malaysia had only a rudimentary manufacturing sector. However, its five-year development plans soon built up the nation's industrial base, enabling the manufacturing sector to eventually supercede agriculture as the largest contributor to GDP. In the 1960s, Malaysia's industrial policy operated through an import substitution strategy which concentrated on increasing domestic processing of natural products and on producing basic consumer goods for home consumption. In the 1970s, the government changed the focus to export-oriented labor intensive industries like electronics and textiles, which were mainly financed by foreign investment. In the early 1980s, the government introduced a second phase of import substitution, this time focusing on the car and steel industries, but led by the public sector. It set up the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia (HICOM) and launched the *Proton* car project. Progress though was thwarted by the mid-1980s recession, which led to a fall in global demand for electronics and other manufactured goods. The economy recovered in 1986 nonetheless, stimulated by the renewed global demand for electronic goods.

In 1986, the government also completed the Industrial Master Plan (IMP), with recommendations for improving Malaysia's manufacturing sector for the period 1986-1995. The IMP stressed that Malaysia should target 12 key industries, all high value-added and high-skilled. Its recommendations also covered how linkages and diversification of the manufacturing base could be carried out. The government then completed a second IMP in 1996, with strategies to develop a more competitive manufacturing sector for the period until 2005. The second IMP stressed the development of dynamic industry groups and industrial clusters, the expansion of value-added activities, and the strengthening of industrial linkages. It identified the following industrial clusters or groups for further development: the electrical and

electronics group; the transport industry group; the chemical industry group; the textiles and apparel industry group; the resource-based industry group; the materials and advanced materials industry group; and the agro-based and food products group. This cluster group approach also pays attention to “downstream” activities, like distribution, packaging, and marketing, including indigenous design and branding. Malaysia is thus working towards its Vision 2020 plan of becoming a fully industrialized country by that date. Meanwhile, the manufacturing sector’s share of the GDP has grown from 8.6 percent in 1960 to 33.1 percent in 2000, while the contribution of manufactured exports to overall export earnings has jumped from 13 percent in 1970 to 86 percent by 2000.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Road, rail, and port facilities are generally well developed on Peninsular Malaysia, but less developed in East Malaysia. Malaysia’s total network of main roads is around 100,000 km, of which about three-quarters are paved. The nation’s emphasis on improving its transportation system is reflected in its five-year Malaysia Plans. In line with road development goals, Malaysia opened its 848-km North-South Highway in 1994. To alleviate traffic congestion in Kuala Lumpur, the government has also embarked on the construction of an integrated public transport system, including a Light Rail Transit (LRT) system, which began operations in 1998. Plans are presently underway to improve commuter train services.

Malaysia’s most important seaport is Port Klang, which handles almost half of the nation’s total cargo. This port is now ranked as one of the world’s leading container terminals. In 2000, a new port in the south, the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, commenced operations.

The main airline is Malaysia Airlines, formerly Malaysian Airline Systems or MAS, which provides extensive domestic and international service. In 1994, a second national carrier, Air Asia, was formed to operate both domestic and international flights. In 1998, Malaysia opened the first phase of its new and very modern Kuala Lumpur International Airport at Sepang.

The telecommunications sector has been developing rapidly in recent years. Although telecommunications was partially liberalized in mid-1994, the dominant share is still held by Telekom Malaysia, which is partly owned by the government. Greater competition exists in the more liberalized and rapidly expanding mobile telephone market. Cellular phone subscribers increased from 2.9 million in 1999 to 5.1 million in 2000. Meanwhile, more Malaysians are also subscribing to internet services.

## **FOREIGN TRADE**

Malaysia’s major exports are made up of manufactured goods, minerals, and agricultural commodities. Manufactured goods, the bulk of the exports, include electronics; electrical machinery and appliances; chemicals and chemical products; textiles, clothing and footwear; manufactures of metal; and optical and scientific equipment. The minerals exported are crude oil and liquefied natural gas while the main agricultural commodities are palm oil, sawn timber, and rubber.

The main imports are capital goods, intermediate goods, and consumption goods. The first group consists of industrial machinery and equipment, office equipment, telecommunication equipment, and transport equipment. The second group includes industrial supplies, fuels and lubricants, and parts and accessories of capital goods. The consumption goods consist of food and beverages and other durable, semi-durable, and non-durable items.

Trade has expanded greatly in recent years under Dr. Mahathir. On official visits abroad, he is accompanied by Malaysian businessmen looking for trade opportunities. As a result, Malaysia has expanded its trading links to various parts of the world, including Africa, Europe, Latin America, Central Asia, Russia, China, Myanmar, and Indochina. With its concept of Malaysia Incorporated, the nation is very business friendly. The United States is currently Malaysia's largest trading partner.

### **THE 1997 FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The Asian Financial Crisis began with the fall in the Thai baht in May 1997 and Malaysia soon felt the contagion -- the Malaysian dollar (*ringgit*) and stock market experienced downward movement from weak investor confidence and massive outflow of short-term capital. The ringgit fell from RM 2.5 to one US dollar in July 1997 to RM 4.88 against the US dollar by January 1998. The Malaysian economy contracted 7.5 percent in 1998.

To address imbalances in the economy, the Central Bank (Bank Negara) introduced a series of macroeconomic policy measures, such as the consolidation of commercial banks and financial companies to create institutions better able to survive adverse conditions. The government also instituted several fiscal measures to contain the current account deficit, for example, an immediate 2 percent reduction in government spending and the deferment of mega-projects. In addition, currency controls were instituted in September 1998 as follows: -- the ringgit was fixed at US\$1 = RM 3.80; ringgit circulating outside Malaysia had to be repatriated within one month or it would lose its value; and foreign portfolio investment had to remain in the country for at least one year. Although widely criticized in 1998, these currency controls seem to have worked for Malaysia, and some former critics of the controls are now revising earlier views. In any case, Malaysia relaxed some of the currency controls as early as February 1999 when it allowed the repatriation of principal foreign investments in Malaysian securities.

### **THE MALAYSIAN ECONOMY SINCE 1997**

Economic recovery was slow until mid-1999 when positive growth was recorded once more, driven by the manufacturing sector. By the end of 1999, the economy had grown by 5.4 percent, and all sectors were showing positive growth. By 2000, Malaysia's growth rate had risen to 8.3 percent, and both public and private sector investments reflected the return of investor confidence.

The country's growth rate was adversely affected again with the 2001 global downturn for electrical and electronic goods, which make up 60 percent of Malaysia's total exports. Currently, according to mid-2002 figures by the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA), Malaysia's growth rate is between

3.5 percent to 5 percent, while the per capita income is US\$3,392 and the net international reserves stand at US\$30.8 billion, which is equivalent to 5.1 months of retained imports. The GDP is US\$55.3 billion, with a breakdown as follows: services -- US\$30.8 billion; manufacturing -- US\$17.4 billion; agriculture -- US\$4.8 billion; mining and quarrying -- US\$3.8 billion; and construction -- US\$1.9 billion.

Unemployment continues to be low, at roughly 3 percent, and the ringgit is still pegged to the US dollar at the rate of US\$1 = RM3.80. The banking system is made up of 25 commercial banks, including Islamic banks; 12 finance companies; and 10 merchant banks. The Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE), established in 1973, is now ranked as one of the largest bourses in Asia. Since 1989, the KLSE has had a fully electronic trading system called SCORE, which enables script-less trade settlement. Both the banking system and the KLSE have undergone reforms since the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. In 2001, Malaysia announced its Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3), aimed at continuing the goals of the NEP and the NDP and fostering an information technology-savvy society.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- What have been the major aims of the two Malayan Plans and the eight Malaysia Plans?
- When and why was the New Economic Policy (NEP) implemented in Malaysia? What is the significance of the NEP in Malaysian history?
- What are some similarities and differences between the NEP and the New Development Policy (NDP)?
- What are some important features of Dr. Mahathir's 20/20 Vision Plan for Malaysia?

Why do you think some nations and organizations have followed Malaysia's example in adopting a 20/20 vision plan?

- Why has agriculture's role in the Malaysian economy been diminishing in importance?
- Why has the role of industry in Malaysia's economy been gaining in importance?
- What have been some strides in Malaysia's transportation and telecommunications systems in recent years?
- What are Malaysia's main exports and imports? What conclusions can be drawn about Malaysia's economy from its exports and imports?
- How did Malaysia deal with the Asian Financial Crisis? How has the Malaysian economy fared since 1997?

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# **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

## **THE 1957 CONSTITUTION FOR MALAYA**

The actual drafting of the Malayan Constitution was entrusted to a Constitutional Commission appointed by the British monarch and the Malay rulers. The composition and terms of reference of the Commission

were agreed upon in discussions held in 1956 between the British authorities, the Malay rulers, and the Alliance leaders. The Commission, known as the Reid Commission after its Chairman, Lord Reid, was made up of two members from the United Kingdom and one member each from Australia, India, and Pakistan. The Commission was instructed “to make recommendations for a federal form of Constitution for the whole country as a single, self-governing unit with the Commonwealth based on Parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature”. The Constitution had to make provision for: (1) the establishment of a strong central government with some state autonomy; (2) the safeguarding of the position and prestige of the Rulers; (3) the provision for a constitutional Head of State; (4) the creation of a common nationality; and (5) the safeguarding of the special position of the Malays and the legitimate interests of other communities.

The Commission met in Malaya from June to October 1956. It invited written memoranda from organizations and individuals, visited each state and Settlement, and met with British and Malay officials, members of the Legislature, State and Settlement Councils, representatives of organizations, and private persons. It held 181 meetings of the full Commission before going to Rome to prepare its report. The Commission’s draft Constitution was then reviewed and revised by a Working Committee, comprising representatives from Britain, the rulers, and the Alliance Party. Both sides agreed on many provisions, such as that for a constitutional monarch to be elected for a five-year term from among the nine Malay rulers on the basis of seniority. They also agreed on a bicameral legislature, made up of an elected House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*) and a Senate (*Dewan Negara*), with two members from each of the eleven states and sixteen members appointed by the government.

Controversy arose, however, over the issues of citizenship, language, religion, and Malay rights, and compromises had to be made. On citizenship, the compromise agreed upon allowed for strict citizenship laws that favored the Malays. On language, it was agreed that Malay would be the official national language and that English would serve as an official language for at least ten years. On religion, Islam was to be the official religion, but the freedom to worship and proselytize, except among Malays, was also guaranteed. On Malay rights, these special privileges were to be retained, but the rights of non-Malays were not to be hindered by prejudicial privileges or government intervention. The Malay rights include priority in the civil service, scholarships, educational facilities and training, land, permits for trade or business, and entry to university. The Reid Commission proposed a 15-year time limit for these special rights, after which they were to be reviewed, but the Working Committee rejected the idea of a time limit.

Although the revisions by the Working Committee evoked protests from some Chinese and Indian groups, the Federal Legislative Council ratified the draft Constitution on August 15, 1957, just in time for the transfer of power on August 31, 1957, the country’s Independence Day.

## **THE 1963 CONSTITUTION FOR THE FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA**

On September 16, 1963, the Federation of Malaysia was established when Malaya federated with Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak to form a larger political entity. Whereas the Federation of Malaya had been made up of 11 member states, the new Federation of Malaysia had 14 members. Accordingly, the 1957 Constitution was amended in 1963 to become the new Federal Constitution of Malaysia. The

Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

Besides including Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak as member states, the new Constitution incorporated the substantial compromises that had been made with their entry. Singapore, for example, was allowed to keep most of its revenue and its autonomy in education and labor affairs in return for accepting under-representation in the House of Representatives. Moreover, although its citizens were Malaysian citizens, they could not participate as full citizens in Peninsular Malaysia without fulfilling strict naturalization requirements. In the case of Sabah and Sarawak, unlike other states in the new federation, they were given control over immigration, including that from the Malay Peninsular. Both states also received special funds for their economic development and the right to use English as a medium of instruction, even though Malay was the national language. Furthermore, their indigenous peoples were entitled to special rights like the Malays.

### **THE 1965 CONSTITUTION AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF SINGAPORE**

Singapore withdrew from the Federation of Malaysia on August 9, 1965, after its then premier, Lee Kuan Yew, had proposed a “Malaysian Malaysia”. Since this withdrawal meant that the membership in the Federation had changed from 14 to 13 states, the Federal Constitution of Malaysia was amended in 1965 to reflect this change.

### **THE 1971 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AFTER THE 1969 RACIAL RIOTS**

After the May 13, 1969 racial riots, the Malaysian Government under Tun Abdul Razak decided that for security reasons there should be prohibitions against public discussion of sensitive issues. These sensitive issues include Malay rights, the monarchy, and the national language. Hence, when parliamentary government was established on February 20, 1971, after nearly two years of emergency rule, the Constitution was amended to prevent public discussion of sensitive issues. With this amendment, it has become seditious for anyone, even in Parliament, to touch on these issues.

Another amendment, aimed at addressing ethnic and social inequalities, gave the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the power to reserve academic places for Malays in institutions of higher learning in courses where their number was disproportionately low.

### **THE MALAYSIAN MONARCH**

Unlike other constitutional monarchs around the world, the Malaysian king, or *Yang di-Pertuan Agong*, is elected by a Conference of Rulers for a term of five years. This Conference of Rulers is made up of Malaysia’s nine Sultans and its four state governors, but only the Sultans attend when electing a King. The Sultans also elect another ruler as Deputy King to stand in for the King in case of illness or other absences. When the King’s term expires or he dies in office, another election is held to choose his successor, since the Deputy does not automatically ascend to the throne. At the end of a King’s reign, he returns to his home state and resumes his previous position as ruler there.



As monarch, the Malaysian King acts on the advice of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. He also appoints the Prime Minister, the other ministers and deputy ministers, the state governors, the ambassadors, and the judges. In addition, he serves as the Head of the religion of Islam in Penang, Malacca, Sabah, Sarawak, and the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan. In the other states, the Sultan or the hereditary ruler is the Head of the religion of Islam. As Head of Islam in Penang and Malacca, the King has the power to grant pardons in both these states for offenses under Muslim law. As the Supreme Commander of the Malaysian Armed Forces, he can also grant pardons for all offenses tried by court-martial or committed in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan. Moreover, he is responsible for safeguarding the special rights of the Malays and indigenous groups and the legitimate interests of the other communities.

## **THE UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANIZATION (UMNO)**

UMNO was formed in May 1946 in opposition to the Malayan Union Plan by the British. Its first president was Datuk Onn bin Jaafar, who in March 1946 helped convene an All-Malaya Congress in Kuala Lumpur which was attended by 200 delegates from 41 Malay associations. The meeting passed a resolution to form a new organization to galvanize nationwide Malay opposition to the Malayan Union. UMNO was the result, and its members included aristocrats, civil servants, Islamic leaders and radicals.

When Dato Onn resigned from UMNO in 1951, its new leader was Tunku Abdul Rahman, a Cambridge-educated lawyer. UMNO forged a political alliance with the MCA in 1952 and with the MIC in 1954. UMNO was the main party in the Alliance coalition and is presently the dominant party in the National Front, or *Barisan Nasional*. Dr. Mahathir has served as president of UMNO since becoming premier in 1981.

## **THE MALAYSIAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (MCA)**

MCA began as the Malayan Chinese Association and was formed in February 1949 by Dato Tan Cheng Lock to serve as an anti-Communist Party for Malayan-domiciled Chinese. The British encouraged its founding as the Chinese had no prior political organization to represent their interests. Because its early members were wealthy, Western-educated Chinese, the MCA was considered an elite grouping. Its constitution called for the promotion and maintenance of inter-racial harmony in the country.

The MCA teamed up with UMNO in 1952 to contest the municipal elections in Kuala Lumpur. Together, they defeated the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) in those elections, winning all but two seats. The success of this alliance led them to form the Alliance Party in August 1953.

Tan Cheng Lock served as president of the MCA until 1961 when he was succeeded by his son, Tan Siew Sin, the then Finance Minister, who served as president until 1974. When the Federation of Malaysia was established in 1963, the MCA became the Malaysian Chinese Association. At present, Dr. Ling Liong

Sik, the Minister of Transport, holds the post of MCA president.

### **THE MALAYSIAN INDIAN CONGRESS (MIC)**

The Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) was formed in 1945. Its leaders, like those of UMNO and the MCA, were mainly English-educated and of the middle or upper class.

The MIC joined the Alliance Party in late 1954, in preparation for elections the following year. In the general elections of 1955, the Alliance won a sweeping victory, gaining 51 out of the 52 seats in the Federal Legislature. In 1963, with the formation of Malaysia, the MIC became the Malaysian Indian Congress. The present President of the MIC is S. Samy Velu, the Minister of Works.

### **THE INDEPENDENCE OF MALAYA PARTY (IMP)**

The IMP was formed in 1951 by Dato Onn Jafaar upon his resignation from UMNO, after failing to get support from UMNO members to open the organization to non-Malay members. The IMP was thus a non-communal party to achieve racial harmony. With the IMP, Dato Onn hoped to achieve independence within seven years. It was defeated, however, by the Alliance Party in the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections of 1952 when the IMP gained only two out of the twelve seats. The IMP had a short existence, as Dato Onn went on to found a more pro-Malay party, Party Negara, in 1954. The IMP represents the country's first formal attempt at establishing a multi-racial party.

### **THE ALLIANCE PARTY**

The Alliance Party was formed in the early 1950s when UMNO, the MCA, and the MIC joined forces to contest the elections. At first, UMNO and the MCA joined forces as the Alliance to win the municipal elections of Kuala Lumpur in 1952. In October 1954, the MIC also joined the Alliance. By then, the coalition had become known as the Alliance Party, and together they won the 1955 federal elections.

They then formed the new government upon independence in 1957. After independence, the Alliance Party won the 1959, 1964, and 1969 general elections under Tunku Abdul Rahman's leadership. The Alliance Party represented a multi-racial coalition party of three communal parties, with UMNO in the dominant position.

### **THE NATIONAL FRONT**

The National Front, or *Barisan Nasional*, was the new name in 1974 for the expanded Alliance Party. The Tunku's successor, Tun Abdul Razak, called for a new name for the coalition as it had been enlarged to include many of the opposition political parties. When Malaysia held its fourth general elections on August 24, 1974, the National Front won with a landslide victory, capturing 135 out of 154 seats in Parliament. Since then, the National Front has gone on to win the 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1995, and 1999 general elections, the last five under the leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

In the 1999 general elections, the National Front comprised the following 14 political parties: UMNO; MCA; MIC; Gerakan (Malaysian People's Movement Party); PPP (People's Progressive Party); LDP (Liberal Democratic Party); AKAR (People's Justice Party); SUPP (Sarawak United People's Party); SNAP (Sarawak National Party); PBRs (Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah); PDS (Sabah Democratic Party); SAPP (Sabah Progressive Party); PBB (Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu Sarawak); and PBDS (Sarawak Dyak Party). UMNO continues to be the dominant party within the National Front.

## **MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES IN SABAH AND SARAWAK**

In Sabah, the main political parties include the following: PBRs, or *Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah*; PBS, or *Parti Bersatu Sabah*; PDS, or *Parti Demokratik Sabah*; SAPP, or *Parti Maju Sabah*; and LPD, or *Parti Demokratik Sabah*.

In Sarawak, the main parties are AKAR, or *Parti Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat*; SNAP, or *Parti Kebangsaan Sarawak*; PBDS, or *Parti Bangsa Dayak Sarawak*; SUPP, or Sarawak United People's Party; STAR, or State Reform Party Sarawak; and PBB, or *Parti Pesaka Bumiputra Bersatu Sarawak*.

## **OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES**

In 1999, the main opposition parties holding parliamentary seats were the following: PAS (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party); DAP (Democratic Action Party); PBS (*Parti Bersatu Sabah*); STAR (State Reform Party Sarawak); BEBAS (Independent Party); and PRM (Malaysian People's Party). Since then, however, the main opposition parties in Sabah and Sarawak have joined the National Front. In Peninsular Malaysia in 2002, the main opposition party is PAS.

## **PARLIAMENT**

Malaysia's Parliament comprises the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* and the two Houses, the Senate (*Dewan Negara*) and the House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*).

The Senate has 69 members, of which 43 are appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and 26 are elected by the legislative assemblies of the 13 states of Malaysia, with each state having two Senators. Appointed senators are those who have rendered "distinguished public service or have achieved distinction in the professions, commerce, industry, agriculture, cultural activities, or social services or are representatives of racial minorities or are capable of representing the interests of aborigines". They include two senators from the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and one from the Federal Territory of Labuan. A Senator's term is for three years, with a maximum of two terms being allowed. To qualify as a senator, one must be a citizen resident in the country and not less than 30 years old.

The House of Representatives has 193 members, all elected to office. Of this number, 145 are from Peninsular Malaysia, including 10 from the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and 1 from the Federal

Territory of Labuan; 27 from Sarawak; and 20 from Sabah. Each member serves for a maximum of five years. To qualify for election, one must be a citizen resident in the country and not less than 21 years old. The House of Representatives serves as the legislative branch of the government.

## **JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

Judicial power in Malaysia is vested in the Federal Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court Malaya, the High Court Sabah and Sarawak, and the subordinate courts as provided by federal law.

In Peninsular Malaysia, the subordinate courts include the sessions courts, the magistrate courts, the *Penghulu* (village headmen) courts, and the juvenile courts. The Islamic courts come under state jurisdiction, and appeals from them are submitted to the Sultan of the state concerned, as he is the ultimate authority in Islamic affairs.

In Sabah and Sarawak, there is a separate system of native courts under state jurisdiction. These courts settle cases dealing with native law and custom, including Islamic law and custom, involving only natives.

The head of the judiciary is the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. The Federal Court has jurisdiction to determine the validity of any law made by Parliament or by a state legislature. It can also settle disputes between states or between the Federation and any states. Moreover, the Federal Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from the High Courts.

## **GENERAL ELECTIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has held 10 general elections: in 1959; 1964; 1969; 1974; 1978; 1982; 1986; 1990; 1995; and 1999.

The first three elections were won by the Alliance Party and the remainder by its successor, the National Front. Although the next election is not due until 2004, it could be held as early as 2003 because of Dr. Mahathir's plans to retire in October 2003.

## **THE ANWAR IBRAHIM CRISIS SINCE 1998**

Anwar Ibrahim rose to fame in Malaysia in 1974 when, as a student activist at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, he was jailed for 22 months under the Internal Security Act for anti-government demonstrations supporting the plight of poor farmers in Baling, Kedah. As the founder and President of the Islamic Malaysian Youth Movement (ABIM) in 1971, he attracted the attention of Dr. Mahathir, then Minister of Education. In 1982, when Anwar became the leader of UMNO Youth, Dr. Mahathir, then premier, co-opted him into the government, in part to prevent his collaboration with PAS. Anwar then rose rapidly, becoming Minister of Culture, Youth, and Sports in 1983, Minister of Agriculture in 1984, Minister of Finance in 1991, and Deputy Prime Minister in 1993. In April 1998, Mahathir also made him

Acting Prime Minister when he went abroad for a vacation.

So what made them clash? There are several reasons. According to press reports, they differed on fiscal policy after the Asian financial crisis occurred in mid-1997. There is some truth to this as Anwar favored policies, such as fiscal restraint, suggested by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, while Dr. Mahathir was wary of these international financial institutions and favored priming the pump to jumpstart the sluggish economy. Mahathir also believed in currency controls, and he implemented them, such as preventing the outflow of capital from Malaysia and pegging the Malaysian dollar to the US dollar.

Another reason for the rift was Dr. Mahathir's suspicions that Anwar was plotting to unseat him. For example, at a Congress of the ruling UMNO in June 1998, Anwar's supporters hit at Mahathir by criticizing cronyism and corruption but Mahathir retaliated by showing a list of all who had benefited from government contracts, including Anwar's relatives. That year also saw the publication of a book citing Anwar's misdeeds and arguing that he should not be premier. Dr. Mahathir then moved against some Anwar supporters in the press and in the Central Bank, and there were sudden resignations. By this time, they had become rivals. Other reasons include the generation gap between them (Mahathir was then 73 while Anwar was 51), and the differences in their personalities. According to Anwar in an article for the New York Times in April 1999, Dr. Mahathir had become envious of his popularity abroad. Anwar claimed that a 19-gun salute accorded to him in Washington D.C. had led to his being called a CIA mole and a US agent. According to Mahathir, however, he removed Anwar because he was unfit for office. Meanwhile, their supporters added fuel to the fire.

Dr. Mahathir then undercut Anwar's powers in June 1998 when he appointed former Finance Minister Daim Zainuddin as Special Economic Advisor in charge of economic policy. When Anwar was asked to resign but refused, Mahathir dismissed him from the cabinet, charged him with treason and sexual crimes, and expelled him from UMNO. Anwar reacted by leading anti-government demonstrations in the capital, resulting in Mahathir accusing him of trying to launch Indonesian-style protests to topple him. After a demonstration of around 30,000 to 40,000 people, the government arrested Anwar on September 20, 1998 and placed him under police custody.

While in police custody, he received serious injuries – a black eye and bruises on his neck and hands. When he appeared in court with his injuries, this led to an outcry, in Malaysia and abroad. His supporters demanded an inquiry into the injuries. The police then set up their own inquiry but when their report did not reveal who were responsible this led to further outcry, forcing Dr. Mahathir to appoint an Independent Commission of Inquiry chaired by a former Attorney General. This Commission revealed that the Police Chief had inflicted the injuries. The Police Chief was forced to resign and later faced trial and punishment.

Anwar was charged in court with 5 counts each of sodomy and corruption, with each charge carrying the maximum penalty of 14 years in jail and a M\$20,000 fine. The sexual charges included whipping as punishment. He pleaded not guilty to all charges and claimed he was the victim of a political conspiracy. His first trial began in November 1998 and lasted five months. It examined 4 corruption charges accusing

him of misusing his power in 1997 by interfering with a police investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. In January 1999, the prosecution rewrote the 4 corruption charges, eliminating the need for government lawyers to prove the allegations about Anwar's sex crimes. Judge Augustine Paul then ruled that all evidence relating to sex was irrelevant and that testimony about a political conspiracy was also irrelevant. On April 14, 1999, the judge announced his verdict -- he found Anwar guilty of corruption as charged and sentenced him to 6 years imprisonment.

This verdict was more harsh than expected and led to larger than usual anti-government demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur. The demonstrators, mainly Malay youth, called on Dr. Mahathir to resign. To deal with the demonstrators, the police used tear gas and water cannons while the government threatened students with expulsion from university, and workers with the loss of their jobs. The remainder of 1999 and the following year saw a spate of arrests and charges against many associated with Anwar.

Meanwhile, Anwar's supporters rallied around his wife, Dr. Wan Azizah, an eye surgeon. They formed a new political party, the National Justice Party, calling for reform and justice, with Dr. Wan Azizah as President and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, a social activist, as Deputy President. In the November 1999 general elections, this party joined with the DAP and PAS to form the *Barisan Alternatif* (BA), or Alternative Front, to challenge the National Front, but it was an abortive attempt. However, although the National Front won, it lost significant support from the Malays, around half of whom voted for the opposition. It gained 148 seats compared to 42 for the BA. Of the 42 opposition seats, PAS got 27, DAP 10, and Keadilan 5. PAS consolidated its hold in Kelantan and also gained control of Trengganu. The National Front won in large part because of the Chinese vote.

Anwar then faced a second trial, this time on sodomy charges which carry 20 years jail time and whipping. On August 8, 2000, he was found guilty of "unnatural sex acts" and sentenced to 9 years in prison. The whipping was set aside because of his age. With the earlier 6-year sentence, he will spend 15 years in prison. He is also barred from seeking office for five years from his release. When Anwar appealed against his 1999 conviction, the appeal was postponed indefinitely. In December 2000, Anwar's appeal against the High Court's rejection of his M\$100 million defamation suit against the premier was also dismissed. That month, the High Court also upheld a two-month jail term and a fine of M\$2000 against the Police Chief who had assaulted Anwar. During these developments, Anwar faced health challenges -- he was hospitalized for spinal cord trouble and continues to be in poor health. Support for him has lessened while support for Dr. Mahathir has grown.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

- During the drafting of the Malayan Constitution in 1957, what were some contentious issues that required compromises from the drafters of the Constitution?
- Why did the 1957 Constitution have to be amended in 1963 when the Federation of Malaysia was established?

- What is the significance of the 1969 racial riots in Malaysia? What, in your opinion, causes racial riots? How can they be prevented?
- What is unique about the position of the Malaysian monarch? What are some of the King's duties?
- Why was the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) formed in 1946?
- When and why did the MCA (Malayan Chinese Association) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) team up with UMNO in elections?
- What are some interesting facts about the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP)?
- Why did the Alliance Party become the National Front in 1974?
- How many elections has Malaysia held since independence in 1957? What are some reasons that account for the success of the Alliance Party and its successor, the National Front, in the general elections?
- What led to the Anwar Ibrahim crisis of 1998? What were some repercussions of that crisis?

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# NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY

## NATIONAL SECURITY

The Malaysian Government has identified communal tension as a national security concern, because of the country's delicate racial balance. The 1969 racial riots alerted the government to the potential for ethnic violence and led to remedial actions, such as poverty eradication and the restructuring of society. Since then, the few small incidents of racial violence have been quickly put down. These include the March 1998 fighting between Malays and Indians in Penang over a Muslim mosque and a Hindu shrine and the March 2001 Malay-Indian clashes in Kampong Medan, near Kuala Lumpur, over a Malay wedding celebration and an Indian funeral. In the latter case, economic and social reasons were as much to blame as ethnic tensions.

Another threat is religious extremism. In 1986, the police fought with Islamic religious extremists in Memali, Kedah, while in July 2000 the government had to deal with an arms heist in the state of Perak by another extremist Islamic group. From 2000 to 2001, the government also faced trouble from Islamic extremists in the Philippines -- these Abu Sayyaf rebels kidnapped tourists from the Malaysian island of Sipadan, off Sabah, and held them as hostages at Jolo in the Philippines until ransom was paid. Because of the September 11, 2001 bombing incidents in the United States, Malaysia now views Islamic extremism as a terrorist threat. Malaysia considers Islamic terrorism as a very serious security threat, since there appears to be some ties between the terrorists linked with the Al Qaeda network and certain local Islamic extremists. Two of the September 11 hijackers were spotted in Malaysia before the terrorist attacks in America.

Among Malaysian measures to handle security threats is the Internal Security Act (ISA), which provides for the detention of individuals and groups for an indefinite period without the process of law. This act was used by the Malaysian Government against the Memali villagers in 1985 and against Anwar Ibrahim in 1974 and 1998. Other security laws include the Essential (Security Cases) Regulations (ESCAR), enacted in 1975, which deal with arrest and pretrial procedures for those detained for undefined offenses decided only by the public prosecutor

The Malaysian Government also considers drug abuse and trafficking as national security problems and devotes considerable resources to combating them. Yet another security threat is the Spratly Islands dispute -- Malaysia claims a few islands in this grouping. Malaysia raised its claims in 1980 after establishing a 200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which showed several Spratly islands within its EEZ.



For Malaysia, former security threats have included its long fight from 1948 to 1960 against communist insurgency and its handling of the Vietnamese refugee problem from 1975 to 1996. Since 1979, Malaysia has been building up and modernizing its defense forces and capabilities. The Five-Power Defense Arrangement that Malaysia made with Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore in 1971 is still in force. Malaysia is presently cooperating very closely with its ASEAN partners and with the United States to deal with the Islamic terrorist problem. In late 2002, terrorism is Malaysia's most urgent security threat.

## **PARTNERS IN THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)**

In 1967, Malaysia became a founding member of ASEAN, along with Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. Since then, ASEAN has doubled in size to ten members, as Brunei joined in 1984, Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Burma (Myanmar) in 1997, and Cambodia in 1999.

Of Malaysia's ASEAN partners, Indonesia is one of the closest as their historical ties go way back to the time of the Srivijaya and Majapahit maritime empires when Indonesia ruled the Malaysian area. There are also ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural ties as their people are of the Malay stock and mainly Muslim, share common words and terms, and have similar cultural traits. Moreover, in dealing with British colonialism, Malay nationalists looked to how Indonesian dealt with the Dutch. The Malay nationalist movement was thus influenced by developments in Indonesia.

For the most part, the Indonesia-Malaysia relationship is cordial. At times, however, tensions have arisen, as when President Sukarno launched his "Confrontation" policy against Malaysia from 1963-66, claiming that the Federation was a British imperialist plot. Under President Suharto, however, full diplomatic relations were re-established, paving the way for ASEAN's formation. Since then, other tensions have been caused by the following problems: piracy at sea; smuggling activities, especially of timber, along the Sabah-Kalimantan border; the haze problem caused by forest fires in Indonesia; President Habibie's support for Anwar Ibrahim in 1998; and their claims to the islands of Sipidan and Ligitan, which are presently occupied by Malaysia. These islands are located off the coast of Sabah and near Indonesia's province of Semporna in East Kalimantan. Bilateral discussions on the islands began in 1991, and both sides agreed in 1996 to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The Philippines, like Indonesia and Malaysia, forms part of the Malay world in Southeast Asia, sharing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural ties. With the Southern Filipinos or Moros, Malaysia also shares strong religious ties as the Moros were converted to Islam before Spanish influence in the Philippines. In 1961, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand formed the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) for economic cooperation, while in 1963 the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia formed MAPHILINDO for Malay brotherhood. Both plans for regional cooperation soon became derailed in 1963, due to Indonesia's Confrontation policy and the Philippine claim to Sabah. According to the Philippines, Sabah could not become part of Malaysia because it still belonged to the Sultan of Sulu, who had leased, not ceded, Sabah to the British North Borneo Company in 1881. When British and Malayan authorities disputed this claim, the Philippines broke off diplomatic relations. Under President Ferdinand Marcos, however, relations were restored in 1966. The Sabah claim, however, has not been resolved, only shelved.

Since then, relations with the Philippines have been cordial for the most part. Some tensions have arisen at times over Malaysia's support for the Moros -- in 1969 the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) was founded in Malaysia. During the administration of President Joseph Estrada, there were also some tensions over his support for Anwar. Under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, on the other hand, there has been increased cooperation over Malaysia's help in brokering talks between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic National Liberation Front (MINLF) and over their joint fight against terrorism. Nonetheless, Philippine concern rose in mid-2002 over Malaysia's deportation of Filipino illegal immigrants in the country. In earlier years, there was also concern over the treatment of Filipino maids working in Malaysia.

As for Singapore, its relationship with Malaysia is extremely close as well as sensitive. They are like Siamese twins in that they share a common history and were one country until they separated in 1965. They also share a common legacy as part of British Malaya. Singapore began as a part of Malaya and was a small Malay fishing village rife with piracy when the British founded it in 1819. Under British rule, it was soon transformed into "a Chinatown in a Malay lake". After independence in 1959, Singapore was keen to join the Federation of Malaysia and did so in 1963, after arrangements had been made to include the British North Borneo territories to balance the racial mix in the population. When Singapore withdrew from Malaysia in 1965, it kept trade and defense ties with Malaysia. These areas show cooperation in the relationship as does their agreement over water, whereby Singapore buys untreated water from Malaysia and then sells some back after it has been treated in Singapore-owned plants in Johore. However, in recent years, the agreement over water has also become a point of discord. Since Malaysia is mainly Malay and Singapore is mainly Chinese, their ethnic composition remains a built-in problem. Other tensions revolve around immigration and railway checkpoints, Singapore's land reclamation, disputed ownership of certain islands, and disparaging remarks on Malaysia by Singapore's former Premier, Lee Kuan Yew. For a time, tensions also existed over the so-called "Clob" issue, regarding Singapore-owned shares frozen by Malaysia since 1998. This issue was resolved in 2000.

Thailand, Malaysia's neighbor to the north, is both admired and feared. For example, it is admired for its past military prowess, its strong kings, and its ability to escape Western colonialism, but feared for its rule over the Northern Malay states during earlier periods of Malaya's history, its exaction of tribute from the Malay states, and its ruthlessness in war. Thailand's collaboration with the Japan during WWII also evoked both admiration and fear. Fear was dominant when Japan handed to Thailand the four Northern Malay States as reward for Thailand's wartime collaboration. Relations with Thailand improved after the war when Thailand returned the Northern Malay States to Malaya. This return was carried out at British urging after the Allied Powers defeated Japan. Bilateral relations became stronger after Malaya's independence. In 1960, when the Emergency ended in Malaya, there was security cooperation at their borders to deal with communist terrorists from Malaya who had sought refuge at the Thai border. They then became partners in ASA in 1961 and partners in ASEAN in 1967. From time to time, friction has occurred over some Malay support for Thai-Muslim separatist groups in Southern Thailand, over the demarcation of their common borders, and over overlapping claims on the continental shelf area near both countries. On the whole, however, the bilateral relationship is very cordial.

Relations with Brunei are close because Brunei is also part of the Malay world and shares many common characteristics with Malaysia. Although it did not join the Federation of Malaysia, the bilateral relationship is mainly amicable. There is, however, a problem with Brunei's Limbang claim against Malaysia. Limbang was ruled by the Sultan of Brunei until 1890 when the then White Raja of Sarawak, Charles Brooke, seized the territory, prompted by his desire to increase Sarawak's size and by requests from the local chiefs of the Limbang district to end Brunei's harsh rule. Although the Sultan did not recognize this seizure of territory, Brooke went ahead and united Limbang with the Trusan valley to form the Fifth Division of Sarawak. The British Government then offered to pay compensation to the Sultan, but the offer was not taken up. As a result, the British Government regarded the seizure as a cession by default and formally recognized Limbang as part of Sarawak. Brunei still has not formally recognized Sarawak's rights over Limbang. There is also a bilateral dispute over Brunei's 1993 declaration of its EEZ. According to Malaysia, based on the equi-distance principle of international maritime delimitation, Brunei has a smaller maritime area claim. Brunei is now amenable to giving up Limbang if Malaysia is agreeable to recognition of Brunei's claimed maritime area. Malaysia has suggested a sharing formula that divides their sea corridor, but this is unacceptable to Brunei. The dispute over Limbang thus continues.

In the case of Burma (Myanmar), both countries share a common heritage as former British colonies. While there are similarities in their experiences, there are also differences. For example, the British brought in mainly Indian immigrant workers rather than Chinese workers. During British colonialism and after, Burma thus faced an Indian problem rather than a Chinese one. Also, nationalist fervor in Burma was inspired by Buddhism, not Islam. Few bilateral ties existed after Burma's independence in 1948 until the late 1980s. During this period, civilian rule in Burma was replaced by military rule in 1962, and the country followed a one-party, socialist, and isolationist path. Malaysia's ties with Burma only became closer in the early 1990s when the military leaders opened the country to trade. At first, there were irritations over Burma's mistreatment of Muslim citizens, many of whom fled to Malaysia and Indonesia for refuge, and over the slow pace of democratic reform, even after the 1990 election victory by Aung San Suu Kyi. Then Malaysia supported ASEAN's policy of "constructive engagement" with Burma to help bring about change in the country. By the mid-1990s, Malaysia was championing Burma's admission into ASEAN, despite opposition to Burma's entry by the EU. Since this took place in 1997, trade ties have increased as has Malaysia's standing in Burma. This is partly due to the successful intermediary role played by a Malaysian UN envoy, Razali Ismail, in holding talks between the military junta and Aung San Suu Kyi. These talks led to her release from house arrest in May 2002.

With regard to Vietnam, Malaysia supported non-communist South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It showed this support by handing over military equipment when the Emergency ended, by training South Vietnamese policemen in police administration, and by providing facilities for jungle warfare training. North Vietnam, on the other hand, was considered an enemy because it was a communist state. Yet, when the Vietnam War ended in 1975 and Vietnam was reunified, Malaysia along with ASEAN put out peace feelers, only to be rebuffed. As Vietnamese boat people began flooding the shores of Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations, relations soured further. Malaysia was called upon to provide temporary asylum for the boat people, and did so, thinking the problem would be of short duration. But the refugees kept coming year after year, becoming a security concern as the Malaysian Government feared a "residual

problem” that would upset the delicate racial balance in the country. With other ASEAN countries, Malaysia called for Vietnam to stop the flow of refugees at its source.

In December 1978, relations worsened when Vietnam invaded and occupied Cambodia and began the Third Indochina War. Throughout the duration of this war from 1979 to 1989, Malaysia joined ASEAN in its diplomatic offensive against Vietnam. This offensive followed a carrot-and-stick approach – if Vietnam agreed to withdraw its troops from Cambodia, to stop the flow of Vietnamese refugees, and to allow repatriation of its refugees, ASEAN would offer economic and technical aid plus entry into the regional organization. With the Vietnamese economy in dire straits and with Russian aid more difficult to obtain, the diplomatic offensive worked. Vietnam also needed new friends and trading partners, especially with its new “doi moi” policy for economic recovery and renovation in 1986. Vietnam withdrew its military troops from Cambodia in September 1989, agreed to the repatriation of refugees, and was admitted into ASEAN in 1995. For Malaysia, the saga of the Vietnamese boat people finally ended in 1996 when the last remaining refugees were repatriated. By then, Malaysia was already extending economic and technical aid to Vietnam, and trade ties had grown. Malaysia has become one of the top foreign investors in Vietnam. In 2002, in view of Malaysia’s labor shortage, it is now considering allowing Vietnamese workers into the country.

In the case of Laos, Malaysia’s relationship with it has also been distant until recent years, because Laos was so closely identified with communist North Vietnam as a result of colonial, family, and ideological ties and geographical proximity. Since the end of the Vietnam War, however, Laos has improved its ties with Thailand and the other ASEAN states, including Malaysia. Malaysia’s ties with Laos have become stronger since Laos became a member of ASEAN in 1997. Besides trade ties, Malaysia also extends economic and technical assistance to Laos.

Malaysia’s relationship with Cambodia is closer than that with either Vietnam or Laos. Trade ties between them have existed since ancient times, with some records indicating that the Malayan area was once part of the maritime empire of Funan. There are also the religious ties in that Cambodia has a Muslim minority population made up of Chams, who fled there when Vietnam conquered and absorbed Champa in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These Chams are of Malay stock and speak Malay. Because of the religious bond with the Chams, Malaysia became very concerned about them during the genocidal Pol Pot period from 1975 to 1978 when Chams were killed, tortured, or forced to eat pork. Malaysia’s concern led to its allowing Cham refugees to settle in Malaysia. Thus, while Malaysia did not offer permanent asylum to Vietnamese refugees, it quietly did so to Cambodian refugees of Cham descent. During the Third Indochina War, Malaysia was also concerned about Cambodia and joined ASEAN in its efforts to end Vietnam’s occupation of the country. When the war ended, Malaysians served in the UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. Since then, Malaysia has extended economic, technical, and medical aid to Cambodia and has become the top foreign investor in the country. In many ways, Malaysia acts like a mentor to Cambodia.

Malaysia’s contributions as an ASEAN member include the following: its concept of “Southeast Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality” (ZOPFAN) in 1971; its EAEC proposal in 1990; its chairing the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting of ASEAN in 1997; and its serving as the site for the proposed ASEAN

University. It is the leading ASEAN nation with regard to educational services. One of Malaysia's diplomats, Ajit Singh, also served as ASEAN's first elected Secretary-General, while another diplomat, Razali Ismail, now serves as the UN Special Representative to Myanmar. In addition, Malaysia chairs ASEAN's Mekong Basin Project and provides technical and economic aid to newer ASEAN members like the three Indochinese nations and Myanmar under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP).

## **EAST ASIA AND SOUTH ASIA**

With regard to China, historical records note that the rulers of the Malacca Sultanate paid homage to the Chinese emperor and that their countries enjoyed trade ties. During British colonialism, the ties centered on the Chinese immigrant labor that helped the British to exploit the county. In the 1930s, emigration from China was restricted because of Malay protests. By then, the Chinese civil war was raging, and both sides in that war drew support from the Chinese in Malaya. These remittances to China, for both the Kuomintang and the communists, continued after the war, but the British now took an anti-communist line as the Cold War had begun. When China fell to the communists in 1949, relations between Malaya and the People's Republic of China (PRC) declined further. Throughout Malaya's fight with communist insurgency from 1948 to 1960, relations between the two nations were difficult because of support that local Communists received from the PRC. Only with the premiership of Tun Abdul Razak did a change take place; he recognized the PRC in 1974, the first ASEAN state to do so. Since then, the trade relationship has grown. Presently, Malaysia enjoys strong trade ties with China, which is also supportive of the EAEC proposal. Moreover, China is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. While Malaysia looks upon China as an important trading partner, apprehension also exists over China's claims to the Spratly Islands.

In the case of Japan, the period of the Japanese Occupation during World War II saw an adversarial relationship between Britain and Japan. For the Malays, however, it was a nationalistic period as the Japanese treated them with deference and gave them important administrative positions while they treated the Chinese and the Indians more harshly. After independence, the relationship with Japan grew stronger after Dr. Mahathir implemented his "Look East Policy" in 1982 in admiration of the work ethic of the Japanese and South Koreans. He wanted to promote this work ethic in Malaysia, especially among the Malays, as his book *The Malay Dilemma* had complained that the lack of this ethic among Malays had hindered both their advancement and national development. With this policy, he hoped that the Japanese and South Koreans would be good role models as well as sources of business skills and technological transfers. He also admired the close cooperation between the Japanese government and large Japanese corporations in promoting trade through trading houses known as the *sogo shosha* concept.

His "Look East" policy led to Japanese and South Korean scholarships for Malaysian students, mainly Malay, for technical training; the introduction at university level of Japanese and Korean language courses; and the promotion of Japanese business techniques among Malay businessmen. Japanese and Korean business firms were also given special consideration in the awarding of contracts for major projects. For example, the Japanese won the contract to build the new UMNO Headquarters and Dayabumi complex in Kuala Lumpur, while the South Koreans won the contract for the bridge

connecting the island of Penang to the mainland. Later, the Mitsubishi Corporation in Japan was invited to engage in a joint project to produce the Proton Saga, Malaysia's national car project. The policy also led to more trade and investment links with both East Asian nations and allowed Malaysia more options regarding main trading partners. To some, the policy reflected anti-British and anti-Western bias by the government. The policy has been maintained over the years, although at times there have been complaints by Malaysia over inadequate technological transfers. There have also been some tensions with Japan over its weak response to Dr. Mahathir's EAEC proposal in that Japan has been hesitant in showing overt support because of security ties to the United States.

In the case of South Korea, Dr. Mahathir has admired the work ethic of its people and the Korean success in industrialization. When Malaysia's Industrial Master Plan was drawn, it was done with the objective of following the Korean pattern of industrial development. Under Mahathir's administration, many contracts have been awarded to Korean firms for construction projects, such as the Penang Bridge and many highway projects. With Malaysia's "Look East" policy, South Korea, like Japan, extended study and training programs to Malaysian students. Like Japan too, South Korea has been reluctant to show much support for the EAEC proposal. This reluctance, however, seems to have been overcome by the ASEAN + 3 meetings held recently between ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea.

In East Asia, Malaysia also has growing trade ties with the Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan. The ROC is one of the top investors in Malaysia. Moreover, many Malaysian Chinese have gone there to work. There are also some educational ties between the two nations.

With regard to South Asia, Malaysia has bilateral relations with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Of these nations, the strongest ties are with India and Pakistan, since most members of the Indian community in Malaysia can trace their backgrounds to both these nations. Many Malaysian students have also studied in schools and institutions of higher learning in India and Pakistan. Both nations continue to reserve quotas for Malaysian Government sponsored students in medicine and veterinary science courses in their universities. Besides government sponsored students from Malaysia, there are also privately sponsored students.

In recent years, relations in trade and commerce with the South Asian nations have grown, especially with the members of the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), i.e., Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. These SAARC members have liberalized their economies and have become important markets for Malaysia's trade in commodities. In particular, Malaysia views trade with Pakistan as being a gateway to the untapped markets in the Central Asian Republics. Several of the South Asian nations also supply workers for Malaysia's labor needs in the industrial and plantation sectors of the economy. This recruitment of labor has become an important area of joint cooperation with South Asia. At times, however, problems have also arisen with the foreign workers over work conditions and criminal activity. The bilateral ties with the South Asian nations include security cooperation. In this connection, Malaysia has Joint Commission Meetings at Ministerial level with India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. These meetings have helped to enhance relations in the economic fields.

## **AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

For the most part, relations with Australia and New Zealand have been cordial until recent years. Both nations have helped with the training of Malaysian students under the Colombo Plan and with defense arrangements for Malaysia under the Five-Power Defense Arrangement that includes Britain and Singapore. This help was given during Indonesia's Confrontation against Malaysia. Australia also stationed a battalion in Malaysia for the country's defense.

Tensions with Australia arose in 1981, however, when Dr. Mahathir did not attend a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Australia. More recently, in 1991, Mahathir considered, but did not implement, a "Buy Australia Last" policy after bilateral relations had soured over what many Malaysians believed were misrepresentations of the country in Australians films and television programs. For example, the Australian film, *Turtle Beach*, on Vietnamese refugees in Malaysia, showed the killing of Vietnamese boatpeople by Malay villagers, exaggerating the actual facts of the situation. Some skirmishes had taken place, but not to the extent portrayed by the film. A television series called *Embassy* also portrayed negatively an imaginary country that many suspected to be Malaysia.

In response, Malaysia's TV3 showed a television series, *The Ugly Face of Australia*, on the ill treatment of Australian aborigines and Asians. The government also cancelled some official visits to Malaysia by Australian dignitaries and suspended all non-essential Australian projects in Malaysia. The "Buy Australia Last" policy was averted when the Australian Government offered an apology, and both countries signed an agreement against involvement in news reports about the other side. In 1993, however, problems rose again over Dr. Mahathir's non-attendance at the APEC meeting in Seattle. This time, Malaysia reacted by banning temporarily Australian-made television shows and commercials.

## **MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA**

From early times, Malaysia has had close relations with Muslim nations in the Middle East. Malays recognize that the Middle East is the home of the Islamic religion and the home of the Sufis or missionaries who helped to spread the religion to Southeast Asia. The Middle East has also played, and continues to play, an important role in educating Muslim scholars from Malaysia. Many of these scholars were influenced by the teachings and reform movements in the Middle East. Malaysia places special importance on its relationship with Islamic countries and on its role in the Organization of Islamic conference (OIC). As a co-founder of the OIC, Malaysia aims at promoting the solidarity, progress, and well-being of the Islamic Ummah on the political, economic, social, and cultural levels.

On the political level, Malaysia remains deeply concerned about the situation in the Middle East and believes that a solution to the problem has to take into consideration the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, their right to an independent and sovereign state, and the return of occupied Arab land by Israel. On the economic level, Malaysia has emphasized the need for the Muslim countries to use the opportunities available to them in trade and commerce to strengthen their economic cooperation for their mutual benefit. Malaysia has followed this suggestion by making promotional trips to the countries to identify possible areas of cooperation in trade, investment, and tourism. On the social and cultural levels, Malaysia has called on the Muslim countries to deepen their

understanding of each other for more effective cooperation. It has also stressed that Muslims can only achieve better political and economic standing through achievements in economic development, science, and technology. Within the OIC, Malaysia is well regarded as a pragmatic, moderate, and progressive nation.

In the early 1990s when the OIC focused on the plight of the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Malaysia participated actively in two Extraordinary Sessions of the OIC Foreign Ministers held in Istanbul and Jeddah and made significant contributions towards diplomatic and humanitarian efforts to help the Bosnian Muslims. Malaysia strongly condemned Serbian atrocities and injustice against the Bosnian Muslims and, with other OIC countries, called on Western countries to stop the Serbian aggression. To promote unity among the Muslim countries, Dr. Mahathir and Malaysia hosted in June 2002 the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers, which focused on the problem of terrorism.

Malaysia's relations with Central Asia are more recent. These ties improved after the end of the Cold War with the decline in Russian influence. For example, in 1995 and 1996, business delegations from Mongolia visited Malaysia, while in 1997 Dr. Mahathir paid a formal visit to Mongolia. These visits led to joint-venture projects in construction and hydro-electricity and to other business dealings between the two countries. Under South-South cooperation, Malaysia also extends educational training to Mongolian officials. During the 1997 visit, Mahathir received an honorary doctorate of humanity from the National University of Mongolia at Ulaanbataar.

Dr. Mahathir also visited the Kyrgyz Republic in 1996 and agreed to help it prepare an economic report. He visited the country again in 1997 to present the completed report, a joint effort by Malaysia's Economic Planning Unit and Kyrgyz's Ministry of Finance. The report was translated into the Russian language to make it more accessible to all levels of the Kyrgyz Government. Both sides agreed to establish linkages in areas related to tourism, mining, and infrastructure development. The Malaysian premier also agreed to help train Kyrgyz officials in Malaysia. In November 2000, during the state visit of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic to Malaysia, both countries signed an agreement covering cooperation on tourism, taxation, and air transport.

## **WESTERN EUROPE**

Links with Western Europe are also growing and are mainly educational and trading ties. For example, some Malaysian students have been sent to Germany and France for further studies and training, while some students from Europe have also come to Malaysia for further studies. Malaysia has also tried to sell its national car, the Proton Saga, to the European nations. These ties with Western Europe have increased in recent years with the Asia-Europe Meetings (ASEM) between ASEAN and the EU. In March 1998, Malaysia and the EU held a Malaysian-European Union Joint Seminar on "Europe and the Islamic World" in Kuala Lumpur.

## **RUSSIA AND EASTERN EUROPE**



Malaysia sent a trade delegation to Moscow in 1966 to sell rubber to the Russians, and in 1968 it allowed the opening of a Soviet Embassy in Kuala Lumpur. In 1969, it also promoted diplomatic and trade relations with the Eastern European communist states. In 1975, however, Malaysia became more wary of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after the whole of Indochina became communist states following Saigon's fall. These fears increased when Russia invaded and occupied Afghanistan in 1979.

With the end of the Cold War, however, the relationship has become closer. Trade ties have increased, and Malaysia now buys military equipment from Russia, including airplanes. On the Chechnya issue, Malaysia regards Chechnya as part of the Russian Federation and has called on the Russian Government to stop the bombings and to find a negotiated political settlement to the problem. Malaysia has expressed concern over the plight of the Chechens and has agreed to contribute US\$100,000 for humanitarian relief through the UNHCR.

In the case of Bosnia, in the early 1990s Malaysia extended aid in several ways: through participation in UN peacekeeping activities; through the giving of temporary asylum to Bosnian refugees; and through monetary contributions for reconstruction efforts and building up its armed forces. With regard to Kosovo, Malaysia sent army and police personnel as UN peacekeepers and gave medical and financial aid through relief agencies. Malaysia also spoke out strongly against Serbian aggression towards Muslims. In 1998, Malaysia made gifts of Proton cars to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Malaysia has also strengthened trade and diplomatic ties with Albania, with Dr. Mahathir paying a state visit to the country in 1995.

## **AFRICA**

Until South Africa's apartheid policy was dismantled, Malaysia spoke out strongly against it at the UN and other public forums. When Nelson Mandela became the President of the Republic of South Africa, Malaysia invited him to a five-day state visit in March 1997. This visit boosted trade and investment ties between the two countries, and Malaysia soon became involved in a big housing project in South Africa. By the time Mandela visited Malaysia again in August 2000, the trading ties had grown further to their mutual benefit.

Since the 1950s and 1960s, Malaysia has also made contact with other African nations through their membership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Trade ties were on a limited scale with these countries until Dr. Mahathir expanded trade and other links in the 1990s. Other ties with African countries have been forged through UN peace-keeping activities. Beginning with a UN peace-keeping mission to the Congo in 1961, Malaysia went on to other peacekeeping operations in Angola, Chad, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, and Somalia. Trade agreements have also been signed with many African nations, including Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The Organization of African Unity chose Kuala Lumpur as the venue for its 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting in May 1998. That year, Mahathir made official visits to Namibia and Mozambique while his Foreign Minister represented Malaysia at NAM's summit meeting in South Africa. More African students are now studying at Malaysian universities, while several African nations receive help under Malaysia's technical aid program.

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

The relationship with Britain is a close and sensitive one. British colonialism transformed the country from a Malay land into a multi-racial nation with its attending ethnic and religious problems and its economic disparities. In the 1930s, when the census revealed that the total non-Malay population outnumbered that of the Malays, Malay protests led the British to place restrictions on the entry of Chinese and Indian workers into the country. While the British had attempted to protect Malay political rights with special rights for the Malays, they failed to control emigration and to fend for the Malays on the economic level. A pro-Malay policy thus emerged in the 1930s to make Malaya a Malay land, but it was abandoned in the Malayan Union Proposal after the war, because of the need for greater administrative efficiency and because Malay leaders had collaborated with the Japanese while the Chinese had fought against the Japanese. Hence the British tried to make the Sultan a ceremonial ruler and offered equal citizenship rights for all. Malay protests, however, led to the withdrawal of this plan and to the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement, which restored the Sultan's former role and instituted more restrictive citizenship provisions for non-Malays. On the other hand, there was much cooperation between the British and the multiracial population to fight communist insurgency during the Emergency from 1948 to 1960 and over scholarship and training offers by the British Government under the Colombo Plan and other agencies.

There was also much cooperation on plans for Malaya's independence, which was achieved in 1957 through negotiations. There was further amicable cooperation for the realization of the Federation of Malaysia Plan in 1963 and when Britain defended Malaysia during Indonesia's Confrontation from 1963 to 1966. Britain's efforts on Malaysia's behalf during Confrontation drained its resources and contributed to the decision to withdraw its forces east of Suez by the 1970s.

While the relations with Britain were cordial during the Tunku and the Razak administrations, there were some tensions over rising university fees and quotas on foreign students during the Hussein Onn period. During the Mahathir period, there have been several instances of friction. For example, in 1981, Dr. Mahathir rejected an invitation to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Australia and this was seen as a slight to Britain and Australia. The same year, there were also frictions over landing rights for the Malaysian Airlines Systems (MAS), over the ending of British preferential trade benefits for Malaysia, and over the high increase in student fees for foreign students, leading to Mahathir's announcement of a "Buy British Last" policy and the boycott of British goods. This boycott was formally ended in March 1983 after various concessions by the British Government, including the creation of a fund of M\$161 million to help Malaysian students studying in Britain and the transfer to the Malaysian Government of Carcosa, the residence of the British High Commissioner to Malaysia. Since then, relations have been cordial for the most part.

## **UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

The US-Malaysia relationship in earlier years was mainly economic in nature as America needed rubber and tin for its industrial growth and war efforts. After World War II, the relationship took on geo-political

dimensions because the United States viewed the country as needing protection from communism. America extended economic and technical aid to Britain and also sided with the new Federation during Indonesia's Confrontation policy from 1963-1966. During the Vietnam War, Malaysia showed its appreciation of the US war effort by handing over military equipment from the Emergency to the South Vietnamese Government and by providing training in jungle warfare and police administration to South Vietnamese personnel.

Meanwhile, with Britain's waning influence after independence in 1957, US social and cultural ties were forged with Malaysia through the Peace Corps volunteers posted throughout the nation and through educational exchanges under the Fulbright Program. With quotas and rising fees at British universities in the 1980s, Malaysia began sending more students to American universities. By the early 1990s, over 100,000 Malaysians had studied at US universities while several Malaysian colleges had begun twinning programs whereby Malaysian students can study locally for two years before transferring to a US college to complete the degree program.

At times, tensions did occur in the US-Malaysian relationship over America's tin and rubber disposal plans, due to their adverse effects on the price of Malaysia's two most important exports. By the mid-1970s, these tensions had abated, but trouble arose over Malaysia's oil palm exports. The US soybean lobby called for a duty on palm oil because of fear of competition and because of the then glut in US soybean production, but Malaysia protested the duty, viewing it as increased protectionism on the part of certain groups in America. In the mid-1970s, tensions also arose over the refugees from Vietnam; thousands of the boat people landed on Malaysian shores after Saigon's fall in 1975. The United States called on Malaysia to provide temporary asylum, and Malaysia obliged, thinking that the humanitarian assistance would be on a short-term basis. The problem, however, continued for two decades, ending only in 1996 when the last Vietnamese refugees were finally repatriated to Vietnam.

In the 1980s, other tensions in the US-Malaysia relationship revolved around US protectionist measures, such as countervailing duties on cotton textiles and apparel. There were also tensions over the General System of Preferences (GSP), until they were gradually phased out, and over Dr. Mahathir's proposal for an East Asian Economic Caucus, which the United States viewed as a trading bloc. With the outbreak of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, Mahathir's remarks about Jewish currency speculators, like George Soros, and his imposition of controversial capital controls caused further irritations in the bilateral relationship. On the other hand, Malaysia has been critical of the United States over its alleged negative views of Muslims and over US attacks on Iraq. More tensions resulted from the Anwar crisis, due to the Malaysian Government's treatment of Anwar, the arrests of his close associates, and the pro-Anwar statement by Al Gore during the 1998 APEC meeting in Kuala Lumpur. In addition, the United States has on occasion expressed concern over alleged human rights abuses in Malaysia, for example in connection with harsh laws, like the Internal Security Act.

In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the tensions in the relationship are overshadowed by close cooperation in combatting terrorism. Since the September 11 attacks, the United States has sought Malaysia's assistance in tracking down the Muslim terrorists responsible for the attacks, and President George W. Bush has invited Dr. Mahathir to the White House to discuss this and other collaboration

between the two countries. Besides cooperation over counter terrorism, there is much cooperation over narcotics control, educational exchanges, and defense matters. The United States provides Malaysia with limited military assistance in the form of training programs and military sales credits, while Malaysia extends docking and repair facilities to US ships and aircraft. Bilateral trade ties have also grown. The United States is now Malaysia's largest trading partner, accounting for US\$30 billion or about one-fifth of Malaysia's total trade in 2001. About 20 percent of Malaysia's exports go to the United States, while about 16 percent of Malaysia's imports come from the United States. Around three-quarters of Malaysia's total exports to the United States consist of electrical and electronic goods. Presently, Malaysia is America's 11<sup>th</sup> largest, two-way trading partner. The United States is also the leading investor in Malaysia, with half of its investments in oil, gas, and petroleum and the other half in manufacturing, mainly semi-conductors and electronics.

In the case of Canada, the bilateral relationship is close and cordial. They have regular consultations and cooperate in the areas of trade, education, investment, defense, and technical assistance. As a member of the Commonwealth, Canada extends scholarships and training programs to Malaysia, such as Colombo Plan awards to its students and professionals in a variety of fields. In 1992, both countries also signed a Memorandum of Understanding, which allows Malaysian graduates of accountancy to undertake their articleship in Canada. In addition, Malaysia receives assistance through the Canadian Investment Development Assistance (CIDA) Program for developing industrial and business linkages between their private sectors. Their bilateral trade ties have increased, and Canada is one of ASEAN's dialogue partners. Both countries cooperate in international and trade fora like APEC, and Canada is also a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum for security cooperation in the region.

## **LATIN AMERICA**

Malaysia's ties with Latin America have developed in recent years mainly under the Non-Aligned Movement and South-South cooperation in the Group of 15 to ensure that the interests of developing countries are not marginalized. In 1997, two Cuban delegations visited Malaysia and identified possible joint ventures in construction, tourism, mining, power generation, petroleum exploration and refining, food processing, and trading in consumer items. That year, Dr. Mahathir paid a state visit to Cuba and also received the Jose Marti Award, named after a Cuban nationalist, from President Fidel Castro. He came with a delegation of Malaysian businessmen and addressed prominent members of the Cuban and Malaysian business community.

After the visit to Cuba, Dr. Mahathir also visited Chile to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council Meeting (PECC) in Santiago. Since his first visit in 1991, trade ties with Chile had increased. Malaysian exports to Chile include the national car, natural rubber, radio broadcast receivers, and automatic date processing machines, while exports from Chile to Malaysia include copper, iron ore, fish meal, and fresh fruits. By 1997, seven agreements had been concluded with Chile on trade, investments, air links, and cooperation on economic, scientific, and technical levels. Official visits to Uruguay and Argentina were also made by Mahathir on that trip to Latin America, and several trade agreements were signed.

## Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration

- At present, what are Malaysia's major security concerns?
- Why is Malaysia's relationship with its ASEAN partners so close and complex?
- What are some interesting features about the Malaysia-Indonesia relationship?
- What are some benchmarks in the Malaysia-Vietnam and the Malaysia-Cambodia relationships?
- How has the Malaysia-Africa relationship evolved since 1957?
- What are some distinguishing features about Malaysia's relationship with Britain, its former colonial master?
- What is the nature of Malaysia's relationship with Australia and New Zealand?
- What are some areas of cooperation and tension between Malaysia and the United States?

## Resource Materials for Further Exploration.

Ahmad, Dato' Abdullah. Tengku Abdul Rahman and Malaysia's Foreign Policy, 1963-1970. Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing Sdn. Bhd. 1985.

Ariff, M.O. The Philippines' Claim to Sabah: Its Historical, Legal, and Political Implications. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970.

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Mezerik, A.G. Malaysia-Indonesia Conflict. New York: International Review Service, 1965.

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Padmanathan, Murugesu and David Lazarus (eds.). Winds of Change: The Mahathir Impact on Malaysia's Foreign Policy. Kuala Lumpur: Eastview Productions, 1984.

Saravanumuttu, J. The Dilemma of Independence: Two Decades of Malaysia's Foreign Policy, 1957-1977. Penang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1983.

Sodhy, Pamela. The US-Malaysian Nexus: Themes in Superpower-Small State Relations.

Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_ (ed.). The United States and Malaysia: The Socio-Cultural and Legal Experience. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Association for American Studies, 1988.

Sopiee, Mohamed Noordin. From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1974.

## USEFUL WEB SITES

### MALAYSIA SPECIFIC

- [www.geocities.com/Paris/Lights/7995](http://www.geocities.com/Paris/Lights/7995) (a photographic tribute to Malaysia's past created by Binder Kaur and entitled "Binder's Classic Malaya").
- [www.alang.ukm.my/kamal/](http://www.alang.ukm.my/kamal/) (provides links to local journals and archaeological associations in Malaysia and Southeast Asia and to recent archaeological research in the country. Maintained by Kamal Rahman of the National University of Malaysia).
- [www.kln.gov.my](http://www.kln.gov.my) (web site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, with information about Malaysian foreign policy).
- [www.tourism.gov.my](http://www.tourism.gov.my) (web site of the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Tourism with useful information on many aspects of tourism in the nation).
- [www.smpke.jpm.my](http://www.smpke.jpm.my) (web site of the Prime Minister's Department)
- [www.stpi.com.my](http://www.stpi.com.my) (web site of the *News Straits Times*, the main Malaysian daily newspaper in

English).

- [www.utusan.com.my](http://www.utusan.com.my) (web site of the *Utusan Malaysia*, a daily newspaper in Malay. For the English version of this newspaper, go to the main page and click on *Utusan Express*).
- [www.bernama.com](http://www.bernama.com). (web site of the Malaysian National News Agency with daily news of the nation).
- [www.thestar.com.my/](http://www.thestar.com.my/) (web site of the popular English newspaper with daily news on Malaysia).
- [www.malaysiakini.com/index.php3](http://www.malaysiakini.com/index.php3) (on-line Malaysian political daily with a subscription based site).
- [www.eBridgeMalaysia.com](http://www.eBridgeMalaysia.com) (on-line weekly roundup of Malaysian and Malaysian-North American news. This site is subscription based).

## SOUTHEAST ASIA

- [www.iseas.edu.sg/](http://www.iseas.edu.sg/) (web site of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore).
- [www.iseas.edu.sg/pub.html](http://www.iseas.edu.sg/pub.html) (Books and Journals Catalogue of ISEAS, Singapore).
- [www.aseansec.org](http://www.aseansec.org) (web site of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia).
- [www.library.wisc.edu/etext/seait/](http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/seait/) (multimedia database on Southeast Asia created at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, the University of Wisconsin General Library System, and the Division of Information Technology).
- [www.library.wisc.edu/guides/SEAsia/](http://www.library.wisc.edu/guides/SEAsia/) (Vast collection by the University of Wisconsin-Madison of links to the countries of Southeast Asia).

## ASIA

- [www.aasianist.org](http://www.aasianist.org) (web site of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) based in Ann Arbor, Michigan).
- [www.coombs.anu.edu.au/CoombsHome.html](http://www.coombs.anu.edu.au/CoombsHome.html) (contains Asian and Pacific sites and has links to universities, research institutes, and libraries around the world).
- [www.coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html](http://www.coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html) (the Asian-Studies - WWW Virtual Library at the Australian National University).

## GENERAL

- [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org). (Includes human rights issues in Malaysia).
- [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov). (includes background information on Malaysia).
- [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com). (includes news on Malaysia).
- [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org) (includes International Monetary Fund information on Malaysia).
- [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). (includes US State Department background information and policy on Malaysia).
- [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) (includes United Nations information on Malaysia).
- [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch) (includes information by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees on refugee issues involving Malaysia).>
- [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) (includes US Agency for International Development material on Malaysia).
- [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org) (includes World Bank related material on Malaysia)



# MOLDOVA

## A Self-Study Guide



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The Self-Study Guide devoted to the Republic of Moldova is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of relevant issues which define Moldova's specificity in the variegated context of the successor states of the former Soviet Union. This Guide offers a compact digest of Moldova's history, geography, traditions and culture, economics, government and politics, as well as the place of this small state in the international arena, including its relations to the U.S. and West on the one hand, and with post-totalitarian countries in its neighborhood, such as Russia and Romania, on the other hand. This Guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. The Republic of Moldova is far too complex and diverse a society to be fully covered using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the Guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic

material can be found on the Internet or in the National Foreign Affairs Training Center Library, the Main State Library, or major public libraries.

The first edition of the Self-Study Guide to the Republic of Moldova was prepared by Dr. Andrei Brezianu, Chair of the Moldova/Romania course in the School of Professional and Area Studies of the Foreign Service Institute and former Chief of the Voice of America's Romanian Language Service (1991-2001). Dr. Brezianu's most recent book is the "Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Moldova" (Scarecrow Press, 2000). The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and non-profit use only.

First edition

March 2002

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The Republic of Moldova Self-Study Guide includes maps, specific bibliographic suggestions, and custom-tailored options and choices for further reading.

## **PART I: THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PEOPLE**

### **1. The Land**

The Republic of Moldova is one of the smallest successor states of the former Soviet Union. Located between Romania and Ukraine, its territory covers an area of 33,700 square kilometers, between 47 00' north latitude and 29 00' east longitude. Roughly the size of Maryland, its surface --ranking thirty third in Europe-- overlaps with most of the northeastern lands of the historic Principality of Moldova (1359-1859). Stretching on a north-south axis, Moldova is a landlocked country whose lay of land is comprised between the banks of the Nistru River, a tributary to the Black Sea, and the Danube's easternmost affluent, the Prut which separates the country from its western neighbor, Romania. The country's capital is Chisinau (population: over 700,000 inhabitants).

## A Land With Several Names

From the 14th century to 1812, the Romanian proper noun **Moldova** applied to the principality of the same name, whose territory used to stretch from the Carpathian Mountains to the Nistru River, and down to the Black Sea. After 1812 --under the borrowed name of **Bessarabia**-- the eastern part of that principality was incorporated into the Russian Empire and became a province of Russia.

After that partition, the name Moldova continued to denote the western half of the principality, whose later union with the Principality of Wallachia laid the foundation of the unitary Romanian state (1859). The transnational designation **Moldavia** (adjective: Moldavian) was in use before the country's declaration of independence. Both are interchangeable.

While the re-born independent state of Moldova declared in Chisinau in 1991 bears the historic name of the Principality of Moldova, the Republic of Moldova occupies only the eastern half of that historic land: its western half --equally known as Moldova-- is a province of Romania.

## Land Features

The country's topography features a hilly plateau with decreasing elevations in the south. The relief is dominated by rolling hilly plains in the north, patches of forests in the center and ravines in the south, extending into a fertile plain that descends toward the country's ancient seaboard, lying between the estuary of the Nistru and Chilia, the northern arm of the Danube Delta, --currently the natural border separating Ukraine from Romania. Moldova's highest elevation, Mount Balanesti, 430 meters high is in the country's heartland, the Codri region.



Map of Moldova

**Hydrographic Network**

The river system of the Republic of Moldova is not very large. It includes several hundred rivers, some

permanent, some intermittent, out of which only seven have a length of more than 100 kilometers. The most important of them is the border-area river Nistru (Russian: Dnestr). 1,325 kilometers in length, it is the second largest river, after the Danube, in the western area of the Black Sea basin. The Nistru rises on the northeastern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains and drains an area of 47,739 kilometers before flowing into the Black Sea through a broad estuary known as Liman. Due to the typical canyon-like elevation of its west bank which overlooks the Podolyan plains lying eastward, the Nistru played the part of a natural frontier for most of Moldova's recorded history. It also served, for many centuries, as historic Moldova's political border to the east. After 1940, the Nistru ceased to mark a political boundary, becoming enfolded into the then newly created Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, whose successor state, the Republic of Moldova, now lies on both banks of the river for a total length of about 630 kilometers.

Moldova's other main rivers are the Prut --967 kilometers, the Raut --286 kilometers, the Cogalnic --243 kilometers, the Bac --155 kilometers, and the Botna -- 152 kilometers. Moldova has over 50 natural lakes with a total surface of about 50 square kilometers. The underground water reserve, mostly drinking water, is estimated at 200 million cubic meters.

### **Access to the Sea**

Historically, Moldova had access to the Black Sea across the whole length of its southern coast, chiefly through the port-city of Cetatea Alba (formerly Akkerman --in Russian; Bilhorod Dnistrovsky --in Ukrainian), and the smaller ports of Reni and Ismail, both on the Chilia arm of the maritime Danube. Moldova's current landlocked position is a consequence of Soviet-era territorial and administrative arrangements, by which the USSR awarded Soviet Ukraine the southern tip of the province of Bessarabia, turned into a Soviet republic by the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union which, on August 2, 1940, established the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR) on most of territory of the historic province of Bessarabia (East Moldova).

A border adjustment accord with Ukraine is expected to restore Moldova's riparian status on the maritime Danube, south of the village of Giurgiulesti, the southernmost point of the country, located some 200 meters away from the river, west of Reni. A future port and oil terminal at Giurgiulesti will be accessible to seagoing ships and tankers, and will be able to reconnect Moldova to seafaring lanes in the future.

### **Vegetation Zones**

Most of Moldova's territory is covered by a slightly raised hilly plain. In the north, the treeless Balti steppe rolls southward where it gradually gives way to the thick forests zone of the Codri (Romanian: "forests"), where hornbeam, oak, linden, maple, wild pear and wild cherry are the most common trees. The rocky banks of the Nistru and the Prut valley carry a natural vegetation made up of oaks, poplars and thickets of shrubs. The forests, which historically used to cover a huge part of the country, now cover about 6 percent of its territory, out of which some 60 percent is agricultural land, with corn and wheat as the dominant crops. Vegetation grows scarcer in the south and south-east, yet vineyards, orchards and sunflower plantations coexist with patches of southern steppe vegetation. The lower south-western region of the country, near the confluence of the Prut with the Danube, is interspersed with frequent saline marshes

### **Climate**

Moldova's has a temperate continental climate. The average annual temperature is +7/10 degrees Celsius. The warm season lasts about 257-315 days a year. Sunny days account for 45 to 50 percent of the year. Winters are relatively mild, with January temperatures averaging around -4 C. Annual rainfalls range from ca. 400 millimeters in the south, to ca. 600 millimeters in the north, with most precipitations occurring in the early Summer and the Fall.

## **Soils and Agriculture**

About 75 percent of the country is covered by the proverbially fertile and humus-rich black soil (also known as "Tchernoziom"), which supports a rich variety of crops. With practically no mountains and no significant mineral deposits, Moldova's topography has traditionally favored intensive agriculture. In the northern highlands clay-textured soils are found, while in the south red-earth soil is predominant.

Agriculture is deployed on an overall surface of ca. 2.5 million hectares of farming land. Its soil basis for production includes about 68 percent arable land, about 18 percent orchards and vineyards and about 14 percent meadows and pastures. Yearly agricultural production is over 2 million tons of grain (chiefly winter wheat and corn), over 800,000 tons of fruit and berries, 1 million tons of vegetables, over 2 million tons of sugar beets, some 200,000 tons of sunflower seeds and some 50,000 tons of tobacco. Moldova's most important agricultural asset is its grape producing capacity, with an annual yield average of ca. 900,000 tons of grapes, and a wine production that accounts for about 25 percent of the country's export earnings.

Despite the small size of its territory, Moldova ranks ninth in Europe in grape production and seventh in Europe in tobacco production.

## **Mineral and Natural Resources**

Moldova's territory lies on deep sedimentary rock with harder crystalline outcroppings in the north and center, where higher elevations are found. The geological infrastructure of the Moldovan plateau rests on granitic spurs, originating from the piedmont of the Carpathian Mountains. They reach longitudinally eastward across historical Moldova's stretch of land, down to the Nistru banks. Mineral resources are scarce. Major mineral deposits and resources consist of cement components and gypsum, limestone, sand and basic raw minerals for bricks and tiles. Sparse oil and brown coal deposits were recently discovered at considerable depths in the south, but their industrial importance is poor due to the high estimated costs of extraction.

## ***Questions and Issues:***

\* What impact did the Nistru River have on Moldova's history? Reflect on the fact that Russia first established its southern border on the Nistru River in 1792, when the Russo-Turkish Treaty of Jassy made Moldova for the first time a neighbor of the Russian Empire. Was that event an important strategic landmark in Russia's imperial ambitions to move south and gain access to the mouths of the Danube?

\* What is the likely impact of the utter lack of mineral and energy resources on the economic independence of the Republic of Moldova, vis-à-vis big owners of such essential resources, such as the Russian Federation?



### ***Suggested Reading:***

Dvoichenko Markov, Demetrius. The Impact of Russia in the Danubian Principalities, 1806-1812. *South European Monitor*, v.I, nos.3-4 (1994) pp.24-51

LeDonne, John. *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917: The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*. New York: Oxford U. Press, 1997.

## **2. The People**

### **Major Ethnic Groups**

The four major ethnic and linguistic groups in the Republic of Moldova reflect specific trends of historical stratification and acculturation, from the nation's earliest times down to the present. Romanian-speaking Moldovans form the ethnic core of the country (originally the eastern lands of the Principality of Moldova, annexed by czarist Russia in 1812, as Bessarabia). According to the first Russian census, conducted in July 1817, some 87 percent of the then newly acquired province's inhabitants (419,420 out of a total of 482,630) were described as local "Moldavians". The Russian minority amounted to only 1.5 percent of the total population, some 6.5 percent were registered as Ukrainians, and 4.2 percent as Jews. Before the end of the century the natives' number had dwindled to a mere 47.6 percent of the total population which, as a whole -- mainly through internal migration from other parts of the Russian Empire-- had reached a total of 1,936,012 inhabitants. The 1897 census (which distinguished Bessarabia's ethnic populations by native language rather than nationality) had over 900,000 people registered as speakers of "Romanian" (that was the term used), 19.6 percent as speakers of Ukrainian, 8.1 as speakers of Russian and 11.8 as speakers of Yiddish.

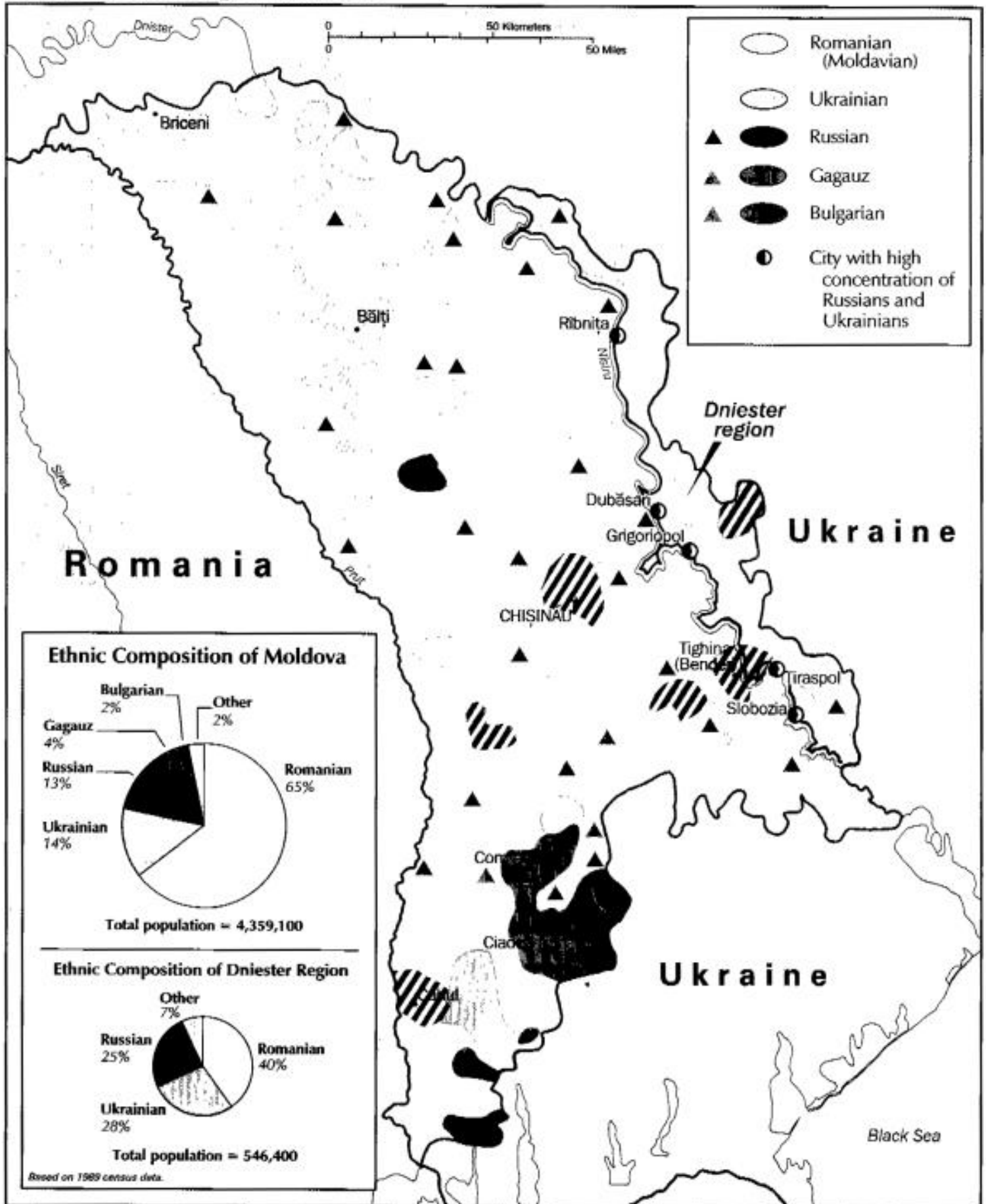
The Soviet nationality census conducted after the 1940 annexation of Bessarabia by the USSR indicated a balance of 65.5 percent Moldavians, versus 6 percent Russians and 16.4 Ukrainians.

Currently, Romanian-speaking Moldovans make up ca. 64.5 percent of the republic's population, Ukrainians being the second largest group, with 13.8 percent. Russian ethnics come in third, with 13.00 percent of the country's total population. Moldova's fourth ethnic group is the Gagauz (or Christian Turks) minority, a population which constitute about 3.5 percent of the country's population, followed by the Bulgarian minority, amounting to some 2 percent of the total.

The Gagauz and Bulgarian ethnic groups settled on the territory of what is today the Republic of Moldova at the invitation of Russia's czars during the 19th century. They display a clear-cut immigration pattern within a limited time-frame (from the beginning of the 19th century until the late 1870s).

The second significant group includes non-natives, i.e. foreign-born Russian and Ukrainian ethnics having settled in the country recently, under the policies of internal migration conducted by Moscow over the last decades of Soviet rule over the MSSR. Such non-natives of Moldova account for about 29 percent of the former Soviet republic's Ukrainian minority, and about 30 percent of its Russian minority. Most of them use Russian as their first language of communication and few speak the Republic of Moldova's official language

### Major Ethnic Groups in Moldova



A general break-down of Moldova's major ethnic and linguistic groups is as follows:

**Latin-roots People:** Romanian-speaking Moldovans: 64.5%

**Slavic-roots People:** Ukrainians:13.8%; Russians: 13%; Bulgarians: 2% (most of them having Russian as their first language of communication).

**Turkic-roots People:** Gagauz: 3.5% (speakers of a Turkic dialect, but using mostly Russian as their common language of communication).

### **Overall Ethnic Structure Today**

Total population: 4,489,657

Moldovans: ca. 2,795,000 (64.5%)

Ukrainians: ca. 600,000 (13.8%)

Russians: ca. 562,000 (13%)

Gagauz: ca. 153,000 (3.5%)

Bulgarians: ca. 88,000 (2%)

Jews and others: ca. 66,000 (2%)

(Source: *Belarus and Moldova Country Studies*, Library of Congress Federal Reserve Division, 1995)

### **National Identity:**

#### **The Moldovans**

Moldova's search for identity is to a large extent a reflection of the influences its population has been exposed to and forced to assimilate after its 1812 annexation by Russia, and, in a more special way, over the latter half of the 20th century, when the combined processes of intensive Russification and Sovietization left their imprint, most glaringly, in the area of linguistic communication.

At two essential junctures in Moldova's history --under czarist rule, and under Soviet domination-- the language issue came to play the role of one of the most powerful catalysts for both political change and national assertion. The thrust and weight of the language debate --combined with the Latin vs. Cyrillic alphabet issue-- proved of defining importance in the Moldovans' attempts to assert their own identity.

In parallel fashion, another significant factor in the Moldovan people's quest for identity has been influenced by the evolving composition of its once unitary ethnic fabric, gradually changed over time through policies of colonization, conducted in various installments under Russia's two successive rules: czarist after 1812, Soviet after 1940.

A specific trait has been Moldova's acculturation experience under these two dominations, both of which worked to transfigure the local people's inherited culture in an attempt to tone down its specifics and make it

look as close to Russia's as possible, and as distinct possible from its originary roots .

Moldova's ethnic identity uncertainties can tentatively be explained as a consequence of the fact that, right from the outset, both in its Russian and Soviet incarnations, the eastern half of historic Moldova came to be part of a huge core-empire not as a whole, rounded-out entity, but rather as a part of a pre-existing whole split into two, with twin-like identity elements left open-ended across the border in the old core-country, the Romanian province of Moldova and with Romania in general, with which it shares a common heritage of culture and folklore.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* To what extent do the Romanian-speaking people in the Republic of Moldova share the same ethnic identity with Moldovans living in Romania's historic province of Moldova? Try to account for the similarities and differences between the two.

\* Moldova's original identity features were forced to interact with the political, linguistic and cultural ascendancy of the the Russian Empire (1812-1917) and with the political, linguistic dominance of Soviet Russia (1940-1990). How did these two influences modify the ethno-cultural profile of the Moldovan people today?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Crampton, Richard. "Inventing Moldova". *TLS*, March 30, 2001, p. 28

Deletant, Dennis. "A Shuttlecock of History: Bessarabia". *Studies in Romanian History*.

Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedica, 1991

Sunley, Johnathan. "The Moldovan Syndrome". *World Policy Journal*, v. 11, no. 2 (Summer 1994) pp. 87-91

### **Identity:**

#### **The Russophone Ethnics**

With a total population which comprises over 35 percent, mostly Russophone, non-Moldovans (including an important group of non-natives) the Republic of Moldova has been faced with several challenges over the past recent years. They have impacted negatively on the process of building a distinct and cohesive national identity, after the demise of Soviet totalitarian rule over the country.

Under Moscow's governing power, non-Moldovan ethnics used to be perceived by most of the population as exponents of the Soviet authority, engaged in achieving an in-depth acculturation process of the Romanian-speaking population of Moldova. Thus, Russians and Ukrainians, especially the more recent settlers, tended to be perceived by the local population as allies and proponents of Moscow's totalitarian policies.

Through education and the imposition of Russian as the official language of the republic, such policies succeeded in creating a situation in which most of the Soviet republic's population had to become bi-lingual. The language spoken by the majority of the population (dubbed "Moldavian") had to be written in Russian Cyrillics, in a concerted campaign to artificially distinguish it from the Romanian language spoken in Romania, with which it is in fact identical. The non-Moldovan ruling elite of the Soviet era seldom cared to learn the language of the majority, which accounts for the fact that Ukrainian and Russian ethnics rarely became bi-lingual in Soviet Moldova.

After the country's achieved independence, the Russian-speaking group came to be looked upon by many as sympathizers or holdovers of Moscow's former power. Hence, the largely shared post-1991 perception that non-Moldovans were generally pro-Moscow and anti-Western, while the Moldovan majority was as a rule and by definition pro-Western, anti-communist and anti-Moscow. Such an attitude favored rifts and disruptions of the nation's fabric and fueled two-way nationalistic feelings, especially among intellectuals. A number of non-Moldovan groups were driven to the erroneous perception that Romanian-speaking Moldovans were bent on joining Romania, ready to surrender the newly-born republic's sovereignty, and reunite with the country's next-door neighbor and cultural kin, post-totalitarian Romania. A minority group of Romanophone intellectuals and academics contributed to entertain that perception.

The early litmus-test of that simmering conflict was the dramatic secession of the Nistru east-bank districts in 1990, and the unilateral declaration of a non-recognized "Moldavian Transnistrian Soviet Socialist Republic" in September of that year (currently the internationally non-recognized "Moldavian Nistrian Republic"), with its capital in Tiraspol. The "Moldavian Nistrian Republic" claims 4,163 square kilometers under its control, including the city of Tighina (Russian: Bendery) on the west bank of the Nistru River.

Located on an enclaved sliver of land on the river's east bank, the separatist entity has preserved the Soviet era symbols of power and the expressions of public worship to Lenin and Marx. It is leftist, pro-communist, pro-Russian, anti-reform and conservative. It seceded from Chisinau over independent Moldova's first laws regarding the return to the Latin alphabet, the establishing of the language of the majority ("Moldavian") rather than Russian as the official language of the country, and the change of the republic's Soviet-style flag to a new one, almost identical to the Romanian tricolor flag. A brief civil war, which resulted in a stalemate, broke out between the separatist region and Moldova's regular army in 1992. Although officially neutral, Russia's 14th Army (currently downgraded to the status of an "Operational Group") took part in the conflict, siding with the rebels.

The Russian army headquartered to this day on Moldovan soil, east of the Nistru, remains a sizable regional force and is the only Russian military presence on foreign territory outside the Russian Federation in Europe. In conjunction with the breakaway Tiraspol authorities, it controls over 40 thousand tons of weapons and ammunition depots of the former Red Army located on the Nistru east-bank. Tiraspol is a historic Russian military settlement. The regional authorities opposed Moldovan independence in 1991-92, and soon after gained control over a narrow strip of land, bounded by the Nistru River and the border with Ukraine, in which the bulk of Moldova's industry and electricity-generating capacity was concentrated.

### **The Russophone Critical Mass On The Nistru East-Bank**

The interplay between Moldovan ethnic identity and its core-components on the one hand, and some of its political-cultural underpinnings, on the other hand, are patent in the secession of the so-called “Moldavian Nistriian Republic” (“MNR”). The ethnic and linguistic distribution in the breakaway enclave contrasts with the population breakdown of the republic of Moldova as a whole: Romanian-speaking Moldovans in the “MNR” amount to some 240,000, whereas the total amount of the Russian-speaking (Ukrainian and Russian) population is estimated at about 325,000, which gives the Russophone population a clear majority. A reflection of this specific composition is shown in the general inclination toward a return to the old political and state structures. Tellingly, a non-binding referendum on joining the Russia-Belarus union held in the “MNR” in 1998, indicated that 66 percent of the voters there supported such a union.

### **Ethnic Distribution in the Nistru East-Bank Enclave**

Total population of the Nistru east-bank region: ca.740,000

Russophone: ca. 59%

Ukrainians ca. 170,000 (28%)

Russians ca. 154,000 (25%)

Moldovans ca. 240,000 (40%)

Bulgarian, Jews, Gagauz and others ca. 40,000 (7 %)

(Source, Charles King, *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture*. Hoover Institution Press: Stanford, 2000)

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* Is the trans-Nistriian conflict a reflection of ethnic divisions within the Republic of

Moldova, or is it a political and ideological motivated conflict?

\* Is Russia’s military presence in the Nistru east-bank enclave an indication of

Moscow’s intentions to control and influence independent Moldova’s policies?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Crowther, William. “Ethnicity and Participation in the Communist Party of Moldavia”. *Journal of Soviet Nationalities* I, no.1 (1990): 148-149

King, Charles. “Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism”. *Slavic Review*, v. 53, no.2 (1994), 345-368

Kolstoe, P. et al. “The Dnestr Conflict: Between Irredentism and Separatism”. *Europe-Asia Studies*, v. 45, no. 6 (1993)

Lynch, Dov. *Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: The Cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan*. New York:

St. Martin's Press, 2000

## Identity:

### The Gagauz Minority

Soviet Moldova's last census (1989) indicated a Gagauz (Christian Turkic population) of over 150,000 (ca. 3.5 percent of the republic's total population) concentrated in a patchwork of rural communities around the southern city of Comrat. In the context of the Soviet Union's breakdown, a separatist movement with strong pro-communist overtones developed within the Gagauz ethnic group, and in 1990 a short-lived "Gagauz Soviet Socialist Republic" was proclaimed in Comrat. Through negotiations with the Moldova's central authorities in Chisinau, a compromise was reached and the Gagauz ethnic group dropped its secessionist claims. In March 1995, the results of a local referendum secured the autonomy of the territory where Gagauz ethnics are scattered, and the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (Romanian: Unitatea Teritoriala Autonoma Gagauzia; Turkish: "Gagauz Yeri") was established within the unitary state of Moldova. By virtue of Gagauzia's special status, Moldovan Gagauz elect their own executive and legislative officials, and their governor, the *bashkan*, is by law a member of the Chisinau Parliament.

The autonomous territorial unit comprises three towns --Comrat (its administrative center), Ciadar-Lunga and Vulcanesti, twenty three villages, and three suburban townships. Gagauz Yeri encompasses an area that has been described as a piece of Swiss cheese, pockmarked by compact settlements whose population constitutes a multiethnic quilt which includes 5.5 percent Bulgarians, 5.1 percent Russians and about 4 percent Ukrainians, most of them living in rural communities, interspersed with Romanian-speaking Moldovan villages. In this complex patchwork, the ethnic Gagauz population forms the absolute majority in only two subterritorial units -- Comrat and Ciadar-Lunga. In the last Soviet-era census conducted in 1989, over 70 percent of Gagauz ethnics named Russian as their second language, after their Turkic mother-tongue. Until 1990 only 33 books had been published in Gagauz, most of the cultural life of the Gagauz minority being traditionally conveyed in Russian.

### *Questions and Issues:*

\* What are the main differences between Moldova's Gagauz minority and the country's Russian minority in terms of cultural status and political importance?

\* What is the explanation of the fact that the push for Gagauz separatism was solved by independent Moldova early on, while the Nistru east-bank secession continues to be unsolved?

### *Suggested Reading:*

Chinn, Jeff, and Robert Kaiser. *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States*. Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1996

King, Charles. "Gagauz Yeri and the Dilemmas of Self-Determination". In *Transition*, v. 1, no. 19 (1955) pp. 21-25

## Identity and Nationhood

The question of Moldova's identity as a nation raises the issue of its minorities and of their historic integration into a common societal fabric, within the confines of a what is now an independent state, set apart from its former core-powers --Russia and, more recently, the USSR. The stronger profile of Moldova's former dominant elites (Russian and Soviet) on the one hand; and the less powerful and less articulate profile of the Gagauz population, on the other hand, are part of an equation in which historic Moldova's smaller core-power, Romania, continues to play its own part with a polarizing role.

The term nation denotes any sovereign state with a political autonomy and settled territory, such as the Republic of Moldova. In a narrower definition, however, a nation can also be described as a community of people sharing a common language, inhabiting a fixed territory, having common customs and traditions and having become sufficiently conscious to recognize similar interests and a mutual need for a single sovereign leadership. Applied to the issue of the differences and similarities between Moldova and what is now its western core state and neighbor, Romania, the first part of the more specific definition carries connotations that may be applied, in twinlike fashion to Moldova as well as to Romania, since the native population in both countries shares common roots, the same language and literature, and similar legacies of folklore and traditional beliefs. However the second part of the definition fails to apply in similar fashion to other fundamental concepts, such as a mutual acknowledgment of common interests and the need for a single leadership. These terms are not conterminous, since present-day Moldova's interests currently include the interests of its strong Russophone minority on the one hand, and the interests of another compact group, the Gagauz ethnic patchwork, established today as an entity in its own right in the south of the country.

The Russophone population issue at large (and its flaring point in the Nistru east-bank separatist enclave) on the one hand; and the Gagauz autonomy issue, on the other hand, contribute to set Moldova and Romania apart --if not in terms of the broader sense of nationhood, certainly in terms of statehood and separate profiles as political bodies.

Despite these clear-cut distinctive features, a minority of Moldova's society --mostly historians, writers and other members of the intelligentsia-- sometimes advocate the view that "Moldovan" should simply be a semantic label applied to regional identity, not one connoting nationhood. The debate was particularly heated in the early 90s when it gave rise to a current of thought and social-cultural initiative known as "unionism" or "pro-Romanianism". In objective fashion, the place of Russian acculturation and of the Gagauz ingraft in historic and present-day Moldova, should be part of the debate and contribute to a well-founded understanding of the Moldovan identity and its specificity in the context of post-totalitarian eastern Europe.

### *Questions and Issues:*

\* What role did Russification play in creating the overall appearance that nationhood does not fully apply to describe present-day Moldovan identity?

\* How does the following statement apply to the peculiar situation of Moldova's identity as a country: "Countries tend to bandwagon with countries of similar culture and to balance against countries with which they lack cultural commonality. This is particularly true with respect to core states. Their power attracts those who are culturally similar and repels those who are culturally different [...] Core states may attempt to



incorporate and dominate some peoples of other civilizations who, in turn, attempt to resist or to escape such control” (S.Huntington, in *The Clash of Civilizations*, p.155)

\* Comment on the following statement: “We are ethnic Romanians by inheritance but Moldovans by citizenship”. (Moldova’s president Petru Lucinschi in a Reuters interview: February 1999).

### ***Suggested Reading:***

\* King, Charles. “Moldovan Identity and the Politics of Pan-Romanianism”. In *Slavic Review*, v. 53, no.2 (1994) pp.345-368

### **Acculturation and Specific Identity:**

#### **The Moldovan Context**

Historically, Moldova’s pristine cultural traditions came to interact with the powerful political, linguistic, and cultural ascendancy of the Russian Empire for over a century (1812-1918); the same process was aggressively resumed on all planes, political, linguistic, cultural and ideological, during almost half a century of Soviet totalitarian rule (1940-1941 and 1944-1990).

The peculiar type of acculturation that took place over those periods of time explains several distinctive traits and accentuated reactions that characterize modern Moldovan culture today, and its search for a clear cut identity. It is against the backdrop of these endeavors that one can better assess the underpinnings of the strong emphasis on the Latin origin of the language, or on the pre-Russian traditions of Moldova. Powerful symbols that epitomize this revival and the rebuttal of Russian acculturation include, among other things, the bronze monument titled “To Rome” featuring the Capitoline she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, a statue that dominates the entrance of the Chisinau Museum of History; the Roman eagle in Moldova’s national emblem; and the Latin language motto “Virtus Romana Rediviva” (Roman Virtue Reborn) on the great seal of the city of Chisinau.



***Great Seal of the City of Chisinau (founded 1436)***

Regardless of those reactions to the past, Russia's impact over Moldova's identity (in its two core state incarnations --czarist and Soviet) is a phenomenon hard to ignore. The cultural changes that occurred in the wake of the interaction between Moldova's traditional society, and Russia's manifold influences over 150 years of attempts to forcefully assimilate Moldova are visible in the social, linguistic and ethnic fabric of Moldovan society.

But although superior in political power and cultural ascendancy, Russia failed to fundamentally modify the bedrock of Moldovan identity, and in the case of Moldova, acculturation did not result in total cultural fusion or assimilation. In the words of a high-ranking Moldovan official: "It is obvious that in numerous positions, the history of our country coincides with the history of the Romanian state of today, but nevertheless Moldova is another country" (Presidential Briefing, July 24, 2001)

***Questions and Issues:***

\* What is the explanation of the fact that Russian influence resulted in a higher degree of acculturation in Moldova's urban population, while Moldova's rural areas remained the repository of the land's ancient traditions?

***Suggested Reading:***

Kenez, Peter. *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1985

King, Charles. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford, Ca.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000

Livezeanu, Irina. "Urbanization in a Low Key and Linguistic Change in Soviet Moldavia". In *Soviet Studies*, 33, no. 3 (1981, p.334)

### 3. Moldovan Culture

#### The Language

Moldovans speak Romanian (dubbed "Moldavian" by the land's former rulers, Russia and the Soviet Union). Romanian is the language of communication of the majority of the country's native population and the mother tongue of about 65 percent of its residents. Romanian spoken in Moldova is the same as the language spoken across a wider geographical area by some 24 million people in Romania, limited parts of Yugoslavia (Voivodina) and Hungary (the Gyula area), differentiated here and there by hues of regional accent. According to Romance Linguistics the differences in accent encountered in the Romanian language fall into three broad categories --Moldovan, Transylvanian and Muntenian. Such differences make Romanian sound regionally different, the same as English spoken in Massachusetts usually differs from English with a southern drawl, characteristic to Georgia.

For political reasons, Russia in the 19th century, and the Soviet Union in the 20th century called the language spoken in Moldova "Moldavian". The roots of the issue date back to the beginnings of the process of Russification, in the wake of the annexation of the eastern half of historic Moldova by Russia in 1812. Linguistic authority and common sense converge in the conclusion that, the same as there is no such thing as a "Mexican" or "Nicaraguan" language separate from Spanish, there is no such thing as a "Moldavian" language. The semantic fallacy of Moldavian as a separate language is exemplified by the impossibility of ever compiling a Moldavian-Romanian dictionary. Historically, Romanian is the lineal descendant of Vulgar Latin, the non-literary speech of the legionaries and colonists drawn from various parts of the Roman Empire who began the Romanization of Dacia in the second century of the Christian era. It developed from the "lingua franca" spoken around the lower Danube and the Carpathian Mountains from about the middle of the first millenium of the present era.

The frequency of the Latin element in modern Romanian amounts to about 85 percent. The non-Latin lexical elements fall into two categories: the numerically small but semantically important Thraco-Dacian substratum (connected, but not identical with elements found in Albanian); and the manifold loan-words borrowed over the course of centuries of political, cultural and ethnic contacts with other peoples. An important element in the second category is Slavonic, Church Slavonic having been for centuries the vehicle of communication in Eastern Orthodox cultures, including Romania's. However, Romanian started to absorb such borrowings long before the populations of former Romanized Dacia embraced Slavonic-rite Orthodoxy, in the ninth century. That specific process began much earlier, at the time of the Slavic populations' invasion of former Dacia and East-Central Europe, in the seventh and eight centuries. As a result of the Romanized local population's cohabitation with these early Slavic settlers, many Slav borrowings entered the basic word-stock, giving the Romanian language its specific flavor in the family of the Romance languages. Other borrowings in the Romanian language are of Hungarian, Greek and Turkish origin.

## **The Alphabet**

At the time of Moldova's struggle for independence from the Soviet Union, with the notable exception of the language issue, no other issue was more ardently debated than that of the alphabet. In the 1989 popular demonstrations for freedom, the recurring slogan chanted was: "Limba! Alfabet!" ("Language! Alphabet!"). Such unusual demands reflected the deep-seated frustration of a people whom the Soviet regime had forced to use Russian as the official language and Russian Cyrillics in the writing of their mother-tongue, a Romance language, just like Spanish or Italian, naturally suited for the Roman script.

In Moldova's cultural and historical context, the alphabet issue illustrates the unique situation of a neo-Latin language forcefully written for decades in an alien script --Russian-Cyrillic-- in order to make it look different from Romanian in writing, and thus blur and hinder communication between speakers of Romanian on the two sides of the Moldo-Romanian border.

On August 31 1989, while still part of the Soviet Union, Moldova abrogated Russian as the official language of the republic and established by law the return to the Roman script. In the Nistru east-bank districts of the Republic of Moldova, the 1989 Language and Alphabet Law was rejected and became instrumental in the secessionist movement of the trans-Nistrian enclave, where Russian-Cyrillic continues to be the only officially recognized alphabet.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Bruchis, Michael. *One Step Back, Two Steps Forward --On the Language Policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the National Republics: Moldavian, a Look Back, a Survey and Perspective, 1924-1980.* Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1982

Dyer, Donald. *The Romanian Dialect of Moldova: A Study in Language and Politics.* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999

Fouse, Gary. *The Languages of the Former Soviet Republics. Their History and Development.* Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2000

King, Charles. "The Politics of Language in the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic". In *Studies in Moldovan*, D. Dyer ed. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1996

### **Religion:**

#### **Moldovan Orthodoxy**

The Orthodox Church is Moldova's main religious denomination, to which over 86 percent of the population belongs. Moldova is thus one of the most homogeneous Orthodox countries in the world. Despite its many successive incarnations, the Orthodox Church represents the oldest and most enduring institutions in the country whose first metropolitan, the bishop of Cetatea Alba, was appointed in 1401. Under the Russian czarist

rule (1812-1917) ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Bessarabia was devolved to Russia's Orthodox Synod in St. Petersburg, under whose direction the local church's ties to its originary metropolitan see of Jassy, across the Prut, were severed. Russian was imposed as the language of liturgy and the Orthodox Church became one of the czarist empire's most powerful instruments in pursuing the policies of Russification.

Under the Soviet rule (1940-1990) the Orthodox Church was the target of communist atheistic propaganda. In spite of decades of atheistic propaganda and destruction of churches under the Soviet rule present-day Moldova boasts some 853 Orthodox churches and over a dozen monasteries, most of them reopened after the country's declaration of independence.

Currently Moldova's Orthodox Church is canonically split between the metropolitanate of Moldova, subject to the jurisdiction of Russia's patriarchy, and the metropolitanate of Bessarabia, which put itself under the jurisdiction of Romania's patriarchy.

### **Moldova's Other Religious Denominations**

Other religious denominations include Baptists, with some 184 communities, Adventists, with over 60 communities, Pentecostals, with about 34 communities, Roman-Catholics, with some 11 communities and Jews, with 6 communities.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* Does the division between Moldova's Church subject to the jurisdiction of Russia's patriarchate, and the one subject to the jurisdiction of Romania's patriarchate indicate a deeper polarization inside Moldova's post-Soviet society?

\* Do you think Moldova's Orthodox revival will contribute to moving the public spirit and the political class closer to the West, or closer to forces that would like Moldova to re-enter Russia's sphere of influence in Moscow's near abroad?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Bourdeaux, Michael, ed. *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995

Dima, Nicholas. "Politics and Religion in Moldova: A Case Study". In *Mankind Quarterly*, v. 34, no. 3 (Spring 1994) pp.175-194

### **Moldovan Traditional Culture and High Culture**

Traditional Moldovan culture is rooted in Romanian culture from which it can hardly be separated. Beginning with the folk myths relating to Roman Emperor Trajan, the conqueror of Dacia, and the memory of his "vallum" ("Valul lui Traian" whose vestiges cut across Moldova from the Prut River to the banks of the Nistru; or the widely popular legend of Dochia, thought to evoke the name of Dacia; and continuing with such folklore

creations as the “Miorita” epic, the oral and written traditions relating to the historic cradle of Moldova in Transylvania’s Maramures, and the long history of leading figures, heroes and warriors; and ending with commonly shared literary masterpieces, all of Moldova’s major cultural landmarks are not Moldova’s exclusively. They straddle the Prut and are shared with Moldova’s next of kin, west of the border, where the same language is spoken and the same heritage has been preserved. In the realm of high culture, that is corroborated by Moldova’s pantheon of classic writers, identical to Romania’s. It includes literary and cultural personalities such as historian and polymath Demetrius Cantemir (1673-1723), cultural trailblazer and writer Gheorghe Asachi (1788-1869), humorist Ion Creanga (1837-1889), historian, playwright and novelist B.P. Hasdeu (1838-1907), cultural innovators Mihail Kogalniceanu (1917-1891) and Alecu Russo (1819-1859), playwright and poet Vasile Alecsandri (1818-1890), novelist and and historian C. Stere (1865-1936); and, last but not least, Moldova’s (and Romania’s) national poet Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889).

## **Holidays**

Traditional Moldovan culture is rooted in the peasant folklore and the Orthodox religious celebrations. Folklore calendar traditions include the New Year fertility ritual “Plugusorul” featuring the symbol of ploughing under the auspices of old “Badica Traian” (Graybeard Trajan), the early March “Days of Dochia”, a period of nine days when Winter sheds its last snows and gives way to Spring time, the Christian movable feast of Easter (Paste), with all-night church vigils and midnight mass, Saint Elijah (Sfantul Ilie) August 2 when people go on processions in the fields and pray for rain, and Christmas (Craciun) celebrated either on the western date December 25, or according to the Julian calendar on January 7.

Secular holidays include “Women’s Day”, March 8; “Labor Day” (or May Day, May 1); “Victory Day”, May 9; Moldova’s National holiday – “Independence Day”, August 27; and “National Language Day”, August 31, celebrating the 1989 passing into law the establishment of the official language replacing Russian and the return to the Latin alphabet.

## ***Questions and Issues:***

\* To what extent does the shared cultural heritage of Moldova’s and Romania’s traditions indicate a confluence and kinship, and to what extent, divergent historical paths between the two countries have created a cleavage?

\* Moldova shares with Romania both old folklore traditions and more recent higher culture achievements in literature and the arts. Which of the two posed higher barriers to Russia’s endeavors to assimilate Moldova, both under the czars and during the more recent decades of Soviet domination?

## ***Suggested Reading:***

Dyer, Donald ed. *Studies in Moldovan: The History, Culture, Language and Contemporary Politics of the People of Moldova*. Boulder, CO.: East European Monographs, 1996

King, Charles. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Studies in Nationalities. Stanford, CA.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000

Williams, Nicola. *Romania and Moldova: From Tarzan's Birthplace to Ovid's*

*Grave*. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Publications, 1998

### **The Moldovan Family**

Moldovan society has preserved to a very large extent the traditional pattern of extended families living together. Historically, that mode was disrupted brutally during the Stalin-era deportations when many families were separated on their way to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other parts of the former Soviet Union. Between 1956-1961 some 15,000 Moldovan families were allowed to return from their places of deportation back to their native places in Soviet Moldova.

In Moldova's traditional society extended families tended to live together, often comprising more than one generation. Today the pattern is still alive and contributes to alleviate the economic hardships of transition. Family bonds remain strong especially between grandparents ("bunel" and "bunela") and grandchildren, as well as between mothers and daughters.

In 2001 a "National Strategy Plan for the Protection of the Family" was approved by the government of Moldova. Its full implementation is expected to take five to ten years.

#### ***Suggested Reading:***

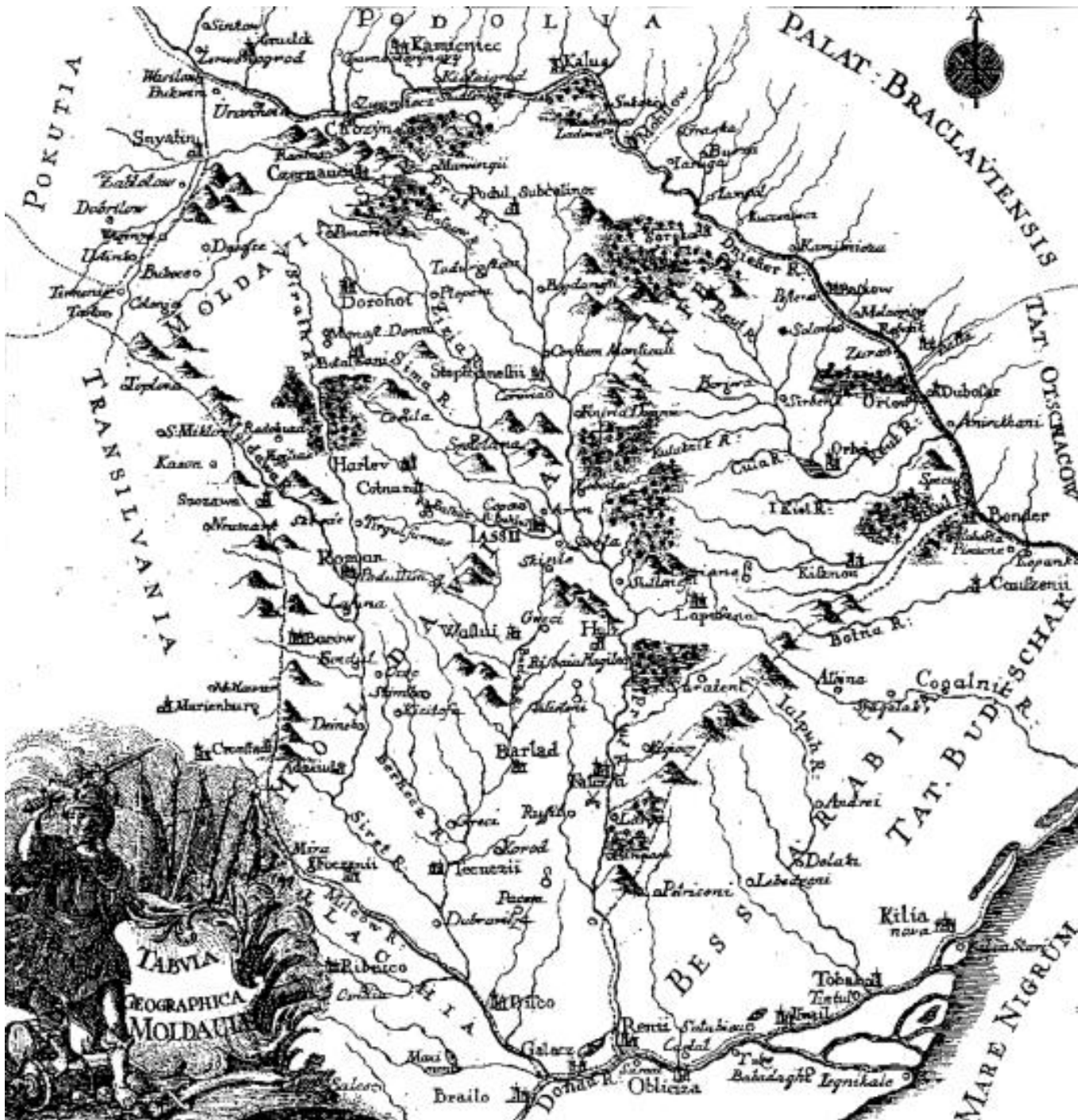
Hassard, Daniel. *From Russia to Romania: Three Generations of Women and Translocation --Two Studies in Human Adaptability*. Youngstown, OH: D.A. Hassard, 1994

## **Part II: HISTORY AND ITS LEGACIES**

### **1. Early History**

#### **Founding of Moldova**

According to ancient chronicles, Moldova was founded in approximately 1352 by Voivode Dragos, a Wallachian nobleman from Maramures who took possession of the province in the name of Hungary's king, to whom he was a vassal. Moldova's history of statehood begins in 1359, when another Wallachian nobleman from Maramures, Bogdan I proclaimed himself independent of the Hungarian Crown. But Moldova had borne its name and had been inhabited by its own local population before Dragos and his successors organized it as a principality. As far back as 1334, a Latin document already mentioned one of its cities as "**civitas Moldaviae**". Out of 755 villages mentioned in official documents before the year 1449, --607 (i.e. 80.3 percent) had had their boundaries established before Moldova became a principality under Bogdan I.



*Map of Moldova and Bessarabia before the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russian conquests and the Peace Treaty of Bucharest (1812)*

**What's in a Name:**

**Bessarabia**

Moldova's seaboard and the lowland areas north of the Danube Delta were initially under the authority of the Wallachian dynasty of the Basarabs, whose progenitor, Basarab I founded in 1330 the Principality of Wallachia, south of Transylvania. Moldova acquired the "Land of the Basarabs" from Wallachia in the 1400s, which accounts for the fact that only the southern tip of Moldova, as distinguished from the major part of its



landstretch, was traditionally known as Basarabia (Latinized form: Bessarabia), a name after 1812 extended to the entire area.

## 2. Moldova and the Ottoman Power

### A Maverick Struggle for Self-Rule

The Medieval Principality of Moldova maintained a fragile independence for some time, defending itself against the inroads of the Tatar tribes of the Golden Horde, Moldova's primal neighbors to the east; and later on, against the first Ottoman incursions from the Black Sea, the basin of which came under total Turkish control after the 1453 fall of Byzantium and the demise of the Eastern Roman Empire.

While the Ottoman Empire continued its aggressive expansion into the Balkans and eastern Europe during the 15th century, Moldova's most famous ruler, Stephen the Great (1457-1504), attempted to maintain the principality's independence. In spite of stubborn resistance and a number of small-scale victories against the Turkish invader, Moldova was eventually forced to capitulate. It surrendered the country's seashore, consented to pay an annual tribute and entered into a vassalage relation with Ottoman Turkey whose sultan became the overlord of the principality. In exchange for the tribute, Ottoman Turkey pledged not to interfere in the framework of church and state in the country. Due to that status, Moldova was never turned into a *pashalik* or Turkish province. It preserved self-rule in domestic affairs, continued to have its own reigning princes, approved and nominated by Ottoman Turkey, which almost continuously acted as Moldova's suzerain power until the mid-19th century.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Moldova intermittently tried to shake off Ottoman suzerainty by attempting to take advantage of Turkey's conflicts with the Habsburg and Russian Empires. But being located along the direct invasion route to Turkey's provinces south of the Danube --just the same as neighboring Wallachia-- Moldova soon became an area of warfare and military occupation for a long series of intermittent Russo-Turkish Wars.

### Russia's Rise to Power

With Russia progressively projecting rising power west and south-west, Moldova first came under Russian military occupation, briefly, in 1739 and, later on, together with Wallachia, during the 1768-1774 Russo-Turkish War, which ended with the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji. Russia's armies again occupied Moldova between 1787 and 1791, during a war that ended with the Treaty of Jassy, which brought the border of imperial Russia to the Nistru. In 1782, in the interlude between between those two wars, Russia's Empress Catherine the Great proposed to Austria's Emperor Joseph II what is called the "Greek Project", devised to establish a Russo-Austrian sphere of influence against the Ottoman Empire in East-Central Europe and the Balkans. The plan included the creation of two buffer states: a reconstituted Dacia encompassing the twin-Principality of Moldova and Wallachia to be ruled by an Orthodox sovereign acceptable to both Russia and Austria and a restored Greek Empire south of the Danube, to be ruled by Catherine's grandson, Konstantin.

The Greek Project did not materialize and, the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldova came again under Russian military occupation between 1806-1812, at the time of the first Russo-Turkish War of the 19th

century.

### 3. Czarist Russia and Moldova

#### The 1812 Annexation

The Peace of Bucharest which ended the 1806-1812 Russo-Turkish War and the third Russian occupation of the Danubian Principalities, resulted in the partition of Moldova, the eastern half of which was surrendered by Ottoman Turkey to Imperial Russia, into which it was incorporated as Bessarabia --from then on the name of the entire stretch of land between the Nistru and Prut Rivers.

The moment of the splitting of Moldova was a historic milestone, paving the way for a new course of social action, political change and over 100 years of unprecedented acculturation of its eastern half under the influence of Russia. Russian rule over the eastern half of historic Moldova was briefly interrupted over part of the annexed territory in the aftermath of the Crimean War (1853-1856), when the Congress of Paris returned three of Bessarabia's Danubian districts to the Principality of Moldova, still a vassal of Ottoman Turkey at that time. Southern Bessarabia was a component of Moldova when the principality merged with Wallachia to form -- under Moldova's Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1859-1866)-- the United Principalities, the core-state of modern Romania (1862). The status of southern Bessarabia changed again after the 1877-1878 Russo-Romanian-Turkish War, when the Treaty of Berlin, while recognizing Romania's independence, compelled it to cede to Russia the Danubian three districts, and thus restored Russia's full authority over the the lands between the Nistru and Prut Rivers and the czars' empire riparian status on the Danube.

#### *Questions and Issues:*

\* Why did Russia content itself with only half of the Principality of Moldova at the time of the 1812 Russo-Turkish Peace Treaty of Bucharest?

\* What was the international importance of Russia's advent to the mouths of the Danube? Assess the importance of that move in reverse --as mirrored in the later decision of the other European powers to remove Russia from the Danube border, in the aftermath of the Crimean War.

\* Did Ottoman Turkey have the legal right to surrender the eastern half of the Principality of Moldova to Russia? Take into account the fact that, from the standpoint of international law, Moldova was not a province or possession of the Ottoman Empire, but rather a self-governing Principality, subject to Ottoman Turkey's suzerainty.

#### *Suggested Reading:*

Jewsbury, George. *The Russian Annexation of Bessarabia, 1774-1828: A study of Imperial Expansion*. Boulder, CO.: East European Monographs, 1976

#### Russia's Imperial Rule: 1812-1917

Russia's czarist rule brought imperial absolutism to Moldova alongside the immigration of alien groups, encouraged by the czars to settle in their newly acquired province. Although a certain measure of economic progress and urbanization of the province's towns --including the future capital, Chisinau (renamed Kishinev)-- are recorded as a positive part of the Russian reorganization of Moldova, historians point out that the region continued to be one of the most backward areas of the Russian Empire, with a population that had one of the highest mortality rates in Europe, twice that of the Russian average. Russian governors treated Bessarabia like a colony, czarist censorship stifled public opinion, the native language of the majority of the population was banished from education and public life, ethnic tensions flared up, especially anti-semitic outbursts, that culminated in the notorious 1903 Easter massacre, which, among other things, gave the Russian word "pogrom" international circulation for the first time in history.

### ***Questions and issues:***

\* What are the basic dissimilarities between the status of Bessarabia (East Moldova) before and after 1812?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Focas, Spiridon. "Bessarabia in the Political Order of Southeast Europe in the 19th Century". In *Acta Historica* (Rome), v. 8 (1968), pp.119-144

Seton-Watson, Hugh. *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990 *The Tragic Plight of a Border Area: Bessarabia and Bukovina*. Maria Manoliu-Manea, ed. Los Angeles: Humboldt State University Press, 1983

### **The Shedding of Russia's Imperial Sway:**

#### **Moldova and the Bolshevik Revolution**

Russian absolutist administration of Bessarabia crumbled in the final stages of World War I, triggered by the Russian revolutions of February and October 1917. After the flight of the last Russian governor from Chisinau and the formation of a provisional government of Russia in Petrograd, a Moldovan National Committee was organized in the capital in April 1917. It called for autonomy, land reform, and the return to the Romanian language in education, judicial and public administration.

On November 15 1917, Bolshevik Russia promulgated "The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples" of the former Russian Empire, including "the right of total separation". On December 2 1917, Moldova's general Assembly ("Sfatul Tarii"), elected from all of the province's ethnic groups and social and economic strata, convened in Chisinau. Out of the 138 members of the newly elected body 70 percent were Moldovan and 30 percent represented the province's ethnic minorities, Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians, Jews etc. The Chisinau Assembly proclaimed the establishment of the Moldovan Democratic Republic, as a loose constituent of the Russian Federation.

In the first days of January 1918, as the Bolshevik revolution was gaining momentum across the board, communist para-military units from across the Nistru occupied Chisinau and dispersed the fledgling republic's

governing body. Soon after, with the help of four brigades sent in from neighboring Romania, the Moldovan military units (whose core-battalions –“Cohortele Moldovenesti”-- had been formed in Odessa and Chisinau between April-November 1917) mounted a counter-offensive and forced the Bolshevik units out, throwing them back, east of the Nistru.

With Bolshevik power out, and Ukraine threatening to annex the region, Sfatul Tarii reconvened in Chisinau on January 24 1918, broke all ties with Russia, increasingly plunged at that time into revolutionary anarchy, and declared the independence of the Moldovan Democratic Republic.

Later on, on March 27 1918, as the Bolshevik revolution was plunging Ukraine into increasing disorder and misrule, Sfatul Tarii proclaimed the conditional union of the Moldovan Democratic Republic with Romania “in accordance with historical right and ethnic right, and the principle that peoples should determine their own fate”. The vote was 86 in favor, 3 against and 36 abstentions.

Eight months later, on November 27 1918, Sfatul Tarii proclaimed Bessarabia’s unconditional union with Romania which, in the meantime, alongside its western allies, had emerged on the side of the victors in World War I.

The Bessarabia-Romania union was formally acknowledged by the Peace Treaty of Versailles (October 28, 1920), ratified by Great Britain in 1921, France in 1924, and Italy in 1927. Russia’s successor state -- established on December 30, 1922 as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)-- refused to adhere to the Treaty’s provisions, seeking instead to pursue one of its articles that called for Romania and Russia to negotiate at a later stage on any matters of dispute, through the arbitration of the League of Nations. Such talks, held between 1924-1932, ended in deadlock over the USSR’s insistence that a plebiscite be held in Russia’s former province, a claim which Romania opposed, citing sovereignty over internal matters.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

the 1918 Bessarabia-Romania union be described as an act of annexation according to international law?

\* Assess the applicability of the principle that, under international law, annexation is validated only when consented to by the state whose territory is annexed (in whole or in part) or, in the case of territory not formerly held by another state, when consented to by the international community.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Armstrong, Hamilton Fish. “The Bessarabian Dispute”. In *Foreign Affairs* II no. 4 (1924), pp. 609-656

Bacon Walter. *Behind Closed Doors: Secret Papers on the Failure of Romanian-Soviet Negotiations, 1931-1933*. Stanford, CA.: Hoover Institution Press, 1979

Dobrinescu, V.F. *The Diplomatic Struggle Over Bessarabia*. Iasi: Center for Romanian Studies, 1996

Mosley, Philip E. “Is Bessarabia Next?”. In *Foreign Affairs* XVIII, no. 3 (1940), pp. 557-562

## 4. 1918-1940: The Romanian Interlude

### An Uneasy Integration

In historic hindsight, Bessarabia's 1918 union with Romania was the one critical move that prevented the tottering Moldovan Democratic Republic from becoming a Soviet republic at the end of World War I, a course followed by all other former provinces of the Russian Empire (with the exception of the Baltics). Importantly, Moldova's next-door neighbor to the east, Ukraine, united with Russia's Soviets on December 28, 1920 and was established as a full-fledged Soviet Socialist Republic in 1922.

Bessarabia's union with Romania has been viewed as part of the surge for self-determination of Central Europe's nationalities in the wake of the collapse of the Habsburg, Russian and Ottoman Empires. Though never fully secured by international treaty (not only Russia, but also Japan and the United States failed to ratify the Versailles provisions regarding Bessarabia), the 1918 union was inspired and supported by the Wilsonian principles, spelled out by American president Woodrow Wilson to serve as the basis for territorial settlements at the end of the first World War. Another cause of Bessarabia's decision to join Romania was the revulsion the majority of the local population and of the intellectual elite vis-a-vis the prospects of a Bolshevik take over in the former czarist province.

### Roadblocks in the Old Country

While part of Romania between the two world wars, Bessarabia's lot improved, as the Bucharest government sought to integrate the former Russian province into the structures of modern Romania. Agrarian reform, already voted by the Chisinau Sfatul Tarii in 1918 and endorsed by the Romanian Parliament in 1920, redistributed some 1.8 million hectares to over 350,000 farmers. Public works projects were accelerated. By 1930 literacy had risen to nearly 30 percent. New roads, bridges across the Prut, airports, modern telephone networks were inaugurated in the 30s. In 1939 a state-of-the-art radio station began broadcasts from Chisinau.

About a dozen Bessarabian politicians served with distinction as members of Romania's successive governments during the interwar period, but were never able to return to the high status they had at the top of the Bessarabian national movement in 1917-1918.

The new status of the province was not without dysfunctions and flaws. Many of these had been inherited from the czarist empire. For example, only about 90 miles of paved roads existed in the province before its union with Romania. There were 657 miles of railroads but --built for strategic reasons-- they connected Bessarabian towns and cities with Russia, not with each other.

In the 20s and 30s, 87 percent of Bessarabia's population lived outside the cities, nearly 93 percent of Romanian-speakers lived in the countryside, while Russian ethnics and Jews formed over 50 percent of the urban population. In Bessarabia's towns and cities the Romanian presence was numerically negligible. As a consequence of over one century of policies of colonization, the province was home to over 350,000 Russian ethnics, over 300,000 Ukrainian ethnics and over 200,000 Jews. The latter alone accounted for over 26 percent of Bessarabia's city residents.

At the same time, pro-Soviet, pro-Russian and pro-communist propaganda was active underground, mostly in the cities, but also in the countryside. The Romanian authorities attitude toward any appearance of subversion was, more often than not, harsh and heavy-handed. Locals of diverse ethnic background frequently complained about the patronizing and distrustful behavior of the new administration, which made Bessarabians feel in many cases like second-rate citizens of Romania. In addition, Romanian carpetbaggers offered pro-Russian and Bolshevik propagandists handy ammunition to criticize the evil nature of Romania's rule over Bessarabia.

Throughout the Romanian interlude, Soviet-trained agents were active across the province, Soviet planes episodically dropped leaflets in the countryside, and there were a number of shooting incidents along the Nistru. Bolshevik-inspired incursions, both from across the Nistru and from the Black Sea, culminated in the Tatar Bunar communist rebellion (1924).

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* What were the main causes of the uneasy acclimatization of Bessarabia into Greater Romania between 1918-1940?

\* Which of the following three contributed most to Bessarabia's decision to join Romania in 1918: The specter of Bolshevik anarchy? Fear of looming annexation by Ukraine? Or the majority's wish to reconnect to the province's pristine cultural roots ?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Clark, Charles Upson. *Bessarabia: Russia and Romania on the Black Sea*. New York: Dodd Mead, 1932

Lungu, D.B. "Soviet-Romanian Relations and the Bessarabian Question in the 1920s". In *Southeastern Europe*, VI no.1 (1979), pp. 29-45

Lungu, D.B. *Romania and the Great Powers, 1933-1940*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989

## **5. A Soviet-Made Moldova On The Border**

### **The MASSR Experiment : 1924-1940**

The Soviet determination to seize back from Romania the czars' former province of Bessarabia materialized in the creation of a pilot political entity under the name of "Moldavia" abutting Romania's border with Soviet Ukraine. Under the custom-tailored name of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (MASSR) the creation of the new body was passed into law by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in Moscow, on October 12, 1924. Moscow's design was to establish an institutional bridgehead for the its future moves into the area west of the Nistru.



### *The Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1924-1940)*

Carved out of Soviet Ukraine on the Romanian border, the largely artificial Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic covered a 8,300 square kilometers area, with a population of over 560,000 inhabitants (1926 est.), mainly Ukrainian ethnics. Ukrainians formed nearly 49 percent of the total population, while less than a third (some 30 percent) were registered as “Moldavians”. Most of the latter were the descendants of a sparse Romanian-speaking rural population which had migrated there from across the Nistru in the 18th and 19th centuries. Other ethnics in the MASSR included Russians (9 percent), Jews (8 percent) and Germans (2 percent).

With its capital in Balta, later Tiraspol, the MASSR was a largely artificial political construct planned to lay the ideological, cultural and logistical groundwork for the future expansion of Soviet power into Romanian-held Bessarabia. It is no coincidence that, as far back as 1924, the MASSR declared Chisinau its “real” capital.

On August 2 1940, upon the annexation of Bessarabia, the Soviet Union dissolved the MASSR, and only a tiny strip of its territory --3,400 square kilometers in surface-- along the Nistru east-bank, was attached to the newly created Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (MSSR). The greater part of the short-lived MASSR --nearly 5,000 square kilometers in surface-- was then returned to Soviet Ukraine.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* Analyze and assess the relation between the MASSR as a pilot political construct, and today's separatist "Moldavian Nistrian Republic" on the east bank of the Nistru River.

\* Is it fair to say that the actual parent-state of the Republic of Moldova is the 1924 Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, rather than Bessarabia, or the eastern half of historic Moldova?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

\* King, Charles. "The Moldovan MASSR on the Eve of the War: Cultural Policy in 1930s Transnistria". In *Romania and World War II*, Kurt Treptow, ed. Iasi: Center for Romanian Studies, 1996

## **6. 1940-1991: Soviet Rule Over Moldova**

### **The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact**

In one of the most important diplomatic preliminaries of World War II, Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a 10-year nonaggression pact, signed on August 23 1939 by Viacheslav Molotov, Stalin's commissar of foreign affairs on behalf of the USSR, and Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's foreign minister on behalf of Nazi Germany. Although the pact became null and void in June 1941 when Nazi Germany went to war against the USSR, the provisions of its Secret Additional Protocol shaped much of Eastern Europe's history --including Moldova's-- in the post-World War II years. Article 1 of the Secret Additional Protocol apportioned the Soviet and Nazi spheres of influence in the Baltic states --Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (annexed by the USSR on 17-21 June 1940). Article 2 described the future partition of Poland, with the border between the USSR and the Nazi Reich running across the middle of Poland (this provision was enforced by both signatories through military occupation on 1-17 September 1939, thus triggering the beginnings of the second World War in Europe). Article 3 referred explicitly to Bessarabia. It stated the USSR interest in annexing Bessarabia from Romania, and Nazi Germany's consent to that annexation. Today's borders of Poland and Moldova's status (now, a country in its own right for the first time since the 19th century) are among the indirect lingering consequences of the 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. The republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania regained their full pre-1940 status in 1990-1991.

The incorporation of Bessarabia into the USSR was carried out through military occupation in the last days of June 1940, preceded by a 48-hour ultimatum to Romania. In the case of Moldova (Bessarabia) the territorial provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact were eventually consented to by both the predecessor state -- Romania, and the international community, in the form of the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty. The provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as embodied in the status of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, a part of the USSR after 1940, became null and void on August 27 1991, by virtue of Moldova's declaration of independence which put an end to Soviet rule over Moldova.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* Why is the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact still raised between the Republic of Moldova and Romania as an issue



in the on-going discussions about finalizing the basic treaty between the two countries?

\* What are the reasons for the current difference in international standing between the Baltic states --Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania-- (now restored to their pre-annexation status after the downfall of the Soviet Union), and the status of post-Soviet Moldova, which enjoys a different status from the one the land had before the 1940 annexation?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Graham, W. Malbon. "The Legal Status of Bukovina and Bessarabia". In *American Journal of International Law*, v. 38 (October 1944), pp.667-773

Matei, Valeriu, ed. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Documents)*. Chisinau: Universitas, 1991

Spector, Sherman David. *Romania at the Paris Peace Conference*. Iasi: Center for Romanian Studies, 1995

### **The Soviet Take Over:**

The incorporation of Romanian-held Bessarabia into the USSR was carried out through military occupation between June 28-July 3 1940. Thirty-two Red Army divisions took part in the operation. On August 2, 1940 the Supreme Soviet of the USSR passed into law the creation of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic on most of Bessarabia's territory. Russian was declared the official language of communication and Russian Cyrillics became mandatory in the writing of Romanian (dubbed "Moldavian" and described as separate from Romanian). On August 15 1940, a Soviet decree passed into law the nationalization of all privately owned land, industries, businesses and trading companies. Confiscation of private land began immediately and the first kolkhozes (Soviet collective farms) were established in the countryside. By October 1940, 487 private enterprises had been taken over by the state in the MSSR's towns and cities.

A Constitution based on the 1936 Soviet Constitution was promulgated in February 1941. It established the Communist Party as the unique political power over the land, and the MSSR Supreme Soviet as the republic's legislative authority. In terms of social and economic initiatives, the elimination of private property continued full scale.

Over 13,000 Soviet specialists and Communist Party activists, including 500 teachers from Russia and 380 from Ukraine moved to the MSSR, assigned to instruct and teach in the new republic. On the other hand, the policy of deportations, started immediately after the annexation, continued unabated, reaching a total of over 100,000 people, mostly landowners, merchants, teachers, priests and members of the urban bourgeoisie. Only in the first months of 1941, over 20,000 persons, were deported to Kuzbas, Karaganda, Kazakhstan and other distant parts of the USSR, amid reports of atrocities and exterminations. In the city of Balti, almost half of the population of about 55,000 was deported to the interior of the USSR in June 1941. Definitive figures are hard to assess, but the number of Moldovan deportees throughout the Soviet rule is considered to range anywhere between 200,000 and 500,000. (According to the 1958 edition of the *British Encyclopedia* (vol.15, p. 662), by mid-1955, the Soviet authorities had deported about half a million persons from the MSSR).

## **World War II**

On June 22, 1941, Germany and Romania attacked the Soviet Union and a Romanian-German military coalition briefly recaptured Bessarabia between June 1941 and March 1944. The Red Army reconquered the land in the Spring of 1944. On August 23 1944, Romania overthrew the military dictatorship that had led the country to war against the Soviet Union and turned its arms against Nazi Germany, fighting as an ally of the USSR until the end of World War II.

The Paris Peace Treaty signed on February 10, 1947 restored the January 1 1941 borders between Romania and the Soviet Union, and thus sanctioned the incorporation of Bessarabia into the USSR. Except for the Romanian wartime occupation (June 1941-March 1944) the de facto incorporation of Bessarabia into the Soviet Union had been in effect since its 1940 annexation.

## **Moldova's Post-War Transformation**

The post-World War II era in Moldova's history began with the continuation of Stalin's policies launched in 1940, including the forced collectivization of the republic's farmland. Between 1944-1948 in a follow-up of the operation begun immediately after the 1940 occupation, 578 kolkhozes were created in the Moldavian SSR. They included the properties of over 100,000 farming families, accounting for 22 percent of the republic's private land. By May 1 1949 the number of collectivized farms had risen to 925. By deportations and other means of eradication of private property, the forced collectivization process was completed by the end of 1950.

Sovietization and Russification continued full-scale in the 1950s under the direct supervision of Leonid Brezhnev, whom Stalin had appointed in 1950 to serve as secretary-general of the Moldavian Communist Party's Central Committee with discretionary authority over the new Soviet Republic.

In the 1950s and 1960s a moderate process of socialist industrialization was implemented on orders from Moscow. One of its relevant characteristics was that most of the new industrial units were located in the Nistru east-bank strip of land, where from the outset, the Russophone population had outnumbered native Moldovans. Steel mills and cement factories were built in Rabnita, which became one of the MSSR's industrial centers. Energy-producing plants and other industrial units were built at Dubasari, Rabnita and Cuciurgan, on the east bank, and the city of Tiraspol became the MSSR's second industrial center after Chisinau. One of the consequences of this long-range policy is that, to this day, Moldova's industrial units, placed by the Soviet Union on the narrow strip of land on the left bank of the Nistru account for about 90 percent of the country's energy production and 28 percent of its industrial enterprises, holding only 16 percent of the country's territory and 14 percent of its population.

Apart from this territorial distribution imbalance, Soviet era planners' emphasis continued to be on the republic's agricultural potential. A "Moldavian experiment" in agriculture was launched in the early 1970s calling for a dramatic increase in the RSSM's agricultural production, which soon brought Moldova the reputation of one of the USSR's breadbaskets and its main vineyard and orchard. While holding a record low of less than 0.2 percent of the Soviet Union's territory, the MSSR ranked sixth in the USSR's food production.

## ***Questions and Issues:***

authoritarian rule over Moldova? What were the fundamental differences between them in: (a) mode of acquisition and (b) administration?

\* With the benefit of hindsight, whose interests were best served by the 1940 inclusion of the Nistru east-bank sliver of land into the Moldavian SSR : Russia's or present-day Moldova's ?

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Bruchis, Michael. *Nations-Nationalities-People: A Study of the Nationalities Policy of the Communist Party in Soviet Moldavia*. Boulder, Co.:East European Monographs, 1984

Clem, Ralph. *The Soviet West: Interplay Between Nationality and Social Organization*. New York: Praeger, 1975

Deletant, Dennis. "The Soviet View of Bessarabia". In *Slavonic and East European Review* 56, no.1 (1978) pp.115-118

## **7. The Fall of the Soviet System in Moldova**

### **Political Context: Glasnost**

The *glasnost* policies launched by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991), to promote more openness in the debate of Soviet policies and more freedom of the media triggered an explosion of open discussions that ended in challenging the Communist Party's policies not only in Russia proper, but also in the other Soviet republics, more especially so in the Baltics. The *glasnost* climate exerted a huge impact on Soviet-held Moldova, where it provoked an open debate about the country's language issue and alphabet issue. A groundbreaking periodical called *Glusul* (Romanian: "The Voice") was printed illegally in the Latin alphabet by Moldovan intellectuals in Latvia. Unavailable in Moldova under Moscow's policies of Russification, Roman characters were nevertheless available in Soviet Latvia, where the alphabet issue had no direct political relevance to Soviet policies, as was the case of Moldova. Carried clandestinely, the approximately 60,000 copies of the March 1989 edition of *Glusul* was smuggled and distributed in the MSSR where it had the effect of a watershed, giving a huge impulse to Moldovan intellectuals' struggle for cultural and political emancipation from the USSR.

In the wake of Gorbachev's *glasnost* policies, as the anti-totalitarian sentiment was cresting throughout the Soviet Union, a largely symbolic proclamation of sovereignty was declared in Chisinau, on June 23 1990, preceding Moldova's further moves toward independence.

### **Moldova's New Statehood: 1991**

In March 1991 the MSSR refused to take part in a referendum on preserving the USSR. On May 23 that same year, the name of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (applied to the land after its 1940 Soviet incorporation into the USSR) was changed to the Republic of Moldova, the old vernacular form --Moldova-- superseding the long-standing use of Moldavia in foreign languages and international documents. At the same

time, the name of the the Supreme Soviet was changed to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Such a dramatic pursuit of independence put the Chisinau local authorities increasingly at odds with the Kremlin, and led to growing tensions between the ethnic non-Russophone majority and the Russophone minorities in the republic. These tensions led to sporadic violence, involving mostly the Nistru east-bank districts of the republic, where Russia's 14th Army was stationed. A brief armed conflict ensued and the republic's east bank districts -- already at odds with Moldova's central government over the language, flag and alphabet issues-- declared their secession from Chisinau.

Moldova's independence was pronounced in an explosion of popular enthusiasm on August 27 1991, in the immediate aftermath of the failed communist putsch in Moscow. In a huge show of solidarity, around 600,000 people from all parts of the country gathered on that day in downtown Chisinau in front of the Soviet-era executive headquarters prompting the republic's legislative body to declare Moldova's separation from the USSR and the end of the Kremlin's rule. On December 26, 1991, the USSR itself was disbanded. As a prelude to its formal dissolution, on December 8, 1991 the three Slavic republics -- Soviet Russia, Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus announced in Minsk the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as a "coordinating body" meant to oversee common interests of its members in the areas of the economy, foreign policy and defense.

On December 21, the other non-Slavic republics, including Moldova, joined the CIS, under certain conditions. Moldova declined to join the political and military structures of the CIS, but adhered to its commercial and economic structures. The Baltic states and Georgia declined to join.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

\* How were the ethnic, linguistic and political elements linked in Moldova's quest for independence from the Soviet Union?

\* Did the shift in name --from **Moldavia** to **Moldova**-- carry a special connotation in the Soviet republic's efforts to separate itself from Moscow's rule?

\* Is Moldova's new statehood totally firm and secured ? Assess the weak links in Moldova's new identity, taking into account its limited statehood experience, and the Nistru east-bank districts declared secession from the central government and pro-Russian orientation.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Barbour, William, and Carol Wesseker, eds. *The Breakup of the Soviet Union: Opposing Viewpoints*. Dan Diego, Ca.: Greenhaven Press, 1994

King, Charles. *Post-Soviet Moldova: A Borderland in Transition*. Iasi: Center for Romanian Studies, 1997

## **Part III: THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA TODAY**

# 1. Constitution and State Structures

## Moldova's Constitution

Independent Moldova's Constitution was adopted on July 29, 1994 and took effect on August 27 of the same year. It defines Moldova as a sovereign, neutral, and democratic country, and declares its permanent neutrality; it mandates a free market economy based on the protection of private property rights; and it guarantees the personal rights of all citizens of the country, regardless of ethnic or social origin, language, or religious and political affiliations. Moldova's Constitution guarantees the rights of political parties and of other public organizations. Public administration is carried out on the principles of local autonomy and government powers are based on democratic elections.

The 1994 Constitution described Moldova's system of government as semi-presidential. It called for the president's direct election by all members of the electorate over eighteen years of age.

A referendum on changing Moldova's semi-presidential system of government, as stipulated by the 1994 Constitution, was held in May 1999. In keeping with the amendments consequently brought to the Constitution, in 2001 Moldova became a parliamentary republic, whose head of state is now elected by the Parliament. Critics of the move argue that with one party's solid majority in the Parliament, and the president elected by that very same Parliament, it is possible to envisage a slide toward a brand of direct presidential rule, less likely to be challenged in a relevant way by the legislative body.



The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

## **The Legislature**

Moldova's parliamentary system is based on a unicameral legislature. The one-chamber Parliament --a successor to the former Supreme Soviet-- has 101 seats. Deputies are elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term. The Parliament meets in two ordinary sessions per year. There are eleven permanent committees, whose tasks cover the following areas: agriculture and food processing industries; culture, science, education and youth; ecology and development of the territory; economy, industry, public finances and budget; foreign affairs; national security; health, family and social protection; human rights and national minorities; law; public communication and mass media. A number of special committees may supplement the Parliament's permanent committees. Special committees in Moldova's XVth legislature currently debate such issues as the Nistru east-bank conflict, changes in the Moldova's Constitution, and adjustments to the administrative organization of the territory. The numbering of Moldova's current legislatures reflects institutional continuity with Soviet-era legislatures (the last Soviet-era Supreme Soviet --at the time of Moldova's declaration of independence-- is considered the republic's XIIth legislature)

## **The Judiciary**

Independent Moldova's judiciary is a successor to the Soviet era judicial system and reflects in many ways practices of the former legal institutions. The General Prosecutor's office directs investigations, orders arrests and prosecutes criminal cases. A network of local courts and higher level appeals courts constitute the territorial basis of the system. The Supreme Court is the top authority on civil, criminal and administrative law. It also passes judgment on cases involving the Constitution and other litigations and special suits, such as disputes over the competence and jurisdiction powers of state bodies, including the presidency, and the other branches of government.

## **The Executive Branch**

The government of Moldova is headed by the prime-minister, nominated by the president. Currently the cabinet has fifteen ministries: Economy, Finance, Industry, Energy, Transportation, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Public Health, Labor and Social Protection, Culture, Justice, Ecology and Territorial Organization, Defense, and Internal Affairs. Subordinate units in Moldova's government include the following state departments: Statistic and Sociology, National Relations and Language Functioning, Energy Resources and Fuels, Standards, Metrology and Technical Supervision, Information Technologies, Youth and Sports, Inter-ethnic Relations, Border-Guard Troops, Privatization, Civil Protection and Emergency Situations, Customs.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Dawisha, Karen, and Bruce Parrot, eds. *Democratic Changes and Authoritarian Reactions in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1997

## **Local Government**

Moldova is administratively divided into 11 territorial units --Balti, Cahul, Chisinau, Dubasari, Edinet, Lapusna, Orhei, Soroca, Tighina, Ungheni and Taraclia-- called *Judete* (singular:*Judet*), and an autonomous

territory --Unitatea Teritoriala Autonoma Gagauzia (the Gagauzia Autonomous Territorial Unit), home to most of the Gagauz (Christian Turks) minority. The chief governing authority in each *judet* is the prefect; the local governor of the Gagauz autonomous unit --in keeping with Gagauz tradition-- is called *bashkan*.

Prior to the administrative-territorial reform of 1999, the country was divided into 40 small-size districts (*raioane*). The Soviet-era territorial division is still enforced in the Nistru east-bank region where the secession of the self-declared “Moldavian Nistrin Republic” obstructed the implementation of Moldova’s 1999 territorial-administrative reform, a precondition for continued IMF and World Bank loans to post-Soviet republic.

Moldova’s leftist government which took power after the 2001 elections has given consideration to a return to the old Soviet-style administrative division of the republic’s territory.



*Administrative Map of the Republic of Moldova (2001)*

## 2. Domestic Politics

### Political Parties:

### The Comeback of the Left

Moldova’s political spectrum reflects the legacies of the Soviet-era when the Communist Party was the one and only dominant political force in the republic, exerting discretionary control over all administrative, economic, and cultural affairs of the MSSR, from the advent of Soviet communist rule to 1990. The Communist Party was formally banned in Moldova in 1991, after the aborted Moscow putsch against Mikhail Gorbachev. It was re-established in 1994 under the slightly altered name of the Party of Moldova’s Communists. Whereas its influence in public life

dwindled in the immediate aftermath of the demise of the post-Soviet era, its appeal to Moldova’s electorate rebounded dramatically after 1997, as a consequence of the failure of the center-right parties to deliver on

promises to improve the economic situation of the country and of the people at large.

Rallying 51 percent of the popular vote in the 2001 general elections the Party of Moldova's Communists came back to power as the leading force of a revived left, currently reflected in the composition of the Chisinau Parliament, where the Communists and their allies hold an absolute majority of 71 out of 101 deputies.

The former ruling center-right coalition, formed in the wake of the 1998 elections by three parties (the Democratic Convention, the Bloc for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova and the Party of Democratic Forces) dissolved in the meantime as an opposition force, the only two center-right parties currently represented in the Parliament being the "Braghis Alliance" with 19 seats, and the Christian-Democrat Popular Party, with 11 seats.

## **Political Parties:**

### **The Extra-Parliamentary Opposition**

Moldova's extra-parliamentary opposition consists of over half a dozen smaller parties. In the wake of the 2001 defeat of the center-right formations, seven of them (the Party of Revival and Accord, the Democrat Party, the National Liberal Party, the Social-Democrat Party, National-Peasant Christian-Democrat Party, the Party for Order and Social Justice and the Party of Democratic Forces) merged to constitute the centrist Democratic Forum of Moldova. The newest emerging political formation in the country's extra-parliamentary opposition is the centrist pro-western Social-Liberal Party which made his debut in May 2001. It advocates the integration of the Republic of Moldova in the European Union and a clear break with the communist past. Its chief objectives include rallying the young generation, women and ethnic minorities under its banner and distancing Moldova from the looming prospect of closer integration with the Russian Federation and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Its political platform is center-left, youth-oriented and pro-European. It strikes one of the sharpest political contrasts with the mostly old-guard Party of Moldova's Communists.

### **Public Communication and the Media**

The lack of a free press tradition in Moldova is one of the legacies of Soviet totalitarian rule. In the Soviet era all Moldovan media were state-owned, state controlled and subject to drastic political and ideological supervision. The appearance of the Romanian-language, Latin-character periodical *Glasul*, printed illegally in Latvia and smuggled into Moldova in 1989 was a groundbreaking infringement of Soviet censorship over the media. In the immediate aftermath of the country's declaration of independence, most of the press and media outlets were privatized, but under financial pressure, they gradually got under the control of groups of interests whose views they tend to express. The Constitution and the law provide for freedom of speech and of the press, although with some restrictions. Print media express a wide variety of political views and commentary. The frequently encountered inability to distinguish fact from opinion in Moldovan journalism is still at work more often than not in public communication.

In all, Moldova's print media include over 200 newspapers (out of which some 90 in the Romanian language), and over 60 magazines (out of which about half in Romanian). Most papers have a circulation of less than 5,000. The daily circulation is about 24 copies per 1,000 persons. The main official newspapers are the Chisinau daily *Moldova Suverana*, published by the government and its Russian-language version *Nezavisimaya*



*Moldova*. The country's largest circulation papers include the independent *Saptamana* and *Flux*, *Mesagerul* published by the Party of Democratic Forces and *Tara*, published by the Christian-Democrat Popular Party. Other print media include *Sfatul Tarii* published by the Parliament, *Viata Satului* a government publication that targets rural readers. Minority-language publications include *Kishinovskye Novosti*, *Telegraf*, *Russkoye Slovo* and *Kodry* all published in Russian. Also in Russian is *Komratskiye Vedemosti* published in Comrat, the administrative center of the Gagauz Autonomous Territorial Unit where *Ana Sozu* and *Karlangaci* are also published in Gagauz. Other ethnic minorities publications include *Prosvita* and *Homin* in Ukrainian, *Rodno Slovo*, in Bulgarian and *Undser Koll/ Nash Golos*, published in Yiddish and Russian. Tiraspol separatist publications include *Rabochyi Tiraspol* and *Dnestrovskaya Pravda*, the newspaper of the Tiraspol soviet.

## **The Audio-Visual Media**

Although the number of media outlets that are not operated publicly by the state or a political party is growing, most of these independent media still are in the service of a political movement, commercial interest, or foreign country ( mostly Russia and Romania) and secure large subsidies from these sources.

There are dozens of independent radio stations, some of them re-broadcasting programs from Romania and Russia. Three independent television stations cover the Chisinau metropolitan area, and one covers the northern city of Balti. The government owns and operates several radio stations and a national television station that covers most of the country. A number of local governments, including Gagauzia, operate television and radio stations.

Moldova's national TV broadcasts daily in Romanian and Russian. As of June 1995, 89.3 percent of Moldova's households had television sets, which means one TV set per 3.7 persons. Over 15 percent of Moldova's households receive cable television. Cable receivers have access to approximately 18 hours of daily broadcasting aired by the Russian-language television radio company "Ostankino". In addition to its programs in the Romanian language, Moldova's national TV carries five hours per day of Russian-language programs, three hours per month of Ukrainian, Gagauz and Bulgarian and one and one-half hours per month of Hebrew- and Yiddish-language programs.

There are some 800,000 radio receivers in Moldova. In addition to its programs in the Romanian language, Moldova's national radio carries five hours per day of Russian-language broadcasts and one hour per month of Gagauz-, Bulgarian-, and Yiddish-language programs.

By 1999, over 90 private TV and FM radio stations with low transmitter power had obtained licenses to broadcast in the Republic of Moldova. Their operations are regulated by Moldova's Telecommunications Law, passed in December 1995. According to that law, the radio frequency spectrum constitutes a national patrimony which is administered by the State Committee on Radio Frequencies, subordinate to the government.

## **Moldova's Non-Governmental Organizations**

One of the Soviet-era legacies is the virtual absence of civic organizations within Moldova's society before independence. The endeavors to lay the groundwork for non-governmental organizations and thus contribute to building the basis for a strong and stable civil society have been relatively successful in spite of this drawback. A law on NGOs was passed by Moldova's Parliament in 1996. Today, Moldova's several hundreds of NGOs

include organizations dealing with the areas of agriculture, business, education and culture, the environment, public health, law, human rights, women's issues the media, etc. In Chisinau alone these include the 21st Century Fund, the Altair International Ecological Agency, the Anti-HIV Association, the "PRAES" Association for Social Development, the "Bluebird" Charitable Fund European School, the Eurasia Foundation, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, the Independent Journalism Center, the Independent Press Association, the International Center for Economic Transformations Research, the Mold-Eco Foundation, the Gender in Development (GID) Project, the Open Information Society, the Pro-Basarabia/ Pro-Bucovina Association, the Chisinau Russians' Community, the Republican Organization for the Empowerment of Moldova's Youth, the Moldovan Scientists Association, the Pro-Moldova Patriotic Movement, the Philanthropic-Social Foundation for the Protection of Disabled People and Pensioners, the Socium-Moldova Foundation, the Women's Organization of Moldova, the Association of Electronic Press, the Association of Independent Press, etc.

### **3. Economic Structure**

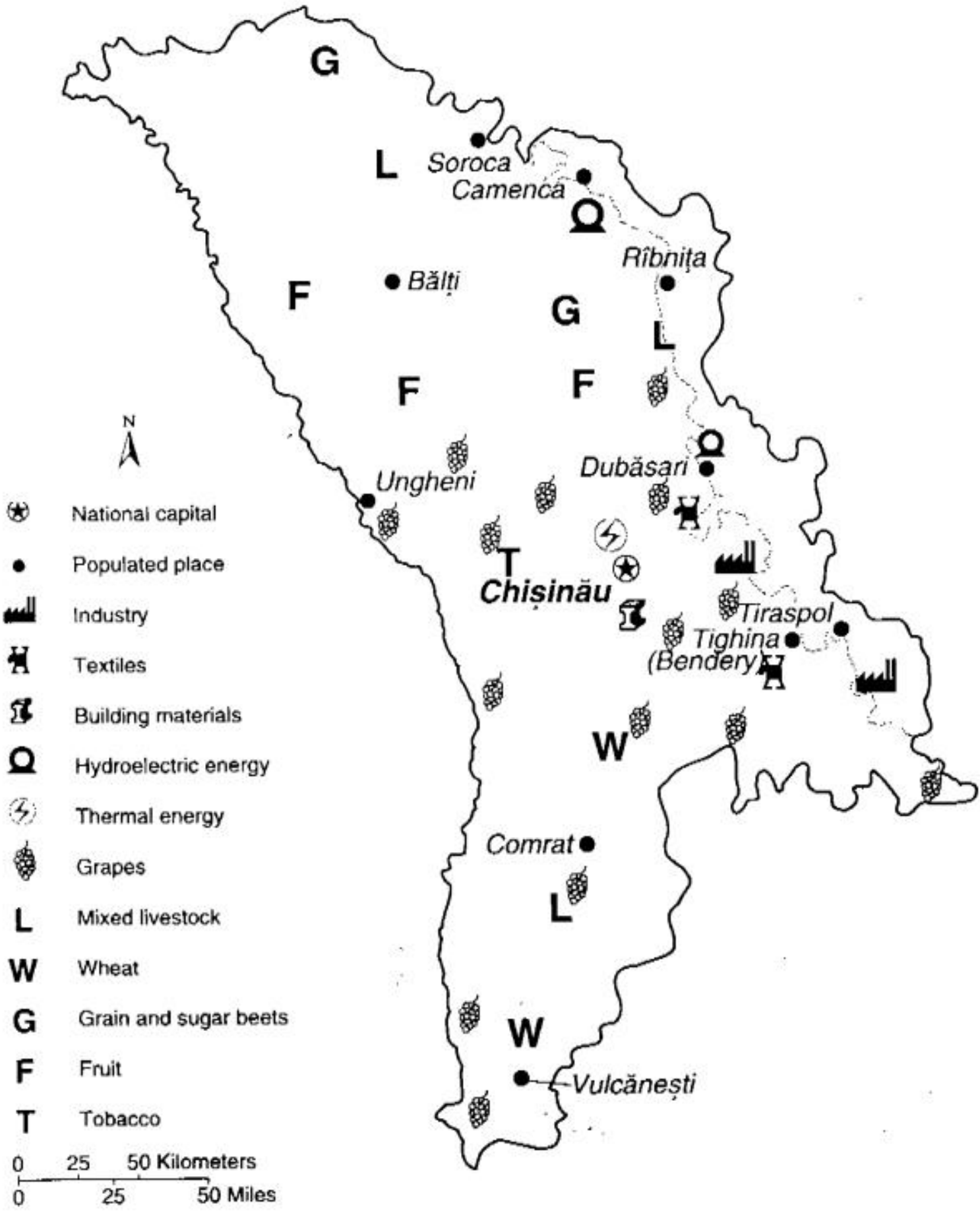
#### **General Profile**

Moldova's national economy is agro-industrial, with agriculture accounting for over 44 percent of the net material product. Its major products are vegetables, fruits, wine and liquors, tobacco, grain, sugar beets, and sunflower seeds. About 46 percent of the country's industrial sector is based on food processing, which operates in close cooperation with agriculture. Electric energy production accounts for 17.7 percent, engineering and metal processing for about 10.8 percent and light industry for about 6 percent of Moldova's total output. Moldova's economy is chronically affected by dysfunctions generated by the trans-Nistrian separatist conflict, as most of the country's industry and energy-producing units are located on the east bank of the Nistru River.

There are indications that official data fail to capture a substantial portion of the country's economic activity, with some estimates maintaining that nearly half of the country's overall economic activities are unofficial. Financial analysts say that the recorded GDP curves may be an effect of the inadequate record of exports to other successor states within the CIS, which either transit through or originate from the breakaway Nistru region controlled by the Tiraspol secessionist authorities.

A general decline of the economy translated into a dramatic deterioration of the purchasing power of the population making Moldova one of the poorest countries of Europe over the 1991-2000 period. The poor state of the economy was one of the leading factors that contributed to the left's victory in Moldova's 2001 elections when the communists were voted back to power.

Under the statistical data of Moldova's National Bank, at the beginning of 2001, Moldova's foreign debt was \$ 1,539 million, which translates into \$341.3 per head of inhabitant (up by 16.3 percent from \$293.45 in 1997).



Moldova's privatization effort has been governed by the Privatization Law of 1991, according to which all Moldovans have the right to privatize state property by using their National Patrimonial Bonds to purchase shares of major, midsized and small enterprises as well as state-owned homes. The privatization effort has been generally slow and hampered by numerous bureaucratic hurdles. It was somewhat more expeditious in the areas of housing and the return to private ownership of the land. The pace of privatization subsided amidst the political uncertainties that led to the February 2001 anticipated elections, and in the immediate aftermath of the Party of Moldova's Communists return to power as a result of these elections. The IMF froze its \$142 million, three-year lending program after the elections, as the left was swept to power and some communist deputies talked of scrapping privatization plans, introducing protectionist trade tariffs and abandoning economic reforms demanded by the IMF.

But in the first half of the year 2001, Moldova's economy displayed signs of recovery. The gross domestic product expected to rise by seven percent after increasing 1.9 percent in 2000 and dropping 4.4 percent in 1999. The International Monetary Fund was encouraged by Moldova's inchoate economic progress after the new government took over, and agreed to resume lending, if the Chisinau government met some legislative conditions, such as adopting the needed laws on bankruptcy and financial disclosure.

## **Main Economic Coordinates**

### **Agriculture**

Moldova's economy is based primarily on agriculture which, together with food production, accounts for about 50 percent of the country's GDP. Under average conditions, Moldova's yearly agricultural production is around 3 million tons of grain (chiefly winter wheat and corn), 800,000 tons of fruit and berries, 1 million tons of vegetables, over 2 million tons of sugar beets, 200,000 tons of sunflower seeds, over 400,000 tons of meat (live weight), over 1 million tons of milk, and around 55,000 tons of tobacco. Moldova is an important producer of grapes, with an annual yield of approximately 870,000 tons (1995 est.).

From the total area of the Republic of Moldova, over 58 percent are agricultural

grounds. The agriculture, beverages and food industries employ about 36 percent of the country's available labor force. Approximately half of Moldova's agricultural and food production is traditionally exported to the former Soviet republics. In the first half of 2001, the main importer was Russia, followed by Ukraine, Italy and Romania .

### **Sequels of Collectivization**

Due to the drawbacks of Soviet collectivization, chronic lack of incentives and the many malfunctions generated by the centralized system of production, Moldova's agricultural production started to display a decline ever since the late 1980s. The trend continued into the 1990s while privatization of the agricultural sector lagged behind. In April 1997 only 8.6 percent of the total land subject to privatization had been transferred into so-called joint-venture companies which de facto continued to be run by the same Soviet-era kolkhoze managers and administrators. Moldovan farmers tended to withdraw their lands and properties from

such companies in order to create, like before 1940, their own individual farms.

By 1993 Moldova had only a small number of privately-owned farms (about 500); by 1995 this number increased to almost 14,000. These small farms held only 1.5 percent of Moldova's agricultural land, but their output increased from 18 percent of the country's total agricultural output in 1990, to a significant 38 percent in 1996. In 1997 the Chisinau Parliament approved a law that for the first time since the forced Soviet collectivizations of the 1940s, made possible the sale of land, and in 1998 the World Bank approved a \$5 million credit for a Rural Finance Project meant to develop and test a banking system apt to provide financial services to small private farmers and rural entrepreneurs in Moldova. As of 2001, only 10 percent of Moldova's total agricultural land was privatized.

In the year 2000, out of the country's approximately 1,000 large collective farms, over 900 had applied for the government's land privatization program. By the end of the year 2000 approximately 630,000 landowners had received title to almost 1.7 million plots of land. In 2001, the United States expressed its willingness to further support Moldova's agriculture, stressing the need for a successful finalization of agricultural reform.

## **Industry**

The industrial sector accounted for about 23 percent of the net material product of Moldova's national economy in 1998 (down from 38.9 percent in 1993). The decline continued into the late 1990s, but signs of relative recovery were noticeable in the first half of the year 2001, when the rhythm of industrial production was 112.1 percent up from the preceding year's comparable figures in the same time-frame. Industrial growth in the first six months of 2001 was as follows: construction --143 percent; chemical industry --118 percent; machinery --123 percent; timber --123 percent; glass --106 percent; food processing --114 percent. Under average conditions, the country's industrial sector furnishes less than one third of the gross domestic product. It comprises about 600 major and midsized enterprises and provides over 250,000 jobs.

About 46 percent of the industrial sector is based on food processing which operates in close interaction with agriculture. It includes over 200 enterprises producing wines, canned fruit and vegetables, meat and dairy products, sunflower seed oil, sugar, perfumes and cosmetics. Its average potential capacity per season includes the processing of 1.4 million tons of grapes, 1.6 decaliters of brandy, over 10 million bottles of sparkling wines, 500,000 tons of sugar and 50,000 tons of tobacco.

Electric energy accounts for about 17.7 percent of Moldova's total industrial output. Engineering and metal processing, which includes agricultural machinery and foundry equipment, accounts for about 10.8 percent. Light industry, which includes refrigerators and freezers, washing machines, textiles and shoes, accounts for about 6 percent.

Most of Moldova's industry was created during the Soviet era and is strategically located on the east bank of the Nistru River, on the territory of the separatist "Moldavian Nistrin Republic". Although holding about 14 percent of Moldova's total population, the breakaway region accounts for 28 percent of the country's enterprises, 21 percent of its total industrial employment and over 33 percent of its total industrial output, which includes power transformers, military weaponry, cement and steel.

## **Energy**

Moldova's energy sector relies mainly on imported coal, oil and natural gas, with local resources accounting for a very small share of the fuel and electrical power needs of the country. The energy sources consist of a system of small hydroelectric plants on the west bank of the Nistru and on the east bank of the Prut. Local thermal power plants are providers of electricity in Balti, Chisinau and Rabnita. Moldova's largest power-producing plant is Cuciurgan, located on the east bank of the Nistru, on territory held by the breakaway "Moldavian Nistrin Republic". In recent years, Cuciurgan alone produced roughly 30 percent of Moldova's consumption of energy. The other two main producers of energy, Dubasari and Rabnita are also under the control of the Tiraspol separatist authorities which frequently resort to power outages as a means of exerting pressure on the country's central authorities. Moldova is currently exploring alternative energy sources and working on projects to develop its own energy supplies, such as solar power, wind and geothermal. Moldova also plans to take part in the building of the second reactor of the Romanian nuclear power station in Cernavoda if that project proves advantageous.

Aggravated by the trans-Nistrin secession, Moldova's lack of independent energy resources is one of the most onerous bequests of the decade-long Soviet rule over the republic.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

*The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile, Moldova 2000-2001*

*The Republic of Moldova in Figures, 1998. Statistical Pocket Book. Chisinau:1999*

### **Structural Challenges:**

In the wake of Moldova's accession to independence, three pivotal areas ended up in generating a vicious circle; they currently continue to pose the hardest challenges for the take off of the country's post-Soviet economy:

## **I. The energy factor**

Due to the country's lack of energy reserves and domestic resources, the Republic of Moldova is heavily dependent on a couple of important causal factors which it cannot adequately control:

The first causal element is the fact that most of the country's own energy producing plants are located on the territory of the breakaway "Moldavian Nistrin Republic". The Tiraspol secessionist leadership practices a policy of pressure and blackmail on the country's central authorities --at times in the form of electric power blackouts which episodically paralyze the capital and the rest of the country in demonstrative manner.

The second cause is Moldova's complicated relationship with its main traditional supplier of energy, Russia. Russian natural gas monopoly and main provider of Moldova's energy companies is Gazprom. For a variety of economic reasons, Moldova's payments to Gazprom have been chronically lagging behind, and the Russian firm has frequently threatened to cut supplies, unless the Moldovan firms pay off their debt. However, most of the gas supplies go to state-controlled industrial firms in the breakaway Nistrin republic, whose separatist

authorities routinely stall payment. In 1999, Moldova's total debt to Gazprom was over \$ 600 million, out of which Chisinau's owed about \$210 million, while Tiraspol separatist entity owed over \$400 million.

## II. The shadow economy factor

It accounts for about two thirds of the national economy and encompasses four distinct operating areas: the *unofficial economy*, comprising business entities and persons engaged in both legal and illegal activities for which they avoid paying taxes; *the informal economy*, representing transactions among economic factors based on personal contacts and relationships that substitute for, or replace officially documented transactions; *the fictitious economy*, encompassing off-book transactions conducted by state officials who take advantage of their positions to manipulate expenses and income in order to reduce tax liabilities; and *the criminal economy*, encompassing underground activities conducted in such areas as drug trafficking, prostitution, illegal import-export transactions, bribery, extortion and smuggling.

The internationally unrecognized political entity on the east bank of the Nistru River is the haven of most of these activities. It is in that specific context that the breakaway "Nistrin republic" plays the role of the main linchpin in the vicious circle of challenges that hampers the progress of the Moldova's post-Soviet economy.

## III. The privatization factor

Privatization is not fully transparent, ownership rights are often unclear and hard to protect legally. Whereas privatization programs continue to be under way, recent structural downturns in the areas of industry and agriculture, as well as the lack of control over the economy in the breakaway Nistru east-bank districts, continue to generate chronic dysfunctions which have resulted in the slowing down of the overall pace of reform. In parallel with the privatization efforts made throughout the 1990s, actual bureaucratic measures intermittently halted the process and, in many cases, made it ineffectual locally. Part of the explanation is the complicated political situation, with frequent changes of leadership in Chisinau, but also in the economic consequences of the political and military conflict in the trans-Nistrin region.

The disruption of traditional ties between economic units on the two banks of the Nistru River continue to exert a negative effect on the overall pace of privatization. Both unaccomplished privatization and the lack of clear cut legislation on private ownership and its guarantees constitute chief obstacles to increased foreign investments in the Republic of Moldova. In 2001, foreign investments in Moldovan companies amounted to approximately \$660 million.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

*The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile, Moldova 2000-2001*

## 4. Society

### **Demographic Trends**

In terms of demographics the Republic of Moldova is facing the symptoms of growing crisis, prompted and accentuated over the 1991-2001 interval by the decline of the economy and acute worsening of living conditions. According to recent statistics, life expectancy at birth is 61.0 for the male population and 69.9 for the female population. Population growth rate is around --0.02%; the birth rate stands at around 14.32 per 1,000 population; the death rate at around 12.33 per 1,000 population (1997 est.). These figures compare unfavorably with the last statistics of the Soviet era (1989) when Moldova's birth rate was 18.9 per 1,000 population and the death rate 9.9 per 1,000 population, with a rate of natural increase of 1.0 %. Social instability associated with the difficulties of the transition and the deterioration of the standard of living account in large measure for that dramatic drop.

On the other hand, migration, mostly illegal, has been on the increase. Government estimates claim that currently between 600,000 and 800,000 Moldovans are illegally working outside the country. Estimates indicate these migrants work in Russia, Romania, Ukraine and Bulgaria. There was news of occasional arrests of illegal Moldovans in South Africa and South Korea. In the year 2000 2,240 Moldovans working illegally abroad had been extradited back to the country.

## **Health**

Moldova has over 300 hospitals with a total of over 50,000 beds, to produce a ratio of 124.7 hospital beds per 10,000 people. Outpatient care is provided by some 500 medical centers. Medical staff consists of over 17,000 doctors and about 48,000 nurses and other medical professionals. Pharmaceutical supplies rely mostly on imports. A return to the state-owned pharmacies network is to be put in place by Moldova's new leftist government under the pledge that medicines prices will be subsidized by the state. In the decade after independence most pharmacies were privatized but the price of medicines spiraled out of control, creating huge difficulties for the poorer segment of the country's population needing medications.

## **Poverty and Social Safety**

According to a survey conducted by the Moldovan government for the first quarter of the year 2001, 40 percent of the country's population live under the poverty threshold. The percentage is 49 percent in the rural population of the Republic of Moldova. The monthly disposable income per person is about \$15.5 (193 Moldova lei) and 92 percent of the population lives on less than \$1 per day. A majority cannot afford to buy fish, meat, milk and other dairy products on a regular basis. Malnutrition is widespread and can be recognized in the rates of anemia for children, and the growing percentage of young men not physically fit for military service. According to the most recent surveys, infant mortality and the rate of death in childbirth are on the increase, and the overall life expectancy is decreasing.

The leading cause of other deaths stems from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory and accidents. Moldova ranks second among the countries with the highest rate of accidental deaths --including traffic accidents, domestic accidents and falls (in terms of annual deaths per 100,000 persons, South Korea ranks first, with 120.2, Moldova second, with 114.0 and Russia third, with 112.3). The number of HIV infected people has increased over the past years and a growing number of AIDS cases were recorded. In 1991 the government set up the Social Assistance Fund to provide assistance to the needy, and the Social Security Fund, composed of the Pension Fund, the Social Insurance Fund and the Reserve Fund. Nevertheless arrears in the payment of pensions have been routine, creating permanent difficulties in the daily lives of most pensioners (over 800,000



people).

## **Environment**

Moldova's environment has deteriorated markedly during the last decades of Soviet rule when, in keeping with the requirements of socialist central planning, the Chisinau leadership was directed to launch an ambitious plan, called the "Moldavian Experiment" (1971-1974) intended to boost the republic's agricultural and livestock production. One of the chief factors of Moldova's environmental degradation during the years that followed were the excessively heavy pesticide applications that polluted the soil to such a degree that over half a million acres had to be taken out of rotation. Another factor was the excessive growth of livestock industrialization (especially swine and cattle), which led to a massive concentration of offal, much larger than the bulk of animal production as such. The gradual impact of this imbalance on the environment translated over the years into ammoniacal, bacteriological, and nitrates pollution, as well as soil and underground pollution that affected underground waters.

After independence, in order to counter these developments the government took action as early as 1990, and, in 1993, specific laws were passed on environmental protection, water resources, and protection of the underground. In 1999 the World Bank contributed \$125,000 to Moldova's program for protecting and preserving the biodiversity of its environment.

## **Education**

Moldova inherited the Soviet education system, marred by decades of ideological indoctrination and governed by the requirements of socialist central planning. Beginning in 1995, the Parliament adopted a new set of regulations to reform and modernize education and make it more adequate to prepare Moldova's future workforce and decision makers, in keeping with the challenges of transition, civil society and the market economy.

A specific aspect of Moldova's education reform was the return to the local population's pre-Soviet traditions in schools, colleges and universities. To counter the effects of the decades of cultural Russification, Moldova turned to Romania with which educational cooperation has been intense after independence. Romania's Ministry of Education currently provides thousands of grants and scholarships for Moldovan students to study at Romanian universities. For the 1999-2000 academic year, several thousands graduate and undergraduate students from Moldova were scheduled to study in Romania.

## **Women's Issues**

In the context of Moldova's traditional culture, Moldovan women have suffered more than men the consequences of the country's economic decline and social disruptions, more especially in the aftermath of independence and the difficulties of transition. Moldova's government supports educational efforts to increase public awareness of the condition of women and the law provides that women shall be equal to men. However, according to statistics, women have been affected disproportionately by unemployment and social discrimination.

One of Moldova's most serious problems is trafficking in women for forced prostitution abroad. Moldovan

young women and girls are trafficked to various locations, including Turkey, Kosovo, Italy, Greece and Israel. According to certain sources, as many as 10,000 Moldovan women are currently working as prostitutes in foreign countries. The International Organization for Migration (OIM) reports that more than 50 percent of the women working in forced prostitution in Kosovo are from Moldova. To combat trafficking in persons, a Human Trafficking Task Force was established by the government in 2000 with the objective of implementing a project of the OIM on trafficking women and girls from Moldova.

## **5. National Security**

### **Moldova's Ministry of National Security**

Moldova's Ministry of National Security replaced the Soviet-era Committee for State Security, the KGB branch of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1991, the local assets and personnel of the former KGB taking orders from Moscow were transferred to the new authorities in Chisinau and, in 1994, Moscow and Chisinau reached an agreement on intelligence cooperation, pledging to work together on a broad range of security issues, including exchange of information, combating terrorism and illegal arms sales. According to data made public in 1997, only 30 percent of the officers currently working at the Ministry of National Security were hired as KGB officers before 1990. The overall staff was reportedly reduced by 30-40 percent since then. With regard to public access to files of the former KGB in Moldova, the policy of the government has been to keep them secret. Only close relatives of people who suffered deportation under the Soviet rule are permitted access to the files, provided the documents contain no other names.

### **Moldova's Armed Forces**

Moldova's armed forces are part of the structural inheritance of the state system of the former Soviet Union. Under Moldova's old Soviet-style Constitution, defense was devolved to the Soviet armed forces which the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was mandated to equip and provide with manpower. Under those circumstances, between 1989-1989 over 9,000 young Moldovans were drafted by the USSR to fight in Afghanistan. After 1991 the government took steps meant to create a brand new reliable army, apt to ensure the country's security, independence and territorial integrity.

Moldova has some 8,000 servicemen, organized into three motor rifle brigades, one artillery brigade and one reconnaissance and assault division. In 1994 Moldova's air force consisted of one fighter regiment, one helicopter squadron and one missile brigade.

Moldova is a member of the U.S. Partnership for Peace initiative. In 1997 the first ever Partnership for Peace exercise involving American and Moldovan troops took place in northern Moldova; the event marked the first time U.S. troops were present in the territory of a former Soviet republic. In the following years Moldova's military took part in various U.S. Partnership for Peace exercises and military applications.

Soon after the victory of the left in the July 2001 general elections Moldovan troops took part in joint military exercises with Russian troops at the Kantemirovskaya Division's training grounds in the Moscow region. Various reports have suggested that the exercise could be an indication of a new line in the government's attitude toward Russia and the CIS. Other reports indicate that the joint military exercise could also be a first

step toward the future creation of a joint Russian-Moldovan peace-keeping battalion, for possible deployment, some time in the future, on the secession-plagued east bank of the Nistru River. Such a move would politically justify and extend Russia's military presence in the troubled Tiraspol enclave, beyond the OSCE-scheduled deadline for evacuating it from Moldova by 2002.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

Gribincea, Mihai. "Challenging Moscow's Doctrine on Military Bases". In *Transition*, v. I, no.19 (1995) pp. 4-8

## **6. Foreign Policy**

Moldova's foreign policy efforts have been complicated by its geographic position and its history --partly shared with its huge former ruler in the east, partly shared with its much smaller western neighbor, Romania. The uncertainties of Moldova's status are those of the one and only successor state of the USSR to inherit legacies from both an ancient root-country --the Principality of Moldova (and a modern core-state --Romania) on the one hand; and the recent legacies of a much more powerful core-state --Russia-- on the other hand. These polarizations have recently surfaced in two divergent initiatives (apparently inspired by the model of the Russia-Belarus union). While in Chisinau Moldova's Liberal Party launched a vaguely articulated project advocating a "state-union" between Moldova and Romania, in Tiraspol, the "Zubr" parliamentary group launched the idea of making Moldova and Ukraine joint partners in the Russia-Belarus state-union. Albeit vague and abstract, the concept of a "Russia-Belarus-Moldova" state-union has surfaced in a statement made in August 2001 by President Vladimir Voronin, who described it as a "possibility", taking into account the fact that --in his words--"Moldova is open to any form of collaboration with the other member states in the CIS". Voronin was careful to note that Ukraine's attitude vis-a-vis a possible "Moldova-Russia-Belarus" state-union should also be taken into account.

On the other side of the issue, a west-oriented Moldova, aspiring to become a member of the European Union featured prominently in the year 2000 on Moldova's foreign policy agenda, peculiarly during the visits the country's former Foreign Minister, Nicolae Cernomaz made to Washington and Brussels. With Cernomaz soon after removed from office, observers have wondered if Moldova's new government is not after all inclined toward cultivating stronger ties with Russia and the CIS.

The expectation that Moscow could use its critically important leverage in order to impose a durable solution to the trans-Nistriian secession conundrum has been cited as an explanation for that inclination, should a throwback in the direction of Moldova's former ruler ever materialize in the future, taking its inspiration from the yet to be defined Russia-Belarus state-union.

### **Relations with the United States:**

Related to Moldova's population and compared to U.S. assistance going to other former Soviet republics, American assistance going to Moldova ranks second among that received by other member states of the CIS. Moldova's first two Presidents (Mircea Snegur and Petru Lucinschi) visited Washington during their tenure in office and were received at the White House. In August 2001, the Bush administration emphasized its current

expectations from Moldova's new government in a letter to Moldova's President Vladimir Voronin. The letter stressed that Moldova's future is with the West, Europe, and the trans-Atlantic community, and that the United States looks forward to the Chisinau government's pledge to move ahead with democratic reform and continue the country's transition process towards a market economy.

The same was pointed out by Secretary of State Colin Powell who reaffirmed the United States willingness to further support economic reforms and democratization in Moldova, stressing the need of a successful finalization of agricultural reform. A U.S.-Moldova bilateral Agreement on Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties was signed in 2001, to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of all national, religious or ethnic groups residing in Moldova and were in one way or another, victims of genocide.

Regarding the trans-Nistrian region, the United States supports the OSCE 1999 Istanbul Summit accord demanding the withdrawal of Russia's troops from Moldova's east-bank separatist territory by 2002, and the removal and scrapping of the weapons and ammunition stockpiles left there by the former 14th Soviet Army by 2001.

Through USAID, Moldova receives from the United States a large variety of programs to support land privatization reforms, agricultural yield growth, democratization and market economy reforms.

Moldova takes part in the programs of the U.S. Partnership for Peace and is a signatory of the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction Agreement. In 1998, American technical assistance to Moldova stood at about \$25 million and in 2001, through USAID, the United States plans to provide an extra several million dollars contribution in humanitarian assistance to help Moldova's needy population living under the poverty threshold.

## **Moldova and Russia:**

### **The CIS Connexion**

Although Moldova signed the Minsk Agreement and the Alma Ata Declaration in December 1991, the Chisinau Parliament --strongly influenced at that time by the pro-Romanian Popular Front bloc of deputies-- dragged its feet on ratifying the documents. It was only in April 1994 that a new Parliament finally approved, with reservations, Moldova's membership in the CIS and Moldova signed the CIS charter on economic union. The Republic of Moldova declined to join the political and military structures of the CIS.

However, soon after the advent of the left and the victory of the party of Moldova's Communists in the 2001 elections, Moldova's new government signed a Military-Strategic Cooperation Agreement with Russia. After their August 2001 talks, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Moldova's President Vladimir Voronin agreed that the two countries are ready "for all forms of collaboration" within the CIS, especially in the economic and military fields.

Alongside the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan, Moldova is part of the so-called GUUAM group of successor states that share specific economic and trade interests, somewhat distancing themselves from the main priorities existing within the broader structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The world after September 11, 2001 has added a new dimension to the importance of the GUUAM group. Almost overnight, one of the GUUAM member-countries --Uzbekistan, has become militarily

and diplomatically a de-facto ally of the United States by hosting American troops that take part in the war waged against Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

However, Moldova's long-abiding commercial interests and its quasi-total dependence on energy supplies, traditionally delivered from Russia, are among the chief priorities tying Moldova to the CIS structures and, in a more special way to the Russian Federation.

Russia expressed interest in a specific part of Moldova in 2000, when the Russian Federation's Duma defined the Tiraspol enclave as a region of special strategic interest for Russia; and again in 2001, when leftist forces in Russia's legislature suggested that Moscow, Minsk, Chisinau and Tiraspol start consultations for an eventual creation of a "common state-union" that should join Russia, Belarus and Moldova in a way that would put an end to the Moldavian Nistrian Republic's secession from Chisinau.

An important component of the Moldova-Russia relation is the continued presence of Russia's military on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Russia's former 14th Army, currently downgraded to the status of an "Operational Group, continues to be headquartered in the Tiraspol separatist enclave. The Russian army remains a sizable regional force and is the only Russian military presence on foreign territory outside the Russian Federation in Europe. In conjunction with the breakaway Tiraspol authorities, it controls over 40 thousand tons of weapons and ammunition depots of the former Red Army located on the Nistru east-bank. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) the 40,000-42,000 tons of stockpile of Russian arms in the separatist region of Transnistria is a "candy store" for terrorist groups. In this connection it has reportedly been "item of interest" well before the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, and that the potential for misuse of the arsenal had increased since then.

The stockpile has been stored in eastern Moldova, at Colbasna close to the

Ukrainian border, since Soviet forces withdrew from Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the late 1980s and 1990s. There has been virtually no withdrawal of ammunition since then, although parts of the stockpile have been dispersed to help arm Transnistrian separatist forces, to assist local arms production, and for sale to third parties. In 1991, 2,596 railcars of ammunition and rockets were present in Colbasna. By 1994, Russia declared only 1,362 railcars were present -- apparently because the stockpile was divided in 1994 between the Russian armed forces in Transnistria and the separatist army (currently 4,500 strong). The two parts of the stockpile are now guarded by 100 Russian and 300 Transnistrian troops, with no independent monitoring of the ammunition which passes from one half of the stockpile to the other.

The Colbasna stockpile has already fuelled conflict in Moldova and elsewhere. During the 1991-92 war between the Moldovan state and Transnistria, some 15,000 firearms, 18 tanks, and nearly 100 artillery guns and armored vehicles passed to the Transnistrian army. In 1994, Transnistrian authorities sold "Grad" rocket launchers to Abkhazia (which had just fought a successful war of separation from the Georgian state). Moldovan investigations have revealed that Tiraspol, the capital of the separatist territory, also attempted to sell "Igla" ground-to-air missiles to an unidentified buyer in 1996- 97. The same report alleged that the Rabnita Steel Mills had succeeded in converting materials from the stockpile into arms for export. The stockpile is one aspect of the Russian military presence in Transnistria which has continued in the post-Soviet period despite Moldovan opposition. Tiraspol is a historic Russian military settlement. As shown above, the regional authorities opposed Moldovan independence in 1991-92, and soon after gained control over a narrow strip of

land, bounded by the Nistru River and the border with Ukraine, in which the bulk of Moldova's industry and electricity-generating capacity was concentrated.

## **Moldova and Romania**

Romania was the first state to recognize the independence of Moldova on the day it was proclaimed, 27 August 1991. However, a basic treaty between Chisinau and Bucharest has been slow in being finalized because of disagreement on a number of points, most of them related to the way of describing the nature of the relationship between two countries which, while being separate political entities, share identical origins and a common history, the same language and quasi-identical cultural legacies.

Romania's diplomatic action in favor of the Republic of Moldova played an important part in the latter's admission in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe in 2001. In spite of differing views on the issue of whether the countries constitute "two Romanian states" (a view which Chisinau declines to accept) Moldova acknowledges that its relations with Romania are privileged. A controversial Treaty of Cooperation between Moldova and Romania was signed on April 28, 2000.

## **Moldova and Europe**

Moldova became a member and of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, and of the World Trade Organization in 2001, two moves which were interpreted as signals of the country's desire for deeper integration in the global economic system and in the community of Euro-Atlantic interests and shared values.

Visiting Brussels in July 2001, President Vladimir Voronin stated that "European integration remains on Moldova's top priority foreign policy agenda". Along these lines, western expectations are that, requirements fulfilled and all other conditions permitting, the Republic of Moldova could eventually become a full member of the European Union by the year 2015.

### ***Questions and Issues:***

- \* How did the organizing principles of Moldova's foreign policy evolve after the country's accession to independence, and what were the main driving factors involved in Moldova's apparent wavering between East and West?
- \* Do you think Moldova may face the risk of losing its statehood, either by inclusion in a future state-union with Russia and Belarus, or by eventually, in one way or another, joining Romania?
- \* Assess the impact of the trans-Nistrian secession in Moldova's foreign policy uncertainties.

### ***Suggested Reading:***

King, Charles. *The Moldovans*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, CA.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000

## Part IV: Resources

1. *Belarus and Moldova Country Studies* (Federal Research Division, Library of Congress 1995)

[*Readers' Guides* available at the School of Professional and Area Studies]

### 2. Reference Works:

*The Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Moldova* (Scarecrow Press, 2000)

*The Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe* (Garland Publishing, Inc. 2000)

### 3. Suggested Periodicals:

*Foreign Affairs*

*Foreign Policy*

*Post-Soviet Affairs*

*Problems of Post-Communism*

### 4. Web Resources:

See the Moldova page on the FSI/ School of Professional and Area Studies

# MOZAMBIQUE

## A Self-Study Guide



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The **Self-Study Guide: Mozambique** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Mozambican history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The guide should serve an introductory self-study resource. The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this guide was prepared by Dr. William Minter, senior research fellow at Africa Action in Washington, D.C. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are public domain, from Internet sites that explicitly say "can be used for non-profit or educational use, or are from the



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First Edition

July 2001

Cover credit: Eduardo Mondlane University, <http://www.uem.mz/malangatana/230999/resum2.jpg>

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## Capsule Chronology

**Early First Millennium** - settlement of Mozambique by Bantu-speaking peoples.

**Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries** - height of Zimbabwe civilization located in region of present-day Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

**Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries** - height of Swahili city-states on East African coast.

**1498** - Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama lands in Mozambique.

**Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries** - Portuguese, Arabs and Africans contend for and collaborate in control of trade from the coast.

**Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries** - Portuguese occupy parts of Zambezi valley as well as key coastal posts, but many settlers are assimilated into African kingdoms. Most of interior remains under African control.

**Eighteenth to Nineteenth Centuries** - The slave trade is at its height in Mozambique, with slaves shipped both across the Atlantic and to Indian Ocean islands.

**1880s to 1917** - Portuguese complete their military conquest of Mozambique.

**1884-1885** - Berlin Conference at which European powers decided how to divide up Africa.

**1895** - Gungunhana, chief of the Gaza state, is defeated by the Portuguese and deported to the Azores, leading to Portuguese occupation of southern Mozambique.

**1890s to 1910s** - Southern Mozambique becomes a major source of workers for the mines of South Africa, and Lourenço Marques the key port for South Africa's mining region.

**1926** - Coup establishes dictatorship in Portugal, which lasts until 1974, under António Salazar from 1932 to 1968.

**June 16, 1960** - Mueda massacre in northern Mozambique, in which Portuguese kill an estimated 600 protesters.

**June 25, 1962** - Founding of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO)

**September 25, 1964** - Beginning of the war for independence

**February 4, 1969** - Assassination of FRELIMO's first president, Eduardo Mondlane.

**April 25, 1974** - Coup overthrows dictatorship in Portugal.

**June 25, 1975** - Independence of Mozambique.

**April 18, 1980** - Independence of Zimbabwe

**March 16, 1984** - Mozambique signs Nkomati nonaggression pact with South Africa.

**October 19, 1986** - Mozambican President Samora Machel and 33 others die in suspicious air crash

inside South African border with Mozambique.

**October 4, 1992** - General Peace Agreement for Peace in Mozambique signed in Rome.

**October 27-28, 1994** - In Mozambique's first national multiparty elections, voters choose Joaquim Chissano as president and give legislative majority to Frelimo.

**December 3-4, 1999** - Second national multiparty elections reelect Joaquim Chissano as president and maintain Frelimo majority in parliament.

## Maps



There are many maps of Mozambique available online.

These two, from the UN's Africa Recovery magazine ([www.africarecovery.org](http://www.africarecovery.org)) and the CIA's World Factbook 2000 ([www.cia.gov/cia/](http://www.cia.gov/cia/)

publications/factbook) show the position of the country and selected cities and towns.

The map on the next page, from the government of Mozambique, shows the

provinces into which the country is divided.

Other maps show more detail and provide current information on a wide variety of subjects.

A good place to start is the Relief Web map centre:



<http://www.reliefweb.int>

<http://www.mozambique.mz/dadosbas/provinc.htm> Mozambique's ten provinces (plus Maputo city) are the basic geographical divisions within the country. The provincial divisions are significant in economic and cultural as well as political terms. They are commonly divided into "South": Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane; "Center": Manica, Sofala, Tete and Zambézia; and "North": Nampula, Cabo Delgado and Niassa. The names of the provincial capitals are shown in the list to the right of the map.

The URL on the Mozambican government website (above) has descriptions and a detailed map of each province (can be slow to download).

As in the U.S. the usage of the terms "South" and "North" is not consistent. Sometimes Tete or Zambézia is included in the "North" for example, or people may even refer to everything north of Gaza and Inhambane as "North." People may also speak of being in or going to "the capital," "the provinces" (generally the provincial capitals) or "the districts" (the next level of administrative subdivision).

## History

*Particularly recommended for additional background on Mozambican history:* Jeanne Marie Penvenne, "History of Mozambique" on [www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com); Malyn Newitt, *A History of Mozambique* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995). Also see additional sources in the bibliography.

## Pre-Colonial

The history of the geographical area which is now Mozambique is deeply intertwined with that of its African neighbors and of the Indian Ocean region which borders it to the east. Its rivers and ports served as gateways for trade between the interior and the sea for at least a thousand years before arrival of Portuguese ships coming around the Cape of Good Hope from the Atlantic.

Like most of Africa south of the Sahara, Mozambique is populated by speakers of Bantu languages whose ancestors brought iron technology, agriculture and cattle along with their languages from west-central Africa between 1,500 and 2,000 years ago. Archaeologists think Bantu speakers arrived in Mozambique from the North along the coast as well as from the west, intermarrying with earlier peoples who lived by hunting and gathering.

By the end of the first millennium, kingdoms featuring stone enclosures or *zimbabwes* were emerging on the interior plateau to the west of Mozambique. The peak of the Zimbabwe civilization, which overlapped the border with present-day Mozambique, was in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Along with the area of central Africa in what is now the Katanga province of the Democratic Republic of Congo, this region supplied gold, copper, ivory and other goods for trade within the region and through Indian Ocean ports in Mozambique and to the north.

While trade and migration across the Indian Ocean, including routes from Indonesia through Madagascar to Mozambique, date back thousands of years, the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the height of the Swahili (the word means coast) Afro- Arab city states that extended as far south as Sofala, near present-day Beira in central Mozambique.

The voyage of Vasco da Gama around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean in 1498 was the beginning of Portuguese influence on Mozambique and the Indian Ocean region. They established control over Mozambique Island in northern Mozambique and Sofala in the center, as well as setting up trading posts as far as Tete on the Zambezi River. *Prazos* (land grants) became independent centers of Afro-Portuguese military power, contending for power and trade with other African chiefdoms and Arab and Portuguese traders.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the slave trade became the most dominant part of the coastal trade. Slaves from Mozambique and its interior were sold for trade across the Atlantic, and within the Indian Ocean to both Arab destinations and French- controlled islands. Declining after the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the slave trade nevertheless continued clandestinely into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Colonialism

As seen in the previous section, the common reference to over four centuries of Portuguese colonialism is misleading. Before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, colonial rule was confined to only a few enclaves. At independence in 1975 Portuguese domination was, for the most part, less than a century old, coinciding with the European occupation of the African interior by Britain, France, Belgium and Germany.

On the east coast Portugal claimed a long strip of land stretching more than 1500 miles from the German (later British) colony of Tanganyika in the north to British-controlled South Africa and Swaziland in the south. To the interior Mozambique bordered on the British-held territories of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. By the turn of the century most of this territory had been conquered. The Gaza chiefs in the south were finally defeated in 1897. But conquest was only completed with the close of World War I. A widespread revolt in Zambézia was suppressed only towards the end of 1918.

Portuguese-ruled Mozambique had a population of approximately 10,000 whites, 12,000 mestiços (persons of mixed race) and almost 3 million Africans, according to estimates published in 1920. The least developed colonial power, Portugal lacked the capacity to administer, much less develop, the territory. From the 1890s huge portions of the country were handed over to concessionary companies

financed by British and other foreign capital.

Mozambique's dependence on other white powers was also reflected in the transport links and labor flows to its neighbors. Before the colonial powers arrived, shared languages had joined the peoples of southern Mozambique to South Africa, central Mozambique to Rhodesia, and northern Mozambique to central and east Africa. The economic bonds forged under colonialism reinforced these east-west axes, leaving north-south links within Mozambique to neglect.

The South African connection made southern Mozambique an economic dependency of the mining economy of the Transvaal and the most developed area within Mozambique. Portugal supplied the mines with migrant workers, while South Africa channeled trade through Lourenço Marques and eventually agreed to remit part of the miners' wages to Mozambique in hard currency.

In central Mozambique, Beira served as the port for Southern Rhodesia. Mozambican migrants went to work on the mines and white farms across the border, although in smaller numbers than the southern flow to South Africa. Even further north, on a less organized basis, Mozambicans emigrated to find work in Nyasaland, Tanganyika and as far afield as Zanzibar and Kenya. There was a glaring contrast between the economic opportunities available under Portuguese colonialism and in these neighboring countries.

In most areas, nevertheless, the majority continued to depend on small-scale subsistence agriculture. Their participation in the colonial economy was limited to occasional forced labor on roads or on Portuguese plantations or, later in the century, forced cultivation of cotton and other crops to serve industry in Portugal. Portuguese colonialism was not unique in coercing a labor force to serve the European economy. Its relative underdevelopment, however, meant that market incentives were less significant and force more prominent than in neighboring British territories.

According to Portuguese colonial theory, African natives (*indígenas*) could exempt themselves from forced labor by assimilating Portuguese culture and in effect becoming Portuguese. A small number succeeded in meeting the tests of income, education and life style to gain this *assimilado* status. Others, even if not assimilated, were incorporated into the colonial order with some relative advantage over other Mozambicans: chiefs used in administration, overseers, teachers in mission schools, semi-skilled workers in the ports or administration.

At mid-century, this colonial order appeared to be a stable although backward system. The Salazar regime had constructed a more integrated Portuguese empire, expanding forced cultivation and encouraging Portuguese settlement. The white population of Mozambique increased from about 18,000 in 1930 to some 85,000 in 1960. Salazar's corporatist ideology excluded dangerously liberal democratic ideas both at home and in Africa. Independence was not an issue, the theory held, because the colonies were an integral part of Portugal. Neither African protest, as in South Africa, nor nationalist stirrings, as in other African colonies, were particularly visible in Mozambique before the 1960s.

Even the *assimilado* elite, however, who to a certain extent bought into the Portuguese model of culture and politics, rejected its implications of white racial superiority. They also reacted against competition

from an increased flow of white immigrants, who were legally assumed to be 'civilized' even if illiterate. Discrimination favored whites from Portugal not only over Africans, but also over mestiços and even locally born whites.

## Nationalism and the Struggle for Independence

Mozambican nationalism emerged first of all among those who had some education, whether or not they were officially assimilados. The numbers were not large--in the late 1950s there were probably not more than a few thousand Africans and a somewhat larger number of mestiços who had completed more than four years of school. The largest cluster of educated Mozambicans was close to the capital, in the south, where Portugal had permitted Protestant missions from the US and Switzerland. Beira and the Zambezi area were other zones of concentration.

The individuals and groups who came together in June 1962 to form Frelimo reflected these diverse origins. The founding congress met in Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika--later to become Tanzania--which had just won independence from Britain. The leaders of Frelimo had the example of the successful independence struggles by Britain's African colonies. The movement's first president, Eduardo Mondlane, had served in the UN Secretariat overseeing independence referenda in West Africa. The contrast with Portugal's refusal even to consider independence was striking. It was clear that the route to independence for Mozambique would pass through war.

In September 1964 Frelimo guerrillas launched attacks in northern Mozambique, beginning the 'armed struggle.' It was, above all, Frelimo's virtually undisputed leadership of this war of national liberation that positioned it as the natural successor when the Portuguese colonial state collapsed a decade later. Tanzania and later Zambia gave Frelimo bases for diplomacy and for the guerrilla war inside Mozambique. Portuguese secret police intrigue, exploiting internal divisions, culminated in the assassination of President Mondlane in early 1969. But the leadership which regrouped around top guerrilla commander Samora Machel proved remarkably cohesive. Although rival organizations announced their existence from time to time in various African capitals, none gained significant credibility. Individual rivals to the Frelimo leadership either deserted to the Portuguese or faded into obscurity in exile.

Frelimo sought to create a broad base of international support. It declined to take sides in the Sino-Soviet dispute and won military aid both from China and the Soviet Union. In the West, religious organizations and the Nordic countries provided support for Frelimo's health and education programs. But efforts to build links with other Western governments or mainstream organizations foundered on vested interests tying the Western bloc to Lisbon.

This pattern of international support, together with the radicalizing effect of guerrilla war, reinforced Marxist ideas within the Frelimo leadership. The emerging Frelimo perspective stressed collective commitment and mobilization of the people for social justice as well as national independence. Those who opposed Mondlane and Machel were seen as opponents of the revolutionary process, as witnessed by

their pursuit of individual privilege, their resort to divisive ethnic and racial appeals, and their willingness to be wooed by the colonial authorities.

Portuguese repression ruled out open political action, so Frelimo's activities were played out in exile, in areas of guerrilla operations and in scattered clandestine cells. The war opened up 'liberated areas' in the north in Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Tete. Here the movement set up administration, health services and schools. By 1973 Frelimo forces in these areas, as well as in several other provinces, were stretching the Portuguese military. The Portuguese coup in April 1974 allowed clandestine Frelimo supporters greater freedom to operate. The movement was met with a wave of enthusiasm and applauded for defeating colonialism.

Nevertheless, most areas of Mozambique, including the cities, experienced little impact from the war of liberation. When the independence agreement was signed in September, the movement's organizational structures around the country were at best rudimentary. In this period Frelimo entrusted local organization to ad hoc *grupos dinamizadores* (dynamizing groups). These were self-constituted residential or workplace committees of Frelimo members or sympathizers. While they took their general direction from the national leadership, their membership ranged from long-time supporters to others newly engaged by the excitement of the hour or by the sense that this was the bandwagon to ride. Their activities ranged from political organization to literacy campaigns and cultural programs. As Portuguese authority receded and settlers left, abandoning or sabotaging their farms and shops, the local *grupo dinamizador* was often called on to pick up the pieces.

One month before independence, Frelimo President Samora Machel left Tanzania for a triumphal tour of Mozambique from north to south. On independence day, June 25, dance troupes from all ten provinces performed before festive crowds in Lourenço Marques (Maputo) and in each provincial capital, symbolizing national unity. The constitution promised people's power under Frelimo's leadership, solidarity with national liberation movements, and a drive to eliminate underdevelopment and exploitation. Few expected such ambitious goals to be easy, but most were optimistic. Hope was the dominant note, not just of the day, but of the years immediately to follow.

*Topic to explore:*

**Eduardo Mondlane:** First president of FRELIMO, regarded as father of the nation, graduated from Oberlin College and gained his doctorate at Northwestern University. Mozambique's national university is named after him. Among the resources you will find on the web:

<http://www.cphrc.org.uk/sources/so-col/so-col-160561.htm>

Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, May 16, 1961, Subject: Conditions in Mozambique, Participants: Mr. Eduardo Mondlane, Mr. William J.

Wright, Jr., Deputy Director AF/E.



[http://www.oberlin.edu/~alummag/oampast/oam\\_spring98/Alum\\_n\\_n/eduardo.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/~alummag/oampast/oam_spring98/Alum_n_n/eduardo.html)

Oberlin Alumni News and Notes

See what other sources you can find in libraries and on the web. In Mozambique you should be able to get his book *The Struggle for Mozambique* and a memoir by his widow, Janet Mondlane.

## War and Peace

On June 25, 2000, Mozambique celebrated 25 years of independence. During that period, Mozambique was at war for more than 16 years, from the first Rhodesian attacks in March 1976 to the Rome peace treaty of October 1992. And implementation of the treaty took more than two years. The period since 1994 is in effect covered by later sections of this guide, particularly those on politics and economics. This section focuses on the period from 1975 through 1994, and particularly on issues of war and peace. It is also particularly brief, since there are abundant published sources covering this period.

While divisions within Mozambique would in any case have provided reasons for

tension along regional and political lines in the years after independence, the intractable war and pervasive destruction that resulted was above all the result of Mozambique's engagement in the regional conflict accompanying the end of white minority rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Without this context, its political history would probably have resembled more closely that of Tanzania, its close ally to the north.

The scale of war over the years and the timing of peace efforts were also related to external as well as internal factors – a relatively contained conflict in the period 1976-1980, affecting primarily central Mozambique and tied to the last stages of the war for the independence of Zimbabwe; an overwhelmingly devastating reality throughout the country from 1981 through 1989, the years of P.W. Botha's "total strategy" to defend apartheid; and a gradual transition from war to peace from 1990 to 1994, paralleling almost exactly the complicated mix of talks and covert violence in South Africa during the years preceding South Africa's first democratic election.

The Mozambican National Resistance (first MNR and then Renamo, the equivalent Portuguese acronym) was initiated by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization as an adjunct to Rhodesia's attacks on Mozambique, which provided rear bases for Zimbabwean guerrillas fighting the white minority regime in that country. Throughout the war, it retained the legacy of its military origin, with most of its soldiers being recruited by force in the countryside. Increasingly, however, it also gained strength from the neutrality or sympathy of Mozambicans alienated by the government's failures, abuses of power, and repressive counter-insurgency strategies. By the end of the war, after transition to the status of a political

party, it also provided a political home for many Mozambicans opposed to the government who had not participated in the war.

[The relationship between the external and internal causes of war in Mozambique was much debated during the war and in the immediate post-peace agreement years. For an extensive discussion, see William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras* (London: Zed, 1994). For alternate views see the sources cited there, and more current works such as T. Young and M. Hall, *Confronting Leviathan* (London: Hurst, 1997). For a summary of the chronology of the war, see particularly Chapter 2 of *Apartheid's Contras*.]

The war escalated rapidly in the 1980s. At Zimbabwe's independence, Renamo forces were transferred from Rhodesia to South Africa, and participated in the expansion of covert and surrogate armies directed by South Africa's special forces against its neighbors. While Mozambique did not provide military bases for the African National Congress as it had for Zimbabwean guerrillas, it did provide political support and passage through Mozambique to the ANC. By the end of 1982, Mozambique was seeking a detente with South Africa, and in 1984, hoping for an end to South African backing for Renamo, President Machel signed the Nkomati Accord pledging that neither country would provide any support for armed groups in the other's territory.

While Mozambique kept the terms of the Accord, and won increasing diplomatic and financial support from Western countries, including the conservative administrations in London and Washington, South Africa did not. While South African material support for Renamo did eventually decrease, it was more than sufficient to ensure the continuation of the war against Mozambique's weakened defenses. Since the primary targets of attack were civilians, social services and transport in the rural areas, it was in any case impossible for an army which often lacked fuel for its vehicles to defend a territory almost twice the size of California with fewer paved roads than the state of Delaware.

In 1989, the UN estimated the economic loss to Mozambique from war over the period 1980-1988 at \$15 billion, more than five times the gross domestic product in 1988 (United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force, *South African Destabilization: The Economic Cost of Frontline Resistance to Apartheid*. New York / Addis Ababa, 1989). The same study also estimated the loss of lives directly and indirectly due to the war as 900,000 people, more than half young children.

[Among recent books in English dealing with the human reality of the war, one can particularly recommend Nordstrom, 1997. Older books include Magaia, 1988 and Human Rights Watch, 1992 (see bibliography for full references). On-line, see Alcinda Honwana, "Sealing the Past, Facing the Future: Trauma Healing in Rural Mozambique" at [http://www.c-r.org/acc\\_moz/honwana.htm](http://www.c-r.org/acc_moz/honwana.htm)].

The details of the tortuous peace process which led to the Rome agreement in October 1992 and elections in October 1994 are described in many sources available in print and on-line (see particularly [http://www.c-r.org/acc\\_moz/contents\\_moz.htm](http://www.c-r.org/acc_moz/contents_moz.htm)). The reasons for success are complicated, as indicated below in William Minter's review of several books on the topic (the review was originally published in *Peace and Change: A Journal of Peace Research*, April, 2000).

## The Mozambican Peace Process: An (Over)abundance of Lessons

by William Minter

Richard Syngé, *Mozambique: UN Peacekeeping in Action, 1992-94*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

Jeremy Armon, Dylan Hendrickson and Alex Vines, eds., *The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective*. London: Conciliation Resources and Maputo: Arquivo Historico, 1998.

Carolyn Nordstrom, *A Different Kind of War Story*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Thomas Ohlson, *Power Politics and Peace Politics: Intra-State Conflict Resolution in Southern Africa*. Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1998.

Success, the saying goes, has many parents. The successful peace process in Mozambique, taking added prominence by comparison to the war still raging in Angola and other conflicts on the African continent, is no exception. The books discussed or cited in this review -- recent English-language books which have come to the attention of this reviewer -- well illustrate the point. A more comprehensive bibliography might turn up even more aspects to be considered. But the factors singled out for attention in these books are wide-ranging enough to confound any attempt to draw simple lessons to be emulated elsewhere: international mediators ranging from diplomats to tycoons to church leaders, multilateral and bilateral donors, global and regional geopolitics, as well as Mozambican political and military forces, religious groups and cultural traditions, both national and local.

Syngé provides both a chronological and analytical overview, with particular attention to the role of ONUMOZ, the \$700 million UN peacekeeping operation in Mozambique between December 1992 and December 1994. The success of the peace operation, Syngé sums up, was due mainly to "the commitment to peace of all Mozambicans; the importance placed on the political functions of the leading peace commission; the skill, patience and flexibility of the SRSG [special representative of the UN Secretary-General, Aldo Ajello]; strong financial and logistic support from the international community; and the political support of neighboring states" (p. 146). In the next paragraph Syngé quotes a 'senior UN official in Maputo' as saying "Success was achieved despite ONUMOZ and not because of ONUMOZ" (Ibid.).

Syngé's lucid account documents both successes and weaknesses. He shows how the process of implementing the Rome peace accord of October 4, 1992 was pushed along, despite a seemingly unending series of delays, to culminate in demobilization of government and Renamo troops, formation of a new national army, and multi-party elections won by incumbent President Joaquim Chissano and the ruling Frelimo Party. One of the principal goals of the process, Syngé notes, was to convert the rebel Renamo group from a force of destruction to a credible political organization, an objective at least minimally achieved by international engagement and direct funding of Renamo to replace its previous external support from South Africa. In this way, and in other steps such as two-year subsidy packages for

demobilized soldiers on both sides, the international community literally paid for peace (total demobilization costs came to about \$85 million, according to Syngé; other sources put the total as high as \$95 million, or more than \$1,000 per soldier demobilized).

Yet the weight of the UN presence during this period increased rather than diminished the country's already massive donor dependency. Short-term priorities diverted attention from longer-term requirements for reconstruction (for example, weapons collection was a notable failure). More generally, Syngé argues, the international community "effectively displaced the normal functions of government ... [and] derailed the government's own efforts to reform" (p. 149).

Syngé does draw up his list of "lessons" for successful peacekeeping [1. a credible formula, 2. manageable components, 3. a closely monitored cease-fire, 4. outside support, 5. clear rules, and 6. capacity building]. He rates Mozambique as successful in 1, 3, and 4, and less successful on 2, 5 and 6.

Syngé's first point pushes the search for factors responsible for success back into the pre-implementation phase, namely the existence of a viable peace settlement. The best resource on the process leading to the settlement is probably the edited collection by Conciliation Resources, which is also available in full on their web site ([www.c-r.org/acc\\_moz/contents\\_moz.htm](http://www.c-r.org/acc_moz/contents_moz.htm)). In addition to a comprehensive chronology and the text of the Rome peace agreement and other key documents, *The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective* sets the agreement in historical context, with general background essays by Zimbabwean scholar (and former army officer) Martin Rupiya and Mozambican journalist Fernando Gonçalves. It also features an article on the role of the churches by two of the key participants (Anglican Bishop Sengulane and Catholic Bishop Gonçalves), a detailed account of the central role of entrepreneur 'Tiny' Rowland in the diplomacy, and Mozambican scholar Alcinda Honwana on the role of traditional ritual in healing war trauma.

Despite its modest length (100 pages in the printed edition), this collection is rich in insights which go beyond conventional wisdom on Mozambique's peace process. Thus, for example, Zimbabwe is portrayed as an important mediating force as well as in its better-known role as a military ally of the Mozambican government. And while the Italian congregation of Sant' Egidio is given credit for its well-known role in hosting the peace talks in Rome, so are the longer-term peace efforts of local Mozambican church leaders and the more material incentives provided by 'Tiny' Rowland and the Italian government in particular.

Honwana's essay stresses not only the resilience of local Mozambican communities in confronting the trauma of war but also the fact that these measures still fall short of ensuring reconciliation and a stable peace at local levels. Five years after the peace agreement, she notes, writing in 1997, in the rural areas "profound social unrest and intermittent violence pose a persistent threat ... tensions reflect both the deep social divisions spilling over from the long war and the desperate survival tactics of many Mozambicans attempting to rebuild their lives in the face of overwhelming poverty" (p. 75). The horrors experienced by many Mozambicans, particularly but not exclusively at the hands of Renamo, "cannot simply be erased from the collective memory" (p. 80).

The same issue is explored in depth in Carolyn Nordstrom's reflective and moving *A Different Kind of*

*War Story*. During extensive travel in rural Mozambique between 1988 and 1996, anthropologist Nordstrom talked with local people about their experience of war. She found not only horror stories, but also extraordinary creativity in not only surviving war but also in constructing a pervasive nationwide culture of peacemaking. Most surprisingly, she found that this culture extended throughout the country, across ethnic and political boundaries. From traditional healers through teachers and students who found ways to restart classes in the aftermath of horrendous violence, or traders who carried news as well as goods across war zones, she found a commitment to "unmaking" violence. Both soldiers and civilian victims of violence were perceived as in need of healing, both physical and mental. Common threads in the culture of healing stretched across the diversity of traditional cultures in different parts of the country. She concludes that Mozambique illustrates the opposite of the Hobbesian premise that elite-brokered agreements bring peace. Average Mozambicans, she notes, "crafted sophisticated institutions to stop violence ... and set the stage for peace. .. it was on this work that the peace accords were built" (p. 220).

In a brief but intriguing epilogue, she contrasts Mozambique with Angola. Angolans, she notes, have also crafted a wealth of cultural resources to withstand war. But, unlike Mozambique, they had not coalesced into a "nation-wide set of linked practices" (p. 230). The arenas of conflict management in Mozambique had spread from area to area, via displaced people, traditional healers, traders and teachers to form a space independent from the armed conflict. In Angola, such space was -- and is -- still embedded in a bipolar militarized political space.

The comparison Nordstrom makes rings true. Her appeal to learn from the Mozambican example to build cultures of peace from the bottom-up will hopefully find echoes in other conflicts. And yet one must also wonder whether the Mozambican culture of peace would have prevailed without the other favorable conditions -- in the Southern African region, in the international community, and in the character of the armed forces on both sides -- that were conducive to a national political settlement in Mozambique.

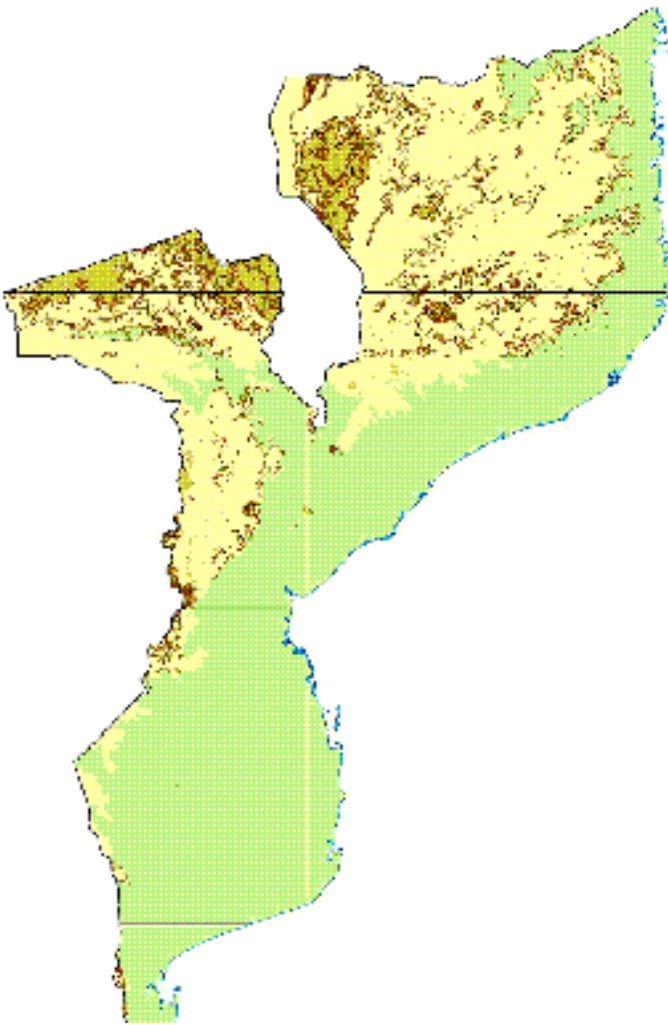
The final book in this review, Thomas Ohlson's *Power Politics and Peace Politics*, is a systematic attempt to explore this question by a comparison of eight peace accords in southern Africa between 1974 and 1994 -- the Lusaka (1974) and Rome (1992) accords for Mozambique, the Alvor (1975), Bicesse (1991) and Lusaka (1994) accords for Angola, the 1979 Lancaster House accord for Zimbabwe, the 1988 agreement for Namibia and the 1993 agreement for South Africa. His question in each case: what factors determined whether the peace agreement was implemented or whether there was a return to war? At the time the study was written, the Lusaka agreement in Angola had not yet definitively collapsed, and the return to war there actually confirms Ohlson's theoretical propositions even more clearly than the tables in the published book.

Ohlson lays out six key variables -- systemic conflict (Cold War), regional conflict, the role of third parties, leadership (of the parties in conflict), learning (experiences leading to negotiation being valued over conflict), and the extent to which the peace agreement satisfied the parties' goals of political participation and security. A review of Ohlson's work more generally lies outside the scope of this essay, but it is noteworthy that his review of the implementation of the Rome agreement for Mozambique finds almost all the indicators of the six variables predicting success. Writing in mid-1998, Ohlson notes that "the fact that large-scale warfare has not resumed in Angola ... has more to do with sober assessments of

military, diplomatic and economic realities than with a genuine willingness to compromise" (p. 155). As this review is written, in mid-1999, Angola is not only still missing a powerful national culture of peace. It has also not yet had the Mozambique post-Rome advantage of having a set of stable neighbors and a relatively unified international community also interested in investing heavily in peace.

The numerous ways in which the Mozambique experience is unique do not invalidate the efforts to draw "lessons" that might apply to resolving other conflicts. Each of the studies above provide insights that may be helpful in other contexts. As Armon, Hendrickson and Vines note, however, Mozambique "does not offer a blueprint for other war-torn countries engaged in the search for peace" (p. 7). Successful application of any of the lessons, if it happens, will likely less resemble transmission of "best practices" than the kind of creativity Nordstrom documents in the transmission of a culture of peace within Mozambique.

## Geography



Mozambique stretches along the Indian Ocean from Tanzania in the north to South Africa in the south, bordering to the west on Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

With a coastline of 2,470 km--more than 1500 miles--Mozambique is a little less than twice the size of California in area, or slightly more than all the east coast states from New York through Florida.

The defining physical features of the country are the great distance along the north-south axis and the contrast between the low areas adjoining the sea and the interior plateau, which is most prominent in the north and center.

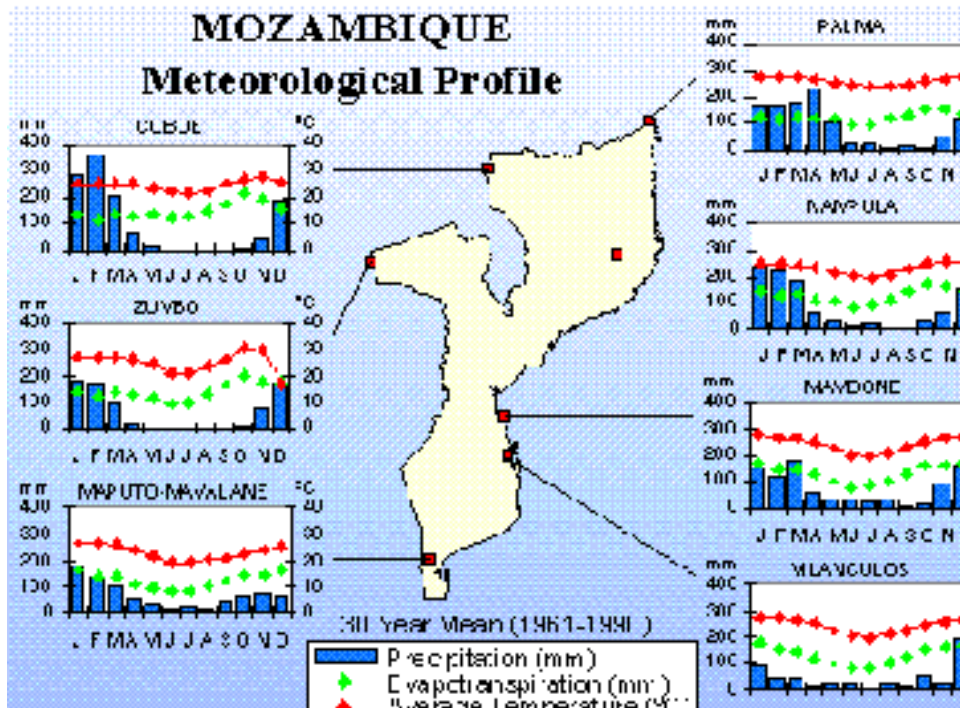
Note: The topographical map above is taken from the Population- Development-Environment Project study of Botswana, Mozambique and Namibia, by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria, in partnership with institutions in the three countries. The project's report, with rich data and illustrations, is available at

<http://www.iiasa.ac.at/Research/POP/pde>.

The most important rivers are the Zambezi, which bisects the country, the Rovuma along the northern border, the Limpopo in the south, and the Save along the northern borders of Gaza and Inhambane

provinces.

The climate varies from semi-arid and subtropical in the south to tropical in the north. Seasons are divided into one rainy and one dry season a year. Vegetation is predominantly light forests and grasslands.



<http://www.fao.org/giews/english/basedocs/moz/mozmet1e.stm>

*Topic to explore:*

Read the following article. Follow up with research on line on international and Mozambican responses to the floods in 2000 and 2001, and on issues such as the role of dam management in increasing flood risk and the possible influence of global warming. You can start with <http://www.africapolicy.org/search.htm> and <http://www.mol.co.mz>.

Friday, 2 March, 2001

*Mozambique: Prepared but overwhelmed*

*Rescue efforts combine local and international expertise*

By Joseph Hanlon, co-author with Frances Christie of *Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000* (London: James Currey, 2001).

As floodwaters rise on the Zambezi, Mozambique's navy has picked up more than 8,000 stranded people using rubber boats donated by the international community for last year's floods.

This is the second year of major flooding, and a similar pattern is emerging.

Both this year and last year, predictions of heavy rain led to flood warnings and extensive preparation by the Mozambican government, local non-government organizations such as the Red Cross, and United Nations agencies such as the World Food Programme.

But Mozambique remains one of the poorest countries in the world, and record-breaking floods soon exhaust the capacity of the government - and of neighboring countries.

International help is needed to provide fuel for the boats and helicopters, and to provide tents, food and clean water for the tens of thousands who are forced to flee to high ground.

### Media images

Dramatic television pictures and appeals for help by international agencies tend to present a picture of helplessness. But they miss the extensive preparation and organization which had already been done at local level.

Research for my book on last year's floods pointed to three months of preparation, which provided an essential foundation and infrastructure for the massive international support.

### Local input

The result was remarkably successful international cooperation, with human, material and financial international aid providing vital help to the Ministry of Health, Red Cross and local government who were already in action dealing with huge numbers of displaced people. One improvement on last year is an increased participation by the Mozambican military.

Last year the Mozambican military rescued 17,000 people, but with very few boats and no helicopters. This year, the boats donated by the international community for last year's flood were put to use quickly.

Mozambique's air force has only two helicopters, but this year, because of the advance warnings, both were serviced and ready to fly, and are now in use for rescue and reconnaissance.

The provinces of Mozambique differ significantly in size, population and other characteristics.



POPULAÇÃO, SUPERFÍCIE E DENSIDADE, SEGUNDO PROVÍNCIA, MOÇAMBIQUE, 2000			
PROVÍNCIAS	POPULAÇÃO	SUPERFÍCIE	HAB/Km2
	N	Em Km2	
Total	17.242.240	799,380	21.6
Niassa	870,544	129,056	6.7
Cabo Delgado	1,465,537	82,625	17.7
Nampula	3,265,854	81,606	40.0
Zambezia	3,316,703	106,008	31.6
Tete	1,319,904	100,724	13.1
Manica	1,137,448	61,661	18.4
Sofala	1,453,928	68,018	21.4
Inhambane	1,256,139	68,615	18.3
Gaza	1,203,294	75,709	15.9
Maputo Província	933,951	26,058	35.8
Maputo Cidade	1,018,938	300	3396.5

[http://www.ine.gov.mz/indicadores2/densidade\\_populacional\\_por\\_prov.htm](http://www.ine.gov.mz/indicadores2/densidade_populacional_por_prov.htm)

Additional tables from the 1997 census, at both national and provincial levels, are available at the web sites of the National Institute of Statistics (<http://www.ine.gov.mz>) and, in more detail, the Ministry of Education

(<http://www.mined.gov.mz/docs/censo97>).

*Topic to explore:*

Find a map that shows Mozambique's railways, such as that on page 29 of *Atlas Geográfico* published by the Mozambican Ministry of Education or one in a good world atlas (one can find maps on the web that show railways, but not clearly). What does the pattern suggest about problems of national unity in the country?

## Politics

Under the 1990 constitution, Mozambique's president and unicameral national assembly are both elected in multiparty national elections every five years. The president appoints professional members of the supreme court, from candidates proposed by the judiciary, and the assembly elects other members of the supreme court. The president also appoints the prime minister, who is the head of government.

Joaquim Alberto Chissano has been president of Mozambique since November 1986. He was first chosen by the central committee of Frelimo after the death of the country's first president Samora Machel, and returned to office in national elections in 1994 and 1999.

Pascoal Mocumbi, previously minister of health, has been prime minister since December 1994.

For parliamentary elections Mozambique uses the d'Hondt method of proportional representation, similar to that used in Australia and for the European parliamentary elections. To be included in the assembly, a party must gain at least 5% of the votes at a national level. Seats within a province are then divided among parties depending on their vote within that province

(See <http://www.mozambique.mz/governo/eleicoes/hondt.htm>).

The two major parties are Frelimo and Renamo (see history section above). As indicated by the elections results by province shown below, Frelimo has its strongest electoral bases in the south and in the northern province of Cabo Delgado; Renamo has its strongest base in the central provinces of Manica, Sofala, and Zambézia; Niassa, Nampula, and Tete are more evenly divided.

Both history and geography are important influences on political divisions, but it would be a mistake to exaggerate stereotypes based on either influence. Thus, for example, most elected representatives of Renamo joined the party after the war was over, when donors were providing subsidies to turn it from an armed group to a political party. Their common element was opposition to the ruling party, not identification with Renamo's history. And many of the strongest critics of the government today in Mozambique were active supporters of Frelimo's liberation struggle and post-independence policies, who have no sympathies for Renamo's brand of opposition politics. Within both government and opposition, moreover, there is a wide diversity of views on political issues.

### *1999 Elections*

[Source: Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin, Issue 24 - 28 December 1999

<http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/eawep24/eawepa24.htm>]

The results announced by the CNE (National Elections Commission) for the 1999 elections were:

Joaquim Chissano	2,338,333	52.3%
Afonso Dhlakama	2,133,655	47.7%

(Percentages are of valid votes; blank votes were 6.5% and invalid votes 2.9% of a total of 4,934,352 votes.)

This compares with the 1994 results :

Joaquim Chissano	2,633,740	53.3%
Afonso Dhlakama	1,666,965	33.7%
Others	640,774	13.0%

(Percentages are of valid votes; blank votes were 5.8% and invalid votes 2.8%.)

This year there were only 2 presidential candidates, compared to 12 in 1994.

Although Renamo's leader made major gains in the presidential race, Renamo itself made only small gains in the parliamentary race; both Frelimo and Renamo increased their number of seats, but Frelimo strengthened its position as majority party. This year there were 12 parties and coalitions in the parliamentary race, compared to 14 in 1994.

The votes this year were:

Frelimo	2,005,713	48.5%
Renamo	1,603,811	38.8%
Others	522,799	12.7%

(Percentages are of valid votes; blank votes were 9.6% and invalid votes 4.9%.)

The 1994 votes were:

Frelimo	2,115,793	44.3%
Renamo	1,803,506	37.8%
UD	245,793	5.2%
Others	608,133	12.7%

(Percentages are of valid votes; blank votes were 8.4% and invalid votes 3.2%.)

### **Distribution of 250 Seats in Parliament, by Province**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Renamo-UE</b>	<b>Frelimo</b>
Niassa	7	6
Cabo Delgado	6	16
Nampula	26	24
Zambézia	34	15
Tete	10	8

Manica	10	5
Sofala	17	4
Inhambane	4	13
Gaza	0	16
Maputo Province	1	12
Maputo City	2	14
TOTAL	117	133

For additional background in English on politics in Mozambique in recent years, an invaluable source is the Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin, which has been published irregularly, in English and Portuguese, by AWEPA (European Parliamentarians for Africa). Recent issues are available at: <http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa>.

Although no political parties other than Frelimo and Renamo have gained any significant momentum, there is widespread and growing disillusionment with both parties and with “politics” in general among Mozambicans. In April 2001, the journalist Ricardo Timane, a leading figure in the Movement for Peace and Citizenship, wrote a commentary eloquently expressing this view (Timane died of a heart attack several weeks after the article was published).

An Alternative of Hope, by Ricardo Timane

Metical, April 18, 2001 [translated excerpt;

for Portuguese original see <http://www.mol.co.mz/noticias/mt010418.html>]

The hour of difficult choices has arrived. Our country is passing through a very troubled period in its history. Those in power try to hide the many problems under the rug and to paint reality with the marvelous colors of the macroeconomic situation, cooking up a beautiful dish called two-digit growth, which the majority of Mozambican citizens from Cabo Delgado to Maputo and from Manica to Zambézia neither eat nor even catch a smell of. The opposition directed by Dhlakama grumbles, shouts, and pounds on the table, but finds it too much work to come up with even a single idea or project to improve the lives of Mozambicans. At one moment it is throwing rocks at Frelimo and at the government it says it doesn't recognize; at the next moment it is kissing the check from the Planning and Finance Ministry and running to the bank to pick up the salaries for its representatives in parliament. And then it either begs or

threatens violence, depending on its whim, to make its political opponents, which it calls corrupt, divide up the cake, because after all they are brothers, as Dhlakama says. ...

... Mozambicans regardless of party need to join hands in a broad patriotic front and construct an alternative of hope for Mozambique. An alternative against exclusion, for social justice, for dignity and effective institutions, for ethics in government and for participatory democracy by and for the citizens.

*Topics to explore:* (1) Look up the Mozambique Land Act of 1997 (try "Mozambique land reform" in a search engine) to explore the role of peasant associations in lobbying for changes in the act. (2) In late 2000, the assassination of journalist Carlos Cardoso and the death of prisoners by suffocation in the northern town of Montepuez were each the subject of intense controversy in Mozambique and internationally among those concerned with the country. You will find much information on-line.

## Economics

### Colonial Legacy of Underdevelopment

Prior to independence in 1975, the economy of Mozambique depended largely on services provided to South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. The service income came from transit traffic through the ports of Maputo, Beira and Nacala, and from remittances from migrant workers in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. A large part came from wages of over 100,000 Mozambican miners working in South Africa.

Exports were concentrated in the agricultural sectors, characterized by forced labor on approximately 4,500 foreign-owned plantations and farms and by forced sale by peasants of cash crops at artificially low prices. Roughly 80 percent of agricultural production by Mozambicans was dedicated to subsistence agriculture. The commercial retail and wholesale network linking the rural areas to national and world markets was dominated by Portuguese settlers and, to a less extent, by Mozambicans of Asian or mixed-race origin.

The major products exported at independence were cashews (15 percent in value), sugar (11 percent), cotton (9 percent), wood (7 percent), prawns (5 percent) and copra (5 percent). Although industry employed only 2 percent of the active labor forces and was concentrated around Maputo and Beira, there was significant increase in manufacturing in the last decade of colonial rule. This was oriented to the consumer market provided by some 200,000 Portuguese settlers, most of whom had arrived in the country since World War II.

Semi-skilled as well as skilled posts in both the colonial administration and the private sector were concentrated in the hands of Portuguese and, secondarily, Mozambicans of Asian and mixed-race origin. Only 20 percent of the non-agricultural work force was of African origin in 1970. Only one tenth of one percent of black Mozambicans (some 5,000 individuals) were estimated to have more than four years of schooling in 1970, out of a total population of 6.6 million over the age of six.

## Post-colonial Economy: Exodus, War, Overextended State

Between 1973 and 1975, Mozambique's gross domestic product declined abruptly from \$3.5 billion to \$2.2 billion (at 1980 prices), a drop of 37 percent. This was the result of the exodus of probably more than 80 percent of the Portuguese settler population in anticipation of or immediately following independence. In aggregate terms, Mozambique has never fully recovered to pre-independence levels, although the trend was modestly positive in the first years of independence (and significantly positive in the last part of the 1990s).

From 1981, the war had an even more negative impact than that of the settler exodus, with GDP declining to \$1.6 billion in the low year of 1985. During the period 1980-1988, the UN calculated that Mozambique suffered economic losses due to the war of approximately \$16 billion (1988 prices).

While the primary reason for economic decline was the war, the economy also suffered from over-centralized management by a state that was seriously lacking in skilled personnel and management capacity. While health care, education and banking were nationalized by decree, much of the rest of the economy also fell into government hands, as the state took responsibility for farms, factories and other businesses abandoned by settlers.

The Mozambican service sector--including rail and port services for all the interior countries as well as migrant labor to South Africa and Rhodesia--was highly vulnerable. When Mozambique implemented UN sanctions against Rhodesia in 1978, it was a crippling blow to the economy of central Mozambique. South African cutbacks on migrant Mozambican mine workers were devastating to southern Mozambique, as well as cutting foreign exchange. And the transport sector was at the mercy of sabotage during the war.

The colonial agricultural economy had been based on the coercion of the Portuguese state and a network of rural trading dominated by Portuguese settlers. Makeshift replacements failed to install a working agricultural system. Efforts to build a new system suffered both from the government's concentration on state farms (formerly Portuguese-owned) to the neglect of peasant farmers, and from the African and Renamo military strategy of targeting rural communities and the links between city and countryside. Both agricultural export earnings and food production dropped dramatically in the 1980s.

For an overview of the interaction of war and other factors in Mozambique's economic decline in the 1980s, see chapter 10 of William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras* (London: Zed, 1994). For a detailed analysis of economic policies in the agrarian sector, see Merle Bowen, *The State against the Peasantry* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

## Growth with Poverty

Since the end of the war in 1992 and elections in 1994, Mozambique has seen renewed economic growth, combined with continuing poverty for the vast majority of the population. The current context is

summarized in the October 2000 issue of the UN publication *Africa Recovery*, in an article reproduced below in condensed form.

Condensed from "Mozambique: growth with poverty," by Paul Fauvet, *Africa Recovery*, October 2000. *Africa Recovery* is available on-line at <http://www.africarecovery.org>.

Since peace came in 1992, the image of Mozambique has been transformed from that of an economic basket case to an African "success story." Despite severe flood damage this year [2000], the economy has grown dramatically, achieving some of the highest growth rates in the continent. But poverty remains widespread and the country is still heavily dependent on donor aid -- and subject to the onerous conditions attached to such assistance.

By the late 1990s, the economy had made remarkable progress, with double-digit growth rates. Nevertheless, economic growth is not a panacea. Large increases in gross domestic product (GDP) coexist with grinding poverty for the bulk of the population.

By the time President Joaquim Chissano and Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama signed a peace agreement in 1992, much of the country's physical infrastructure -- roads, bridges, railways, sugar mills, rural shops and much else -- lay in ruins. Annual per capita GDP had fallen from \$133 in 1981 to \$90 in 1993.

Since the mid-1990s, the targets of high growth rates, low inflation and currency stability have all been met, and the government has won praise from its international partners for its tight control over public finance. The GDP growth rate peaked at 11.3 percent in 1997 and averaged nearly 10 per cent in 1996-99. This is one of the highest rates in the world, although from an admittedly low starting point.

By 1997, the inflation rate had declined to 5.5 per cent, from 54 per cent in 1995. In 1998, for the first time, average prices actually fell and the inflation rate for the year was minus 1.3 per cent, before rising again to a modest 4.8 per cent in 1999. Significantly, these price falls were concentrated in foodstuffs, on which poor Mozambicans spend the bulk of their income.

Low inflation went hand-in-hand with currency stability. In 1992 the Bank of Mozambique stopped fixing the exchange rate of the country's currency -- the metical -- and let it float according to supply and demand. The metical's depreciation against the US dollar became no more than a gentle slide, making it one of the most stable currencies in Southern Africa. This was achieved thanks in part to tight credit ceilings and control over the money supply, although this has posed difficulties for Mozambican businesses. The government has vowed that it will not resort to printing more money to pay its bills.

Despite this macro-economic "success story," 69 per cent of Mozambicans still live below the poverty line (see table). As Prime Minister Mocumbi told donors in 1998, poverty "is an atrocious reality, particularly in the countryside where 80 per cent of the population lives." This rural poverty is intimately linked with rudimentary agricultural techniques. Only 7 per cent of farmers use traction (animal or mechanical) and only 2 per cent use fertilizers or pesticides. The dominant image of Mozambican

agriculture remains that of a farmer (usually a woman, and often with a baby on her back) turning the soil over with nothing but a hoe.

Peace and adequate -- if sometimes excessive -- rains have contributed to an agricultural recovery, despite some flood losses. The 1980s spectre of famine has vanished. There is no longer a chronic food deficit.

Increased grain harvests are not due to higher productivity, however, but simply to an increase in the area under cultivation. Most peasant families have been unable to build up a reserve of food or money that would see them through a bad harvest. A disaster such as this year's floods plunges the affected areas into an immediate crisis and sends the government appealing once again for international food aid. Fragile marketing networks and the poor state of access roads add to the precariousness of small-scale farming.

In the towns, most of the social and economic safety nets that existed under the previous centrally planned economy have been withdrawn. There is no longer a basic ration of subsidized food for all and health services are no longer essentially free. The statutory minimum wage for industrial and office workers is now the equivalent of \$30 a month. The trade unions complain that workers alone are bearing the costs of the structural adjustment programmes under way since 1987. The Mozambican Workers' Organization (OTM), the main union federation, argues that more than 100,000 jobs have been lost over the past decade because of structural adjustment policies. The unions calculate that in order to meet the basic needs of an average family of five, a worker needs a monthly wage of 900,000 meticaís (\$76).

One of the government's main goals is to attract foreign investment, particularly in large enterprises that could generate thousands of jobs. The largest project is the \$1.3 billion MOZAL aluminium smelter on the outskirts of Maputo, which began production in June 2000. The main shareholders are the London-based metals company Billiton, Mitsubishi of Japan, and the South African Industrial Development Corporation. The construction phase created around 7,000 temporary jobs, but there will only be 800 full-time staff when the smelter is fully operational, probably by March 2001, when its annual output is expected to reach 250,000 tonnes. All of this will be for export, and at an anticipated value of \$400 million, the aluminum will earn Mozambique more than all exports combined in 1999.

An even larger project on the drawing board is a factory to produce steel slabs in Maputo, using South African iron ore and Mozambican natural gas. This would entail a \$1.6 billion investment and another \$600 million to build a gas pipeline. However, negotiations between the Mozambican government and the US corporation Enron stalled for more than a year over terms for exploiting the Pande gas field in Inhambane province. Agreement was finally reached in April 1999, giving Enron rights over a larger area than the government had initially wanted.

## **Focus on transport**

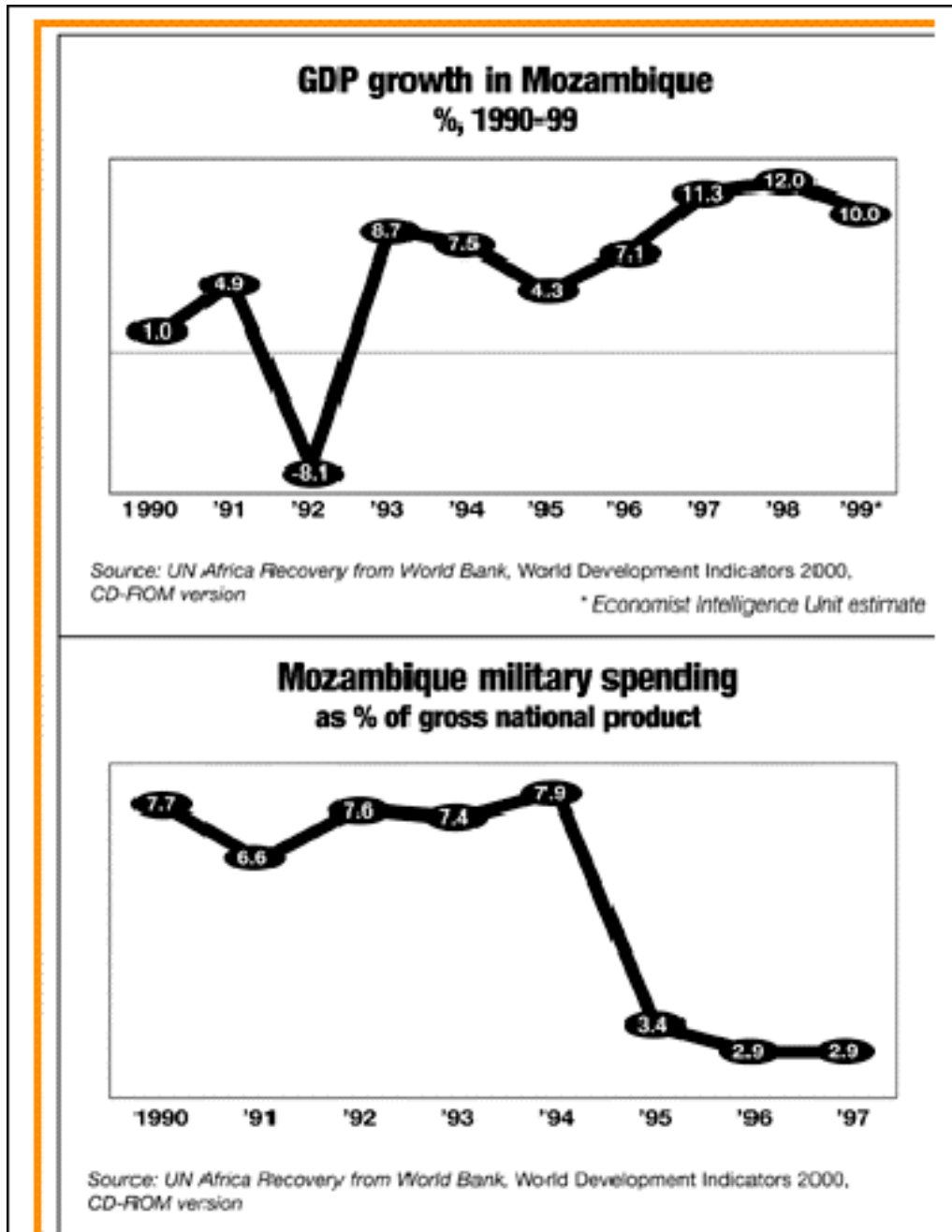
Despite the war, major upgrading of transport infrastructure took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including rehabilitation of Beira port and the rail lines from Beira and Maputo to Zimbabwe and most of the line from Nacala into Malawi.



Currently, Mozambique and South Africa are improving transport links to encourage traffic from South Africa's Gauteng and Mpumalanga provinces to use Maputo port, which is much closer to Johannesburg than any South African port. The key component of a major project called the Maputo Development Corridor, launched by Mozambique and South Africa in 1996, is a toll road from Maputo to the South African town of Witbank. Now under construction by a consortium headed by the French firm Bouygues, the road is ahead of schedule and should be ready later this year. Plans for the corridor also include dredging the Maputo port entrance channel to take larger vessels.

## Dependence on donors

Despite the macro-economic improvements, Mozambique remains dependent on huge annual injections of foreign grants and soft loans. The government collects enough domestic revenue to cover its running costs, but the capital budget is almost entirely funded by foreign aid.



Every year the government attends the World Bank's Consultative Group for Mozambique, which brings together the country's major creditors. The most recent meeting, in June 2000, brought donor pledges of \$530 million for this year and \$570 million for 2001.

Besides the bilateral creditors, both the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) exercise significant policy leverage through their lending. If they are not satisfied with Mozambique's implementation of IMF/World Bank programmes, they can suspend lending, which in turn endangers funds from bilateral sources. Prime Minister Mocumbi, responding in a parliamentary debate to opposition complaints that the government is taking orders from foreigners, acknowledged, "We are a

country that begs, and beggars have their sovereignty

curtailed." Agreements reached with the Bank, Fund and other creditor institutions have included a wide variety of policy targets and conditions. Most recently, Mozambique's policy framework for 1999-2002, agreed to with the IMF and World Bank, stipulates that the government will continue to improve the environment for private sector development and further liberalize trade and investment.

## The Case of the Disappearing Cashew Industry

Cashews, one of Mozambique's leading exports, grow on trees, which are owned by peasant families in almost all areas of the country. But the nuts must be extracted from a hard shell containing a toxic liquid. In the years immediately following independence, Mozambique's processing industry employed some 10,000 workers, mostly women. In 1976 Mozambique exported 21,100 tonnes of processed cashew kernels, worth \$33 million, 23% of export earnings

By the end of the war in 1992, marketed production of raw nuts had dropped dramatically, from 200,000 tons a year in the 1970s (when Mozambique was the world's leading producer) to about 32,000 tons a year. This was due mainly to the collapse of the rural marketing network and war-related damage to the cashew tree stock (estimated at 25 million trees). Still, in 1996-1997 a survey reported that 26% of rural families had cashew trees.

Early in 2001 the Mozambique News Agency reported that most cashew workers were unemployed. The decline of the industry has been the subject of a bitter policy dispute pitting the World Bank against Mozambican public opinion and international critics. Read the news agency report below, and excerpts from the clashing views of columnist Paul Krugman and critic Robert Naiman.

You can find more on-line, including the classic article of Mozambique specialist Joe Hanlon (<http://www.jubileeplus.org/analysis/reports/roape100400.htm>), and a recent article by Washington Post correspondent Jon Jeter (<http://www.globalexchange.org/wbimf/washpost101800.html>). For other sources use the search at <http://www.africapolicy.org/search.htm>.

### MOST CASHEW WORKERS NOW UNEMPLOYED

Maputo, 20 Jan, 2001 (AIM / Mozambique News Agency) - About 6,000 workers in Mozambique's cashew processing industry lost their jobs in 2000, according to the general secretary of the Cashew Workers Union (SINTIC), Boaventura

Mondlane, cited in Saturday's issue of the Maputo daily "Noticias".

This brings to 8,500 the number of workers who have definitively lost their jobs since the crisis in the cashew sector began to bite in 1997. In other words, the great majority of workers in this industry are now unemployed.

"We have just ended a dark year for the cashew sector", said Mondlane. Prospects for the future looked no better - he said there was no money available to reopen factories that have closed because of the liberalization of the trade in cashews imposed on Mozambique by the World Bank.

Since 1995, the World Bank had insisted that protection be removed from the local processing industry: in effect, this meant that raw cashew nuts were exported to India, for processing by child laborers who shell the nuts by hand, rather than sold to the Mozambican factories. Liberalization, the World Bank insisted, protected the interests of the peasants who harvest the nuts, who would receive a greater percentage of the cashew price.

But as the industrialists predicted, the opposite has happened. With next to no competition from the local factories, the exporters of raw nuts have been able to push prices down.

"The result of liberalization, which we are now witnessing, is a fall in the marketing price", said Mondlane. "The producers are earning less and less, contrary to the arguments of the World Bank and the government. Now that the industry has been put out of action, prices are tumbling".

This year's cashew marketing campaign in northern Mozambique looks good, but the bankrupt industries are unable to purchase nuts and reopen their plants.

With the fading of all hope for the industry, workers who had been kept on the books even though they were producing nothing, have now been made definitively redundant. The sacked workers are receiving their wage arrears and their redundancy pay. "We are not satisfied at the payment of redundancy money", said Mondlane. "Our objective is employment, and not the laying off of workers". (AIM)

*Krugman v. Naiman* (excerpts only: full text of Krugman's article and Naiman's reply can be found at <http://www.fair.org/articles/naiman-krugman.html>)

From "Reckonings: A Real Nut Case," Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*, April 19, 2000

When Seattle Man went to Washington, his activities were coordinated in large part by a Web site, [www.a16.org](http://www.a16.org). Browsing the site, I was struck by the critique of the World Bank, written by Robert Naiman ... [Naiman's] example of how bank-imposed policies inflict economic damage is the way the bank "destroyed Mozambique's cashew nut processing industry, by forcing Mozambique to remove export tariffs on raw cashew nuts."

Mozambique's cashews are grown overwhelmingly by small farmers. ... a stiff export tax levied on raw, but not processed, nuts [...] in effect prevented the farmers from selling their product on the world market, and forced them to continue selling cheaply to domestic processors.

The World Bank demanded, as a condition for new loans, that this export tax be reduced. ... Governments

frequently tax the rural poor to subsidize urban industries -- industries whose workers are very badly paid by Western standards, but nonetheless receive much higher wages than most of their compatriots. This case -- in which peasants were forced to sell their crops cheaply in order to protect the jobs of 10,000 processing workers -- fits right into the pattern. ...

The World Bank is evil, then, because it tried to end a policy that not only made Mozambique as a whole poorer, but directly hurt millions of impoverished small farmers. Its high-minded critics want to keep the prices those farmers receive low, on behalf of 10,000 politically influential workers and a handful of foreign factory owners.

From Robert Naiman letter to the New York Times, "Krugman's Sloppy Economics," April 20, 2000

Paul Krugman ("A Real Nut Case") is right about one thing: the destruction of Mozambique's cashew nut processing industry by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is my favorite example showing why the destructive power of these institutions must be dramatically reduced. It illustrates that the IMF and the Bank exercise colonial power over developing countries; that, like Krugman, they are sloppy economists ...

On the paramount question of democracy, Krugman doesn't contest that the IMF and the World Bank imposed their policies on Mozambique-- contrary to their claims about "negotiation" and "dialogue."

As to whether the World Bank's diktat was good economic policy for Mozambique, it is Krugman who needs to do his homework. Krugman ignores the 1997 Deloitte & Touche study commissioned by the World Bank, which found that Mozambique's peasants did not gain anything from liberalized exports of raw cashews. This single fact demolishes Krugman's entire defense of the Bank's policy. The study also found that Indian subsidies to its cashew nut processing industry made competition unfair, and that Mozambique earns an extra \$130 per ton processing its own cashews, "sufficient reason to support the processing industry against competition from India."

## Health and Education

"According to estimates in Mozambique's national Human Development Report, released last Tuesday, the country can expect to lose 17% of its educational personnel by the year 2010 due to HIV/AIDS. Predicted deaths from AIDS include 9,200 teachers and 123 senior professional staff in the Ministry of Education."

The news item above, from a Maputo newspaper (*Noticias*) of June 14, 2001, starkly poses the enormous challenge for both health and education in Mozambique. After initial successes in the first years of independence in addressing the legacy of backwardness left by Portuguese colonialism, and significant progress in the 1990s in recovering from the damages to health and education from the years of war, the country now faces another formidable challenge.

Visitors arriving in the country today, without a sense of earlier successes against long odds, may easily see only the obstacles to progress. Yet there is a hidden resource in Mozambique's well-documented determination to succeed in health and education when resources are available.

## Some Early Successes

Before independence the country had approximately 500 doctors, overwhelmingly of Portuguese origin, less than one doctor for 22,000 people. They served primarily the white population and a fraction of urban blacks; most rural communities had little or no access to modern health care. Less than 100 of these doctors stayed on after independence. But after nationalizing health care in July 1975, the new government managed to expand services, stressing preventive medicine and primary health care.

By recruiting foreign health workers from a wide variety of countries, and by training large numbers of nurses and paramedics, the new health system quickly extended rudimentary coverage around the country. A national vaccination campaign in 1976, achieving coverage of 96%, was rated a remarkable success by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 1982, the last year before war became generalized in most of the countryside, a WHO study of randomly selected rural areas found "extensive contact by mothers and their young children with rural health services." The health budget, 3.3% of state expenditures in 1974, increased to an average of over 10% over the 1976-82 period. Mozambique's poverty meant that this added up to only US\$5 per capita in 1982, the peak year. Making the most of limited resources, the Health Ministry established a formulary of several hundred basic drugs, requiring competitive bidding from foreign suppliers. The new system reduced costs of imported medicines by 40%, making it possible to provide rural health posts with relatively regular supplies.

Even in 1982, regular preventive measures were reaching less than half the population, and even fewer had access to curative medicine. The majority of doctors were still in the cities, and less than a third were Mozambican. Management, particularly in the hospitals, left much to be desired. But given the starting point and the resources available, Mozambicans rightly took pride in the achievements of their health policies.

Developments in education were also impressive. Just before independence the illiteracy rate, including whites, was over 90%. Only one percent--about 80,000 people--had completed more than four years of school, and most of these were Portuguese settlers. In 1973, only 40 of the 3,000 university students were African. By 1980, illiteracy was down to 75%. Primary school enrollment expanded from 666,000 in 1973 to 1.4 million in 1980. Secondary school enrollment went from 33,000 to 91,000 over the same period, an extraordinary pace considering that in 1973 a high proportion were white. New teacher training courses in each province increased the number of primary teachers from 11,000 to 19,000. Double shifts and classes held outdoors or under hastily constructed shelters partially made up for a lack of school buildings.

This pace of advance would likely not have been sustainable even with peace. But

with rural clinics and schools among the primary targets of attack by Renamo, the 1980s saw much of this progress reversed. During the war half the rural primary schools were burned down or forced to close, and the health network shrank by more than a third.

### *Recovery and Obstacles\**

\* condensed from Paul Fauvet, *Africa Recovery*, October 2000.

Until 1994, defense spending was easily the largest single item of recurrent expenditure in the annual budget. But after the 1994 elections, resources were shifted, and each year saw a real increase in allocations to the social sectors.

By the end of 1998, the primary school network had recovered from the damage inflicted during the war. The number of first-level primary schools (first to fifth years) equaled and then surpassed the number that had been operating in 1983. There were 6,600 such schools by April 1999, attended by 2.1 million children.

However, according to the education ministry's planning directorate, 32 per cent of primary schoolchildren attend schools that are so crowded that classes have to be given in three shifts a day. Even so, many children still cannot get a place in school. Currently, only 81 per cent of all 6-year-olds enter the first year of primary school, though this is much better than the 59 per cent figure in 1992.

The education pyramid narrows dramatically after the fifth year. There are only 440 second-level primary schools (sixth and seventh years), and just 81 secondary schools in the entire country. Most children cannot go to secondary school, since there are simply not enough places. There were fewer than 64,000 children receiving basic secondary education (levels eight to ten) in early 1999, and only 8,500 in pre-university schools. There are about 7,000 students enrolled in Mozambique's six university-level institutions (three public and three private), and 15,000 in various vocational colleges.

The school system also is characterized by high dropout and failure rates, particularly among girls. The quality of education is poor, in part because teachers remain poorly paid, despite the budget increases.

## **Illiteracy Rate by Sex and Residence in 1980 and 1997**

Sex	Residence	1980	1997
Both sexes	Total	72.2	60.5
	Urban	40.3	33.0

	Rural	77.1	72.2
Female	Total	84.5	74.1
	Urban	56.5	46.2
	Rural	88.4	85.1
Male	Total	na	44.6
	Urban	na	19.4
	Rural	na	56.4

Modern health services reach only about 40 per cent of the population. For key public vaccination campaigns, mobile brigades are sent into remote areas, with great success. Indeed, the second dose of the 1998 vaccination against polio reached 111 per cent of the national target, partly, explained Health Minister Aurelio Zilhao, because many mothers from neighbouring countries brought their children into Mozambique to be vaccinated. Mozambique is now likely to qualify for World Health Organization certification as a polio-free country. But the shortage of clean drinking water, poor or non-existent sanitation in peri-urban areas, and inadequate refuse collection facilitate the spread of disease, including cholera and malaria.

And now AIDS. At the end of 1999, UNAIDS estimates 13% of Mozambican adults as infected with HIV. This is lower than the 25% rates in Swaziland and Zimbabwe, or the 20% rates in South Africa and Zambia. (For country fact sheets see <http://www.aids.org>). But it is more than enough to overwhelm the resources of the country, even one with double-digit economic growth rates. Mozambique's leaders were among the earliest in Africa to speak frankly about AIDS.

Mozambique's Prime Minister, himself a doctor and former minister of health, had this to say in an opinion piece in *The New York Times* (June 20, 2001)

A Time for Frankness on AIDS and Africa, By PASCOAL MOCUMBI

[excerpts: For the full article, go to:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/20/opinion/20MOCU.html>

"In Mozambique, the overall rate of H.I.V. infection among girls and young women—15 percent—is twice

that of boys their age, not because the girls are promiscuous, but because nearly three out of five are married by age 18, 40 percent of them to much older, sexually experienced men who may expose their wives to H.I.V. and sexually transmitted diseases. Similar patterns are common in other nations where H.I.V. is rapidly spreading. Abstinence is not an option for these child brides. Those who try to negotiate condom use commonly face violence or rejection. And in heterosexual sex, girls and women are biologically more vulnerable to infection than are boys or men."

As a father, I fear for the lives of my own children and their teenage friends. Though they have secure families, education, and the information and support they need to avoid risky sex, too few of their peers do.

As prime minister, I am horrified that we stand to lose most of a generation, maybe two. The United Nations estimates that 37 percent of the 16-year-olds in my country will die of AIDS before they are 30.

As a man, I know men's behavior must change, that we must raise boys differently, to have any hope of eradicating H.I.V. and preventing the emergence of another such scourge."

"Today, in Africa and elsewhere, we are far from achieving these goals. Most political leaders still view adolescent sex as a politically volatile subject to be avoided. Community and religious leaders wrongly believe that sexuality education promotes promiscuity. Health providers and teachers are ill trained about sexuality and ill at ease with it. Parents know little about sexuality, contraception or sexually transmitted diseases, and many believe that early marriage will "protect" their daughters. They may themselves condone or perpetrate sexual violence as a legitimate expression of masculinity.

For the long term, we need to develop H.I.V. vaccines and provide treatment to everyone with H.I.V. We need to develop protection methods like microbicides that women can use with or without a partner's knowledge or cooperation. Above all, we must summon the courage to talk frankly and constructively about sexuality. We must recognize the pressures on our children to have sex that is neither safe nor loving. We must provide them with information, communications skills and, yes, condoms.

To change fundamentally how girls and boys learn to relate to each other and how men treat girls and women is slow, painstaking work. But surely our children's lives are worth the effort."

– Pascoal Mocumbi, prime minister of Mozambique and its former minister of health, is a physician and a board member of the International Women's Health Coalition.

## **Culture**

## **Languages**

Mozambique encompasses a wide variety of cultural traditions which have intertwined in complex



patterns of interrelationship over history—those coming from Bantu-speaking cultures in Mozambique and neighboring countries, from Islamic and other Asian influences, and from the colonial powers and settlers in neighboring countries as well as the Portuguese.

African languages spoken in Mozambique belong to the group of Bantu languages. Their similarities are roughly the same as those within the Romance group of European languages, and it is relatively easy for someone who knows one of them to acquire at least a working knowledge of another. The largest group of closely related languages is Makua-Lomwe, in Nampula and Zambézia provinces, which is spoken by approximately a third of Mozambicans. Tsonga, with variants called Ronga and Tswa, is referred to as Shangaan in neighboring South Africa, and dominates southern Mozambique, being spoken by a with a bit more than a tenth of Mozambicans. In central Mozambique Shona languages are spoken, including Ndaou and Manyika.

Mozambicans share many languages with their neighbors, including Swahili, Yao, and Makonde with Tanzanians; Nyanja and Chewa with Malawians; Shona with Zimbabweans; and Shangaan with people of the northeastern Transvaal in South Africa.

Note: the names of languages are spelled in many different ways. They may often be preceded by Xi (in Portuguese) or Chi (in English), the Bantu prefix that indicates a language name.

The national language of Mozambique, and the language of instruction in schools, is Portuguese. As such, Portuguese is being assimilated into Mozambican culture, and adapted to Mozambique, as significant numbers of Mozambicans use it as a first language. Although less than one percent of Mozambicans are of Portuguese ancestry, 1997 census results say 6.5% of those over 5 years old regard Portuguese as their “mother tongue.” In urban areas 17% say they regard Portuguese as their mother tongue; 26.1% say it is the language they speak most frequently at home.

Almost 40% of Mozambicans say they know how to speak Portuguese, with the rate rising to 81% among urban males and falling to 16% among rural females.

## Contemporary Arts

No attempt to present Mozambican music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre and literature could possibly substitute for hearing and seeing in person. Fortunately there are at least small samples now available on the web that can give at least a glimpse of what is available in Mozambique.



The black-and-white painting to the left and the color painting on the cover of this study guide are among the prodigious artistic output of Malangatana Valente Ngwenya, generally considered Mozambique's leading contemporary artist.

You will find a page dedicated to him on the Mozambique home page

(<http://www.mozambique.mz/malangatana>) and an extended collection of photographs of making of his mural at the Center for African Studies of Eduardo Mondlane University (<http://www.uem.mz/>

malangatana). A web search will turn up numerous additional sites, many with images of his paintings.

Despite his prominence, Malangatana is not alone, but part of a wide panorama of artistic creativity in the country.

The culture page of Mozambique On-Line (<http://www.mol.co.mz/cultura>) is the best entry point for those visiting by web. Among

links of particular interest are the following:

Arms into Art

<http://www.africaserver.nl/nucleo/>

On-line exhibit of sculptures from recycled weapons, the result of a joint project by the Christian Council of Mozambique and Maputo's Nucleo de Arte.

Centro Cultural de Matalana

<http://www.matalana.cjb.net/>

Innovative web site, including children's art, from a cultural center outside Maputo.

## Caixinha de Música (Music Box)

<http://www.macua.com/caixinha1.html>

Collection of Mozambican music on the web, in Real Audio and MP3 formats.

## Child's Eye

<http://www.piac.org/childseye/silva.htm>

Exhibit of photographs of children in central Mozambique, Sérgio Silva

## Art of Mozambique

<http://www.cama.org.za/mozambiq/art.htm>

Exhibit in South Africa of several Mozambican artists.

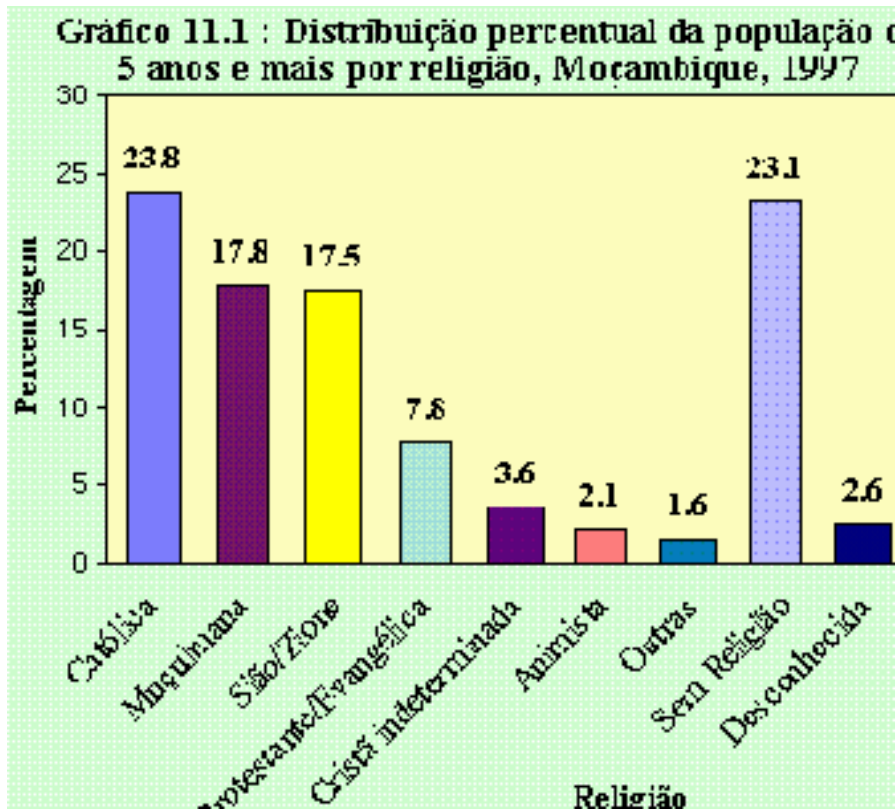
## Mozambican musical instruments

[http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/2962/instrumentos\\_index.html](http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/2962/instrumentos_index.html)

Drawings and descriptions (in Portuguese) of traditional Mozambican musical instruments.

## Religion

As shown by this graph reporting on the 1997 census, from the National Institute of Statistics in Mozambique, Catholics and those claiming no religion—many of whom may hold local traditional beliefs-- each make up almost one quarter of the population of Mozambique. Muslims and adherents of what in Southern Africa are called “Zionist” or “African Independent” churches come next, with a bit over 17% each, followed by Protestants with almost 8%



<http://www.ine.gov.mz/>

In colonial Mozambique, the Roman Catholic church was the state church, with close links to the colonial state. Pressure from other European powers ensured access by Protestant missionaries to some parts of Mozambique, but it was restricted to certain areas of the country. Missions were restricted in their use of African languages in education, and the Portuguese hierarchy suspected not only Protestants but also non-Portuguese Catholic missionaries of disloyalty to Portugal. In the colonial period, the Portuguese Catholic Church was among the most conservative in the world.

Nevertheless, Catholic as well as Protestant Mozambicans were active in the liberation struggle. One of the martyrs of the struggle, a Presbyterian minister named Zedequias Mangahela, has a street named after him in Maputo. And it was Catholic missionaries who exposed the massacre of villagers by Portuguese troops in Wiryamu in Tete province in 1972.

In the years following independence, relations between the Mozambican government and the Catholic church in particular were very tense, as Frelimo nationalized church schools and medical services and integrated them into expanded national educational and health systems. The hostility intensified in 1978 after Frelimo declared itself a “Marxist-Leninist” party and many party officials displayed a dogmatic opposition not only to organized religious groups but also to traditional religious beliefs. Suspicion that some in the Catholic hierarchy supported Renamo widened the gap with the Catholic church in particular.

By the early 1980s, however, the ruling party was seeking rapprochement even with the most hostile church leaders, including cooperation in responding to the damages from war and natural disasters. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, Mozambican church leaders as well as the Italian Catholic order of St. Egídio played key roles in facilitating contacts between the government and Renamo, one of the factors leading to the peace agreement in 1992. [See an account of the role of the churches in the peace process in Mozambique, by two of the church leaders who were involved: “A Calling for Peace: Christian Leaders and the Quest for Reconciliation in Mozambique,” By Dínis S. Sengulane and Jaime Pedro Gonçalves ([http://www.c-r.org/acc\\_moz/sengulane.htm](http://www.c-r.org/acc_moz/sengulane.htm))]

For additional sources on religion in Mozambique, including links to the web sites for specific churches and missions, see <http://www.mol.co.mz/religiao>.

## International Relations

Mozambique's international relations have been decisively shaped by its geographical position, its history and its poverty. Through skillful diplomacy, both as a liberation movement before independence and then as the country's ruling party, Frelimo succeeded in building good will and relationships for the country that go well beyond those that might be expected on the basis of its resources or strategic interest to outside powers.

In terms of transport, labor migration, and culture, the three zones of Mozambique have been linked to different sectors of southern and eastern Africa. Southern Mozambique has an intimate connection to South Africa. Central Mozambique's ties to Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi are also profound. And northern Mozambique is tied to Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, to other countries of the western Indian Ocean. All its land borders are with English-speaking nations, and English is taught in Mozambican schools.

For those familiar with this context, it was not a surprise that Mozambique formally joined the Commonwealth in 1997 (<http://www.mg.co.za/mg/news/97nov1/14nov-mozambique.html>). Portuguese continues to be the official language, however, and Mozambique is also an active participant in organizations of Portuguese-speaking states, including the group called PALOP (African Countries with Portuguese as an Official Language -

<http://portal.com.pt/palop/pnn1>) Despite a series of disputes with the former colonial power in the first decade after independence, Mozambique also enjoys generally good relations with Portugal.

The history of Mozambique's war for independence and the subsequent years of engagement in the struggle against minority rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa was also decisive in shaping Mozambican foreign relations. Mozambique had particularly close ties with Tanzania and Zambia, which provided the rear base for the war for independence. Similarly, it had close ties with Zimbabwean and South African liberation movements which relied on Mozambican support. Mozambique not only played a leading role in founding the group of Front Line States and then the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), but also continues to be one of the key actors in facilitating communication among other members and in behind-the-scenes diplomacy on regional issues. Mozambique diplomats, for example, played an important role in facilitating the Lancaster House agreement for independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

On a global scale, Mozambique's position was also shaped by the stance taken by different actors towards the liberation of southern Africa. Before independence, with the United States and other Western countries allied to Portugal, Mozambique relied on the Soviet bloc and China as well as African support. It also continued to reach out for support in the West. The Nordic countries were an important source of support, as were churches and other non-governmental groups in other Western countries.

These international relationships, especially that between the US and South Africa as Washington pursued

the Reagan Administration's "constructive engagement" policies, shaped Mozambique's international relations in the first decade after independence. By 1983, however, Mozambique's leaders had concluded that the danger from South Africa was so great and Mozambique so vulnerable that they had no choice but to try to woo the Western countries and build new ties with even the most conservative Western leaders. The rapprochement with President Reagan, despite some in the U.S. who proposed adding Renamo to the list of Reagan Doctrine military clients, was facilitated by the good ties Mozambique already enjoyed with Margaret Thatcher's government in the United Kingdom.

By the late 1980s the U.S. had joined the Soviet Union, Sweden and Italy among the top bilateral donors to Mozambique. Mozambique had joined the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and shifted its economic policies accordingly. It had engaged the U.S. as well as other intermediaries in the search for peace with

South Africa and with Renamo. And it had built solid relationships with a host of donor agencies and non-governmental organizations, to the extent that some quipped that the "people's republic" had given way to the "donor's republic."

For more background on the period 1975-1992 in particular, see chapter 5, "The Cold War Connection," in William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras*. The views of a key U.S. policy maker (Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs) can be found in Chester Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa* (New York: Norton, 1992)

With the heavy engagement of the UN and bilateral donors in management as well as funding of the peace process in 1992-1994, and the parallel escalation of the World Bank and IMF role in economic planning during the 1990s, one of the key issues in Mozambican foreign relations was how much autonomy it was possible to maintain in such a context of dependence. Nevertheless, Mozambique continued to offer a distinctive voice in the international arena, on regional and global as well as on national issues.

*Topic to explore:* use an internet search engine and look up "Mozambique debt" or "Mozambique landmines" to find out Mozambique's role on these issues.

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Note: This bibliography lists only a small selection of books about Mozambique, and only includes books in English.

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## **Mozambique on the Internet**

Despite all its apparent disadvantages--poverty, the damages left by war, and the use of a national language other than English--Mozambique has been one of the pioneers in Africa in use of the Internet. Under the leadership of Venâncio Massingue at the computer center of Eduardo Mondlane University, store-and-forward e-mail connections were first set up in 1992, and direct Internet access in 1994. The university provided Internet services both inside and outside the university, finding an enthusiastic response in both government and non-government sectors.

In the second half of the 1990s, with increased donor support and strong government encouragement, including the state-owned telephone company, internet access expanded rapidly with founding of new private ISPs, the development of web sites by government agencies, and extension of services to areas outside Maputo. Mozambique was one of the first African countries to have its national telephone book available on-line (in 1999)! (See <http://rovuma.tdm.mz>).

By the year 2000, Mozambique was estimated to have over 6,000 Internet subscribers, with 5 major ISPs



and access points in 4 cities.

There is a wealth of information on-line provided by Mozambican sources: government agencies, commercial media, non-governmental organizations and private individuals, as well as information about Mozambique from international agencies. Most of the Mozambican sites are in Portuguese, but many also contain sections in English. While some sites are slow to load due to limited bandwidth, this situation is improving rapidly.

As everywhere in the world, Internet sites in Mozambique change rapidly. For current information, always use a search engine as well as the sites suggested in this section. Be sure to enter “Moçambique” or “Mocambique” as well as “Mozambique” to get sites in Portuguese as well as English. Two highly recommended search engines are Google <http://www.google.com> and FAST <http://www.alltheweb.com>.

The most comprehensive guide to Mozambican sites (as well as to information on Mozambique from many international sites) is Mozambique On-Line (<http://www.mol.co.mz>). Mozambique On-Line provides current news (in Portuguese and in English), and links organized by topic, often with informative annotations. The following is a small selection of recommended sites in several sectors. Additional links can be found in the topical sections above.

## General Information

<http://www.mozambique.mz/eindex.htm>

Official Mozambique home page, produced by Computer Center at Eduardo Mondlane University. URL is for English version.

<http://www.ine.gov.mz>

National Statistical Institute; includes results of last census (1997)

<http://www.unsystemmoz.org>

UN System in Mozambique – includes World Bank as well as other agencies; current information on 2001 floods

<http://www.africapolicy.org/featdocs/southern.htm> and

<http://www.africapolicy.org/featdocs/southnws.htm>

Links to other sources of country-specific data and news.

## Economy

<http://www.mol.co.mz/economia/>

Comprehensive collection of links

<http://www.mozambique.mz/economia/contacto.htm>

Useful contacts for economic issues

## Politics

<http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/>

Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin, 1997-2001, in English and Portuguese

Published by European Parliamentarians for Africa

## News

<http://allafrica.com/mozambique>

News updated daily from international sources, in English and French.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/IRIN/archive/mozambique.phtml>

From the UN's Integrated Regional Information Service

<http://www.mol.co.mz/notmoc/>

Weekly news summary, in Portuguese. Also available free by e-mail subscription.

<http://www.sortmoz.com/aimnews/English/Menu.htm>

Mozambique News Agency daily news summary, in English.

and links to many more sources at:

<http://www.mol.co.mz/noticias>

## Yet More Links on Mozambique

While many links are duplicated in the extensive listings on the sites below, many are not.

<http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/mz.html>

Governments on the Web

<http://www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/moz.html>

Stanford University African Studies

[http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African\\_Studies/Country\\_Specific/Mozambique.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Country_Specific/Mozambique.html)

University of Pennsylvania African Studies

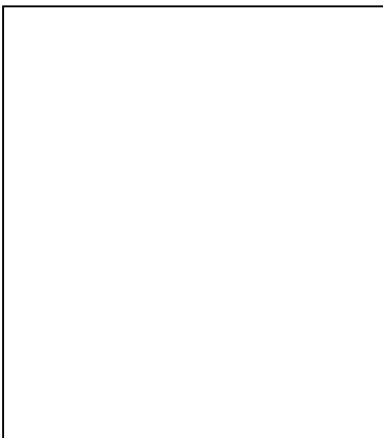
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/africa/cuvl/Mozambique.html>

Columbia University African Studies

<http://www.kanimambo.com/kan4i0.htm>

A site in Portugal dedicated to Mozambique

# A Self Study Guide to Nigeria



GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The **Self-Study Guide: Nigeria** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Nigerian issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Nigeria

is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

Rhonda M. Horried, a doctoral candidate completing her Ph.D. in political science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University prepared this first edition guide on Nigeria during her 2000 summer internship at the Foreign Service Institute's School of Professional and Area Studies. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. Special thanks are extended to Mr. Albert Fairchild and Dr. Anne Imamura.

This publication is for official educational and nonprofit use only.  
First Edition  
August 2000

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<a href="#">GUIDE</a>
<a href="#">BIBLIOGRAPHY AND GUIDE TO FURTHER READINGS</a>

## Important Political Events: 1960-1999

<b>1960s</b>	<b>1960</b>
	<b>October :</b> Nigeria declares independence from Britain.
	<b>1963</b>
	Nigeria becomes a republic.
	<b>1966</b>
	<b>January:</b> Attempted coup is staged, suppressed by federal troops. Still results in military government being established.

	<p><b>1967</b></p> <p><b>May:</b> Eastern region of Nigeria secedes and proclaims itself the Republic of Biafra. Civil war erupts that kills an estimated 1 million people.</p>
<b>1970s</b>	<p><b>1970</b></p> <p><b>January:</b> Civil War ends, but military rule continues for 9 more years.</p> <p>1979</p> <p><b>October:</b> Nigeria returns to civilian rule when Sheu Shagari is elected President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic.</p>
<b>1980s</b>	<p><b>1983</b></p> <p><b>December:</b> Military coup topples the Shagari regime.</p> <p><b>1985</b></p> <p>Another coup is lead by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, who promises new elections.</p>
<b>1990s</b>	<p><b>1993</b></p> <p><b>June:</b> Moshood Abiola receives 58 percent of the vote for President, but Gen. Babangida annuls the election. U.S. suspends aid. Eleven people die in riots protesting a return to military rule. Babangida relinquishes power and an interim government is established.</p> <p><b>November:</b> Gen. Sani Abacha seizes power.</p> <p><b>1994</b></p> <p><b>June:</b> Abiola declares himself president and is subsequently arrested and charged with treason.</p> <p><b>July:</b> Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers strike and the price of crude oil increases worldwide.</p> <p><b>November:</b> Wole Soyinka, 1986 Nobel Prize winner for literature, flees Nigeria.</p> <p><b>1995</b></p> <p><b>October:</b> General Abacha vows to step down in 3 years after reforms</p>

are complete.

**November:** Ken Saro-Wiwa along with 8 other political activists are hung by Nigeria's military government for killing 4 pro-government traditional chiefs in 1994. Subsequently, Nigeria is suspended from the Commonwealth.

## **1996**

**June:** Kudirat Abiola, outspoken wife of Moshood Abiola is gunned down in her car in Lagos.

## **1997**

**March:** Nobel Prize Laureate Wole Soyinka is charged in absentia with treason by the country's military government.

## **1998**

**May 7<sup>th</sup>:** Nigeria announces it has freed 142 prisoners on orders of General Abacha.

**June 8<sup>th</sup>:** Abacha dies and is quickly replaced by Maj. Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>:** Clinton Administration offers improved relations with Nigeria's new military government if it frees political prisoners and moves toward democratic reform.

**June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Nigerians riot in Lagos and demand an end to military rule. They are dispersed by troops and police.

**July 7<sup>th</sup>:** Imprisoned Moshood Abiola dies of apparent heart attack as he talks with Nigerian officials and senior U.S. diplomats.

**July 20<sup>th</sup>:** Maj. Gen. Abubakar promises that free elections will be held in early 1999 and a civilian sworn in as president on May 29.

## **1999**

**January 20<sup>th</sup>:** Nigerian and international election monitors declared that local elections in December and state elections Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> were fair.

**February 27<sup>th</sup>:** Nigerians vote for a civilian president in an election marred by claims of voter fraud and irregularities. Two days later,

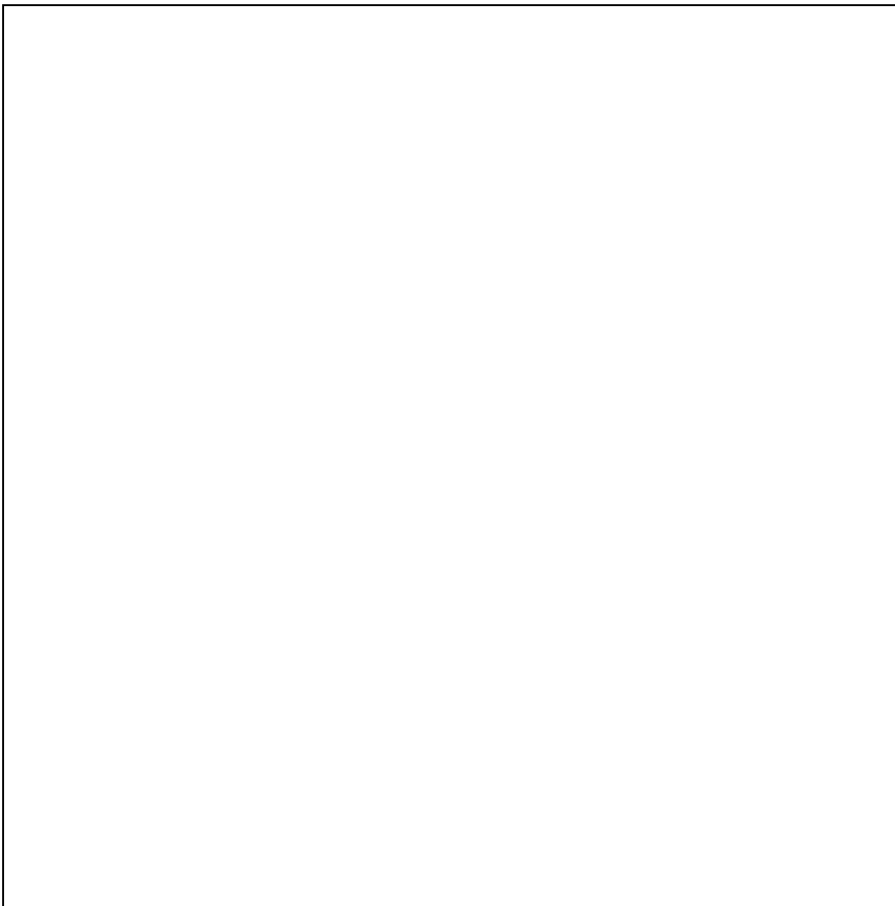
	Nigeria's election commission confirms former military ruler, Olusegun Obasanjo the winner.
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Time Line adapted from Washington Post.com: Nigeria Report,  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com>

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **MAP OF NIGERIA**



Nigeria is not a nation.... It is a mere geographical expression...There are no 'Nigerians' in the same sense as there are 'English' or 'Welsh' or 'French.' The word 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who within Nigeria from those who do not.

Chief Obafemi Awolowo, 1947



Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and faces many challenges in its political and economic development. It has been in a constant struggle since its independence in 1960 to build a strong federal system and reduce conflicts that arise from uneven development, religious, ethnic, regional and class differences. This guide attempts to set forth the major issues that threaten Nigeria's potential. The federal system, political competition, and the interests of the various ruling groups have posed significant barriers to Nigeria's political and economic development; they have also paradoxically acted in ways that favor development and democracy.

There are several dominant themes in Nigerian history that are essential in understanding contemporary Nigerian politics and society. First, the spread of Islam, predominately in the north but later in southwestern Nigeria, began a millennium ago. Second, the slave trade, both across the Sahara Desert and the Atlantic Ocean, had a profound influence on virtually all of Nigeria. The transatlantic trade in particular accounted for the forced migration of perhaps 3.5 million people between 1650-1860. Third, the colonial era was relatively brief, lasting only six decades or so (1900-1960), depending on the part of Nigeria under discussion, but it unleashed such profound change that the full impact is still felt in the contemporary period. Fourth is the military, which has ruled for 30 out of Nigeria's 40 years of independence.

The history of Nigerian people extends backward in time for some three millennia. Archeological evidence, oral tradition, and written documentation establish the existence of dynamic societies and well-developed political systems whose history had an important influence on colonial rule and have continued to shape independent Nigeria. Nigeria's history is fragmented in the sense that it evolved from a variety of traditions, but many of the most outstanding features of modern society reflect the strong influence of the three regionally dominant ethnic groups-Hausa/Fulani in the North, Yoruba in the Southwest, and Igbo in the Southeast.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE**

Nigeria takes its name from its most important feature: the Niger River. The Niger rises in the northeast mountains in Sierra Leone and flows through Guinea, Mali, and Niger before entering Nigeria from the West. In Nigeria, it goes Southeast into the Niger Delta then into the Atlantic Ocean (Oyewole, 1987:1-2). Nigeria lies at the inner corner of the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa with an area of 356, 669 square miles. It is slightly more than twice the size of California. The longest distance from the eastern to the western boundaries is 700 miles, while the distance from the northern boundaries to the Atlantic Ocean is 650 miles. Benin borders Nigeria on the west, Niger and Chad on the north, Cameroon on the east and the Atlantic Ocean on the south (Oyewole, 1987:1-3). The climate varies: equatorial in the south, tropical in the center and arid in the north. The terrain ranges from southern lowlands to central hills and plateaus. There are mountains in the southeast and plains in the north (CIA, 1999).

## **POPULATION AND ETHNIC GROUPS**

The size and population of Nigeria is one of its most significant and distinctive features. Various studies estimate Nigeria's population between 100 and 118 million; the precise figure is uncertain because there has been no accepted census since 1963. Nigeria is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups with more than 500 diverse spoken languages and various religious faiths. The official language is English, but Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and several others are spoken. The main ethnic groups are Hausa/Fulani in the North, Yoruba (made up of the Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Ife, Ilesha, Ekiti and Owu peoples) in the Southwest, and the Igbo in the Southeast. These three groups comprise about 60 percent of the Nigerian population. The remainder of the people are members of the ethnic minority groups which include such peoples as the Kanuri, Tiv, and Nupe in the North, the Efik/Ibibio, Ejaw and the Ekoi in the East and the Edo and Urhobo/Isoko in the West along with hundreds of other groups that differ widely in language, culture, and even physique.

Fulani- One of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. They were the first ones to accept Islam and they did much to spread it. The Fulani are either nomadic cattle herders or town traders. During the Jihad in 1803 led by Usman Dan Fodio, the Fulani gained political control over the Hausa states. After the war, Fulani were installed as emirs in all the emirates in the northern regions. The Hausa and Fulani have acculturated each other's values and are often referred to as Hausa/Fulani (Oyewole, 1987:137).

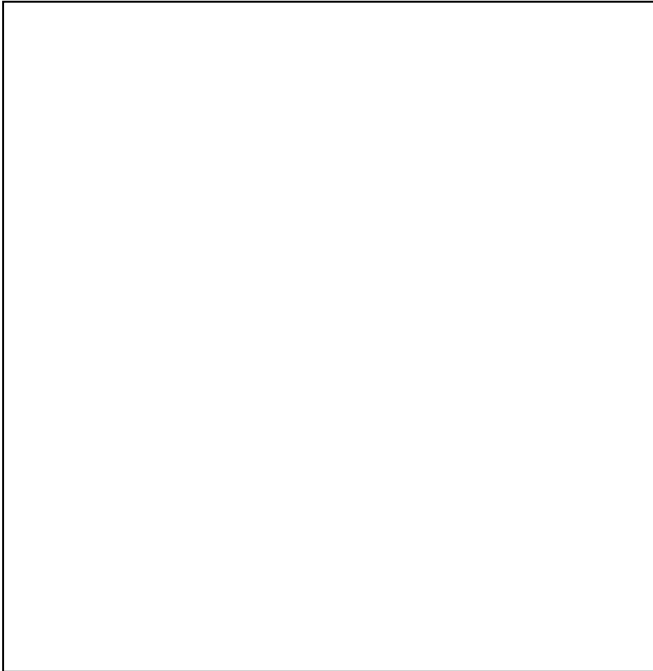
Hausa- The largest ethnic group in the North. They are Muslim and mostly farmers, artisans, and traders. The Hausa language is widely spoken not only in Northern Nigerian but also in other parts of West Africa. It is said they possess an intense cultural consciousness and pride in themselves. When they arrived in what is now called Nigeria, the Hausa set up 7 small states where they developed techniques of efficient government, including a carefully organized fiscal system and a highly learned judiciary.

Igbo (also spelled Ibo)- They constitute the majority ethnic group in Southeast. Among them they speak many dialects, which reflects their decentralized political structure. Their largest societal unit was the village, where each extended family managed its own affairs without being dictated by any higher authority. The villages were democratic in nature and where chiefs existed their political power was restricted to local jurisdiction. They are mostly farmers and traders. Many of the Igbo are Catholic, but some also practice the Igbo traditional religion.

Yoruba- They mainly live in the Southwest. It is believed that their ancestors migrated from Egypt. There were many trade wars among them during the 19th century. They have been the most urbanized people in Nigeria and before the British arrived, they had a fairly developed large political organization and traditional and constitutional monarchy. They have also been exposed to intense westernization. About 40% of the Yoruba are Christian (protestant), another 40% are Muslim and the remaining 10% practice the traditional Yoruba religion.

## **HISTORY**

## Map of 3 Major Ethnic Group Regions



## PRECOLONIAL HISTORY

People have lived in what is now known as Nigeria since at least 9000 BC. Kingdoms emerged in the northern area, prospering from trade ties with North Africa around the early centuries AD. At roughly the same time, the southern area yielded city-states and looser federations sustained by agriculture and coastal trade.

### North and Northwest Nigeria

The northern region's first well-documented state was the Kanem kingdom around 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Kanem profited from trade ties with North Africa and the Nile Valley, from which it received Islam. Around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Kanem-Bornu Empire was established. Kanem-Bornu became a flourishing center of Islamic culture and grew rich in trade of salt and textiles. The empire lasted until 1846.

The Hausa cultures emerged into seven city-states (Kano, Rano, Katsina, Zaria, Gobir, Kebbi, Auyo) in the northwestern and north central areas of Nigeria. They developed strong trading centers typically surrounded by a wall. Their economies were based on intensive farming, cattle raising, craft making, and later slave trading.

### The Fulani and the Jihad

In 1803, Usman Dan Fodio, a Fulani priest and reformer, initiated a movement to purify the practice of the Islam and to improve the economy in the North. This religious war

helped spread Islam and united Northern Nigeria under the Caliphate of Sokoto (city founded by Usman Dan Fodio).

### Southwest Nigeria

Ife is the first well-documented kingdom established by the Yoruba in the southwest around the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Ife was known for its highly skilled artisans, who made beautiful pieces from terra cotta, bronze, wood and ivory. The kingdom of Benin emerged to the East of Ife, shortly after its rise. Around 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Yoruba city-state of Oyo arose. It replaced Ife as Yorubaland's political center. Initially, because of its strong military, the Oyo controlled the trade in slaves with the Portuguese. The Slave trade had disastrous effects on the area as the groups vied for the lucrative trade in slaves, conflicts increased, and agriculture and other economic areas declined or stagnated.

	<p><u>Southeast Nigeria</u></p> <p>The Igbos (pronounced Ebo) dominated this part of Nigeria. They did not for the most part have large, centralized kingdoms like other parts of Nigeria. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Aro arose to dominate Nigeria's southeastern border. The Aro were oracular priests for the region and used this role to secure large numbers of slaves. The slaves were then sold in coastal ports.</p> <p><u>Slave Trade</u></p> <p>The effects of slavery on the development of Nigeria and West Africa are many. It drained the population of a</p>
	<p>considerable number of able-bodied men and women in their prime, leaving behind old men and women. It destroyed many villages and flourishing towns, and created distrust and hatred between various ethnic groups and even within the same ethnic groups, especially as witnessed by the Yoruba civil wars (mentioned previously under Southwest Nigeria). Still important is the fact it diverted Nigeria and West African efforts away from agriculture and industries. Finally, the suppression of slave trade in the 1800s gave European Empire builders a good opportunity to intervene in local African affairs, support one group against other and finally subjugate them.</p>

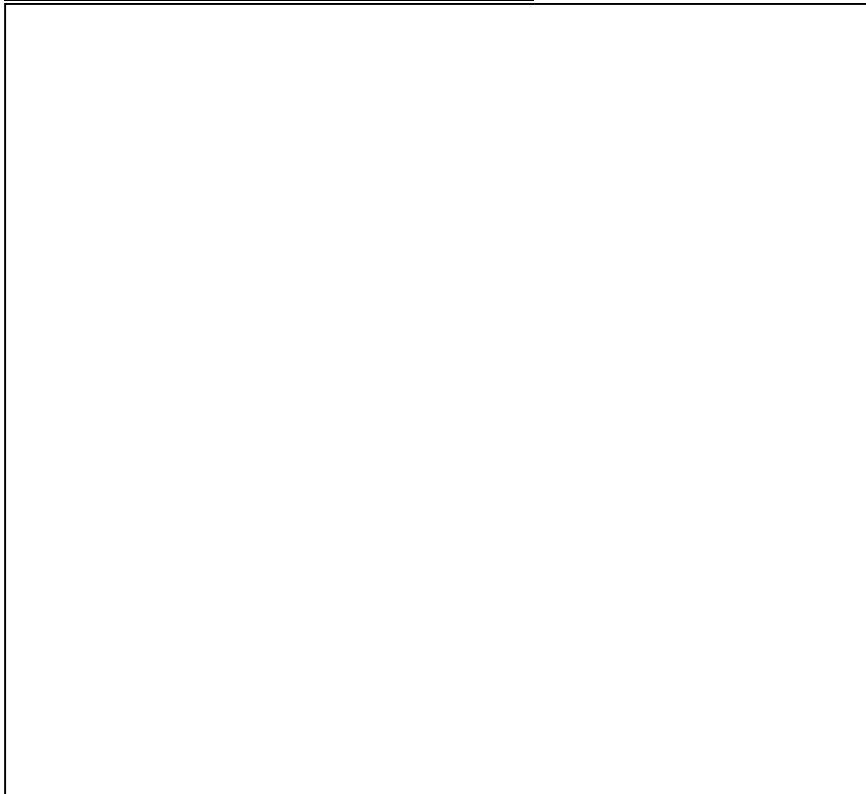
## **COLONIAL HISTORY**

	<p>In 1853 the British government had two consuls in Nigeria: John Beecroft for the Bight of Biafra and Benjamin Campbell for Lagos. Nigeria was the creation of these British imperial authorities. Its boundaries were determined not on the basis of its ethnic communities, but rather on the basis of European economic interests and power politics (Oyewole, 1987:5). The British established a colony in Lagos in 1861. Lord Frederick</p>
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Lugard, a British colonial administrator was responsible for the pacification and conquest of the Sokoto Caliphate as well as unifying northern and southern Nigeria. He was a major advocate of British indirect rule, which basically used local chiefs and emirs to rule the people rather than establish a entirely new administrative network.

The British divided and ruled colonial Nigeria as distinct and independent political units via a regional system of separate administrations and local authority structures. Thus, there was no central representative institution or unifying political body. Nigeria became a federation of three regions (Eastern, Northern, and Western) in 1954. The federal structure reflected the wide cultural and political differences between the country's three largest ethno-linguistic groups, the Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba that constituted the majority of the populations in the Northern, Eastern and Western regions, respectively. Within each regional system, the majority group tended to exercise political dominance over numerous of other smaller ethnic groups. (Forrest, 1993:17).

### **COLONIAL MAP OF NIGERIA**



### **Independence and Crisis Years**

The Federation of Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. Since no party had won a majority in the 1959 elections, The Northern People's Congress and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) formed a coalition government. After the election, Abubakar

Tafawa Balewa of NPC became Prime Minister and Nnamdi Azikiwe of NCNC became the governor-general. In 1963, it became the Republic of Nigeria and its first President was Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The first years of independence were characterized by severe conflicts within and between regions. In the Western region, a mostly Yoruba based party called the Action Group led by Obafemi Awolowo split off under the leadership of S.I. Akintola to form the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1962. In 1963, the Mid-Western region (mostly Edo population) was formed from part of the Western region. National Elections in 1964 were hotly contested with an NPC-NNDP coalition emerging victorious.

The January 1966 coup staged by Igbo army officers killed Federal Prime Minister Balewa, Northern Prime Minister Ahmadu Bello, and Western Prime Minister S.I. Akintola. The coup leaders installed an Igbo, Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi as head of government. Another coup in July killed Ironsi, and named Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon as head of a new military regime. The Eastern parliament subsequently declared the region an independent republic and civil war erupted.

### **Issues to Explore in Nigeria's History: Pre-Colonial to Civil War**

Effects of Slave Trade

Resistance of Emirates in the North to Colonialism

Lord Frederick Lugard and the British policy of Indirect Rule

Independence, Internal Conflict and the Biafra War

## **POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### **ETHNICITY AND POLITICS**

In Nigeria, politics is not just the pastime of the educated elite alone. The uneducated rural population and their uprooted urban counterparts are as keenly aware of their stake in politics as the educated elites. Politics is largely non-ideological, based more along ethnic lines and concerned with material advancement and the

accumulation of power for one's ethnic group (Wilson, 1988:21-22). Nigeria has spent most of its post independence years searching for a national identity or at least trying to get citizens to think of themselves as Nigerians. Most Nigerians still have strong regional local loyalties embedded in ethnic and religious ties.

### *Politics of Marginalization*

Minabere Ibelema claims that Nigeria's ethnic groups are fearful of domination and, that this is the root cause of all the tension and instability that Nigeria has experienced since independence. At different points in time, each of the 3 major ethnic groups claims to have been marginalized from the government. Their claims of marginalization center on 4 central concerns: participation in and/or control of government, political appointments, budgetary allocations, and leadership of government-owned industries or parastatals.

The declining economy and government corruption have exacerbated the problem as many groups feel a loss of privilege and have started seeking scapegoats among other ethnic groups. There is an inherent inequity in the federal revenue sharing system, as 85-90 percent of the government's budget comes from a relatively small region's (the Niger Delta) crude oil production.

The Igbos and the Hausa/Fulani both feel marginalized. One can understand the Igbo claim since they still feel the impact of the civil war, but it is difficult to understand the Hausa/Fulani claim as they have dominated political leadership of Nigeria since the end of colonialism. Before the civil war, many Igbo held important political and business positions throughout the country especially in the North and Niger Delta, positions many have yet to regain. Although the Hausa/Fulani have dominated national politics, the Northern region where majority live has lagged tremendously in educational and industrial development.

On the other hand, Yorubas feel cheated since they have not fully participated in political leadership despite their high levels of education and extensive involvement in national industry and commerce. As a group, the Yoruba did not vote for Obasanjo (although he is Yoruba)

because he did not denounce the military government when it nullified the 1993 elections that would have made Moshood Abiola the first Yoruba Nigerian president.

## GOVERNMENT

In 1968, Nigeria adopted a federal structure of 12 states. The number of states increased in 1976 to 19, to 21 in 1987, to 30 in 1991, and to 36 in 1996. The federal capital of Abuja, a new city on the model of Brasilia, was created in 1979 (Mabogunje, 2000:818). The Nigerian state is now governed under the 1999 Constitution that is modeled after the American Presidential system, with three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. The executive branch is headed by a popularly elected president for a 4-year term and is assisted by a cabinet. The bicameral legislature consists of a 360-seat House of Representatives and a 109-seat Senate. All legislators are elected for 4-year terms. The current President is Olusegun Obasanjo of the People's Democratic Party, and the Vice-president is Alhaji Abubakar Atiku. The three major political parties are People's Democratic Party (PDP, centrist), All People's Party (APP, conservative) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD, progressive).

State governments are run by democratically elected Executive Governors, assisted by a Deputy Governor and State Executive Council of Commissioners who are appointed by the Governor and approved by the legislative arm of government-the State House Assembly. States enact laws, which are superceded by federal laws in case of conflict.

### Nigerian Leaders since Independence

Name	Ethnicity, Religion or Region	Period in Power	Type of Government
Nnamdi Azikiwe	Igbo	1960-66	Civilian
Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi	Igbo	1966	Military
Yakubu Gowon	Hausa	1966-75	Military
Murtala Muhammad	Hausa/Fulani	1975-76	Military
Olusegun Obasanjo	Yoruba-Christian	1976-79	Military

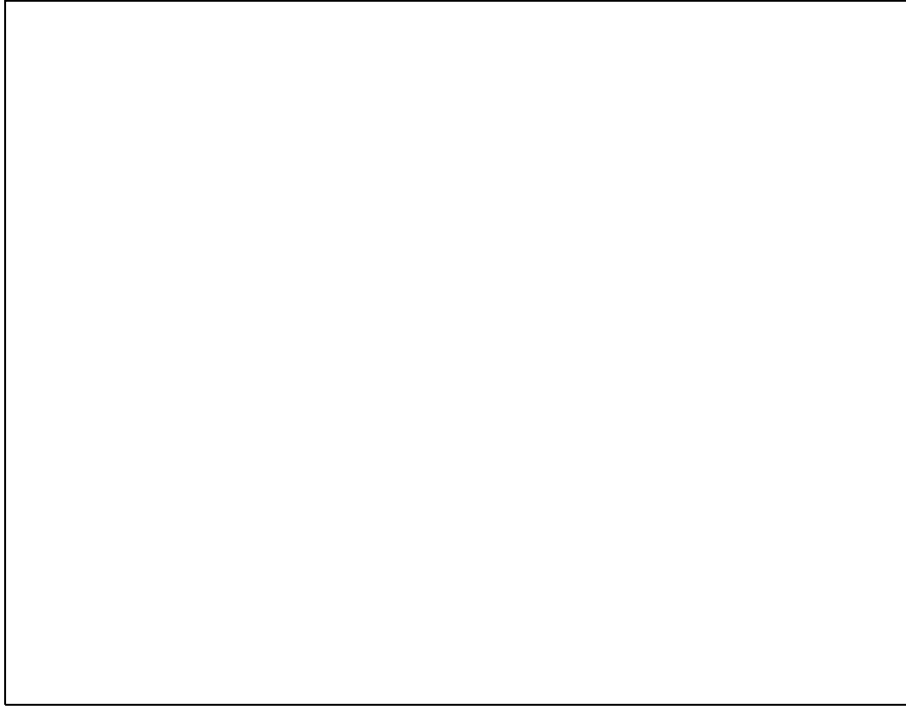


Shehu Shagari	Hausa/Fulani	1979-83	Civilian
Muhammadu Buhari	Hausa/Fulani	1983-85	Military
Ibrahim Babangida	Hausa/Fulani	1985-1993	Military
Ernest Shonekan	Yoruba	1993	Civilian
Sani Abacha	Kanuri (North)	1993-98	Military
Abdulsalami Abubakar	Hausa/Fulani	1998-1999	Military
Olusegun Obasanjo	Yoruba-Christian	1999-	Civilian

### Nigeria's 36 States

Abia	Adamawa	Akwa Ibom	Anambra	Bauchi	Bayelsa
Benue	Borno	Cross River	Delta	Ebonyi	Edo
Ekiti	Enugu	Gombe	Imo	Jigawa	Kaduna
Kano	Katsina	Kebbi	Kwara	Kogi	Lagos
Nassarawa	Niger	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Oyo
Plateau	Rivers	Sokoto	Taraba	Yobe	Zamfara

Map of Nigeria's 36 States



## **DOMINATION OF MILITARY RULE**

The political future of Nigeria is tied to the future of the Nigerian military. For now the military is confined to its barracks. However, military dictatorships have dominated 30 of Nigeria's 40 years of independence. Thus, the military remains a viable and threatening alternative to civilian rule. The key will be to get the military force to defer to civilian authority and accept a subordinate role in a constitutional democracy. After so many years of military rule, many Nigerian public and private sector institutions are overly centralized, corrupted, inept, and autocratic.

Many of the country's military rulers and their associates stole tens of billions of dollars that may never be reclaimed. Far worse than this, however, was the squandering of the national budget on capital building projects that simply provided vehicles for kickbacks, but produced little of value. It is estimated, for example that \$8 billion was spent to build a steel plant in Ajaokuta in 1970s (*Economist*, 2000). It has yet to produce any steel.

### **Coup d' État (1966-1993)**

Between 1966 and 1993, Nigeria experienced 7 coups. Some people, especially the Hausa/Fulani saw the first coup in January 1966 in the North as being staged for the sole purpose of establishing Igbo domination. After the *Unification Decree* in May, 1966, abolished the federal structure to set-up a unitary form of government, this was especially the case. Violent protest subsequently erupted in the Northern Region and 6,000-8,000 Igbos were killed (this ultimately led to the civil war and declaration of the Republic of Biafra).

The second coup in July 1966 established General Gowon as national leader. The third coup in July 1975 brought in General Murtala Muhammad as head of state, and Olusegun Obasanjo, as military chief of staff. In February 1976, there was an attempted coup that resulted in the death of General Muhammad. Obasanjo stepped in to rule the country. The fifth coup in December 1983 was bloodless, and removed Shehu Shagari's civilian government and brought Major-General Muhammadu Buhari to power. A sixth coup in 1985 was led by General Ibrahim Babangida. Sani Abacha led the seventh coup in November 1993, and brutally ruled until his death in 1998.

### **Civil War**

The Nigerian civil war was the result of ethnic suspicion and leadership conflict. The Hausa/Fulani thought the Igbos were attempting to dominate the country after the January 1966 coup, so they launched a counter coup in July that killed many Igbo military officials as well as thousands of civilians in the North. Many Igbo began to feel insecure in the current Nigerian federation, especially after General Gowon emerged as the new leader. The Igbo military leadership expressed much displeasure over the selection of General Gowon. After almost a year of political and economic power moves, Lt. Col. Ojukwu proclaimed the independent Republic of Biafra in May 1967. The war ended with Biafra surrendering in January 1970.

### **Modern Economy**

Spurred by the booming petroleum industry, the Nigerian economy quickly recovered from the effects of the civil war and made more impressive advances. Nonetheless, inflation and high unemployment

remained, and the oil boom led to government corruption and uneven distribution of wealth. In the late 1970s, a crisis ensued. It was brought on by rapidly falling oil revenues, government restrictions on public opposition to the regime, restricted union activity, student movements, nationalization of land, and increased oil industry regulation.

The World Bank ranks Nigeria as a low-income country despite its tremendous agricultural and mineral resources. It is among the world 20 poorest countries on the basis of per capita income. The decline in world petroleum prices in 1981 led to a decline in earnings from foreign exchange, which led to an accumulation of arrears in trade debts and to import shortages that resulted in a sharp fall in economic activity. A series of poor harvests, an overvalued currency, and a widening budget deficit severely compounded the problem. Between 1984 and 1990, austerity measures-- including elimination of price subsidies and privatization of state enterprises--were instituted by the Buhari and Babangida governments.

### **Petroleum Domination**

The development of the petroleum industry in the late 1960s and 1970s radically transformed Nigeria from an agriculturally based economy to a major exporter of oil. Nigeria extracts about 93.1 metric tons of oil annually to account for 2.9 percent of the world production (Ejobowah, 2000). The entire production comes from the Niger Delta and adjacent off-shore fields, which host over a dozen oil companies producing what accounts for at least 80% of Nigeria's annual revenue. The largest of the companies is Shell. The Nigerian government has joint partnership arrangements with each company, and commands 55-60 percent of shares.

### **Effects of Petroleum**

The discovery of oil, rather than improving the quality of life of most Nigerians, only made it worse (Onimode, 1992). Although it led to the establishment of many projects in industry and construction, which generated employment for skilled and unskilled labor, it also led to the population drift from rural to urban areas and the decline of agriculture in the national economy. The long-term problem of neglecting

agriculture has resulted in steep increase in food prices and food insecurity. The disruptive effect of petroleum activities also directly affected agriculture productivity in the oil producing regions, since some of the shore lands were farming lands. The pollution that accompanied oil-drilling activities also affected fish production in the area.

### **Niger Delta**

Ogoniland is the center of oil production in the Niger Delta and is suffering deteriorating social and environmental conditions. As it is the center of oil production, it generates at least 80% of government revenues in Nigeria. Ken Saro-Wiwa led the struggle of the Ogoni people until his execution by the Abacha regime in 1995. Before his demise, he called for reparations from the oil companies.

Even after the election of a democratic regime, Nigeria's oil region still experiences immense problems--with unemployed youth resorting to violence and terrorist tactics against oil company personnel and pipelines. These recent conflicts are unlike actions led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, which were peaceful demonstrations limited to the Ogoni people, who inhabit a small part of the region. These recent uprisings have been violent and deadly. President Obasanjo's attempts to quell the unrest by sending in the military have resulted in condemnation by human rights groups. The Niger Delta region wants development, but the oil fields do not lend themselves well to providing arable land for farming and clean water for fishing. The Niger Delta question revolves around the federal government's control of oil resources and the distribution of oil revenue among the constituent states of the federation, and the claims of local communities to ownership of the resources.

### **Corruption and Crime**

Corruption and crime are believed to be two of the most serious challenges posing a threat to the fabric of Nigerian society. Although direct looting of the Treasury associated with previous military administrations has probably declined under President Obasanjo, routine corruption, largely responsible for the state's mismanagement of

resources is likely to continue even after the delayed anti-corruption law comes into force (EIU, 2000:7). Corruption is so widespread in Nigerian public culture that it will take major changes – including the promotion of greater openness in government, paying public servants enough to reduce the temptation for bribe-seeking and generally loosening the state’s grip on the economy – to reduce the problem.

The effects of corrupted and incompetent military leadership on the Nigerian economy are still felt throughout the society. Crime including armed robberies, thefts/stealing, burglaries and house/store break-ins, violence including murders, assault and rape constitute 73% of all crimes and offenses reported to the police between 1994-1997 (UNDCP, 1999).

### **Advance Fee 419 Scam**

At one time Nigeria criminals targeted potential fraud victims via the mail, but now it is mostly over the Internet. In all cases, it is still the same Advance Fee 419 scam that starts with a letter enticing recipients to part with information, such as bank account details, with the promise they can make huge profits by allowing money to be transferred out of Nigeria into their account.

### **Drug Trafficking**

Since the mid-1980s, Nigeria-based trafficking organizations, which smuggle large quantities of Southeast Asian heroin (primarily Thailand) into the United States, have become an increasingly sophisticated threat to drug enforcement efforts. The traffickers from Nigeria pay couriers, many of them fellow Nigerians to smuggle small amounts of heroin aboard commercial airlines. To avert suspicion, traffickers have begun to recruit couriers from every nationality. American teenage girls have been used, as well as members of U.S. military. As a result of increasing law enforcement pressure, Nigeria-based traffickers are beginning to switch from courier shipments to using express mail deliver. Once in the U.S., ethnic Nigerian traffickers sell the product to inner city gangs. To decrease their transportation costs, Nigerian traffickers have begun to cultivate heroin markets in other areas outside of Southeast Asia, such as Europe (DEA, 2000).

## **Debt**

Nigeria has over \$30 billion in loans due to official bilateral, private sector, and multilateral creditors. Much of this debt, over \$20 billion, is in arrears because Nigeria's previous government stopped paying its official bilateral creditors in the early 1990s. The government has used every opportunity to argue for debt relief, including substantial debt cancellation, and has even published a booklet, "Debt Cancellation: A Case for Nigeria," which it hopes will turn the argument in its favor. The government contends that Nigeria is too poor to meet its present debt repayment obligations of over \$3 billion a year, needs to invest in poverty alleviation and deserves compensation for its financial commitment to stabilizing the West African region.

## **Issues to Explore in Nigeria's Political Economy**

1. Federalism and Ethnic Rivalry
2. Potential for Democratization
3. Corruption by Civilian and Military Officials
4. Oil Resources and Revenue Sharing
5. International Criminal Activities: financial fraud, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, white-collar crime

## **RELIGION AND SOCIETY**

In Nigeria as well as in other parts of Africa, Islam, Christianity and strongly held traditional beliefs exist along side each other. Approximately 50 percent of the population is Muslim, 40 percent is Christian and the remaining 10 percent practice indigenous beliefs. Religious differences combined with ethnicity have contributed greatly to Nigeria's instability.

Religion has always been an important aspect of the culture and a way of life for the Nigerian people. Long before the advent of Islam and Christianity, the various people of Nigeria had their own indigenous religions, which permeated all aspects of the peoples' lives. Each ethnic or linguistic group had its own religious customs. The intersection of religion and politics can be as volatile as ethnicity and politics, and may be growing more so. Over the past 15 years, the most divisive

communal or interregional conflicts have occurred over religious matters. Some have pitted Muslims against Christians, and other members of radical Muslim sects against fellow Muslims.

### **Religious Controversy and Conflict**

Since 1970, religious controversy and intolerance in Nigeria have increased, and religious identities have become more overtly involved in political divisions. Religious tensions, especially intra-religious ones, are not new to Nigeria. Within Islam there was competition between the Qadariyya and Tijaniyya brotherhoods in the 1950s and 1960s. Later in the 1970s, there was localized conflict between the reformist Izala movement and the brotherhoods. But open conflict between Christians and Muslims had been rare in the past. Religion has on occasion been manipulated for political purposes. In general, however, religious identities – as distinct from ethnic, sectional, and class ones – have not been harnessed to mobilize political support. This has all changed since 1999. Indeed, the bloodiest conflicts that have occurred since Nigeria inaugurated a civilian government in May, 1999, have had less to do with religion rather than ethnicity. They have pitted the northern Hausa/Fulani, who are Muslim against the southern Yoruba, who are also Muslim as well as Christian. Many Hausa/Fulani claimed to be shut out of power, because the current president is Yoruba and Christian.

### **Prominence of Religious Issues**

To understand the prominence that religious issues and organizations have attained in Nigeria, a number of factors are relevant. First, there was the growth and dynamism of Islam and Christianity and the rise of fundamentalism in both Islam and Christianity. Second, there was the impact of the civil war of the 1960s and the increased influence of international tensions on domestic divisions. Third, there was the growth of state intervention in areas like education that were previously the province of religious bodies. Finally, there was the changed position of Christian populations within the northern states.

### **Islam**



Islam is the earliest external influence to reach Nigeria. It impacted principally the Northern sections of Nigeria, introduced a new way of life, and brought with it literacy in the Arabic language. Until the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio in 1803, it was mainly a religion of a small elite among the Hausa rulers. Today, it is practiced in the north among the Hausa/Fulani and some sections of western Nigeria among the Yoruba people.



### Sharia

Sharia means path or way. It is the legal structure central to Muslim identity and practice. In Northern Nigeria, it deals mostly with civil cases, but it is in the area of family law and succession that it is strongest and most important. Nigeria's 1999 Constitution allows sharia courts to decide questions of Islamic personal law where the parties are consenting

Muslims, but the Constitution forbids the adoption of a state religion. Unfortunately, the Constitution also empowers each of the 36 states to make laws on religion. Recently, some northern governors had instituted the sharia criminal code. The governors insist it will apply only to Muslims. This has led to protest from non-Muslims. A plan by the Kaduna state to introduce the system in February, 2000 unleashed mayhem resulting in the deaths of hundreds of people and reprisal killings in Southeastern Nigeria. Sporadic sharia-related violence still continues.

The sharia issue is complex. While Muslims, rich and poor, insist on their religious rights, Christians in Muslim-dominated states fear they will eventually be subjected to the legal code. In addition, to attempt to adopt an Islamic criminal system, some northern states have introduced laws (or plan to ) that are more associated with Islamic states than a multi-cultural society including banning alcohol and the separation of sexes in public (EIU, 2000:12).

### Role of Women

Women's roles are primarily governed by regional and ethnic differences. Traditionally, in the North, Islamic practices are still very common. Thus, generally, there is less formal education, early marriages-especially in rural areas, and confinement to the household (except for visits to kin, ceremonies, and the workplace, if employment is available and permitted by a woman's family or husband). Marriage is often polygamous. For the most part, Hausa women do not work in the fields, whereas Kanuri women do. Both work with harvesting and all

household members work in food processing. In the Muslim North, education beyond primary school has traditionally been restricted to the daughters of the business and professional elites.

In the South, women traditionally have economically important positions in interregional trade and the markets, work on farms as major labor sources, and have influential positions in traditional systems of local organization. The South, like North, still practices polygamy in Christian and Muslim households. Women in the South, especially among the Yoruba peoples, have received Western-style education since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Nigerian Literature**

Two of Nigeria's greatest authors and commentators are Nobel Prize Laureate Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. These authors have written books, essays, poems, plays on Nigeria's post independence struggles.

Suggested Readings:

#### **Wole Soyinka**

*The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis*  
*The man died: Prison notes of Wole Soyinka*

#### **Chinua Achebe**

*The Trouble with Nigeria*  
*Anthills of the*

*Ibadan: the Penkelemes years: a memoir: 1946-1965*  
*The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness*  
*A Dance of the forest*  
*Myth, Literature and the African World*

*Savannah*  
*A Man of the People*  
*Things Fall Apart*  
*No Longer at Ease*  
*Hopes and*  
*Impediments*

### Other Nigerian Authors to Explore

Buchi Emecheta

Olu Oguibe

Christopher Okigbo

Ben Okri

Ken Saro-Wiwa

Amos Tutuola

### Art and Culture

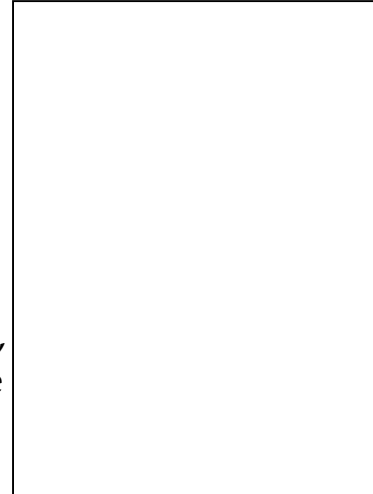
In Nigeria, culture is manifested in art, dance, language, literature, folklore, governance, music, and even the environment.

### George Landow, Brown University, "Civilizing Scars"

As in the essentially anti-Romantic arts of medieval Europe, traditional African body decoration and sculpture elevate the human above both the merely natural (in reality) and the merely realistic (in aesthetics). Scarification, tattooing, and body piercing therefore parallel the characteristic African aesthetic emphasis upon composure, balance, and calm in an important way, for both represent ways of separating the human from the less-than-human -- the animal, the natural. As Susan Mullin Vogel explains, "Scarification and other forms of body decoration were traditionally considered marks of civilization. They distinguished the civilized, socialized human body from the body in its natural state and from animals. The Chokwe say that teeth not filed to points are like the teeth of animals" [Aesthetics of African Art" The Carlo Monzino Collection, NY; Center for African Art, 1986,25;images from Willet, 189,221]

Such body modifications, she explains, largely occurs "during adolescence, often at rituals that celebrate the accession to adulthood, " and it "marks progressive stages of social integration and standing, such as parenthood, and it marks one as a member of one's group" (25).

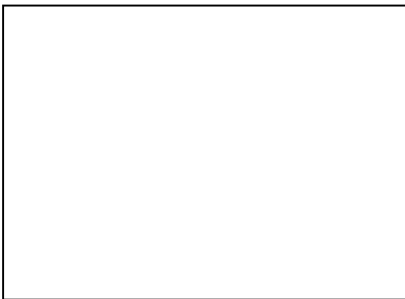
Scarification thus functions as a multiple border marker -- separating the human form from the animal, the individual at a particular life-state from those at all other, and members of one tribal or ethnic group from outsiders.



Scarification serves as a sign of character as well, since it is "not only beautiful to look at and arousing to touch but it is also proof of stamina and courage, characteristics necessary to undergo the painful operation" (25) --something apparent in Soyinka's description of his scarification in Ake.

If changing the physical body thus combines the aesthetic, philosophical, and social much as do other African aesthetic qualities, how does African body modification relate to scarification, tattooing, and body piercing in the West, and how do both relate to elective cosmetic surgery?

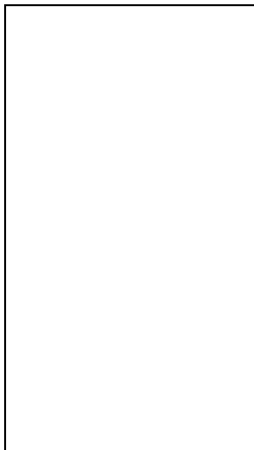
Michael Connor, Indiana University "Shaping: The Blacksmith"



Forged-iron figurative sculpture is not common in Africa, but Yoruba blacksmiths pound, weld, and cast several types of very elegant standards, such as those carried by Ifa cult priests, those planted in the ground at the shrines of Osanyin herbalists, and those

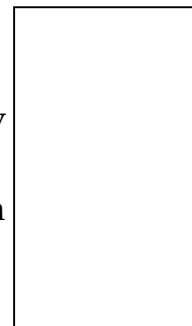
pounded from hoes into a sword-like staff for the deity of agriculture, Oko. These are the same artisans who produce the everyday tools of the leatherworkers, woodcarvers, and farmers. Some of these men also know how to do ornamental and ritual brass casting using the "lost-wax" process. Most of this casting work is done on commission for the Ogbodi (or Osugbo) society. This is a secret society comprised of elders

dedicated to maintaining law and order in a community. The society worships the Earth and values the incorruptible quality of brass. It is famous for its twin ritual brasses (edan) joined from the head by a metal chain. Some of the stylistic abstraction of cast-metal art can be attributed to differences in media and technique. Some may be due to the abstract character of the Ogboni society's subject of veneration - Earth itself. Regional variation in style may also be involved. Until late in the last century, the Ogboni cult was a southern forest phenomenon, while woodcarving has long been practiced throughout Nigeria. Yet both woodcarvers and brass casters depict the figure in basically the same manner: frontal, expressionless, and with great attention to meaningful detail, especially around the head.



Occasionally, the caster will create items for other cults. The covered brass bowl with four figures in the Meyer Collection may be either an Ogboni-related medicine bowl or a container for an Ifa diviners sacred palm nuts. At least one important divination verse compares Ifa to brass, stating, "White ants never devour brass, worms do not eat lead. I (Ifa) am humble, hence I have become a god." Secular or cult prestige staffs were sometimes commissioned by chiefs or important dignitaries. As public staffs of office or chief's messenger staffs, they incorporate symbols of leadership and are sometimes

heavily ornamented with figures. The worship of the god of iron, Ogun, also requires certain brass-cast objects. Anyone who uses iron in any form should honor the god of iron. Of course, most occupations and institutions use iron, so the symbol of Ogun is widely mingled with images of most other deities. Even the woodcarver will carefully maintain a shrine to Ogun and make offerings there before felling a tree or beginning a new work. Like the Opa Osanyin herbalist, whose metal staff with birds is shown above, the blacksmiths use staffs (iwana Ogun) and swords with open-work and incised patterns (ada Ogun) to define status in their trade, to advertise a mastery of their craft, and to ornament shrines to Ogun. The senior blacksmith's staff is in the form of an iron poker with a figurative cast-brass handle. At the top of the poker sits a tilted Ogun devotee,



dressed militantly, holding weapons, and wearing the insignia of his office - an openwork headdress, bandoleers of medicines, charms, and beads.

### Health Issues

Nigeria continues to experience severe epidemics of preventable diseases and remains among the world's greatest focal points for polio cases, HIV infections, and overall population growth (USAID, 1998). Major diseases included cerebrospinal meningitis, yellow fever, Lassa fever, HIV/AIDS, malaria, guinea worm, schistosomiasis, and river blindness. The federal, state and local governments and private groups own medical establishments. In rural areas there is a shortage of medical facilities and physicians (*Nigeria*, 1992:xvii). Half of the population has no access to safe drinking water. Many walk hours every day to get water, and it often contains water-borne parasites and bacteria that leads to deadly cases of diarrhea and guinea worm (Economist, 2000).

### HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a growing problem in Nigeria. It is estimated as of June 1999 that over 5 million Nigerians are living with HIV infection. The first case of AIDS was reported in Nigeria in 1986, yet it took the government six years before it was able to carry out its first HIV sentinel survey, with assistance from World Health Organization (WHO). The national prevalence rate was then (1992) estimated to be 1.2 percent. Since then, the number of HIV infected individuals in Nigeria has increased rapidly from about 600,000 through to 1.9 million in 1994 and 2.25 million in 1996 to over 3-4 million in 1998 (USAID, 1999).

### **Issues to Explore in Nigerian Religion and Society**

#### 1. 'Sharia' in majority Muslim States

Role of Islamic and Christian Fundamentalism

Christianity as an ethnic/regional issue & its conflicts with traditional customs

Role of Women (pre- and post-colonial periods)

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **Nigerian International Relations**

Nigeria accounts for 47 percent of the region's population, and 43 percent of the region's GDP. In recent years, Nigeria has exercised a leadership role through the West African peacekeeping force, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which restored peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nigeria has played a vital role in supporting regional stability through substantial peacekeeping efforts over the last decade. It is home to about 1 in 5 Africans, and the second largest economy in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria is also an important bilateral economic partner of the United States, it is the United States' second largest trading partner on the continent (South Africa is first).

President Obasanjo has spent much of his first year in office travelling abroad and is keen for Nigeria to play a more active role in African economic and political issues outside of West Africa. These include leading the African campaign for debt relief and seeking a role as a mediator in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the current problems in Zimbabwe.

### **Political Culture and Foreign Policy**

Akinyemi (1974) argues that Nigeria has a conservative foreign policy because of the numerical strength of conservative Northern Nigeria. Wilson (1988) believes the conservative orientation also reflects the general conservatism of the traditional cultures throughout Nigeria and their impact on popular opinion. He also states it is closely tied to the importance most groups place on business and commerce. Thus, Nigeria's foreign policy has tended to be pro-Western and conservative.

Ogunbadejo also implies that 'oil wealth provided Nigeria with the economic base, and thus the confidence, to give more substance to its foreign policy...' (1980:765). Thus, Wilson (1988) concludes that 'with its newly-found wealth and relative stability, and within the general

framework of pro-Western moderation, Nigeria sought to influence Western countries' relations with sub-Saharan Africa, and to establish itself as a leading broker in Western-African relations (35).

In its foreign relations, Nigeria sought to promote independence in the region without radicalization and to legitimize Nigeria's emergence as a leader in sub-Saharan Africa (Wilson, 1988). Nigeria achieved these objectives in negotiating Zimbabwe's independence, its search for solutions to Southern Africa conflicts, its support for MPLA in Angola against the US' wishes, and its self-proclaimed membership in the front-line group of states.

### **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

ECOWAS is an association of West African states. It was established by a treaty and ratified by 15 states in 1975 (Cape Verde joined later) to promote trade, economic development and cooperation in West Africa. In 1978, ECOWAS adopted a non-aggression protocol and in 1981, 13 of its members signed a mutual defense pact providing for collective military response against attack from non ECOWAS countries, mediation and peacekeeping missions in the event of armed conflict between states and defense against external states that initiate or support insurgencies in within member states. ECOWAS has a mixed record in mediating disputes between member states, particularly in attempting to resolve civil wars. An ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) comprising about 8,000 troops led by Nigeria was dispatched to Liberia in 1990. It succeeded in implementing a cease-fire agreement between the main rival factions and in appointing an interim president.

### **International Sanctions**

From 1994-97, Nigeria faced political isolation, primarily on the issues of human rights and democratic processes in the country. The European Union and the U.S. imposed limited sanctions that suspended bilateral and multilateral assistance. The suspended direct flights between Nigeria and the United States, arms sales, and military assistance. It placed restrictions on travel by government officials and their family members. After the hanging of the Ogoni 9, Nigeria was suspended



from the Commonwealth and the United States recalled its Ambassador for a four-month consultation.

### **Issues to Explore in Nigerian Foreign Relations**

1. Nigeria in Africa
2. Nigeria in West Africa
3. Role of Sanctions during Military Regimes

## **Internet Site Guide**

### **General News and Information**

**African News Service-** recent news on Nigeria from Pan African News Agency, Nigerian press and other sources.

<http://www.africanews.org/west/nigeria>

**Nigeria Nexus-**newspaper articles and essays on Nigerian politics, civil society, media, economy and history -

<http://www.internews.org/nigeria>

**Nigeria Media Monitor-** focuses on media and censorship-

<http://www.kilima.com/mediamonitor>

**Nigerian news On-line** <http://www.Nigeriaworld.com>

<http://www.Nigeriaweb.odili.net/culture.html>

**Africa Policy Home Page-**<http://www.africapolicy.org>

**Association of Nigerian Scholars for Dialogue-**discussion, documents and additional background on constitution-making and potential reform in Nigeria <http://www.nigerianscholars.africanqueen.com>

**CIA Factbook.** 1999. "Nigeria."

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ni.html>

### **Society**

**Nigerian Music On-line**

<http://www.nigeriagalleria.com/lifestyle/music.htm>

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"Cutting: The Woodcarver"-

<http://www.fa.indiana.edu/~conner/yoruba/woodcarver.htm>

"Shaping: The Blacksmith"-

<http://www.fa.indiana.edu/~conner/yoruba/blacksmith.htm>

Landow, George, Professor of English and Art History, Brown University

"Yoruba Aesthetics: Theories and Attitudes"

<http://landow.stg.brown.edu/post/nigeria/yaesthetics.htm>

"Mask Sculpture and Social Practice"-

<http://landow.stg.brown.edu/post/africa/art3.htm>

"Civilizing Scars"-

<http://landow.stg.brown.edu/post/africa/scar.htm>

"African Attitudes toward Art Objects: the BaLega"-

<http://landow.stg.brown.edu/post/africa/art2.htm>

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## **Political Economy**

<http://www.shellnigeria.com>

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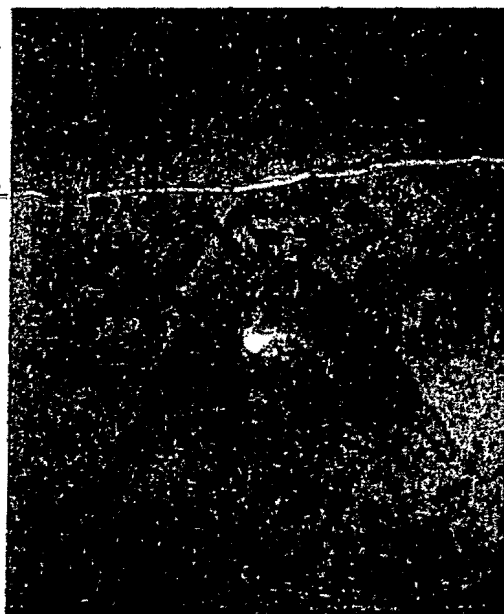
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# PARAGUAY: B6 SELF-STUDY GUIDE

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GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE School of Professional and Area Studies  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: APPEALS REVIEW PANEL Foreign Service Institute  
CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State  
APPEAL ACTION: RELEASED IN FULL  
DATE/CASE ID: 08 NOV 2010 200701753

## Self-Study Guide to Paraguay

The **Self-Study Guide: Paraguay** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Paraguay's history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by Robert E. Service former United States Ambassador to Paraguay and Karol C. Service. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and

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DATE/CASE ID: 25 FEB 2010 200701753

attributable sources and do not necessary reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Ambassador Service.

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First Edition: December 2002

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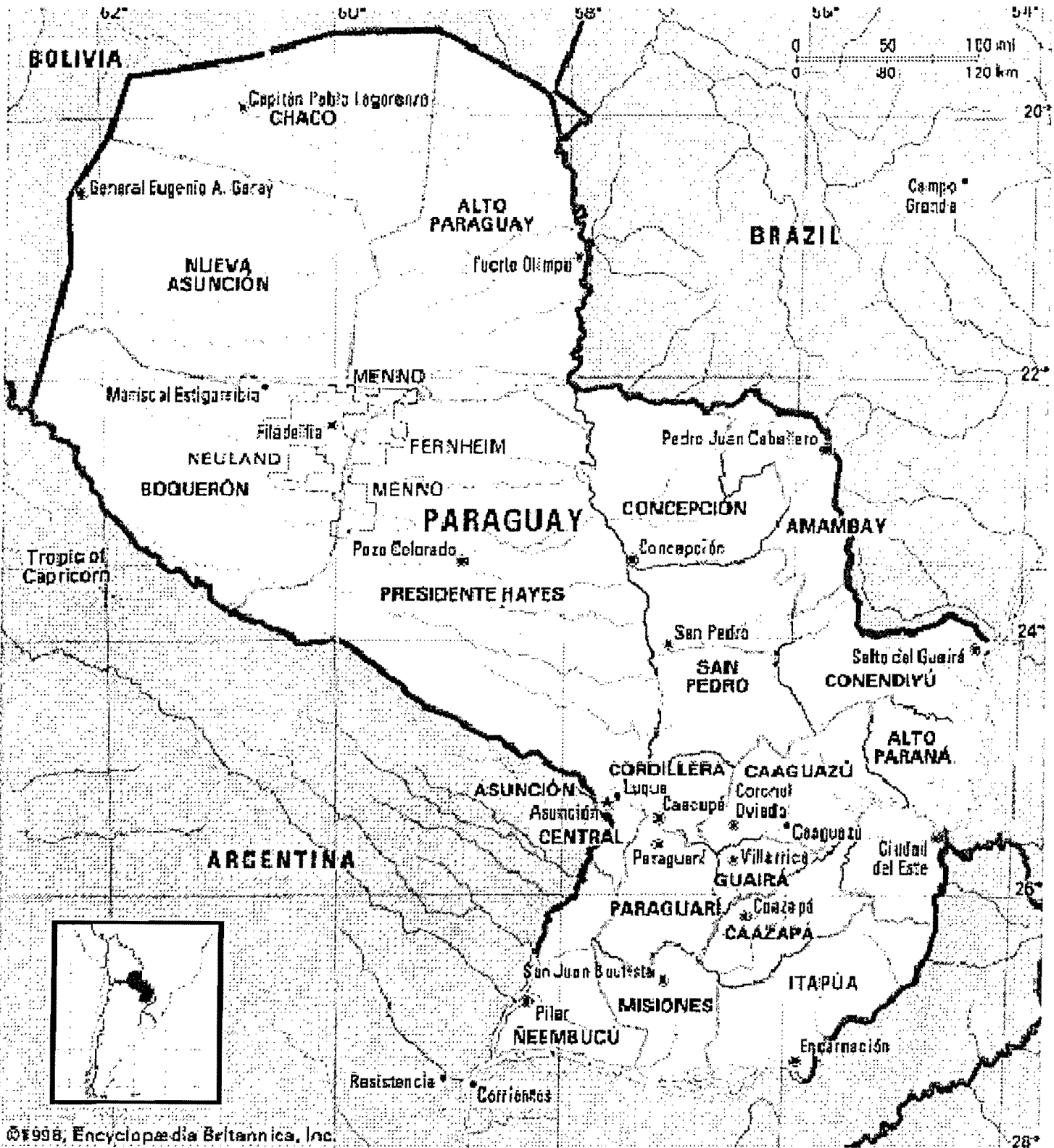
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# CHRONOLOGY

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1537 Founding of Asunción by Juan de Salazar y Espinoza.

1609–1767 Period of Jesuit colonies (*reducciones*).

1720–35 Comunero revolt against Spanish authority.

1776 Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata established (with authority over Paraguay).

1811 Paraguayans defeat Argentine Army under Belgrano and declare independence.

1813 First Paraguayan constitution.

1814–40 Dictatorship of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia.

1841–62 Dictatorship of Carlos Antonio López.

1862–70 Dictatorship of Francisco Solano López.

1864–70 War of the Triple Alliance against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.

1876–77 Brazilian occupation ends; mediation of Rutherford B. Hayes gives disputed portion of Chaco to Paraguay rather than Argentina.

1878–04 Large areas of country sold in order to raise money and promote development.

1887 Liberal and Colorado Parties formed.

1904–40 Period of Liberal Party dominance.

1925–26 First Mennonite colonies in the Chaco.

1932–35 Chaco War with Bolivia (won by Paraguay).

1936–37 Febrerista revolt and government.

1940–48 General Morínigo rules with dictatorial powers Paraguay declares war

on Axis Powers in early 1945; U.S. economic and technical assistance begins.

1947 Civil war pits Colorado Party against other parties and much of officer corps.

1948–54 Six presidents, all Colorado Party.

1954–89 Dictatorship of General Alfredo Stroessner.

1955–57 Growing ties to Brazil lead to road and bridge across the Alto Paraná and to construction of Itaipú Dam. Paraguay no longer depends on Paraná River for access.

1969–1989 Opposition to Stroessner joined by Catholic Church and then by U.S. and other Governments on human rights grounds.

1989 Stroessner ousted by military coup; General Rodríguez elected to 4-year term in contested election.

1991 Treaty of Asunción joining Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay in Southern Common Market (Mercosur).

1992 New, democratic constitution.

1993 Colorado Party candidate Juan Carlos Wasmosy wins election for President.

1996 General Oviedo threatens coup; resigns; launches successful campaign to win Colorado Party nomination for President.

1998 Oviedo imprisoned for coup attempt. Vice President candidate, Cubas Grau, wins election over opposition alliance candidate and pardons Oviedo.

1999 Assassination of Vice President Luis María Argaña sparks riots that force Cubas Grau and Oviedo to flee country. Senate President González Macchi assumes Presidency.

2000 Liberal Party wins election for vacant Vice President position.

2003 Next national elections.

# GEOGRAPHY

Nowadays, most foreigners arrive in Paraguay by air from São Paulo. Most of the forest has gone. Clay red is the predominant color. You cross the Paraná River near the Iguazú Falls and the Itaipú Dam, and then glide down toward the flood plain of the Paraguay River and Asunción. Now, roads connect Brazil and Paraguay, the most important of which crosses the Paraná just below Itaipú into Ciudad del Este, Paraguay's second largest city.

It was not always this easy. Until 1950, Paraguay was the hemisphere's least accessible country. Almost everyone arrived by river from the south. It is 800 miles up the Paraná River to where the Paraguay River flows in from the left, while the Alto Paraná bears off to the right. At the point where they meet there is a wooded bluff, the southernmost point of the country. Behind it is a lush, fertile, and rolling land, broken here and there by wetlands and by hills that separate broad valleys. To the east, along the Alto Paraná River, an escarpment extends down from Brazil. The lake behind Itaipú Dam, the Amambay Mountains (high hills, really), and the Rio Apá separate Paraguay on the north and east from Brazil. This is eastern Paraguay, about 40 percent of the country and the home to well over 95 percent of all Paraguayans. It used to be heavily forested. Now only scattered remnants remain. Farming, grazing, and urbanization have claimed the rest. The highest point in the country is here, less than 3,000 feet.

Continue up the Paraguay River. On the right, where the river narrows and makes a bend to the east, you pass Humaitá and then Pilar in the Department of Ñeembucú. At Humaitá (little more than a ruined church remains), the Paraguayans held off the Argentine and Brazilian forces for almost 3 years during the War of the Triple Alliance, helped by the waterlogged nature of much of the terrain. Old battlefields are reminiscent of those of our Civil War. Although Pilar has the biggest textile plant in the country, there is little other development. Ñeembucú only recently got its first paved road.

On the left the land is flat as far as the eye can see; Argentina at first, then Paraguay north of the Pilcomayo River. This is the Chaco, a gently rising, former seafloor that has wetlands along the Paraguay River and becomes increasingly arid the farther west and north you travel. A paved highway that runs past the Mennonite colonies gives way to sand well before the Bolivian border. Just north of the Pilcomayo, but on the eastern side of the Paraguay River, is Asunción, the capital and center of Paraguayan history since 1537. Farther north is the old town of Concepción, on the right shortly before reaching the Apá River and Brazil. Paraguay continues on the western side for another 140 miles to the border with Bolivia. This area, from Puerto Casado to Bahía Negra used to be a major source of *quebracho* wood (used for extracting tannin and for railway ties).

Beyond the riverbank, few Paraguayans find the Chaco an attractive place to work or live. It is the home to most of the country's remaining Amerindians, to three large Mennonite colonies, and to cattle ranches, but not much else. Almost all of the country's history and economic activity is in the eastern portion.

Rivers define Paraguay. The Paraguay River, wide, meandering, and relatively slow moving is much like the Mississippi. The Paraná to the east is more like the Columbia, and carries a greater volume of water in a more rapid descent.

Asunción is by far Paraguay's largest city, with 1.5 million people within the metropolitan area. Regional centers are Encarnación in the south across the Alto Paraná from Argentina, Villarrica, and Colonel Oviedo in the center of the eastern portion, Ciudad del Este in the east, and Concepción in the north. The country's main transportation artery goes almost due west from Asunción to Colonel Oviedo and then Ciudad del Este. Other main roads link Asunción and Ciudad del Este with Encarnación in the south. From Colonel Oviedo a paved road goes north to Pedro Juan Caballero on the Brazilian border.

Paraguay's area of 157,048 square miles is about the same as California's. It has 1,880 kilometers of border with Argentina, 1,290 kilometers with Brazil, and 750 kilometers with Bolivia. The rivers provide access to small oceangoing ships, although nowadays most waterborne cargo travels by barges to deeper ports in the River Plate Basin. Paraguay sits on the Tropic of Capricorn. About 80 percent of the country is in the Tropics, the remainder, from Asunción south in the Temperate band. If it were in the Northern Hemisphere, Paraguay would be South China, the Hawaiian Islands, or Egypt below the Aswan Dam.

The weather in most parts of Paraguay is hot and humid during summer months (December through March), warm to hot in spring and fall, and cool during the winter months of June through August. Summer days in the 100's and winter nights in the 40's are not uncommon. Snow is almost unknown; but, for those living without heating in houses that are partially open to the elements, most Paraguayans, the winter days and nights can be quite cold. Average annual rainfall is 100 inches in parts of the eastern portion. In the Chaco it tapers off to 15 inches near the Bolivian border.

Six percent of the land is described as arable. The principal crops are soybeans, corn, manioc, cotton, sugar, and tobacco. Fifty-five percent of the country is in permanent pasture, much of which is devoted to cattle. Forests and woodland now make up less than one-third of the territory.

There is very little mineral wealth apart from Limestone and clay. No known commercial deposits of petroleum, gas, or coal exist. There may be minable gold.

## Questions/Issues

1. Despite past isolation, is Paraguay's central location a plus or a minus for future development?
2. Does Paraguay have significant tourism potential?

## Further Reading

[See end of Guide for full bibliographic citations.]

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Washburn, Charles A. *The History of Paraguay*. Chapter 27 of volume 1 gives an idea of what the country looked like 140 years ago.

## HISTORY

In bald outline: The Guaraní Amerindians occupied much of what is now Paraguay when Europeans discovered and began to settle the area from 1524 to 1537. After a brief stint as the center of Spanish administration of the River Plate Basin, Paraguay passed two centuries as an isolated outpost of an empire. Independence, when it came in 1811, was less a rejection of Spain than a determination by the country's first dictator not to buckle under to Buenos Aires and its local allies. In the 1860's, Paraguay fought a disastrous war against Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. In the 1930's, it won the Chaco War against Bolivia. Without significant mineral wealth, Paraguay has always been predominantly agricultural. Since 1870, Paraguay's experiments with democratic governance produced alternating periods of one-party rule and then almost 50 years of military dictatorship. Since Stroessner's ouster in 1989, Paraguay has made a serious effort to modernize; success has been only limited thus far.

### The Guaraní Inheritance

The first Europeans known to have set foot in Paraguay were the Portuguese Aleixo García who came overland from the coast in 1524 and Sebastian Cabot who sailed up the Paraná River in 1526. They encountered large settlements of Guaraní Amerindians who, for the most part, were friendly. The Guaranís are often linked with the Tupí Amerindians. Together the Tupí-Guaraní occupied a large part of what is now coastal Brazil, extending through Paraguay into eastern Bolivia. According to some experts, the Guaranís may have originated in the Paraguay River Basin. They practiced slash-and-burn agriculture with corn and manioc as the principal crops, and hunted and fished. The social unit was the family. Each community had a chief, but a shaman often held the real power. There was little in the way of a governing or upper class, and no central government. Related communities joined together in time of war.

More than any other country in the Americas, modern-day Paraguay is a fusion of what existed before the Spaniards and what came later. Today, there are perhaps no more than 100,000 pure Amerindians, mostly in the Chaco, few of whom are Guaranís. But most Paraguayans have some Amerindian blood

and almost all still speak some Guaraní. In the rural areas, Guaraní is still the preferred language. For an aspiring politician, fluent command of Guaraní is a plus. Contrast this to Andean or Central American countries where large indigenous populations exist side by side with mestizo and European populations—or frequently in separate parts of those countries. Although many other Latin American nations have substantial mestizo populations, in Paraguay because of limited European settlement, the mix is probably more weighted to the Native American side than elsewhere in the region.

The first Europeans did not pose an immediate threat to Guaraní life and customs. They wanted to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean or a shorter route to the mineral wealth of the Andes. The Guaraní Amerindians saw the new arrivals as potential allies in their own battles with hostile tribes. Living in a fertile area, the Guaraní appear to have been willing to share that abundance with the newcomers; in any event, personal property barely existed. Even today, what we might call theft is often viewed as simply taking something that the other person has more of than you do, and therefore is a form of social sharing. Similarly, personal enrichment by dubious means is something less than corruption if the political candidate shares his wealth with potential voters.

For more than 400 years after Spanish settlement, subsistence agriculturalists occupied abundant unowned or unworked land. Aside from the demand for Amerindian labor (see below), those in whom the Guaraní inheritance was still strong could continue living as they had. Following the War of the Triple Alliance, foreign individuals and companies bought large chunks of territory, but development was seldom intensive. Only in the past 50 years, has land become scarce, giving rise to a serious problem of landless peasants and property invasions. (See [Social Issues](#) and [Economics](#).)

### **Far Away With no Gold or Silver**

On August 15, 1537, Gonzalo de Mendoza y Espinoza built a fort above a small bay on the East Bank of the Paraguay River and called it Nuestra Señora Santa María de la Asunción. He viewed it as a base to explore for silver and gold in the direction of the Andes. For a time, Asunción prospered. In 1541, the Spanish Government abandoned Buenos Aires (Nuestra Señora del Buen Ayre) and moved its remaining settlers to Asunción. For 40 years, the small settlement 1,000 miles upriver from the coast was the center of Spanish activities in the southern part of the continent, east of the Andes. By 1560 the population was 1,500. Domingo Martínez de Irala, the first effective governor (1544–1556) encouraged the settlers to take Guaraní wives—there were as yet very few European women—to learn the local language, and to adopt some of the local customs.

The Chaco route to the Andes proved harsher and longer than explorers had hoped. They soon recognized that bringing mineral wealth to the east would not be economically feasible. Nor, were any nearer valuable deposits found. The exploratory phase had ended. After the Spanish reestablished Buenos Aires in 1580, Paraguay became an outpost of the empire, largely ignored by the Crown and not given much more attention by its nearer neighbors. The resulting isolation lasted for 400 years. Only after 1950, with commercial aviation and the building of all-weather road links to Brazil, did Paraguay become readily accessible. Looking forward, some foresee a virtue in Paraguay's central location: as a

hub for continental transport by land, air, and the rivers.

Isolation meant that the viceregal regimes (in Lima until 1776 and then in Buenos Aires) exercised only limited authority in Asunción. The early European settlers claimed with mixed success the right to choose and depose the royally appointed governors. Since Asunción had no royal troops, governors had to rely on the dubious loyalty of a locally recruited militia. Rather than more or less orderly governance maintained by a distant imperial authority, Paraguayans learned early the political value of controlling the most guns and men at the local level.

In 1811, with revolution starting to sweep through Spain's American colonies, Argentines naturally assumed that Paraguay would continue as a dependency of Buenos Aires. That it did not, that it opted for independence from both Spain and Argentina, was largely the work of one man, José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia. After twice defeating an Argentine army, an assembly in Asunción declared independence on May 14–15, 1811. When further negotiations broke down, Argentina closed the Paraná River to Paraguay, not finally granting recognition until the 1850's. Francia's response was to close Paraguay in on itself, making a virtue of an isolation that had been the normal order of events for much of its history.

Initially, Francia was one of two consuls charged with running the country. By 1814, he had decreed a law replacing the two heads with just one, his own. In 1816, he was declared Ruler for Life with the title of El Dictador Supremo. A well-educated man, of ascetic temperament, Francia's response to Argentine hegemonic pretensions was to severely curtail the once-dominant positions of those who looked to Buenos Aires for commercial or other reasons—first the small Spanish-born elite, then the Creole elite, and eventually the Catholic Church. Many who left the country were not allowed to return. Some who entered were not allowed to leave. Francia expropriated large amounts of land that had previously belonged to the elites or the Church. At the same time, he nationalized much of the trade that continued and looked to the overland route with Brazil as an alternative to the traditional supply route up the rivers. Francia also diversified Paraguayan agriculture, thus, making the country less import. Efforts to overthrow Francia were quickly and harshly crushed. When he died in 1840 at age 74, Paraguay's independence had been solidified, but, at the cost of almost total isolation. Francia was hardly an enlightened leader, but the country had enjoyed peace and some limited internal development. This example of a hardworking, unflamboyant, dictator would echo more than a century later in the even longer rule of Alfredo Stroessner.

### The Agricultural Imperative

Lacking other alternatives, the Paraguayan economy quickly came to depend on agriculture and forest products, which still account for the bulk of exports. The *encomienda* system, originally developed by the Spaniards in the heavily populated and more developed areas of Mexico and Peru, apportioned Amerindians among Spanish settlers who, in return for labor or payment, saw to the spiritual well-being and protected their wards. In Paraguay, about 20,000 Amerindians were divided among the 320 surviving Europeans. In theory, there were two types of *encomienda*: those requiring labor from the Amerindians; and those requiring an annual payment instead. In Paraguay, which operated almost entirely on a barter



basis during the early period, almost all *encomenderos* enforced year-round servitude on the Amerindians in their charge. This system remained in effect throughout the colonial period, and its legacy is still visible in the relations between landlords and the landless in the Paraguayan countryside.

Beginning in 1609, the Jesuits set up an alternative model for organizing the indigenous population—the so-called *reducciones* or missions. Building on work that had started in Brazil in the preceding century, the Jesuits gathered Guaraní Amerindians in the interior into self-contained communities, some with as many as 6,000 members and usually administered by just two Jesuit priests. The Jesuit communities developed yerba mate as a major crop, and also traded cattle, hides, tobacco, and food crops. On occasion they provided native troops to the Crown to ward off attacks from the Portuguese, English, and French. Voltaire, in *Candide*, includes a short episode about the Jesuit state within a state.

Inevitably, the settlers from Asunción viewed the Jesuits as rivals for the control and exploitation of Amerindian manpower. In 1720, Paraguayans rebelled against royal authority when the Viceroy in Lima reinstated a pro-Jesuit governor the local inhabitants had earlier deposed. One of the issues was access to Amerindian labor, which prominent families viewed as being more and more walled off by virtue of the Jesuit settlements. When the rebellion spread to poorer elements of the mestizo community, the more prominent families reversed direction and called for imperial help to end the revolt. Ironically, Amerindian troops from the Jesuit *reducciones* helped restore order. Antipathy toward the Jesuits continued, however, and leading Asunceños were not unhappy when the Jesuits were banned from the Spanish Empire in 1767. The Franciscans maintained some of the *reducciones* for a time, but now only ruins remain.

After the War of the Triple Alliance, foreigners, and some Paraguayans, invested heavily in commercial agriculture—first cattle and forest products such as tannin—and, more recently, in cotton and soybeans. Except for Brazilian soybean interests in eastern Paraguay, foreign influence has diminished. Overall, however, economic performance continues heavily dependent on year-to-year fluctuations in agricultural productivity.

### Little Country in the Middle

Carlos Antonio López replaced Francia from 1841 to 1862 and made some progress in opening up the country to modern influences. He was selected by a popular assembly, but he ruled as a dictator. Where Francia had sealed off the country, López wanted to bring in foreign investment and technology. Paraguay's one railroad, little changed to this day, was López' idea. He began construction of the Presidential Palace in Asunción and other public buildings. López also built more than 400 schools, and he strengthened the army. In 1852, Argentina formally recognized Paraguay's independence and other countries followed suit.

At Carlos Antonio's death the Office of President passed to his son, Francisco Solano López. Solano López is Paraguay's greatest national hero, buried now in the Panteón in downtown Asunción. Many historians judge that he was a megalomaniacal tyrant. Solano López had spent numerous years in Europe,

purchasing arms and studying the ways and intrigues of great countries. He also found an Irish-French mistress, Elisa Lynch, who was to bear him five children and to be at his side throughout the War of the Triple Alliance. Solano López had some reason to believe that Brazil and Argentina had designs on Paraguayan territory, but his ambitions were not solely defensive. Paraguay had a central location; the economy, based largely on agriculture, was stable; both Francia and Carlos Antonio López had begun the work of creating a professional military; and the latter had started an iron industry. When Brazil made demands on Uruguay in 1864, Solano López sent troops to the defense of its small sister republic, marching without permission across Argentina.

The War of the Triple Alliance arrayed Brazil, Argentina, and nominally Uruguay against Paraguay. The outcome was preordained, but it took 4 years for Asunción to fall and 2 more before Brazilian troops killed Solano López at Cerro Corá near the Brazilian border. Reputedly, Solano López' last words were "I die with my country." Whatever he intended the words to mean, Paraguay almost did die with him. By most accounts, well over 50 percent of the adult men were dead. Much of the country's limited infrastructure was destroyed. The peace settlements with Brazil and Argentina lopped off about 30 percent of the prewar territory and imposed reparations.

Although the War of the Triple of Alliance was a disaster for Paraguay, Paraguayans have also found ways to profit from the country's central location. At various times they have played off Argentina and Brazil to gain economic advantage, notably in the building of the Itaipú Dam. There has always been substantial contraband back and forth across the borders, to the benefit of Paraguayan middlemen.

The Triple Alliance War largely fixed Paraguay's borders with Brazil and Argentina, but those with Bolivia, also considerably larger, were still unresolved. The Spanish had never bothered to clarify the dividing line between the jurisdictions of Lima and Buenos Aires. The Bolivians, after losing their Pacific coast to Chile in 1883 were eager to establish an outlet on the Paraguay River, and there were rumors that the disputed area of the Chaco contained extensive petroleum deposits. The Chaco War is generally dated from 1932 to 1935. In the final analysis, the lowland Paraguayans were more capable of fighting in the region than were Bolivia's Andean conscripts. Paraguay retained much of what it had claimed.

### **Men Over Laws**

Paraguay shares much the same cultural history as the rest of Latin America. Its Government and its laws, often explicitly based on foreign models, are very similar to those found elsewhere. Like every country, Paraguay has had its enlightened leaders and exemplars of civic virtue. Yet Paraguay, to the outside observer, seems to have had a harder time than most in establishing the supremacy of law over the will of those with power. Dictators have ruled for more than half the period since independence and they have been tolerated, even welcomed at times, because they seemed to promise more stability and certainty than available alternatives. Even in periods of more-or-less democratic governance, the executive branch has dominated the other two. Judges and Congressmen could be bought or intimidated. The history of political parties is that of individual leaders and factions, more than ideology. In the

economic sphere, there is a long history of foreign partnerships with the Government or influential Paraguayans that later went sour because of perceived failures of the legal system.

Various factors may play a part: The Guaraní cultural inheritance, the “thinness” of Spanish rule over three centuries, the historic isolation and poverty of the country, rural predominance, the frontier mentality until very recently, the apparent belief of many Paraguayans that they can outwit richer neighbors, indeed any foreigners, and profit as a result.

Personal relationships remain very important in Paraguay. Most businesses are individual or family owned. Historically, politics has offered one of the few avenues for upwardly aspiring Paraguayans. Many of the more successful politicians have been caudillo-type leaders who cultivate patron-client relationships, trading protection and favors for support. The imperative of power, once gained, is to make sure that supporters get the benefit of Government action (or inaction, as quite often is the case when it comes to legal issues). Although now declining in importance as Paraguay slowly diversifies, a Government job at almost any level is a plum.

The personalist nature of Paraguayan life may have reached its apogee during the 35-year dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner (1954–89). Since then Paraguay has embarked on its most serious experiment with democratic governance, joined with neighbors in forming the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), and attempted to convince foreign investors that Paraguay is a land of opportunity. Success remains uncertain.

### Questions/Issues

1. What has to change in Paraguay if there is to be a strong and independent judiciary?
2. What is the role of other governments and international organizations in promoting political and economic development?
3. What are the prospects for significantly less corruption? What might be the key factors for such reduction?

### Further Reading

[See end of Guide for full bibliographic citations.]

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## CULTURE

### Language

Paraguay is a bilingual country. Since 1967, both Spanish and Guaraní have been recognized by the constitution as national languages. The degree of bilingualism in the population varies with respect to education and urban-rural circumstances. Nearly all Paraguayans (about 90 percent) speak some Guaraní. About half the total population is bilingual, and 40 percent of Paraguayans speak only Guaraní. Although Spanish is the official language in Government, education, and religious activities, Paraguayans of all classes use Guaraní in their homes and, according to some linguistic specialists, in their thoughts. Fluency in Spanish is related to educational attainment and is much more widespread in urban than in rural areas. Exclusive use of Guaraní is most common in rural areas.

At various times in the nation's history, Guaraní has served as an effective nationalistic symbol and unifying force. Guaraní is closely associated with Paraguayans' sense of national identity, and it has proved to be a vital communications asset in politics, particularly in rural areas. Jesuits in the 17<sup>th</sup> century developed an orthography for Guaraní. In contemporary Paraguay, Guaraní is often used in poetry, popular music, and theater productions; it is widely used in radio broadcasts; and some newspapers contain columns written in Guaraní. For most Paraguayans, however, Guaraní is primarily a spoken language, one they have learned at home or in the countryside with little or no formal instruction. Until the 1960's only Spanish was used in schools; bilingual instruction was introduced in the late 1980's.

At least 5 percent of the population speak languages other than Spanish and Guaraní. Mennonites who speak Plattdeutsch, a German dialect, are part of this group. Other languages spoken are Portuguese, Japanese, German, Korean, and Chinese.

## Ethnic Composition

High rates of intermarriage swiftly produced a fairly homogeneous mestizo society in Paraguay. Most of the original 350 settlers were male and from Spain, but the group also included some settlers from France, Italy, Germany, England, and Portugal. An early governor encouraged the settlers to give up thoughts of returning to Europe and to take Amerindian wives. Polygamy was common among the Guaraní tribes; some chiefs had as many as 20 concubines and shared them willingly with visitors. The settlers followed this practice, and some had as many as 10 to 20 wives and concubines. Before long, the mestizos outnumbered the Europeans, and by the 18th century, they outnumbered the Amerindians. Since almost all Paraguayans are of mixed blood, the term mestizo is seldom used in Paraguay.

Ethnic minorities, chiefly immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Latin America and Amerindians who continue to pursue an indigenous way of life, comprise less than 10 percent of the total population but are of considerable importance in some areas and activities. European and some Middle Eastern immigration began after the War of the Triple Alliance. Government efforts to attract immigrants in the late 1800's brought some 12,000 new residents from Italy, Germany, France, and Spain. There was also some immigration from Argentina at that time. German-speaking Mennonites came to Paraguay from Canada, Mexico, and Russia between 1920 and 1950 and established three agricultural settlements in the Chaco where, within a generation, they converted the semiarid desert into fertile farmland. Including a few smaller communities in the eastern region, the Mennonite population is estimated at some 25,000. Japanese immigration, which began in the 1930's and continued in the 1950's, was also largely agricultural in orientation. There is some Japanese involvement in commercial farming in the eastern region and several Japanese agricultural settlements have a total population of 30,000–40,000. Immigration from Brazil is more recent and of a significantly larger scale. Repeal of land ownership restrictions for foreigners in border areas and low land prices brought 300,000 to 400,000 Brazilians to eastern Paraguay in the 1970's and 1980's. More recently, immigrants from South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, estimated at a total of 30,000–50,000 have settled chiefly in Ciudad del Este and Asunción where they are engaged primarily in the import and sale of electronic goods from Asia and other commercial activities. (See [Social Issues](#) for information on the Amerindian population.)

## Religious Beliefs

More than 90 percent of Paraguayans are Roman Catholic. Mennonites and various Protestant groups account for the balance. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution. At one time the constitution required that the President be Roman Catholic, but that is no longer the case.

Catholic rituals and communal religious celebrations are an integral part of social life in Paraguay.

Catholic rituals generally mark important transitions in life, but there is some class distinction in this participation. The costs involved in the accompanying celebrations for weddings and baptisms are often a burden for the lower classes, causing them to postpone or curtail some of these rituals. Religious fiestas are community and national events that are celebrated by all social strata. Most church holidays are public holidays.

## National Holidays

January 1	New Year's Day
March 1	Heroes Day
Variable	Holy Thursday
Variable	Good Friday
May 1	Labor Day
May 15	Independence Day
June 12	Chaco Armistice
August 15	Assumption of the Virgin, founding of Asunción in 1537
September 29	Victory at Boquerón
December 8	Virgin of Caacupé
December 25	Christmas

## Questions/Issues

1. What are the benefits and disadvantages of bilingualism: Would Paraguay be better off with just a single language, presumably Spanish?
2. If the Mennonites could make a success of the Chaco, why can't other groups or sectors of the population?
3. What should be the role of Government or nongovernmental organization policies in promoting cultural change?

## **Further Reading**

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# **SOCIAL ISSUES**

## **Population Characteristics and Trends**

Paraguay must make substantial investments to adequately educate and care for its population. The Paraguayan population, estimated at 5.6 million in 2000, has been increasing at 2.6–2.9 percent a year. It is a relatively young population, with 39 percent under 15 years of age; 56 percent between 15 and 64 years; and 5 percent age 65 and older. The fertility rate, 4.16 per woman of childbearing age, is above the 3.4 average for Latin America. Considerable improvements have been registered in the last 25 years in the infant mortality rate, which was 36 per 1,000 live births in 1999; this rate compares favorably with infant mortality in Ecuador (39.4), Brazil (39.8), Peru (43.0), and Bolivia (59.). Life expectancy was nearly 70 years, for men 67 years and 72 years for women.

Mobility is high within the country, and emigration has been significant. Paraguay has, thus far, avoided the massive rural-urban migration so prevalent elsewhere in Latin America. Urbanization, however, has increased in recent decades and by the late 1990's more than half (52 percent) of the population resided in urban areas. One-fourth of the total population lives in the Asunción metropolitan area. During the last 25 years, internal population migration has been focused on the eastern region of the country where new agricultural lands were opened for colonization. There was a significant outflow from the central region to the eastern departments of Alto Paraná and Caaguazú where population increases have averaged about 10 percent a year. Most of this was rural-rural migration, but there was sufficient rural-urban movement to produce significant growth in small cities and towns. As a result, by the 1980's Paraguay had more than 30 cities with at least 5,000 residents. Some of the most spectacular growth was in Ciudad del Este where the population increased almost sixfold in 1972–82.

Emigration is chiefly to Argentina and follows long-established patterns. Since the mid-1800's, great numbers of Paraguayans have sought economic or political refuge in Argentina. As many as 2 million Paraguayans live in Argentina today, mainly in the northeastern agricultural areas and in Buenos Aires. Some 366,400 Paraguayans are regarded as part of the Argentine laborforce, and they are particularly notable among the construction trades in Buenos Aires. Reportedly, there are also numerous Paraguayans living in Brazil, and about 28,000 Paraguayans live in the United States, chiefly in New York.

## **Social Structure and Income Distribution**

Paraguay is generally regarded as having a more egalitarian social structure than most of its Latin American neighbors. Differences in income and cultural levels are not as extreme as in many Latin societies, and although Paraguayan society is stratified it is not rigidly divided. There are urban-rural distinctions. It is chiefly in urban society that a middle class is evident.

The basic social dichotomy is between the rural poor and the urban elite, between a broad stratum of small farmers and landless peasants many of whom operate on a subsistence level and a narrow stratum of elite families with ties to industry, commerce, and Government. The upper class is centered in the capital; most of its members have known each other since childhood and many are interlinked by kinship and marriage. Most of the urban population falls between these extremes. There is a small middle class in the major cities and towns largely delineated by education and occupation, essentially entrepreneurs, professional and technical workers, white collar employees, highly skilled craftsmen, civil servants, and military officers. The urban poor is the larger component, comprising as much as 80 percent of the population of Asunción; included in this group are unskilled laborers, most service workers, the self-employed and family workers in small businesses, and the unemployed. Education and military service are the traditional means of advancing from lower to middle level status. Acquisition of wealth in the Itaipú boom years broadened the ranks of the elite, adding high-ranking military and Government officials and others who profited from the huge project.

Income distribution data are very limited but indicate a relatively more even distribution than in similar Latin American countries. At the upper end of the spectrum, the 20 percent of households with the highest levels of income account for 46 percent of total income and at the lower end, the poorest 20 percent of households represent 6 percent of total income. About one-third of the population was regarded as living below the poverty line in 1999. Poverty is most evident in rural Paraguay among small farmers, farm workers, squatters, and the Amerindian population where most farm at the subsistence level. More than 200,000 rural families depend on subsistence farming and are only marginally involved in the money economy. In 1999 about one-fourth of the rural population experienced extreme poverty.

## **Land Ownership and Use**

Over the last 40 years, the Government has attempted to improve conditions for the rural poor through agrarian reform, land distribution, and agricultural resettlement programs with varying degrees of success. The colonizing program in eastern Paraguay degenerated into a land grab benefiting Brazilians



as well as Paraguayans, and when the dust settled, there were still a great many landless Paraguayan peasants. By the 1990's the Government's land resources were exhausted, but rural poverty and discontent persisted. Conflicts between squatters and landowners were common, and as land values increased, relations between commercial and subsistence farmers deteriorated.

At the core of many rural problems is the clash between traditional land use practices and commercial farming. For generations, the abundance of land and sparse population allowed Paraguayans to be fairly casual with regard to land ownership and use. Nomadic farming and squatting were established practices, and custom permitted squatters to settle on the fringes of large holdings. Although this land use arrangement was considered transitory, it could last for years; in the interim squatters could be called upon by landowners to provide labor as needed. Problems developed as commercial farming expanded and land values increased, and squatters were no longer widely tolerated.

Until the 1960's few farmers owned their land; nearly half of all farmers (49 percent) were squatters in 1956. The largest landowners were the Government and foreigners. The Government had acquired about 60 percent of the land area through confiscation of church and Spanish property in the 1800's; it sold off large tracts, chiefly to Argentines, to pay debts from the War of the Triple Alliance. These sales marked the beginning of foreign ownership of large landholdings in Paraguay, a trend that has continued to the present and now includes Brazilian, U.S., and European interests. Over time, the Government used its landholdings to reward political loyalty and for colonization projects; in the 1960's land distribution became the escape valve for rural discontent in the densely settled central region.

Land reform began in the 1960's with the creation of the Rural Welfare Institute; it was empowered to issue land titles to farmers for the land they were using and to organize colonizing projects in vast tracts of untitled land near the Brazilian border. Land ownership broadened considerably under this program, and the circumstances of about one-quarter of the population were directly affected. Some 250,000 Paraguayans moved to new settlements in the eastern region. Over the next decade, thousands of Brazilian colonists also moved to the newly opened lands, and several foreign-owned agribusinesses bought large holdings in this area. As land values rose, conflicts developed. Some original settlers sold out to larger landowners, and the squatters who'd traditionally lived in this sparsely populated area were soon in conflict with the colonists, immigrants, and agribusinesses.

The latest agricultural census (1981) indicates about 14 percent of the rural population was landless but land ownership has increased; 58 percent of all farms were owned outright and 15 percent were share cropped. Most of the nation's 273,000 farms are very small; those under 5 hectares (1 hectare equals 1.43 acres) in size represent 35 percent of all farms and have an average size of less than 2 hectares; they comprise 1 percent of all farmland. In contrast, large farms averaging 7,300 hectares, constitute 1 percent of all farms, and have nearly 80 percent of the farmland.

## Family and Kinship

For Paraguayans of all classes, family and kin are the center of their social world and the focus of their

loyalties. Since authority in Paraguay is exercised along personal rather than legal or institutional lines, family and kinship ties are extremely important. These ties apply to godchildren, godparents, and members of the extended family. Assistance in times of need can be expected from extended kin, and kinship ties are important in most economic activities, from business connections to employment opportunities.

Most households are nuclear families, made up of spouses and unmarried children. About 20 percent of all households are headed by a single parent, usually a woman. Few households are intergenerational. The prevalence of nuclear families is generally attributed to the limited economic opportunities available to most families. Few Paraguayans earn enough to support more than their immediate family members.

Godparenting (*compadrazgo*) is an important means of strengthening and extending kinship ties. Parents select godparents for a child at baptism and also for confirmation and marriage; the godparents have a special relationship with the parents and are regarded as coparents. The social link between coparents can be significant; they are expected to treat each other with respect and to assist each other in times of need. Class distinctions are evident in the selection of godparents. The upper and middle classes tend to select social equals as coparents. The relationship has less practical significance for these classes than it has for the poor. Potential economic benefits and the forging of ties outside one's social circle are more relevant for the urban and rural poor who are likely to select an influential benefactor for the godparent role. In these relationships, the poorer person acquires protection from someone above his own social standing, and the benefactor is entitled to absolute loyalty in return. These kinship ties can be politically significant in Paraguay and political parties have used them to mobilize rural support.

## The Status of Women

Paraguay is a conservative male-dominated society that has been slow to grant women equal rights or access to political power but in recent decades fundamental changes have occurred. Women only gained the right to vote in 1963. Although some women have been elected to Congress, few women serve as mayors or judges or in other positions of civil authority. The principal Government organization concerned with women's issues is the Secretariat of Women in the Office of the Presidency. Recent changes in the civil code have provided women with protection in the division of marital property in separations; divorce became a legal option in 1992. A domestic violence law was enacted in 2000.

Women constitute about 20 percent of the total laborforce in official statistics. Many sources contend that women represent a larger portion of the laborforce, as much as 40 percent in urban areas and even more in most rural areas. The economic contribution of women has always been important in the countryside where women traditionally perform all domestic work and most of the fieldwork on small and subsistence farms. Services and commerce are the main sectors of employment for women in urban areas. Pay rates for women tend to be at the low end of the scale, and many working women earn less than minimum wage.

## The Role of Religion

Exception for the Jesuit missions, the Roman Catholic Church had little influence in Paraguay's formative years. In colonial times, the Paraguayan church was often without a bishop for several years at a time. The Asunción diocese was established in 1547 and greeted its first bishop in 1556. Reportedly only 20 of the first 40 bishops actually reached Paraguay. The Jesuits arrived in 1588 with the aim of pacifying and converting the Amerindians; they established their missions in remote areas, and most of their activities were conducted outside the formal church structure under special arrangements with the Spanish Crown. This did not endear the Jesuits to the local church hierarchy in Asunción, which welcomed the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767.

Relations between church and state were antagonistic at times after independence but later during the Stroessner regime, became overtly hostile. In the early 1800's Francia confiscated church lands and closed the seminary and convents. The execution of the bishop of Asunción in the War of the Triple Alliance (1865–70) was another low point; at that war's end there were just 50 priests left in Paraguay, and the bishop was not replaced for more than 10 years. During the Stroessner era, the Catholic Church became the regime's most important opponent. Friction centered on student and agrarian affairs in the early years but then broadened to human rights and social justice issues in the 1970's and 1980's. Confrontations were frequent. When the Government expelled foreign-born clergy and periodically closed the Catholic University in Asunción, the archbishop countered by excommunicating several prominent Government officials and suspending church participation in civic religious celebrations. A papal visit in 1988 lent support to the local church in its opposition to Stroessner. During that visit, Pope John Paul II repeatedly stressed human rights, democracy, and the right and duty of the church to be involved in society. Since Stroessner's ouster, the Catholic Church has continued to support human rights and social justice but has been less militantly involved in politics.

## Amerindians

Paraguay's destitute and dependent Amerindian population poses complex social and cultural problems for modern policymakers. Traditional Government policy has been to leave the Amerindian population to the care of religious organizations. In the 1970's the Stroessner government was accused of genocide against the Amerindians, and it was chiefly Catholic and Protestant missionaries who denounced the Government's policies.

The Amerindians are not a homogeneous group; there are 17 tribal groups and at least five language families. Exactness is lacking in statistics on this segment of the population, but it is generally estimated that 50,000 to 100,000 people maintain indigenous traditions and live apart from the general Hispanic culture. This group comprises less than 3 percent of the total population but represents about 10 percent of the poorest Paraguayans. Many Amerindians are no longer economically independent; in recent decades they have lost access to the lands they traditionally used for hunting and farming and have become dependent on wage labor and the protection of missionary groups. Prejudice against Amerindians is strong in some rural areas.

Around a third of the Amerindians live east of the Paraguay River, where their traditional way of life has become less viable in recent years. For generations these Amerindians have lived in remote areas along the Brazilian border; until the 1960's they were able to practice slash and burn agriculture and hunting and gathering in this area without being disturbed. Beginning in the 1960's Government colonization programs brought thousands of Paraguayans and Brazilians to this area, and the Amerindians were forced to move elsewhere. As the pace of this development quickened, the land available to the Amerindians for their traditional lifestyle diminished. Very few Amerindians held titles for the land they utilized, and most were dispossessed as the newly arrived settlers claimed this land. Without the land they'd used to hunt and fish and grow food crops, the Amerindians were forced to move elsewhere or seek wage employment. Many of these Amerindians have become totally dependent on agricultural employment and some have taken refuge in missionary settlements. The Aché tribe suffered greatly at the hands of these settlers. Members of this tribe lived in remote forest areas; their contacts with rural Paraguayans had seldom been peaceful. The killing and enslavement of Aché members predates the colonization programs but during the 1960's and early 1970's these practices became organized activities, as Paraguayans and Brazilians mounted "Aché hunts." Governmental efforts to establish a reservation for the Aché were a total debacle, placing the Aché in even greater physical danger and subjecting them to disease. Almost all the surviving Aché now live in communities run by missionaries.

The other two-thirds of Paraguay's Amerindians live in the Chaco; their traditional way of life has disappeared. These Amerindians were hostile to the early Spanish settlers and resisted pacification. Most of the Chaco Amerindians engaged in hunting and gathering and maintained herds of sheep and goats; they avoided contact with the general Paraguayan society until the Chaco War (1932–35) and the subsequent expansion of ranching in the area and the Mennonite colonization of the central Chaco. Many of these Amerindians became dependent on wage labor provided by ranchers and the Mennonites, and by the 1970s, most Amerindians in the Chaco lived on settlements under missionary auspices or on ranches where they worked.

## Labor Force

The laborforce is currently about 1.8 million (2000) with an unemployment rate of 15–16 percent. Males account for 80 percent of the total laborforce, but it is very likely that female laborforce participation is underrepresented in official statistics. Almost half the laborforce engages in agricultural pursuits; industry (manufacturing and construction) absorbs about 20 percent; and services employ some 30 percent. This distribution has changed very little over the last 50 years. The construction sector expanded in the 1980's but overall the distribution has been fairly static, giving Paraguay the distinction of having the highest percentage of labor in agriculture in South America and also the continent's lowest percentage in services. Decades of inadequate investment in human capital are reflected in the educational attainment of the laborforce; only 41 percent has received more than a primary education.

Most of the country's labor legislation has been enacted since the 1960's, and enforcement is not universal. The 1993 Labor Code regulates working hours, holidays, child and female labor, unions, collective bargaining, minimum wages, and work safety and hygiene. Minimum wages have been in

effect since 1974 but have usually not kept pace with inflation; moreover, the rates established have generally been above prevailing wages, and it is widely reported that about 80 percent of Paraguayan workers receive wages below the legal minimum. The monthly minimum was about \$205 in May 2001; average wages were estimated to be about \$195.00 per month.

Civil service employment is governed by a law passed in January 2001; it established a merit-based system intended to end traditional clientelism in public administration. Just months after its enactment, the Supreme Court declared several articles of the civil service law unconstitutional. A limited form of social security applies to most public sector employees and to about 40 percent of nonfarm private sector employees. (See "Health and Welfare" for social security information.)

Organized labor does not have a long history in Paraguay. Beginning in the early 1900's, periodic efforts to organize unions among urban workers were met with Government resistance. The Government either co-opted these unions or dissolved them and exiled the leaders. In rural areas, church-related groups have been involved in organizing peasant groups; most of these movements have been oriented toward social protest rather than workers' rights, and they also met with strong Government opposition. The Stroessner government was openly antiunion, and it crushed Catholic efforts to organize agrarian leagues in the 1970s. Since 1989 private sector workers have been free to form unions. There are currently more than 200 unions and three labor centrals.

## Education and Literacy

Government spending on education, about 1 percent of GDP, is low by international standards. Public schools educate about 90 percent of all primary students and nearly 75 percent of secondary students. Throughout the educational system, teachers are poorly paid, and there is a general lack of qualified personnel and materials. Rural schools are often understaffed and some offer only a few grades of instruction. About 90 percent of eligible children are currently registered in the six primary grades that are compulsory for children 7 to 14 years. Unfortunately, attendance rates are low, and dropout rates are high; consequently, completion rates are low, especially in rural areas. About 10 percent of primary students repeat grades, usually the first two, and nationwide, less than 50 percent complete the primary program. In urban areas the completion rate is highest, roughly two out of three students, but in rural areas it is only one out of four students. Secondary education has separate 3-year programs for college preparation, teacher training, and technical-vocational fields. In rural areas, enrollment drops markedly at the secondary level; less than 12 percent of rural children attend secondary programs. Any major effort to broaden secondary education would require substantial investments in school construction. Paraguay has two universities, the National University of Asunción (UNA) which has about 20,000 students and the Catholic University of Asunción with close to 15,500 students. Both universities are headquartered in the capital but have campuses in several other cities as well.

The adult literacy rate is officially 92 percent, but many critics claim this statistic overstates the ability of the population to actually read and write. It appears to many of these critics that the Government uses primary school registration data to determine literacy rates. In addition, there is some doubt about

literacy levels among the 40 percent of the population that speaks only Guaraní. Literacy data in the 1982 population census are also at odds with the official rate; according to that census 21 percent of Paraguayans over age 10 were illiterate, and among the rural population 20 years and older 29 percent of the men and 38 percent of the women were illiterate.

## Health and Welfare

Paraguay made significant improvements in health care delivery in the 1970s and 1980s, and began an overhaul of the entire health care sector in 1996 (Law 1032). More than 95 percent of all health care is publicly provided. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare has been responsible for all public and private health programs; the newly enacted reforms are expected to decentralize many aspects of health care and establish a National Health System. The new system will face inadequate funding, shortages of trained medical and nursing staff, and the limited scope of water and sewage service for the population.

The leading causes of death among adults are heart disease, stroke, cancer, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections. The chief infectious and parasitic diseases are malaria and Chagas disease. The leading causes of infant deaths are diarrhea, pneumonia, malnutrition, and infections. Malnutrition and other deficiency diseases (anemia and goiter) are most prevalent in the rural and Amerindian population. Major improvements in infant and early childhood health were achieved through an extensive immunization campaign begun in the 1970s; this program brought infant immunization rates for diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, and measles from 5 percent to more than 60 percent in 7 years. Since then most infant immunization rates have risen to more than 80 percent but about one-third of all children still have not been vaccinated against polio or measles. Advances were also made in prenatal care, and the proportion of infants receiving medical care has increased to nearly 75 percent.

Improvements in sanitation conditions, particularly in rural areas, will require major infrastructure investments. Almost 60 percent of the urban population have access to safe drinking water but only 7 percent of rural residents have this service. Sewage service is only available to 32 percent of the urban and 20 percent of the rural population. Manpower shortages may also limit further improvements in health standards. In the 1990's Paraguay had 1 doctor for 1,231 people and even fewer nurses.

Basic social security coverage is provided by six institutions; the largest are the Instituto de Previsión Social (IPS) which covers about 40 percent of private sector nonfarm employees and the Caja Fiscal which includes most public sector employees. The IPS offers old age and disability pensions, sickness and maternity benefits, and temporary and permanent disability for work accidents; the IPS operates its own clinics and hospitals for medical and maternal care. Contributions are based on a 23 percent payroll tax. Financial problems plague all the social security institutions. Pensions have been eroded by inflation and are generally below minimum wage levels. The financial position of the IPS was severely undermined by the banking crisis in the late 1990's; its reserve funds were deposited in banks that became insolvent, and it held a number of unredeemable loans.

## Questions/Issues

1. What are the implications for stability and development of continued migration from rural areas to the cities?
2. Now that Paraguay has managed to enroll most rural children in primary school, what can be done to ensure that most complete at least the primary grades?
3. Should national policy aim to integrate the remaining Amerindians, or to preserve their ways of life?
4. Given the development of commercial agriculture and its importance to the economy, is further land reform an option open to policymakers?
5. Why is the IMF so insistent that the IPS funds for health care and pensions be separated?

## Further Reading

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# ECONOMICS

## History and Overview

Paraguay has a market-based economy with a very large informal sector that includes both legal and illegal activities.<sup>1</sup> The nation's economic development has not had a

smooth trajectory. By almost any reckoning, Paraguay is ideally suited for agricultural pursuits, but there

have been tremendous difficulties in getting land, labor, and appropriate technology into balance and in maintaining a stable political and financial framework. There have been two periods in the nation's history when Paraguay registered remarkable economic growth and notable improvements in living standards; one of these was in colonial times and involved only a portion of the economy, while the other was fairly recent and had a more generalized impact. In the 1700's significant economic progress was made in the settlements or missions established by the Jesuits. This was wiped out almost overnight and subsequently, for two centuries, whenever economic advances were secured, they were dissipated in internal strife or wars with neighboring countries. Notable progress was not achieved again until the 1970's.

The Paraguayan economy changed very little from colonial times to the 1970's. The recurrent wars adversely affected manpower resources and burdened the nation's treasury, causing postponement of much needed investments in education, health care, utilities, and roads. The developmental policies favored by other Latin American countries, such as import substitution, found little favor in Paraguay which ambled along with a significant segment of its population engaged in subsistence farming and essentially outside the money economy. Commercial farming and livestock raising were mostly small scale and traditionally oriented; innovation was minimal. Very little agricultural processing or manufacturing was established. The physical infrastructure was rudimentary. Paved roads were rare, and only a small portion of the population received water, sewage, electrical, or telephone service.

Paraguay made major catch-up steps in its economic development in the 1970's and early 1980's. The prosperity of this period was spurred by construction of the Itaipú hydroelectric complex and augmented by favorable developments in agriculture. During the boom years, 1974–81, Paraguay outperformed all of its Latin American neighbors, as GDP increases averaged 8.5 percent a year and reached a level of 11 percent annually in 1977–80. Brazil and Paraguay were partners in the \$20 billion Itaipú complex, the largest

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<sup>1</sup> All general statistics are from the late 1990's and 2000–2001 unless otherwise noted. Most data are from composite sources, chiefly International Monetary Fund staff reports, the Economist Intelligence Unit, and Central Bank of Paraguay. National statistics refer to the formal or official economy and do not expressly include activities of the informal sector; this sector is covered separately in the text, and statistics related to this sector are identified as such.

in the world at 12.6 million kilowatts. The key developments in agriculture that contributed to the boom were a major shift to soybean cultivation, the expansion of colonization, and an influx of foreign capital and technology.

As the impact of the 1970's boom reverberated through the economy, it became evident that the pace of change had quickened noticeably. However, all sectors were not affected equally, and, many underlying problems were brought to light. Considerable improvements in road construction and paving were



achieved, but the nation's physical infrastructure remained inadequate and investment in human capital sorely lagged. The Government found its obsolete and largely unenforced tax system did not bring in much additional revenue from the boom. Construction and commerce expanded. In agriculture very little technological change trickled down to small-scale farming, and problems began to loom in land use and tenure.

The 1980's and 1990's brought little sustained economic progress. When the major construction work on Itaipú was completed in 1981, the Paraguayan economy went into a

severe downturn, and for most of the decade inflation, unemployment, and rising external debt were serious problems. In the late 1980's Paraguay and Argentina began work on another major hydroelectric project, Yacyretá, which is roughly one-fourth the size of Itaipú and has had less impact on the general economy. Moderate growth was restored in the early 1990's; much of this was credit driven and came to a crashing halt with a banking crisis that began in 1995 and continued until 1998. Total losses from this crisis, estimated at \$900 million, were borne by the public sector. The Paraguayan economy has been in a sustained contraction ever since.

In 2000 Paraguay's GDP was estimated at \$7.4 billion, a decline of 0.4 percent from the previous year. Per capita income, less than \$2,000 a year, has been virtually stagnant for two decades. Unemployment is 15-16 percent in a laborforce of 1.8 million. Minimum wage is about \$200 a month; but wages average slightly less. Inflation, which reached over 40 percent in 1990, had been brought down to single digits in the latter part of the decade and was 8.9 percent in 2000.

[Sources: Central Bank of Paraguay and IMF Staff Estimates]

Agriculture (including livestock raising and forestry) has been the mainstay of the economy since colonial times although the crops, scale of activity, and acreage under cultivation have changed markedly over time. The sector has a substantial direct impact on the economy, accounting for nearly 30 percent of GDP, employing almost half (48 percent) of the laborforce, and providing more than 60 percent of export earnings. It also has a significant indirect impact, particularly in manufacturing which includes a great deal of agricultural processing, and in transportation, commerce and financial services.

Soybeans are the principal crop and the country's largest export; they are sold as raw beans and processed oil. Soybeans were first planted in quantity in Paraguay in the late 1960's, and acreage expanded rapidly. Most production is in the newly opened

agricultural lands in the east (Itapúa, Alto Paraná, Canindeyú, and Amambay Departments) and utilizes modern technology. High world prices for soybeans in the late 1970's attracted large-scale producers to this sector, including several large agribusinesses

from Brazil, the United States, and Italy. Acreage in soybeans was estimated at over 1.2 million hectares in 2001 with the harvest expected to exceed 3.1 million tons. Soybeans generally provide 30 to 40

percent of Paraguay's exports.

Second in importance is cotton, a traditional crop that has been grown in Paraguay since the time of the Jesuit missions. It is grown in the central region by small farmers and in the east by large-scale foreign producers; the latter account for most output. In 2001 Paraguay had some 300,000 hectares devoted to cotton and the harvest was estimated at 384,000 tons. Weather conditions and world price fluctuations determines the outcome of Paraguayan cotton harvests. In the mid-1990's cotton provided 20–30 percent of exports; in recent years it represented 9–10 percent of exports.

Paraguay also exports tobacco, coffee, sugarcane, and yerba mate tea; these crops account for about 2 percent of agricultural exports. The principal food crops, grown chiefly for the domestic market, are manioc (cassava), corn, beans, peanuts, sorghum, sweet potatoes, rice, and wheat.

Livestock raising contributed about 25 percent of total agricultural production and provided about 13 percent of the sector's exports in the late 1990's. Cattle ranches occupied more than one-fourth of the land area and accounted for 80 percent of all capital investment in agriculture. The chief exports are meat and hides; most of this trade is directed to Brazil and Chile. Government policies have promoted cattle production and export. Other livestock activity includes poultry and pig farming. Both the Mennonite and the Japanese agricultural colonies are important poultry producers.

Forestry activities account for 10–12 percent of agricultural production. Paraguay is an established supplier of fine timber, and its wood exports compete effectively in world markets. About one-third of the land area is forested. Timber is processed by more than 150 small sawmills for export as well as for use in the paper, construction, and furniture industries. In recent years Paraguay has officially exported as much as \$100 million annually in lumber products; some timber is also reportedly exported illegally to Brazil, perhaps as much as one-third of production. Deforestation has only been marginally addressed in national policymaking. In addition to traditional lumbering, virgin forests were cleared for the colonization of eastern Paraguay, and a great deal of wood is consumed as charcoal and fuel. The nation's largest steel mill is fueled with charcoal; the railroad is wood powered; and wood is also important in household energy consumption. The rate of deforestation in Paraguay is one of the highest in the world, causing some analysts to predict that by 2020 there will be little land available for commercial lumbering if current levels of deforestation and reforestation are maintained.

Manufacturing (15 percent of GDP) is concentrated in consumer goods; less than 5 percent of output is capital goods. More than 60 percent of manufacturing involves processing of agricultural raw materials. Food, beverage, and tobacco products account for 45 percent of output. Next in importance are wood products (about 15 percent of output); these include lumber, milled wood, plywood, chipboard, and parquet. Manufactured goods generally constitute about 35 percent of exports. Most manufacturers are small or medium scale; many of the largest and most modern factories produce oilseeds, meat products, and beverages chiefly for export. Paraguay is one of Latin America's major oilseed exporters; it processes cottonseed, soybean, peanut, coconut, palm, castor bean, flaxseed, and sunflower seedoils as well as tung oil and petitgrain oil. Most new investment in manufacturing is in offshore assembly plants

for re-export within Mercosur; eight plants, representing an investment of \$30 million and more than 2,000 new jobs, were certified in 2001. Exports from these plants are subject to the Mercosur requirement that 60 percent of the value be of local origin. Toshiba is one of the largest investors in offshore plants; it is establishing an assembly plant in Paraguay to serve the Brazilian market.

Construction (5–6 percent of GDP) has been one of the most dynamic sectors of the economy. During the building of the huge hydroelectric project at Itaipú, Paraguayan firms received construction contracts valued at \$2 billion: the sector grew at about 30 percent a year in the boom years and hired an additional 100,000 workers. Unemployment was widespread when the Itaipú project was completed; many construction workers returned to agriculture, and some may have emigrated. Growth was modest and uneven in the 1980's and 1990's, spurred chiefly by the hydroelectric project at Yacyretá, infrastructure improvements, and residential housing in Asunción and Ciudad del Este.

Services represent about 46 percent of GDP and employ some 30 percent of the laborforce. Included in this sector are transportation and communications, commerce and finance, general Government, and other services. Increased foreign investment in Paraguay's mobile telephone system prompted expansions of the communications sector in 1995–2000, and mobile telephones now account for more than two-thirds of all telephone usage. Commerce and finance account for over 50 percent of services. The commercial sector is primarily engaged in importing goods from Asia and the United States for reexport to neighboring countries. This commercial activity, which generated exports of about \$1.6 billion in 1999, is to be phased out by 2005 under the terms of the Mercosur agreement. The financial sector was restructured in the aftermath of the banking crisis that closed 15 of the 19 locally owned banks in 1995–98; ownership in banking is now predominately foreign. The only remaining state-owned bank, Banco Nacional de Fomento, is in severe financial difficulties. Among the causes of the banking crisis were lax regulation and poor supervision, but the underlying problems derived from poor banking practices, including off-the-books transactions, poor risk loans to related enterprises, and fraud.

General Government services account for about 6 percent of GDP. Several major reforms are underway in the public sector, including a restructuring of the central government administration and the social security systems. Public sector payroll and pension costs have risen rapidly in recent years, hampering efforts to control budget deficits. During the late 1990's financial difficulties also plagued the eight fully state-owned enterprises, many of which are utility companies. The largest of these enterprises are ANDE (electricity), PETROPAR (gasoline and diesel), and ANTELCO (telecommunications). There are two midsize enterprises, CORPOSANO (water and sewage) and INC (cement factory) and three small organizations involved in transportation (river ports, airports, and the railroad). For many of these enterprises, the rates they charge for their services are set by the Government once a year; and in the late 1990's there were serious lags in adjusting these rates and some rates were frozen for several years. Compensatory rate increases in early 2001 prompted public protests. Privatization of state-owned enterprises is allowed under a 1991 law; only one enterprise, the former national airline, LAPSA, has been sold. ANTELCO and CORPOSANO were slated for privatization in 2001. The Government also has major investments in the ACEPAR steel company. The cement and steel investments were made in the latter Stroessner years; both have been highly unprofitable and have added significantly to the nation's external debt.

Public sector finances have deteriorated in recent years. In the early 1990's the Government had modest fiscal surpluses, but it has run deficits since mid-decade. Paraguay's public sector deficit reached \$330 million (4.5 percent of GDP) in 2000. As a result of increasing fiscal deficits, Paraguay's public external debt has doubled during the last 5 years, to about 32 percent of GDP. Early in 2001, the Paraguayan Government sought IMF assistance in reversing these negative trends. With this aim, the Government established a series of economic targets for 2001; these include GDP growth of at least 2 percent, inflation of less than 10 percent, reduction of the fiscal deficit to \$146 million through spending cuts, personnel freezes and agency closures, and privatization of the telecommunications and water companies.

## Trade and Balance of Payments

Essentially Paraguay exports raw and semiprocessed agricultural products and imports fuels, capital goods, and manufactures. Its export base is very narrow; soybeans and soy oil represent about 50 percent of registered exports (1998); cotton and beef account for another 20 percent. This base is highly vulnerable to climatic conditions and changes in international commodity prices. In recent years exports of domestic products have run \$1.0 to 1.4 billion: total exports, including the re-export trade (see informal economy), were \$2.3–2.7 billion a year in 1999–2000. Imports have been at high levels since the 1970's; they were about \$3 billion in both 1999 and 2000. Paraguay began to experience trade deficits in the 1980's, and it has had a negative trade balance since 1994.

Since Paraguay joined Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay in a regional customs union, Mercosur, in 1991, its trade with the member countries has increased substantially. Almost 50 percent of Paraguay's exports were shipped to Europe in 1990; by the end of the decade, the European share was about 20 percent and 60–70 percent went to Western Hemisphere countries. Paraguay's merchandise exports to Mercosur countries doubled in the last decade and represented more than 60 percent of export earnings in 2000; Brazil is the largest purchaser (39 percent in 2000), followed by Uruguay (13 percent) and Argentina (11 percent). The reexport trade, which involves chiefly Brazil and Argentina, is slated to be phased out by 2005 under the Mercosur agreement. Sourcing for imports is more diverse. About 70 percent of imports come from the Americas; Brazil provides about 30 percent, the United States, 20 percent, and Argentina, 15 percent. Asian sources supply 15–20 percent of imports and Europe less than 10 percent.

Energy-related activities, particularly, electricity exports and oil imports, are important in Paraguay's balance of payments and have a broad impact in the general economy because many sectors are highly sensitive to increases in energy costs. Increases in utility rates and in the price of diesel fuel in early 2001 set off a round of protests and demonstrations that began in the agricultural sector and moved on to reflect general discontent. Paraguay was almost totally dependent on thermal and diesel power sources before the massive investments in hydroelectric power. Today, Paraguay is a major exporter of electricity; its revenues from Itaipú and Yacyretá were \$370 million in 2000 and \$433 million in 1999. These earnings fluctuate because of the effects of climatic conditions and water volume on electricity output. In contrast, Paraguay is totally dependent on petroleum imports; it has limited refining capacity

and many derivative products are imported as well. There is some domestic production of renewable alternatives to fossil fuels; in the late 1980's it was estimated that the use of these products reduced oil imports by about 130,000 barrels a year.

The nation's balance-of-payments situation was precarious through most of the 1990's. The overall deficit in 2000 was \$265 million. The current account has been in deficit since the mid-1990's largely because of trade deficits. For the last 10 years, the service account has also been in deficit because of transportation costs associated with the re-export trade. Paraguay's transfer balance is usually positive due to remittances from Paraguayans living abroad; these amounted to \$184 million in 1999. Direct foreign investment declined steeply in 1999, from \$336 million to \$66 million, and recovered slightly in 2000 to reach \$95 million. Since the banking crisis in 1995 there have been substantial capital outflows and foreign exchange reserves have declined. The reserve cover ratio for imports fell to 2.6 months in 2000. These reserves were reduced by nearly \$100 million (from \$700 to \$608 million) in the first 3 months of 2001. The IMF has called for minimum reserves of \$1 billion to protect the guaraní from speculative activity. Reduction of the balance-of-payments deficit to less than \$100 million is another of the Government's economic targets for 2001.

## **The Informal Economy**

Unregistered and illicit trade has been a feature of economic life in Paraguay for many decades and perhaps since colonization. Legal requirements, particularly taxes and import or export duties, have always been a little lax and somewhat discretionary in Paraguay. At some point, smuggling and contraband trade became an occupation and evolved into an industry. Opportunities for extra-legal trade expanded in the 1950's and 1960's as Brazil and Argentina set high tariff rates to rein in luxury imports and to protect newly established industries. Items such as scotch whiskey, cigars, cigarettes, and perfume found their way from low-tariff Paraguay into neighboring countries. Later, as economic ties with Brazil grew in the 1970's and 1980's, some of this trade was formalized into what is currently called the reexport or tourist trade. This commerce is generally legal but is largely unrecorded because the goods imported into Paraguay are subject to little or no taxes. Bulk buyers and tourists purchase goods in Ciudad del Este and other Paraguayan border towns at advantageous prices, and import them into neighboring countries within duty free limits. Some of the products sold in this manner are manufactured in the neighboring countries; they are imported into Paraguay net of sales or value added taxes and are sold at prices that are attractive to buyers from the country of origin who bring the goods home tax free. The range of goods involved in this trade has broadened from whiskey, tobacco, and perfume to include electronic products, computers, sound equipment, cameras, household appliances, cosmetics, clothing, and other items. Part of this trade involves pirated production and has led to serious intellectual property conflicts with the United States and other countries. Paraguay's low tax and duty rates and exemptions from the common external tariff of Mercosur have fostered the reexport trade. Brazil has periodically tried to restrain this trade by lowering its duty-free limits. Mercosur agreements require Paraguay to phase out this trade by the end of 2005. It remains to be seen how and if this will be accomplished.

The informal sector also includes small-scale enterprises, the self-employed, family workers, street

vendors, and other workers or enterprises in activities outside the scope of general tax and licensing requirements. Household surveys conducted by the Paraguayan Statistical Office suggest that some 40 percent of the urban laborforce may be occupied in this manner. Most of this economic activity is legal but is not included in national accounts and census data. Some is questionable and involves counterfeit trademarks.

Criminal elements are also included in the informal sector; they are involved in drug trafficking and stolen cars and probably other activities as well. The drug trade consists chiefly of locally grown marijuana that is sold in Brazil and of transshipment of cocaine that is produced outside Paraguay. The stolen car trade is a big business and notorious in South America. Brazil and Argentina are the main sources for the stolen vehicle trade, which includes automobiles, trucks, and even limousines. The Paraguayan police estimated in 2001 that 400,000 of the country's 600,000 cars had been purchased on the black market.

By their very nature, the activities of the informal sector are difficult to measure or estimate. The reexport trade is the most easily quantified; it was estimated at \$1.6 billion in 1999, down from a high of almost \$3 billion in 1995. Some estimates place the overall value of the informal sector as high as 50 percent of GDP. Studies of the legal portion of this sector by the Central Bank of Paraguay indicate these activities may represent almost 20 percent of GDP.

## Economic Outlook

Serious economic problems in Argentina and Brazil may impede Paraguay's efforts to improve its own economy. Disruptions in the economies of its chief trading partners are bound to have repercussions in Paraguay's economic performance. Although the Paraguayan Government's economic targets for 2001 were in line with IMF guidelines, they will present a major challenge for policymakers. Bumper soy and cotton harvests in 2001 may be sufficient to restore GDP growth, but the reduction in Government deficits is more problematic. Privatization plans for telecommunications and the water company pose political difficulties and have been postponed before. Looking a little further ahead, the scaling down of the reexport trade may prompt recourse to smuggling, and it is likely to augment balance-of-payments difficulties.

## Questions/Issues

1. What is the relationship of corruption to development? *Realistically*, what can be done to reduce the negative aspects?
2. Should Paraguay continue to focus on commercial agriculture, or place a higher priority on nonagricultural manufacturing?
3. What would be the environmental impact of developing a third major hydroelectric dam on the Alto Paraná and "improving" the Paraguay River for barge traffic to/from Central Brazil?
4. How can Paraguay attract foreign investment?

## Further Reading

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## POLITICS

Paraguayan political history revolves around personal rivalries within a small elite, overwhelmingly centered in Asunción. Until recently the population was largely rural and agricultural. Even now, with about 52 percent of the population living in cities and larger towns, Paraguay is still one of the hemisphere's least urbanized countries. Historically, the great bulk of the population has been poor and uneducated, with little interest in political theories. Personal ties with a local or national leader were what counted. In return for that loyalty, a leader (still frequently called a *caudillo*) could provide protection and the occasional gift or favor, if not to the individual then at least to a family member. For those higher up the socioeconomic ladder, the rewards for support became proportionally greater.

Paraguay's location as an outpost of the empire contributed to the growth of personalism. Spanish rule was never backed up by extensive bureaucracy. The ruling court (*audiencia*) was far away in what is now Bolivia (Sucre, then called Charcas). Rather than a sizable and growing proportion of European settlers, bringing with them at least the rudiments of Western political heritage, Paraguay's was the most

thoroughly “mixed” population in the Americas. Even today, a fluency in speaking Guaraní is a strong plus for a politician. Isolation, limited immigration, and the lack of mineral wealth delayed development of alternatives to agriculture that eventually led to social and economic diversification in larger countries. It is still true, but just barely, that the party with most effective control in the countryside is likely to win a national or regional election.

While Paraguay’s postindependence political history is the story of individuals more than parties, and the country has only recently become democratic by generally accepted standards, grassroots support has had recurring importance. Local, regional, and national *caudillos* are measured by how many bonds of personal loyalty, however gained, they can muster. Through the civil war of 1947, Paraguayan politics frequently broke down into armed struggle that enlisted the support of rural and urban poor. The organized demonstration of bused-in supporters remains an important political tactic. In a crudely democratic sense, the head count behind one or another leader has always been a factor in Paraguayan politics.

For 58 years after independence, three dictators governed Paraguay. From 1869 to 1954 when Alfredo Stroessner became President, political power alternated at long intervals between one major party and the other. The country had 44 presidents with an average term of office of less than 2 years. Violence or the threat of violence forced the early departures of more than half. Since Stroessner’s forced exit in 1989, the country has for the first time experienced more-or-less fair, open, and contested democratic politics. Having had little prior practice, substantially less than almost any other Latin American country, Paraguay faces a steep learning curve.

### **The Early Dictators: "As the twig is bent ..."**

A good case can be made that Paraguay’s first dictator, José Rodríguez Gaspar de Francia, and the third, Francisco Solano López, set the frame for much of what came after—by loose analogy, the George Washington and the Abraham Lincoln of Paraguayan history. By almost any standard, Francia was an unusual person. He was one of the very few well-educated Paraguayans of his day and was personally austere. He never married and when he died, in 1840 after a quarter century of total control, unused portions of his salary reverted to the treasury. Francia’s prime objective, apart from maintaining his own power, was to preserve Paraguayan independence. Since Paraguay’s nonsubsistence economy was almost totally dependent on the river connection through Argentina, the country’s small Spanish-born and Creole elites, and affiliated church leaders, were disposed to find accommodation with the dominant neighbor, if necessary at the expense of independence. Francia maneuvered to break their power by convening an assembly of regional and local leaders to give him the dictatorial powers that then allowed him to exile many upper class opponents and to confiscate their properties. Control of the countryside outside Asunción has had continuing importance in later Paraguayan political dynamics. The rivalry between Brazil and Argentina ([See Foreign Affairs](#)) also worked to Francia’s advantage. Even so, for more than two decades Paraguay was largely shut off from the rest of the world.

Carlos Antonio López, also acclaimed by a popular assembly weighted toward rural areas, succeeded



Francia from 1841 to 1862. He was no less dictatorial but reopened Paraguay to the outside world. Fatefully, he sent his son off to Europe to buy arms. Francisco Solano López seized power when Carlos Antonio died in 1862. The War of the Triple Alliance see History ruined Paraguay, but in retrospect is the single most powerful ingredient of Paraguayan national identity, with Francisco Solano López its avatar.

Francisco Solano López now occupies the place of honor in Asunción's Panteón. For his early formative influence, Francia's bust is on display at the headquarters of the Organization of American States in Washington.

### **The Beginnings of Democracy in Paraguay, 1869–1940**

In July 1887 a group of politicians formed the Centro Democrático, which soon became known as the Liberal Party. The next month, rival politicians formed the Asociación Nacional Republicana which adopted a red banner and hence its popular name as the Colorado Party (blue is the color of the Liberal Party). Both grew out of less formal political clubs and groupings that had existed (some in exile) since the 1850's. Together they continue to dominate Paraguayan politics.

Protodemocratic politics in postwar Paraguay was an uneasy mix of occupying Governments (Brazil in Asunción, Argentina across the river), survivors of the López forces, and returned exiles, some of whom had fought against Paraguay with the allied armies. Although there remains a popular belief, encouraged by Colorado Party propaganda, that the exiles (often called legionnaires because of wartime service in the Paraguayan Legion on the side of Argentina) formed the basis of the Liberal Party, while those who had remained loyal to Francisco Solano López founded the Colorado Party, Paul Lewis in *Political Parties and Generations in Paraguay's Liberal Era, 1869–1940* has demonstrated that there is little basis in fact for that dichotomy. Legionnaires and loyalists were almost equally important in both parties.

To the extent they were ideological, both the Liberal and Colorado parties were liberal parties. Progress was to come through good government that left most economic activity to the private sector (unlike the strict controls of the Francia period or the national socialist ideas that were to come later), while encouraging international trade and foreign investment and immigration—the latter preferably from Europe.

Absent significant ideological differences, personalities assumed dominant importance. Since Paraguay had no tradition of open, freely contested elections (perhaps not very different from other Latin American countries of the period), the party in power never lost an election. Accordingly, intraparty struggles for leadership often predominated over interparty competition.

Adherents to the Colorado Party controlled Paraguayan politics from 1874 to 1904. The dominant figure was a loyalist general, Bernardino Caballero. The Liberals gained power after a 4-month armed struggle in 1904, and held on to it for most of the period to Estigarribia's death in 1940. They were, if anything,

even more faction-prone than the Colorados. During both periods, the party out of power seldom contested an election (1928 the exception). Just as the War of the Triple Alliance had ushered in Paraguay's first period of attempted democracy, the Chaco War hastened its demise.

### **The Chaco War and the Nationalist Resurgence**

A Paraguayan Communist Party began in 1928, a Nazi Party in 1931. Of more enduring importance than either was the Febrerista Party that grew out of a military-led revolt in 1936 that installed Chaco War hero Col. Rafael Franco as President for 18 months. Franco drew many of his political ideas from Italian fascism. Like other nationalists of the period he was looking for ways that the state could take the lead in promoting economic development and address the socio-economic needs of the poor majority—and thereby, not incidentally, ensure long-term political support. His administration enacted labor laws and made a start at agrarian reform. He had Francisco Solano López's body exhumed and placed in the Pantheon.

Franco departed the way he had come, the victim of a military-led revolt. The Liberals regained power for 3 years, but the balance between civilian and military politicians had shifted. During the 66 years from 1870 to 1936, active duty military had often played important roles in support of one or another faction. For the next half-century, military officers turned politician were usually in the forefront, neutralizing the political parties if they could not bend them to their own purposes.

### **Soldiers as Presidents: Estigarribia to Rodriguez**

Paraguay's military leader during the Chaco War, José Félix Estigarribia, won the presidential election in 1939. In 1940, convinced that the state had to play a more dominant role in the nation's economic and social affairs, he pushed through a new constitution (only marginally modified by Stroessner in 1967) that greatly strengthened presidential powers. Soon after, he died in a plane crash. Since the new constitution did not provide for a Vice President, and elections had not been held for the one chamber legislature, ranking military leaders took it upon themselves to appoint a successor. They saw War Minister Gen. Higinio Morínigo as an interim appointment. Instead, displaying some of the skills that Stroessner was later to perfect, Morínigo held on to office until 1948, despite a civil war in 1947 that saw much of the officer corps go over to the insurgent side.

Having backed the winning side in 1947, the Colorados returned to power for the first time since 1904. Torn as usual by factional fighting, they fielded six Presidents in 6 years, before Stroessner assumed office in 1954.

General Alfredo Stroessner was born in Encarnación in 1912 to a German immigrant father and a Paraguayan mother. He entered the military academy at 16, served with distinction in the Chaco War, and went to Brazil for advanced military training. In the 1947 civil war he was one of the few military officers who remained loyal to the Morínigo government, and played a key role in the defense of Asunción. From 1948 onward Stroessner was a factor in Colorado intraparty maneuverings, even though

many in the party distrusted him.

In May 1954, Stroessner was instrumental in the overthrow of President Chaves. To the warring party factions, the relatively nonaligned Stroessner may have appeared as the least objectionable interim alternative. He received the party's nomination for President and took office on August 15, 1954. He did not leave it for almost 35 years.

Stroessner's longevity in a political system marked by chronic instability for 85 years is attributable to a number of factors. Central were his work ethic, his attention to detail, and his political shrewdness—until age and complaisance began to exact a toll. Like Francia he avoided private ostentation. Entering office without a solid personalist base in the Colorado Party, Stroessner moved adroitly over the first 6 years to eliminate those factional leaders who could not be coopted. At the same time he took steps to ensure that the military stayed out of politics, while making Colorado Party membership a requirement for officers. Stroessner also realized that his long-term success depended on economic development and the resulting income flows that would ensure the support of those whose interests were more material than partisan, particularly the business and professional sectors. By painting himself as an ardent anti-Communist, Stroessner was able to gain the support of the United States. Through the mid-1970's the United States provided military assistance that Stroessner used effectively to combat guerrilla incursions.

Expanding economic ties to Brazil were vital to Stroessner's success (see Economics and Foreign Affairs). The overland transportation route with Brazil supplanted the river link to Argentina, and the building of Itaipú Dam sparked a decade of very rapid economic growth—and made fortunes for a number of Paraguayans who would later seek political office.

By the 1980's Stroessner's control had begun to deteriorate. After 1986, in a manner reminiscent of earlier internecine struggles, those around Stroessner began to jockey for the succession and to protect their own wealth and incomes. The so-called "militantes" backed Stroessner's son Gustavo. Opposed were the "*tradicionalistas*." Ostensibly, they favored a return to the dominance of the party over individual or family interest. More to the point, they wanted to preserve space for their own political ambitions. On February 3, 1989, military members of the "*tradicionalista*" faction forced Stroessner to resign and put him on a plane for Brazil (where he still lives as of this writing).

The fourth soldier-president was General Andrés Rodríguez. Like Estigarribia he was a transitional figure. Whereas Estigarribia's 1940 constitution paved the way for the Morínigo and Stroessner dictatorships, Rodríguez oversaw the writing of the 1992 constitution that restored democracy, perhaps for the first time in a durable form. In some ways Rodríguez was an unlikely leader for such an effort. He was a long-time Stroessner subordinate and confidant, and had made a fortune from various types of business activity, including drug trafficking.

### **Democratic Paraguay: Will it Last?**

The international environment had changed markedly by the time Stroessner departed. Brazil, Argentina,

and Chile had already or were about to return to civilian rule after long periods of military leadership. The cold war had ended. Even earlier, U.S.-Paraguay relations went sour over human rights abuses and narcotics. Democratic rule and open economies appeared to be the wave of the future.

Internally, the post-Itaipú slump continued, suggesting to many the need for a new style of political leadership. After fitful guerrilla insurgencies during the first two decades of Stroessner rule, much of the political opposition had settled for tolerated minority status (one-third of congressional seats under the 1967 constitution) while awaiting the dictator's demise. Newer generations of political leaders, within and outside the Colorado Party, were better educated and more aware of the outside world. There were parallels with other periods of major political change, particularly those that followed the War of the Triple Alliance and the Chaco War.

Rodríguez won a 4-year term as President in May 1989. During his tenure, a multiparty assembly drafted a new democratic constitution, the Liberals returned in force as a national mass-based party, and a new agglomeration of younger, more idealistic leaders captured the Asunción city government and a few offices elsewhere. In 1991 Paraguay joined Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay in establishing the Southern Common Market (Mercosur). To his credit, Rodríguez stepped down when his term ended.

The choice of a Colorado Party candidate to succeed Rodríguez, and the continuing political aftermath, tells us much about the still-fragile nature of Paraguayan democracy. Luis María Argaña was an older style *caudillo* politician who enjoyed broad support within the party. However, Rodríguez and those around him did not trust Argaña to protect their interests. Instead, they proposed Juan Carlos Wasmosy, an Itaipú-wealthy engineer with limited party credentials who had served in Rodríguez' cabinet. Argaña probably won the party primary, but vote counting was interrupted for 3 months and Wasmosy was declared the victor. He went on to defeat Domingo Laíno for the Liberal Party and Guillermo Caballero Vargas, representing the newly formed Encuentro Nacional (National Encounter Party). Combined, the opposition parties won a majority in the Congress.

In 1998 Wasmosy's most important accomplishment was being the first civilian President since 1932 to complete a term of office, arguably the first democratically elected-Paraguayan President ever to do so. To achieve that milestone he had to survive a threatened coup in 1996 that was not unlike those that had prepared the way for Stroessner in 1954 and then forced his ouster in 1989.

Lino Cesar Oviedo, an army colonel, had played a role in the Stroessner departure. He was also instrumental in ensuring Wasmosy's win over Argaña in the Colorado Party primary of 1992-93. Wasmosy, as President, rewarded him with leadership of the army. A *caudillo*-type leader like Argaña, and, thus, almost by definition an archrival, Oviedo had used his military position like Rodríguez to amass substantial personal wealth. Far better than Wasmosy or Argaña, he had fluent command of Guaraní and a flair for the more public manifestations of Paraguayan politics. Many viewed him as the real locus of power in the Wasmosy administration.

In late April 1996, Wasmosy asked for Oviedo's resignation. The general initially refused, demanding

instead that Wasmosy and his Vice President step down. Strong support from the United States and from the other Mercosur countries enabled Wasmosy to survive. Oviedo retired and immediately launched his campaign for the 1998 election. In 1997 he narrowly won the Colorado Party primary over Argaña, and he almost certainly would have won the Presidency in 1998 had not a military court sentenced him to 10 years in prison for the coup attempt. The Vice Presidential nominee, Raul Cubas, moved to the top of the ticket (with Argaña taking his place as Vice President) and won the election with 55 percent of the vote to Laíno's 44 percent. Laíno was the coalition candidate of the Liberal and Encuentrista Parties. Once in office, Cubas pardoned Oviedo.

The victory proved short-lived. In addition to being Vice President, Argaña continued to control the Colorado Party apparatus. Dissident Colorado legislators, together with those of the opposition parties, controlled the Congress. The situation was not unlike the erosion of sharp party lines that had led to the Liberal replacement of Colorado dominance in 1904. The assassination of Argaña in early 1999 (almost certainly inspired by Oviedo) provoked massive demonstrations that led to further deaths. Cubas and Oviedo fled the country, and Senate President Luis Angel Gonzalez Macchi of the Colorado Party became President. A special election for Vice President in August 2000 gave a narrow victory to the Liberal Party's Julio Cesar Franco over one of Argaña's sons. The next presidential election is scheduled for 2003.

### **The Constitution of 1992 and the Structure of Government**

The 1992 constitution, Paraguay's sixth, is a democratic document that provides for a clearer and more balanced separation of powers than existed in the constitutions of 1967 and 1940. The Presidential term is 5 years and there is no reelection. Vice Presidents can run for the Presidency if they resign 6 months before the election. The Chamber of Deputies has 80 members, elected from the 17 Departments and the capital city of Asunción. The 45 senators are elected nationally on the basis of proportional representation. Both deputies and senators can be reelected. Congressional elections are coterminous with the presidential election, but Congress takes office a month before the presidential inauguration date of August 15.

The judiciary consists of a five-person supreme court and lesser judges, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. If appointed again after a 5-year initial term, judges have tenure. The judiciary is guaranteed a budget that cannot be less than 3 percent of the overall national budget.

There are also a number of quasi-independent organs: The Office of the Comptroller, the National Electoral Commission, and the Office of the Attorney General. In theory, at least, they are to ensure the fairness of elections and to serve as checks on the abuse of power by the three main branches of government. The record to date has been mixed.

### **Political Parties**

*Asociación Nacional Republicana—ANR (The Colorado Party)*: In power since 1948, the ANR has lost

support in urban areas but continues to have the best grass roots organization in rural areas. It makes effective use of government patronage and at times still waves the banner of nationalism to set it apart from the supposedly more internationalist orientations of other parties. In most recent national elections it has polled in excess of 50 percent.

***Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico—PLRA (The Liberal Party)***: Paraguay's other traditional party, which controlled government from 1904 to 1940, with the exception of 18 months in 1936–37. Like the Colorado Party, it is mass-based and has support throughout the country. Nowadays, it is strongest in the cities and among more educated and wealthier segments of the population. It controls the Asunción city government and some other smaller cities. A Liberal, Julio Franco, won the Vice Presidency in 2000.

***Partido Encuentro Nacional—EN***: Beginning in 1991 as a loose coalition of primarily younger, democratic, reformist leaders that was able to win control of the Asunción City Government, it backed Guillermo Caballero Vargas for President in 1993, expecting to win. Then and subsequently, it has failed to demonstrate the organizational strength necessary to have significant impact in the countryside. Encuentristas tend toward the left side of the ideological spectrum, but the party is not dogmatic and includes elements of the business community.

***Partido Revolucionario Febrerista—PRF (Febrerista Party)***: The party is an outgrowth of the February 1936 revolt that made Col. Rafael Franco President for 18 months. Originally attuned to European national socialism, the party later allied with the international social democratic movement. It was part of the legally recognized opposition under Stroessner after 1964, but has never been able to return to electoral importance.

There are also very minor Christian Democratic (PDC), Socialist, Communist, and Humanist (Green) Parties.

## **Interest Groups**

Although the Colorado and Liberal Parties continue to be the most important determinants of what happens in Paraguay, both in turn respond to pressures from other social and economic sectors. The most important of these are:

### ***The Military***

Stroessner made the military, primarily the army, a pillar of his regime. Since his ouster there has been some movement back toward an apolitical role, in this following the lead of developments elsewhere in the region. Party affiliation is no longer a requirement for entry or advancement. After the Oviedo coup attempt of 1996, the military was more forceful than civilian authorities in opposing Oviedo's political ambitions. The military role in society will probably continue to decline (and, with it, budget allocations). If not managed skillfully, there will be potential for another military leader to emerge, playing on institutional interests as well as appealing to the deeply embedded Paraguayan respect for a

strong leader.

### ***The Church***

For much of the last two decades of the *Stronato* (the years of Stroessner's regime), the Catholic Church was the strongest and most vocal opposition force, particularly over human rights and the lack of social reform. It no longer has to play the lead role in those areas and conservatives within the hierarchy have become stronger. Protestant groups have made some inroads into Catholic dominance, particularly among poorer segments of the population. On balance, however, the Catholic Church remains a force for modernization and reform.

### ***The Media***

Less successfully than the Church, the media played a role in eventually bringing about the downfall of Stroessner. Freedom of expression is now a fact of life and will play an increasing role in shaping public opinion and national policy. Although ownership is for the most part in the hands of the political elites, reporters and columnists draw heavily from the ranks of the younger generations (see below).

### ***Landowners and the Landless***

Paraguay has very unequal ownership of land, and, historically, a great deal of land has been underutilized. The population will continue to expand at a rapid rate for the foreseeable future. Although many peasants are moving to urban centers, the number of landless and other rural poor is still increasing, and illegal land occupations continue. Agrarian reform efforts thus far have been limited.

Those who own the large estates are part of the political elite. Many hold political office or exercise professions other than farming. A booming economy would provide funds and the alternative occupations to carry out more far reaching agrarian reform. Barring that, the large landowners and the rural poor will continue to exercise contradictory and largely irreconcilable pressures on Paraguay's Government.

### ***Business Groups***

For much of Paraguayan history, business took a backseat to agricultural interests. Since 1950 and particularly after the start of construction on Itaipú, business organizations assumed increasing importance. Success usually required accommodation with the Government and often with the Colorado Party. That is much less the case now, but not irrelevant. The business community is at best divided over Mercosur. Most manufacturing establishments are small and fear the competition. Commercial enterprises on the other hand may benefit. One of the less gratifying results of democracy has been to make corruption and "the rules of the game" less predictable. Some businessmen yearn for a return to a strong, even if authoritarian, regime.

## ***Urban Labor***

Unlike its neighbors, Paraguay has never had a strong labor movement. The lack of extensive industrialization, the paternalistic nature of much of Paraguayan life, the pre-emptive political role of the two traditional parties, inhibited its development. The democratic opening after 1989 has, if anything, led to further fracturing of organized labor. If/when Paraguay resumes consistent economic growth, labor will become more important.

## ***The Younger Generation***

Almost despite itself, Paraguay is changing. Modern communications technology, the fact that many more Paraguayans are traveling and studying abroad, and membership in Mercosur, make it much more difficult to maintain old ways of doing things. When the *Stronato* collapsed, leadership passed to those who had been shaped by events of the preceding four decades. Now, gradually, younger politicians and other professionals, less weighted with past battles and who understand the need to modernize practices and institutions, are replacing them. Not even the Colorado Party is immune. There is hope in this, albeit little assurance of orderly progress.

## **Looking Ahead**

Paraguay's democratic tradition is 12 years old. In all its almost 200 years of independence, Paraguay has not yet had a peaceful transition of political power from one party to another. Civil-military relations remain delicate. The still high population growth rate places heavy demands on scarce resources. Particularly among the poor, rural, or uneducated that make up at least 60–70 percent of the population, the success or failure of Government is measured much less by civic and political freedoms than by material benefits, including physical security. Paraguay's economy has stagnated since the completion of the Itaipú and Yacyretá Dams and the near-collapse of the border trade with Brazil and Argentina. New investment, particularly from abroad, is discouraged by the apparent fragility of Paraguay's newfound democracy. While the 1992 constitution looks good on paper, it remains to be seen whether the country can move beyond personalist politics to institutionalized democratic rule.

## **Questions/Issues**

1. Are Paraguay's major parties likely to become more ideological over time? Would that be good for Paraguay's development and stability?
2. What accounts for the fact that General Oviedo, after attempting a coup in 1996, could then win the Colorado Party primary and almost become President in 1998?
3. Is Paraguay ready for a President from another party (other than the Colorado)?



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# **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

As a small, poor, thinly populated state between much larger countries, the central theme of foreign policy for much of Paraguay's history has been preserving national integrity and independence. Pervasive subthemes have been the perceived requirements of successive governments to maintain themselves in office and how to take advantage of Paraguay's central location and the rivalries of other states to gain economic advantage. The first predominated until the end of the Chaco War in the 1930's. Since then, the second and third, not unrelated, have been more salient.

## **Independence and Territorial Integrity**

Spain ruled Paraguay through Buenos Aires after 1776. Not illogically, the Creole elites there expected Paraguay to continue as a province of Argentina after independence. Paraguayan forces defeated Argentine invasion attempts in 1810–11. The Argentine response was to close the Paraná River system to Paraguayan commerce. Francia, making a virtue of necessity, walled Paraguay off from almost all foreign influence for the next quarter century, in the process expelling many Paraguayans with close ties to Buenos Aires and confiscating their assets. His dictator successor, Carlos Antonio López, taking advantage of political change in Argentina, finally gained Argentine recognition of Paraguayan independence in 1852. Brazil, in 1844, had already granted recognition. By the mid-1850's, the U.S. and leading European countries had also formally recognized Paraguay.

Francisco Solano López, Paraguay's third and last 19th century dictator, almost managed to undo the achievements of Francia and the first López. Fearing that Argentina and Brazil still had designs on Paraguayan territory, for which there is probably some basis in fact, but also because of his own aggressive personality, he enmeshed Paraguay in the War of the Triple Alliance. Brazil and Argentina

(Uruguay was a passive partner) eventually wore down dogged Paraguayan defenses. They occupied Asunción in 1868 and Brazilian forces did not finally leave until 1876. Most Paraguayan males of military age, and many who were not, died. The country was bankrupt. In the aftermath of the war, Brazil and Argentina annexed about 30 percent of the territory that Paraguay had previously claimed.

The lead Brazilian role in the War of the Triple Alliance laid the basis for an eventual split between the foreign policy orientations of Paraguay's two major parties. Historically, and continuing through the first half of the 20th century, Paraguay's main avenue of access to the outside world was through Argentina. The commonality of language also meant that Paraguayans went to Argentina to study or when they were in exile. Some of the latter, the so-called Paraguayan Legion, fought with Argentina in the War of the Triple Alliance. In general the Liberal Party has had closer ties with Argentina, while the Colorado Party has looked to Brazil.

Both Argentina and Brazil preferred to maintain Paraguay as a weak buffer state rather than to have it dominated or annexed by the other. To the extent that one of the two main parties had close ties with Buenos Aires, there was an incentive for the other, and for Brazil, to cultivate closer relations. But the Brazil-Colorado Party nexus did not flourish until after 1950, by which time the relative economic balance had shifted markedly in Brazil's favor.

The second major threat to national integrity was the longstanding dispute with Bolivia over the Paraguayan Chaco. The origins go back to the colonial period when, since the whole area was governed by Spain, there was little perceived need to define borders precisely, particularly so in a region of almost no population or profitable resources. After Bolivia lost its Pacific Ocean access in the war with Chile of 1879–83, some Bolivians began to look to the Paraguay River as an alternative outlet for commerce. The discovery of oil on the western side of the Andes in the 1920's led to speculation that the entire Chaco region might contain valuable deposits. Bolivian forces gradually extended a chain of forts into territory long claimed by Paraguay. The Chaco War of 1932–35 was the result. Although Argentina was neutral and played an active role in the efforts to bring about peace, it also provided or permitted critical support to Paraguay's war effort. The longstanding ties between Liberal politicians and Argentine leaders were a factor.

### **The U.S. as a Friendly but Distant Power**

Official U.S. contact with Paraguay began in the 1840's when President Polk named Edward Hopkins as a special agent in Asunción. Hopkins' interests were primarily commercial and he entered into various agreements with the Paraguayan Government that eventually went sour. In 1855, Paraguayan troops fired on a U.S. naval research vessel, the *Water Witch*, killing the helmsman. That incident, plus pressure generated on the U.S. Congress by Hopkins seeking compensation for the broken commercial agreements, resulted in the sending of 19 ships and 2,500 men to Paraguayan waters in 1859. The López government agreed to pay \$250,000 for the death of the helmsman, but Hopkins got little satisfaction.

After the War of the Triple Alliance, Paraguay resisted Argentine demands for a part of the Chaco north

of the Pilcomayo River and the matter was submitted to the mediation of U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes. He came down on the Paraguayan side of the dispute, an outcome no doubt viewed favorably by both Brazil and Bolivia.

The United States also played a role in the final brokering the Peace Treaty of 1938 that formally ended the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay. This time, however, many Paraguayans believed that U.S. pressure played to Bolivia's advantage, since Paraguayan troops had to withdraw from some of the positions they had captured.

### **Making the Most of Being a Small Country in the Middle**

Beginning with the Febrerista Revolution of 1936–37, Paraguay looked to the European models of national socialism that had also found strong support in neighboring South American countries. German immigrants were a significant part of the small foreign-born community. Morínigo broke relations with Germany and Italy in 1942 but did not declare war until 1945 and meanwhile refused to move against German economic interests. In an effort to encourage Paraguayan action against German activities, the United States began an economic and technical assistance program that eventually peaked under the Alliance for Progress. For two decades U.S. assistance was very large relative to the national budget. Many roads, schools, and other infrastructure can be traced to what was, for the times, a massive inflow of capital and expertise.

In the 1950's, Brazil and Paraguay started to develop the lines of communication that would eventually lead to much closer economic and political ties. Paraguay sought an alternative to its historic dependence on Argentina as the avenue for trade. When Perón was ousted in 1955 he went first to Paraguay, straining relations between the two Governments. Stroessner assumed office in August. He had attended Brazilian military schools. As a Colorado, he did not have any partisan inclination toward Argentina. Brazil for its part was eager to do business. Its own economic development was moving westward and it was interested in Paraguay for its resources and also as a market. A number of agreements were signed, the most important of which provided Brazilian financing for completing a road across Paraguay to the Paraná and for a bridge linking the two countries at Puerto Stroessner (now Ciudad del Este). Paraguay also gained freeport privileges in Paranaguá to supplement those it already had in Santos.

By far the most important element in the growing link between the two countries was the agreement in the 1960's to move ahead with construction of the Itaipú Dam, still the world's largest. Argentina objected strongly, but had to settle for Paraguayan agreement to build a smaller dam lower down on the Alto Paraná (Yacretá) and perhaps eventually a third at Corpus. At the same time Stroessner, not wanting to tie Paraguay too closely to Brazil, refused to convert Paraguay's electrical grid to make it compatible with Brazil's. This would have reduced the overall costs of the dam. Brazil is now Paraguay's principal trading and investment partner, and many Brazilians have settled in Paraguay.

In the 1991 Act of Asunción, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil formed the Southern Common Market (Mercosur). Paraguayan negotiators were successful in gaining advantages not equally available

to the other three.

For his first 20 years in office, Stroessner exploited U.S. preoccupation with the cold war to gain substantial U.S. military assistance, which he used to suppress the guerrilla efforts stimulated by Cuba and by more radical dissidents. Beginning with President Carter and continuing until Stroessner's ouster, U.S. policy placed increasing emphasis on human rights and democracy. Pressure from the U.S. was instrumental in encouraging and sustaining the democratization process that began in 1989.

Paraguay under Stroessner and after has cultivated relations with countries ostracized elsewhere, but with a price tag. South Africa provided substantial military assistance and some trade opportunities. It still has diplomatic relations with Taiwan and has reaped considerable economic assistance. In recent decades Japan and the European Community have moved ahead of the US as sources of assistance. Japan's assistance is directed in part to the agricultural colonists who came to Paraguay before and after World War II.

Throughout Paraguay's history, but of more than local importance only during recent decades, Paraguay and individual Paraguayans have maneuvered for economic advantage out of Paraguay's central location. Contraband has a long tradition. Many of the vehicles in Paraguay were stolen from one of the richer neighbors. When Argentina and Brazil moved to import substitution models of development, placing high duties on most imports, Paraguay developed a lucrative business in selling legitimate or pirated goods at bargain prices (see section on Economics).

Two other issues have assumed prominence in Paraguay's relations with the U.S. and other countries in recent decades: drugs and terrorism. Beginning about 1970, Paraguay has been an important transshipment country for drugs, first heroin and then cocaine. It is also an important producer of marijuana, most of which moves to neighboring countries. Under Stroessner, senior high officials profited from the narcotics trade. Direct ties to central government officials are now less likely, and the Government has recently taken a more active role in fighting the drug trade, but more needs to be done.

Over the past two decades, the border area around Itaipú, particularly in Brazil and Paraguay, has attracted a significant Arab population. An estimated 12–15,000 people of Arab descent live and work there. A small percentage are affiliated with Middle East groups that have a history of terrorist action: Hizbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and al Qaeda. The Argentine Government believed that some of these groups might have had a role in the 1992 and 1994 bombings of the Israeli Embassy and the Argentine-Israeli Community Center in Buenos Aires. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, antiterrorist coordination has received increased attention in bilateral and regional relations. The Paraguayan Government arrested two officials for selling Paraguayan passports to foreigners.

Twelve years after the end of the Stroessner dictatorship, Paraguay has had considerable success in breaking out of the pattern of *sui generis* isolation that characterized much of its history. There is still a ways to go before the country has an assured place in the democratic developing world.

## Study Questions

1. Given the relatively small U.S. investment and trade with Paraguay, will U.S. influence decline if and as Mercosur develops?
2. What would be the impact on Paraguay's foreign relations of a return to non-democratic rule?

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**The Self-Study Guide: The Philippines** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Philippine issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide merely serves as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. The Philippines is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. Therefore, the reader is encouraged to explore the

questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in Foreign Service Institute or Main State libraries.

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First Edition  
September 30, 2001

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## Chronology of Important Historical Events

1521	On March 15, Ferdinand Magellan discovered the Philippines and attempted to subdue Lapu-Lapu, a native chieftain in today’s Cebu province in the central Visayan region; Magellan was killed in a skirmish with Lapu-Lapu’s warriors on April 24, 1521.
1543	Spanish conquistador Ruy Lopez de Villalobos was forced out of the Philippines by the natives a year after discovering the rest of the islands and naming the archipelago after King Philip II of Spain.p
1564	Miguel Lopez de Legazpileft New Spain with four ships to colonize the Philippines.p
1565	Miguel Lopez de Legazpi established the first Spanish colony in the Philippines at Cebu in the central Visayan region, designating it as the colony’s Capital.p
1571	On May 19, Manila was founded by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi; soon afterwards, Legazpi relocated the capital to Manila in the southern Tagalog region (from Cebu, in the central Visayan region) and used the newly designated colonial Capital as a base for the further colonization of the islands.
1896	On August 26, the <i>Kamahalmala’t Kagalangalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan</i> (KKK), a secret society under the leadership of Andres Bonifacio committed to total separation from Spain, launched the Revolution of 1896, which eventually ended Spanish colonial rule over the Philippines.  On December 30, Jose P. Rizal, a co-founder of the non-separatist <i>La Liga Filipina</i> and author of <i>Noli Me Tangere</i> and <i>El Filibusterismo</i> (two powerful political satires that exposed Spanish atrocities in the Philippines) was executed by the Spanish authorities after a sham trial on trumped-up charges.

	<p>On January 23, the Philippine Revolutionary Army (PRA) of General Emilio F. Aguinaldo signed a truce with the Spaniards (the Pact of Biak na Bato) during which time Aguinaldo headed a delegation to Hong Kong to procure arms and ammunition for the PRA’s expected final offensive against the Spaniards holed up in the Walled City (Intramuros) of Manila.</p> <p>On February 25, Commodore George Dewey received a secret cable from Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, ordering the former to steam toward Hong Kong and await further orders for possible engagement with elements of the Spanish Armada, stationed in the Philippines, under the command of Admiral Patricio Montojo.</p> <p>On May 1, the Battle of Manila Bay which pitted the U.S. Navy’s modern steel-clad battleships against the antiquated and wooden-hulled ships of the Spanish Armada took place; not surprisingly, all 10 Spanish ships were sunk and 381 Spanish sailors lost their lives while Commodore Dewey’s fleet, led by the <i>USS Monocay</i> (Dewey’s flagship) sustained only 8 casualties (mainly from heat prostration) with none killed; 11 days after his “great naval victory,” Dewey was promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral.</p> <p>On June 12, General Emilio F. Aguinaldo proclaimed the short-lived First Philippine Republic, also known as the Malolos Republic (1898–1901), and sought recognition of the new government by the international community, including the United States.</p> <p>On August 12, a peace protocol was signed between Spain and the United States, allowing the latter to occupy Manila pending the conclusion of a peace treaty between them; 4 months later, on December 10, 1898, the Treaty of Paris formally ended the Spanish-American War; in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, Spain withdrew from Cuba and ceded Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to the United States; the United States paid Spain \$20 million for the Philippines.</p> <p>On December 21, President William McKinley issued a proclamation extending “American sovereignty over the entire archipelago.”</p>
<p><b>1899</b></p>	<p>On February 4, the “Philippine Insurrection” (cf., “Filipino-American War,” the term preferred by Filipinos) broke out.</p> <p>On February 6, the United States Senate narrowly ratified the Treaty of Paris; the final vote tally was 57 to 27, one over the required two-thirds vote.</p>
<p><b>1900</b></p>	<p>On March 6, General Emilio F. Aguinaldo, president of the First Philippine Republic (1898–1902), was captured in Palanan, Isabela (in the northern Luzon region) by General Frederick Funston, effectively ending the Philippine Insurrection or Filipino-American War.</p>
<p><b>1902</b></p>	<p>On July 4, President Theodore Roosevelt, who succeeded William McKinley to the presidency, officially proclaimed the end of the “great insurrection” in the Philippines and commended the U.S. troops involved in the campaign for upholding America’s “lawful sovereignty over the islands.”</p>

<b>1934</b>	On March 24, the Tydings-McDuffie Act, which among other things, established the Philippine Commonwealth and set forth a 10-year timetable for Philippine Independence was enacted by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
<b>1941</b>	On December 10, Japan invaded the Philippines, and the Imperial Japanese Army landed on the main island of Luzon.
<b>1942</b>	On January 2, the Imperial Japanese Army captured Manila, declared it as its Capital and became its principal headquarters and base of operations throughout Japan's 3-year occupation of the Philippines.  On April 9, USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) troops on the Bataan peninsula surrendered to General Tomoyuki Yamashita, although a significant number of the 36,000 U.S. and Filipino soldiers who surrendered to the Japanese subsequently died during, and in the aftermath of, the infamous "death march" from the Bataan peninsula to Capas, Tarlac en route to internment camps in the metropolitan Manila area; thousands of others succumbed to disease, starvation and torture in the hands of their Japanese captors in the internment camps.
<b>1945</b>	On January 9, U.S. military forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur began the campaign to liberate the Philippines from Japan; MacArthur entered Manila on February 4 and in spite of strong Japanese resistance, completed the recapture of the city within 3 weeks; Washington, D.C. announced the liberation of the Philippines on July 5.
<b>1946</b>	On July 4, the United States granted the Philippines its independence (cf., "restored" Philippine independence as Filipinos preferred to put it) under the terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934; Manuel A. Roxas, a Japanese collaborator earlier exonerated by General MacArthur and a staunch U.S. loyalist, was elected president of the new republic; in a plebiscite simultaneously held with the presidential election, Roxas campaigned hard for the so-called Parity Amendment an "ordinance" appended to the 1935 Philippine Constitution, which accorded American nationals and corporations the same rights as Filipinos in the ownership of public lands and exploitation of natural and mineral resources; the amendment, which became a major irritant in post-war Filipino-American relations, expired on July 4, 1974.
<b>1947</b>	On March 14, the Military Bases Agreement between the Philippines and the United States was signed and subsequently ratified by the Philippine Senate.
<b>1950</b>	On August 30, the RP-U.S. Mutual Defense Pact, the first among a series of bilateral security agreements between the United States and a number of pro-western countries in East Asia, was signed by U.S. and Philippine authorities.
<b>1951</b>	Ramon F. Magsaysay, credited by the United States for "breaking the backbone of Philippine communism," was elected president of the Philippines; Magsaysay was the beneficiary of generous financial assistance from the United States Government and invaluable campaign advice from his CIA "handler," Colonel Edward Lansdale.
<b>1965</b>	Ferdinand E. Marcos, a much-decorated World War II hero was elected to the first of two 4-year terms as president of the Philippines, soundly defeating the incumbent president, Diosdado P. Macapagal; Marcos was elected to a second 4-year term in 1969, the first Philippine post-war president to be so honored.

1966	Along with Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, the Philippines co-founded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a regional cultural-economic-political organization, which has since expanded to include all 10 countries in Southeast Asia ( <i>e.g.</i> , Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam).
1972	On September 21, Ferdinand E. Marcos declared martial law, suspended the 1935 Constitution and the writ of <i>habeas corpus</i> , shut down Congress, ordered the arrest and detention of his political opponents and other suspected dissidents and assumed plenary powers; Marcos justified his declaration of martial law as a legitimate and necessary response to an alleged Communist plot to overthrow the duly constituted government, subvert the rule of law and threaten the survival of the republic.
1981	On January 17, Ferdinand E. Marcos proclaimed as “duly ratified” the 1983 Constitution, which transformed the Philippines’ American-style unitary-presidential system of government into a nondescript hybrid “parliamentary-presidential” system purportedly modeled after the British’s parliamentary system and the French’s presidential system, particularly the latter’s strong chief executive feature.
1982	On August 21, exiled opposition leader and old Marcos nemesis Benigno S. Aquino, Jr., better known as “Ninoy Aquino,” returned to the Philippines from self-imposed exile in the United States and was shot to death, execution-style, by still unknown assailants as he disembarked from his plane at the Manila International Airport (the same airport facility that now bears his name); Aquino’s brutal assassination touched off a firestorm of protest and outrage both in the Philippines and abroad that eventually precipitated Marcos’ ouster and fall from power.
1986	On February 26, the entire Marcos family accompanied by an entourage of military and civilian aides and a handful of diehard supporters left Manila for Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii (via Clark Air Force Base in Angeles, Pampanga); earlier in the day, Corazon C. Aquino, “Ninoy” Aquino’s widow and putative winner of the February 7, 1986 “snap election,” took her oath of office as president of the Philippines before Supreme Court Justice Claudio Teehankee.
1989	On September 28, Ferdinand E. Marcos died in Honolulu, Hawaii; in a controversial decision that would later haunt her presidency, Corazon C. Aquino refused to allow the return of Marcos’ remains to the Philippines for burial in spite of, among others, a “Sense of the Senate Resolution” to the contrary and the recommendation of other notable Philippine political and religious leaders; Marcos is currently buried in his hometown of Batac, Ilocos Norte, after former president Fidel V. Ramos, subsequently lifted his predecessor’s ban on Marcos’ burial on Philippine soil.
1990	On September 16, the Philippine Senate voted to terminate the RP-U.S. Military Bases Agreement (MBA); the decision to terminate the 40-year old basing agreement was undoubtedly affected by the eruption earlier in the year of Mount Pinatubo, a volcano that had been dormant for more than 6 centuries; the Mount Pinatubo eruption caused extensive damage to Clark Air Force Base and Subic Naval Base; in a bit of a paradox, two of the senators who voted for the termination of the MBA were Joseph Estrada and Orlando Mercado. They became strong supporters of the VFA (as president and defense secretary, respectively) that was ratified by the Philippine Senate in 2000.

1998	<p>On June 30, Joseph E. Estrada, former movie actor-matinee idol, city mayor (San Juan, Rizal), senator, vice-president and celebrated crime-fighter took his oath as the ninth president of the Philippines in the post-war period, after a spectacular election victory over Fidel V. Ramos’ “anointed” successor, Speaker Jose de Venecia, standard-bearer of the ruling <i>Lakas-NUCD</i> Coalition, and four other presidential hopefuls; among Estrada’s major challenges were how to cope with the consequences of the Asian economic debacle that started in Thailand in May 1997 and a daunting budget deficit inherited from the Ramos administration; Estrada’s political mettle would also be tested to the limit by the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which resumed hostilities against the Philippine Government and defiantly demanded an independent “Moro Islamic Republic.”</p>
1998	<p>On January 12, the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) was signed by U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hubbard and Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Leonides Caday.</p>
1999	<p>On May 27, after protracted and often acrimonious debate, the Philippine Senate ratified the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) by a vote of 18-5, paving the way for, among other things, the resumption of <i>Balikatan</i> (“shoulder to shoulder”) RP-U.S. joint military exercises, which had been on hiatus since September 16, 1991.</p>
1999	<p>On October 5, Senate Minority Leader Teofisto Guingona, Jr., accused President Joseph Ejercito Estrada of illegally taking P220 million in <i>jueteng</i> (an illegal numbers game popular among rural Filipinos) bribe money from Ilocos Sur Governor Luis “Chavit” Singson from November 1998–August 2,000 and P70 million in excise taxes on cigarettes intended for Ilocos Sur; Guingona’s charges were referred to the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee for investigation; the House Committee on Public Order and security conducted parallel investigations.</p> <p>From October 11–17, calls on President Joseph Ejercito Estrada to “step down from the presidency,” were made by: Jaime Cardinal Sin, putative leader of the country’s Catholics (October 11); the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (October 13); former presidents Corazon C. Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos (October 17).</p> <p>On October 12, Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo resigned as Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Services—although elected as vice president under the opposition <i>Lakas-NUCD</i> coalition, Macapagal-Arroyo was invited by Estrada to serve in the latter’s cabinet and Macapagal-Arroyo obliged—and joined the call for Estrada’s resignation.</p> <p>On November 13, the 218-member House of Representatives adopted a four-point “Articles of Impeachment” against President Joseph Ejercito Estrada; although no formal vote was ever taken, 115 representatives led by former Estrada ally Speaker Manuel Villar, signed a letter forwarding the articles of impeachment to the 24-member Senate (because of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s election to the vice presidency and the death of Marcelo Fernan earlier, however, the Senate membership had been pared down to only 22).</p> <p>On December 7, the trial-sentencing phase of the impeachment proceedings against Joseph Ejercito Estrada formally began in the Senate, with Hilario G. Davide, Jr., Chief Justice of the Philippine</p>



Supreme presiding; the task of prosecuting Estrada fell on the shoulders of 11 House prosecutors elected by their colleagues and a “battery of private prosecutors.”

On January 16, the prosecution lost a key “test vote” in the Senate when 11 pro-Estrada senators voted not to admit into evidence a sealed envelope that supposedly contained incriminating evidence against Estrada.

On January 17, accusing the Senate of having pre-judged the case and the 11 pro-Estrada senators of rigging the proceedings to exonerate Estrada, the prosecution team tendered their collective resignation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and filed a “Manifestation of Withdrawal of Appearance” with the impeachment tribunal; Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr., suspended the impeachment proceedings indefinitely “until the House of Representatives shall have resolved the issue of the resignation of the public prosecutors.”

On January 19, the Secretary of National Defense, AFP Chief of Staff, the Chief of the Philippine National Police, all erstwhile Estrada supporters, and other ranking military and police officials joined the anti-Estrada forces at the so called “EDSA Shrine” and openly called for Estrada’s resignation.

On January 20, at 12:00 noon, Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide, Jr., administered the oath of office to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as president of the Philippines; at 2:30 p.m., Estrada and his family left Malacanang Palace, the official presidential residence.

On April 3, the Supreme Court of the Philippines in *Estrada v. Macapagal Arroyo et al*, G.R. No. 146738, held *inter alia*, that Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is the *de facto* and *de jure* president of the Republic of the Philippines.

On April 16, Joseph Ejercito Estrada surrendered to the *Sandiganbayan* (a special Constitutional court that has jurisdiction over criminal cases brought up against public officials) and posted bail for six criminal charges filed against him by the Office of the Ombudsman.

2000 On April 25, Joseph Ejercito Estrada was arrested at his residence for alleged “plunder,” a non-bailable capital offense; the scene at the arrest site was tense and chaotic as tens of thousands of Estrada’s loyal supporters camped out in front of the latter’s residence, battled a large contingent of heavily armed police and soldiers and attempted to prevent Estrada’s arrest.

On May 1, hundreds of thousands of Estrada supporters who had been holding nonstop anti-regime demonstrations at the so-called EDSA Shrine, marched toward Malacanang Palace (the official presidential residence) demanding that Macapagal-Arroyo step down from the presidency; the pro-Estrada demonstrators clashed with police and military personnel who were called in to beef up security at the presidential palace, resulting in three fatalities and at least 113 people injured; Macapagal-Arroyo declared a “state of rebellion” in the entire Metro Manila area and ordered the arrest and detention of the “rebellion” leaders.

On May 11, general elections were held throughout the archipelago; up for grabs were all 218 seats in the House of Representatives, 13 Senate seats, 73 provincial governorships and thousands of other provincial, municipal and city offices; the two main election protagonists were the People Power Coalition (PPC) of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the opposition *Pwersa ng Masa* (PM) Coalition identified with deposed president Joseph Ejercito Estrada; in the hotly contested Senate elections, the PPC won eight seats while PM won five seats (one of the senatorial seats was won by Estrada's spouse, in spite of the fact that she had never before run for any elective office).

On October 1, the long-awaited "plunder" trial of Joseph Ejercito Estrada and his son "Jinggoy" Estrada at the *Sandiganbayan* got off to a rocky start; both defendants appeared in court in their house clothes, under heavy police escort and without counsel; in spite of the Estradas' refusal to accept court-appointed counsel (the "appointments" were made in open court by the presiding judge), the trial proceeded.

On November 19, the Supreme Court, on a 10-4-1 vote, upheld the constitutionality of the "plunder law" (Republic Act 7080); the constitutionality of the statute was challenged by Joseph Ejercito Estrada and Jinggoy Estrada earlier in the year for, among other things, alleged over-breadth, vagueness, and ambiguity.

# Part I

## The Environment and People

### The Land

The Philippines is an archipelago located between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea in Southeast Asia with a total area of 300,000 square kilometers (115,831 square miles). Of the country's 7,300 islands, the largest are Luzon, Mindanao and the Visayas (the Visayas is a chain of medium-to-large islands that straddle the country's mid-section) while several thousand "islands" are in reality reefs, visible only during low tide. Only about 19 percent of the Philippines' land area is arable; the rest is mostly rugged and mountainous terrain, now mostly denuded, inhabited by indigenous peoples and transplanted lowlanders who eke out a living by swidden agriculture. The inhabitants of the coastal lowlands (especially in Mindanao, Sulu and the Visayas) are mostly small-scale farmers, fishermen, fishpond tenders, etc., or live off the sea, gathering kelp, shells and an assortment of other marine or submarine materials. The Philippines has two distinct seasons—the dry and wet seasons—with the northeast monsoon occurring from November to April and the southwest monsoon that occurs from May to October.

### The People

The Philippines is a virtually homogenous society, with roughly 96 percent of the population being Malay (91.5 Christian Malay and 4 percent Muslim Malay). Today's Filipinos are the descendants of a seafaring group of people originating from mainland Southeast Asia, who settled in what is today called the Philippines, long before the advent of Western colonialism, in the early 16th century. The ethnic Chinese comprise about 1.5 percent of the population while the proverbial "other" category, which includes "non-Christian tribes" such as the Igorots, Ilongots, Gaddangs and Negritos (Aetas) of Luzon; and the Bagobos, Bilaans and Tasadays of Mindanao, account for roughly 3 percent of the population. Because Filipinos, unlike some of their east Asian brethren, have always favored interracial marriages, the Philippines has a significant mixed-race or *mestizo* population some of whose genealogy could be traced all the way back to the onset of Spanish rule in the early 16th century. Perhaps because of their lighter skin color and "Caucasian" looks, *mestizos* (male) are highly successful movie actors and actresses specifically, and in the performing arts, generally. Mixed-race females or *mestizas* are perennial beauty pageant winners. In addition to the Spaniards (1521–1898) and Americans (1898–1946), Filipinos also heavily intermarried with the Chinese over an extended period of time, accounting for a fairly significant Filipino-Chinese *mestizo* community that has been integrated into the overall population.

## Natural Resources

The Philippines is blessed with an abundance of natural and mineral resources, *e.g.*, rich farm lands, inland rivers and lakes, abundant fishery and marine resources, adequate rainfall and as a littoral state, one of the longest coastlines in the world. In addition, the Philippines has vast deposits of strategic minerals such as iron, cobalt, copper, gold, silver and nickel, to name only a few. In recent years, commercial quantities of petroleum and natural gas were discovered in locations west of the island-province of Palawan in the southwestern part of the country. In the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's, the Philippines was also a major producer of unprocessed timber (mostly hardwood) and other wood products like plywood. Unfortunately, however, indiscriminate logging activities by politically well-connected corporate and individual concessionaires in the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's, have virtually depleted these forest resources and turned once dense and impenetrable jungles into virtual wastelands. In certain areas of the country, for example, heavy silting and massive soil erosion caused by the destruction of natural watersheds is believed to have seriously jeopardized the lifespan of hydroelectric power plants such as those in Ambuklao, Mountain Province; Montalban, Rizal; and Maria Cristina Falls, Agusan, in Mindanao. In spite of a "total log ban" that has been in place since the late 1980's, illegal logging apparently continues to go on, especially in Luzon's Cagayan Valley and northern Mindanao.

As with other developing countries attempting to telescope their modernization timetable into a 20- to 30-year span (*cf.*, 100–200 years in the case of highly industrialized nations like the United States), the Philippines has tended to ignore or downplay potential environmental problems related to rapid industrialization. Major waterways like the Pasig River that traverses Metro Manila and its suburbs have been so badly polluted by toxic industrial wastes and raw sewage over the last several decades; so too have inland lakes like Laguna de Bay, perhaps one of the largest freshwater reservoirs in all of Southeast Asia. In the case of Laguna de Bay, the principal culprits are wealthy and influential commercial fishermen who have crisscrossed Laguna de Bay with giant fish traps, thereby impeding the movement of

large concentrations of water hyacinth and other aquatic plants. According to marine biologists who have studied the situation thoroughly, this has choked off the lake's oxygen supply, in turn resulting in massive fish kills and slow death to Laguna de Bay itself. Parenthetically, according to a non-governmental organization (NGO) opposed to further land reclamation in Manila Bay, upwards of 5,000,000 pounds of untreated sewage is released annually into Manila Bay, one of the best natural deepwater ports in the world.

## Lingo-Cultural Groups

The Philippines' various lingo-cultural groups and the respective geographic areas where these groups are concentrated are: (1) Bicolano (the southeastern tip of Luzon); (2) Bisaya or Cebuano (central and eastern Visayas and certain parts of Mindanao); (3) Hilagaynon or Ilongo (western Visayas and certain parts of Mindanao); (4) Ilocano (northern Luzon and Cagayan Valley, half of central Luzon and certain parts of Mindanao); (5) Pampangan (Pampanga); (6) Pangasinense (Pangasinan); (7) Tagalog (southern Luzon and the national capital region); and (8) Waray (eastern Visayas and Samar). The Muslim populations of North and South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi speak Maguindanao, Maranaw, and Tausug, respectively. In addition, according to language specialists who have studied the Philippines' various dialects, the country has over a hundred different "linguistic dialects" that do not lend themselves to phonetic transcription. By law, Tagalog is the principal base of Pilipino, one of two official languages in the Philippines (the other official language is English). Bicolano, Bisaya, Hilagaynon, Ilocano, Tagalog, etc., are so linguistically different from each other—except for some words of Spanish origin—that Filipinos versed only in one particular language, *e.g.*, Ilocano are unable to communicate with other Filipinos who do not speak or read Ilocano. This is the reason why English remains the *lingua franca* in the Philippines especially among educated Filipinos. Parenthetically, each lingo-cultural group has its distinguishing stereotypical characteristics—both positive and negative—and putative strengths and weaknesses. For example, Ilocanos are stereotyped as dark-skinned (*maitim*), hard working, industrious and frugal to a fault, while Tagalogs are stereotyped as fair-skinned (*maputi*), well dressed, well spoken, street-wise, and given to excessive spending. Perhaps because of the Philippines' colonial past (*i.e.*, the lingering effects of *divide et impera*), archipelagic geographical configuration and the existence of natural communication barriers such as mountain ranges, rugged terrain, oceans, etc., Filipinos have always had a problem forging a distinct identity as a unified nation and one people. Internal divisions spawned by regionalism continue to hamper nation-building, more than 55 years after the Philippines regained her independence from the United States in 1946. The situation is exacerbated by a palpable state of fractiousness; a propensity towards the politics of *inggitan* (jealousy) and *lamangan*, an indigenized version of one-upmanship. Indeed, according to various commentators and students of Philippine history and social dynamics, fractiousness and the tendency of Filipinos to denigrate and downplay the achievements of others while conversely, puffing up and exaggerating their own achievements, has been one of the most difficult obstacles standing in the way of true nationhood and nation building.

## Cultural and Political Identity

According to David Joel Steinberg, the Philippines is a product of “355 years in the convent and 50 years of Hollywood.” As a group, Filipinos exhibit a highly ambivalent, if slightly confused cultural identity, that is part Hispanic, part indigenous and part American; a curious blend of conservative and modern values and idiosyncrasies. The conservative influence of the Catholic Church on institutions such as the family and social issues like birth control, divorce, etc., is all too pervasive and apparent. And so it is for example, that the Philippines is the only country in the world that continues to outlaw absolute divorce even as other predominantly Catholic countries like Italy, Ireland and Argentina, etc., have long ago legalized it. Yet for the most part, Filipinos are also steeped in the images and values of American “pop culture” as evidenced by an insatiable appetite for Western-style clothes, American music, cinema, television and fast food. Indeed, so dominant and influential has the American cultural influence been on younger Filipinos that American rock and roll and Hollywood icons like Gwyneth Paltrow, Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez, the Backstreet Boys, and Britney Spears, to name only a few, enjoy wide followings in the Philippines as they do in the United States and other Western societies.

Politically, Filipinos take great pride in their commitment to democracy and its underlying principles and values such as egalitarianism, fair play, due process of law, and the basic freedoms (speech, press, religion, association, etc.) and immunities and privileges of citizenship enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution. Perhaps because the Philippines is a former colony of the United States, all of her three Constitutions—the 1935 Constitution that governed the Second Philippine Republic (1946–1972), the 1981 Constitution that governed Marcos’ so called “New Republic” (1981–1986) after the “lifting” of martial law in 1981, and the 1987 Constitution, the basic law of the Third Philippine Republic—have either been heavily influenced by or were methodically patterned after that of the United States, and except for a brief flirtation with authoritarian rule and a nondescript “parliamentary” system in the early 1970’s and early 1980’s, the Philippine political system has remained uncannily similar to the American system after which it was modeled. Like American democracy, the one over-arching value that underlies Philippine democracy is the enduring belief in the efficacy of the ballot box and free elections as the only right way to bring about change.

## Religion and the Indigenous Culture

Philippine culture is rooted in a strong and extended kinship system and a set of overlapping indigenous values, practices and beliefs, such as *utang na loob*, *hiya* and *pakkikisama*. Like most Asian societies, kinship of the extended variety, is a major element of Philippine culture. Under the Philippines’ extended kinship system, it is not unusual for two or three generations of a given family to live under one roof and “cousins,” several degrees removed, are considered “close” relatives. The three variants of the Philippines’ extended kinship system are (1) consanguinal or kinship based on blood; (2) affinal or kinship based on marriage; and, (3) *compadrazgo* or fictive kinship that results from religious or quasi-religious rites like baptism (*binyag*) or marriage (*kasal*). Fictive or *compadrazgo* kinship is established between and among the parents of a newly baptized child or a bride and groom, as the case may be, and the respective baptismal or wedding sponsors (*ninong* or *ninang*) become *compadres* and *comadres*. The newly baptized child and newly married couple becomes the *inaanak sa binyag* and *inaanak sa kasal*, respectively, of the baptismal and wedding sponsors.

A complex system of reciprocity in bilateral and multilateral relationships, *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude) is a value, which has a profound impact on all personal and business relationships. An *utang na loob* relationship is created when one party seeks, accepts and benefits from a favor, deed or deliberate act of another party. Filipinos expect the beneficiary of an *utang na loob* to acknowledge and repay the “debt” either as soon as it is incurred or at a later time. The beneficiary (*may utang na loob*) may ignore the debt at his own peril; risk social ostracism or being labeled as an ingrate (*walang utang na loob*). In certain situations, *hiya* (shame) trumps or neutralizes an *utang na loob* obligation if repayment of the debt has the potential of resulting in a *kahihiyaan* (scandal or outrage). Some common manifestations of *hiya* are: (1) the use of, and reliance on, intermediaries and go-betweens in bilateral and multilateral negotiations; (2) false modesty and self-effacing conduct; and (3) reluctance to express emotions in public. According to the late Frank Lynch, S.J., of the Ateneo De Manila University’s Institute of Philippine Culture, *pakikisama* or “smooth interpersonal relations” as Lynch put it, is the ability to get along with others. Filipinos put a high premium on *pakikisama* and a person who gets along with others (*marunong makisama*) is universally admired and well liked. Conversely, a person who is perceived as self-centered and egotistical (*mayabang*) and uppity (*suplad[a]*) is generally shunned and avoided. On occasion, laws and regulations are ignored, “bent” or even violated in the name of *pakikisama* and may be partly to blame for rampant graft and corruption. Among some of the common manifestations of *pakikisama* are: (1) a nearly obsessive search for consensus prior to the formulation of a policy decision; (2) avoidance of conflict or potential conflict situations; (3) respect for elders and authority-figures; and (4) avoidance of public displays of anger and displeasure.

According to most estimates, 94 percent of the Philippines’ estimated 83 million people are Christian, making the Philippines the only predominantly Christian country in all of Asia. Eighty-four percent of Filipinos are Roman Catholic, although it is believed that only about 50 percent are “serious practicing Catholics” who go to Mass regularly, observe holidays of obligation and participate in the church’s holy sacraments. Indeed, Philippine Catholicism has often been characterized by religious scholars like Fr. Rodolfo Bulatao, S. J., as of a “split-level” variety; an odd mixture of church-approved religious ritual and liturgy and neo-pagan rites like the crucifixion of penitents during Holy Week and the *ati-atihan* festival in Aklan during the Lenten season, which celebrates Jesus Christ’s passion and sacrifice. The latter practices are mostly driven by superstition and perhaps to a lesser extent, commercialism, and have their roots in the Philippines’ pre-Hispanic polytheistic belief system and religious rituals and practices.

The other 10 percent of Filipinos belong to various mainstream protestant religious denominations such as Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Church of Latter-day Saints, etc., although of late, the so called “charismatic evangelicals” (mainly from the United States) have begun to gain inroads into the country’s religious landscape. Two of these protestant denominations—the Filipino Independent Church or *Aglipayans* and the *Iglesia ni Kristo* or Church of Christ—are homegrown varieties and have come to signify, rightly or wrongly, the Filipino’s struggle for religious independence. Of these homegrown churches, the *Iglesia ni Kristo* (INK), a politically monolithic organization whose members vote as a solid bloc, has the higher profile of the two and wields a strong political clout. The Filipino Independent Church was founded at the beginning of the 20th century by Gregorio Aglipay, a defrocked priest, while the *Iglesia ni Kristo* was founded in the 1920’s by Felix Manalo.

Muslims account for about 4 percent of the population, and are primarily concentrated in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago, although with the erection of a mosque in the heart of downtown Manila in the 1970s, small Muslim communities have since sprouted up in the national capital region as well. Although Filipino Muslims are Sunni, not Shiite nor Wahabi, the Muslim population consists of three principal sub-groups, *e.g.*, the *Magindanaws* of Cotabato, South Cotabato, and Sultan Kudarat; the *Maranaws* of Agusan, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur; and the *Tausugs* who are spread out in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi (a much smaller but distinct sub-group, the sea-dwelling *Badjaos*, also live in the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi area). The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which fought the Philippine Government for 24 years under the leadership of current ARRM (Autonomous Rural Region of Mindanao) governor Nurallaji Misuari was primarily a *Tausug* group as is the notorious kidnap for ransom and bandit group Abu Sayaff. In contrast, the leadership and rank and file of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) whose armed struggle for an “Islamic homeland” is currently in hiatus are primarily of Magindanaw and Maranaw extraction. Be that as it may, the MILF is a splinter group of the MNLF and its leader, Hashim Salamat, was one Misuari’s former lieutenants. Hashim Salamat and the MILF split with Misuari over the latter’s decision to negotiate with, and eventually sign a peace treaty with the Philippine Government in 1996, under the auspices of the Government of Indonesia. In spite of losing Camp Abubakar—its political and military headquarters—to government forces in 2000, after a rather costly military campaign (in terms of the number of lives lost on both sides and destruction of private property) the MILF, appears determined to achieve its goal of creating an independent Islamic republic.

The proverbial “other” category, also denominated “non-Christian tribes” in the literature, encompasses all of the country’s “cultural minority” groups. These include the various Igorot sub-groups in Kalinga-Apayao and the Mountain Province (Apayao, Bontoc, Ifugao, Ibaloi and Kalinga, etc.); the Tinguians of Abra, in northern Luzon; and the Gaddangs, Ibanags and Ilongots of Nueva Vizcaya and Cagayan Valley; the Aetas (also called Negritos) of central Luzon; and the Bilaans, Bagobos, Manobos and Tasadays, etc., of Mindanao. Except for a short period of time in the afterglow of the alleged “discovery” of the Tasadays, a supposed pre-Stone Age tribe, during the martial law period, these cultural minority groups have been largely ignored by the central government in Manila, and as a result, live under deplorable conditions. If anything, the subsequent unmasking of the “Tasaday discovery” as a hoax perpetrated by no less than the head of the Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN), turned the spotlight away from the cultural minorities. One group in particular, the Aetas of Pampanga and Zambales in the central Luzon region who were forced out of their mountain homes and deprived of their only means of livelihood by the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in 1990–1991, have been especially hard-hit and so far, government-led efforts to resettle them in Dau and Mabalacat, all in Pampanga, have invariably failed. Hundreds of Negritos have since died or become ill as a result of their exposure to “lowland” diseases and infections they contracted while confined in crowded “tent cities” and hastily built relocation centers. Even more importantly, however, the Negritos who have always lived in the deep jungles of Mount Pinatubo and subsisting on *camote* (sweet potato), other root crops and a wide variety of game, have been permanently displaced from their natural habitat, because even today, 10 years after its original eruption, Mt. Pinatubo continues to discharge significant quantities of *lahar* (volcanic mud with the appearance and consistency of wet cement) rendering the mountain and surrounding foothills totally uninhabitable.

## Discussion Questions on “The Environment and People”

- What common cultural, idiosyncratic and physical characteristics, if any, do Filipinos share with the other Malay countries in Southeast Asia (e.g., Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia)?
- Has the fact of the Philippines being an archipelago had anything to do with rampant factionalism, regionalism and the Filipinos’ general inability to come together as a cohesive national entity?
- What role, if any, has the Roman Catholic Church played or continued to play vis-à-vis the Filipino’s cultural, ideological, and political ambivalence?
- Have indigenous Philippine values, beliefs and attitudes, such as *hiya*, *pakikisama*, *utang na loob*, *inggit*, *lamangan*, etc., militated against the full flowering of Western-style democracy in the Philippines, and if so, how and why?
- Is the Philippines’ *particularistic* political culture (cf., the United States’ *universalistic* political culture) an obstacle to political and economic growth and development?
- What are the short- and long-term effects of over-population on the country’s overall quality of life and what specific measures if any, could the government and the private sector undertake to alleviate the situation?

# Part II

## History and Its Legacies

### The Philippines Under Spain

The Philippines, like all of Southeast Asia with the exception of Thailand, is a former colony; first European and then American. The first to colonize the Philippines was Spain, whose rule over the islands lasted approximately 355 years. The Spaniards took possession of the Philippines in the middle of the 16th century (the city of Manila, Philippines was established in June 1572, by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi). Earlier, in 1521, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer sailing under the Spanish crown, “discovered” the Philippines while looking for a new route to the East Indies in pursuit of the lucrative spice trade. Magellan was later slain by Lapu-Lapu, a native chieftain in what is today the province of Cebu, during a relatively obscure skirmish that is chronicled by a number of Filipino historians and nationalists as the first notable example of Filipino resistance to alien domination. Spanish rule over the Philippines, as in the rest of the colonial empire was, from inception to its denouement, exploitative, and oppressive.



The Filipinos were treated by the Spaniards as serfs, or in Jose P. Rizal's iteration of a classic phrase, "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and contemptuously referred to as *indios*. Filipinos were also denied participation in colonial government, except at the lowest levels and even then only in token form, for example as *gobernadorcillos* (petty governors) at the village level, whose real function was to assist the Spanish authorities in disseminating edicts from the crown and in collecting taxes. Administratively speaking, the Philippines was a dependency of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, governed through the Council of the Indies, the supreme governing body for all of the Spanish overseas empire.

A decisive element throughout Spanish colonial rule was the dominant role played by the ecclesiastical authorities in political and civil affairs. Because of the theocratic nature of the Spanish monarchy at that time, ecclesiastical authorities exerted a strong influence on political and administrative matters. The abuses and profligacy of the clergy went unchecked, for the most part, because the Archbishop of Manila enjoyed veto power over the selection of the colony's Governor General, the Philippines's highest secular official. Because of this veto power, the religious authorities were able to ensure that whoever was appointed Governor General either kept his peace or tacitly tolerated a wide variety of clerical excesses. In the Philippines, as elsewhere in the empire, the "royal patronage of the clergy" made the church the most important agency of the crown.

In fairness to the Spaniards, there were brief interludes, which proved beneficial to the Philippines, especially in the economic sphere. For example, it was during the administration of Jose Basco y Vargas (1778–1787) during the enlightened rule of Charles III (1759–1788), when a general economic plan for the development of the natural resources of the Philippines was put into effect. In accordance with the program, Basco also improved the schools and promoted the teaching of the Spanish language, a policy that was opposed by the clergy. In the political arena, the granting of Philippine representation in the Spanish *Cortes* (1810–1813, 1820–1823, and 1834–1837) even if "it did not accomplish anything for the Filipinos ... because the delegates themselves were not Filipinos but Spaniards and these Spanish delegates represented not Filipino but Spanish interests in the Philippines," proved in the long run to be meaningful in that it marked the beginning of the struggle between liberalism and constitutionalism on the one hand and conservatism and absolutism on the other. One of the more tangible results of the struggle as far as the Philippines was concerned, was the appointment of a liberal Governor General, Carlos Maria de la Torre, after the Spanish Revolution of 1858. Governor General de la Torre's Administration, albeit short lived, was one of the best liked by the Filipinos and later proved instrumental in stimulating Philippine nationalism.

Rule by the clergy or the so called "friarocracy" and its attendant evils and inequities triggered about 100 revolts that took place throughout the country beginning with the Rajah Lakandula and Rajah Sulayman revolts in 1574 and several others in the 17th and 18th centuries, such as the Diego Silang revolt in the Ilocos provinces (1762–1763), and the Cavite Mutiny of January 20, 1872, which resulted in the martyrdom of three Filipino priests: Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez, and Jacinto Zamora. Because of the absence of a central leadership or a unifying element in these revolts, however, and because of the Spaniards' superior weaponry and organization, the Spanish colonial authorities succeeded in quelling these revolts.

In spite of the Spanish colonial government's policy of refusing the Filipinos any appreciable measure of education, there developed through the years a native *principalia* or *ilustrado* class. The members of this class, particularly the landed gentry, were native Filipinos or Filipino-Spanish *mestizos* who had attained some level of economic success. The children of the *principalia* or *ilustrado* class, who were the only ones able to avail of the opportunity for post-secondary education in the Philippines, were also fortunate enough to travel to, and study in, various European universities and locations. There, these *ilustrados* were exposed to liberal ideas, lived in a more enlightened political and social setting, and in 1889, launched an organized protest movement designed to expose Spanish abuses in the Philippines. The movement, known as the Propaganda Movement, also took on the task of educating and agitating Filipinos about their common plight and in fostering pride in their own race. This became necessary in order to counter one of the principal effects of Spanish colonialism: the near complete destruction of the Filipino's spirit and sense of dignity. As an upshot of their systematic denigration by the Spaniards, Filipinos started believing that they were an inherently inferior race relative to the Spaniards and for this reason, generally tolerated abuses perpetrated on them by their colonial masters. As an organization, the Propaganda Movement was reformist, not separatist, and it disseminated its ideas and philosophical positions both in Europe and in the Philippines primarily through *La Solidaridad* its official publication, under the editorship of Graciano Lopez Jaena.

Other notable members of the Propaganda Movement were the artist Juan Luna, who depicted conditions existing in the Philippines through highly acclaimed works like the *Spolarium*, and the polemicist Marcelo H. del Pilar whose main contribution to the movement was a strongly worded anti-friar volume entitled *La Soberania Monacal*. But perhaps the best known and most influential of them all was the physician, scientist, writer, artist and humanist Jose P. Rizal, who wrote hundreds of essays, letters, scientific tracts, and two major novels, *Noli Me Tangere* (Social Cancer) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Reign of Greed), two stirring social commentaries that exposed and satirized the abuses of the clergy in the colony, as well as the foibles and weaknesses of Philippine society—Spanish and Filipino—at that time. A recurrent theme in Rizal's writings was the thesis that the Filipino was just as good and able as the Spaniard, and if afforded the right opportunities, could excel in whatever endeavor he chose. Speaking through his principal character, Simoun, in *El Filibusterismo*, Rizal argued against complete separation from Spain by revolutionary means, because in his view, Filipinos were not yet ready for independence. In spite of his reformist stance and rejection of armed revolution as a method of effecting change, however, the Spaniards executed Rizal on December 30, 1896, after a mock trial on trumped-up charges of inciting to rebellion and plotting against the Spanish crown.

Although the intellectual foundation of the Revolution of 1896 was laid by the *ilustrado* class, the armed phase of the struggle was led by a man of the masses, Andres Bonifacio, founder and first *Supremo* of the *Katipunan*, a secret society that advocated complete separation from Spain. The first open armed clash between the *Katipuneros* and the Spanish *guardia civil* occurred on August 23, 1896, and from that point onward, the revolution spread through other parts of the country. After Bonifacio's untimely death, as a result of a factional struggle for power within the *Katipunan*, the leadership of the revolutionary movement was assumed by General Emilio F. Aguinaldo, Bonifacio's chief rival. On November 18, 1897, the first part of a truce, known as the Pact of Biyak na Bato, was signed between the Spanish Government and Aguinaldo's revolutionary forces, and Aguinaldo was exiled to Hong Kong. While in

Hong Kong, Aguinaldo procured arms and ammunition to replace the antiquated and outmoded weapons of the Filipino Revolutionary Army. When it appeared certain that the truce was headed for a total collapse, Aguinaldo returned to the Philippines and hostilities between the Spaniards and FRA resumed shortly thereafter. The remaining Spanish forces retreated to the heavily fortified walled city of Intramuros, their last remaining stronghold in the colony, as they awaited the final and decisive attack by Aguinaldo's forces. Low on supplies and ammunition and cut off from Spain by vast oceans, the Spaniards found themselves in an almost hopeless situation. It was at this juncture that the Americans arrived on the scene and decided to intervene, ostensibly at first, in behalf of the Filipinos, but as it turned out eventually, on their own behalf, when the United States decided to annex the Philippines and turn it into a colony. Ironically, the Spaniards and Filipinos were not the principal combatants in the last decisive battle of the Philippine Revolution. The protagonists were a flotilla of modern American warships led by George Dewey and the mostly wooden ships of the once "invincible" Spanish *armada* under the command of Patricio Montojo. The so called Battle of Manila Bay a "naval battle" that various historians—American and Filipino—have described as a "sham," "turkey shoot in the bay, etc.," took place on May 1, 1898, and was staged to salvage Spanish honor and provide the Spaniards with a face-saving device to abandon the Philippines and surrender to the Americans, whom they regarded as their "equals" instead of to the lowly Filipinos whom the Spaniards despised and loathed. On June 12, 1898, after successful completion of mopping up operations against remaining Spanish forces, Aguinaldo proclaimed the short-lived First Philippine Republic (also called the Malolos Republic) and as most new governments usually do under the circumstances, proceeded to seek recognition of the fledgling government by other countries.

## The Philippines Under American Rule

The United States gained sovereignty over the Philippines from Spain by virtue of the Treaty of Paris, which brought an end to the abbreviated Spanish-American War. The acquisition of the Philippines came at a time when the United States was emerging as a world power; the period of 1891–1918, characterized by Frank L. Klingberg as a period of "extroversion" in the cyclical interpretation of American involvement in world affairs. William McKinley's decision to acquire the Philippines was greatly influenced by, among others, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Alfred Thayer Mahan. Although the anti-annexation forces waged a determined effort to foil the McKinley administration from acquiring the Philippines, those who favored annexation won out in the end, with the ratification of the Treaty of Paris by the United States Senate on February 6, 1899. Interestingly enough, however, the pro-ratification forces in the United States Senate barely managed to muster the two-thirds majority required to secure ratification.

Interestingly enough, Spain no longer had effective political control of her former colony when she ceded the Philippines to the United States. As previously mentioned, Aguinaldo's rag-tag revolutionary army had for all intents and purposes, defeated the Spaniards by the time the First Philippine Republic was proclaimed on June 12, 1898. Shortly thereafter, a relatively brief but brutal war, the Philippine-American War or Philippine Insurrection (depending on whose version of events one chooses to adopt) broke out between the Filipinos and Americans. The war ended in 1902, almost a year to the day from the time the United States established a civilian government in the Philippines, decided to teach Filipinos the

English language and made available to all Filipinos a system of free universal education. The latter two policies clearly set the Americans apart from their Spanish predecessors—who denied Filipinos access to education and refused to teach them the Spanish language—and to a large extent, hastened Filipino acquiescence to American rule. Soon, efforts were made to involve the Filipinos in political and governmental affairs as well.

Although the Republican Party was not as receptive to the idea of early Philippine independence as the Democratic Party, which had incorporated early Philippine independence into their party platforms for 12 years, both political parties favored eventual Philippine independence. The difference lay in the duration of the period of political tutelage necessary to prepare the Filipinos for self-government. The first proffer of political self-rule for the Philippines was formalized through the Jones Law during the Woodrow Wilson Administration in 1916. Although the Jones Law fell short of Filipino expectations, it gave impetus to the Filipinization of higher echelons of the civil service and the development of Filipino legislative leadership. This Filipino legislative leadership would later be pitted against a trenchant Governor General in the person of Leonard Wood, who took over from Francis Burton Harrison after the Republicans were returned to power in 1921. In fact, the controversy between Governor General Wood and President J. Calvin Coolidge on the one hand, and Manuel L. Quezon, Sergio Osmena, Sr., and Manuel A. Roxas, on the other, served to intensify, at least on the Philippine side of the picture, the Filipino demand for total independence from the United States.

Independent of the agitations of Filipino leaders, however, worsening economic conditions in the United States, which culminated in the Great Depression, worked to hasten the decoupling of the Philippines from the United States. A curious coalition of interest groups, such as organized labor, farm lobbies, genuine anti-imperialists and jingoist groups opposed to Filipino immigration to the United States, combined to pressure the United States Congress into enacting legislation that ultimately took the Philippines off American hands. At this time too, it had become clear to American political, industrial, economic and religious leaders, who lobbied hard for the acquisition of the Philippines earlier, that the Philippines had not lived up to expectations as a potential source of wealth, or as an *entrepot* of trade and commerce in the Far East. One area where expectations met with some degree of success was toward the goal—championed by Alfred Thayer Mahan—of making the Philippines into a naval “outpost” and “magazine” from which the United States could project her military power in the Pacific rim. All in all, however, to borrow a felicitous phrase from George F. Kennan, the Philippines had turned out to be a “minor inconvenience.”

In 1932, a Philippine Independence Mission led by Sergio Osmena, Sr. and Manuel A. Roxas succeeded in lobbying for the passage of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, which set up a transitional period of 10 years (the commonwealth period) before the grant of total independence. Indicative of the American state of mind vis-à-vis Philippine independence at that particular point in time, Congress decisively overrode President Herbert Hoover’s veto of the measure. The implementation of the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act, however, was aborted by a power struggle in the Philippines between and among Sergio Osmena, Sr., Manuel A. Roxas and Manuel L. Quezon, with Quezon ultimately emerging as the victor. Quezon denounced the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act as both weak and disadvantageous to the Philippines in the long-term. In retrospect, however, it appears that Quezon torpedoed the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act not for its

putative lack of merit, but because it was secured by his political rival, Sergio Osmena, Sr. Under Quezon's leadership, the Commonwealth Assembly rejected the Act and authorized Quezon to return to Washington, D.C. to negotiate a new independence bill.

Working on the assumption that the Democrats would give the Philippines a better independence bill (Republican Herbert Hoover was soundly defeated by Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential elections), Quezon personally headed a second independence mission to the United States, only to find an unsympathetic United States Congress and an indifferent Roosevelt Administration, not so much because of opposition to Philippine independence as such, but because of the deteriorating economic conditions in the United States and understandable legislative-executive preoccupation with domestic affairs. In 1934, Quezon returned to the Philippines with a "new" independence law, the Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act, legislation that was nearly identical to the much-maligned Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act. In February 1935, under the terms of the Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act, the Philippines held a constitutional convention, which drafted a basic law for the Philippine commonwealth (the transition government from 1935–1945) and the future republic scheduled for establishment 10 years later. Predictably perhaps, the Filipino "founding fathers" established a governmental system meticulously modeled after that of the United States.'

## The Japanese Interregnum

The timetable for Philippine independence spelled out in the Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act was set back by World War II and Japan's subsequent occupation of the Philippines. The reorganization of the commonwealth government was ordered by General Masaharu Homma, commander-in-chief of the Imperial Japanese Forces (IJF), in a proclamation signed on January 3, 1943, just 1 day after the IJF took control of Manila. In his proclamation, General Homma announced the end of the American colonization of the country and declared that the purpose of Japan's occupation of the Philippines was to help establish an "independent" Philippine republic; a "Philippines for Filipinos," as an integral part of Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The Japanese had evidently hoped that their declaration of Philippine independence would help convince Filipinos who remained loyal to the United States that it was not Japan's intention to occupy the Philippines permanently; that it was simply emancipating the country and the Filipino people from Western colonialism. Preparations for the organization of the war-time republic formally began on June 18, 1943, with the creation of a Preparatory Commission for Philippine Independence headed by Jose P. Laurel, Sr. as president and Benigno S. Aquino, Sr. and Ramon Avancena as co-vice presidents. The commission completed a draft Constitution on September 4, 1943, that was ratified in a "popular convention" 2 days later. The new Constitution established a unicameral National Assembly, whose entire membership was elected on September 20, 1943. Five days later, the National Assembly elected Jose P. Laurel, Sr., as president of the new republic, and was formally inducted into office on October 14, 1943.

The Japanese-sponsored republic never got off the ground because the Filipino people did not acknowledge the IJF as their emancipators, and, of course, because of the Filipinos' continued loyalty to

the United States. Indeed, after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, thousands of Filipino regulars (officially known as the “Philippine Scouts,” these soldiers were an integral part of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East or USAFFE) fled to the hills from where they waged relentless guerrilla warfare against the Japanese. These same guerrilla forces provided vital intelligence and logistical support to General Douglas MacArthur, paving the way for the latter’s return to liberate the Philippines from the Japanese. The atrocities perpetrated by Japanese soldiers on the civilian population especially toward the end of the war such as impaling babies on bayonets, subjecting suspected guerrilla sympathizers to the dreaded “water torture,” mass rape, and razing entire communities to the ground, etc., in retaliation for guerrilla raids on Japanese troop garrisons or well executed ambushes of Japanese military forces in the field also alienated a large segment of the population.

## The Second Philippine Republic: Roxas to Marcos

As a result of the decision in Washington, D.C. to proceed with the grant of Philippine independence, President Sergio Osmeña Sr. reconvened the Commonwealth National Assembly, in early 1946. Elected president of the Senate was Manuel A. Roxas, a savvy politician from the western Visayas, and like the late Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña, Sr., a member of the ruling *Nacionalista* Party. Later on, however, Roxas led a group of his *Nacionalista* party mates and a few “independents,” and formed a splinter group, which became the Liberal Party (Roxas won the presidency as the standard-bearer of the Liberal Party). But first, Roxas had to be cleared by General Douglas MacArthur of pending collaboration charges in order to become eligible to run for president. There is consensus among Philippine historians and other students of the Japanese collaboration issue that MacArthur’s exoneration and virtual endorsement of Roxas’ was instrumental in ensuring Roxas’ victory in the first post-war presidential election held on April 23, 1946. Roxas ran with Elpidio Quirino as his running mate, against the *Nacionalista* Party team of Sergio Osmeña, Sr. and Eulogio Rodriguez. Roxas and Quirino waged a long and effective campaign throughout the archipelago focusing largely on the issues of rehabilitation, democracy, and anticipated American economic assistance. In contrast, the Osmeña-Rodriguez team waged a low profile and limited campaign with President Osmeña refusing to debate Roxas on the issues.

As predicted, Roxas won the election handily. A year later, Roxas delivered on his campaign promise to secure “parity rights” for American citizens and corporations in the ownership of land, exploitation of natural and mineral resources and in the operation of vital public utilities. Under Roxas’ leadership, the Philippine Congress approved a constitutional amendment, which provided “parity rights” for American citizens and corporations (the constitutional amendment was later ratified by the Filipino people in a nation-wide plebiscite). The Roxas Administration primarily devoted itself to the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction and was greatly aided in this regard by massive financial assistance from the United States under Public Law 370 (the Philippine Rehabilitation Act of 1946) as well as benefits that accrued to the Philippines from the Philippine Trade Act of 1946. It was generally believed that the financial assistance was a *quid pro quo* for the Philippines’ passage of the parity rights amendment referred to earlier. Roxas was also responsible for the negotiation and ratification (by the Philippine Senate) of other treaties with the United States, including the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty and the Military Bases Agreement. In fact, Roxas was perhaps the United States’ strongest Filipino advocate and supporter during those formative years. It was, therefore, ironic that Roxas met his untimely death at Clark Air

Force Base, on April 15, 1948, after delivering a stirring speech affirming the Philippines' "undying loyalty" to the United States in the event of another war.

After Roxas' death, Vice President Elpidio Quirino was sworn in as president and served the remainder of Roxas' unexpired term. In addition to the daunting problems of reconstruction and rehabilitation, Quirino also faced a communist insurgency in the hands of the *Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (People's Army Against the Japanese), which transformed itself into the military arm of the *Partidong Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP) after World War II. Quirino suspended the writ of *habeas corpus* after the failure of a short-lived truce with the Communists. Although the suspension was only partial and temporary, the act was nevertheless roundly criticized by civil libertarians and various bar associations, as unnecessary, excessive, and unconstitutional. As with Marcos' suspension of *habeas corpus* in 1972, however, the constitutionality of Quirino's proclamation was declared lawful and constitutional by the Philippine Supreme Court in the landmark *Barcelon* case. The Quirino Administration defeated the Communist insurgency with a combined "mailed-fist" policy and a "land for the landless" program. The chief architect of the Quirino Administration's success in what Alvin Scaff described as "breaking the backbone of Philippine communism," was Secretary of National Defense Ramon F. Magsaysay. After Quirino announced his plan to run for reelection, Magsaysay was enticed by the opposition *Nacionalista* Party to become their party's "guest candidate" for president; Magsaysay went on to defeat Quirino in one of the most-lopsided election victories in the country's brief history. Ramon F. Magsaysay brought a genuine love of the common *tao* (common man) and a charismatic brand of leadership to the presidency, which enabled him to rally diverse individuals and groups behind his administration's pet projects and programs. In his resolve to eradicate poverty and ameliorate living conditions especially in the rural areas of the country, Magsaysay launched a three-pronged "community development" program, which called for, among other things, extensive land reform; the building of a network of "feeder roads" and related infrastructure; and the extension of much-needed financial assistance to farmers. Magsaysay created the Office of Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD) to coordinate the government's community development initiatives and recruited and trained a veritable army of workers and volunteers. Like the U.S. Peace Corps established by President John F. Kennedy some 8 years later, Magsaysay's PACD attracted thousands of idealistic young college students and recent college graduates who signed up to work in the rural areas for virtually nothing and under harsh and primitive working conditions.

Ramon F. Magsaysay was staunchly pro-American and as a populist, virtually peerless. He opened the doors of Malacanang Palace (the presidential office and residence) and for the first time ever, made government offices and the corridors of power accessible to the common people. As a political reformer, Magsaysay addressed the perennial problem of graft and corruption with remarkable zeal and to implement reforms in the area, tapped a cadre of active-duty and recently retired military officers who had worked with him at the Department of National Defense and were instrumental in ensuring the success of his (Magsaysay's) counter-insurgency campaign. Magsaysay's Jacksonian brand of populism and his charismatic personality, made him a shoo-in for reelection had he lived long enough to seek another term. After Magsaysay's tragic death in a March 1957, plane crash, various political commentators noted that Magsaysay was at the cusp of launching a nationwide grassroots-level coalition that would have challenged the stranglehold of the *Nacionalista* and Liberal parties on political power. It was widely believed that as he approached the end of his first presidential term, Magsaysay had become totally

disillusioned with “old guard” politics and the graft and corruption that the system spawned and promoted.

The death of Magsaysay thrust another vice-president, Carlos P. Garcia, a little known politician from central Visayas, into the presidency. Partly because he succeeded an immensely popular president and partly because of his own shortcomings and the greed of his relatives and friends, Garcia’s presidency turned out to be a mediocre one. Like Quirino who ascended to the presidency by the same route—the death of an incumbent president—Garcia sought and won the presidency on his own in 1957. Garcia’s victory was unconvincing however, as he only managed to poll 43 percent of the total votes cast. Indeed, Garcia could well have lost to his Liberal Party challenger, Jose A. Yulo, had it not been for the candidacy of Manuel P. Manahan, a Magsaysay look-alike and close political associate (Manahan was Magsaysay’s Customs Commissioner) and Elpidio Quirino’s younger brother Antonio, whose candidacy split the Liberal vote (especially in northern Luzon, Quirino’s political bailiwick).

The bulk of the Garcia Administration’s efforts were directed at solving the Philippines’ severe economic problems. A modest industrialization program was launched and the entry of foreign goods—especially “non-essential items” imported from the United States and Europe—was severely restricted by, among other things, the imposition of heavy tariffs and duties. Moreover, the Garcia Administration adopted a “Filipino First” policy, a throwback to the fierce nationalism of the 1930’s during the fight for Philippine independence. The resurgence of nationalism in the 1950’s no doubt inspired Garcia to play a key role in the organization of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), one of two unsuccessful efforts at a pan-Malayan union in the 1950’s and 1960’s, and a precursor of today’s Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 1961, Garcia was defeated in his bid for reelection by the incumbent vice-president, Diosdado P. Macapagal, father of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Philippines’ current president. A president and vice-president from opposing political parties can serve together at the same time, because split ticket voting in Philippine presidential elections is the norm rather than the exception, a practice sanctioned by the 1935 and 1987 Constitutions.

Like Magsaysay, Diosdado P. Macapagal of central Luzon, was a man descended from the masses and born of very poor parents. Macapagal and Magsaysay were from Pampanga and Zambales, respectively, two adjacent provinces in central Luzon, the traditional hotbed of agrarian unrest in the country. Before his election as vice-president, Macapagal served multiple terms in the House of Representatives and in the Philippine Senate. As vice-president, however, he did practically nothing (Garcia broke a long-standing political tradition by refusing to appoint Macapagal to a cabinet post), except to tour the country at taxpayer expense, building or reinforcing political networks and where necessary, mending political fences, as it were. Although Macapagal campaigned hard on a platform of restoring the people’s faith in government and eliminating graft and corruption, Macapagal’s Administration, like that of his immediate predecessor Garcia, became mired in scandal and corruption. One of Macapagal’s legacies was the enactment of the Land Reform Code of 1963, a comprehensive, albeit watered-down, loophole-filled agrarian reform program. During the signing of the new law at Manila’s Rizal Park—amidst great ceremony and fanfare—with representatives of farm groups and peasant organizations in attendance, Macapagal declared the *kasama* form of land tenure (an oppressive and exploitative share-tenancy system heavily skewed in favor of the landlord) abolished and replaced with a leasehold system. Arguably the



new law's centerpiece was a provision calling for the expropriation of large-landed estates and their purchase by the government for resale to the tenants who tilled them, either at cost or in easy installment plans. Because of various loopholes and escape clauses in the law, however, and the shortage of government funds to pay for the program, the Land Reform Code of 1963 was never fully implemented.

It was also during Macapagal's presidency that the Philippines almost became involved in a shooting war over the Malaysian State of Sabah, claimed by the Philippines as an integral part of its sovereign territory. The dispute over Sabah notwithstanding, Macapagal was the second post-war Philippine president to steer the Philippines closer to her Asian identity and assume a leadership role in the region. Macapagal's involvement in the founding of *MAPHILINDO* along with Indonesia's Ahmed Soekarno and Malaysia's Tunku Abdul Rahman, after the collapse of ASA, was an attempt to revive the concept of *Malaya Irredenta* that would have united the Malay peoples of the region. Unfortunately, however, *MAPHILINDO* was doomed by the subsequent armed confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia over the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, which joined peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak (the upper half of Indonesia's Kalimantan) and Sabah into one nation. In 1965, Macapagal lost his bid for a second term to Ferdinand E. Marcos, who had been president of the Philippine Senate and of Macapagal's own ruling Liberal Party. The Macapagal-Marcos split was triggered by Macapagal's refusal to give way to Marcos for the Liberal Party nomination. After it became apparent to Marcos that Macapagal would handily win the ruling party's nomination, and in effect killing his own presidential ambitions, Marcos bolted the Liberal Party and became the standard bearer of the opposition *Nacionalista* Party, which just happened to be casting around for a candidate who had the stature to defeat Macapagal in a head-to-head contest. Jumping from one political party to another is quite common in the Philippines' particularistic political culture; a convoluted system where party labels mean virtually nothing and expediency, not ideology, determines whether one remains with his original political party or go somewhere else.

Ferdinand E. Marcos remained in office for 21 years, from 1965 when he was elected to his first of two terms, through 1986, when he was ousted in a "people power" uprising and forced to flee to Hawaii where he lived in exile until his death in 1989. Marcos' victory over Macapagal came largely as a result of the former's strong stance vis-à-vis graft and corruption and promises to weed out corrupt government officials and rebuild the faltering economy. Before 1965, Marcos had served two terms in the House of Representatives, and later, two terms in the Philippine Senate. Marcos was on his second term in the Philippine Senate and serving as that body's president, when he bolted the ruling Liberal Party to become the opposition *Nacionalista* Party's presidential standard bearer. Marcos was larger than life—legal luminary, decorated war hero, and spellbinding orator—whose life and exploits were celebrated in cinema and books. Convicted of killing his father's main political rival, Marcos prepared for the bar exams while in prison. In spite of the unusual circumstances, however, Marcos obtained the highest average score in the bar exams with record-breaking performances in political and constitutional law. Upon admission to the bar, Marcos argued his own case before the Philippine Supreme Court and won a reversal of his earlier conviction. He served as a United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) commissioned officer in World War II and emerged from the war as its "most decorated hero." His whirlwind courtship of, and subsequent marriage to, Imelda Romualdez, a former beauty queen and niece of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, no doubt added to the burgeoning Marcos mystique in the eyes of Filipinos. In 1967, Marcos succeeded where two of his predecessors (Garcia and Macapagal) had

failed, *i.e.*, successfully co-founding the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) along with the leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the former “republic” of South Viet Nam. Today, ASEAN has doubled in size to include all 10 nations (from the original five or six, if the “republic” of South Viet Nam is included) in the region, and has become one of the most viable and effective regional inter-governmental organizations in the world.

Like all his predecessors, Marcos discovered early on that improving the state of the economy was not an easy task. By the end of Marcos’ first term, chronic problems, such as high unemployment, double-digit inflation and government corruption had deteriorated to a new low. It was at this juncture when public dissatisfaction with the Marcos Administration turned into massive street demonstrations and protest. By the time the 1969 presidential election rolled around, talk was rife about impending revolution. In so many ways, the 1969 presidential election, which Marcos easily won, resembled the infamous 1949 electoral contest between Elpidio Quirino and Jose P. Laurel, Sr., won by the former. Widespread fraud, vote buying, terrorism and other election irregularities marred the 1949 election. The candidate who lost to Marcos in the 1969 election, Sergio Osmena, Jr., filed a formal election protest with the House of Representatives and then went into self-exile in the United States before the declaration of martial law in 1972. In the ensuing 14-year period (1972–1986), Marcos and his *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL) or “New Society Movement” ruled the Philippines with an iron hand; by executive fiat, especially during the first 9 years of martial rule (1972–1981).

In 1981, Marcos “lifted” martial law and launched a hybrid “presidential-parliamentary” system called the *New Republic* that appeared to be part British, part French, and part Mexican. In January 1981, Marcos declared as “duly ratified” and in full force, the 1981 Constitution that served as the basic law for the *New Republic* during its brief existence. Among other things, the Philippines’ twin insurgencies—the Communist insurgency waged nationwide by the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) and the Muslim separatist movement in Mindanao and Sulu waged by the *Moro* National Liberation Front-*Moro Bangsa* Army (MNLFBMA)—grew dramatically during the last 9 years of Marcos’ authoritarian rule. So too did public opposition to the regime, especially in the aftermath of Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr.’s brutal assassination at the Manila International Airport on August 21, 1983, on the latter’s return to the Philippines after 3 years of self-imposed exile in the United States. The beginning of the end for Marcos’ 21-year grip on power came after a February 1986 “snap election” ironically called at Marcos’ behest, resulted in the apparent election victory of Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, Ninoy Aquino’s widow. The Marcos’ regime’s subsequent attempt to tamper with the election results ignited a “people power” uprising commonly referred to as *EDSA Uno* (*EDSA* is acronym for Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the north-south highway between Camp Aguinaldo, headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and Camp Crame, headquarters of the now-defunct Philippine Constabulary) where hundreds of thousands of anti-Marcos demonstrators gathered to call for an end to the martial-law regime.

## The Third Philippine Republic: Aquino to Arroyo

Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino took over the presidency on February 26, 1986, on the crest of *EDSA Uno*, the first “people power” uprising. Aquino left office on June 30, 1992,

6 “Mexican model” of a 6-year, 1-term only presidency, and as a result, Aquino was precluded from seeking reelection), with little to show in the way of accomplishments especially vis-à-vis the ailing economy and in solving the country’s deteriorating law and order situation. Although supporters and critics alike suggest that Aquino could have done “a lot more” to address the country’s chronic problems, she is generally credited with three major accomplishments: (1) the restoration of American-style democracy to the Philippines; (2) the reinstatement of Congress and the Judiciary as co-equal branches of the Executive branch; and, (3) the drafting and ratification, in record time, of the 1987 Constitution, regarded by legal scholars and experts as a “progressive” Constitution. On the debit side of the ledger, the Aquino presidency was marred by, among other things, five abortive *coups* led by the same group of AFP officers and men who spearheaded the successful military mutiny against the Marcos regime.

According to most observers, the 1989 abortive *coup* may well have succeeded in toppling the Aquino Government, had it not been for the timely intervention of the United States. Although the United States did not actually get involved in the fighting, it is generally believed that the scrambling of US aircraft based at Clark Air Force Base to undertake what were euphemistically called “persuasion flights,” did scare off the inferior *Tora Tora* aircraft used by the rebels to strafe and bomb government positions, including Malacanang Palace. Aquino was succeeded by her handpicked successor, Fidel V. Ramos, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and co-leader of the *coup* that toppled Marcos (the other person was Juan Ponce Enrile, Minister of National Defense at that time). As Aquino’s AFP Chief of Staff and later Secretary of National Defense, Ramos was credited for “saving” the Aquino Government and the Aquino family from the five abortive anti-regime uprisings referred to earlier. In handpicking Ramos as her successor, Aquino turned her back to House of Representatives Speaker Ramon V. Mitra, the official standard-bearer of the ruling party, *Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP). Ramos won the presidency by the slimmest of margins; a mere 21 percent plurality of the total vote, thanks to an electoral system that does not require a run-off election in the event that no candidate polls a majority of the total vote.

Compared to his immediate predecessor, Ramos did meet with modest success in improving the country’s moribund economy. According to experts, this was primarily the result of a three-pronged economic strategy that revolved around: (1) the privatization of government-owned corporations and divestment of stocks in corporations (*e.g.*, in the communications, transportation, steel and petroleum industry) where the government had controlling interest; (2) the easing of currency restrictions on the repatriation of profits by multinational corporations to their respective home bases specifically, and the creation of a more favorable economic climate for individual and corporate foreign investments, generally; and, (3) the passage of enabling “build, operate and transfer” legislation that opened the door for foreign corporations to participate in the Philippine infrastructure program, with little or no financial risk to the Philippine Government. During Ramos’ tenure as president, aggregate and *per capita* GDP figures improved dramatically; so too did annual economic growth rates—in real terms—and the volume of foreign investments that flowed into the Philippines. In another front, Ramos successfully negotiated an end to the MNLFBMA insurgency with the assistance of the government of Indonesia and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), although an MNLFB splinter group, the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) continued to battle the government long after Ramos left office and remains committed to its principal goal of an independent Islamic republic.

Joseph Ejercito Estrada (also known as “Erap”), former vice-president, city mayor, senator, movie star, and matinee idol, succeeded to the presidency after winning the 1998 presidential election over Ramos’ “anointed” successor, Speaker Jose de Venecia of the House of Representatives. Estrada’s lopsided victory over de Venecia—by far the largest margin of victory in Philippine election history on a *per capita* basis—was made possible by a massive outpouring of support from the *masa* (the masses), the millions of poor and destitute Filipinos who comprise the overwhelming majority of the population. Estrada’s campaign slogan, *Si Erap Para Sa Mahirap* (Erap is for the Poor) and his political party, *Laban ng Masang Pilipino* (LAMP), a blend of Edgardo Angara’s *Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (Angara was Estrada’s vice-presidential candidate) and Estrada’s original *Lapian ng Masang Pilipino* (LMP), resonated with the masses in a big way. Unfortunately for Estrada’s *masa* supporters, however, the latter was unceremoniously forced out of office on January 20, 2001, barely 32 months into his 6-year term, and replaced by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, in the aftermath of *EDSA Dos*, an uncanny reprise of the “people power” uprising that toppled Marcos 15 years earlier. Interestingly enough, *EDSA Dos* was led and orchestrated by the same cast of characters behind *EDSA Uno*, e.g., the Archbishop of Manila, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, two former presidents and the civilian and military leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, with two additional notable characteristics: (1) the active involvement of the print and broadcast media in creating the climate that eventually led to Estrada’s “voluntary” resignation; and, (2) the key role played by the Philippine Supreme Court in providing the legal authority and basis for Macapagal-Arroyo’s assumption of the presidency.

Less than 5 months after taking office, Macapagal-Arroyo presided over a national election that pitted her administration’s People Power Coalition (PPC), an amorphous combination of mainstream and fringe political parties (*Aksyon, Lakas, Reporma, Liberal, Promdi*, etc.) against the opposition’s *Puwersa ng Masa* (PM), an equally loose political grouping whose senatorial slate included three pro-Estrada reelectionists (two of whom, Ponce Enrile and Defensor-Santiago lost), the deposed president’s wife, Luisa “Loi” Ejercito, a medical doctor by profession, and Estrada’s controversial chief law enforcement officer, Panfilo Lacson. Both Macapagal-Arroyo and Estrada stumped for their respective candidates, although in the case of Estrada, this ended on April 25, 2001, when Estrada was arrested and taken into custody to await trial before the *Sandiganbayan*, a constitutional anti-graft court, for alleged “plunder,” a capital non-bailable offense. Although Macapagal-Arroyo and the People Power Coalition worked hard and expended a lot of resources to register a “13-0 sweep” of the senatorial contest, only eight PPC candidates won. Parenthetically, *Puwersa ng Masa* succeeded in electing four senators—five, if an independent candidate “adopted” by PM as one of its own is added to the list—including Estrada’s wife, who had never before run for elective public office. Estrada and his supporters were understandably buoyed by Loi Estrada’s clear-cut election victory and viewed it as a “vindication” for the Estrada Administration.

Because of the post-election defection to the ruling PPC of three former *Laban ng Masang Pilipino* (LAMP) senators—the first two are a former movie actor and his son-in-law, a retired professional basketball player while the third defector was one of Estrada’s fiercest defenders during the latter’s impeachment trial—the 2001 Philippine Senate is virtually split down the middle, with the PPC enjoying a four-person edge over the opposition. Because of the Philippines’ particularistic political culture and the relative ease in which political officeholders in Congress and elsewhere jump from one political party

to another, however, it would not at all be inconceivable if the current Senate balance of power changes in the near future, especially as potential presidential candidates who are members of the body gear up for the 2004 presidential election. Indeed, since taking office in June 2001, the Senate has devoted most of its time conducting open-ended hearings on a litany of criminal allegations against three or four senators (two with the majority and two with the opposition), all of whom are reportedly considering a run for the presidency in 2004. Meanwhile, the long-awaited trial of Estrada and his son has begun, under serio-comic circumstances—the former chief executive appeared at the *Sandiganbayan* under heavy police escort in his slippers and with none of his nine lawyers in attendance—even as the Philippine Supreme Court grappled with the legality of the “plunder” law, a statute of dubious constitutionality that Estrada helped enact, when he was one of only two oppositionists in the Philippine Senate between 1986 and 1992.

Ironies and contradictions like these make Philippine politics interesting to watch, yet deeply disturbing at the same time. Estrada’s fall from grace has all the tawdry elements of a typical Filipino action movie—a virtuous hero, a heartless villain, betrayal, revenge and then, Estrada and supporters could only hope, eventual vindication. Whether it is art imitating life or life imitating art, the “villain” who turned Estrada in was, “like in the movies,” one of his “close” friends and drinking “buddies;” an unabashed self-confessed “plunderer” who took his “cut” for every peso of bribe money that he allegedly funneled into Estrada’s ersatz foundations and phantom bank accounts. Yet while the fallen Estrada languishes in “jail” (actually an air-conditioned suite at the country’s premiere government medical facility) and stripped of the office he had dreamed of occupying all his life, his chief accuser is scot-free and enjoying his newly found celebrity status as one of the hottest commodities in the country’s after-dinner lecture circuit; a highly sought after guest at political fundraisers and shindigs. Equally disturbing and ironic was the recent arrest by U.S. Federal law enforcement agents of a former head of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG)—established in 1986 shortly after Aquino took office, and tasked with the recovery of Marcos’ alleged “hidden” wealth—for allegedly selling fake gold bullion certificates to Treasury and FBI agents engaged in a sting operation.

### **Discussion Questions on “History and Its Legacies”**

- What are Spain’s principal legacies to its former colony?
- Would the Filipinos have remained loyal to the Spaniards had the latter been “getter” colonizers, taught the Filipinos Spanish language and culture and provided them access to free universal education?
- How much of the American decision to provoke a war with Spain and the eventual acquisition of the Philippines was influenced by the evangelicals of the day whose unabashed commitment to “manifest destiny” and the “white man’s burden” was matched only by Alfred Thayer Mahan’s absolute belief in the maxim of “...whoever controls the oceans and vital sea lanes, controls the world...”
- Why did the American goal of making the Philippines an *entrepot* in the Far East not materialize nor pan out?

- How did the Japanese, after a spectacular start and a wonderful slogan, *i.e.*, “Aisa for the Asiatic.” Which resonated with a large number of the Filipino elite initially, lose support so quickly and conversely, why did the Filipinos return to the bosom of the Americans?
- What were the positive legacies, if any, of Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Garcia, Macapagal, Marcos, Aquino, Ramos and Estrada?
- Is graft and corruption endemic in Philippine society; a “way of life” and a mindset that is beyond cure; does it make a difference at all who is at the helm?

## Part III

### The Philippines Today

#### The Governmental System

The Philippines is currently governed by the 1987 Constitution ratified by the people on February 2, 1987, in a nationwide plebiscite. Except for a few permutations, *e.g.*, term-limits for all elective officials, a single 6-year term for the president, the party-list method of choosing a specified number of House members, etc., the 1987 Constitution closely resembles the 1935 Constitution, which governed the republic from 1946 until the proclamation of martial law in 1972. Technically speaking, the Philippines is a unitary-presidential system, headed by a popularly elected chief executive who is also the chief of state. Like the American form of government after which it was patterned, the Philippine Government consists of three co-equal branches—the legislature, presidency and judiciary—each of which is supreme within its own sphere but with the ability to check and balance the other. Under the 1987 Constitution, the president and vice-president are elected on separate tickets by a plurality of the popular vote to 6-year terms, and are barred from seeking reelection. The bicameral legislature, on the other hand, consists of a 221-member (an additional 50 sectoral members may be appointed by the president) House of Representatives (*Kapulungan ng mga Kinatawan*) and a 24-member upper chamber called the Senate (*Senado*).

Because of term limits, members of the House of Representatives may only serve for a maximum of 9 years or three 3-year terms, and represent discrete congressional districts constituted on the basis of geographical balance and population. Members of the Senate, on the other hand, are elected nationally for no more than two consecutive 6-year terms, for a maximum of 12 years. The House of Representatives turns over every 3 years while the Philippine Senate, like its American counterpart, is a continuing body and senatorial terms are staggered in such a way that only one-half of the body is elected every 3 years. The judiciary is dual and hierarchical with the regional trial courts at the bottom of the national judicial pyramid, the Court of Appeal in the middle and the 15-member Supreme Court at its apex. Complementing the national constitutional courts are provincial and local courts of limited and

specialized jurisdiction located in various municipalities, towns, and cities throughout the country. National constitutional court judges are appointed by the president on the recommendation of the Judicial and Bar Council and serve until the mandatory retirement age of 70 years. In addition, a special anti-graft court called the *Sandiganbayan* was established by the 1987 Constitution and has jurisdiction over cases involving misfeasance or malfeasance in office by elective and appointive public officials. Prosecutorial responsibility for cases before the *Sandiganbayan* belongs to the Office of the Ombudsman, a constitutional entity independent of the legislative and executive branches of government.

A cabinet whose members are appointed by the president subject to the advice and consent of the Commission on Appointments (CA), a legislative bicameral and bipartisan body, compose the rest of the executive branch. Also needing CA confirmation before their appointments become final, are other “high government officials,” including foreign service officers with the rank of ambassador and above, various commissioners (such as the Customs Commissioner and commissioners in the Commission on Elections, the constitutional body that oversees and conducts the country’s triennial elections), bureau chiefs and flag-level officers in both the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP). Law enforcement is the responsibility of the Philippine National Police, the organization that replaced the now-defunct Philippine Constabulary and the National Bureau of Investigation, the chief investigative arm of the Department of Justice. The day-to-day operations of government at the local and provincial levels are in the hands of elected governors, provincial boards, mayors, city councils, etc., in the country’s 73 provinces, 61 chartered cities and some 4,000 or so municipalities. Finally, the lowest grassroots-level administrative unit in the Philippine governmental system is the *barangay* (formerly called “barrio”), headed by an elected *barangay* captain, accountable to both the inhabitants of the *barangay*, as well as to municipal, provincial, and national officials.

## Key Actors in Philippine Politics

There are basic categories of actors in Philippine politics, *e.g.*: (1) those who favor and support the government; (2) those who are opposed to or strongly critical of it; and, (3) those who maintain a neutral position. Among the actors under the first category are the: (1) traditional political-economic elite; (2) Roman Catholic Church (RCC); and, (3) the Armed Forces of the Philippines; while the second category includes, although is not necessarily limited to, the: (1) Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army; (2) Moro Islamic Liberation Front; (3) moderate political opposition; and, (4) so-called radical left-wing organizations. As in the United States, the political or ideological orientation of each key actor is not etched in steel and may shift from time to time, depending on the circumstances of the times. For example, while the Catholic Church was a staunch supporter of the Aquino regime from beginning to end (1986–1992), it was lukewarm to the Ramos Administration (1992–1998), perhaps because of the fact that Ramos—a Methodist—was not Catholic and the latter’s support of artificial contraception as a method of family planning and population control, policies vehemently opposed by the RCC. When Juan Flavio Velasco, former Secretary of Health and point-person in the Ramos Administration’s family planning program, ran for the Senate in 1995, the Catholic Church expended a lot of time, money and resources, to ensure Flavio’s defeat. Fortunately, for family planning, however, Flavio not only won in 1995, he was overwhelmingly reelected to a second 6-year term earlier this year. In like manner, certain organizations and individuals with ties to the country’s left-wing, who supported Estrada’s presidential candidacy in

1998, perhaps because of Estrada's "nationalist credentials" and 1991 "no" vote on the proposed extension of the U.S.-RP Basing Agreement, turned against Estrada in January 2001 and joined the *EDSA Dos* "people uprising," which resulted in Estrada's forced resignation from office. In the 1998 presidential election, Sin issued pastoral letters to the "flock" urging Filipino Roman Catholics to repudiate Estrada as "morally unfit" for the presidency. After Estrada's inauguration, however, Sin moderated his criticism of the Estrada Administration, became a frequent palace visitor and shortly thereafter, was awarded a commemorative medal by none other than Estrada himself.

## The Traditional Political-Economic Elite

The traditional political-economic elite includes remnants of the old-landed gentry, such as the Cojuangcos of Tarlac and the Yulos of Laguna whose flagship properties, the *Hacienda Luisita* and Canlubang Sugar Estate, respectively, have so far managed to avoid being subjected to land reform laws such as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) enacted during the Aquino Administration. Also part of the traditional political-economic elite are the entrepreneurial-business class exemplified by influential *taipan* families like the Tans, Gokongweis, Gatchialians, Roxas-Chuas, Sys, Tans, Yaps, etc., and Spanish *insulare* families like the Aboitizes, Aranetas, Elizaldes, Sorianos and Zobel de Ayalas. These wealthy families, either singly or in concert with others, bankrolled individual candidates for office or entire slates of candidates as an "investment in the future of the country." Most were content to remain in the background, although some family members did hold political office on various occasions, *e.g.*, Fernando Lopez (vice-president to both Quirino and Marcos); Gaudencio Antonino, Aurelio Montinola, Gil Puyat, etc. (all former senators); and Jose Cojuangco, Jr., Albertito Lopez, Manuel Villar, etc. (all former members of the House of Representatives). As a group, the traditional political-economic elite influenced the formulation and implementation of public policy and protected their interests through surrogates in the legislative and executive branches of government, an arrangement that worked well for decades, especially in the context of the country's vaunted *utang na loob* value system. A more recent addition to the traditional political-economic elite is the Makati Business Club (MBC), which played a key role in the overthrow of the Marcos regime in 1986, and the ouster of Estrada in 2001. The leadership and rank and file of the MBC are dominated by relatively young MBAs from high-profile American business schools like Chicago, Harvard, Stanford, or Wharton.

## The Armed Forces of the Philippines

Because of its monopoly of the organized forces of violence, well-delineated chain of command and an increasingly politicized officer corps, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is one of the most powerful political actors in the country. Should it choose to do so, the AFP could either grab power for itself or remain in the background and play the role of a power-broker either by withdrawing support of an incumbent regime (as it did in 1986 in the case of Marcos and in 2001, with respect to Estrada) or conversely, endorsing an individual or group poised to take over the reins of government. The fact that the AFP, both at *EDSA Uno* in 1986 and at *EDSA Dos*, in 2001, seemed content to play second fiddle to Corazon Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, respectively, is to a large extent, attributable to the socialization of Filipinos and the AFP officer corps and rank and file into the principle of civilian



supremacy over the military. It is noteworthy, for example, that during *EDSA Dos*, the AFP leadership reportedly rejected a proposal to constitute itself into a military *junta* and serve as a caretaker government while the modalities of a peaceful transference of power from Estrada to Arroyo were sorted out. Had the top AFP leadership echelon succumbed to the temptation of grabbing power for itself, the country may very well have been plunged into chaos or even worse, a costly and destructive civil war. Yet, there is no question about the fact that Estrada's hand was forced into peacefully giving up the presidency, by the timely defection of the Secretary of National Defense, the AFP Chief of Staff and various service chiefs. Until that particular moment, the political situation was so fluid and volatile that anything could have happened.

## The Roman Catholic Church

Some 75 million Filipinos, out of an estimated population of 83 million, identify themselves as Roman Catholic and proudly point to the fact that the Philippines' is the only predominantly Christian country in Asia. James B. Reuter, S.J., of the Ateneo de Manila University, a naturalized Filipino and a long-time Philippine resident, perhaps put it best when he declared, rather breathlessly, "... because God has touched this nation," when asked to explain the success of the bloodless *coup d'etat* that toppled the Marcos martial law regime in 1986. As pointed out earlier, however, only about 50 percent of this total number may be considered devout, practicing Roman Catholics who regularly attend Sunday Mass and observe holydays of obligation; the rest are Roman Catholic in name only, roughly analogous to the *Muslim istatistik* category in neighboring Indonesia. Nevertheless, there is no question that the RCC is one of the most dominant and powerful social and political actors in the country. It is generally assumed, for example, that the "people power" uprisings, *EDSA Uno* (1986) and *EDSA Dos* (2001), materialized, because the RCC, led by Jaime Cardinal Sin and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), successfully mobilized and organized the Catholic faithful to march to the "*EDSA Shrine*" and join ongoing or anticipated anti-regime demonstrations. With thousands of clerical workers, parish churches and other religious-oriented institutions (schools, orphanages, hospitals, etc.) and countless lay leaders spread throughout the country, the RCC has a readymade infrastructure for mass action either in support of, or in opposition to, any government.

There are three identifiable blocs within the RCC, namely: the conservative, moderate and progressive blocs. Nominally headed by Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, archbishop of Cebu, and one of two Filipino Cardinals, the conservative bloc believes that members of the Catholic clergy should confine their activities to purely spiritual matters—ministering to the needs of their flock—and if at all possible, to stay away from secular political issues and questions. On the other hand, the moderate bloc of the RCC, with whom an overwhelming majority of the current CBCP membership is identified (some estimates put the number at 80 percent) is led by Jaime Cardinal Sin, archbishop of Manila and the other Filipino in the RCC's College of Cardinals. Unlike the highly reclusive Vidal, Sin is a high-profile religious leader who has not shied away from involvement in controversial issues and events. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Sin had no qualms whatsoever in openly endorsing—through homilies from the pulpit and pastoral letters to the faithful—specific candidates for the presidency (*e.g.*, Corazon Aquino, Ramon Mitra, Jr., and Jose de Venecia in the 1986, 1992, and 1998 elections, respectively) or in condemning others as "morally unfit for the presidency," *e.g.*, Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, Fidel Ramos in 1992, and Joseph Estrada in 1998.

By his own admission, Cardinal Sin was also a central figure in both *EDSA Uno* and *EDSA Dos* and in countless public interviews since, seems to relish his self-appointed role as kingmaker and regime-killer, rolled into one. Citing past papal encyclicals such as Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* and Paul VI's *Poppulorum Progressio*, among others, the progressive bloc contends that the Catholic clergy has a moral obligation to minister to the temporal needs of its flock or when called upon, to speak out against injustice and egregious abuses of power by government authorities and the exploitation of the poor by the country's privileged classes. During the martial law period, the progressive bloc of the RCC functioning through the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) refused to temporize or enter into any kind of accommodations with the Marcos regime. Activist priests, many of whom were advocates of *liberation theology*, assisted displaced peasants organize against the government or helped set up Basic Christian Communities (BCCs), called *kristianong katilingban* in Hiligaynon-speaking areas of the country, as vehicles for social protest at the grassroots-level.

The moderate bloc of the RCC, under the leadership of Sin, pursued a policy of *critical collaboration* vis-à-vis the Marcos regime during “martial law proper” (1972–1981). In accordance with said policy, the moderate bloc of the RCC supported “correct” government programs, such as land reform, but condemned “morally reprehensible acts,” such as the torture of suspected political dissidents and the denial of basic human rights. Apparently, the *quid pro quo* for the RCC's critical collaboration policy were: (1) the shelving of legislative proposals that would have stripped religious organizations of their tax-exempt status; (2) the scuttling of bills that sought to institute absolute divorce (cf., limited or “bed and board” divorce) in the Philippines; and, (3) the discontinuation or deceleration of government-sponsored, birth-control and family planning programs. The RCC hierarchy praised the “lifting” of martial law on January 17, 1981, with no less than Sin himself urging the country's Roman Catholics to give Marcos the “benefit of the doubt” on the latter's assurance to return the country to political normalcy. Although the accommodation between the RCC and the Marcos regime was subsequently marred by the controversy over who should serve as official host—the government or the RCC—to Pope John Paul II's 1981 state visit to the Philippines, church-state relations up until January 1983, were relatively harmonious. In late January 1983, the CBCP withdrew from the Church-Military Liaison Committee, created in 1973 for the purpose of investigating alleged military abuses. A month later, on February 15, 1983, the CBCP released a pastoral letter, read in thousands of parishes throughout the country, denouncing the Marcos regime for repression, graft and economic mismanagement.

The CBCP decision followed a spate of military raids on church facilities, especially in Samar and Negros Occidental (where the BCCs or *kristianong katilingban* were most active), and the large-scale arrest of clerical workers and lay leaders suspected of involvement in “subversive” activities. In an unrelated event, Sin became embroiled in a public debate with government spokesmen and Imelda Marcos over questions of morality and art. In retrospect, two separate events served as the catalyst that moved the RCC away from its policy of critical collaboration to one of open opposition to the Marcos regime, e.g.,: (1) the brutal assassination of Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr., on August 21, 1983, as the latter returned home from self-exile in the United States, and the prolonged public outrage and anger that it provoked; and, (2) the Marcos regime's attempts to tamper with the results of the February 1986 snap election, that Corazon Aquino, Ninoy's widow, apparently won. The rest, as the saying goes, is history. Three years

later, in late February 1986, the RCC and Sin mobilized the Roman Catholic faithful to proceed to Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) between Camp Aguinaldo (the general headquarters of the AFP) and Camp Crame (the general headquarters of the now-defunct Philippine Constabulary) to “defend” a small group of soldiers, affiliated with the Reform Armed Forces Movement (RAM), who had earlier joined Juan Ponce Enrile and Fidel V. Ramos, in a mutiny against Marcos. Heeding Sin’s entreaties and exhortations broadcast over the facilities of Radio *Veritas*, hundreds of thousands of Roman Catholic faithful—of all ages, occupations, callings and social backgrounds—did proceed to *EDSA* and at the end of the day, accomplished what many thought was impossible: overthrow a repressive regime and send it into exile without a single shot being fired in anger.

## The Technocratic Elite

One of the distinguishing features of the Philippines in relation to other developing nations in Asia and elsewhere is the presence of a large number of well-educated and highly skilled technocrats in positions of responsibility and power. This is an obvious upshot of the fact that the Philippines, with the possible exception of Singapore, has one of the largest pools of college-educated men and women in the region. It is interesting to note, for example, that even in the House of Representatives and Senate, there are a growing number of articulate and well-educated members (one House group identified with the opposition is referred to by the media as the “Bright Boys,” because its members are Ivy League graduates). This is in sharp contrast to the days when cabinet positions and directorships of government bureaus were held for the most part by old-school politicians, political lame ducks and the protégés of old-school politicians. The few technocrats who had an opportunity to work for the government generally declined to do so, because of the conventional wisdom that the old-school politicians and political kingmakers made it very difficult for the technocrats to do their jobs. During the martial law period, Marcos enjoyed great success in inducing technocrats to opt for government service instead of the private sector, so did Ramos and to a lesser extent, Estrada and Macapagal-Arroyo. It remains to be seen whether greater involvement by technocrats in policy formulation and implementation (especially with respect to the economy) will yield better results overall.

A perennial criticism of technocrats as a group—by nationalists and the public as a whole—is that they are too “elitist” in outlook, contemptuous of the “common man” and “out of touch with the real world.” In fact, this sentiment was expressed by Estrada and his followers after the latter’s ouster from the presidency; from its inception to its denouement, *EDSA Dos* was an “elitist plot” bankrolled by the entrepreneurial-business elite, e.g., the Makati Business Club, and promoted by the “elitist media” to oust a populist leader and deny his legions of impoverished and non-elite supporters their place in the sun. To prove their contention, Estrada’s supporters noted that pro-Estrada rallies attended mainly by poor Filipinos were not covered by the major print and broadcast media or if covered at all, invariably denigrated as “staged” and “paid” demonstrations. Conversely, “people-power” or anti-Estrada demonstrations, which featured political, business and entertainment celebrities and the elite, were thoroughly covered and reported. The technocratic elite is also faulted by various nationalist groups as being “too westernized” and pro-American; witting or unwitting agents of U.S. multinational corporations and the International Monetary Fund-World Bank (IMF-WB). Indeed, according to the nationalists, the various models and paradigms that have guided Philippine economic and developmental policy for nearly

two decades, have been American in origin and for the most part, heavily influenced by the IMF-WB. The nationalists and their supporters reject the technocratic notion that the key to economic growth and prosperity is industrialization—financed by foreign capital and long-term loans from the IMF-WB and other western financial lending institutions—suggesting that while such an economic strategy may, arguably, yield short-term benefits such as jobs and increased purchasing power, its long-term implications are detrimental to the country as a whole.

## **Communist Party of the Philippines—New People’s Army**

The Communist Party of the Philippines (cf., the *Partidong Komunista ng Pilipinas* or *PKP* of the 1950’s) was formally founded in 1969–1970 in Tarlac, in the central Luzon region. At the height of its power in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the New People’s Army (NPA), the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), was believed to have had an estimated armed strength of from 25,000–26,000 armed partisans and a mass-base in excess of 2,000,000 throughout the Philippines’ 73 odd provinces. Unlike the *PKP-Huks* 2 decades earlier, the CPP-NPA conducted military operations nationwide, and its cadres were more highly ideological and better schooled on the issues and forces underlying the revolution. After the ouster of the Marcos regime in 1986, the collapse of the former Soviet Union—although not a supporter of the CPP, a Beijing-oriented communist party, the USSR-supported wars of national liberation worldwide and was indirectly helpful in fundraising especially in Europe—and the unraveling of the world Communist movement in 1990–1991, the CPP like various Communist parties in other parts of the world, experienced a steady decline in its ability to recruit fresh NPA cadres to wage war against the Philippine Government. The latter state of affairs was further exacerbated by a general amnesty program offered to “all rebels of the left and right” by the Ramos Administration in the mid-1990’s, of which thousands of NPA guerrillas and right-wing rebels (mostly former AFP officers and men who participated in the five abortive *coups* against the Aquino regime) took advantage. The net effect of the Ramos Administration’s amnesty program on ongoing insurgent movements like the CPP-NPA and the MILF was to hurt their recruitment efforts and further decimate their ranks.

Today, the strength of the CPP-NPA is believed to have been reduced to a mere 4,000–6,000 armed cadres. Even worse, the CPP-NPA has split up into two main factions, reportedly over the issue of strategy—one faction wants to shift the emphasis of the “struggle” to urban guerrilla warfare while the other faction continues to adhere to the Maoist concept of protracted guerrilla warfare waged from the countryside, designed to eventually encircle the cities—further diminishing the effectivity and solidarity of the Philippine Communist movement. The putative founder of the CPP-NPA and chief advocate of the strategy of protracted guerrilla warfare has been living in exile at Utrecht in the Netherlands—along with leaders of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the left-wing umbrella organization that has been involved in on again, off again, negotiations with the Philippine Government since the late 1980’s—after the failure of an attempt at a negotiated settlement of the Communist insurgency initiated by Corazon Aquino in November 1986. At the present time, previously scheduled peace talks between the Philippine Government and the NDF in Oslo, Norway, have been suspended by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime after a series of unexpected NPA attacks and ambushes on AFP troops and the broad-daylight assassination of the former governor of Cagayan and member of the House of Representatives this last summer. A CPP-

NPA comeback could not be entirely ruled out, however, especially if economic and social conditions and rampant lawlessness in the Philippines continues to worsen in the months ahead.

## The Moderate Political Opposition

The moderate political opposition is a loose and shifting coalition of various groups, some temporary and others more or less permanent, bound together by common opposition to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her People Power Coalition (PPC). The main opposition political party around which the anti-Arroyo *Pwersa ng Masa* coalition revolves is the *Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP), headed by Edgardo Angara, former president of the University of the Philippines, Estrada's vice-presidential running-mate in 1998 and executive secretary during the waning months of the Estrada presidency. In addition to the LDP, the other political parties that were, in one way or the other, affiliated with the *Pwersa ng Masa* coalition are: (1) Joseph Estrada's *Partido ng Masang Pilipino* (PMP); (2) Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC); and, (3) and the Marcoses' *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL). *Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (Fight for Philippine Democracy) was organized in early 1978 to serve as a platform for various individuals who wanted to run for seats in the unicameral *Batasang Pambansa* (National Assembly) against President Marcos' handpicked slate of candidates. The LDP ticket was headed by Benigno Aquino, Jr. (Corazon Aquino's martyred spouse), who waged a valiant but futile campaign from his jail cell. All of *Laban's* 24 candidates in the Metro Manila area, some of whom were top vote-getters in previous elections, lost to Marcos' KBL.

As a political party, the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) was organized in 1992 to launch Eduardo Cojuangco's bid for the presidency. A former Tarlac governor, member of the House of Representatives and wealthy entrepreneur, Cojuangco was a protégé and business "crony" of Marcos. In spite of his close identification with the Marcos regime and allegations of "unexplained wealth," however, Cojuangco placed a close third to Ramos, the eventual winner, and runner-up Miriam Defensor-Santiago. To put things in proper perspective, the combined votes of Cojuangco and Imelda Marcos—the other presidential candidate closely linked to the fallen dictator for obvious reasons—exceeded the number of votes garnered by eventual winner Ramos. Joseph Ejercito Estrada, Cojuangco's vice-presidential candidate in the 1992 presidential election, was elected overwhelmingly and obtained more votes than all the other vice-presidential candidates combined. Five years later, Estrada left the NPC to found his own party, the *Partido ng Masang Pilipino*, later renamed *Laban ng Masang Pilipino* (LAMP) that became the *de facto* ruling party on June 30, 1998, after Estrada was sworn into office as the Philippines' ninth post-war chief executive. As is customary in Philippine political circles, a large number of *Lakas* (the ruling party at that time) congressional, provincial, and municipal officials defected *en masse* to LAMP and remained affiliated with the latter political party until the House of Representatives voted articles of impeachment against Estrada on November 13, 2000, when the same politicians rejoined *Lakas* and signed on to become part of Macapagal-Arroyo's People Power Coalition. The third political party that supported the *Pwersa ng Masa* coalition in 2001 was the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (KBL) or New Society Movement, founded in the mid-1970s by Ferdinand Marcos and nurtured after the dictator's death in 1989 by Marcos' widow Imelda (elected to a seat in the House of Representatives in 1995), two of the Marcos children, Ferdinand, Jr. and Maria Imelda (better known as "Bong Bong" and "Imee," incumbent governor of Ilocos Norte and member of the House of Representatives, respectively), and a fairly significant number

of diehard followers concentrated primarily in northern Luzon and eastern Visayas.

## The Economy

The Philippine economy—a mixture of agriculture, light industry, and supporting services—is in a period of decline. Partly as a ripple effect of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and partly because of nagging internal political and social problems, the annual growth rate of the Philippine economy plummeted to a virtual zero in 1998 (from a healthy 5.0 percent the year before) as Ramos, credited by many for dramatic improvements in the economy during a 6-year period, prepared to leave office. Like other nations in the region, with the exception of Singapore, the Philippines has been beset by chronic economic problems, such as skyrocketing unemployment, high inflation, low *per capita* income, budgetary deficits, and since 1972, heavy foreign borrowings. These economic woes have been exacerbated over the years by government corruption in high places and in somewhat of a paradox, the so called “revolution of rising expectations” especially on the part of young college graduates cranked out annually by the country’s diploma mills in the tens of thousands, who are unable to find jobs. The latter is the principal reason why Filipino degree-holders, many of them with little or no marketable skills, leave the Philippines for menial jobs overseas—in North America, Western Europe, Southeast and East Asia, and the Middle East. Demeaning as the latter state of affairs might be to the Filipino elite and emerging middle class, the phenomenon of over a million overseas Filipino workers has been quite beneficial to the economy and the nation as a whole. Not only have Filipino overseas workers remitted badly needed foreign exchange to their families and relatives in the Philippines over the years; the government-supported program has also functioned as a safety valve and has served to defuse potential social and political unrest at home.

With an estimated *per capita* income of US\$3,800 in 2000, (cf., Singapore’s US\$26,500 on the high end, and Cambodia’s US\$1,300, on the low end), the Philippines is in the lower third of the *per capita* income spectrum. Although some of the Philippines’ economic problems were arguably triggered by exogenous factors (*e.g.*, skyrocketing crude oil prices in the late 1990s and most of 2000, a chronically depressed commodities market and the 1997 Asian economic crisis), some commentators contend that the economic downturn is the result of flawed government policies and the climate of political uncertainty that pervades the country in the aftermath of the Estrada Government’s ouster at the beginning of the year. Some of the reasons for the sharp decline in the economy’s annual growth rate (from an impressive 5.0 percent in 1997 to 3.0 and 3.6 percent in 1999 and 2000, respectively) are: (1) reliance on foreign borrowings to finance the government’s infrastructure programs; (2) the pursuit of a policy of import substitution for a prolonged period; and (3) the naïve assumption that an industrial base could be built on the shoulders of a small group of foreign investors, who were expected to plow back their earnings into the economy in the form of expanded plant capacity, hiring more workers, etc., instead of repatriating these to their home bases. As it turned out, many foreign investors were scared off by the widening Asian financial crisis and the ensuing devaluation of the local currency, that they have decided to withdraw from the Philippines (capital flight), at least for now.

The problem of high unemployment, estimated at 10 percent in 2000—a rather misleading piece of statistic since the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) does not make a distinction between the “partly employed” and “grossly underemployed,” on the one hand, and those who are “fully employed,”

on the other—is bound to worsen in the years ahead if the country’s population growth rate (2.03 percent in 2000) remains at current levels. Even the recent downturn in crude oil prices will not necessarily benefit the Philippines’ immediately, because of the large number of overseas workers who could lose their jobs should the Middle-Eastern OPEC nations run into cash-flow problems. A similar fate may await Filipino construction firms and workers who are involved in ongoing projects in nations like Saudi Arabia, not only because of depressed oil prices but the cloud of political uncertainty that hovers over the region. Needless to say, the forced repatriation of a significant number of Filipino overseas workers is bound to complicate even further the unemployment picture at home. More than anything, however, the most difficult task that the current government faces is how to narrow the ever widening gap between rich and poor. According to the government’s own Commission on Population and the National Statistical Coordination Board, 40 percent of the population or some 30.6 million Filipinos live below the “poverty line,” pegged at P12, 000 (US\$240 at prevailing exchange rates). While the minimum daily wage of a factory worker in Metro Manila is P255 and the “monthly living wage” is P8, 036.60—the highest in the country—this is far below P191, 878.40, the amount that a family of six must earn every year to “live decently” in Metro Manila.

## Philippine Foreign Policy

Philippine foreign policy has revolved around three basic guideposts since the birth of the Second Philippine Republic in 1946, *e.g.*: (1) active support of, and involvement in, the United Nations (UN) and its various organs and specialized agencies; (2) continuing friendship and partnership with the United States; and, (3) close friendship and cooperation with other Asian countries. As a charter member of the United Nations, the Philippines has been a principal player in the world body, especially in the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1945. The late Carlos P. Romulo, one of the world’s best known diplomats of his time, served as president of the General Assembly in 1950, and for many years as the Philippines’ Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Another Filipino diplomat who served multiple terms as Philippine Permanent Representative to the world body was the late Salvador P. Lopez, who played a key role in the drafting of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. A third Filipino diplomat, the late Rafael M. Salas, served as director-general of UNFPA until his untimely death in the mid-1980’s. During the Korean conflict, the Philippines was a full participant of the United Nations Expeditionary Force (UNEF) authorized by the 1950 Uniting for Peace Resolution and has been a participant in other UN peace-keeping efforts, including UNTAET (United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor) tasked with overseeing East Timor’s transition to independence. The Philippines has also been an active player in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), hosting UNCTAD V in 1979.

The second guidepost—continuing friendship and partnership with the United States of America—is the result of a long love-hate relationship that dates back to the turn of the 19th century, when the United States decided to acquire the Philippines from Spain after the Spanish-American War. Filipino and American soldiers fought side by side during World War II and in the campaign to liberate the Philippines from Japan in 1944–1945. Although Filipino-American relations have had some difficult moments, *e.g.*, when the Philippine Senate voted to terminate the RP-U.S. Military Bases Agreement in 1991, the special friendship between the two countries has endured and remains as strong as ever. Apparently, as pointed

out earlier, even the termination of the RP-U.S. Military Bases Agreement in 1991, and the “falling out” that ensued, has not diminished the strength of the U.S.-Philippines bilateral relationship. Indeed, two of the senators who voted against the extension of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) in 1991, became ardent advocates of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) 8 years later. In fact, no sooner had the VFA been ratified by the Philippine Senate when Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado, during a trip to the United States, started talking about the need to “revisit” the RP-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty to determine if some language could be added to the treaty that obligates the United States to come to the Philippines’ assistance if she were to get involved in a military tussle over the Spratly Islands.

The third guidepost has assumed even greater significance as a driver of the country’s foreign policy since the founding of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, although the Bali Treaty, ASEAN’s founding document, was not signed until 1976. Since 1976, ASEAN has evolved into a viable and effective vehicle for political and economic cooperation in the region. In addition to affording Filipinos an opportunity to showcase their leadership skills vis-à-vis other countries in the region, ASEAN has provided a symbolic rite of passage, as it were, for the Philippines; from being a “tail to the American kite”—as Jawaharlal Nehru derisively referred to the Philippines at the Bandung Conference in 1955—to that of a full-fledged Asian country with roots in Asia and a distinctly Asian identity. Philippine foreign policy was fundamentally reoriented in the mid-1970s to take advantage of the triple *détente* and *rapprochement* that was going on between and among the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China. In addition to the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations with the two socialist bloc giants, the Philippines also expanded its diplomatic presence in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. So far, the country’s new foreign policy outlook appears to have boosted Philippine credibility abroad, especially in the eyes of developing countries, which viewed the change as much as an effort to expand the country’s international horizons as it was to lessen Philippine dependence on the United States.

## Contemporary Problems and Prospects for the Future

Until relatively recently, Filipinos were regarded by other Asians as an “aberration” of sorts—an Asian people located in Asia but whose culture, political system, language, social mores, and religion were Western, not Asian. Even Filipino names are mostly Hispanic or Western in etymology and derivation; entries in Manila’s telephone directory have a lot more in common with telephone directories in Madrid or Mexico City than Kuala Lumpur or Jakarta. Before the advent of authoritarian rule in 1972, Filipinos were told that the Philippines is the “third largest English-speaking country in the world,” the “only Christian country in Asia,” and had the “freest press in the world.” Before 1972, Filipinos told anyone willing to listen that authoritarian rule was not possible in the Philippines because of the country’s free and unfettered press and institutionalized checks and balances built into the political system itself. The Philippines is not a “banana republic,” Claro M. Recto, the great nationalist of the 1950’s used to intone whenever the issue of the country’s potential descent into dictatorship became the subject of conversation in the Senate. But “banana republic” or not, authoritarian rule did come to the Philippines in 1972 and remained in place for nearly 14 years. Today, more than 15 years after the restoration of American-style democracy in the Philippines, the country is not all that changed. The same prominent families that dominated Philippine electoral politics prior to the imposition of martial law in 1972 continue to lord it



over the political arena, to the exclusion of others. Even term-limits and an explicit provision in the 1987 Constitution proscribing “political dynasties” has not prevented the traditional political elite from putting up their spouses, children, grandchildren, in-laws, siblings, etc., regardless of qualifications, to run on their behalf. Indeed, Philippine electoral politics has become a true family affair, *e.g.*, the sons of three current members of the Philippine Senate (Barbers, Biazon, and Cayetano) are members of the House of Representatives; two senators are estranged cousins (Sergio Osmena III and John Osmena), and the brother and spouse of two more senators (Oreta and Villar, respectively) are members of the House as well.

Filipinos also love to tell foreigners that the Philippines is a free country; the “showcase of American democracy in the Far East,” even as they contend that the country needs a “strong leader” to whip it into line; a leader who could stand up to the political warlords and Chinese-Filipino *taipans* and engender a sense of national discipline, cohesion, and seriousness of purpose. The freewheeling nature of Filipinos is perhaps best symbolized by the *jeepney*, the closest to a Philippine mass transit system and an enduring metaphor for Filipino creativity, practicality, and resourcefulness. This freewheeling nature is a bit related to *abilidad*—the knack of putting one over the other person and getting away with it or the skill to surreptitiously blend into the front-end of a long line without causing a commotion. Over the years, there have been conflicting images of Filipino society by Filipinos and their friends. Some invariably speak of the Philippines as a land of delicate beauty and charm; of a friendly and hospitable people, and a society steeped in democratic and libertarian values. Filipinos who subscribe to this school of thought take umbrage at such American characterizations of Philippine politics as “wild and wooly,” “bazaar-like,” and “Dodge City East.” Whenever the foreign press characterized Philippine elections as marred by “fraud,” “violence,” “vote-buying,” and other “irregularities,” subscribers to the latter school of thought were quick to point out that Philippine elections were no more fraudulent than Chicago’s, and Philippine political bosses no more cunning nor corrupt than the old bosses of Tammany Hall. The other image of the Philippines—a very negative and unflattering one—is that of a society where corruption is a “way of life;” a violent society that puts little value on the sanctity of human life; a nation mired in grinding poverty juxtaposed with almost limitless affluence. The pejorative nickname “Dodge City East” that some Americans gave the Philippines in the 1960’s and 1970’s, invariably evoked images of gun-toting and pistol-packing citizens. Metro Manila and other Philippine cities were dirty, filled with slums, squatters and uncollected garbage; and the streets teemed with child-beggars, pickpockets, prostitutes, and a whole host of other unsavory characters.

When perceptions differ greatly, the truth usually lies somewhere in between. Although it is true that the Filipinos have many vices, they have many virtues as well; and while there is a large number of corrupt public officials out to feather their nests at the expense of the people, there are also legions of officials and civil servants who are scrupulously honest, work very hard, live within their means, and remain poor for the rest of their lives. Flawed as elections may have been during the Second and Third Republics (1946–1972, 1986 to the present) these exercises did consistently provide a mechanism for the peaceful transference of power from one elected leader to the other. If there were any violent incidents at all during elections, these usually involved over zealous and fanatical followers out to impress their political patrons and employers. And until *EDSA Uno* in 1986, the Philippines has never experienced a *coup d’etat*, if indeed *EDSA Uno* was one. In the area of the economy, it is significant to note that among the 10

Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines fared better than most of her Southeast Asian neighbors in dealing with, and recovering from, the Asian economic crisis that originated in Thailand in May 1997. Nevertheless, the Philippines continues to face serious problems, not the least of which is the restoration of the faltering economy to some semblance of health. The Philippines also faces serious law and order problems, *e.g.*: (1) the criminal activities of the Abu Sayaff, a vicious terrorist organization that has made a mockery of law and order and the sanctity of human life; and, (2) the country's kidnap for ransom gangs that prey on innocent people, especially well-to-do Chinese-Filipinos in the Metro Manila area and other large cities. Not only have these two organizations given a black eye to the Philippines in international circles, they have also caused terrible harm to the Philippines' growing tourism industry, a vital source of revenue and badly needed foreign exchange, as indicated by travel advisories warning people about the dangers of traveling to the Philippines, issued by governments of Japan and the United States.

### **Discussion Questions on “The Philippines Today”**

- Why did the Philippines choose to return to an American-style presidential system of government in 1986?
- Given the unpredictability of Philippine politics and the proliferation of political dynasties—in spite of a specific Constitutional provision that unequivocally bans them—would a parliamentary system, which allows for a change of government at any time perhaps, be more suitable?
- Are the Roman Catholic Church and the putative leader of the country's 75 million Catholics, Jaime Cardinal Sin, really influential as a political actor/kingmaker, or is the Church's avowed political clout grossly exaggerated?
- If recent intelligence reports suggest that in spite of internal schisms and dwindling finances, the Communist Party of the Philippines/New Peoples Army (CPP/NPA) is beginning to regain some of its lost luster—the number of armed cadres has reportedly jumped from 5,000 to a new high of some 11,000—is a new round of hostilities in the offing?
- Could the Philippines overcome its current economic and political problems and restore public confidence in the efficacy of government and elected officials as handmaidens of change?
- Could the country's leaders move away from the politics of scandal and self-destruction, endless recrimination and finger pointing and put the public interest ahead of everything else?

## **Part IV**

### **Resources**

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# Self Study Guide: Russia



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies   
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Self-Study Guide : Russiais* intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Russian issues related to history, culture, politics, economics, security and international relations. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Russian affairs are far too complex and broad to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide.

The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the appropriate sections. Most of the referenced material can be found either on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide* to Russia was prepared by Dr. Martyna Fox, chair for Russian and Eurasian area studies at FSI. The views expressed in this guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the U.S. Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

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October, 2000

# I. The Environment and The People

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## The Land

Russia's vast and varied territory places it in a geographic category of its own. The country's size (16,995,800 square km) and location (well to the north and straddling Asia and Europe) have shaped the history of the Russian state and as well as the lifestyle and the culture of its inhabitants.

### Geography



## Land features

Although traditionally Russia has been divided into a European and an Asian part, from a topographical point of view there are far more features uniting the Eurasian landmass than dividing it. Russia comprises most of the Eurasian plain and abuts significant mountain ranges only along its frontiers: the **Caucasus** mountains in the south, the **Altai** Mountains along the border with China, the **Saian** Mountains near Mongolia, and finally, the **Verkhoiansk** and the **Kolyma** Ranges, which include Russia's twenty active volcanoes on the **Kamchatka** Peninsula. The **Ural** Mountains –the official dividing line between Europe and Asia –are just a chain of hills which never have been a barrier to human migration.

## Network of rivers

Russia's extensive river system has facilitated the economic and political coalescence of the Russian state. The great rivers of the Eurasian plain mostly follow a north-south axis: the **Don** flows into the Black Sea, the **Volga**—known in Russian culture as the "mother of Russian rivers"—flows into the landlocked Caspian Sea, and the giants of Siberia: the **Ob**, the **Yenisei**, and the **Lena**, all empty into the Arctic Ocean. Because of the gentle gradation of the Eurasian plain rivers tend to be slow and highly navigable; even more importantly, they have a dense network of tributaries forming an interlocking system of waterways unique in Europe or Asia. Development of canals during the Soviet era further enhanced the river system's prominent transportation role.

## Access to Open Seas

Historically, Russia has been a land power, that is a state deriving its resources from land, population and mineral wealth rather than from trade or access to open seas. However, over the course of its expansion Russia has gained access to two seas (the Baltic Sea in the northwest and the Black Sea in the southwest) and two oceans (the Arctic and the Pacific). These maritime outlets present geo-strategic as well as commercial challenges: they are either difficult to reach (Murmansk or Archangelsk in the White Sea for instance is ice-bound most of the year), lie within inland seas (Narva in the Baltic, Nikolaevsk in the Black Sea), or are distant from Russia's population and production centers (Vladivostok in the Far East).

## Vegetation zones

The Eurasian plain is marked by distinct vegetation and soil zones, running in roughly horizontal bands from the Far East to Eastern Europe. In the extreme north, the arctic **tundra** is a zone of permafrost plains where the climate does not allow even for the grasses to survive. The tundra does support the lichens and with it herds of reindeer. It also holds great mineral resources –such as natural gas and oil.

South of the tundra lies the largest coniferous forest on the planet: the **taiga**. This zone –never narrower than 1000 km –stretches from the Gulf of Finland to Kamchatka. Even today it is thinly inhabited, due to a harsh climate and swampy soils. However, it has historically provided Russia's great natural resources of timber and precious furs. Below the taiga lies a relatively narrow but historically important zone of mixed forests, which includes the famous Russian birch tree stands. This area has been cleared and farmed since earliest times, and all of Russia's historical capitals - Kiev, Vladimir and Moscow, lie within it.

Further south, mixed forests give way to open grasslands, called the **steppe**. Its greatest resource is the famously fertile *chernozem*, or black earth, which in European Russia supports most agricultural output. Once the domain of Turkic-speaking nomadic herders, these grasslands are now entirely under cultivation.

Finally, the dry climate of the south turns the steppe into the semi-desert along the north-eastern rim of the Caspian Sea.

## Climate

Russia's continental climate, with extreme temperatures both summer and winter (a record of  $-90^{\circ}\text{F}$  was recorded in Eastern Siberia) is further complicated by Russia's northern location. Close to 70% of the Russian Federation's territory lies north of the  $60^{\circ}$  latitude on a level with Alaska. Winters are long, especially in Siberia where in some areas the frost-free season lasts only 45 days. Consequently, the growing season is relatively short throughout Russia, presenting a permanent challenge for agriculture. In European Russia the climate is somewhat mitigated by the flow of warmer air from the Atlantic. Interestingly, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the percentage of the Russian population living in severely cold climate



has increased due to the emergence of extraction /industrial centers in Siberia and the Far North.

## **Rainfall**

Rainfall in both European Russia and in Siberia is rather poorly distributed. Most of it falls to the north (contributing to the already extensive swamp areas between the tundra and the taiga), while too little falls to the south on the relatively richer soils of the steppes.

## **Soils and Agriculture**

Almost 88% percent of Russian land is uncultivated, with 46% covered by dense forests or woodlands. In European Russia large swaths of forests and swamps produce a type of poor soil known as *podzol*. Regions more suitable for agriculture include the Volga region, Novorossiia and Western Urals, where *chernozem* and other "brown" soils prevail. In Siberia, a belt of *chernozem* extends to some portions in the south, where an attempt was made to develop intensive agriculture during the so called Virgin Land campaign of the 1950's.

The most important grains in Russia are wheat, barley, oats, and rye, although in the past 20 years Russia became a wheat importer because much of its arable land is devoted to fodder crops. Sugarbeets, flax and tobacco are also among the most important crops. Traditional vegetable crops consist of potatoes, cabbage, peas, carrots and onions.

Overall, because of the challenging climate and soil conditions, agricultural activity in Russia remains less efficient and harvests are less reliable than in the rest of Europe.

## **Mineral and Natural Resources**

Apart from some iron and coal deposits, most of Russia's extensive natural and mineral resources are to be found in Siberia. World-class deposits of natural gas and oil have been developed in Western Siberia in the Tiumen oblast. Coal, iron, gold, copper, tin, nickel, uranium and other non-ferrous metals, as well as Yakutia's extensive diamond fields, are located in Eastern Siberia. Another area of potentially great oil and gas deposits is under development in Sakhalin.

Among other natural resources, timber and paper have been among the top export items in Russia as has been another forestry product, precious furs. Finally, the Pacific fisheries have been a staple of economic activity for the port cities of the Far East.

## **Questions/Issues:**

What impact did geography have on Russian history?

Reflect on this excerpt from Michael Florinsky's *History of Kievan Rus*. Do you agree with his

conclusions?

The historical destinies of nations, like the lives of individuals, are determined largely by their environment. It was no mere historical accident that the immense plain occupying one-sixth of the land surface of the globe became gradually absorbed within the political frontiers of the Russian state

... Unlike western Europe, the monotony of the Russian plain is not broken by ranges of mountains ...[and its] waterways ...greatly facilitated the unity of the Eurasian plain, worked against the establishment of independent political states and thus contributed to the eventual triumph of a centralized political system.

Natural resource development in the Soviet era was based on the needs of the state rather than on economic consideration. What is the likely impact of a free-market economy on the industrial cities of the Far North and Siberia?

**Suggested Reading:** Richard Pipes, "The Environment and its Consequences" in *Russia under the Old Regime*; Robin Milner-Gulland, "The Geographic Background" in *Cultural Atlas of Russia and the Soviet Union* (Facts on File, New York, 1991)

## The People

### Major Ethnic Groupings

The three major ethnic and linguistic groupings of the Russian Federation are the Slavic, the Turkic, and the Ugro-Finnic /Uralic peoples. They form the oldest ethnic core of the Russian state. In the past, their cultures and ways of life differed considerably. The earliest historical sources describe the Slavs as the settled, agricultural population of what is today Ukraine, Belarus and Western Russia. The Ugro-Finnic and Uralic peoples, by contrast, inhabited the dense forests to the north and east as hunters and gatherers. Finally, the Turkic speakers belong to different waves of nomadic herders who over the last two millennia have migrated from Far East Asia along the Eurasian steppes.

In the course of its expansion the Russian state also incorporated the Caucasian peoples of the north slopes of the Caucasus Mountains, the numerous but extremely small Paleo-Siberian groups in the Far North, and a number of largely urban ethnic minorities such as the Jews, the Armenians, the Germans and the Poles.

**Slavic Peoples:** Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian, Polish

**Turkic:** Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash, Kumyk, Tuvin

**Ugro-Finnic:** Karelian, Kalmyk, Komi, Mari, Mordvinian, Udmurt

**Uralic:** Samoyed, Buryat, Yakut

**Paleo-Siberian:** Chukchi, Evenki, Nentsy

**Caucasian:** Chechen, Ingush, Adygey, Cherkess, Kabardin, Avar, Lezgin

## Ethnic Structure Today

Despite its long history as a multi-ethnic state, the Russian Federation today is more ethnically homogeneous than at any point in the last two hundred years. (That is of course due to the break-up of the USSR and political independence for most non-Russians). The following table depicts the ethnic structure of the Federation for 1991-1993:

### **Total Population: 147, 022,000**

Russian 119, 866,000 (81.5%)

Tatar 5,522,000 (3,8%)

Ukrainian 4,363,000 (3,0%)

Chuvash 1,774,000 (1,2%)

Bashkort 1,345,000 (0.9%)

Belorussian 1,206,000 (0.8%)

Mordvinian 1,073,000 (0.7%)

Chechen 899,000 (0.6%)

German 842,000 (0.6%)

Udmurt 715,000 (0.5%)

Avar 544,000 (0.4%)

Jewish 537,000 (0.4%)

Buryat 417,000 (0.3%)

Yakut 380,000 (0.3%)

Kumyk 277,000 (0.2%)

The remaining nationalities average in size 0.1% of the overall population.

(Source, S. Batalen, ed. *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia. Handbook of Former Soviet Republics*(Oryx, 1993).)

## Ethnic Identity: the non-Russians

In the wake of the break-up of the USSR the issue of ethnic and national identities within Russia received much attention, largely as a result of concerns over the stability and integrity of the Federation itself. But for both Russians and non-Russians living in these territories the question of national identity is complicated by their long history of cohabitation within the Tsarist and the Soviet states.

Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most nationalities identified themselves through language, religion, or the way of life, rather than by ethnic criteria. Levels of national consciousness also varied considerably and the Tsarist state strove to keep any such consciousness from becoming a coherent, political identity. Ethnic (and by definition, unchangeable) identity did not come to prominence until the Soviet era, when Stalin's administrative and federal structures solidified, and in some cases imposed, particular ethnic labels. [For discussion of Stalin's nationalities policy and the Soviet administrative structure see chapter on Ethnic Legacies of the Soviet Era].

Today, ethnic Russians form either the majority or the largest minority in all administrative units of the Federation, including the ethnic republics. This further blurs the issue of local identities. Consequently, there have emerged different (although sometimes overlapping) approaches to building a national identity within the federation. One strategy emphasizes ethnic and linguistic components. It is most successful in the largest ethnically-based republics, such as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and Yakutia. Another approach stresses a common cultural heritage, as do the Russians, but also the Jews. Finally, there are ethnic groups mobilized by the political and economic struggle with the center to control local taxes and resources: Tatarstan, Kalmykia, Yakutia.

Only in the North Caucasus have all three strategies been fused. In the areas where this has occurred –most prominently in Chechnya –the issue of political independence from Moscow has indeed come to a head.

### **Sample of Ethnic Balance in Russia's National Republics:**

Bashkortostan population: 3,943,000

Bashkort 21.9%

Russian 39.3%

Sakha (Yakutia) population 1,094,000

Yakuts 33.5%

Russians 50.3%

Tatarstan population 3,642,000

Tatars 48.5%

Russians 43.3%

Chechnya/

Ingushetia\*\* population 1,270,000

Chechens 57.8%

Ingush 12.9%

Russians 23.1%

(note: these figures reflect population levels before the 1994-96 and 1999 conflicts)

Altai population 191,000

Altai 31.0%

Russians 60.4%

Source: RFE/RL Research Report, vol. 2, no. 20 (May 1993)

### **Questions/Issues:**

--Which of the territories and nationalities within the Russian Federation have been seen as potentially

raising the issue of independence from Moscow? What particular factors influenced each case?

**Suggested Reading:** M. Katz, *Handbook of Soviet Nationalities*

### **Ethnic Identity: The Russians**

The rise of the Russian state was closely linked to the expansion of the empire, and both preceded the emergence of any modern Russian identity. For most of their history Russians lived in a multi-ethnic state. As the "imperial" people, the Russians did not tie their identity to a defined "core" territory but rather to the empire in general. Pride in the military and diplomatic achievements of the empire took the place of a sense of ethnic solidarity. Consequently, the Russians lagged behind their subject nationalities in the development of modern national identity.

The same dynamic also characterized the Soviet era. Despite the varnish of the ethnic brotherhood, the Russians found themselves falling into the old role of the "imperial people". They continued to settle throughout the Soviet Union, frequently inter-marrying and further undercutting their own territorial roots. They were also disproportionately "Sovietized" and deprived of access to their traditional culture. Thus the strongest basis for self-identification of the Russians today remains not an ethnic background but language, religion and common culture.

### **Questions and Issues:**

-- Has the issue of Russian national identity been settled since 1991?

-- What impact can the Russian identity issue have on the direction of the country?

-- How can it influence its relations with the neighbors?

**Suggested Reading:** Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*; Martha Brill Olcott and Valery Tishkov, "From Ethnos to Demos: The Quest for Russia's Identity" in *Russia after Communism*, ed. A. Aslund, M. Olcott (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

## **Russian Culture**

### **Russian Language and Alphabet**

The Russian language (together with contemporary Belorussian and Ukrainian) belongs to the Eastern branch of the Slavic family of languages. Although still mutually intelligible, these Slavic languages have steadily diverged for the last seven centuries. Their common ancestor can still be seen in the Old

Church Slavonic –an ancient language preserved today in the Russian Orthodox liturgy.

The Russian alphabet is known as the Cyrillic alphabet. It was created in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by St. Cyril and Methodius, two Slavonic monks. They borrowed letters from the Greek, the Hebrew and from other Slavic languages to represent adequately the wide array of consonants characteristic for Russian. Today, the Cyrillic alphabet consists of 33 letters: 21 for the consonants, 5 for hard vowels, five for diphthongs and 2 for voiceless signs (soft and hard sign). As a result, Russian is a more phonetic language than English: by and large it is pronounced the way it is written. Cyrillic is not easily intelligible to Latin alphabet users. It is therefore strongly recommended that those traveling to Russia familiarize themselves with the alphabet before they set out.

**Suggested Reading:** Robin Milner-Gulland, "The Land and the People" in Cultural Atlas of Russia and the Soviet Union (Facts on File, New York, 1991)

### Russian Orthodoxy

The Russian Orthodox Church celebrated the millennium of Kievan Rus' conversion to Christianity in 1988. The Russian Church has been and remains one of the chief national and cultural institutions in Russia. It has been credited with preserving a sense of Russian identity through the dark era of the Mongol Yoke. It has also played a paramount role in shaping Russian culture, bequeathing on it some of its most recognizable symbols: from the language (alphabet) and literature (early chronicles), to architecture (the onion-shaped dome), the visual arts (the icon) and music (choir music and church bells).

Most of the Church's history in Russia has been marked by political influence and protection by the state (until 1917, the Russian emperor was also the head of the Orthodox Church). But it also experienced periods of devastating internal schism (in 17<sup>th</sup> century, with the split of the Old Believers) and persecution (under Peter the Great). The Soviet era brought not only severe limitations on all church activities, but also wholesale prosecution and killing of priests, destruction of churches, seminaries, and monasteries.

Since 1991, the Russian Church -- the largest Eastern Orthodox church in the world -- has experienced a strong revival. The Russian state has returned most of the church property and officially recognized religious holidays. Furthermore, both the Duma and the government have expressed strong support for the Orthodox Church in its attempts to safeguard its place as the foremost of Russia's "historical" religions. Consequently, with 96.7 million nominal believers, the Russian Orthodox Church remains the largest and best organized denomination not only in Russia, but throughout the Former Soviet Union.

### **Questions and Issues:**

The Orthodox Church in Russia has a long history of close cooperation with the state. How has this relationship played out since 1991?

Does the Orthodox Church deserve a special legal protection considering its persecution by the authorities during the Soviet Era?

**Suggested Reading:** Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church. A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*(Westview, 1995).

### Islam, Judaism, Buddhism

The Russian law on religious freedom passed in 1997 specifically distinguishes Islam, Buddhism and Judaism as "historic" religions of Russia, i.e. religions whose long presence and role within the Russian state confer a special, protected status.

**Islam** is the second largest religion in Russia. Although Russian Muslims are overwhelmingly Sunni, religious traditions and practices among them vary greatly. The two largest concentrations of Muslims in Russia are among the Turkic speakers of the mid-Volga regions (Tatarstan, Bashkortostan) and in the North Caucasus (Chechnya, Ingushetia, Daghestan, Kabardino-Balkaria). The tradition of secret islamic brotherhoods (the **Sufi**orders) are particularly strong in the North Caucasus, where Islam has become a potent cultural and political unifying force. In Tatarstan, by contrast, Islamic self-identification is more cultural in character. It needs to be stressed that both traditions have evolved quite distinctly from other strains of Islam, especially those in the Middle East.

**Suggested Reading:** Shirin Akiner, *Islamic Peoples of the Soviet Union*(KPI, London, 1986); Alexander Benningsen, *Mystics and Commissars, Sufism in the USSR*(University of California, 1985).

**Judaism** –although named among the historical religions of Russia –has had a unique and difficult history in that country. Jews have been treated as both a religious and an ethnic minority. Roots of the Jewish community in Russia reach back to the rural population in today's Belorussian and Western Ukrainian territories (which the Tsarist authorities designated as the official Pale of Settlement for the Jews). However, the Holocaust in WW II destroyed these ancient Jewish communities, leaving as their only survivors the mostly Russian-speaking and assimilated urban dwellers. Consequently, Judaism in Russia today, although strongly reinvigorated, faces the challenge of rebuilding its religious institutions and reviving its traditions after decades of official non-existence.

Anti-Semitism, both official and unofficial, has also marred the history of Jewish-Russian relations. It ranged from violent pogroms in late Tsarist Russia, to professional discrimination and cultural persecution in the Stalin era. Today, open anti-Semitism remains limited to fringe nationalist groupings, although its occasional outbreaks have been public enough to be officially condemned by the Russian government.

**Suggested Reading:** Joshua Rothenberg, *The Jewish Religion in the Soviet Union*(Brandeis University, 1971)

**Buddhism** spread into Siberia from Mongolia. The largest Buddhist ethnic group in Russia are the Buriats of the Lake Baikal region, who adopted Buddhism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the Soviet efforts to limit the number of lamas and monasteries, Buddhism has experienced a strong revival since 1991, making Russia the seventh largest Buddhist country in the world.

**Shamanism** is the original religion of the indigenous Siberian peoples. Its specific traditions vary from tribe to tribe, but generally shamanism features a spirit helper (shaman) who mediates between the visible and the spirit world. Many Shaman tribes have been forcibly converted to Eastern Orthodoxy (most notably the Yakut-Sakha), but they have managed to retain their tribal religious practices.

**Other religious groups:** The 1997 Duma law placed the **Catholic**, the **Uniate** (Eastern Rite Catholic) and the **Protestant** churches in the non-historical category of Russia's religious organizations. Although most of these denominations have been present in Russia for several centuries, they are associated with ethnic groups which have ties abroad: the Poles (Catholic), the Ukrainians (Uniate), and the Germans (Lutheran). In addition, such Protestant groups as the Baptists, the Pentecostals, the Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses have been harshly prosecuted because of their perceived missionary zeal.

### **Questions and Issues:**

What has been the historical relationship between Russia and the Islamic world?

What has been Russia's (and Soviet Union's) attitude toward the so-called Islamic fundamentalism?

How does Russia balance its relationship with the Islamic countries and its relationship with the Islamic nationalities at home?

What are Russia's stated interests in the Islamic movements of Central Asia?

What has been the outcome of the 1997 law on religious organizations in Russia?

**Suggested Reading:** Michael Bourdeaux, ed. *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (ME Sharpe, 1995); John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and the Successor States* (Cambridge University, 1994).

### **Traditional Culture and Holidays**

Traditional Russian culture is rooted in the rich peasant folklore and the Orthodox celebrations. It was above a culture of the village and of community life. Although severely damaged during the Soviet era, this traditional culture continues to express itself, largely through the celebration of holidays.

Until 1917, the holidays were of course religious. The most important – then as well as today – is



**Paskha**(Easter), with all-night church vigils, services, and festive processions. The Russian Easter also has many pre-Christian, "rite-of-spring" elements such as special foods and brightly decorated Easter eggs.

Due to the two-week difference between pre-1917 Julian and Western Gregorian calendars, **Rozhdestvo**(Christmas) can be celebrated either on the Russian Orthodox date (January 7), or on the Western date (December 25). During the Soviet era, the authorities encouraged the celebration of New Year, often with a Santa-Claus-like figure, Grandfather Frost. Thus the Russian "winter celebration" season is longer than in the West.

Among many secular holidays introduced during the Soviet era, **International Women's Day**(March 8) and **WWII Victory Day**(May 9) have shown few signs of diminishing popularity. The old Soviet holidays of May 1 (**Workers' Day**) and November 7 (**Great October Revolution**), although no longer officially recognized, still draw some celebrants. Finally, the new Russian official holidays like **Independence Day**(June 12) and **Constitution Day**(October 7) are merely seen as days off work.

As in the United States, the observed days of many holidays are changed in order to give workers an extended weekend.

**Suggested Reading:** Suzanne Massie, *The Land of the Firebird*

### Role of High Culture and Literature

Historically, the culture of the vast majority of the Russian people was Slavic, peasant, traditional, and isolated from outside influences. Following the state reforms of Peter the Great and Russia's "opening to the West" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a narrow but important ruling elite (nobility, state officials) espoused West European culture and transplanted it to Russia. The true flowering of this culture took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Russian genius started to penetrate and modify the purely Western models.

This synthesis was visible in the visual arts and architecture, as well as in science and philosophy. But it was in music and literature that what the Russians call their "high culture" was born.

Starting with **Glinka** in the 1830's, Russian music was transformed by such creative giants as **Mussorgski**, **Rimsky-Korsakov**, and of course, **Tchaikovsky**. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, **Rachmaninov** and **Stravinsky** set the world standard for modern music. The meteoric rise of Russian music was mirrored by the achievements of the Russian ballet, as personified by the choreographic genius of **Marius Petipa**, and the dancing of **Anna Pavlova**. Again, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the famous Ballets Russes created a musical, visual, and dancing sensation when performing in Western Europe. It is to these great traditions and achievements that today's **Bolshoi** Theater and the **Kirov** Ballet aspire.

Literature –both poetry and prose -- holds an especially revered place in the Russian culture. Russia's greatest poet is without doubt **Alexander Pushkin**, beloved precisely for his brilliant use of the Russian

language and Russian folk themes in Western poetic forms. His works are known universally and by heart throughout Russia; they represent one area of culture common to all inhabitants of that country. Better known in the West are the achievements of such Russian writers as **Leo Tolstoy**, **Fodor Dostoyevsky**, or **Anton Chekhov**. Intimate knowledge of their writings is a point of pride among educated Russians. They quite rightly consider these writers important contributors to world literature.

Overall, the Russian art encapsulates one of the great tensions in Russian civilization: openness to but also a wariness of foreign influences. Some of the greatest Russian achievements in art were spurred by encounters with new Western models. But it was precisely the transformation of those models into undeniably Russian works that makes those achievements worth anything in the Russian eyes

### Questions and Issues:

What was the consequence of the split between the traditional (popular) and the Westernized (high) culture in Russia?

How does "Russia's window to the West"—St. Petersburg—reflect Western influences on Russian culture?

**Suggested Reading:** James Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russia* (Knopf, 1966); Solomon Volkov, *St. Petersburg: A Cultural History* (Free Press, 1999)

### Soviet Popular Culture

After 1917, a chief ideological aim of the Soviet government was the destruction of the old "bourgeois" culture and the rise of a new Soviet civilization. The traditional Russian peasant culture was largely destroyed as that social class succumbed to collectivization, famine, and eventually, urbanization of the Soviet Union. The high culture of the pre-revolutionary era was treated more selectively. Some elements were destroyed during the 1920's and 30's, when Russia's old intellectual elite was lost in the purges. But other elements—either because they were deemed progressive or valuable for the prestige of the Soviet Union—were preserved and even cultivated. Ballet and classical music were consistently supported by the Soviet cultural authorities. So was most of Russia's great 19<sup>th</sup> century literature. However, all these remnants of the old Russian culture were consciously molded into a larger, Soviet "civilization," which was to be the pride of all Soviet citizens.

Another important task in building a new civilization was to create a genuinely accepted popular culture. Its most important vehicles were to be the cinema (and later television), sports, popular music, and other forms of public entertainment such as the circus or amusement parks, where the new Soviet holidays would be celebrated by the masses. Permeated by official propaganda and often appealing to the lowest common denominator, the Soviet popular culture nonetheless became a genuine social phenomenon. Its lasting power can be seen in the great popularity of exhibits focusing on the Soviet era art.

### Questions and Issues:

What can explain the appeal to the present-day Russians of the Soviet era art and culture?

What has been their attitude to popular art from abroad (such as film, music) since 1991?

To what extent does traditional Russian culture survive in today's Russia?

**Suggested Reading:** Richard Stites, *Soviet Popular Culture, Entertainment and Society since 1900* (Cambridge Press, 1992).

### The Russian Family

In the traditional Russian society extended families lived together, often comprising three or more generations. In the Soviet era, the ability to rely on one's family grew in importance, especially during times of hardship or heightened political oppression. Today, extended family arrangements can be found among 20% of the Russian population, but that is due more to the housing shortages than to cultural preference. Still, family bonds - especially between mothers and daughters - remain strong.

Most women worked outside the home during the Soviet period; they were also charged with taking care of home and family. This trend has not changed much since 1991. The rate of divorce continues to grow in Russia, creating a large segment of female-headed families dependent on the older generation.

**Suggested Reading:** Francine Duplessix-Gray, *Soviet Women: Walking the Tightrope* (Doubleday, 1989); *Women in Russia: A new Era in Russian Feminism* (Verso, 1994).

## II. History and its Legacies

[|Early History](#) | [Imperial History](#) | [The Soviet Area](#) | [The Fall of the USSR](#)

### Kievan Russia

Russia's early history was marked by migration, invasions, and domination by peoples of both Europe and Asia. Originally Slavic agricultural tribes had settled in East European territories, between the Black and the Baltic seas. [They would eventually split into the Western Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks), the South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bulgarians) and the Eastern Slavs (Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians).] Although constantly buffeted by waves of nomadic herders from inner Asia, the Eastern Slavs managed to establish several independent city states. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century Scandinavian Vikings (known as the **Varangians**) imposed a centralized political and economic control over the Slavic settlements along the **Dnieper** River, leading to the emergence of the first Russian state centered in the city of Kiev.

Throughout its brief existence Kievan Rus remained a loose federation of cities and principalities. Its wealth was based on trade between the Baltic Sea in the north and the Black Sea and Byzantium in the south. Consequently, Kievan Rus was open to a wide range of cultural influences. Its Viking ruling elite became quickly Slavized. With the adoption of Orthodox Christianity from Byzantium in 988, Kievan Rus witnessed an impressive growth in culture, architecture, literature and law. However, its relative political and military weakness left it exposed to a new wave of nomadic conquerors who were to inundate the Kievan state after 1236.

## The Mongol Period

With the sack of Kiev in 1243, the Mongol-led armies of **Ginghis Khan** established complete control over all Eastern Slavic territories. The Mongol occupation –which was to last for more than two hundred years –was marked by ruthless exploitation of the subject population, great cost in human lives, and finally by a wholesale dislocation of the surviving Slavic population from the open steppes of the south to the isolated but better protected forests of the north-east. Under the protection of the Russian princes, new cities and settlements were built there; the most successful among them was Moscow which, by 1328, became the seat of the Grand Prince. It was under the ruthless yet determined leadership of the Moscow princes that the Northern Russian settlements built up enough military and political strength to overthrow the Mongol rule.

## Muscovite Russia

With their own empire crumbling, the Mongols were powerless to stop the growing ambitions of **Muscovy**princes. By 1472, through marriage to the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Ivan the Great inherited the title of **Tsar**(Caesar). By 1583, his grandson, Ivan the Terrible, was powerful enough to lead a successful military campaign to conquer the Mongols' own centers of power: the **khanates**of Kazan and Astrakhan. At the same time, Ivan established a centralized and autocratic system of rule at home, eliminating any potential threats to the power of the Russian Tsar. During his *oprichnina*, for instance, his trusted henchmen killed, tortured and terrorized old aristocratic families, they but also destroyed overly independent cities like **Novgorod**. Ironically, having eliminated competitors to his power, Ivan contributed to the early death of his only son thus bringing to a tragic end the ancient Riurik dynasty. Russia was left rudderless to face increasing dangers at home and abroad.

**Suggested Reading:** Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*(Scribners, 1974)

## Imperial History

### The Rise of the Russian Empire

After a prolonged period of civil strife, known in Russian history as the Times of Trouble, a new ruling dynasty was installed on the throne of Russia in 1613. The **Romanovs**would occupy that throne until

1917, and it was during their reign that Russia's greatest territorial growth took place. Among the most outstanding members of the Romanov dynasty was Peter the Great, who came to power in 1694. Focusing on the growing military and technological gap between his country and the rest of Europe, Peter launched a top-down, radical campaign to modernize Russia. Its government, the military, local administration, even education, were restructured to emulate Western models, even as the Tsar's own power grew more centralized and autocratic.

The reforms were to serve the purposes of Peter's activist foreign policy. Through a series of wars with Sweden, he gained access to the Baltic Sea and founded Russia's "window to the West," St. Petersburg. In wars against the Ottoman Turks and the Persians, he expanded Russia's territory to the south and south-east. At the end of his reign, Peter officially moved the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg and declared the establishment of the Russian Empire.

### Autocracy and Serfdom

Even though most of Peter's heirs followed his dreams of imperial expansion, they shared less in his enthusiasm for introducing Western-inspired innovations at home. Consequently, even while the territories of Russia grew at staggering rates, an essentially pre-modern social and economic system prevailed throughout the country. The most important element of Russia's social structure was the existence of **serfdom**, which legally bound a large proportion of peasants to the lands on which they worked. Their forced labor supported a large and wealthy class of land-owning nobility, which in turn owed their service and loyalty to the Tsarist state. Thus, Russia's autocratic regime depended directly on the perpetuation of an inefficient and unjust system of serfdom, which eventually would undercut its economic and consequently military power. This tension -- between the requirements of autocracy and the demands of the Great Power competition -- escalated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Catherine the Great, Peter's most talented successor, engaged in successful diplomatic and military actions against Great Powers of Europe. At the same time, she imposed ever harsher requirements on the peasant population, ruthlessly putting down their repeated rebellions. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even as he claimed for Russia the title of the "gendarme of Europe," Nicholas I adamantly rejected the calls for the abolition of serfdom. It was only a series of military defeats that pushed Russia's autocratic rulers to adopt a modicum of reforms. Following the disastrous Crimean War, Russia launched the so called Great Reforms, including the abolition of serfdom in 1861. After the stinging defeat in the war with Japan in 1905, Nicholas II introduced a limited constitutional government as well as a series of land and economic reforms. The experiment in liberalizing Russia's political system was cut short by the decision to enter World War I -- a step leading directly to the collapse of the Tsarist rule and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.

The confluence of state and empire in Russian history has been blamed by many historians for the social, economic, as well as political ills that besieged that country on the eve of the revolution. Frequent wars -- be they defensive or offensive -- contributed to the extreme exploitation of the population to support the fighting state. Extensive and varied territories and restive subject populations encouraged the growth of a centralized and repressive state. The needs of the state in turn consumed the elite: their loyal service to

the autocrat rewarded them with land, but precluded independent economic activities. The bulk of the population –the peasants -- were left to carry the burden of the military, the huge administration, as well as the land-owners. In the end, these imperial burdens stunted the economic, political and national development in Russia, alienating the society from the Tsarist state. Growing ethnic tensions and resentment of the Russian rule added to this explosive mixture and eventually led to the implosion of the Tsarist Empire.

### **Questions and Issues:**

What were the burdens of empire-building for the Russian society?

How were the Russian state and empire dependent on each other?

**Suggested Reading:** Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*

## **The Soviet Era**

The Bolshevik coup of 1917 opened a turbulent and fateful era in Russian history. The radical ideological ambitions of Lenin and his party led to an unprecedented experiment in building a new state, a new political and economic system, a radically new society, and a new civilization –all at the same time. This experiment, "conducted on the living body of the Russian people," was to bring a staggering human cost and a host of long-term legacies borne by Russia today.

### **Ideological and Political Legacies**

Utopian or not, the early Bolshevik leaders took their ideological aims very seriously. The goal was to quickly and radically remake the traditional Russian society into a communist one, governed by the proletariat –the industrial working class. In order to achieve that aim in the absence of well developed working classes, the Bolsheviks relied on a small, highly disciplined, and determined party structure which was to act as the "vanguard" of the revolution. This decision had fundamental consequences for the political culture as well as the system of rule in Soviet Russia. For one, a distinct ends-justify-means mentality came to prevail among the builders of the Soviet state. Second, total political monopoly of the Communist Party was seen as a given. Furthermore, fanatical ideology brought with a conviction that in any situation there can be only one, ideologically-correct policy or answer to a problem, an attitude which by its nature denies the validity of political compromises. (Under Stalin this obsession with enforcing the party line would degenerate into show-trials and purges of "deviating" party members). All these elements created an inflexible political-administrative system well suited to a top-down system of command, but one singularly unresponsive to social and economic signals from below.

### **Questions and Issues:**

**Continuities between Tsarist and Soviet rule:** A long-standing debate focuses on the features of the

Soviet political system which echo certain characteristics of the Tsarist state.

Did Marxism change Russia, or did Russia change Marxism?

Is it a fair comparison between the Tsarist and the Soviet model of authoritarian rule? What were the fundamental differences between them?

**Suggested Reading:** Richard Pipes, *Three "Whys" of the Russian Revolution* (Vintage Books, New York, 1997);

### **Social Transformation: Modernization and Urbanization**

If Lenin was responsible for forging the Soviet political and ideological system, Stalin was responsible for forcibly remaking the Russian society to fit the Leninist blueprint. Taking reins over a country already ravaged by WW I, the Revolution, and four years of the Civil War, Stalin launched an ambitious program of modernization. His goals were two-fold: to fundamentally restructure the Soviet society and to put the Soviet Union on a par with the leading industrial powers.

Stalin began with agricultural **collectivization**: millions of free-holding peasants were either killed or sent to labor camps; the rest were ordered to join state-run collective farms. This assured complete government control over food production and supplies for the cities. In addition to those "class enemies" targeted by Stalin, the collectivization cost several million lives of peasants engulfed by the famine of the early 1930's. The back of Russia's peasantry was broken; and most of them had no choice but to move to the emerging urban and industrial centers.

The next two decades would witness some of the most intensive paces of **industrialization** in modern history. Focusing almost exclusively on heavy and military industry, Stalin imposed five-year plans of production which were to squeeze out every ounce of material and human resources from the country. An extensive network of labor camps –the **Gulag**–formed an important part of this economic system. The great purges, unleashed by Stalin in the 1930's on the Party as well as the government, the army, and the intellectuals, provided millions of camp laborers. (Others were killed outright in the prisons). Consequently, although its industry was now better developed than in the Tsarist times, the Soviet Union was in many ways weakened and ill prepared to face the invasion of Hitler's forces in 1941.

### **Questions and Issues:**

Did Stalin's policies help or hinder the Soviet Union in its confrontation with Nazi Germany?

What was the impact of his purges on the Soviet Army?

What was the impact of the experience of WWII on the Soviet Union as well as on Stalin's policies?

**Suggested Reading:** Alexander Dallin, ed. , *Stalin and Stalinism*(Garland Publishing, 1992);

## Post-War Era

In the post-Stalin era, the Soviet system never attained the degree of repression and fear present in the 1930's or early 50's. Nonetheless, Stalin's fundamental goals and policies were continued by his successors, **Nikita Khrushchev** and **Leonid Brezhnev**: further industrialization, development of a world class military-industrial sector, continued shift of the population from rural to urban areas, as well as construction a universal and uniform system of education and indoctrination. The only noticeable change occurred in the way the Soviet Union was governed at the very top: to avoid the potential dangers of another "cult of personality," the Soviet leadership relied on the unanimous decisions of the **Politburo**, rather than those of the First Party Secretary. This change contributed to the growing bureaucratic "stagnation" of the 1970's and 80's, but at the same time, it created a political arena for differences of opinion. **Mikhail Gorbachev** would exploit this new arena during his push for *perestroika* after 1985.

## Questions and Issues:

Industrialization and modernization were the chief aims of Lenin as well as Stalin.

How did the economic and social system they established to accomplish these aims hamper the Soviet economy in the 1970's and 80's?

What are the chief legacies of the Soviet economic and industrial structure?

**Suggested Reading:** Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within*(Harvard, 1985) and *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*(Cambridge, 1990); Clifford Gaddy, *The Price of the Past: Russia's Struggle with the Legacy of a Militarized Economy*(Brookings Institution, 1996).

## Ethnic Legacies of the USSR

The Tsarist empire –famously called by Lenin "the prison of nations"–collapsed in 1917 when the weakened center could no longer suppress its subject nationalities' drive for independence. At first, the Bolsheviks encouraged and exploited these centrifugal forces. Having acquired power themselves, however, they opened a military campaign to bring Soviet rule to the very same nationalities that had bolted from the Russian empire. By 1924, the Bolsheviks succeeded in re-imposing Moscow's control over all but the Polish, Finnish, and Baltic territories. The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics was officially brought into existence.

It was an economically and politically precarious union, however. Concessions to the national pride and aspirations had to be made by the center to preserve the USSR's fragile borders. Attributes of a sovereign national existence were extended to the largest ethnic groups; eventually, those would form the 15 so



called 'union' republics, which nominally had the right to secede from the Soviet Union. Other ethnic groups were also given distinct administrative borders within which, as the titular nationality, they were given special rights and privileges, such as education, newspapers or even local administration in their own language.

At the same time, the core of the Soviet ideology did not recognize ethnic or national identity as the fundamental organizing principle: eventually, the goal was to create a non-ethnic, Soviet identity. Uniform system of Soviet education was to be one institution working toward that goal. Meanwhile, to counter the ethnic heterogeneity of the Union, the central "Sovietizing" role was played by the Communist Party, the army, the KGB, and the centralized economy.

Thus, the Soviet system contained a fundamental tension between the totalitarian ideology and the centralizing needs of the state on the one hand, and the ethnically diverse territorial units on the other. Stalin balanced this system by fostering inequalities and tensions among neighboring ethnic groups; they had no recourse but to rely on Moscow for mediation or protection. But by the same token, any weakness in Moscow could easily upset this precarious ethnic balance. Under Gorbachev, the system came to be tested in precisely this way.

### **Territorial Units of the USSR**

**Union Republics:** the largest ethnically-based republics, with external borders, flags, anthems and other attributes of sovereignty, and the formal right to secede from the USSR; with higher educational institutions in the language of the titular nationality; and with other ethnic/or administrative units subordinate to them.

**Autonomous Republic:** ethnically-based, constituent units of the union republics, no external border, lower level of educational institutions in titular language; often the titular nationality is not in majority.

**Autonomous oblast'**

**Autonomous okrug:** the smallest ethnically-based administrative units, titular nationality in minority, some level of control over national-cultural policy.

**Oblast':** A purely administrative territorial unit

**Krai:** An administrative territorial unit, may have a portion of external border and/or diverse ethnic territories.

With the exception of the union republics (independent since 1991), the Russian Federation has retained the territorial and ethnic structure of the Soviet era.

Source: Beyond the Monolith, ed. P. Stavrakis, J. DeBardeleben, (Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997)

## Questions and Issues:

What were the best examples of Stalin's gerrymandering of ethnic borders?

How did these areas fare during the collapse of the Soviet Union?

Have any of the Stalin-drawn borders for territorial units below the union republic level been changed since 1991? How and why?

**Suggested Reading:** J. Chinn, R. Kaiser, "Nationalities Policy in the USSR" in *Russians as the New Minority. Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Westview, 1996); Nadia Diuk, A. Karatnycky, *New Nations Rising. The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence* (Wiley, 1993).

## The Fall of the USSR: Causes and Consequences

### Economic Context: *Perestroika*

From his earliest 1985 campaigns against alcoholism and low worker productivity, Mikhail Gorbachev signaled a new and vigorous style of Soviet leadership. Coming to power after years "gerontocracy" and economic stagnation, Gorbachev was determined to modernize the Soviet Union and to stimulate its flagging economic performance. In order to achieve this aim, a *perestroika*—or restructuring—was required, not only in the industrial and agricultural sectors, but also in the way the centrally planned Soviet economy was managed. One of the greatest obstacles to *perestroika* was the overgrown, inflexible and corrupt bureaucracy. Gorbachev's answer to this problem was to lie in the decentralization of economic decision making.

### Political Context: *Glasnost*

As laid out by Gorbachev, *perestroika* fundamentally threatened the entrenched power of the Soviet bureaucracy and its political elite, the *nomenklatura*. A growing challenge to Gorbachev's reforms was mounted by a coalition of party and KGB "conservatives." To undercut them, Gorbachev launched a campaign of political openness, or *glasnost*. It was to allow the public and the media to voice their true opinions, to expose corruption and abuses of power. Such public openness would be a powerful political tool against the anti-reform functionaries. But once released, the budding freedom of expression was difficult to limit or to manipulate. By 1989, *glasnost*'s spread to areas that were not supposed to be open to public discussion: the fundamental tenets of socialism, the injustices of the Communist system, even the re-emerging nationalist sentiments of the Soviet Union's minorities. Gorbachev thus found himself between the rock of bureaucratic resistance and the hard place of mounting public pressure for reform. His response was to broaden the concept of *perestroika* to include experiments with limited free market,

further decentralization, and political democratization. To that purpose, sweeping electoral reforms were introduced and, between 1989 and 1990, local, republic, and Supreme Soviet elections brought a very different kind of political actors to power throughout the Soviet Union. The confrontation between the new legislators and the Soviet functionaries was to be played out in the next two years.

## National and Independence Movements

Perhaps the most important consequence of *glasnost*' was the ability of nationalist and independence movements within the republics to reach and mobilize their own populations. The most advanced and radical were the movements in the three Baltic republics, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. These independent countries were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union only in 1939-40, and consequently, had a more recent and stronger memory of a sovereign existence. In contrast to other national movements which at first focused on cultural and political "autonomy" within a reformed Soviet state, the Baltic activists pushed from the beginning for full national independence –and implicitly, for the break-up of the Soviet Union. With ethnic strife and protests spreading in the Caucasus, the Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalists soon espoused similar goals of independence. The central authorities intervened by force in Vilnius and in Tbilisi; but although brutal, these interventions were half-hearted and only fueled further resentment of Moscow. Even in the Russian Federal Republic, where in June 1991 Boris Yeltsin was elected president, the sentiment shifted against upholding the power of the Soviet center. The republics –including Russia –now wanted to run their own affairs.

It was the danger of a break-up along the ethnic lines that led Gorbachev to negotiate the so called **New Union Treaty** in the summer of 1991. At the same time, the threat to the survival of the Soviet state (and thus of his own power) had caused him to move closer to the conservative wing. By August 1991, with Lithuania openly declaring independence, the conservatives decided that only a military/police coup could halt the dissolution of central power. When the coup failed (mainly because it could not dislodge Yeltsin and was not backed by the majority of the armed forces), the Soviet power structures imploded. Declarations of independence from all fourteen republics followed within a month; their full diplomatic recognition as sovereign states came at the end of the year as Mikhail Gorbachev resigned his post and the Soviet Union was formally dissolved.

## Questions and Issues:

What role did Gorbachev and his attempted reforms play in the collapse of the USSR? What was the role of Yeltsin?

How were the ethnic, political and economic factors linked?

What was the specific importance of the international context, such as the defeat in Afghanistan, or the U.S. defense initiative?

**Suggested Reading:** Alexander Dallin, Gail Lapidus, eds., *The Soviet System: from Crisis to Collapse*

(Westview, 1995); Michael Dobbs, *Down with Big Brother. The Fall of the Soviet Empire*(Knapf, 1997).

## III. The Russian Federation Today

[Constitution and Federal Structure](#) | [Domestic Politics](#) | [Economic Structure](#) | [Society](#) | [National Security](#) | [Foreign Policy](#)



### Presidential System

Under the constitution passed in 1993, the president of the Russian Federation wields strong executive power. The government answers to him through the prime minister who has to be confirmed by the legislature; the armed forces and the Security Council answer to him directly. The president also has wide powers of appointment, from the Central Bank governor to the chair of the Constitutional Court. Few of these appointments require parliamentary confirmation. The president also has at his disposal the so-called presidential administration, a political/ bureaucratic apparatus which rivals in size and influence the government. Finally, under Vladimir Putin, the positions of seven presidential representatives were created to supervise federal institutions in the designated super-regions. The president serves a four-year term and is limited to two consecutive terms.

## The Legislature

With a strong executive, the legislature of the Russian Federation has proven to be a fractured and weak center of power. The 450-member lower house, the **Duma**, can only challenge the president when it musters a 2/3 majority of votes – a feat it has accomplished very rarely since 1993. Constitutionally, the Duma has the power of veto over the government's budget as well as the option of rejecting the president's choice of prime minister. If it does so three times (or passes a non-confidence vote twice) it can be dissolved by the president. In addition, the president is allowed to issue legally binding executive decrees, although only in areas not yet covered by Duma legislation.

The upper chamber – **the Federation Council** – includes ex officio regional governors and heads of regional assemblies, for a total of 178 members. The Council has the power to ratify international treaties. For the most part, the Council has been unwilling to challenge seriously the executive power.

## The Judiciary

The independence of the judiciary was severely limited during the Soviet era, when the law was seen as designed to protect the interest of the state. Consequently, the authority of the Russian judiciary is still relatively weak. Its top institution, the Constitutional Court (with 19 judges) passes judgment on cases involving federal law, the constitution, statutes and state treaties. It also settles disputes over the competence of different state bodies and branches of power. In this arena, it has shown a modicum of impartiality. The Supreme Court is the highest authority on civil, criminal and administrative law. Business disputes are heard before a Supreme Arbitration Court.

Generally, Russia follows the continental model of civil and criminal law codes. Recently, some regional courts have experimented with the introduction of a jury trial system in civil cases.

**Suggested Reading:** Lilia Shevtsova, Igor Klyamkin, *This Omnipotent, Impotent Government. The Evolution of the Political System in Post-Communist Russia* (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

## The Power Ministries

The Soviet Union's chief "power" institution was the KGB. Although its legal powers and responsibilities were never clearly defined, it performed the function of intelligence gathering, counterintelligence, as well as domestic surveillance and suppression of political dissent.

In the wake of the August 1991 coup, in which the KGB chief Kryuchkov took a leading role, President Yeltsin decided to split the KGB into several agencies, thus removing the future threat of the KGB as a decisive political player. The successor agencies took over distinct functions:

Foreign Security Service (**SVR**) -- foreign intelligence operations

Federal Security Service (**FSB**)-- domestic political, military and economic counterintelligence, teltaps, paramilitary units, surveillance, transportation security

Federal Agency for Government -- Communications intelligence

Communications (**FAPSI**)(cryptography and intercept) and government communications

Intelligence Directorate of -- intelligence collection element of

Federal Border Service (**FPS**)the border troops

Federal Protection Service (**FSO**)-- government guards and bodyguards, counterintelligence

State Technical Commission (GTK) -- denial and deception programs, information security, technical counter-intelligence arms control

[Source: CIA, unclassified]

### **Role of Provincial Governors and Local Authorities**

Beginning with the struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin prior to the fall of the USSR, central power in Russia devolved considerably to the regions. Since 1991 –and especially at the height of Yeltsin’s confrontation with the Duma in 1993 -- regional authorities have played a key role in the federal-level political struggles, often using the promise of support in exchange for additional rights and subsidies from the center. As a result, many regions have negotiated special bilateral agreements with Moscow which complement (and sometimes contradict) the statutes of the Federation Treaty of 1992. Resource-rich ethnic republics, such as Tatarstan or Sakha (Yakutia) have been the prime beneficiaries of these special arrangements. Today, fiscal burdens, control of local resources, level of subsidies and of political independence from the center vary so greatly from region to region in Russia that its system has been called an asymmetrical federation.

Since 1996, all regional governors have been elected through a direct vote. However, mirroring the balance of power at the federal level, most have built up strong executive powers at the expense of the local legislature. This state of political matters has proven to be all too conducive to corruption and abuse of power in many regions. President Putin’s recent efforts to re-establish the power of the central and federal authorities were depicted as aimed at precisely such local abuses.

**Suggested Reading:** *Beyond the Monolith. The Emergence of the Regions in Post-Soviet Russia*, eds. P. Stavrakis, J. DeBardeleben (Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997).

## **Domestic Politics**

## The Power of the Kremlin

From 1991, when he was first elected president of the Russian Federation, until his resignation in September of 1999 Boris Yeltsin dominated the domestic political landscape in Russia. Although under his watch important aspects of power devolved from the center to the regions, he laid the foundation for a strong presidential system in Russia. Yeltsin's struggle with the Communist-dominated legislature over the course of economic reform led to an armed confrontation in October of 1993. As a result of his victory, not only was the Duma disbanded and new elections called, but a new constitution –one tipping the balance of power in favor of the executive branch –was adopted by the end of the year.

This imbalance of power is often held responsible for the relative lack of accountability and transparency on the part of the Russian executive branch. While its size grew past the levels of the Soviet central bureaucracy, the Russian president's apparatus has come to be seen as the new, non-ideological but highly political, "party of power." In the run-up to the presidential elections of 1996, the party of power was widely perceived as cooperating with the emerging group of financial oligarchs to beat down the challenge of Gennadii Zhyuganov and the Communist Party. After Yeltsin's re-election, the dependency between the oligarchs and the Kremlin grew; it subsequently enmeshed Yeltsin's family and entourage –as well as a number of senior administration officials –in charges of corruption, favoritism, and inside-dealing.

With Yeltsin's health declining precipitously after 1996, Russia was left with a "super-presidential" system, but one in which the linchpin figure was missing from day-to-day governance. A quick succession of prime ministers and a collapse of the government's fiscal policies in August of 1998 bore witness to the instability of the political situation. Finally, in September 1999 Yeltsin and his advisers tapped the head of the Federal Security Service, Vladimir Putin, to become acting president. This solution was widely seen in Russia as the party of power's attempt to keep its hold on the executive apparatus and to protect its interests. The chief issue in Russian politics, therefore, is how long President Putin remains beholden to those who helped him come to power.

## Main Political Parties

Political parties in Russia are weak and poorly organized. While to some extent this is due to the pernicious political legacies of the Soviet system, it is also true that current laws in Russia make political fundraising and party-building difficult. Furthermore, the size and fragmentation of the country make grass-root organization a challenge. Mobilizing supporters depends entirely on the mass media, most of which are either state-controlled or beholden to the political interests of their owners. (See section on the media below).

Consequently, the political party scene in Russia is both volatile and fragmented. For instance, within months of Vladimir Putin's appointment as acting president, his supporters were able to organize a brand new pro-Kremlin coalition, the **Unity Party**, which won the second largest number of Duma seats in the December 1999 elections. By the same token, unsuccessful election contenders tend to fragment or

disappear altogether from the political scene, as did Yegor Gaidar's **Russia's Choice** after the 1993 loss. Only three parties in Russia have proven to be relatively stable and electorally successful: the Communist Party, the Liberal-Democratic Party, and Yabloko. Still, even these stalwarts remain dependent on a political personality rather than grass-root strength or popularity of their programs. As the most poignant example, the Yabloko party's name is derived from that of its leader, Grigorii Yavlinskii.

### **The main political parties represented in the current Duma:**

#### **The Communist Party of the Russian Federation (114 seats)**

Successor to the CPSU, launched in 1993 and led by Gennady Zhyuganov. CPRF remains Russia's largest party with over 500,000 members and 20,000 organizational 'cells'. Undercutting its power is the growing ideological and political incoherence and internal divisions among the social-democrats, Stalinists, and ultra-nationalists. Its estimated base of support (approx. 20 –25%) will continue to diminish as it relies on the oldest segments of the population.

#### **Unity Party (73 seats)**

The pro-Kremlin coalition founded in 1999; lacks a program and focused its campaign on the war in Chechnya and the need for strong authority in Russia. Leaders are Sergei Shoigu (Minister of Emergency Situations) and Alexandr Karelin.

#### **Fatherland –All Russia (66 seats)**

Centered around the former prime minister Yevgenii Primakov and Mayor of Moscow Iurii Luzhkov, it enjoyed strong support of regional leaders. However, its political ambitions were diminished by the ascent of the new party of power, Unity.

#### **Union of Right Forces(29 seats)**

A coalition of pro-reformist forces and successor to such parties as Russia's Choice and Democratic Choice of Russia. Its leaders include former prime ministers Sergei Kiriyenko and Yegor Gaidar, and former governor of Nizhny Novgorod, Boris Nemtsov. The Union is more pro-Putin than other reformist parties.

#### **Yabloko (20 seats)**

A liberal, Western-style party founded by Grigorii Yavlinskii in 1993. Supporting broad economic reforms, Yabloko was often the most outspoken critic of the policies of the Russian government.

#### **Liberal-Democratic Party/Zhirinovskii Bloc(17 seats)**



Headed by the flamboyant nationalist, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the misnamed Liberal-Democratic Party has been a voice of ultra-nationalist sentiments, but tended to vote with the Kremlin on most issues. Its share of popular vote has diminished since 1993 (from 23% to 6%), but it has outlived most other parties in Russia.

**Suggested Reading:** Sarah Oates, "The 1999 Russian Duma Election," *Problems of Post-Communism* (June 2000); Michael McFaul, N. Petrov, "The Changing Role of Elections in Russian Politics" in *Russia After Communism*, ed. A. Aslund, M. Olcott (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

### **Role of the Media**

Despite a growing role of local and regional news outlets, in the sphere of politics Russia continues being dominated by the central, Moscow-based media. Here, too, the role of the electronic media –especially of the national television networks –has become disproportionate. The nature of the ownership and editorial policies of these crucial news outlets remains murky, however.

In the Soviet era, electronic and print media were state-owned and subject to strictest political oversight by the party apparatus. In the post-1991 period, most of these outlets were allowed to be privatized, although the Russian government retained the controlling stake in all national television networks (Gusinsky's NTV is an exception as it was a privately owned entity from the outset.) Many newspapers were initially bought out by their editors and employees; soon, however, they were under financial pressure. By 1996, key print and electronic outlets were controlled by the so-called oligarchs and their financial-industrial groups, and problems with editorial independence, credibility of reporting and the use of "compromising materials" escalated.

After Vladimir Putin's nomination as acting president, a serious confrontation with the oligarchs over the control of the media began to unfold. It was spurred both by the Duma and presidential election campaigns and by the press' coverage of the war in Chechnya. The ongoing struggle between the government and the oligarchs does not bode well for the interests of free and independent media in Russia.

**Suggested Reading:** Ellen Mickiewicz, *Changing Channels: Television and the Struggle for Power in Russia* (Oxford, 1997), N. Petrov, "Putin and the media: No love lost," *East European Constitutional Review* (Winter/Spring 2000).

### **The Oligarchs, FIGs and Business Groups**

Trade-unions and broad-based business organizations have not fared well in the post-Soviet Russia. Following the pattern of the political parties, they remain under-developed and carry little political clout. By contrast, several business "empires" which emerged during the era of privatization have come to exercise a disproportionate role in Russian politics, finance, and economic policies.

These FIGs –financial-industrial groups –are generally dominated by either large banks or energy companies that have acquired stakes in industrial enterprises as a result of often murky privatization deals. Among the most powerful are:

**Gazprom:**RAO Gazprom (the natural gas monopoly), GazpromBank, media

**Oneximbank:**Svyazinvest (telecom), Sidanco (oil), Norilsk Nickel, Zil (autos), Izvestia (media); led by V. Potanin, Oneximbank managed the shares-for –loans program of 1995-96.

**LogoVAZ:**Sibneft (oil), Aeroflot, Logovaz (autos), stakes in TV6 and ORT; controlled by B. Berezovsky

**Most:**NTV, Moscow Radio Echo, Segodnya (newspaper), cable and satellite facilities. Led by V. Gusinsky

**Alfa:**Alfa Bank, oil, power generation, construction, aluminum.

**Menatep:** Yukos (oil), Rosporm holding company, stakes in ORT.

**Lukoil:**varied oil producing assets in Russia as well as within CIS.

After the financial collapse of August 1998, many of the powerful banks behind the FIGs have been undercut and struggle for survival. The energy-based groups, however, continue wielding significant influence.

### NGO's and Civic Society

One more legacy of the Soviet system lies in its destruction of the horizontal links within the Russian society such as professional and trade unions, and civic and voluntary organizations. In their absence, the effort to build a vibrant and effective civic society faces an uphill battle. While Western government and non-government assistance has borne some fruit, the number of Russian non-governmental organizations remains low. They tend to concentrate on areas of the most immediate concern for the citizens: health, environment, social issues, education. Because venues for political pressure are few, Russian NGO's often take recourse in legal action. This becomes a challenge in itself due to the weakness of the legal system in Russia.

**Suggested Reading:** A. Aslund, M. Olcott, eds., *Russia After Communism*(Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

## **Economic Structure**

### Aims and results of economic reforms

The Russian Federation inherited an economic disaster, where short-term problems such as shortages, hyper-inflation and a GDP fall of 50% (1989-1996) vied for attention with long-term structural dysfunction. Among the most serious burdens left by the Soviet economic system were the predominance of heavy industry, a moribund agriculture, the disproportionate size of the military-oriented economy, industry and infrastructure designed with no concern for profitability or efficiency, and finally, pernicious bureaucracy which controlled the centralized system of command economy.

An attempt to tackle all these issues through a radical "**shock therapy**" was the initial goal of **Yegor Gaidar**, Yeltsin's Prime Minister in 1992. His most important aims included:

**Liberalization** of prices to restore the allocative function of the market;

**Stabilization** of currency to control inflation, assure affordable interest rates and a manageable budget deficit;

**Internationalization** of the economy by lowering trade barriers, subsidies, elimination of export licenses, opening up to trade and investment;

**Structural reform** with privatization, breaking of state monopolies, and building stronger ownership rights.

Gaidar was unable to adhere to this program of reforms due to the opposition from the Duma and from the managers of the threatened state sectors. The overall aims of his program were to be preserved over the next years, but neither the pace nor the radical reach of his initial proposals were maintained.

### Questions and Issues:

What was the role of the international financial institutions in Russia? More than in any other transition economy, the role of the International Monetary Fund, and to a lesser extent, of the World Bank, have come under heavy political criticism both in Russia and in the West. While its participation in stabilizing the Russian currency and streamlining Russia's fiscal policy has been crucial, the IMF and its loans have also been blamed for reducing the financial pressure on the Russian government to continue a strong pace of reforms. The issue of international and U.S. assistance programs in the Former Soviet Union in general is the topic of a growing number of articles and books, reflecting continuing questions about the successes and failures of economic reforms in Russia.

**Suggested Reading:** N. Davies, N. Woods, "Russia and the IMF," *International Affairs* (1/1999), Janine Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western aid to Eastern Europe* (St. Martin's, 1998).

### Privatization

The process of privatization in Russia was and remains a monumental task which involves shifting one of the world's biggest economies from state to private ownership. It has been a chaotic, poorly managed, and opaque process, whose economic and political fall-out remain among the chief problems in Russia.

Privatization in Russia occurred in two distinct phases. The first phase relied on a system of vouchers which were issued to all citizens of the Russian Federation and entitled them to a share in privatized enterprises. This process led to dispersed ownership and buying-out of shares; as a result, control of most privatized entities remained in the hands of their management.

Between 1995 to 1998, the cash-strapped Russian government reverted to selling shares in the most valuable, state-owned enterprises in order to raise revenue. However, due to a high proportion of inside deals (look above at the section on the oligarch/party of power alliance before the 1996 presidential election) many industrial assets were sold at very low prices, or even in exchange for cash loans to the government (the shares-for-loans program). By 1997, intensifying competition between the FIGs for control of the remaining assets erupted into public scandals and mutual accusations of inside deals; as a result, the government improved the transparency of the process, opened it to foreign participation, and raised the prices of auctioned assets. The pace of privatization has slowed down since 1998 due to the financial and banking collapse.

### **Questions and Issues:**

What are the assessments of the "shock therapy" and privatization programs in Russia?

Both reform programs have become targets of criticism in Russia and increasingly in the West for their lack of transparency, inability to build political and popular support, and above all, for insensitivity to their social impact. While valid, these criticisms must apply to the "gradualists" who controlled Russia's economic policies since 1993 as much as to Gaidar and other proponents of radical reform.

**Suggested Reading:** J. Blasi, M. Kroumova, *Kremlin Capitalism: Privatizing the Russian Economy* (Cornell, 1977); Anders Aslund, "Economic Reform vs. Rent Seeking" in *Russia After Communism*, ed. A. Aslund, M. Olcott, (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

### **Main Economic Actors**

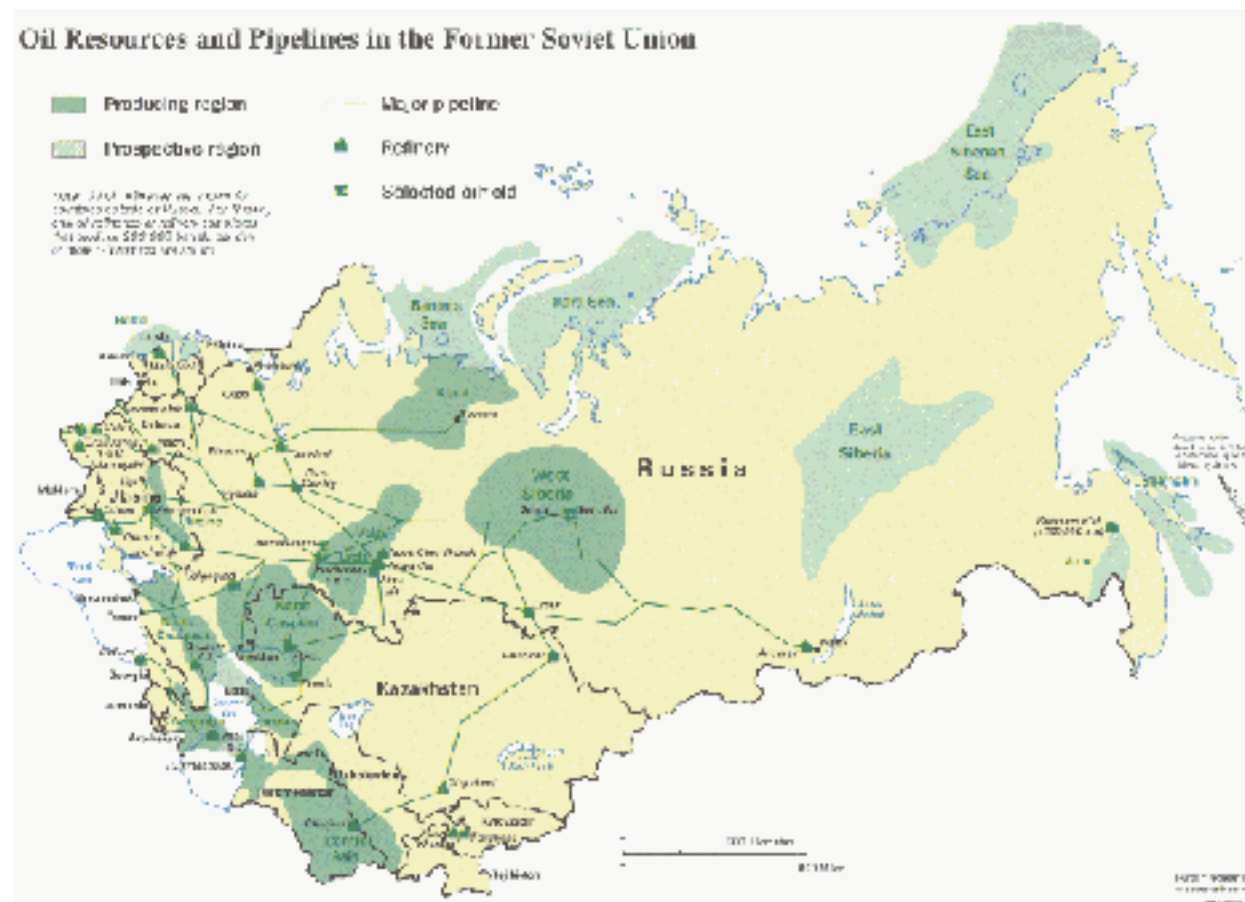
#### **Energy Industry**

Russia's exceptional endowment in natural resources helps it account for 10% of world's proven reserves of oil (and 10% of world's production of oil); 30% of world's production of natural gas, and 10% of hard coal. In addition, relatively few enterprises control the extraction and transportation of energy resources. For this reason, Gazprom (which owns production sites as well as all gas pipelines), Lukoil, and a handful of other energy producers play a disproportionate role in the Russian trade and economy.

By contrast, the huge coal mining sector remains in profound crisis, due to inefficiency, lack of investment, and physical deterioration of plants.

## Extraction Industry

Statistics for Russia's metal and mineral industries are almost as impressive as in the energy sector. Russia holds 14% of world's iron ore and 15% of the non-ferrous ores. Production is even more concentrated: Norilsk Nickel produces about 1/3 of world's nickel and 40% of its platinum. The diamond giant Almazay Rossii-Sakha controls 25% of world production. The collapse of domestic demand for these metals and minerals has led to sharply increased exports abroad.



## Manufacturing

The manufacturing base in Russia remains energy-intensive, technologically backward and heavily skewed toward defense industries. Many enterprises have become competitive (especially in the better-capitalized auto industry and in arms manufacturing), but for the most part they continue the pattern of value-subtracting production. In the wake of the August 1998 collapse of the ruble, some areas of light industry (food and paper processing) have been able to benefit from export substitution, providing a brighter spot in the industrial landscape of Russia.

## Construction

Chronic housing shortage has been a staple of Soviet life. The pent-up demand for housing construction has been hampered however by a slow privatization of the construction companies. By 1997, privately-held companies accounted for 48.7% of the construction industry. Nonetheless, the building booms that have touched Russian cities, most notably Moscow, make construction industry one of the better positioned sectors in Russia.

## **Financial Services**

The first non-state banks were formed in 1988 as the so-called cooperatives. In the early 1990's, during the prolonged triple-digit inflation, these banks experienced explosive and poorly regulated growth, reaching the number of 2,500 by 1994. Most of them began having difficulties after Russia's currency was stabilized and easy speculative profits ended. The devaluation and default of August 1998 further wrecked the sector, forcing more than half the banks into liquidation. The restructuring of the banking sector is to take place under the supervision of the Russian Central Bank and the new Agency for Restructuring Credit Organizations.

## **Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing**

The legacy of Soviet collectivization is an inefficient, mismanaged and undercapitalized agricultural sector, still completely dependent on state support. Land reform has been stalled in the Duma (land still cannot be treated as normal commodity in Russia). Meanwhile, the area under cultivation continues to shrink, and yields on major crops have declined: for instance, the output of grain declined by 59% (1990-98), that of potatoes by 29%. The harvest of 1998 has been the worst year yet. Under such circumstances, any attempt to streamline the subsidies and reward financial success in the sector has had to be put on hold for political reasons.

After a decline in production, the forest-product industry is in much better position due to a healthy growth in the export of timber, cellulose and paper.

**Source :**The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile: Russia, 1999/2000*

**Suggested Reading:** The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Russia*

## **Structural Challenges:**

In the wake of the 1998 financial collapse, the Russian economy has shown stronger growth as a result of weak ruble and historically high prices of oil. Underlying structural problems remain to be solved.

Among them are:

**Unreformed industrial sector:** inefficient, value-subtracting enterprises are subsidized, bankruptcies not enforced; investments is sorely lacking;

**State budget and fiscal policies:** despite cuts in social sectors, federal budget remains too large in relation to the GDP;

**Tax code:** inconsistent and unfair tax code promotes evasion, poor tax collection remains a grave fiscal problem for the government;

**Barter and non-payment** among enterprises: barter has reached 50% among Russian enterprises, 40% in their tax payment; such de-monetization of the economy is highly inefficient and builds additional debt.

**Business environment:** corporate governance is not transparent, ownership rights are often unclear and difficult to protect legally; this is one of the chief obstacles to increased direct foreign investment in Russia;

**Shadow Economy:** is growing as recovering enterprises and individuals seek to evade punishing taxation; this also includes a sizable proportion of strictly illegal activities.

**Suggested Reading:** Barry Ickes, Clifford Gaddy, *"Beyond Bailout: Time to Face Reality About Russia's 'Virtual Economy'"*, Brookings Institution (December 1998); The Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Report: Russia* (<http://www.fggm.osis.gov/EIU/cr9ru400>)

## Society

### Health and Demographic Trends

The Russian Federation faces a serious demographic crisis. The combination of low birthrate (8.6 per 1000 in 1997) and high mortality rate (13.8 per 1000 in 1997) have raised the specter of a precipitous decline in Russia's population (the population has declined from 148.7 m in 1992 to 147.1 m in 1999). The roots of this crisis clearly reach back to the Soviet era, but its specific causes have been properly documented and studied only after 1991. In particular, scholars following demographic and health issues in Russia point to such factors as the falling life expectancy of males (58 in 1999, due to alcohol and tobacco-related deaths, heart disease, and cancer), worsening reproductive health of women (which contributes to higher infant mortality and poor health of the newborns), and high rate of infertility and/or abortion. A combination of severe environmental pollution, poverty and deterioration of health and social safety systems have all been blamed for these alarming trends.

The population remains mostly urban (73.9%), although a large proportion of these urban dwellers live in small, isolated towns. The Russian population is also aging: the proportion of those below 15 year fell from 24 to 22 % between 1991 and 1997; while that of population above 64 rose from 19 to 20%. Consequently, the number of pensioners has risen by 14% in the same period, reaching 262 per 1000 population. It is that part of the population who has borne the brunt of the economic decline and the falling standard of living.

## Poverty, Social Safety and Healthcare

A collapsing economy and long periods of inflation have had a devastating effect on the living standards in Russia. Some 20% of the population had fallen below the official poverty line by 1997; the financial collapse of August 1998 brought that number to 28%. The average wage fell additional 40% in that year. Moreover, income inequality grew throughout the 1990's. The average income of the top 10% was 13.4 times that of the bottom 10% in 1998, as opposed to 3.5 times in the Soviet era. The only silver lining to these official statistics may lie in underreporting of income by most families to avoid taxes, and in their ability to produce their own food on the wide-spread private garden plots.

The social safety net remains unreformed. It is organized along egalitarian lines of the Soviet era and does not rely on need-based criteria. It continues to include extensive housing and energy subsidies, as well as health care (20% health insurance tax was introduced in 1994). The large state-funded health care system, however, has been seriously damaged by severe budget cuts and general deterioration of infrastructure. Staff in state medical facilities are underpaid and often hit by wage arrears; as a result, patients are required to pay bribes for a modicum of medical care.

**Suggested Reading:** Judyth Twigg, *Russian Health Status in the 1990's: National Trends and Regional Variation*(NCEEER Paper (Title VIII), June 2000)

## Environment

Environmental degradation has been one of the most serious concerns to emerge after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As with health issues, environmental problems had not begun in 1991; however fuller reporting and a partial lifting of secrecy surrounding the Soviet-era nuclear, chemical and biological programs has moved these problems to the center of public, if not official, concern.

Among the most serious aspects of environmental degradation in Russia are:

**Water:** limited potability of fresh water supplies due to bacterial and chemical pollution; heavy metal pollution in rivers now impacting open seas (especially the Arctic Ocean);

**Air pollution:** especially in large industrial cities, heavy lead, solid particles, CFS, sulfur dioxide and other dioxins due to ineffective (or absent) scrubbing equipment;

**Soil pollution:** overuse of pesticides and fertilizers, heavy chemical pollution;

**De-forestation:** serious forest cover loss due to clear-cutting in Siberia;

**Bio-Chemical hazards:** concerns over improper storage of bio-chemical materials by the former military/industrial facilities;



**Nuclear hazards:** concerns over safety of the nuclear power industry, secure storage of nuclear material and safe disposal of nuclear wastes (submarines, etc.)

In 1997, the Ministry of Environmental Protection was abolished and its tasks were given to the Ministry of Natural Resources, which is also responsible for overseeing the extractive and mining industries.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Environmental Atlas of the Russian Federation*, ed. Murray Feshbach (1997).

## Education

Despite social stresses, the population of the Russian Federation remains relatively well educated. By 1998, there were 3.25 million students in Russia and 880 institutions of higher learning. Since 1991, many of them became private and focus on commercially oriented qualifications. At the same time, a decade of national economic decline has hurt the quality of Russian state education. Teachers have been among the hardest hit by wage arrears, large numbers of the highest-caliber professors leaving the public for the private sector.

## Women's Issues

Women have been hit the hardest by the economic decline and social stresses. A high proportion of women-led households is below the poverty level. Level of health in general, and reproductive health in particular, show alarming declines due among others to sharp increase in the cases of sexually transmitted diseases. Among the most troubling aspects of women's social situation is the growth of human trafficking in women and girls in Russia. Controlled by organized crime groups, trafficking in women has increased throughout the 1990's and has become a prominent human rights and consular issue in Europe and, increasingly, the U.S.

In the political arena, few women's rights organizations exist; Women of Russia –the most prominent among them –failed to clear the 5% vote threshold in the 1999 Duma elections. The most active women's group today is Soldiers' Mothers. Its focus has been on the war in Chechnya and the treatment of the conscripts in the Russian army.

## **National Security**

### National Security Concept

An official and revised National Security Concept was signed as a decree by Vladimir Putin in January 2000. This document –outlining broad guidelines rather than concrete policy prescriptions –is notable for several reasons:

**Threat assessment** continues to focus on domestic factors, especially economic crisis, social problems,

and lack of law and order. This, combined with the separatist drive in Chechnya (classified as terrorism), is seen as the main threat to the territorial integrity of the Federation.

**Enhanced role of the state** is stressed in economic as well as political/social spheres, and in areas such as strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption and crime.

**Opposition to the unipolar world system** is a chief diplomatic Russian goal. The unipolar world -- i.e. the U.S.-dominated international system and institutions -- are seen as a threat to the multipolar world of "collective management" in world affairs; Russia will actively cooperate with states that oppose "U.S. hegemony" and "arbitrary U.S. /NATO use of force".

**Reliance on nuclear weapons** is required to compensate for the severely weakened Russian conventional force. The new concept relaxes the criteria for the use of nuclear weapons compared to the doctrines of 1993 and 1997.

Continued stress on **arms control and nuclear non-proliferation** regimes, including adapting old agreements and developing new ones to reflect "the new conditions in international relations."

**Suggested Reading:** Stephen Blank, "Preconditions for a Russian RMA: Can Russia Make the Transition?" *National Security Studies Quarterly* (Vol VI, issue 2, 2000)

## Armed Forces

Russia remains the world's second largest nuclear power, but its conventional force has declined dramatically in almost all areas. While the Russian armed forces still rely on universal draft, they have shrunk from the 1992 levels of 2.7 million to 1.24 million in 1997. In the Defense Ministry's blueprint for military reform, a smaller and better equipped professional army is foreseen, but the additional funds required for such a wholesale restructuring are lacking and in recent years even the budgeted levels have often not been disbursed. As a result, the military personnel have often faced shortages of equipment, fuel, electricity, and even food.

This pattern of "benign neglect" of the armed forces, established under President Yeltsin, may change under the Putin administration. The successful military prosecution of the conflict in Chechnya was one of his priorities; consequently, he has officially committed to increasing the funding for the armed forces, including funds for the military reform as well as purchase of new equipment and weapons systems. These plans, however, clearly hinge on the economic turnaround in the country.

## **Russian Military Forces in 1997:**

Army: 420,000

Navy: 220,000

Air Force: 130,000

Air Defense: 170,000

Strategic Nuclear Forces: 149,000

Paramilitary: 583,000

Reserves: 20,000,000

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1998/99*

**Suggested Reading:** Roy Allison, "The Russian Armed Forces: Structures, roles and policies" in *Russia and Europe*, ed. V. Baranovsky (1994)

**Suggested Resource:** *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* (Frank Cass, London)

### Arms Control and Nuclear Non-Proliferation

According to the new National Security Concept, arms control –especially non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction –holds a prominent place in Russia's security policy. Russia is intent on halting its decline as a world power and to that effect is eager to preserve its status as one of the five "official" nuclear powers. It is also true that Russia's exports of dual-use and nuclear technology to such states as Iran, Iraq and India puts these official statements into question. [See section below on weapons and nuclear technology exports.]

At the same time, Russian policy makers have recognized that both its domestic resources and international conditions have changed drastically since 1991. As Nikolai Sokov from the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies put it, "the agreements concluded during or immediately after the Cold War were adequate for a superpower, but are awkward for Russia today. Some are too restrictive on Russia, while others insufficiently restrict Russia's neighbors and rivals." Consequently, Russia "intends to adapt the existing arms-control agreements to the new conditions" and "develop, as necessary, new agreements." (START III treaty would seem to fall into this category).

**Suggested Reading:** Nikolai Sokov, "Russia's New Concept of National Security," *East European Constitutional Review* (Winter/Spring 2000).

### Weapons and Nuclear Technology Exports

With orders from the Russian military at a historical low, the Russian defense industry has turned to exports to ensure the survival of their production and research/development capacities. As a result, Russia has become the second largest arms exporter in the world, focusing above all on China, India, the Near East and South-East Asia. Its exports range from small firearms to the state-of-the-art weapons systems, including Sukhoi 27 and nuclear submarines.

Along with the conventional arms trade, a number of Russian institutions (including the Ministry of Atomic Energy) have been involved in dual-technology and nuclear technology sales, which have called into question Russia's commitment to non-proliferation and caused the U.S. to threaten sanctions against

Russian parties involved in those deals. While some of such export contracts may have been due to simple financial considerations, others –like the exports to Iraq and India -- reflect Russia's foreign policy priorities.

## Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation



### Russia and the CIS

The rise of 15 independent states out of the territories historically controlled by Moscow has presented the greatest discontinuity and challenge for Russian foreign policy. In numerous statements, presidents Yeltsin and Putin stressed that "integration" of the territories of the former Soviet Union and preservation of a Russian sphere of influence are a vital national interest of the Federation. Neither president has suggested the use of military means; rather, further economic, political and defense integration is presented as the chief objective.

At the same time, Russia has had little or no means of economic or political leverage in the region to achieve such ambitious goals. The Commonwealth of Independent States has proved to be a better forum for resisting regional Russian initiatives than for pushing them through. Although a large number of CIS agreements have been signed, they remain unenforced due to lack of agreement on any common mechanisms. And, in a sign of Russia's decreasing influence within the CIS, six countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova) have created an unofficial coordinating group to promote

their economic and security interests vis a vis Russia and other international players.

## **The History of the CIS**

**July 1991:** Gorbachev attempts to negotiate the New Union Treaty among the 15 Soviet republics to replace the existing Union

**August 1991:** Unsuccessful hard-liners' coup, aimed against N.U.T.

**Fall 1991:** All fifteen republics declare independence

**December 8, 1991:** Yeltsin (Russia), Kravchuk (Ukraine), and Shushkevitch (Belarus) announce in the Belovezhska agreement the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States as a "coordinating body."

**December 21, 1991:** CIS is joined by the non-Slavic republics: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan; Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. Georgia and the Baltic states decline to join.

**1992:** Minsk becomes the official site of the CIS "coordination center."

In light of the difficulties in using the CIS as a tool of its regional policy, Russia has turned to bilateral relations with the immediate neighbors as well as other former Soviet republics. Here, Russian foreign policy-makers have more points of leverage at their disposal. Peace-keeping forces and regional security issues play a key role in Russia's relations with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Energy dependence is a prominent issue in Russia's relations with Ukraine and Belarus. Increasingly, then, Russia's relations with its neighbors cannot be defined in group terms, but must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis.

**Suggested Reading:** M. Olcott, A. Aslund, *Getting It Wrong: Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Carnegie Endowment, 2000).

## **Multilateral Relations**

Integration into the global economic system and a desire to maintain "a multipolar world" form two distinct objectives of Russian foreign policy in the arena of multilateral relations.

In its relations with the G7, the European Union, and the International Financial Institutions, Russia has stressed its desire to enter the WTO in order to boost its international trade and foreign investment. However, full integration has been hampered by Russia's insistence on protecting domestic producers and on regulating foreign firm operations. It has also been undermined by continued barriers to some Russian exports in Europe and the U.S. As a result, Russia has discussed a shift of its economic priorities

from the West to the CIS.

In the area of traditional diplomacy, Russia has raised the banner of resistance to the "unipolar world" dominated by the U.S. and NATO. It stresses that such multilateral organizations as the United Nations' Security Council and the OSCE have lost control over the international use of force, with the Kosovo intervention used as the most vivid example. Consequently, Russia sees "the collective management" of international affairs as seriously threatened. To halt this tendency, Russia has increasingly cooperated with China, India, Iran, and other nonaligned countries.

## Questions and Issues

How did Moscow's foreign policy making evolve after the Soviet collapse?

Russian foreign policy establishment has experienced serious changes and challenges since the end of the Soviet Union. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs became more transparent and sensitive to domestic public opinion under its first minister, the liberal and pro-Western Andrei Kozyrev. Since his departure in 1995, however, the Ministry saw a resurgence of the traditional great power-based diplomacy, especially under the leadership of Yevgenii Primakov and his hand-picked successor, Ivan Ivanov.

At the same time, the decision-making process in Russia has seen

unprecedented influence of domestic economic and political actors. In particular, energy producers (Lukoil, Gazprom) with interests abroad, arms exporters, the nuclear industry, and even some regional leaders, have been able to shape the debate on issues relevant to their interests. This growing role of the independent economic actors may temper statist impulses of Vladimir Putin's foreign policy.

**Suggested Reading:** Celeste Wallander, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions in Russian Foreign Policy" and other essays in *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy After the Cold War*, ed. C. Wallander (Westview Press, 1997)

## Relations with the United States:

Relations with the United States have lost their elevated and exclusive character of the Cold War era. While Russia has sought to avoid serious disagreements with the U.S., it has increasingly put its geo-strategic interests ahead of a special bilateral "partnership."

From Russia's perspective, the United States remains a crucial interlocutor in arms control, monetary and trade issues. In the area of diplomacy, by contrast, Russia insists on placing the U.S. in a multilateral context, where Russia's relations with other countries may leverage its weakened position vis a vis the U.S. This is seen as the rationale behind Vladimir Putin's European tour in the wake of the U.S. debate on the Missile Defense Initiative; as well as the main driving force of Russia's expanding partnership

with China.

Among the most important issues on the Russo-American agenda are:

**Security structures** in Europe and the second wave of NATO expansion;

**Arms Control:** START III and national missile defense initiative;

**WTO,** trade access and direct foreign investment.

**Suggested Reading:** P. Stavrakis, "After The Fall: U.S.-Russia Relations"; Thomas Graham, "Reflections on U.S. Policy Toward Russia," *East European Constitutional Review* (Winter/Spring, 2000)

## Russia and Europe

In contrast to its relations with the U.S., Europe's relative importance in Russian foreign policy has increased since the Cold War. Changes in European security structure and economic/political integration on the continent are of direct interest to the Russian Federation. Since 1991, the enlargement of NATO, the proposed expansion of the European Union, and finally, the NATO intervention in Kosovo, have all caused serious tensions.; however, Russia remained engaged through a variety of older and new mechanisms, such as NATO observer status or participation in the Contact Group.

Economic factors -- from debt restructuring (via the London and the Paris Clubs) to trade and investment -- have also come to greater prominence in the Russian-European relations.

**Suggested Reading:** Russian Policies on Central and Eastern Europe: An Overview" in *European Security* (Autumn 1999); Stephen Blank, ed., *NATO after Enlargement: New Challenges, New Missions, New Forces* (Institute for Strategic Studies, 1998).

## Russia in Asia

In the Soviet era, Russian involvement in Asia was extensive and deep: from the troubled relationship with China and an active role in the Korean conflict, to close ties in South-East Asia and a warm relationship with India. Today, Russia's foreign policy in the region has been hampered by its weak economic position. The centerpiece of Russia's Asia policy is the deepening partnership with China. It is built on extensive weapons exports and cooperation in multilateral diplomacy. However, as both sides acknowledge, economic ties between the two countries have been slow to develop while long-term demographic trends create more areas of potential problems (such as legal and illegal Chinese migration into Primorskii Krai in the Far East).

Relations with Japan have also been a disappointment, especially in the economic area. Japanese direct investment, as well as levels of government assistance, have been low due to the unresolved territorial

dispute with Russia over the South Kurile Islands.

Weapons trade is also the chief component of Russia's relations with the Koreans, and to some extent, with India. On October 3, 2000, the two countries signed a strategic partnership agreement which stressed their dedication to elimination of nuclear weapons and close cooperation at the U.N. However, as long as India perceives Russian policy as tilted toward China, the latter's long-term hope of a Russo-Indian-Chinese "strategic triangle" will remain weak.

**Suggested Reading:** Sherman Garnett, ed. *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China relations in a Changing Asia* (Carnegie Endowment, 2000).

## IV. Resources

*Readers' Guides for Russia, Russian Culture, and*

*Russian Foreign Policy* are available at the School of Professional and Area Studies/FSI.

### Works of Reference:

*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)

*An Ethnohistorical Dictionary of the Russian and Soviet Empires* (Greenwood, 1994)

### Suggested Periodicals:

*Asia Week Magazine*

*Current History*

*East European Constitutional Review*

*European Security*

*Foreign Affairs*

*Foreign Policy*

*Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs*

*Post-Soviet Affairs*

*Post-Soviet Geography*

*Problems of Post-Communism*

*Russian Review*

*Russian Social Science Review*

*Slavic Review*

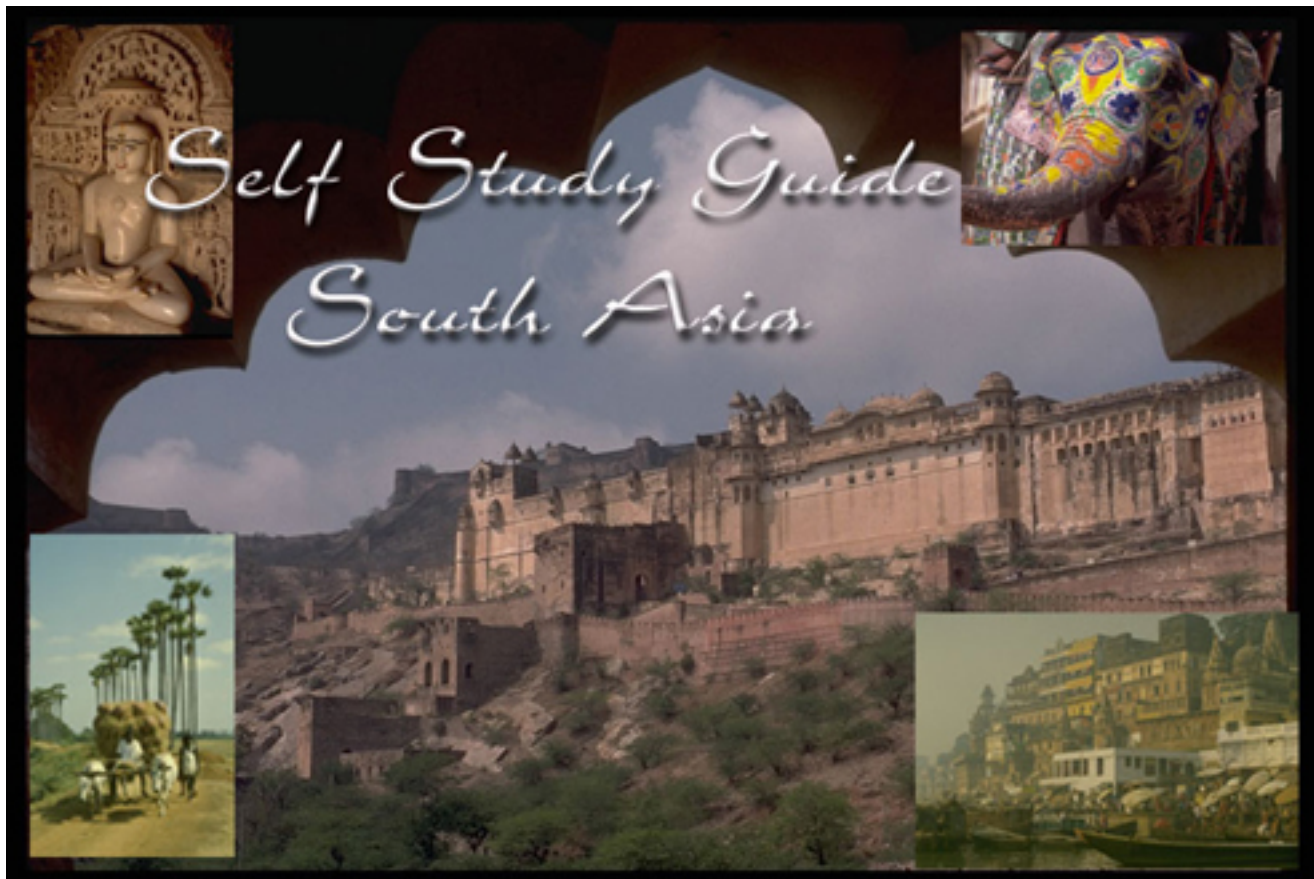
### Web Resources

For a broad array of web sites relating to Russia and to the USG policies and programs in the region see



the Russia Page on the FSI/School of Professional and Area Studies Intranet Page:

On the Student Internet Computers, click here: [10.0.2.2./spas/as/euro\\_rus/russia.htm](10.0.2.2./spas/as/euro_rus/russia.htm) On FSI openet, click here: [fsi.state.gov/spas/as/euro\\_rus/russia.htm](fsi.state.gov/spas/as/euro_rus/russia.htm)



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# INTRODUCTION

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# CHRONOLOGY

## B.C.E.

- c. 3000-1500 Indus Valley Civilization
- c. 2000-1400 Aryan migrations into the subcontinent
- c. 1500-600 Vedic Period, composition of the four Vedas, the Brahmanas and the early Upanishads, and the earliest parts of the Mahabharata and

## Ramayana

- c. 500 Earliest Hindu law books, dharma shastras
- c. 563-483 Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha
- c. 542-458 Magadha Empire
- c. 468 Death of Vardhamana Mahavira, last great Jain teacher
- 327-325 Invasion by Alexander the Great of Macedon
- c. 322-185 Maurya dynasty founded by Chandragupta I (c. 322-298)
- c. 300 Artha Shastra, "Treatise on Means," by Kautilya
- c. 273-237 Ashoka Maurya
- c. 247 King Devanampiya Tissa of Ceylon converted to Buddhism
- c. 185-173 Shunga Dynasty
- c. 170-165 Yueh-chi invade subcontinent
- c. 100-200 Rise of Mahayana Buddhism
- c. 90 Shaka (Scythian) invasions

## C.E.

- c. 78-101 Kanishka
- c. 300-500 Gupta Period, Nestorian Christians (Syrian) settled in Cochin
- c. 300-888 Pallava dynasty in Kanchi
- c. 454-495 Huna invasions
- c. 400-500 Kama Sutra by Vatsyayana
- c. 405 Fa-hsien, Chinese pilgrim, arrives in Magadha (Bihar)
- c. 500 Six orthodox Hindu systems of philosophy established
- c. 550-753 Western Chalukyas in Deccan
- c. 629-645 Hsuan-tsang, Chinese pilgrim, visits subcontinent
- c. 630-970 Eastern Chalukyas
- c. 700-800 Buddhism spreads to Tibet
- c. 760-1142 Palas of Bihar and Bengal
- c. 907-1310 Chola Empire at Tanjore
- 997-1026 Invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni
- c. 1192 Prithivi Raj Chauhan, King of Delhi, defeated by Shahab-ud-Din

## Ghorid dynasty in Delhi

- c. 1000-1200 Buddhism disappears from subcontinent as organized religion
- 1136-1565 Vijayanagar Empire
- c. 1542 Francis Xavier, Catholic missionary, arrives in India
- 1211-1236 Reign of Iltutmish, first sultan of Delhi

1266-1287 Balban, consolidator of Delhi sultanate  
1296-1316 Ala al-din Khalji  
1306-1310 Bhamani sultanate in Deccan  
1325-1352 Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq  
1251-1288 Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq  
1398 Invasion of Timur and sack of Delhi  
1451-1526 Lodi sultanate in Delhi  
1492 Vasco da Gama lands in Malabar  
1496 Birth of Guru Nanak, first guru of the Sikhs  
1526 First Battle of Panipat, Babur defeats Lodis

Mughal empire founded

1555 Humayun resumes reign in Delhi  
1556 Accession of Akbar  
1600 Charter of incorporation granted to East India Company

Elizabeth I

1605-1627 Reign of Jahangir  
1627-1658 Reign of Shah Jahan  
1639 Fort St. George, Madras, founded by E.I. Company  
1668 Bombay ceded to E.I. Company  
1651 Foundation of East India Company factory at Hugli  
1658-1707 Reign of Aurangzeb, last great Mughal emperor  
1739 Sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah of Persia  
1757 Battle of Plassey, Robert Clive defeats Siraj ud-daula,

Mughal Nawab of Bengal

1765 Battle of Baksar, E.I. Company final defeat of Mughals  
and grant of Diwani (revenue collection) for Bengal  
1773 Parliament begins supervision of E.I. Company  
1799 Defeat of Tipu Sultan  
1813 E.I. Company monopoly revoked  
1833 E.I. Company ceased to be a trading company  
1772-1833 Raja Rammohan Ray, the great Bengali reformer  
1848 State of Kashmir created by treaty  
1857-1858 War of Independence with British (Indian Mutiny)  
E.I. Company dissolved, Viceroy appointed by Parliament  
1877 Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India  
1885 Indian National Congress inaugurated in Bombay  
1906 Muslim League founded  
1912 Transfer of Capital from Calcutta to Delhi  
1869-1948 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi  
1876-1948 Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Quaid-i-Azam

1889-1964 Jawaharlal Nehru

1941 U.S. and British India establish diplomatic relations

1942 Quit India movement founded

1946 Henry Grady, first U.S. Ambassador to India

1947 Independence for India under leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru

Independence for Pakistan under Mohammad Ali Jinnah

1947 Accession of Kashmir to India

1950 Indian Constitution ratified

1919-1984 Indira Gandhi

1951 First Indian general election

1962 Indo-China Border War

1966 Tashkent Declaration

1971 Bangladesh secedes from Pakistan forming the People's Republic of

Bangladesh

1972 Simla Agreement

1974 India detonates peaceful nuclear device at Pokharan

1974 Kashmir Accord

1998 Pakistan tests Ghauri missile

1998 India conducts Pokharan nuclear tests

1998 Pakistan conducts nuclear tests

1999 Lahore Declaration

1999 Kargil battle between Indian and Pakistan armies

1999 General Pervez Musharraf declares martial law in Pakistan

\*From Ainslee Embree and Stephen Hay, (eds) *Sources of Indian Tradition*, I and II, (Columbia, 1995)

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The *South Asia Self-Study Guide* introduces the reader to this region of rapidly growing strategic, economic, geo-political importance first, by identifying eleven broad themes or topics that both provide essential background to and put into sharp focus the dominant issues, personalities and events in South Asia today. Second, this *Self-Study Guide* provides a short bibliography of readily available critically acclaimed literature that present the most authoritative crossfire of expert viewpoints on the issues, events and people of the subcontinent, Sri Lanka and Indian Ocean. This reading list is not intended to be representative of the broad sweep of literature on any topic. It provides an introduction to the some of the best currently available studies. For further more general or specialized study the reader may turn to the extensive bibliographies in the books recommended. Third, this *Guide* provides internet sources to direct the reader to the most up-to-date world reportage and commentary. Because of the unpredictable turnover of internet sites preference is given to search engines which direct the reader to currently available homepages and other more stable sites and links.

The following are among the most important general South Asia search

engines:[www.samilan.com](http://www.samilan.com)(South Asian Milan Search Engine),[www.southasia.net](http://www.southasia.net)(the South Asia Search Engine),[www.bestofasiapacific.com](http://www.bestofasiapacific.com)(has links to every country),[www.tufts.edu/fletcher/cais/index.html](http://www.tufts.edu/fletcher/cais/index.html)(Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies at Tuft University),[asnic.utexas.edu/asnic.html](http://asnic.utexas.edu/asnic.html)(Asian Studies Network Information Center, University of Texas at Austin),[www.virginia.edu/~soasia/](http://www.virginia.edu/~soasia/)(Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Virginia),[www.wisc.edu/southasia](http://www.wisc.edu/southasia)(Center for South Asia, University of Wisconsin at Madison. The Lonely Planet Guide sites ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) are another excellent source of general information.

*Familiarity with and appreciation for this diversity is a critically important part of preparation for successful, informed and rewarding service abroad.*

## INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR THEMES AND TOPICS

Identifying the major themes and topics in the study of South Asia is not without problems. Just as there is vigorous diversity of expert opinion on every current issue and its interpretation there is equally vigorous diversity of opinion on what are the major themes and topics and on what are the most reliable sources of information and judgment.

Since this introductory study *Guide* is designed for journalists, travelers and their families who have little or no personal experience and knowledge of South Asia it takes a general historical approach to the region. Identifying major themes and relevant topics (phrased as study questions) for the study of South Asia prepares the way to examining continuities as well as discontinuities in the ancient and proud civilization of nations which are key players on the world stage today.

*This historical approach seeks to encourage students and other observers of South Asia to develop the discipline of a rigorous "critical path analysis" of current events by looking for evolutionary linkages between events, people in the news, groups such as political parties, religious bodies, communal organizations, regional coalitions and their background institutions in their historical-religious-cultural-political-economic and domestic strategic contexts.*

## METHOD OF STUDY

This is an independent study program. The following method of study is recommended. A self-study guide is just that, a program to help you plot your own learning curve. So go at your own pace. Set a comfortable regimen. Demand a lot from yourself. Define weekly goals. Schedule a set time every week for study. Be an active learner. True learning is self-motivated learning. Your success will be in direct proportion to your personal effort. Here are some tips to send you on your way on this fantastic journey of discovery.

First, become acquainted with general reference literature, for example, Francis Robinson's (ed.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the*

*Maldives* (Cambridge, 1989), Gordon Johnson's (ed.) *A Cultural Atlas of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka* (Andromedia, 1996) and Ainslee Embree and Stephen Hay's (eds.) *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vols. I and II (Columbia, rev. 1995). A. L. Basham's (ed.) *A Cultural History of India* (Oxford, 1997) is also an important reference work.

Second, start from the beginning at subsection **A. Books**. Pick a book, read it, use the bibliography as a map to guide you to other literature and related topics. Go to **B. Internet Sites**. Explore, explore, explore the net looking for current reportage and discussion of issues. Move to subsection **C. Study Questions**. Tackle these questions as you would any worthy challenge. They are your sign posts in a bountiful wilderness of new ideas. They will help you single out key organizing issues in what can often be a bewildering flood of new ideas as you begin to study the vast and complex civilization of South Asia.

Third, an approach with instant gratifications is to get in the habit of reading the major South Asian daily online newspapers and journals like *Dawn*, *Pakistan Today*, *Herald* (Pakistan), *The Hindu*, *Express India*, *Hindustan Times*, *India Today* (India), *Daily Star*, *The Independent* (Bangladesh), *The Sunday Times*, *Daily News (Sri Lanka)*, *Kathmandu Post* (Nepal). Browse their archives for interesting articles, book reviews and features. Although these newspapers are not indexed, they are well-maintained and they are "user friendly." A word of encouragement and advice! Don't pass up a tangent! Wander off the subject at every opportunity but always get back on track. Learning is a journey of discovery, some would even say self-discovery!

## ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE

[Geography/Climate](#)

[Peoples/Languages](#)

[Major Religions](#)

### I. Geography, Climate and Eco-Systems

Weather and habitat have always been favorite topics not just of casual conversation but serious discourse in South Asia as any traveler to the region can attest. Monsoons and mountains, the Lu and the heat of the dry season, all are immortalized in ragas (music) and shlokas (verse), and in the colorful metaphors and euphemisms of street speech. Some writers like Jared Diamond (*Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 1997) argue that geography, climate and eco-systems are the single most important forces in the shaping of human institutions.

Rammohan Ray listed ("Remarks on the Settlement in India by Europeans" in 1832, *The Essential Writings of Raja Rammohan Ray*, ed. Bruce C. Robertson, 1998) climate as a significant "obstacle in the way of settlement in India by European." Arguing in favor of encouraging European settlement in India he wrote to the Select Committee of the House of Commons, "the climate in many parts of India may be found destructive, or at least very pernicious to European constitutions, which might oblige European families who may be in possession of the means to retire to Europe to dispose of their property to disadvantage, or leave to ruin, and that they would impoverish themselves instead of enriching India." Ray recommended "cool and healthy spots" like the Nilgiris in South India, as places where Europeans could escape the heat and settle down keeping their wealth and industry in India.

Mark Harrison (*Climates & Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850*, 1999) discusses British attitudes towards the Indian climate and environment. In the eighteenth-century a prevalent East India Company perception was that as India was an extreme hardship tour of duty one had to get in make as much money as quickly as possible and leave before cholera or some other dreaded affliction struck. "In and out while still alive," "get rich quick," were the mottos. Rammohan Ray viewed this perception as a significant impediment to Indian development as a modern





nation. Ray's solution to develop recreation centers in the more temperate climate of the hills was soon followed up and became very popular in South Asia. As a child growing up in India "going to the hills" to escape the dry season was an annual pilgrimage for my family. One year it would be Naini Tal in the Kumaon Hills. Other years it would be Mussourie, Ooty, Kodaikanal, Chikalda, or Kashmir. Dane Kennedy's excellent *Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj* (1996) and Barbara Crossette's *Great Hill Stations of Asia* (1999) capture some of the complex subculture that grew up around the hill stations and which exists to this day.

In *The Continent of Circe* the always controversial Nirad Chaudhuri argued that the geography, climate and eco-systems of the South Asian subcontinent radically altered every foreign invader and culture lured to the region, from the ancient Aryans to the British colonialists. He goes further to say that the entire civilization of the subcontinent -- its religious institutions, sacred literatures, social systems, legal traditions, political institutions, arts, cuisines -- has been a process of coping with the harsh natural environment. India's varied ecosystems have always been a leit motif in Indian literature ancient as well as contemporary.

Gita Mehta's *River Sutras* is a riveting collection of short stories strung together (this is what *sutra* means) by a common theme like Shusaku Endo's *Deep River* (1996) which invokes the Ganga as sacred destination where travelers are reawakened to a primordial awareness. The Narmada River, second perhaps only to the Ganga in sanctity, is the setting for all the stories. The banks of this magnificent river meandering through central India is many things to many people, a place of rest and relaxation, of solace, of spiritual retreat. It is a source of life giving water for vast irrigation systems and now the highly controversial Sardar Sarovar dam project. The Narmada has taken on a larger significance in contemporary India. Booker Prize winner Arundhati Ray (*The God of Small Things*, 1997) has joined the Narmada Bachao Adolan (Paul Kingsnorth, "Small Things and Big Issues," *The Utne Reader*, March, 2001, [www.utne.com](http://www.utne.com)), a local largely tribal movement against the dam, and made it into an international campaign.

In antiquity the Narmada River marked the southern boundary of *Aryavarta*, the sacred and holy land (*punjabhu*) of the Vedic age. For this reason alone it is a sacred river. In one of the best and most highly acclaimed works of contemporary fiction Gita Mehta's stories pair the mythology of sacred rivers with their ecological and spiritual importance to modern Indians in real-time glimpses of rural life today.

Ranchor Prime has explored (*Hinduism and Ecology*, 1992) classical Hindu teachings on the importance of right balance in the relationship between human society and the natural environment. Prime argues for a contemporary environmentalism based upon classical norms.

Ramachandra Guha's *Unquiet Woods* is a contemporary classic of grassroots political and social activism. The *chipko*, "hugging trees" movement has antecedents in Rajasthan during the eighteenth-century and has spread throughout South Asia, and even in America. Today environmental groups in South Asia are doing what governmental agencies are not doing.

## A. Books

Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850* (Oxford, 1999)

Ramachandra Guha, *Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (California, 1989)

Gita Mehta, *River Sutra* (Random House, 1994)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) (click on Books, then on *Survey of the Environment '99*)

[www.afghan-web.com/](http://www.afghan-web.com/)

[www.bhutan-info.org/](http://www.bhutan-info.org/)

[www.virtualbangladesh.org/](http://www.virtualbangladesh.org/)

[www.hindustan.net/](http://www.hindustan.net/)

[www.123india.com](http://www.123india.com)

[www.indiawatch.org.in/agni](http://www.indiawatch.org.in/agni)

[www.khoj.com/](http://www.khoj.com/)

[www.indiawebchakra.com/web\\_search/](http://www.indiawebchakra.com/web_search/)

[www.surfindia.com/](http://www.surfindia.com/)

[www.jadoo.com](http://www.jadoo.com)

[www.indiaconnect.com/a2zindia.htm](http://www.indiaconnect.com/a2zindia.htm)

[www.themaldives.com](http://www.themaldives.com)

[www.info-nepal.com](http://www.info-nepal.com)

[www.nepal-net.com](http://www.nepal-net.com)

[www.pak.org](http://www.pak.org)

[www.pakpowerpage.com](http://www.pakpowerpage.com)

[www.lankaweb.com/](http://www.lankaweb.com/)

## C. Study Questions

1. What role do mountains like the Himalayas and Vindhyas, play in the life of religious communities of the subcontinent today? In domestic and regional subcontinental politics?
2. What role do forests, rivers and oceans, as eco-systems, boundaries and destinations, play in the life of religious communities? In domestic and regional subcontinental politics?

3. What subcontinental climactic factors influence your daily and seasonal schedules?

## II. Peoples and Languages

The subcontinent has always been an enormously rich and colorful patchwork tapestry of peoples and languages reflecting millenniums of continuous interaction between indigenous peoples and institutions and foreign invaders. Modern ethnological, classical and linguistic studies have shown the interconnections between ancient Greece, the Mediterranean region, Africa, and ancient and medieval India. The Sanskrit language is closely related to Greek and Latin within the Indo-European family of languages. The three most important administrative and literary languages of the subcontinent have all been imported, namely, Sanskrit, Persian and English. Rammohan Ray (1772-1833), the great Bengali reformer, praised Sanskrit as the one world language that never needed to borrow words from any other language to convey philosophical and modern scientific ideas. Not only the language but the gods of Vedic India have their counterparts in the pantheons of ancient Greece and Rome. Ethnic and racial interconnections also cross national and cultural boundaries. Language has often been a divisive force in the subcontinent. The peoples of the subcontinent today are as much a mixture of racial and ethnic types as any other peoples anywhere in the world today. Anthropologists and sociologists from M.N. Srinivasan (*The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization and Other Essays* (Oxford, 1989) to Akbar S. Ahmed have studied the length and breadth of the subcontinent. Srinivasan shows that Hindu caste society has never been a rigid system but rather one that allowed for considerable mobility. Akbar S. Ahmed's *Resistance and Control in Pakistan* (Routledge, 1991) stands out as one of the most important studies, indeed a model of field research, of tribal society in South Asia.

More languages (over 300) are spoken in South Asia than in any other region of the world of comparable geographical size. Many of these languages are however only dialects of a "parent" language. It has been said that the languages of adjacent region are dialects but those of more distant regions are distinct languages. So Punjabi and Hindi, spoken in the adjacent states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh would be dialects but Punjabi and Bengali, spoken in the eastern most state of West Bengal, are distinct languages. Punjabis and Bengalis have a difficult time understanding each other if at all. A Hindi speaker especially from the neighboring state of Bihar would have much less difficulty understanding a Bengali speaker from either side of the border with Bangladesh. Urdu and Hindi have been two names for the same language, in other words, with the same grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Practically the only difference (aside from minor pronunciation and syntax changes) has been that Urdu is written in Perso-Arabic script and Hindi *indevanagari*, the script of the Sanskrit language ("Hindi-Urdu," Yamuna Kachru, *The World's Major Languages*, ed. Bernard Comrie, 1990). The language I spoke as a child in India was Urdu-Hindi.

An anecdote will illustrate the point here. At a local gas station in Baltimore run by Sikhs I spoke to an attendant in what I would describe as bad Hindi. He responded, "Oh, you know Punjabi?" He was the son of the owner. A week later I said the same thing to another attendant. His response was "You speak Urdu?" He was from Pakistan. The next time I repeated the same greeting to a third attendant, an Indian, who replied "How do you know Hindi?" The last attendant I spoke to had no idea what I was saying. He was from Kerala, South India.

After the creation of the independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947 however, changes have been forced on Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, and on Hindi spoken in India. In Pakistan Sanskrit-based words are replaced by Persian-Arabic words in the name of cultural purity. Because of India's large Muslim minority the change is perhaps less pronounced though the Hindu *parivar*, religious right, has made this an issue. For example, in Pakistan it is *shukriya*, "thank you" not *dhanyavad*, a Sanskrit word. Though *shukriya* is in the Hindi dictionary *dhanyavad* is probably more correct among Hindus. In India I was once mildly rebuked for using *shukriya*. While many view these changes as frivolous expressions of xenophobia a gradual shift is taking place.

In Pakistan Urdu is the native language only of the minority Mohajirs or Muslim immigrants from India who settled in Karachi and in Sindh during Partition. Balochi is spoken in Baluchistan in the south and Pukhto, the language of the Pukhtun tribe, Dari, and Punjabi are spoken in the north. Language in Sri Lanka also marks the major ethnic divides. Tamils speak Tamil and Sinhalese speak Sinhala.

Language has been one of the barriers between north and south India. The northern languages--Hindi-Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Nepali--all belong to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. South Indian languages—Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu--belong to the Dravidian family of languages ("Tamil and the Dravidian Languages," Sanford B. Steever, *The World's Major Languages*). This explains why the Malayali gas station attendant in Baltimore could not understand what I said in Hindi when the others from the north pretended to understand me.

The one language that is understood throughout the subcontinent is English. While this has been galling to nationalists there are those who contend that English has long been a language of the subcontinent. This fact has been one of the biggest selling points for India as a friendly environment for Americans and Europeans to do business. The controversy surrounding the use of the English language in India will go on and so will the use of this primary language of international business and contemporary world culture.

## A. Books

K. Zvelebi, "Dravidian Languages," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Macropaedia), 15<sup>th</sup> edition

George Cardona and R. E. Emmerick, "Indo-Aryan Languages," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Macropaedia), 15<sup>th</sup> edition

N. Krishnaswamy, *The Politics of Indian's English: Linguistic Colonialism and the Expanding English Empire* (Oxford, 1998)

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## B. Internet Sites

[www.bangladesh.net](http://www.bangladesh.net)

[www.indianlanguages.com/main.html](http://www.indianlanguages.com/main.html)

[www.anu.edu/linguistics/sinhala/](http://www.anu.edu/linguistics/sinhala/)

[www.vjworld.com/afghanist/index.htm](http://www.vjworld.com/afghanist/index.htm)

<http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/countries/Bhutan.html>

## C. Study Questions

1. How are the romance languages related to modern north subcontinental languages?
2. Is English a language of modern India?
3. What are the major language groups?
4. Are Hindi and Urdu separate languages?
5. Who are the Dravidians?
6. Where are the Aryans today?

## III. Major Religions

All the major world religions -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism (Parsis), Christianity, and Islam -- are active in the South Asian subcontinent today. Religion is a dominating force in every aspect of the public and private lives of the people of South Asia and continues to be perhaps the major source of division in the region today. Attempts to understand the politics, social systems and customs, economy, culture and international relations of South Asian nations without reference to the religious context are doomed to failure. Religious festivals occur with such frequency that it is often bewildering to business visitors because every festival means a business holiday. The literature on South Asian religions is copious, and like the religions themselves, is subject to endless impromptu interpretations and divisive controversy. Students should familiarize themselves with the following introductions to the great religions, taking the time to read from their scriptures.

South Asia has bequeathed two great religions to the world--Hinduism and Buddhism. Indic intellectual-

religious culture is to Asia what Hellenic culture is to western civilization. It would be difficult to exaggerate the ancient impact of Hellenism and Indicism upon the shaping of the modern world. Buddhism was Indic intellectual-religious culture for export. The Hindu tradition is for home consumption.

Today there are Hindu mandirs (temples) in every major U.S. urban center, twelve in the Baltimore-Washington, DC area alone. Mosques are in every major city. Islam is the fastest growing religious tradition in America. Gurudvaras (Sikh temples), Shambala and other Buddhist centers can be found everywhere. Today, there are ample opportunities to become acquainted with the general teachings of all these great traditions of spirituality without ever leaving your neighborhood. Internet chat rooms like that of [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com) offer opportunities to enter into dialogue with communicant members of every religious community.

## A. Books

Roberto Calasso, *Ka, Stories of the Mind and Gods of India*, 1998

Donald Lopez, ed., *Religions of India In Practice* (Princeton, 1995)

Akbar S. Ahmed, *Islam Today, A Short Introduction to the Muslim World*, (I.B.Taurus, 1998)

Bernard Lewis, ed., *The World of Islam* (Thames and Hudson, 1976)

Heinz Bechert, Richard Gombrich, eds., *The World of Buddhism* (Thames and Hudson, 1991)

W. Owen Cole and Piari Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs: Their Religion, Beliefs and Practices* (Routledge, 1978)

Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastrianism* (Harper, 1966)

Wendy Doniger, *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism* (Chicago, 1988)

## B. Internet Sources

[www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) (click on Books, then on *The Hindu Speaks on Religious Values*)

<http://webhead.com/WWWL/India/india222.html>

[www.hindunet.org](http://www.hindunet.org)

[www.hindu.org](http://www.hindu.org)

[www.islam.org](http://www.islam.org)

[www.sikhs.org](http://www.sikhs.org)

[www.sikhnet.com](http://www.sikhnet.com)

[www.zorastrian.net](http://www.zorastrian.net)

[www.zorstrianism.com](http://www.zorstrianism.com)

[www.library.dmu.ac.uk/electinfo/subjainf.htm](http://www.library.dmu.ac.uk/electinfo/subjainf.htm)

[www.ummah.net/taliban](http://www.ummah.net/taliban)

[www.mra.gov.pk/index.html](http://www.mra.gov.pk/index.html) (Pakistan Ministry of Religious Affairs)

[www.vjworld.com/](http://www.vjworld.com/)

[www.HolidayFestival.com](http://www.HolidayFestival.com)

[www.chpk.org](http://www.chpk.org)

[www.lankaweb.com/dhamma/index.html](http://www.lankaweb.com/dhamma/index.html)

[www.expressindia.com](http://www.expressindia.com) (click on Mythology)

## C. Study Questions

1. In the Hindu tradition what do the following sets of terms signify? **Dharma, karma, samsara, moksa – brahmana, ksatriya, vaishya, sudra – brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, samnyasi. – Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva**
2. Who was the Buddha? What are the **Four Noble Truths** and **The Noble Eightfold Path**? What is the **Pali Canon**? What are the two main schools of Buddhism?
3. What are the five **Pillars** of Islam? Who is Muhammad?
4. Who are the ten gurus of the Sikhs? What are the 5 Ks? What is the **Adi Granth**?

## CULTURE

[Literary Culture](#)

[Arts: Music, Drama Cuisine](#)

## IV. Literary Culture

Salman Rushdie wrote in the June 23, 1997 issue of the New Yorker that the most important writing in the English language in the world today was coming out of the South Asian subcontinent. The oldest continuously read sacred texts in the world are the Vedas. Literary culture has been both a dominating force in the shaping of subcontinental civilization and an inexhaustible living chronicle. The Sanskrit language is the door to a one of the most extraordinary world literatures. Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous remark that the whole of Indian literature was not worth a single shelf of European classics should be remembered in the context of Rammohan Ray's earlier reference to Sanskrit literature as unrivalled even in the West as a repository of the world's greatest ideas. National pride in arts and letters

in the South Asian subcontinent can never be underestimated. Modern South Asian and South Asian American writers like Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Gita Mehta, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherji, Bapsi Sidhwa, Khushwant Singh, Arundhati Roy, R. K. Narayan, and others are almost household names for many around the world.

Ainslee Embree and Stephen Hay's two-volume classic *Sources of Indian Tradition* provides the beginner with an invaluable survey, complete with samples of primary texts in translation, of the inestimably rich literature of South Asia.

## A. Books

A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (Rupa reprint, 1967)

Ainslee Embree, Stephen Hay, eds. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vols. I and II (Columbia, 1995)

Salman Rushdie, Elizabeth West, eds. *Mirrorwork, 50 Years of Indian Writing 1947- 1997* (Henry Holt, 1997)

Muneeza Shamsie, ed., *A Dragonfly in the Sun: An Anthology of Pakistani Writing in English* (OUP Karachi, 1997)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.gadnet.com/artx.htm](http://www.gadnet.com/artx.htm)

[www.inpros.com/nepal](http://www.inpros.com/nepal)

See also sites above under 3.B

## C. Study Questions

1. What are the following works? *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Artha Shastra*, *Laws of Manu*,
2. Who are Vatsyayana, Kalidas, Kautilya, Mirabai, Kabir and Rammohan Ray?
3. What Indian author provoked a *fatwa* condemning him and a price on his head, and why?
4. What South Indian author won the Booker Prize in 1998? For what book?



5. What Indian-American author won the 2000 Pulitzer prize for her first work of fiction? What was the title of the book?

## V. Arts: Music, Dance, Drama, Cuisine

In the **Artha Shastra**, literally, "Treatise on Means," Kautilya, the mentor of Chandragupta (c. 321 BCE) the founder of the Mauryan Empire, sets forth the Hindu ideal of the full life, well-lived. It included practicing all the arts. The great Mughals were patrons of the arts. In the broad realms of music, dance, architecture, dress, cuisine and the arts in general there has been a remarkable synthesis of two commonly perceived as intrinsically adversarial civilizations. The age-old traditions of skilled craftsmanship is one of the most enduring and endearing aspects of South Asian civilization.

The Festival of India celebration at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC during the summer of 1995 introduced South Asian arts and crafts to a broader spectrum of the American people than ever before. Tourism is a flourishing industry in this region. Travelers are attracted by the magnificent architectural wonders such as the Taj Mahal, and Mughal ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, the vast temple complexes of Khujarah, Puri, and Madurai, the Ellora and Ajanta caves, the great Rajput fortresses and palaces, and the vibrantly colorful regional cultures, to name just a few examples.

"Music, dance, and drama are all integral parts of South Asian culture and society," writes Alison Arnold, editor of *South Asia, The Indian Subcontinent* (*The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 5, 2000), the most comprehensive survey of subcontinental music, dance and drama available today. Arnold goes on to explain that these traditions have been transmitted orally within families, social groups and artistic lineages and provide continuity with the past. South Asian musical traditions are furthermore part of our global cultural heritage influencing the culture of every continent, and for this reason alone deserve our serious study.

The music traditions of South Asia have been popularized around the world by great virtuosos like Ali Akbar Khan, Vilayat Khan, and Ravi Shankar. Even the major schools of dance—Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Manipuri, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Mohini Attam, and Kathakali—while not yet household terms, are becoming known outside of the region through cultural exchange programs. Fine carpets from India, Kashmir and Pakistan are readily available today, as well as many other crafts.

No discussion of modern South Asian civilization can omit mention of Bollywood, the world's largest film industry headquartered in Mumbai. Bollywood films are the primary vehicle for the export of Indian culture throughout the Middle East and Asia. Ashish Rajadhyaksa and Paul Willemen have edited the impressive *Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema* (new revised edition, 1999). Especially noteworthy is Rajadhyaksa's introductory essay arguing that the grand onward march of history has evolved new modes of production of Indian films, that Indian films are somehow the standard bearer of India's cultural leadership in the world. One could arrive at the impression that the rest of India is trying to follow the lead of its film industry that in India life does imitate art. In the United States we hope that the world reflected in Hollywood films is not the real America.

Perhaps one of the best indexes of the growing familiarity with South Asian arts in America is the increasing numbers of critically reviewed restaurants springing up all over America. Four and five-star South Asian restaurants are common in every major city, according to *Zagat Survey*. Nothing written on the subject of South Asian arts can, however, prepare one for the first-hand, personal encounter with great art, food, music, literature, dance and craftsmanship.

## A. Books

J.C.C. Harle, J. Harle, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (Yale, 1992)

A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (Rupa reprint, 1967)

S.A.A. Rizvi, *The Wonder That Was India*, II (Rupa reprint, 1987)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) (click on Books, then on *The Hindu Speaks on Music*)

[www.afghanmagazine.com](http://www.afghanmagazine.com)

[www.bangladesh.net](http://www.bangladesh.net)

[www.gadnet.com/artx.htm](http://www.gadnet.com/artx.htm)

[www.wecometoindia.com/cookery](http://www.wecometoindia.com/cookery)

[www.newari.com](http://www.newari.com)

[www.lollywood.com.pk](http://www.lollywood.com.pk)

[www.kashrus.org/recipes/lanka.html](http://www.kashrus.org/recipes/lanka.html)

[www.lanka.net/gallery](http://www.lanka.net/gallery)

<http://members.xoom.com/sinhala>

[www.heritage.gov.pk](http://www.heritage.gov.pk)

## C. Study Questions

1. It is sometimes said that north Indians and Pakistanis have more culturally in common than do north Indians and south Indians. Is this true?
2. In what ways are the artistic traditions of South Asia a force of continuity, that is for breaking down barriers between religious, ethnic, racial and social communities?

# HISTORY

Historical Overview	Colonial History
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## VI. Historical Overview

The writing of contemporary histories of the subcontinent is a highly controversial enterprise today. Most current histories fall into four schools, "colonialist" or "imperialist," "orientalist" (some critics would subsume this under colonialist-imperialist), "nationalist," and "subaltern" (some critics classify this as nationalist). Each group regards the others' history as propaganda. These criticisms are in some cases justified. Yet all agree that understanding the past is critically important to dealing with the present.

At no time have these often conflicting approaches to history writing been more tested than in the Babri Masjid Ramjanmabhumī controversy which continues to this day. On December 2, 1992 in Ayodhya a mosque was torn down by Hindu radicals because it was believed to have been built on the site of a Hindu temple marking the precise spot of the birthplace of the mythical god Ram. Not only is there disagreement on fundamental details (whether there really was a Hindu temple at that very or any spot) and sources of information (whether the *Ramayana* is in any sense an historical document, and archeological evidence is trustworthy) but also on their interpretation and present-day significance. The doyen of Indian historians, Sarvepalli Gopal (*Anatomy of A Confrontation: The Babri Masjid-Ramjanmabhumī Issue* (1991) brought together historians from various schools in an attempt to bring balance to the investigation and understanding of a conflict which has cost thousands of lives and created a constitutional crisis. Not everyone is happy with Gopal's approach nor his conclusion that the entire tragic set of events has been manufactured by the professional myth-makers motivated by political and class-based agendas.

Though not without their own difficulties like the so-called colonial and orientalist histories, the new (post-Independence) indigenous schools of history writing have attempted what is characterized as "ground-up," micro rather than macro, histories of South Asia which seek, with varying degrees of success, to reevaluate traditional Indian vernacular sources. The subaltern group focus on village life and on regional agrarian culture and reassess the past in light of the interplay of indigenous institutions. A careful selection of representative writers of all these distinctive approaches may give students a better balanced understanding of the broad sweep of civilization than from any one by itself.

W. Norman Brown (*Man in the Universe: Continuities in Indian Thought*, 1966) discusses what he terms continuities (forces of integration), for example religion, in the broad narrative sweep of the peoples of the subcontinent. As in all civilizations there were also discontinuities, forces of disintegration. In the South Asian subcontinent these polar forces can be seen shaping institutions, the climate of opinion and competing value systems. The Chronology in this **Guide** may be used as a starting point for the fascinating study of South Asian history. Several formative ages may be pointed out.

The first age is commonly known as "prehistoric" because, ironically, of what we will never know due to the lack of written records. From approximately 3000 to 1500 B.C.E there was an advanced civilization known for its location, the fertile Indus Valley. This civilization was held together and threatened by the same sets of forces--its alluvial river eco-system, religious institutions and technology. Modern research

suggests that this was the eastern edge of a vast inter-related world that stretched to Mesopotamia and perhaps to the Nile valley.

While it is fashionable in some nationalist circles to question the "invasion theory," there is evidence that around the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E. a nomadic people from Central Asia calling themselves the "worthy ones," *Arya*, began migrating into the valley of the Indus river a period of over centuries. They brought with them new ideas, social organization, polity, technology, economics, a language, and a vigorous literary-religious culture. Equally controversial is the notion that they may have challenged the already fragile sedentary world of the Indus Valley peoples. The textual sources are sketchy at best.

The early Vedas, the texts of these immigrant peoples, are the first written record of this age. The Arya poets and writers say very little about the indigenous culture and so the picture of the Indus civilization as a superceded system. Similarly there is silence on any invasions in the archeological evidence unearthed by excavations of the ruins of the great Indus Valley cities of Mohenjo Daro, Chanhu Daro, Harappa and others. These texts, handed down orally through cultic priestly family traditions, became the sacred scripture of these nomads who settled in the land of the five rivers feeding the Indus.

The four Vedas which include their commentaries are held to be revelation (sruti). These are the oldest most sacred texts of the Hindu tradition, in fact they are the oldest continuously read sacred literature in the world. The society and times reflected in the Vedic literature were subject to the pull and tug of many of the same forces as in the Indus Valley civilization, namely, religion-based institutions, priestly hierarchies, ecosystems, and technology.

In the sixth-century B.C.E. Buddhism and Jainism emerged as alternative views of the world, society, polity, and spirituality. Their founders, Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha or enlightened one, and Vardhamana Mahavira, were charismatic sannyasis (wandering world-renouncers) who rejected brahmanical hierarchical Hinduism teaching new self-help paths of self-discovery that could be followed by anyone irrespective of social standing. Gods, priests, sacrifices, rituals, caste, all were irrelevant to the attainment of liberation from the human condition in these new paths. Thus was born new egalitarian religious options to the highly stratified path of what Brahmanical religion had become.

When in 1954 B.R Ambedkar, the drafter of the Indian Constitution and leader of the Dalit (formerly known as "untouchables") movement, renounced his Hindu faith in protest that it had made outcasts of his class publicly announcing his conversion, with fifty-thousand of his fellow dalits, to the egalitarian religion of Buddhism, he and his followers were exercising one of these historic options.

Under Ashoka Maurya (c. 273-237), himself a convert, Buddhism flourished. Ashoka adopted the Buddha's symbol of the Wheel of the Law as his symbol for good government. The King is the hub which turns the wheel (hence the title Chakravartin, literally, "wheel turner"). The ministers and ministries are the spokes, and the people the rim. Today the Ashokan wheel may be seen at the center of the Indian tri-color flag.

The Mauryan dynasty founded by Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta I (c. 322-298) was the first major empire on record in South Asia. Ashoka's reign has been held up as a golden age by Savarkar (*Hindutva*, 1926) and Nehru (*Discovery of India*, 1946) as well as by other nationalist writers. Chandragupta's minister, Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) wrote the famous treatise on statecraft titled *Artha Shastra* which has unfortunately been trivialized by comparison with Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

The Gupta dynasty (c. 319-540) in the north, also founded by a Chandragupta I (c.319-335) has also been viewed as a golden age of Hindu culture. Two other dynasties, the Chola kingdom of Tanjore (c. 907-1310), and Vijayanagar (1300-1400) in the south were patrons of a massive growth of Hindu culture and domestic economy which has put its stamp not only on the South but upon all India. Not until the great Mughals (1526-1707) was there any comparable flourishing of arts, government and economy. Islam in South Asia developed a unique hybrid culture unlike that anywhere else in the Islamic world as Aziz Ahmed (*Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Subcontinent*, 1964) has shown. Hindu scholars from Rammohan Ray (1772-1833) to Jadunath Sarkar (*India Through the Ages*, 1993) have remarked upon the generally peaceful relations and compatibility of Muslims and Hindus in India.

The British Raj (1865-1947) for all the controversy has provided the model for not uncontroversial governance (Bhabani Sen Gupta, *India: Problems of Governance*, 1996, Mushahid Hussain and Akmal Hussain, *Pakistan: Problems of Governance*, 1993, Rehman Sobhan, *Bangladesh: Problems of Governance*, 1993, K. M. de Silva, ed., *Sri Lanka: Problems of Governance*, 1993, Lok Raj Baral, *Nepal: Problems of Governance*, 1993) in South Asia today. The Raj has been succeeded by other raj, by license raj (the rule of excessive regulations) being now replaced by that great scourge of public administration and every foreign tourist, babu raj (the enigmatic multi-layered maze of petty bureaucracies that turn routine daily tasks into diplomatic incidents).

## A. Books

Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *Modern South Asia, History, Culture, Political Economy* (Routledge, 1998)

Ainslee Embree, Stephen Hay, eds. *Sources of Indian Tradition*, vols. I and II (Columbia, 1995)

A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India* (Rupa reprint, 1967)

S.A.A. Rizvi, *The Wonder That Was India*, vol. II (Rupa reprint, 1987)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.historyofindia.com/hoifrm.html](http://www.historyofindia.com/hoifrm.html)

<http://webhead.com/wwwvl/India/india207.html>

[http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/India/Arts\\_and\\_Humanities/History/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/India/Arts_and_Humanities/History/)

[www.winnipeg.freenet.mb.ca/iphone/s/slam/slhistory.html](http://www.winnipeg.freenet.mb.ca/iphone/s/slam/slhistory.html)

<http://members.tripod.com/~hettiarachchi/deral.html>

see also sites above under I.B.

## C. Study Questions

1. Who were the Aryans and why are they important in subcontinent history?
2. Over what geographical area did the Indus Valley civilization extend?
3. What is the significance of the Ashokan wheel on the Indian flag?
4. Which periods (dynastic and cultural) in subcontinental history are the most important in the shaping of civilization according to Bose and Jalal? Do Basham and Rizvi agree?
5. Were the Muslims colonizers? Were the Aryans colonizers?
6. How did the British come to power?

## VII. Colonial History

The Raj has been vilified and extolled. Few topics raise more heated discussion in South Asia or the university world or inspire less clarity of argument.

K. N. Panikkar (*Culture, Ideology, Hegemony: Intellectuals and Social Consciousness in Colonial India*, 1995) argues that the European presence in South Asia confronted the proud, sophisticated and ancient civilization of the subcontinent with institutions and exercises of power which it had not the resources to resist. A literal handful of foreigners managed to wield irresistible force over hundreds of millions of indigenous people. The shock waves of wounded pride for the people of this ancient and sophisticated civilization are felt even today in the fraternal conflict between its two largest subdivisions, India and Pakistan and in the endless often rancorous debate about colonialism. For Panikkar there is a perpetrator, a victim and an inexorable historical process that renders the entire drama predictable *a posteriori*.

This was not so for Raja Rammohan Ray (Bruce Carlisle Robertson, ed., *The Essential Writings of Raja Rammohan Ray*, 1998). Rammohan Ray offers an invaluable but largely forgotten view of the dawn of what came to be called colonialism because it provides the context for understanding the evolution of the institutions of the British presence in South Asia.

Raja Rammohan Ray was an eyewitness to the rise of British power. Born in 1772 eight years after the Battle of *Baksar* (1764) when as the spoils of conquest (in true Mughal fashion) having defeated the last Mughal army, the British East India Company was handed the *Diwani* (revenue collection) over Bengal. He died in 1833, the year the Company was metamorphosed, with all the liabilities that made it a failed business corporation, into *defacto sarkar* (governing body) over the entire area of its former commercial operations centering in Bengal, Bombay and Madras. Mughal *Diwani* entailed not only revenue collection but public administration which included responsibility for maintaining law and order. The East India Company Charter of 1833 only put the stamp of approval in London on a state of affairs which had evolved naturally by default on the subcontinent.

Rammohan Ray lived during the period in which the Company gradually assumed, by natural processes of default, the role of *defacto sarkar*. The British became *dejure sarkar*, that is, the *Raj* (making official institutions which had already begun to take shape by the end of Rammohan Ray's lifetime) only after the Great Revolt of 1857, nearly twenty-five years after the Raja's death.

Yet living in these times Rammohan Ray like many others of his generation viewed this unfolding process not just as the lesser of two evils but as preferable to the alternative they could envision, namely a complete breakdown of law, order and commerce. There was a sense of genuine though guarded optimism about British governance among his contemporaries. No study of colonialism, indeed, of modern India, is complete without careful study of Rammohan Ray's writings.

The subcontinent looked different to Rammohan Ray in the first third of the nineteenth-century than it does to Panikkar, writing at the end of the twentieth-century. He was the son of a high-caste Brahmin family that had abandoned its priestly social role by becoming middle-level zamindars under the Mughals. The Great Revolt of 1857 had not yet happened, nor the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, nor any of the other flashpoints of confrontation between the British and the people they ruled which have become paradigmatic in collective public memory. The world looked very different to Rammohan Ray than it did to Veer Savarkar, Subhas Chandra Bose, Gangadhar Tilak, Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other leaders of the Quit India movement. There was room in Rammohan Ray's world for positive change.

But Rammohan Ray had premonitions of what was coming and recommended corrective course adjustments. Watching the unfolding drama of the beginning entrenchment of British institutions of governance he became an outspoken critic. Rammohan Ray wrote from experience as *amunshi*, Indian "civil servant" in East India Company service. He saw problems all around.

First, he voiced strong reservations as to the quality of local British administrators he witnessed in action in the judicial and revenue administrations. With notable exceptions they were not, in his judgment, the *crème de la crème* of the British labor pool. His prescient and historic *Memorial to the King in Council* (1824) protesting the revocation of freedom of the Indian press by the Governor-General John Adam warned that His Majesty's officials in India had something to hide and now he feared they could get away with anything since they were now safe from public scrutiny. All was not lost however since

India needed His Majesty's benevolent rule. Restoration of the freedom of the press would restore not only his but the confidence of every Indian about the future of enlightened British rule. While the choice of British personnel in India did not reflect well on His Majesty's hands-on approach to rule he was not himself, in Rammohan Ray's eyes, yet guilty of misrule. He needed only to keep his officials on a tighter rein. What was true of British officials in India was also true of Christian missionaries in Bengal. The good works of the group far outweighed the misdeeds and indiscretions of the few.

The greater problem Rammohan Ray saw was the low quality of indigenous leadership in his own society. He charged brahmans as a class and the elites as a cross-cultural economic, political group with responsibility for the breakdown of traditional Hindu values and institutions of governance. Bengali brahmans, the guardians of Vedic tradition, were primarily guilty of selling out Hindu culture for personal gain. A brahman himself, he charged brahmans with the ultimate disqualifying failure, namely, ignorance of *shastra*, the sacred literature. Putative religious leaders, they were guilty of obscurantism which kept the people ignorant even of their own sacred traditions, of fraudulent use of sacred ceremonies to further suppress and exploit the poor, and even of criminal responsibility for the murder of widows in the name of *sati*, the dowry and polygamy systems, and other abuses of women and the defenseless--children (born and unborn), the aged and other wards of society. Modern-day brahmans had forfeited all legitimate claim to the guardianship of sacred society, Rammohan Ray argued. Rammohan Ray was a scandal, *apariah*, the target of death threats in Calcutta, the seat of power of the British *defacto* sarkar.

The sharp edge of his sword was also drawn against his fellow elites, the so-called *bhadralok*. Their complicity in the evils of brahmanism made them co-conspirators against sacred Hindu tradition. The rancor of the *bhadralok* attack upon Rammohan Ray softened his own criticism of the British *sarkar*. While many British officials in high places were willingly misled to their own advantage, it was his own countrymen who "greased the slide" and who equally profited from what was in their case treachery, Rammohan wrote.

The angry ostracization of Rammohan Ray by fellow brahmans and the *bhadralok* was the beginning of modern Hindu radicalism. The Dharma Sabha (1828) formed by anti-Rammohan Ray forces in Calcutta was the forerunner and model of the Jan Sangh, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) today.

In a series of pamphlets and written statements to the Select Committee of the House of Commons Rammohan Ray outlined the reforms needed to bring British rule in India up to the standard of their own ideals and of their own practice of governance in England. These writings are critical to understanding the evolution of colonialism in the South Asian subcontinent. While quoting Rammohan Ray's writings extensively Panikkar is guilty of anachronism, of reading back into the writings of the Father of Modern India assumptions from a later time. The great constitutionalist Dr. Ambedkar's public rejection of Hindu tradition would have been sympathetically understood by Raja Rammohan Ray.

## A. Books



Lawrence James, *Raj, The Making and Unmaking of British India* (St. Martins, 2000)

Jyotsna G. Singh, *Colonial Narratives Cultural Dialogues: "Discoveries" of India in the Language of Colonialism* (Routledge, 1996)

Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game, The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (Kodansha, 1990)

Bruce Carlisle Robertson, ed., *The Essential Writings of Raja Rammohan Ray* (Oxford, 1998)

## B. Internet Sites

See the sites above under II.B

## C. Study Questions

1. What is colonialism?
2. In what ways did it help shape the subcontinent?
3. What were the negatives? Positives?

# SOUTH ASIA TODAY

Politics Since 1947

Political Economy

Regional Strategic Environment

U.S.-South Asian Relations

## VIII. Politics Since Independence in 1947

Independence brought many changes to South Asia. Parliamentary democracy modeled after the British colonial form was established with varying degrees of success. In India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh it has been successful unlike in Pakistan. In Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives constitutional monarchies and theocracies struggle with growing popular demand for more democratic institutions. The communal strife of colonial times has continued, largely unabated.

In *From Raj to Rajiv* (first published under the title *India: Forty Years of Independence*, 1988) Mark Tully and Zareer Masani chronicle the evolution of Indian politics under the Nehru dynasty, with the brief but significant interlude of P.M. Lal Bahadur Shastri.

## A. Books

Mark Tully and Zareer Masani, *From Raj to Rajiv* (Penguin, 1988)

Mark Tully, *No Full Stops in India* (Penguin, 1991)

Thomas Hansen, *The Saffron Wave, Democracy and Hindu Nationalism In Modern India* (Princeton, 1999)

Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (Vikas)

V.S. Naipaul, *India: A Wounded Civilization* (Penguin, 1977)

## B. Internet Sites

<http://www.nic.in/India-Image/>

<http://alfa.nic.in/> (Indian Parliament)

<http://www.bjpgovernmentwatch.com/>

[www.akalidal.org/](http://www.akalidal.org/)

[www.bjp.org](http://www.bjp.org)

<http://wwwdel.vsnl.net.in/cpim/>

<http://mpcongress.org/HOME.HTM>

[www.shivsena.org/](http://www.shivsena.org/)

[www.jamaat.org](http://www.jamaat.org)

[www.mqm.com](http://www.mqm.com)

[www.ppp.com](http://www.ppp.com)

[www.kri.com.pk](http://www.kri.com.pk) (Kahula Research Lab center for nuclear tech in Pakistan)

[www.pak.gov.pk](http://www.pak.gov.pk)

[www.nab.gov.pk/main.htm](http://www.nab.gov.pk/main.htm) (Pak National Accountability Bureau)

<http://radio.gov.pk> (Radio Pakistan)

See also the sites above under II.B

## C. Study Questions

1. What is parliamentary democracy as distinct from the presidential form?

2. What are the major political parties in India? In Pakistan? Bangladesh? Sri Lanka and Nepal?

## IX. Political Economy

South Asia has not always been an economically underdeveloped region relative to other regions according to K. N. Chaudhuri (*Asia Before Europe, Economy and Civilisation of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, 1990). Alberuni's

(c.1020) account of the Chola empire describes vast irrigation systems, a rich mental culture and thriving economy.

Independent India has been torn between two legacies—Jawaharlal Nehru's state control economics and Mahatma Gandhi's swadeshi (boycott anything not homemade) economics (V.A. Pai Panandiker, "The Present Indian Economic Situation," *The Divine Peacock, Understanding Contemporary India*, ed. K. Satchidananda Murty, 1994). Both were a response to colonial-control economics. Nehru's socialist ideals took "us to a dead end, and the dream soured," writes Gurcharan Das, former CEO of Procter & Gamble India (*India Unbound*, 2000). "Jawaharlal Nehru and his planners attempted an industrial revolution through the agency of the state. They did not trust private entrepreneurs, so they made the state the entrepreneur. Not surprisingly, they failed, and India is still paying a huge price for their follies."

Privatization even of Maruti, a state-run automobile manufacturing company, is in the news today. But Gandhi's economics has been more difficult to shake even though *hissatyagrahapolitics* has long been out of fashion. The *swadeshi* card has been played by radical Hindu groups who are threatened by the idea of a free-market economy and open competition. Liberalization has been a hard fought battle with conservative Hindu groups.

In South Asia only the Indian economy has enjoyed significant growth and that only within the last ten years of liberalization. This has been the subject of numerous studies In Bangladesh there have been developments in the economic sector which have attracted world attention, among them Muhammad Yunus' Grameen bank micro-lending program. Yet most economists, including the Noble Prize winner Amartya Sen and Jagdish Bhagwati, see room for substantial development.

Amartya Sen argues (*Development as Freedom*, 1999) that true individual freedom means living as full "social persons, exercising our own volitions and interacting with—and influencing—the world in which we live." "The usefulness of wealth lies in the things that it allows us to do—the substantive freedoms it helps us to achieve."

A free society is one in which the "unfreedoms" of poverty, undernutrition, famine, lack of health care, lack of sanitation and clean water, lack of functional education, over population, unemployment, economic and social security, inequality and premature morbidity are removed. There can be no political liberty and civil, human rights until these substantive freedoms are available for all members of society.

"Development," according to Sen, "consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency." Since development and freedom go hand in hand it is the primary function of governments, in fact their *raison d'être*, to

insure and safeguard the "intrinsic importance of human freedom." Responsible governments do this by creating environments in which economic and political freedoms reinforce one another, in which social opportunities for education and healthcare compliment individual opportunities for full economic and political participation while fostering creative initiative taking.

Critics have taken Sen to task for not arguing for development within the context of a completely open, market-driven economy. Sen's response is to draw attention to the distinction between the "process aspect" and the "opportunity aspect" of freedom. Process must work from the ground up creating opportunity for everyone including those outside traditional economic, social, political systems. In other words, the agencies of new development cannot simply be transposed onto existing social, economic and political hierarchies and their institutions but must form new twentieth-century structures to build a truly free twenty-first century society.

Jagdish Bhagwati, India's other great economist, argues (*India In Transition, Freeing the Economy*, 1993, *The Wind of the Hundred Days: How Washington Mismanaged Globalization*, 2001) that trade barriers like India's have been public confessions of domestic market failure. Bhagwati's "principle of targets and instruments," that specific economic policies must address specific goals, is articulated in terms reminiscent of the classic *Mundaka Upanishad* (3,1) two birds metaphor for human conflict. One bird represents the individual ego the other the transcendent self, (*theatman*). These two birds represent different ways of knowing. One seeks instant gratification, the other liberation from suffering. Bhagwati argues that policies that seek to maximize GDP and protect the environment or promote free trade and a global social agenda or protect domestic companies and encourage foreign investment at the same time attempt to hit two birds with one stone and usually miss both (Jeffrey Frankel, "The Crusade for Free Trade: Evaluating Clinton's International Economic Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April, 2001). For both Bhagwati and the *Mundaka Upanishad* the error is one of vision, of working at cross-purposes.

Eshwaran and Kotwal (*Why Poverty Persists in India: A Framework for Understanding the Indian Economy*, 1994) agree. Neither license raj nor grand development schemes have created a strong Indian economy. The poor are still poor. They argue that industrialization, new technology, foreign investment and all the five-year plans have done nothing for the vast majority of people. They urge the necessity of development that recognizes agriculture sector as the largest employer and the largest supplier of essential goods and services. Agriculture puts people to work and feeds the nation. Since agriculture has always driven the Indian economy (Chaudhuri) the central goal of any economic development program must be to selectively apply the best new technology to maximize yields and cooperation between rural farmers and distribution systems on the one hand and mid-sized businesses on the other. They argue for re-invention of some of the traditional economic institutions that Chaudhuri describes. While critically important in the twentieth-century world economy multi-national corporations, big business, are not the panacea for India's economic woes. Technology that creates large scale unemployment, poverty, homelessness and consequent social unrest is not development. Eshwaran and Kotwal reject a one-size-fits-all, standard industrialized world template economic plan in favor of smart, culturally, socially, environmentally appropriate economic development.

## A. Books

K.N.Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe, Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1756*(Cambridge, 1990)

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*(Cambridge, 2000)

Mukesh Eswaran, Ashok Kotwal, *Why Poverty Persists in India*(Oxford, 1994)

Muhammad Yunus, *Banker to the Poor, Micro-lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*(Perseus Books, 1999)

Jagdish Bhagwati, *India in Transition: Freeing the Economy*(Clarendon, 1993)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/regions/html](http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/regions/html)

[www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)

[www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org)

[www.economic-observer.com/](http://www.economic-observer.com/)

[www.rbi.org.in](http://www.rbi.org.in)

[www.expressindia.com/](http://www.expressindia.com/)

<http://www.economicstimes.com/today/pagehome.htm>

[www.info-nepal.com/epd](http://www.info-nepal.com/epd)

[www.brecordeer.com](http://www.brecordeer.com)

[www.south-asia.com/saarc](http://www.south-asia.com/saarc)

## C. Study Questions

1. What will it take to end poverty in India, according to Eswaran and Kotwal?
2. How does Amartya Sen link community and national economic development with personal freedoms?

## X. Regional Strategic Environment: Dispute Over Kashmir

Since India and Pakistan have become regional nuclear powers the strategic environment has reached a new level of volatility. This is of great concern not only to the United States but to the world. The dispute over Kashmir has the potential of blowing up into a nuclear confrontation that could draw the world into

the conflict Neither country has signed CTBT though there are signs of new willingness to do so on the part of both nations. SAARC has attempted to mediate between the two regional adversaries. The new Bush administration is back off CTBT which the U.S. has not signed. Bruce C. Robertson, ed., *A Brief Overview of the Dispute Over Kashmir* (FSI, 2000) provides the most complete available case history of the major point of conflict between India and Pakistan today.

## A. Books

Raja Menon, *A Nuclear Strategy For India* (Sage, 2000)

Stephen Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Brookings, 2000 forthcoming)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.janes.com](http://www.janes.com) [www.pakmilitary.com](http://www.pakmilitary.com)

[www.pakdef.com](http://www.pakdef.com)

<http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/>

[www.south-asia.com/saarc](http://www.south-asia.com/saarc)

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitalHill/Senate/114>

[www.klc.org.pk](http://www.klc.org.pk) (Pak view of Kashmir)

[www.forisb.org](http://www.forisb.org) (Pak Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

[www.nrb.gov.pk](http://www.nrb.gov.pk) (Pak Military site)

[http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA\\_RESOURCE/kashmir.html](http://members.tripod.com/~INDIA_RESOURCE/kashmir.html)

## C. Study Questions

1. Why is Kashmir important to Pakistan? To India?

2. What is SAARC?

## XI. U.S.-South Asian Relations

Relations between the United States and post-Independence South Asian nations have largely been a footnote to Cold War international relations. Since the end of the Cold War, particularly since India and Pakistan have become regional nuclear powers, good relations with both nations has become vital to U.S. interests. The March, 2000 visit of President Clinton to South Asia and the return visit of the Indian P.M Vajpayee to the US has underscored how important India is in the world today. On the other hand, Pakistan has isolated itself from the world community because of its political and economic instability.

Raja Rammohan Ray (1772-1833), the early nineteenth-century Indian reformer, defined India's relationship to the young United States of America in one of the modern world's greatest declarations of democratic ideals, an open letter in 1824 to King George IV of England protesting the revocation of the fundamental human right of freedom of speech.

"...your Majesty is well aware, that a Free Press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world, because, while men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of the local authorities to the supreme Government, and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed...." (Bruce Carlisle Robertson, ed., *The Essential Writings of Raja Rammohan Ray*, 1999)

Despotic governments, Rammohan Ray argued, "...naturally desire the suppression of any freedom of expression" which will expose them to public scrutiny and accountability. He cited two models of governance from North America that His Majesty would have no trouble understanding, the United States and Canada, one negative, the other positive. "...as a people become enlightened, they will discover that by a unity of effort, the many may easily shake off the yoke of the few, and thus become emancipated from the restraints of power altogether...." The American Colonists revolted because, as the lessons of history teach, "the resistance of a people advanced in knowledge has ever been—not against the existence,—but the abuses of the Governing power." Canada did not join the American Revolutionaries because "their rights and privileges had been secured to them, their complaints listened to, and their grievances redressed by the British government."

His Majesty had a clear choice. He could either give his Indian subjects no option but to "shake off the yoke...and...become emancipated from the restraints" of British power as the Americans, former British subjects, did or follow the example of a happy, contented Canada. In these eloquent, prescient words Rammohan Ray held up the United States of America as the model that India would follow if the King did not learn from the bitter lessons of his father, George III.

In an 1832 letter to Prince Talleyrand, French Foreign Minister, Rammohan Ray again addressed the theme of conflict resolution this time between nations governed by the rule of law. He proposed a Congress of Nations where disputes between "...two civilized countries with constitutional Governments, might be settled amicably and justly to the satisfaction of both and profound peace and friendly feelings might be preserved between them from generation to generation." In Rammohan Ray's mind was the thought that such a Congress might have been able to resolve the disputes that led to the American Revolution and might yet be instrumental in remedying the abuses of British governance in India. The founding of the United States of America was, for Rammohan Ray, the inevitable consequence of British misrule and unless drastic changes took place the American lesson would repeat itself in India.

According to Rammohan Ray, India and the United States shared a common British colonial experience and as civilized, enlightened peoples with a deep-rooted sense of identity, they were destined to follow

similar paths toward independence.

The history of U.S. relations with the Indian subcontinent begins in our own colonial period. Elihu Yale, an East India Company official, founded his namesake university with the fortune he amassed in India. Lord Cornwallis has the unenviable legacy of being a dismal failure on at least two continents. After instituting in 1793 a ruinous tax administration (the infamous Permanent Settlement) which impoverished the entire eastern region of India known then as Bengal he surrendered to General George Washington at Yorktown, Virginia, effectively losing the Revolutionary War.

Flourishing trade between New England and Bombay, Madras and Calcutta was one of the major causes of the collapse of the East India Company as a commercial monopoly in the subcontinent. In the early nineteenth-century, the fast Baltimore Clipper became the symbol of burgeoning American sea power. Americans were the revolutionaries changing the world order, feared and vilified by many. "Citizen," the word for the American, had the unsettling connotation of "radical revolutionary" in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries that "comrade" had for many in the twentieth-century before the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

During the Civil War it was Indian and Egyptian cotton that supplied the North during its naval blockade of the South. In a famous 1824 letter to King George III Raja Rammohan Ray (1772-1833), the great Bengali reformer who is known as the Father of Modern India, wondered why the British had not learnt their lesson in America. He warned that if British injustices in India did not stop Indians would revolt like the American colonialists.

Dennis Kux (*India and the United States: Estranged Democracies 1941 -1991*, 1992) has traced the evolution of U. S. relations with the subcontinent from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to President George Bush. Kux attempts to answer the central question "Why have ... (the U. S. and India), both democracies, so often found themselves at odds with each other in the international arena? What lies behind their difficulties in getting along politically?" While his answer may appear simplistic to many it identifies two not insignificant sources of irritation. "In arming and aligning itself with Pakistan, the entity born of the traumatic partition of British India, the United States linked arms with the country which independent India considered its principal security threat. For the United States, the decisive problem has been India's attitude toward the Soviet Union."

Since the end of the Cold War U.S. relations with Pakistan have become strained and since the end of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, estranged. The Pakistani perception has been that the United States "uses" its friends and abandons them when they are no longer needed.

From the U.S. perspective relations with both nations have been significantly influenced by a combination of three factors. The first is an unspoken attitude of "preachy" anachronistic post-colonial "hegemonizing" of all more politically and economically successful nations especially the United States. Secondly, their inability to solve their own domestic problems and the isolationism that this reinforces has not made their "preachiness" easier to accept. Third, their escalating fraternal strife has undermined



their credibility as would-be world leaders. If they cannot work things out between themselves how can they be trusted as responsible members of the nuclear club? There are positive signs of change in both India and Pakistan, however. The United States is looking for a break through in the Kashmir deadlock. If this happens a ripple effect of better relations will hopefully develop.

## A. Books

Richard Haas, **A New U.S. Policy Toward India and Pakistan** (Council of Foreign Relations, 1997)

Dennis Kux, ***India and the United States, Estranged Democracies 1941 to 1991*** (National Defence University Press, 1992)

## B. Internet Sites

[www.state.gov/www/regions/sa/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/sa/index.html)

[http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1997\\_hrp\\_report/\(specificcountry\).html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1997_hrp_report/(specificcountry).html)

See above the sites under IX,B.

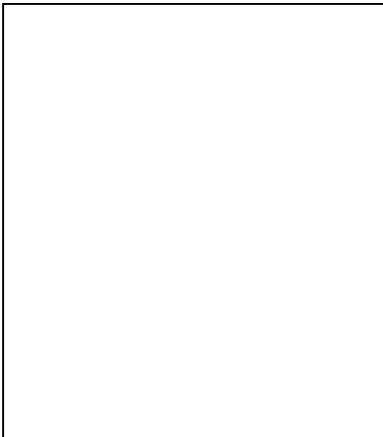
## C. Study Questions

1. What domestic (economic, political, cultural, South Asian-American community) and global strategic concerns have an impact on the shaping of US policy towards India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives?
2. What domestic, regional and global concerns have an impact on the shaping of the policy of these South Asian nations toward the US?

Appendix I: ***A Brief Overview of the Dispute Over Kashmir*** (FSI, 2000)

Appendix II: ***The Multimedia Guide to South Asia*** (FSI, 1999)

# **SURINAME SELF STUDY GUIDE**



**GEORGE P. SHULTZ NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
TRAINING CENTER**  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

## **SELF-STUDY GUIDE TO SURINAME**

The **Self-Study Guide: Suriname** is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to Surinamian history, geography, politics, economics, culture, religion, media, and international relations. The Guide should serve an introductory self-study resource.

The topic is far too complex to be covered in depth using only the text in this Guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced, using the Internet and bibliographic sources provided in the text and in the resource sections. Most of the referenced material can be found on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of this Guide was prepared by Gary Brana-Shute, Ph.D., adjunct professor at the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies of the National Defense University at both the Special Operations School at Hurlburt Field, Florida and Defense Institute Security Assistance Management, Wright-Patterson Field, Ohio.

The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or positions of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). Staff members of the NFATC made final but minor edits to the draft study submitted by Dr. Brana-Shute.

All sources used for graphics and extended quotes are from the public domain, from sites that explicitly say “can be used for non-profit or educational use,” or are from the author’s own materials.

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First Edition  
September 2002

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## **FOREWORD**

This self-study guide is designed as an essential resource for personnel who cannot take Area Studies training at The Foreign Service Institute in preparation for their country assignments as well as for officers at post who may seek additional current material. Although the text parallels the Advanced Area Studies course available at The Foreign Service Institute designed for personnel assigned to the Republic of Suriname, it cannot be the full equivalent of that course. Efforts will be made, however, to provide the officer with access to knowledge not contained here. Supplementary reading is suggested in the bibliography and useful internet websites are pointed out at appropriate places in the text.

The Guide hopes to provide basic background material and serve as a foundation for attaining cultural literacy on the multi-cultural Republic of Suriname. The subjects discussed include geography, history, culture and anthropology, languages and linguistics, religion, social issues, economics, politics and background on foreign affairs and policy.

The language of scholarship and journalism on Suriname is Dutch, a legacy of Suriname's more than 450 year colonial association with the Netherlands. English language resources are few, checkered in quality and tend to focus on what is perceived of as "exotica" (Suriname Maroons, for example), "hot" issues (such as the 1980's dictatorship and civil war) or contemporary matters with "appeal" in the United States (rainforest preservation). Thus this Guide will attempt to place the complexities in a context of understanding that makes sense in Suriname terms and also allows the officer to "make sense" of the realities which they are entering. The preparation of this text relied on consulting the voluminous Dutch language literature. Suggestions for further reading will emphasize what material there is in English and also cite several Dutch/Suriname sources which were drawn upon heavily.

Finally, each chapter and, in some cases, sections of chapters will end with a series of questions designed to engage readers in a thought provoking interaction and engagement with the text. A learning device and exercise, thus. The questions will be followed by suggested readings keyed specifically to the questions at hand.

Good luck.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The chapters that follow in this self-study guide on the Republic of Suriname treat the experience of that country comprehensively. That is, the material aims to trace the emergence of Suriname as a northern European colony, through its colonial period of slavery and indentured labor and through the country's difficult years of independence, conflict and strife.

The chapters that follow are both descriptive and analytical, and cover the events and major themes of Suriname's history and political experience. This guide is written not

only with a Suriname-oriented audience in mind but also a broader hemispheric readership so as to avoid inadvertent isolation and provincialism. Thus I have introduced and concluded each chapter with a thematic essay that locates the unique Suriname experience in the larger context of an issue that has occurred in or afflicted many countries in the Inter-American system. For example, Chapter One profiles the emergence of modern Suriname and inevitably incorporates ethnicity and Suriname's unique multi-ethnicity into the text. However, I did not want to simply mention ethnicity and leave it at that, with no clear conclusions and broader understandings. Thus I concluded Chapter One with a statement on "pluralism, Development and democracy." Other chapters are structured in a similar fashion.

I hope thus that this self-teaching guide will serve to introduce officers to the Republic of Suriname, and add to the hemispheric discourse on maintaining and strengthening peace and democracy. The self-teaching capacity of the text will be reflected in the learning device of ending each chapter and, sometimes, chapter section with interactive and thought provoking questions and issues to "test" and challenge the reader's knowledge and command of Suriname issues. A mini-bibliography of additional sources keyed specifically to the questions and issues will be appended here as well as in the cumulative bibliography at the end of the Guide.

The material is structured in the following manner.

A Guide to Suriname introduces the reader to the basic demographics of the country and includes up-to-date (2000) social, political, cultural and economic data; a snapshot profile if you will.

A List of Acronyms follows. The official language of Suriname is Dutch, although many other languages are spoken there as well. We have left the acronym in the original abbreviation and then translated it into English and followed in parentheses by the original Dutch (or, in several cases, another language which will be identified).

Chapter One locates Suriname in time and space and describes the evolution of a plantation society which at once places Suriname in the colonial conquest of the Americas and also makes an effort to point out Suriname's differences. One trope that runs through this chapter, and indeed the entire guide, is that in addition to Suriname's multiethnicity, there are in effect, two Surinames. One is coastal Suriname with its diverse, cosmopolitan population living in a modern market-oriented city, Paramaribo, and smaller towns and villages along the coastal savanna. The other Suriname is rainforest occupying 80 percent of the country's land surface and home to groups of Maroons (rebel Africans who escaped the plantation system) and Amerindians. An effort is made to point out that these are "kin-ordered" societies and are fundamentally different in organization from the coastal market economy. Kin ordered societies also have special needs and if not attended to can result in misunderstandings at best, or conflict at worst. The chapter is closed with a discussion of the challenge of independence and the May 25, 2000 elections.

Chapter Two examines the period of political instability that characterized the 1980's and 1990's in Suriname, the civil war of that period, the Peace Treaty of 1992 and the fragile democratic aftermath.

The so-called internal conflict of the late 1980's and early 1990's brought to the forefront the deep gulf between the needs, perceptions and aspirations of the interior and those of the coastal area. At root, the Jungle Commando and his fighters had as their immediate goal the removal of the commander of the military and the military-backed government. These conditions presented a fertile environment for the emergence of Ronnie Brunswijk and his men. The immediate oppressive conditions preceding hostilities coupled with the intervention of external actors supporting the insurgency were but the immediate instigators of action in pulling together the long simmering grievances.

The FRONT government attempted peace efforts in the late 1980's. However, the civilian backed efforts were not supported by the military which itself recruited a shadow army of the Tucajana Amazonas to fight a counter-insurgency along with the regular army. Nor was the Jungle Commando willing to strike peace and end hostilities while a still formidable military dominated the elected civilian government (of 1987). Under these conditions there was no chance or serious possibility to talk of strengthening democracy and stabilizing the country until a cease-fire was struck and a peace treaty (Agreement for National Reconciliation and Development) in 1992. The chapter ends with a discussion of "incorporating peace-building in development."

Chapter Three deals with efforts to strengthen democracy in the post-civil war period. The chapter opens with a brief discussion of some of the generally agreed upon tenets of democracy, and the options and experiences they can provide for strengthening democracy in Suriname. From there, the text moves to identifying the problems in Suriname's recent past which interrupted the democratic process and, also, the strengths in Suriname which helped in the transition and return to democracy.

The chapter summarizes four periods of military rule during the 1980's and points out that during the regime the military/military-dominated governments never were able to mobilize the support of or participation of a broad-based sector of civil-society, a basic requirement of democracy. The road to reform and rebuilding thus required strengthening existing institutions in society and creating new avenues of communication in order that Suriname could re-stabilize. Several case studies are offered, both for the interior (land rights and the recognition of traditional tribal authorities) and the coast (strengthening of the parliament—National Assembly—and the elections commission) to address weaknesses in governance.

Chapter Four summarizes, since after the Second World War, the sometimes divergent foreign policies of the Republic of Suriname (independent 1975), the Kingdom of the Netherlands (of which Suriname was a part from 1954 to 1975) and the United States.

Chapter Five makes a modest attempt, based on years of experience in Suriname, to summarize the valuable lessons learned and to offer them as options and ideas to keep in mind for the furtherance of democracy in Suriname.

The guide concludes with a modest bibliography outlining the most salient texts used in the preparation of this guide, and which could be usefully consulted by officers wishing to pursue further study. Websites and internet links are included here as well.



## **INTRODUCTION, ACRONYMS AND MAP**

Suriname is a tropical Caribbean country located on the north east of South America and bordered by Guyana, Brazil, French Guiana and the Atlantic Ocean. With a land area of 164,000 square kilometers the country is roughly the size of the state of Georgia. Best

estimates place the population of Suriname at about 425,000 although this is uncertain due to a huge resident population of illegal Brazilian gold miners and the fact that a census has not been undertaken since 1980. The average yearly temperature is about 27 degrees centigrade and seasonal variations revolve around two rainy seasons (roughly January and June) and two dry seasons (roughly March and October). The 350 kilometer long coast is marsh, mud bank and tangled mangrove swamp and gives over to a savanna area ranging inland from 10 to 70 kilometers. The rest of the country, some 80 percent, is largely thick jungle rain forest cross-cut by major river systems draining the Amazon basin.

Called the “wild coast” by early Europeans, various settlements were attempted by British, French and Dutch colonists until a British settlement was established in 1650. The Dutch acquired Suriname in 1667 as a peace concession and created a full blown plantation economy system based on African and, in rare instances, Amerindian slavery. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century the population of the colony was about 50,000 with about 10,000 residing in Paramaribo, the only city. During this period the population was composed of Europeans, free persons of color and free blacks, urban and plantation slaves, free Maroon communities and Amerindians.

Slavery was abolished in 1863. Ten years later the Dutch turned to importing East Indian contract labor from (British) India, an importation that continued until 1916 resulting in the relocation of about 35,000 East Indians to Suriname. The quest for cheap labor also siphoned off Javanese from the island of Java in the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia). Indonesian contract labor was imported from 1893 to 1939 and brought in some 33,000 persons. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century several hundred small scale Dutch farmers (“boers”) migrated to Suriname and joined almost 4,500 Chinese contract laborers. In the early 1920’s, and continuing sporadically to the present, Christian Lebanese entered Suriname voluntarily. At this writing (2001), estimates place the percentage of the population in the following ethnic mix:

East Indians:	38%
Creoles:	30%
Javanese:	15%
Maroons:	10%
Amerindians:	3%
Chinese:	2%
Other:	2% (Chinese and European)

These figures do not include Brazilian gold miners or Guyanese guest workers.

As will become clear in the following, Suriname’s social organization, sense of national identity and political behavior, in terms of political party choice and preference, is defined largely by ethnicity.



After a centuries long experience as a colony of the Netherlands, Suriname became a member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1954 (“Het Statuut”), along with the Netherlands Antilles. As a “co-equal” member Suriname become internally self-governing in that year and modern Suriname politics began. The country obtained its independence in 1975.

Questions and Issues:

1. Prepare to think about the “Dutch Caribbean” as different from and similar to the Spanish, French and British Caribbean.
2. Did the Dutch have a specific and peculiar colonial policy?
3. Do other Caribbean countries have the degree of “cultural pluralism that Suriname does?”
4. Suriname obtained independence in 1975. Is the country’s sovereignty older or younger than that of the English-speaking Caribbean?

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National Geographic Magazine, 2000 “Suriname,” National Geographic Magazine, Vol. 197(6-May), pp. 38-55.

Organization of American States, 1987 Suriname Planatlas (Suriname Planning Atlas). OAS: Washington, DC

Website: [www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/sasuriname](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/sasuriname) search under topics which appear by category.

Finally, when you get a little Dutch under your belt consult the Suriname/Dutch journal OSO (“house”); a journal of “language, letters, culture and history,” Volume 20, number

1 (May 2001) for a 25 year bibliography of “Surinamese studies” in Dutch and English. OSO is widely available throughout Suriname.

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**ACRONYMS**

The following acronyms have been used throughout the text. Each acronym is defined first in English and then followed by the Dutch (or other language used in Suriname) rendering, which the acronym reflects in italics. If the acronym is of an English phrase no such rendering in Dutch will follow.

ABOP	General Liberation and Development Party ( <i>Algemene Bevrijdings en Ontwikkelings Partij</i> )
AG	Action Group ( <i>Actiegroep</i> )
ALCOA	Aluminum Company of America, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
APS	Suriname Amazon Party ( <i>Amazone Partij Suriname</i> )
BVD	Basic Party for Renewal and Democracy ( <i>Basis Partij voor Vernieuwing en Democratie</i> )
CBB	Central Bureau of Civil Registry ( <i>Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken</i> )
CDI	Council for the Development of the Interior
CMPA	Central Main Polling Authority ( <i>Centraal Hoofd Stembureau</i> )
D-21	Democrats of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century ( <i>Democraten van de 21ste Eeuw</i> )
DA '91	Political coalition Democratic Alternative '91 ( <i>Democratisch Alternatief '91</i> ) joining Alternative Forum – AF - ( <i>Alternatief Forum</i> ) and Brotherhood and Unity in Politics – BEP – ( <i>Broederschap en Eenheid in de Politiek</i> )
DOE	Democracy and Development in Unity ( <i>Democratie en Ontwikkeling in Eenheid</i> )
DNP 2000	National Democratic Platform 2000 ( <i>Democratisch Nationaal Platform 2000</i> )
FRONT	Political Party Coalition run in the 1987 elections. Composed of NPS – the National Party of Suriname ( <i>Nationale Partij Suriname</i> ), the VHP – the United Reform Party ( <i>Verenigde Hervormde Partij</i> ; later changed to <i>Progressive Reform Party – Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij</i> ) and the KTPI – Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level ( <i>Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil</i> ).
HPP	Renewed Progressive Party ( <i>Hernieuwde Progressieve Partij</i> )

IDOS	Institute for Extension Services, Research and Study Support ( <i>Instituut voor Dienstverlening Onderzoek en Studiebegeleiding</i> )
ILO	International Labor Organization
JC	Jungle Commando
KTPI	Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level ( <i>Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil</i> ). See FRONT (1987), NEW FRONT (1991 and 1996) and MC (2000)
MC	Political coalition Millennium Combination ( <i>Millenium Combinatie</i> ) composed of NDP, KTPI, and DA – Democratic Alternative ( <i>Democratisch Alternatief</i> )
NA (or DNA)	National Assembly ( <i>Nationale Assemblée</i> or <i>De Nationale Assemblée</i> )
NDP	National Democratic Party ( <i>Nationale Democratische Partij</i> )
NEW FRONT	Political party coalition run in the 1991, 1996 and 2000 elections.  In 1991 and 1996 the coalition was composed of the NPS – the National Party of Suriname ( <i>Nationale Partij Suriname</i> ), the VHP – the Progressive Reform Party ( <i>Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij</i> ), the KTPI – Party for National Unity and Solidarity of the Highest Level ( <i>Kerukunan Tulodo Prenatan Inggil</i> ), and the SPA – Suriname Labor Party ( <i>Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid</i> ). In 2000 the KTPI was replaced by Pertjajah Luhur (Highest Trust) who joined the coalition after the KTPI left to join the MC.
NHP	National Reform Party ( <i>Nationale Hervormings Partij</i> )
NK	Naya Kadam (New Choice – <i>Nieuwe Keus</i> )
NPK I and NPK II	National Combination Party I (1973) and II (1977) ( <i>Nationale Partij Combinatie</i> )
NPLO	National Party for Leadership and Development ( <i>Nationale Partij voor Leiderschap en Ontwikkeling</i> )
NPS	National Party of Suriname ( <i>Nationale Partij Suriname</i> ). See FRONT (1987) and NEW FRONT (1991, 1996 and 2000)
OKB	Independent Electoral Office ( <i>Onafhankelijk Kies Bureau</i> )

PALU	Progressive Laborers and Farmers Union ( <i>Progressieve Arbeiders en Landbouwers Unie</i> )
Pertjajah Luhur	Highest Trust - See NEW FRONT (2000)
PL	Pendawa Lima
PNP	Progressive National Party ( <i>Progressieve Nationale Partij</i> )
PNR	Party for a Nationalistic Republic ( <i>Partij Nationalistische Republiek</i> )
PSV	Progressive People's Party of Suriname ( <i>Progressieve Surinaamse Volks Partij</i> )
PVF	Political Wing of the FAL [Federation of Laborers and Farmers] ( <i>Politieke Vleugel van de FAL [Federatie van Arbeiders and Landbouwers]</i> )
FAL	Federation of Farmers and Farm workers ( <i>Federatie van Agrariërs en Landarbeiders</i> )
ROB	Council for the Development of the Interior ( <i>Raad voor de Ontwikkeling van het Binnenland</i> )
RVP	Revolutionary Peoples' Party of Suriname ( <i>Revolutionaire Volkspartij Suriname</i> )
SDP	Suriname Democratic Party ( <i>Surinaamse Democratische Partij</i> )
SKM	Suriname National Army ( <i>Surinaamse Krijgsmacht</i> )
SLA	Suriname Liberation Army
SLF	Suriname Liberation Front
SPA	Suriname Labor Party ( <i>Surinaamse Partij van de Arbeid</i> ). See FRONT (1987) and NEW FRONT (1991, 1996 and 2000)
SURALCO	Suriname Aluminum Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of ALCOA
VHP	The United Reform Party, later changed to Progressive Reform Party ( <i>Verenigde Hervormde Partij</i> , later changed to <i>Vooruitstrevende Hervormde Partij</i> ). See FRONT and NEW FRONT

VIDS	Association of Indigenous Leaders of Suriname ( <i>Vereniging van Inheemse Dorpshoofden Suriname</i> )
WIC	(Dutch) West India Company ( <i>West Indische Compagnie</i> )

## CHAPTER I

### A PROFILE OF SURINAME

When Suriname became independent in 1975 the new nation faced several challenges inherited from its pre-colonial and colonial past. In the ongoing discussion about how to structure the Suriname government after independence, in order to ensure adequate representation of the different groups or social categories, the focus has been on the problems associated with ethnic pluralism and/or the widening gap between rich and poor. There is a third factor, however, which should be given more attention: the cultural, economic and political gap between the coastal area and the interior. The challenge of incorporating kin-ordered societies into the nation state is no less daunting than balancing ethnic identity and overcoming poverty. These three themes will be used to link the wide range of information covered in the sections of this guide.

The social, political and economic history of Colonial Suriname has been shaped by the mineral and soil potential of two broad geomorphic zones: a coastal plain consisting of recent sedimentary deposits, and a shield area consisting of Precambrian rocks, which covers about 80% of the country. Before turning to the historical survey, therefore, a brief geographical orientation may prove helpful to the reader. After surveying the natural setting, the following outline will be used to present a brief historical sketch of the human settlement of Suriname:

1. The Pre-Colonial Period (prior to 1650)
2. The Making of Separate Worlds (1650-1875)
3. Attempts to Sustain and Unify (1875-1975)
4. The Challenge of Independence (after 1975)

#### 1.1 The Natural Setting

The coastal plain can be described in terms of three zones: the young coastal plain, the old coastal plain and the savanna belt. The coastal plain, made up of these three formations, is about 30 kilometers wide in the east and about 170 kilometers in the west.

Amazonian currents deposited the fertile clay of the *young coastal plain*. Here and there narrow sand and shell ridges, remnants of former beaches, cut through the clay in an east-

west direction. Natural vegetation consists of mangrove forests, open swamps with aquatic weeds, and low thin-stemmed swamp forests.

The genesis of the *old coastal plain* is similar to that of the young coastal plain, but it is slightly higher. It is surmised that the sea level was higher when the silt was deposited along this belt, it shows more form and relief as creeks carve their way through this landscape. The vegetation consists of swamps with grasses, high swamp forest, marsh forests and dry-land forests.

Further south one comes across the striking white sands of the *savanna* belt. It is surmised that this gently rolling landscape was formed by eroded quartz sands and other sediments from the hills further to the south. The high rainfall is quickly absorbed by the permeable soil, accounting for the savanna vegetation. About 10% of the savanna is made up of white sun-bleached sand. These areas are thinly covered with shrubs and herbs; the remainder is covered with low thin-stemmed or high savanna forest.

The *shield* area roughly corresponds to what is known today as the “interior” of Suriname. The area is covered with dense tropical rainforest with a closed canopy of about 40 meters. As one moves south, the elevation gradually increases and here and there mountain ranges and granite domes protrude above the plateaus and the green canopy, varying in height from 500 to 1.200 meters. The meandering rivers of the interior are difficult to navigate due to the large number of rock formations and cascading rapids.

## **1.2 The Pre-Colonial Period**

During the Pre-Colonial Period (prior to 1650) Amerindians settled in almost every part of Suriname, from the coastal plain to the southern highlands along the Brazilian border. Over the years the different communities adapted quite well to the heterogeneous and complex ecological systems of the coastal areas and the hilly rainforest further inland. They developed subsistence strategies and sustainable technologies appropriate to the regions they lived in. The land and forest was always able to regenerate after communities moved on the new locations. Guides of Amerindian communities suffering from food shortages under this subsistence system are hard to come by.

It was the mineral potential of the Precambrian Guiana Shield that lured the first Europeans to Suriname. This shield has been tectonically stable for a vast period of time and hosts valuable minerals such as bauxite and gold. The myth of Eldorado, featuring a king living in the town of Manoa along the Parima Lake who bathed in gold dust, was the driving force behind the first efforts of the Spanish conquistadors to explore the Guiana coast. Eldorado turned out to be an elusive dream, and gradually the emphasis shifted towards agriculture. Between 1500 and 1650 several attempts were made to colonize the region. It was not until 1651, however, that the first European settlement in Suriname survived the hot, humid climate, disease and attacking Amerindians. Up to that date the indigenous population fully controlled the region known today as Suriname.

Very little is known about the political systems, which existed among the autochthonous populations prior to the European incursion in the 17th century. There are some indicators, however, of what may have existed. Some scholars have suggested that there was no strong leadership among the Amerindian communities. Others have argued that this was not the case, that strong leadership did indeed exist, and that the role of leader was often combined with that of shaman or healer. Oral sources also suggest that pan-societal leaders existed among the Arowak and the Caribs.<sup>1[1]</sup> It is clear, however, that during periods of conflict identifiable leaders emerged and played a pivotal role in dealing with the colonists.

The Amerindian population of Suriname consists of the groups of the coastal area and the interior. The Caribs and Arowaks live in the coastal area. Many of their settlements are in the savanna belt. The Caribs living along the sandy beaches of the Marowijne river maintain close ties with their relatives across the border in French Guiana. The Trios and Wayanas live in the “interior” of Suriname, as far south as the Brazilian border. The Trios of Kwamalasamutu maintain relations with their relatives across the border in Brazil, and the Wayanas of southeast Suriname have close ties with their relatives in French Guiana. A small number of Akurios and Wai Wai have also settled in the Trio villages of the interior.

### **1.3 The Making of Separate Worlds (1650-1875)**

After 1650 the demographic development of Suriname evolved along two tracks. Europeans transported thousands of Africans to Suriname to develop plantations in the coastal area. Hundreds of plantations were established, first on higher ground of the old coastal plain further up-river, and then on the low-lying fertile clays of the young coastal plain. While the plantations were being established rebel slaves used the cover of the dense tropical rainforest to flee and establish themselves above the treacherous rapids of the inland rivers, beyond the reach of the colonial establishment. The rebel slaves relied on their knowledge of African tropical environments to sustain themselves, and drew on their cultural heritage to establish matrilineal kin ordered societies in the hinterland of Suriname.

#### *The Colonization of the Coastal Plain*

In 1651 Lord Willoughby of Parham sent first 100 British planters from Barbados to settle in the coastal plain of Suriname along the Suriname and Commewijne rivers. They already had some experience in tropical agriculture. In 1664 the British were joined by a group of experienced Portuguese-Jewish planters who were forced to leave Cayenne and settled in Suriname. They settled 70 kilometers upriver on high ground and established Torarica, the original capital of Suriname. A few years later the capital was relocated to a

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<sup>1[1]</sup> For example, in 1674 the Amerindian leader Kaaikoesi led a revolt against the planters. In 1686 Governor Cornelis Van Aerssen Van Sommelsdijck signed a peace treaty with the Amerindians. From that time on the Amerindians no longer presented a threat to the plantations.

fort on the left bank of the Suriname river some 10 kilometers inland from the coast. This garrison evolved into Paramaribo, the current capital city. When the Dutch took over Suriname in 1667, there were already 175 plantations in the colony, and the population had grown to 4.000 (including slaves). Many English planters left Suriname and destroyed equipment and plantations on the way out.

Until the end of the 18th century (1792), the colony of Suriname fell under the direct authority of the Dutch sovereign, but was administered by several commercial consortiums, which functioned as a kind of privately owned public authority. Government was in the hands of the private sector, and this guaranteed the colony a certain measure of autonomy.

During the first 15 years of the colony's history, the foundation for this trend was laid. The establishment of the first permanent European settlement in 1650 was a private initiative. Lord Willoughby financed this effort. As noted above, English planters joined him in this venture. A few years after establishing the colony, these planters played an important role in establishing local government.

The period of “commercial government” continued under the Dutch, after they took over in 1667. In 1674 the second Dutch West-Indian Company (W.I.C.) was established, and in 1682 this consortium gained through its charter not only commercial, but also political control of the colony. Its principal aim was to exploit the resources of the colony of Suriname through a few, though significant, import and export monopolies. Only the W.I.C. was authorized to import slaves into Suriname, and to export sugar and other agricultural products. The charter, however, also contained provisions regulating the Government of the colony - it functioned as a kind of constitution of the colony. The W.I.C. appointed the Governor, who was assisted by one or more councils.

Slave labor was the key to the economic development of the coastal plain. First under the British, and then under the Dutch, Africans were forced to toil under sub-human conditions to develop the plantation economy of the coastal plain. After the Dutch takeover in 1667, investors began to develop the young coastal plain. Dutch settlers originating in the province of Zeeland began to import flood control technology and built irrigated plantations with dikes, sluices and transport canals in the young coastal area. The alluvial clays of the lowlands turned out to be very fertile, and the plantation economy shifted northwards. On account of this economic shift northwards, Paramaribo replaced Torarica as the capital city of Suriname.

After 1682 the Governor was assisted by a representative assembly consisting of ten members. The candidates for the body were elected by the white colonists, and then appointed by the Governor. Together these bodies formed the Government of the colony. A great deal of the local political power, however, was in the hands of the planters. For example, as representative of the W.I.C., Governor Mauricius (1742-1751) tried to improve the defense infrastructure and the legal apparatus of the colony, but ran up against the power of the planters, who objected to the costs of these efforts. He ended up leaving the colony, even though his policy efforts were supported by the W.I.C.



In 1700 there were about 100 active plantations in Suriname. In 1740 this number increased to 250, in 1750 some 300 plantations were in production, and in 1770 this number reached 500. The peak production year was 1765, when 10.000 tons of sugar, 7.000 tons of coffee, 100 tons of cocoa and 50 tons of cotton were produced. After the crash of the Amsterdam stock market in 1773, funding for Suriname investments dried up and the number of plantations declined steadily.

In 1792 the W.I.C. was formally abolished, precipitated by, among other things, the disastrous collapse of the economy of Suriname in the second half of the 18th century. The Maroon wars, covered below, further damaged the colonists and drained off more resources.

At the end of the 18th century, during the Napoleonic wars, the British occupied Suriname, and this presence ended in 1814. From 1816 onward the Governor of Suriname represented the King of the Netherlands, and not a commercial enterprise. The country was governed by royal decrees, and it ceased to have its own currency.

In 1865 a major change took place: Suriname acquired a renewed measure of autonomy with the installation of the Colonial Parliament. Four members of the Parliament were appointed by the Governor and nine were elected by a select group of eligible voters. The executive powers remained with the Governor. Another major change took place in 1865: Suriname was divided into districts, each headed by a District Commissioner.

When slavery was abolished in 1863 about 200 plantations were still in production. Particularly telling is the rapid decline immediately before and after the abolition of slavery in 1862. Without the free labor of slaves the Suriname plantation economy was destined to perish. Herewith an overview of this development:

Year	Number of Plantations
1700	100
1740	250
1750	300
1770	500
1820	416
1840	383
1862	216
1872	131

1900	82
1950	24
1975	1

The African population had paid a tremendous toll to develop the coastal plain. About 325.000 Africans had been transported to Suriname to work on the plantations. When slavery was abolished in 1863 a mere 33.621 African-Surinamers gained their freedom. Overwork, mistreatment and disease had resulted in the death of thousands of slaves. After leaving the plantations many African-Surinamers headed for Paramaribo and settled in the outskirts of the quickly expanding town. Names of neighborhoods such as *Frimangron* (“the land of the free persons”) reminds us of both manumission and the abolition of slavery. The urban Africans had access to better education and soon acquired the skills to take up positions as government administrators, teachers and employees in the commercial sector. The better educated became lawyers and doctors. The Moravian Church managed to win many converts among the town Creoles. However, elements of African religion remain to this day prominent in the Creole community.

### *The World of the Interior*

As soon as plantations were established in Suriname, Africans were transported to Suriname to work on these establishments. Suriname planters were notorious for mistreating their slaves, and the dense tropical forest provided excellent cover for those who were no longer willing to accept exploitation and mistreatment. The escaped slaves settled along the upper reaches of the interior rivers above the treacherous rapids. In those days travel with a loaded canoe could require up to three weeks of rowing to reach interior destinations.

Throughout the 1700s the Colonial Government tried to subdue the rebel slaves. Military expeditions were outfitted to locate Maroon settlements and to destroy them, or to engage and capture rebel slaves, but all with limited success. The Colonial Government sued for peace and in the 1760s peace treaties were signed with the major Maroon groups. The African rebel slaves were now free to live in the interior, alongside the Amerindian communities, and develop distinct and autonomous socio-cultural and political entities. Smaller Maroon communities were established after the treaties of the 1760s, but it was not until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the leadership of these Maroon groups was formally recognized by the Colonial Government.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, the interior - originally populated only by indigenous Amerindians - was now the setting for six Maroon nations. The Saramaka and Matakwa were living on the Upper-Suriname and Upper-Saramacca rivers, while the Ndjuka and Paramaka had settled along the Marowijne and Tapanahony rivers. The smaller Boni group ended settling on the Lawa river, and the Kwinti established themselves along the Coppename. The Trio Amerindians lived along the Palumeu river and in the Sipaliwini savanna, while the Wayana lived along the Middle-Tapanahony and Lawa rivers. Caribs

and Arowaks resided largely along the coast. Several other smaller groups lived in the southern fringes of the interior along the Brazilian border.

All these communities have a common characteristic – the Maroons and Amerindians live in kin-based societies in which descent and kinship are important ordering principles in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres.

Among the Maroons, political offices are also tied to the matrilineal descent system. During the past century the offices of the Paramount Chiefs (*Gaaman*) of the major Maroon societies have been passed down along matrilineal lines within a given lineage. The same applies for the office of regional chief (*ede kabiten*), village chief (*kabiten*), and assistant to the village chief (*basya*). Although leadership positions are respected in all regions or villages, the jurisdiction of a village chief is tied to a specific descent group and their settlements, while that of a regional chief is tied to the descent groups which make up the region for which he is accountable.

Currently, newly appointed traditional authorities are confirmed by the Government. Beginning after the Peace Treaties in the 1760s the Government agreed to pay tribute to the leaders of the Maroon societies, but during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century this tribute was converted to payment in cash. The fee received by traditional rulers is an allowance and not a salary - they are not civil servants. The fact that the traditional leaders are not civil servants helps them retain a certain measure of autonomy historically accorded to them. The paying of this stipend implies official recognition, but it also creates a certain measure of dependency. Further, no mention is made of traditional authority in any of Suriname's Constitutions.

Decision making procedures also observe the societal levels outlined above. At the lowest level, the family elders, whether they are a village leader or not, convene to make decisions about family matters. At the lineage level, palavers (*kuutu*), are convened to discuss matters with a broader impact. A more inclusive village meeting is also common, whereas a regional or societal gathering occurs less frequently. During a *gaan kuutu*, which considers, among other things, pan societal matters and external relations, all elders, village and regional chiefs must be present. Recently the term *gaan kuutu* has also been used to refer to meetings between leaders of interior societies convened to discuss issues affecting the entire interior population.

The table below outlines some of the differences between the more western oriented nation-state and kin-based societies.

Characteristics	NATION STATE (modern)	KIN ORDERED SOCIETIES
BASIC SOCIAL UNIT	Nuclear family	Clan, lineage
OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY OR WEALTH	Primarily Individual (though collective responsibilities do persist)	Collective ownership of land and resources (individual ownership of

		personal items)
POLITICAL PARTICIPATION	Individual, special interest groups	Through descent system
MORAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES	Primarily individual	Primarily collective
ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION	Individual, investment based on profit motive	Collective, subsistence oriented

In sum, with the exception of military incursions aimed at destroying rebel slave settlements, the functional presence of the European colonizers did not extend beyond the plantation economy of the coastal area. This is why the period 1650 to 1875 is described with the phrase “*the making of separate worlds.*” During this interlude the British (from 1651 to 1667) and the Dutch (after 1667) “owned” Suriname, but they never managed to take full possession of the colony. During this period the natural boundary between the lowlands of the coast and the highlands of the interior<sup>2[2]</sup> also became a political and socio-cultural frontier, setting apart the world of the European controlled coastal communities and the Amerindian and African communities of the interior.

#### 1.4 Attempts to Sustain and Unify (1875-1975)

This period is characterized by important demographic and economic transitions on the coastal plain, and the political and economic incorporation of the interior with the rest of the country. More than 60.000 laborers were brought from India and Indonesia to replace the slaves freed in 1863, but to no avail. After their contract period expired most contract immigrants abandoned the plantations and settled on small farms in the coastal area. The reluctance of labor led to the further decline in the number of plantations, and during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century small-scale farming gradually replaced plantation agriculture. The once prosperous colony was now facing trade deficits. During the slave era the value of exports exceeded the value of imports by 30% or more. After abolition Suriname began to experience trade deficits and began to rely more and more on subsidies or development aid from the Netherlands to sustain itself.

After 1900 a general shift occurred in the economy. Small farming operations replaced the plantations. These plots were cultivated by ex-slaves, East Indians – known in Suriname as Hindustani -- and later Javanese. Around 1900 90% of the agricultural products were grown on plantations, 10% on smaller farms. In 1950 the reverse was true. Between 1875 and 1900 interest in gold mining was strong, but the boom did not last. The sector reached its zenith in 1908, after which a steady decline set in. Around the turn of the century there was a substantial production of natural rubber (balata), but this activity also dwindled quickly.

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<sup>2[2]</sup> This boundary was marked by the lumber plantation Berg en Dal, located along the Suriname river at the foot of the first prominent elevation as one travels from the coastal area into the interior.

Bauxite mining, on the other hand, turned out to be a steady source of income and employment. From 1922 onwards, production increased almost yearly, and during World War II Suriname became a major supplier of bauxite to the United States. The bauxite was used for the production of aluminum, much of which went to the construction of war material. In the 1960s further investment in a hydro-electric dam, and an alumina and aluminum plant assured Suriname of many years of steady foreign currency income. Mechanized rice farming took off after the 1950s. Between 1955 and 1974 rice production rose from 64.000 tons to 175.000 tons, while the production share of the large-scale farms increased from 20% to 60%. As the century wore on, timber and wood products, as well as shrimp and fishing, became increasingly important.

The developments in the gold mining and bauxite sector had a major impact on the societies of the interior. After 1875, the boundary between the coastal area and the interior began to be challenged by exploration and economic incursions, and by the time Suriname gained independence in 1975 the central Government wielded much greater political and economic influence in the interior. These transitions will be surveyed next.

### *Transitions on the Coastal Plain*

With abolition in sight, the planters expected a massive exodus of African-Surinamers from the plantations and an extreme shortage of field laborers. Their assessment of the situation was correct. Most of the African-Surinamers left the plantations when they could. Attempts were made to obtain laborers from Netherlands-Indies, Madeira, China and the West Indies, with limited success. Between 1853 and 1870 about 4.500 Chinese were brought to Suriname to work on the plantations as indentured laborers. As soon as their contract period expired, the Chinese left the plantations. Most of the Chinese became active in the retail business (40% around 1900, 70% in 1970).

In 1870 the Dutch Government signed a treaty with England and in the period 1873-1916 some 34.000 East Indians were transported to Suriname to work on the plantations as indentured laborers. The period of indentured labor was not without incident. On two occasions around the turn of the century the Hindustani rioted against the plantation owners. These revolts turned bloody when they were struck down with force.

In order to lessen their dependency on the British, the Dutch decided to look for alternative labor sources. Between 1890 and 1935 almost 33.000 Javanese were transported to Suriname to work on the plantations.

Both the Hindustani and the Javanese settled in the coastal area after leaving the plantations. Many did not exercise the option to return to their country of origin because the Government offered them agricultural land. Most of the Hindustani settled in the districts of Nickerie and Saramacca. The Javanese settled in Commewijne, but also in the outskirts of Paramaribo and in some locations in Saramacca.

The demographic make-up of the coastal area after World War II reveals the following picture. In 1950 Suriname had 196.000 inhabitants, the population of Paramaribo was

about 80.000. The urban coastal population was predominantly Creole (about 70%), with a smaller contingent of Europeans and Chinese. Most of the rural coastal population was Hindustani and Javanese, with a smaller number of plantation Creoles who stayed on or settled near plantations after abolition. The population figures for the coastal area in 1950 were as follows:

Creoles	82.408	42.1 %
Hindustani	66.829	34.1 %
Javanese	38.165	19.5 %
Chinese	2.849	1.5 %
Other	5.390	2.8 %
Total	195.641	100 %

Most of the rural settlements were relatively isolated and became ethnic enclaves. The Hindustani and Javanese maintained their language, and despite efforts of the Europeans to Christianize them, most retained their original Hindu or Muslim religion. The temples and mosques developed not only as places of worship, but also centers of educational (especially for language courses) and social activities. Between 1936 and 1937 a law was passed, which recognized and structured village communities, and the Asiatic Marriage Law was also passed. Under this law, marriages concluded under Muslim or Hindi traditions were formally recognized by the Government. Efforts were also made to ensure that the Hindustani and Javanese could have separate representation in the Colonial Parliament. As time passed, the Hindustani and Javanese had increasing contacts with other Surinamers, especially through economic activities, but they retained their language and religion due largely to residential and occupational segregation.

While plantation agriculture faded away major undertakings in the mining industry were initiated. Around the turn of the century bauxite deposits (aluminum ore) were found in the coastal area and mines were established in the Moengo area, about 100 kilometers east of Paramaribo. In 1922 the first shipment of bauxite took place and a period of steady growth followed. In 1938 a processing plant was established at Paranam, some 30 kilometers upriver from Paramaribo. Bauxite mines were opened in the area. Just before World War II the Billiton Company started exploration activities in the Onverdacht area, and in 1953 the company was formally established.

In 1958 the Brokopondo Agreement was signed with ALCOA Aluminum, and in the early sixties, after the construction of the hydroelectric dam, an alumina and aluminum refinery got underway. In addition to the natural resources, Suriname made available the land and agreed to take care of the relocation of some 6.000 Maroons to locations below or above the hydro lake. The investment costs of the dam and the processing plants, including the infrastructure (roads and bridges), were covered by Suralco, a subsidiary of

Alcoa in Pittsburgh. Under the agreement the Government of Suriname would receive part of the electrical power at reduced cost. Ups and downs notwithstanding, over the years the bauxite industry has remained by far the most important foreign currency earner for Suriname (70-85%). Recently the aluminum smelter was taken out of service, but Suriname remains an important producer of alumina.<sup>3[3]</sup>

Other important sectors in the economy after World War II were rice farming, timber products and shrimp fishing. Mechanized rice farming took off after the 1950s. Between 1955 and 1974 rice production rose from 64.000 tons to 175.000 tons, while during the 1990s some 250.000 tons of rice were produced. As noted above, mechanization brought about a shift from small-scale to large-scale farming. During this period the production share of the large-scale farms increased from 20% to 60%. Two banana plantations were established, one in Saramacca and one in Nickerie. Production in this sector rose in the 1960s and in 1968 two million boxes were exported. As the century wore on, timber and wood products, as well as shrimp fishing, became increasingly important.

During the period 1875 to 1975 the political system of Suriname went through a number of major transitions. From 1865 to 1901 the local Government enjoyed a considerable measure of autonomy. The government policy was one of assimilation, primary education was made mandatory (ages 7–12) and the Christian religion was seen as a mechanism for promoting the Europeanization of the local population. In 1874 a decree was issued outlawing “heathen” African rites. This policy of assimilation lasted until the 1930s, when Governor Kielstra brought about a turn-around. He favored protective measures for Asiatic population, and this represented a reversal of the assimilation policy carried out by his predecessors. His efforts were controversial and resulted in several conflicts, especially the introduction of the above-mentioned Asiatic Marriage Law and the law regulating community organization.

In 1901 the appointed membership of the Colonial Parliament was discontinued. All members were to be chosen, but universal suffrage would not be introduced until 1948. After 1908 candidates had to be fielded by political organizations and this brought about the birth of the first political organizations. Despite these “improvements,” the number of political conflicts actually increased after 1900. With the further democratization of the political system, light skinned Creoles began acquiring more influence. One of the new political organizations even fielded socialist candidates and the plantation owners tried to organize their interests by starting their own political organization.

During World War II the Dutch Government promised to introduce a greater measure of autonomy with regards to internal affairs. In 1948 universal suffrage was introduced, and a general council was installed which had executive powers. In 1949 the first general elections were held. In 1954, Suriname acquired political autonomy with respect to internal affairs, while foreign affairs and defense continued to be handled in the context of the Charter and Constitution of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The separation of powers was formalized. Since the introduction of universal suffrage, general elections

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<sup>3[3]</sup>

Alumina is first extracted from bauxite and is then used to produce aluminum ingots.

were held eight times before independence. The political parties were based generally on and represented specific ethnic groups.

Here follows a brief overview of these elections held after universal suffrage was introduced:

#### Election Results by Party: 1949-1973

<u>Year</u>	<u>Political Party – see Acronyms</u>									
	NPS	VHP	KTPI	SDP	PSV	PNP	AG	PNR	Other	Total
1949	12	6	2	.	.	.	.	.	1	21
1951	13	6	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	21
1955	2	6	2	5	3	.	.	.	3	21
1958	9	4	2	0	4	.	.	.	2	21
1963	14	8	4	2	4	.	3	0	1	36
1967	17	11	0	2	0	3	4	0	2	39
1969	11	17	1	0	1	5	.	1	3	39
1973	13	16	2	.	3	0	.	4	1	39

The Suriname parliamentary system is a variation of parliamentary systems found elsewhere. Under this system the Government was held accountable to the Parliament for the approval of its policies. The elected representatives were also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the approved government policy and could draft and approve legislation. In practice, however, most legislation was drafted by technical commissions working at the various ministries and was sent on to the Parliament for approval.

When the Government could not rely on the support of a majority of the elected representatives in the Parliament for the implementation of its policies, it would step down. In 1951, 1958 and 1969 early elections were called after the Government resigned.

It should also be noted in this context, that with the passing of time, a shift in power relations occurred. Up to 1900 almost all of the political leaders were white. Between 1900 and 1958 light skinned Creoles, many of them elite, gradually took over as senior leaders in the political arena. In the early 1950s Johan (Jopie) Adolf Pengel made his entry into the Creole dominated NPS. Though a dark skinned lower class Creole, his political astuteness, excellent oratory skills and charisma brought about his rise in the



NPS. After 1959, when J.A. Pengel formed the government, the predominant position of the light skin Creoles had come to an end.

The urge to become independent was not shared equally by all Surinamers. The most outspoken supporter of the idea was a group of young Creole intellectuals who formed an association “Wi Egi Sani” (“Our Own Property/Thing/Heritage”) and championed the idea of an independent Suriname. In 1961 the largely Creole PNR was created and it was suggested that Suriname would become independent in 1963, exactly 100 years after slavery was abolished.

Up to independence it was generally assumed that the country was governable on the basis of the democratic system, which evolved as a hybrid of the Dutch and other parliamentary systems. The political reality after 1975 proved otherwise. It seems that the differences in the political vision of the members of the various ethnic groups and classes, but also the conceptual gap between persons from the interior and the coastal area, had been underestimated or overlooked altogether.

The chart above, outlining election results suggests, at least numerically that the three main, ethnic-based parties –the Creole NPS, the Hindustani VHP and the Javanese KTPI—voted as ethnic cartels. This is substantially the case as the smaller ideologically-based parties did not fare well in garnering votes (the PNP of 1967 and 1969 was substantially a break away Creole party while the PSV was a smaller Creole party with long standing roots). Notable during this period was the Creole tendency to establish broader ideological choice for its ethnic constituents; by 1969 four Creole parties of differing ideological persuasion had won seats in parliament. Hence, the two Hindustani and Javanese parties give the appearance of a more bounded and solidified ethnic conglomeration. To a real extent this is true but the blunt edge of ethnic-centric focus masks more subtle means of cooperation and coalition building. It is almost a cliché in the political discourse of Suriname to say that the Javanese block often functions in the role of government-maker by aligning with the larger parties who need their support to form a strong majoritarian government. Equally a cliché is to say that a government which excludes Hindustani is doomed to collapse or will, at least, not function well. The Creole-dominated governments of 1967—which collapsed—and 1973—which saw rancorous ethnic disagreement—are testimony to this observation.

Yet, there was established in the 1960’s and early 1970’s a tradition of Creole-Hindustani cooperation which continues to today. Called the “politics of brotherhood” (*verbroederingspolitiek*) or “broad basis” formation (*brede basis*) the ideas undergird the inter-ethnic collaboration which characterizes periods of stability. The reality of politics in Suriname, the preference to vote for “one’s own,” has never resulted in a large, corporate multi-ethnic political party based more on ideology and common cause than the primordial identification of one’s own group. However, mobilizing on the basis of ethnicity does not prohibit inter-party cooperation and coalitions. Ethnicity, one can argue, is merely a cultural resource, not in itself good or bad but merely a building block like age, gender, and residential location in society.

### *The Political and Economic Incorporation of the Interior*

The second economic phase of the colonial period (1875-1975) saw mining replacing agriculture as the main source of income for Suriname. After new deposits of gold were announced in the 1870s, thousands of fortune seekers headed for the interior. Between 1875 and 1925 the economic focus of Suriname was on gold. A 175 kilometers long railroad track was built to the gold fields of the interior. In 1908 production peaked at 1.210 kg. Thousands of fortune seekers flocked to the interior and despite the threat of malaria, worked long hours in the gold fields. Young Maroon men enjoyed relatively high incomes transporting the miners through the rapids to the remote mines in the interior. After the peak in 1908 gold production declined steadily until 1969, when the last mechanized operation was shut down. At the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thousands of Creole men from the coastal area worked as rubber tappers in the interior, but competition from Southeast Asia and the invention of synthetic rubber brought about the demise of this industry.

Other developments also had a major impact on the life of the Indigenous and Maroon communities. In the 1940s and 1950s outboard motors were introduced, reducing travelling time to the interior from two to three weeks to two to three days. Operation Grasshopper began in 1959; a project to establish landing strips through the interior for the purpose of exploration. In the 1960s American missionaries established missions in the interior and began building small runways. Air transport reduced travel to the interior from two to three days to one to two hours.

Universal suffrage was introduced in 1948, and in theory, every adult citizen of Suriname was entitled to vote. However, in order to participate in elections, an eligible voter would have had to be registered. Since the majority of the interior population was not registered during the late 1940s and the 1950s, participation by persons from the interior was minimal. Moreover, there was no residence requirement for candidates, as a result, many persons elected to the Parliament did not have ties or a strong commitment to the people they represented.

Prior to the elections of 1963, a registration campaign was held in the interior, and during these elections, persons from the hinterland were in a position to cast a vote. Since that time, persons from the interior have participated in national elections. The involvement of the interior population in the national political process had a number of consequences for traditional rule (e.g., the *Gaaman*). From the very beginning of the involvement of the interior in the national political system, there was a noticeable association of traditional rulers in party politics. Persons living in the interior objected to this partisanship, and these associations seem to have contributed to the erosion of authority of the traditional rulers.

For better or for worse, the Amerindian and Maroon communities of the interior had become part of the national economic and political system. Some members of Maroon and Amerindian societies have adopted more western norms and customs and live in nuclear families. But traditional customs continue to play a role in the village setting, and

the challenge of integrating the kin-ordered societies of the interior into the nation state remains a formidable challenge. As major socio-cultural, economic and political incursions into the interior continue, further changes in the distribution patterns of resources will take place, and new power relations will be asserted. The accompanying stresses and strains of these changes harbor the potential for conflict. The resulting tensions are an inherent part of development, and democratic and other institutional instruments will have to be created to cope with the latent threats to stability and development. These needs would become particularly evident after 1975.

The cultural life of the interior Maroons and Amerindians remained largely unaffected by European ideas until the last years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first major economic incursions began to take place. To be sure, direct lumber trade between Maroons and Dutch merchants of the coastal area, and the contribution of Maroons to transport and exploration activities in the gold- and bauxite-mining sectors, structured the money economy of these predominantly subsistence societies. Missionaries had some influence in selective areas. All-embracing cultural, social and political influencing, however, only began in earnest when travel times were significantly reduced after the introduction of outboard motors, roads and air links. And yet, the cultural gap left behind by almost 250 years of development in relative isolation, makes incorporation of these societies into the nation state a significant challenge. The challenge posed by this gap would become manifest during the interior conflict in the 1980's and 1990's.

The challenges posed by ethnic pluralism, poverty and the ideological gap between the coastal area and the interior surfaced as key issues during the years immediately prior to and after independence.

### *The Road to Independence*

In early 1933 one of Suriname's first nationalist and political activists, Anton de Kom, arrived in Suriname with his family. From the moment he arrived he was tracked by the authorities, which feared that the labor strikes of 1931 would be rekindled by his political gatherings. He was prohibited from holding public rallies. In 1933 he was arrested. His supporters, both unemployed and poor town-Creoles and Javanese from Commewijne, took to the street demanding his release. Some 30 persons were shot during a public demonstration and de Kom was deported to the Netherlands. After returning to the Netherlands he published We Slaves of Suriname. This work, fundamentally a denunciation of colonialism, critical of labor conditions and poverty, and promoting a nationalist identity, became the canon of the nationalist movement.

Throughout the fifties and the sixties the idea of independence surfaced from time to time in different circles. In 1951 the association *Wi Egi Sani* ("Our Own Heritage") was established by young Creole intellectuals studying in the Netherlands. Eddy Bruma, Henny de Ziel and Jo Rens were the leading figures of this movement. Literary works were produced heralding the cultural heritage of Surinamers. In the early 1950s Johan Adolph Pengel, who was to emerge as the undisputed leader of the NPS, wrote several

articles with strong nationalist overtones. In 1961 the PNR was founded by Bruma and young intellectual supporters.

A serious move to independence would not take place until the NPS, PNR and the PSV (Progressive Peoples' Party of Suriname), all parties with nationalist roots, formed the NPK I coalition. One of the goals of this coalition was to achieve independence by the end of 1975. The Netherlands Government willingly supported the independence effort. Once the realization dawned on the people of Suriname that independence was inevitable, thousands migrated to the Netherlands out of fear for an uncertain economic and political future. Resistance to independence came from the VHP and its Hindustani following, who feared political domination by the Creole groups advocating the creation of a new nation. Tensions flared and several cases of arson occurred, leading to fears that serious civil unrest would erupt pitting the major ethnic groups against each other.

Initially the VHP opposed independence. Three members of the ruling NPK I coalition joined the opposition and technically the Government had lost its majority in Parliament. The Government did not budge and a 20-man delegation, headed by Jagernath Lachmon head of the VHP, flew to the Netherlands to plead their case. The impact of the trip had the opposite results. Leading politicians in the Netherlands convinced members of the delegation that independence was feasible. One of the members of the opposition, George Hindorie ended up supporting the coalition. The year preceding independence a number of colonial wooden buildings in the old section of Paramaribo were set on fire. Hindorie said that he did not want to be responsible for the possible violence and looting, which would break out if the independence effort was thwarted. He crossed the floor, supported the NPK I, Prime Minister Henck Arron got his way and the route to independence was secured. Suriname became a sovereign state on November 25, 1975.

### **1.5 The Challenge of Independence**

On November 25, 1975, Suriname became independent from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. A bilateral treaty fund was set up by the Netherlands and Suriname as an aid-program totaling 3.2 billion Dutch Guilders (approximately 1 billion U.S. Dollars) to be spent over a period of ten years. Suriname became a parliamentary democracy with a clear division of powers: the legislative, executive and judicial branch. The President of the Republic was elected by the Parliament, which had 39 members. The executive powers, however, were in the hands of the Council of Ministers, which was headed by the Vice-President. The Ministers were accountable to the Parliament for their political actions.

However, the new Constitution for the new Republic was a flawed document. Foremost, it contained no provisions to bridge the gap between the coastal area dominated by the merchant-city of Paramaribo and the hinterland, an omission which would be exploited a mere 11 years later with the outbreak of the internal conflict. Specifically, the new Constitution left the interior insufficiently represented by minority candidates as there was no residence requirement to ensure that members of the then Parliament had close ties with and strong relationships to the people and the region they represented. Also,

representation was only at the national level, a highly centralized membership in the Parliament, with no means for local and regional participation, representation, and mobilization. It was only after the period of military rule, in the Constitution of 1987, that such bodies as the local council (*ressort comite*) and district council (*distrikt comite*) would be designed and implemented.

*The First Five Years (1975-1980)*

The first post-independence period (1975-1980) started with optimism. A steady foreign currency income from the bauxite sector could be counted on, and development aid flowed into the State coffers at a rate above the absorption capacity of Suriname's institutions.



Graph 1: Development Aid 1954 – 1980 (in millions Sf)

The economic future of Suriname was to be assured by investing large sums into the West-Suriname project. Two interconnected hydro-electric dams and a river-diversion project would generate a total of 800 MW and this energy was to be used to fuel a new alumina and aluminum plant in the region, and also for other economic activities such as lumber, pulp and paper mills, gold, rubber and agriculture. In 1975 the construction of a 60-kilometer railroad got underway connecting the future bauxite mines in the Bakhuis Mountains to Apoera, an Amerindian village along the Corantijn river, some 150 kilometers inland from the coast. One outcome of the project would be the growth of a new residential area in Apoera, with modern houses and services.

As the seventies wore on, optimism gave way to pessimism. Persons began to doubt that the million-dollar investment in West Suriname would come to fruition. Too many questions remained unanswered and the Government did not seem to be in a hurry to administratively justify the ongoing million dollar spending sprees. Arron and his coalition partners were re-elected with a narrow margin in 1977, bringing the NPK II

coalition to power, and the Government seemed as reassured as ever. And yet, the ever-widening gap between the promises made at independence and their realization led to skepticism and dissatisfaction. Few new jobs were created and the gap between the rich and the poor increased. It was a labor conflict in the military, however, which ended the term of NPK II just prior to the scheduled elections. The non-commissioned officers in the armed forces tried to establish a union, an effort that was not supported by the government. The central issue concerned salary increases.

### *Military Rule: 1980-1987*

On February 25, 1980, the military took over the country. Between 1980 and 1987 four phases of rule can be recognized. Throughout this entire period, however, the ultimate authority resided with the military leaders. During the first phase (1980-1982), a military council was supported by civilians who assisted *a titre personnelle*. During the second phase (1983), the military leaders were supported by proponents of the small socialist parties (the RVP and the PALU). The third phase (1984-1985) saw unions and business associations join forces with the military leaders. During the final phase (1986-1987) the unions, business associations and the old political parties joined the military in the transition to democracy.

At the time of the take-over the population took a wait-and-see attitude. Within a week the President and the Military Council issued a press release saying that in undertaking actions the new rulers would try to adhere to the Constitution as much as possible. But as time wore on, things turned out differently. By the end of March of 1982 four counter-coup attempts had been thwarted and the military leaders began to worry about personal and state security. By mid-1982 the movement to restore democracy became increasingly vocal: church organizations, labor unions, students and teachers began to demand a timetable for the return to an elected government. In December of 1982 the military cracked down and executed fifteen leading opponents of the military regime. The group of victims included the President of the Bar Association, the Dean of the Social Science Faculty, a labor union leader, and several journalists.

When the military took over in 1980 they inherited a considerable foreign currency reserve, partially due to the influx of development aid in hard currency. In 1983, however, the economy suffered several setbacks. Development aid was suspended due to the events of December 8, 1982. A worldwide recession reduced the demand for aluminum and alumina, Suriname's most important export commodities. Moreover, monetary financing of the government deficit increased the money supply and fueled inflation. In the period 1981 to 1985 monetary reserves declined from about US \$ 225 million to US \$ 25 million and the value of the Suriname florin began to slide, a trend which would alternately accelerate and slow down, but continue to this day. The Central Bank, however, continued to maintain the official rate of Sf 1.77 to the US Dollar, resulting in an ever-increasing gap between the official and the parallel rate. Gradually, several "official" exchange rates were introduced, making it very difficult to bring the monetary situation under control.

The military-dominated governments of the period initiated measures to mobilize support outside of the traditional political party structures. A mass movement, which was to presage the emergence of the military's own political party – the NDP—and called variously the Stand Fast (*Standvaste*) or the 25 February Movement (*25 Februari Beweeking*) mobilized supporters through previously untried means. Also, the forerunner of local and district level committees was designed, the People's Committee's (*Volks Comite*), which sought local in-put through institutionalized organs aimed at decentralizing communication, participation and decision-making.

In September of 1987 a new Constitution was approved by a referendum and in November of 1987 elections were held. The old political parties, now in the multi-ethnic FRONT coalition, received an overwhelming majority (40) of the 51 seats in parliament. Under the new Constitution the president and the vice-president are to be elected by the National Assembly by a 2/3's majority. If the required majority is not achieved, the president and vice-president are elected by the United People's Council, consisting of the 51 members of the National Assembly, as well as by the 104 members of the newly created District Councils and the 710 members of the Local Councils. These two bodies were called into existence under the new Constitution in an effort to bring about a higher degree of administrative decentralization. Under the new system the president received a greater measure of executive authority. He appoints and dismisses the Ministers.

The 1987 Constitution, which served as the basic document to guide the country during the transition to democracy, remedied, in part, the flaws of its predecessor. It was a precondition, placed by the NDP, that local and regional committees be recognized and included in the Constitution as law. At the same time the statutory inclusion of these decentralized organs broadened the participation of the masses in governance and simultaneously weakened the centralized control of the traditional political parties. This is an important addition to the governing of Suriname and this positive development was in part a result of the process of decentralization and mobilization begun under the military. A residency requirement for National Assembly members promoted the idea that parliamentarians be recruited from minority groups with close ties to the interior and rural regions.

#### *The Country Divided (1986-1992)*

The year 1987 was marked by the transition to a weak form of democratic governance which was to last only until December 1990. Weak because the newly elected Front government of 1987 had only partial control over the strong and influential military. In fact, the 1987 Constitution guaranteed the military the military privileges embodied in two clauses of the Constitution, principally that of maintaining its role as defender of the revolution. These two clauses would not be removed until the 1992 advent of the Venetiaan New Front government, and only then in the context of a dangerous confrontation between the military and the civilians.

In 1986 a conflict broke out in eastern Suriname, which spread in the subsequent years to central and western Suriname. The conflict involved the national army and the Jungle

Commando, an insurgent group consisting mainly of Maroons. At the end of 1986 and during the first half of 1987, severe fighting took place in and around Maroon villages in east-Suriname. Some 10.000 inhabitants sought refuge in neighboring French Guiana, and another 13.000 people from the interior fled to Paramaribo. Lumbering, bauxite and gold mining, and the palm oil industry suffered major setbacks or closed down temporarily or for extended periods in the areas of conflict. In 1989, other illegally armed groups entered into the internal conflict: the Tucayana Amazonas (Amerindian group), Mandela, Angula and Koffiemakka (other Maroon groups).

It is important to note that the war broke out precisely at the time the country was preparing for the complex and delicate transition to democracy, when stakes for both the military and the civilians were very high. Although the war has been called an “internal” conflict, and it was fought out over serious internal issues, there was external involvement of partisan countries whose position was that Commander Bouterse and his military had to be put under pressure to assure the return of the traditional democratic parties. The actions of the Netherlands, the United States, and France appear to have been important sources of relief and support for the insurgents. It is further important to note that foreign support dwindled after the election of the civilian government in 1987 and the insurgency declined sharply in its ability to undertake combat. The insurgency never completely gave up arms during the late 1980’s. On the one hand the military was unwilling to endorse a peace treaty signed with a group they still considered to be dangerous, unpacified rebels. Equally, the Jungle Commando was unwilling to give up arms with a powerful military still in place. The situation would remain so until 1992.

During the late 1980’s tension between the elected Government of President R. Shankar and Commander D. Bouterse of the Armed Forces mounted. In July of 1989 the Government signed the Kourou accord, without the support of the military, with the intent to bring a halt to the interior conflict. The stresses and the strains culminated in the so-called “telephone” coup of December 1990, which dispatched the elected government with one telephone call from a senior ranking military officer. During the weeks thereafter the take-over was sanctioned by Parliament and new elections were called within six months.

*Consolidating Peace and Democracy (1991-2000)*

With the elections of May of 1991 democracy was restored. The traditional political parties once again united in the “New Front for Democracy and Development” and won a majority that proved sufficient to survive five years in office. The NDP, associated with the military, did well as did the private sector-associated DA ’91. This diversity of political choices reflected the complexity of Suriname’s interest groups. The results of the elections were as follows:

Party	New Front	NDP	DA’91	Total
Seats	30	12	9	51



The first two years in office, however, proved extremely challenging to the government of President Ronald Venetiaan. Among other destabilizing events the huge hydro-electric dam was occupied by terrorists and workers held hostage. The successful effort to place the military under clear civilian authority almost resulted in a military coup d'état (it would have been the third) and take-over. The president first had to have the two clauses providing military privilege removed from the Constitution by the National Assembly. Secondly, which is covered in the following chapter dealing with threats to peace, he moved to relieve Commander Bouterse from control of the military. He succeeded on both counts. On the positive side, the Accord for National Reconciliation and Development (Peace Accord) was signed in August 1992, bringing an end to the interior conflict.

In 1993, the Venetiaan Government started a structural adjustment program, in an effort to bring the economy under control. A single official floating rate replaced the numerous fixed currency exchange rates, foreign exchange rules were liberalized, monetary financing of the government budget was halted, the government debt to the Central Bank had been consolidated and a repayment schedule agreed to, subsidies were eliminated and tax collection improved. These measures were not taken without a price. The introduction of a floating rate brought about wild fluctuations in the exchange rate. In January of 1994 the US Dollar was exchanged for 85 Suriname Florins. By November the rate peaked at 600, but in 1995 the rate declined and finally settled at around 400. The rate stayed at this level for about two years (1996 – 1998) until skyrocketing to over 2000 by the end of June 2000.

The early nineties also saw considerable pressure exerted on the communities of the interior. With the signing of the Peace Accord the process of restoring security in the interior got underway. With an adjustment program underway, the Government was eager to develop the gold and lumber resources of the interior, in order to create jobs and supplement the foreign exchange earnings of the bauxite industry. The rapid devaluation of the Suriname currency prompted thousands of young Maroon men to seek employment in the gold sector, where salaries are paid in grams of ore and not Suriname currency, a hedge against the ongoing loss of purchasing power.

One gold exploration company alone secured almost one million acres in prospective lands, and plans for issuing million acre lumber concessions circulated. Vast tracts of tribal lands ended up in gold and lumber concessions. At the same time, thousands of Brazilian gold miners flocked to the interior and joined Maroon men already active in the sector. The pollution of rivers and creeks caused by the effluent of the small-scale miners took on major proportions. Lawlessness and gangs began to take the upperhand in some mining areas. Foreign lumber companies began extracting huge amounts of lumber at rates well above the prescribed cutting limits, established by law to allow for the natural renewal of the fragile tropical rainforest.

Instead of enhancing the social and economic security of the interior population and promoting national development, a partial implementation of the Peace Accord seems to have had a disruptive socio-economic and environmental impact at the local level. The

Government was not able to restore a functional presence in all areas of the interior and the status of chieftaincy remained in limbo. The lack of clear-cut lines of authority resulted in uncontrolled mining and forestry activities creating the problems mentioned above. The critical issue of land rights was totally ignored.

The outcome of the 1996 elections for the interior were an indication of the dissatisfaction of the population with the failure of the Government to implement the land rights provisions of the Peace Accord. The New Front lost ground in the interior to parties that promised to secure land rights for the population of the interior in the future.

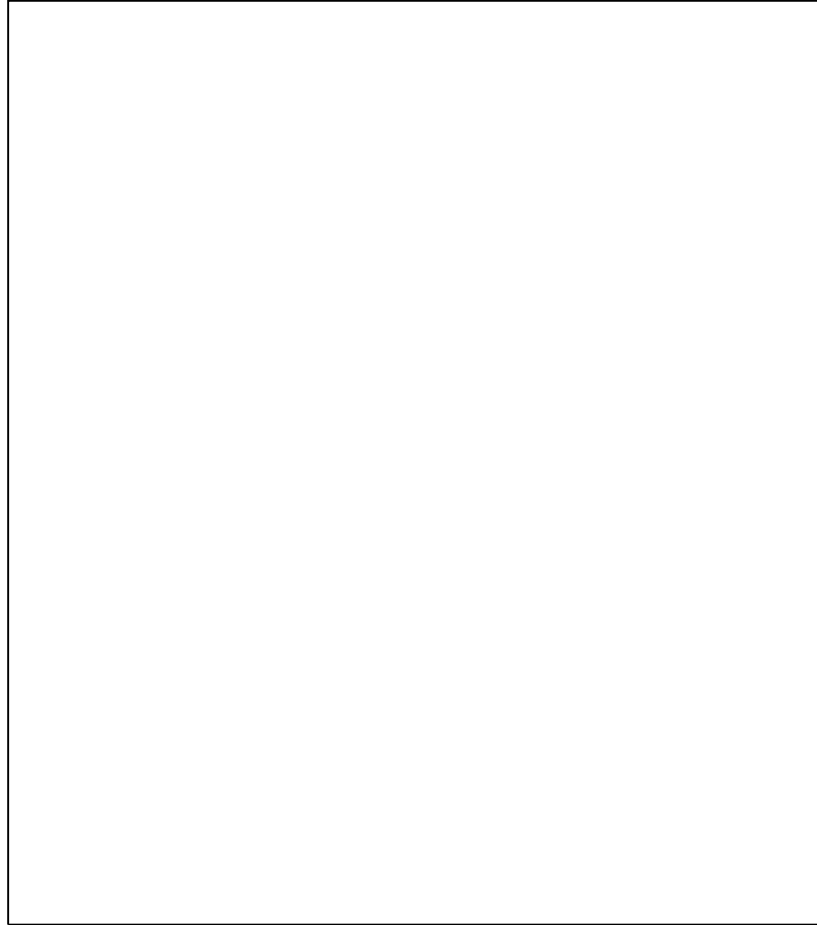
Two new parties won seats: the Javanese Pendawa Lima and Alliantie, a party which had ties to the NDP.

The results of the 1996 elections were as follows:

Party	New Front	NDP	DA'91	Pendawa Lima	Alliantie	Total
Seats	24	16	4	4	3	51

The results of the elections showed that the New Front coalition lost its majority in the National Assembly, even though it had a large majority at the local council level. A coalition of two or more parties would be necessary to elect the president. During the period prior to the attempts to elect the president, friction in the VHP block of the NEW FRONT caused a split. Five of the nine members of the VHP disagreed with the lack of democracy within the VHP and the candidate nominated for vice-president. They did not support the New Front candidate. Two attempts were made and the New Front presidential and vice presidential candidates did not receive the required two thirds of the votes. The United Peoples Assembly was convened and the Candidate of the New Front, Ronald Venetiaan, received 407 votes, while Jules Wijdenbosch, the Chairman of the NDP, received 438 votes. On September 14, 1996, the new president was installed.

The five-year term of the president, however, was reduced by a year after two weeks of street protests in May of 1999. On May 12 the exchange rate reached a record 1400, and even jumped temporarily to 2000. Sales figures plummeted and several businesses closed their doors. The monetary authorities were not able to bring the exchange rates under control. The chart included here gives a clear indication of the dramatic increase in the exchange rates after January of 1995.



Graph 2: Exchange Rates – Suriname Florin to US Dollar

(Compiled by Christopher Healy, Paramaribo, July 2000)

While the crisis was brewing President Wijdenbosch departed with a delegation to Ghana on May 16, 1999. The “Structured Alliance,” a civil society solidarity of opposition parties, unions and other civil organizations, convened a meeting and decided to initiate the protest actions again which had been suspended a few months earlier. The Structured Alliance also advanced the idea that an interim government should be installed and several prominent persons in society were mentioned as possible candidates for president and vice-president.

At the same time, “The Union for the Defense of the Constitutional State“, consisting of the bar association and several civic organizations, were protesting the planned installation of five new judges by the President of the Courts, Mr. Alfred Veldema. This dispute centered on the alleged unconstitutional installation of the Chief Judge by the president. The appointment of the five new judges would also be unconstitutional, so they argued. The next day four of the five candidate judges were installed. One reneged. That same day, the meeting of the National Assembly was called off when a large number of protesters entered the building.

When the president returned on Sunday May 23, 1999, several days of street protests had already taken place. In the coming days the number of protesters would increase significantly, and by Wednesday May 26 some 150 unions had joined the strike, which had virtually shut down Paramaribo for ten days. On May 27 ten members of the National Assembly called for a meeting to discuss the situation in the country.

On Friday May 28 the president dismissed the entire Council of Ministers. On Saturday the meeting of the members of the coalition was cancelled because one party (the BVD, a break away group of parliamentarians from the VHP) did not attend while many of the members of another major coalition partner (the NDP) were absent. The leader of the NDP, former military commander Bouterse, the largest partner in the coalition, then called for the resignation of the president. On Tuesday June 1 the National Assembly adopted a motion of no confidence against the president. While the motion was being discussed in the National Assembly, the president sent a note indicating that he would be willing to shorten his term by one year and call elections, provided the National Assembly would also agree to shorten its term by one year. This was agreed and the protest actions were suspended. Attempts by the opposition to get André Telting and Eddy Jharap elected as president and vice-president in the National Assembly failed. A simple majority was not achieved. The Structured Alliance faded from the political scene.

On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000 elections were held, one year prior to the expiration of the five-year term of the President. The result of the elections were as follows:

Party	New Front	MC	DNP 2000	DA' 91	PVF	PALU	Total
Seats	33	10	3	2	2	1	51

For the fourth time in less than fifteen years the multi-ethnic (Creole, Hindustani, Javanese, and one labor party – largely Creole) NEW FRONT (and its 1987 predecessor the FRONT) demonstrated that ethnic coalitions could work and function under stress. The “politics of brotherhood” was an essential notion for the construction of stable politics in Suriname. It would seem, to promote inclusion of all Surinamers in their governance, that the idea must be expanded beyond the three major groups and include all Surinamers as well. During the electoral process the NDP fragmented into the Bouterse wing (MC) and the President Wijdenbosch wing (DNP 2000). DA ‘91’s vote share was reduced, the labor-associated PVF won two seats, and the left-wing PALU won one.

The new Government of Suriname, was installed in September 2000, and faced a future full with possibilities and a mandate from the citizens to implement reforms and measures, to secure and stabilize peace, democracy and development in the Republic.

## **1.6 Pluralism, Development and Nation Building**

In the profile above an effort was made to review the history of Suriname from a perspective that would promote awareness, not only of the obvious and visible challenges

faced by the country, but also reveal some of the underlying causes of the problems and conflicts to date. It was noted at the outset that this type of awareness and understanding was a necessary precondition for inspiring action aimed at achieving peaceful, harmonious and sustainable development in a truly democratic setting. We have also tried to assess the prospects for maintaining peace and strengthening democracy against the background of this historical sketch. The overview was divided into four sections, ranging from the Pre-Colonial period to the present. Some of the lessons taught us by this historical overview are summarized below. Our first theme was ethnicity.

The cultural landscape of the coastal plain was transformed dramatically after 1875. The abolition of slavery in 1863 led to the evacuation of the plantations by Africans who sought their livelihood in the city of Paramaribo or in freehold villages as small farmers. Dutch policy was to replace them with two major groups of contract laborers, Hindustani and Javanese contract. Coastal Suriname was no longer an African-European conglomerate but became increasingly Asian. By 1950 well over half of the population was of Asian decent (Hindustani, Javanese and Chinese). Their population share has increased to this day, making the coastal zone –just in raw numbers—more “Asian” than Creole or European.

Conventional thinking, framed in what has been called “plural society” theory, attributes much of the social and political problems of Suriname (and other countries) to the remarkable diversity of Suriname’s population. The assumption of this approach is that the many ethnic groups cannot and will not get along nor accommodate, much less cooperate with each other because they are different and invest their trust, time, and resources in their own group at the expense of other forms of cooperation. Hence, Suriname should be inherently unstable due to complexities associated with its ethnic make-up.

The political history of Suriname, after the introduction of universal suffrage in the 1940’s, does not support this view of things. The maturing of Suriname’s political parties, from the domination of white and Creole elites in the 1950’s, through ethnic political party organization and the constitutional advance to independence in 1975, demonstrates a remarkable stability and consistency of cooperation across ethnic boundaries.

Despite policy disagreements, which were often about economic issues rather than something inherently cultural, and personal feuds which occurred from time to time, the twin concepts of “the politics of brotherhood” (*verbroederingspolitiek*) and “broad basis” (*brede basis*) prevailed from the early 1960’s. Strong and stable governments were most likely to occur when the larger political parties representing the major ethnic groups shared power in a coalition.

To be sure, periods of ethnic tension occurred. We saw, for example, that during the years immediately prior to independence tensions flared. Many Hindustani opposed the path to independence set out by the Creole leaders of the time. Several instances of arson occurred, and thousands of Hindustani left the country and settled in the Netherlands. The NPK I government managed to secure a slim margin for its independence proposal when

Mr. Hindorie, a VHP parliamentarian, changed party alliance. This action was motivated by the desire to diffuse tensions between the two major ethnic groups in the country, and it worked.

The democratic tradition which developed after 1948 was interrupted by the military take-over in 1980. Ironically, that occurrence in 1979-1980 was at a time of unrivaled growth in prosperity, supported, among other things, by a large influx of foreign aid (see graph one, 28). Important for the preceding observation on power sharing was that this government, the NPK II, did not include representatives from the main Hindustani party in its coalition. The military coup of 1980 removed a government with only a slim majority in parliament and weakened by lack of representation of one of the largest ethnic groups.

Jules Sedney, former Prime Minister, scholar and himself head of a multi-ethnic government from 1969-1973, has argued that despite the delicate balance of multi-ethnic governance, called “consociationalism” or rule by ethnic cartels, this type of democracy functioned well in Suriname. And, he argued, that despite its shortcomings this type of democracy is to be preferred above the dictatorial military rule of the 1980’s, because it contains the necessary checks and balances needed to ensure governance acceptable to the people of Suriname. The system of rule during the military period seriously limited the participation of the essential associations of society, and pressure emanating from these groups hastened the return to democratic government.

The history of Suriname suggests that that multi-ethnicity is not an obstacle to harmony, cooperation and governance endorsed by the voters, it is, on the contrary, one of the essential building blocks of stable government. In the Suriname reality, the mobilization and management of ethnic balancing is what makes possible any governance at all. The ethnic group is one of the essential associations of society, and this identity is expressed through participation in clubs, churches/temples, sodalities, residential areas and so forth. It seems that the facilitating role of the government in Suriname is actually strengthened by incorporating representatives from the various ethnic groups. Trying to dominate or ignore this social dimension in government seems to promote passive resistance rather than effective participation.

One of the opening positions of this chapter, that awareness building is a prerequisite for effective action, compels us to reconsider the view that ethnicity is necessarily an obstacle to governance. Of course, the associations of society can be manipulated to such an extent that they have a very negative impact on governance and the well-being of the citizenry. However legitimate these fears, ethnic pluralism can also contribute to a stable government, and in Suriname this has often been the case. Cultural and social diversity can also be seen as an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness as well as a source of self-esteem and pride for all humankind, an important development resource. Acknowledging the associations of society can help increase control of citizens of their own well-being and at the same time contribute to the process of nation building.

However, the fragile nature of ethnic coalition building leaves many in Suriname feeling uncomfortable. On July 10, 2000 Ruth Wijdenbosch, a leading spokesperson for the Creole NPS party of the New Front coalition, expressed her concern. On Radio ABC she said that she would feel more comfortable if the New Front were a single political party rather than an ethnic-based coalition.

Our second theme was the gap between the rich and the poor and the poverty that can be associated with the economic conditions in the country. Perhaps it is not possible to link the standard of living to occurrences of conflict in the history of Suriname, but one cannot help noting that many of the conflicts which did occur could be associated with rapid changes in the economic situation of the country.

After the collapse of the Amsterdam stock market in 1773 and the rapid decline in plantation output, and despite three peace treaties concluded in the 1760s, the Maroons war flared up again. During the protest actions in 1933 associated with the arrest of Anton de Kom, two persons were killed and 22 wounded. These events transpired during the depression, which also hit Suriname very hard. Large number of Surinamers were unemployed and had trouble sustaining themselves and their families. The socio-economic context of the military take-over in 1980 was not one of economic decline. Surinamers were living well at the end of the 1970s. The population, however, was becoming increasingly apprehensive, as it became clear that the large show projects financed by the massive influx of development aid were not creating a sustainable economic base. No increase of productivity and new jobs were forthcoming, at least, so it seemed. When the military took over, many gave a sigh of relief and hoped that the new rulers would embark upon ventures resulting in increased but sustainable welfare. This did not materialize.

The absence of checks and balances created a situation in which the foreign currency reserves inherited from the last democratic government were quickly depleted, and when development aid was suspended after the December murders of 1982, the economy went into a sharp decline. The shortage of foreign currency resulted in a parallel market, and the subsequent devaluation of the Suriname guilder impoverished the population at a rate hitherto unknown. In 1984 the Suriname guilder traded for US \$ 0.56 cents. By 1991 this rate had declined to 0.05 cents. In 1994 the rate dropped below 0.0025 cents, in 1998 the rate sank further to 0.001 and in 2000 we saw a rate of 0.0005 cents for the guilder. The Graph 2 (P. 34) gives a good impression of this devaluation in the 1990s.

The weak demand for bauxite products in the early 1980's forced the major companies operating in Suriname to cut cost and lay off workers. Modernizing operations in order to achieve more efficient production and lower costs was opted for in the bauxite town of Moengo in east Suriname. The labor force was reduced from 1200 to below 300. This massive lay-offs and an increasingly harsh and repressive regime by the military fostered a mood of civil disobedience among the Maroons in the area and in 1986 the interior war broke out. The dramatic decline in the value of the guilder between 1998 and 1999 crippled the Wijdenbosch government and, as we have seen above, after weeks of streets protests, the President agreed to shorten his term by one year.

We can conclude from the historical overview that, during periods of rapid economic decline often resulting in a widening gap between rich and poor, the citizenry suffering from a decline in standard of living and impoverishment, will respond forcefully to seek relief. This type of public response has been often been defined by those in power as unconstitutional. A case in point was the response of the government to the public manifestation surrounding Anton de Kom's arrest during the world depression. When protestors failed to disperse they were fired upon.

A recent example were the mass protests against the Wijdenbosch government in May of 1999. These actions were precipitated by hyper inflation in a rapidly deteriorating economy. In this instance, impoverishment and economic pain led directly to social and political instability making it impossible for the democratically elected government to function. Once economic problems created a political crisis of this magnitude, the risk of escalation resulting in serious conflict increased dramatically, and a peaceful resolution is rarely achieved without major concessions. The impact of economic decline and sharpening cleavage between the haves and the have nots posed a serious threat to peace and democracy. Again, this is not to say that there was an obvious causal connection between economic conditions and conflict or suspension of democracy. It was becoming clear from the history of Suriname, however, that good governance was an important condition for maintaining peace and strengthening democracy. This brings us to our third theme, the challenge of incorporating kin ordered societies into the nation state.

Suriname faces a formidable challenge in the process of nation building. Many Surinamers and outside observers decry that the promise of independence was never fulfilled. And, when the post-independence period is examined, they are correct about the facts of the matter. However, after the elections of 2000 we may be witnessing a new realism on the part of Surinamers and their friends. On the same radio program on which Ruth Wijdenbosch spoke, another NPS leader candidly reported that both Suriname and the Netherlands must share the responsibility for not meeting the development goals set forth in 1975 nor have they succeeded in resolving the dilemmas of decolonization.

Suriname is one of the many developing nations in the world seeking to establish overriding national alliances that transcend regional and ethnic differences. In addition to these complex diversities, however, looms the additional challenge of dealing with the issue of kin ordered societies existing in the context of a nation state modeled on western norms.

As noted above, several kin ordered societies exist throughout the hinterland of the country, and they can be grouped into two categories: the indigenous Amerindian population, which lived in the area long before the first Europeans arrived in the early 1600s, and the descendants of rebel African slaves who escaped from the plantations and settled along the rivers of the interior during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Opinions on what to do about the situation vary from one extreme to the other. Some believe that kin ordered societies are remnants of earlier forms of organizing society, and that the process of assimilating ethnicities into the nation state will follow a "natural"



course. Through exposure to Western influences, members of these communities will sooner or later abandon their ideology of collective ownership and family-based political participation, and embrace a more individualistic western economic and political order. At the other extreme there are those who believe that kin ordered societies are viable and functional socio-cultural entities and that their members must be afforded the opportunity to preserve their way of life in the context of the modern nation state, but also be granted autonomous administration of their territories.

During the past century, many of the kin ordered societies have disappeared. Some have been incorporated into modern political systems, but a growing number are advocating cultural revival and are seeking formal recognition of their socio-cultural, economic and political traditions. Out of necessity, they are also seeking legal protection of their resource based economy. In Suriname members of kin ordered societies are becoming increasingly vocal and now demanding legal recognition of their social, economic and political institutions. They want rights to land, access to natural resources and recognition of chieftaincy.

The assumption that kin ordered societies will automatically assimilate into the nation state, that this process will follow a natural course, and that their institutions will fade away with time, is not born out by the events of the past two decades. On the other hand, taking on a completely pro-position on the status of the people of the forest at the expense of coastal interests and enterprise will only end up alienating members of the legislative and executive branch, precisely those authorities whose opinions and views will shape modern Suriname, and who are in a position to do something about the future status of kin ordered societies.

To be sure, kin ordered societies are viable and functional socio-cultural entities. The Governments of the modern states need to recognize this. However, this does not mean that all cultural practices must be preserved and maintained at all cost. A traditional chief from Ghana recently argued that "our political institutions need to play a complementary role rather than a competitive role with our traditional institutions (such as chieftaincy) in moving Africa forward." He notes, however, that in order to achieve this

"our traditional institutions need some major reform and empowerment. We must within ourselves eschew avarice, unnecessary litigation and unwarranted autocracy in order to enhance our own credibility. We also need to modernize some of our cultural practices and religious beliefs to make them acceptable to the entire society."

In chapter 2 we explore conflict *and* development as related processes.

#### Questions and Issues:

1. How has geography and climate affected the emergence of "two Surinames?"
2. If you accept the position of two Surinames, would you consider three or four Surinames? If so, what would they be based on?

3. Did the arrival of Independence for Suriname differ in any substantial way from other countries with which you have experience or knowledge?
4. What was (is?) Suriname's "challenge of independence?"
5. What was the genesis of the 1980 coup? Was this coup more typical of Latin American military coups or the African experience?
6. When did "democracy" conclusively return? With the elections of 1987?, 1991?, 1996? or 2000? We will deal with these questions later but what do you surmise are the difficulties in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy?
7. Is cultural pluralism and multi-ethnicity a problem and extra burden for the emergence of an organic nation-state? How does one get around this? Is ethnicity more problematic than "class?"

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Click on politics and history tabs.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING PEACE**

Chapter One outlined the events that defined the modern history of Suriname. As we have seen, however, several political events went terribly wrong in the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's. Authoritarianism and war cleaved the country and resulted in the destruction of democracy, life and property. Suriname lives with that legacy today.

The military government, established soon after the 1980 coup, oppressed the coast and soon began to expand its control and implement its revolutionary policies in the interior, the other Suriname. This would result in nearly seven years of bloody civil war; the so-called "Interior War" of the Jungle Commando headed by Ronnie Brunswijk. That story is told here in some detail because as of late 2001 the post-conflict issues are not yet resolved nor are the peace treaty protocols implemented. The interior of Suriname remains unsettled.

#### **2.1 The Conflict: 1986-1992**

In order to maintain peace it is essential to understand the nature, the causes, the life cycle, and the post conflict impact of the interior war. Needless to say, this type of analysis demands an impartial examination of the events and a good insight into the recent history of the country. A great deal of this chapter will consider the following questions:

- What type of conflict was the interior war?
- What were the causes?
- How did the conflict emerge, and what conditions and factors contributed to its cessation?
- What are the post conflict conditions in the conflict zone, but also in the country as a whole?

Conflict is defined as a situation in which two or more parties have conflicting interests. These parties can be individuals, small or large groups, or countries. If the divergent interest of countries or groups within a country cannot be integrated peacefully, a violent solution is often sought. Conflict situations vary from a very low level to a very high level; from taking on a hostile attitude to taking actions against the opponent that may

wound or kill and cause extensive material damage to public or private property. Interests can clash over issues related to resources, power, identity, status, and values. Experts active in conflict resolution generally agree that most conflicts are caused by individuals or groups and can be ended by individuals or groups. Conflicts and the prevention of their recurrence can be greatly facilitated by an understanding of the factors that created problems in the first place.

In the preface to a publication of the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, Mr. Jan Pronk, former Dutch Minister of Development Aid and prominent figure during Suriname's move to independence, noted that

“[c]onflict and development are two sides of the same coin. Conflict is an inherent part of development. Changes in distribution patterns or in power relations lead to conflict of interest. If the divergent interests of the various groups within society cannot be integrated peacefully, a violent solution is sought ..... In view of the often-disruptive nature of development, peace-building must be incorporated into the development process.”

The interior conflict can be divided into two periods. The first covers the period between July of 1986 and August of 1989, when the two main actors were the National Army and the Jungle Commando (JC), a group of young Aukaner Maroon rebels who initiated the conflict with an attack on the army outpost at Stolkertsijver. Most of the fighting took place in East- and Central-Suriname. The second phase of the conflict began in August 1989 when the Tucajana Amazonas (TA) announced their entry into the conflict, by hijacking the Coppename river ferry with forty vehicles on board. This group consisted for the most part of Carib and Arowak Amerindians. The TA took control of western region of Suriname, but was also active in the Amerindian communities in the districts of Marowijne and Para.

In September of 1989 the Mandela group announced its existence to the media. The group was formed by young Matawai Maroons who operated along the Saramacca River region. Later on, yet another group was formed by Matawai youth, the Koffiemaka. This group also operated in the Saramacca River region.

In October of 1989 the Union for Liberation and Democracy (ULD) took over Mungo. This group was an offshoot of the JC, established to “disguise” the Mungo take-over as an act committed by a group other than the JC.

In May of 1990 the Angula group was formed by several Saramaka Maroons and challenged the JC in the Central Suriname region. Both the Mandela and Angula received technical and logistical support from the National Army.

During the second phase of the conflict, the Jungle Commando was challenged by the forces of the National Army, and also by the fighters of the Tucajana Amazonas, the Mandela and Angula. The JC was forced to relinquish control of several regions in Central Suriname.

#### The First Phase: July 1986–August 1989

The interior conflict in Suriname started out with several direct engagements between the military and the rebels. On the night of July 21, 1986, a group of rebel Aukaner Maroons from East-Suriname attacked the military post at Stolkertsijver. This small outpost is located near the bridge across the Commewijne River, some 50 kilometers east of Paramaribo. Twelve soldiers were taken hostage. At the same time, an attack was launched on the military camp at Albina along the Marowijne River, the border with French Guiana. The group of rebels became known as the Jungle Commando (JC). The conflict quickly spread throughout the entire Marowijne District, one of the ten administrative and electoral constituencies of the Republic of Suriname.

In the months that followed, the JC launched several attacks on the base camp at Albina and on military platoons patrolling the eastern and central part of Suriname. On August 20, 1986, the Suriname Aluminum Company (Suralco) was forced to shut down the bauxite processing plants at Mungo. The next day the JC attacked a platoon of the National Army at Ajumara Kondre along the lower Marowijne River. Several soldiers were killed. The JC fighters were very mobile and moved freely up and down the Marowijne, Lawa and Tapanahoni rivers. In September, the JC hijacked a single engine Cessna at Apetina (Puleowime), an Amerindian village on the Tapanahoni River. This was the first of several hijackings that would take place.

At the end of November the JC destroyed two more bridges along the East-West highway and took over Mungo. A patrol of the National Army entered the area between Mungo and Albina from the north via creeks and attacked the small Aukaner settlement of Moi Wana. Over 30 women, children and elderly men were killed. On December 1, the government issued Decree A-22 declaring the state of emergency for the area. On December 2, the National Army drove the JC out of Mungo. By mid December the French authorities reported that already 5,000 refugees had sought a safe haven in French Guiana. On December 12, the formulation of a new Constitution was announced, paving the way for a return to democratically elected government.

At the end of 1986 the son of Paramount Chief Aboikoni of the Saramaka Maroons was kidnapped on the Upper-Suriname River, indicating that the JC was already active in this area. In January of 1987 the fighting spread to Central Suriname. Several towers of the high-tension power lines between the dam at Afobaka and the alumina smelter at Paranam were blown up. The aluminum refinery was shut down and the capital city of Paramaribo was left without electricity. In February the villagers of Pokigron, the first Saramaka village above the hydro lake, requested protection from the government against harassment by men of the JC.

That same month the JC destroyed the powerhouse at Mungo. The economy of East Suriname had ground to a halt. The refinery of the 3,000-hectare palm oil plantation at Patamacca was destroyed. Fortunately no one was killed. Lumber companies abandoned their forestry camps in the Patamacca area and expensive equipment was lost. Because the bauxite production in Mungo was shut down, the reserves of Suralco were depleted and for the first time in the history of the country bauxite had to be imported. By

February 1987 the number of refugees in French Guiana was 6,500 and by April it had grown to 8,000. Suriname sought assistance from the International Commission of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

During the month of May some heavy fighting took place in the Mungo and Albina area, but the army consolidated its position and by August the bauxite workers in Mungo were able to return to work. On September 30 a referendum was held to approve the new draft Constitution of the Republic of Suriname. An overwhelming majority approved it and the road to the restoration of democracy was opened.

On November 25, 1987, elections were held for the first time in seven years, and the traditional political parties won forty of the fifty-one seats. The JC would now be fighting the National Army of a democratically elected government.

Positive news notwithstanding, the year closed with a serious human rights violation. The National Army reportedly arrested seven Maroon men in the village of Pokigron. They were driven north along the road to Brownsweg. The truck was stopped and the men were asked to dig a large hole. They were shot and buried in the hole. One of the men rolled down the embankment of the road after being shot and survived a few weeks. He was taken to town by the Red Cross and testified to the killings.

The intensity of the conflict waned somewhat in 1988. There were less direct confrontations between the army and the JC. The rebels did, however, resort to hit-and-run tactics and continued to raid military outposts and police stations in order to secure weapons and ammunition. When two vehicles of Suralco were hijacked in September of 1988 the JC denied involvement. In 1988, there were a number of tragic events involving Saramaka settlements in Central Suriname. There were inhabitants in a number of villages who disliked the authoritative manner of Brunswijk, who was an Aukaner, in dealing with the Saramaka communities of the Upper-Suriname River. There were also Maroons living in villages who had relatives in the army and who sympathized with the political ideas of the revolution. It was also reported that in the case of Pokigron, one of the Chiefs had pointed out suspected sympathizers of the JC to the army, and that these men were arrested and executed by government forces. The JC, in turn, undertook various reprisal actions against inhabitants of several Saramaka settlements. In April of 1989 the JC attacked the village of Pokigron and almost the entire settlement was burnt to the ground. The next day the first eighty displaced persons arrived in Paramaribo. The JC also attacked the settlement of Brownsweg and a number of houses were also destroyed.

In 1988 several organizations were asked to mediate in the conflict and the first peace efforts were made. The mediation by the Commission of Christian Churches resulted in the Protocol of St. Jean of June 28, 1988, but the government never formally endorsed the results of this agreement.

A year later talks were resumed and on June 7, 1989, the JC agreed to a cease-fire. A month later, on July 21, the Accord of Kourou, named for the town in French Guiana, was signed. Both the government and the National Assembly endorsed the

agreement, but the army rejected it. There was opposition to the provision under which the ex-fighters would be incorporated into the police force. It was also argued that the accord was not in the interest of the Amerindian population, who would be at the mercy of legally armed ex-fighters of the JC in the police force, if the accord were to be implemented. On July 25, 1989, the Commander of the Armed Forces and chairman of the new political party NDP, Desi Bouterse, announced his disappointment with the Accord of Kourou. The French government, however, indicated that it was pleased with the accord, and that the refugees could now return home.

This disagreement resulted in a number of new developments that considerably altered the nature of the conflict. Four new warring groups would enter the conflict, and the stage of the fighting would now extend westwards, encompassing almost the entire interior region and a large part of the coastal area of Suriname. Only Paramaribo and its immediate surroundings would be considered safe from the threat of death and destruction.

#### The Second Phase: September 1989–August 1992

On August 31, 1989, the ferry at the Coppename River, 88 kilometers west of Paramaribo, was hijacked. One policeman died and the ferry was commandeered upriver, with forty cars and busses on board. The vehicles were unloaded at the Pikin Saron bridge, some eighty kilometers upriver and were used to take control of Carib and Arowak Amerindian villages along the 300-kilometer road from Zanderij to Apura. At the same time, two Maroon groups announced their existence, the Angula, consisting of primarily Saramaka youth, and the Mandela, manned by young Matawai Maroons. From the onset these groups cooperated with each other, and it was suggested that the National Army supported the new actors in the conflict. A few days after the hijacking of the ferry, Prime Minister Henk Arron told the National Assembly that he had no indications that the TA were armed by the army but, in early 1992, President Venetiaan said that it was clear who had armed the fighters in the western part of the country.

The JC reacted to these developments by taking over Mungo for the second time in October of 1989. This take-over was carried out under the aegis of a new group with a new name, the Union for Liberation and Democracy (ULD) headed by Kofi Ajompong, but Ronnie Brunswijk remained the *de facto* leader of both the JC and the new group. The army wanted to take hard action and drive the new group out of Mungo, while the civilian government seemed to take on a more lenient attitude against the occupiers.

The government of President Shankar backed down on the Kourou Accord, and in November of 1989 the Commander of the National Army, Desi Bouterse, took the initiative to begin negotiations with the JC. These talks notwithstanding, some serious clashes occurred in the weeks after Bouterse began his talks. Early morning December 4, 1989, a group of JC men accompanied by mercenaries attacked the army post at Kraka. Seven soldiers died. Apparently Brunswijk was not happy with the manner in which this attack was carried out and the leading mercenary was guideedly shot through the head when he returned to Mungo. Nevertheless, the talks between Bouterse and Brunswijk continued.

Eventually, the civilian government took the lead again in the peace talks, and on March 24, 1990, a major meeting got underway in the presidential palace. The president himself took charge of the talks. The talks were attended by the JC and the traditional authorities, and even refugee leaders were flown in from French Guiana to participate in the deliberations. The Tucajana Amazonas, however, refused to participate in the talks. The mood at the deliberations was tense and when word got out that a few days earlier a mysterious airplane with 1,000 kilos of cocaine had landed in the Mungo area, the talks fell apart.

In a scuffle at the cabinet of the Commander of the Armed Forces, two bodyguards of Brunswijk were shot. The National Army surrounded Hotel Ambassador, where the JC delegation was staying. The refugee leaders fled for a safe haven at the French Embassy until they could be shuttled out of the country. Brunswijk and the other members of the JC delegation were arrested. On March 28, fighters of the JC occupied the dam at Afobaka and the electric power to Paramaribo was cut off. The Marshall Creek bridge on the road to Afobaka was blown up and the production of bauxite in Mungo was halted by the JC. Brunswijk and the other JC members were released, and tension was reduced.

At the end of April the army landed troops in the Amerindian village of Pelelu Tepu along the Upper-Tapanahoni River and armed youth with military weapons. This was probably intended as a strategy to attack the JC strongholds along the Tapanahoni from the south. In May the military began a campaign to dislodge the JC from Mungo. As the army troops were advancing into Mungo, the JC took over the hydroelectric dam again and threatened to open the spillways, thus flooding the Suriname River with millions of gallons of water. At the end of May, the Angula group drove the JC from the dam and the army advanced in the direction of Mungo. The JC undermined Suralco facilities with dynamite and threatened to blow them up unless the president called a halt to the advance of the army into Mungo. The JC attacked Pelelu Tepu and disarmed the militia. Several hundred Trio and Oyanas (Wajana) Amerindians fled across the border into Brazil. Around mid-June the army and the JC were involved in heavy fighting, and on June 20 the army liberated Mungo. The JC blew up the office of Suralco and several other facilities on the way out.

In August the army attacked Langatabiki and tried to dislodge the JC from this island in the Marowijne River, some fifty kilometers upstream from Albina. The fighting continued and the villagers crossed the border into French Guiana, adding several hundred persons to the refugee population. The army finally took Langatabiki over in September.

Meanwhile, in the capital Paramaribo, political events were unfolding; in December of 1990 the so-called "telephone coup" took place, and the democratically elected government of President Ramsewak Shankar was removed from office. International condemnation of the take-over was overwhelming and the interim government promised elections within six months. The Permanent Council of the OAS repudiated the military coup and issued an appeal for reestablishment of the democratic institutional order. In May of 1991 elections were held and the Venetiaan-led FRONT returned to power. In



March of 1992 President Venetiaan installed the peace commission and talks to end the conflict began again. A detailed account of this story continues below.

## **2.2 The Type of Conflict**

It is difficult to precisely explain why and how tensions between parties with conflicting interests involve into a violent conflict or war, or to predict when such an escalation will take place. Efforts to achieve and maintain peace, however, will most certainly benefit from insights that can be gleaned from previous experiences. We have reviewed the main events that transpired in the course of the conflict. We will now try to identify some of the characteristics of the six-year conflict.

### *Force and Coercion*

The type of *force and coercion* used included conventional war, guerilla tactics, and intentional displacement of persons, besides destruction of private property and several instances of serious human rights violations. The interior conflict in Suriname started out with several direct engagements between the Suriname national military and the rebels. The first six months of the conflict were characterized by direct engagements between the military and the Jungle Commando. As the conflict wore on, however, the Jungle Commando shied away from direct confrontation and resorted to ambushes and hit-and-run military tactics. The JC did continue to attack military and police outposts and stations in order to secure weapons and ammunition.

Most of the material damage was done with fire and dynamite. Infrastructure, private houses and public buildings throughout the war zone were destroyed, either to protect through isolation areas occupied by the rebels, or to retaliate after demands were not met. For example, the office of Suralco and several other facilities were blown up in Mungo when the government did not halt the advances of the army to the east of the country. The National Army, likewise, used fire to destroy large parts of Albina in order to prevent the JC from using uninhabited structures as a cover for attack on the military camp. The National Army also destroyed houses of persons who collaborated with the JC.

Throughout the conflict both sides took actions against civilian targets. This also contributed an ethnic dimension to the conflict. The National Army burned Mungo Tapu, the largest Aukaner Maroon village in eastern Suriname, to the ground. Only the church and part of the school were left standing. It was also noted that the small Aukaner settlement at Moi Wana was attacked by a platoon consisting for the most part of Amerindian soldiers. Over 30 women, children and older men were shot. The Jungle Commando, in turn, took revenge on several occasions. The most notable was the attack on the Saramaka village of Pokigron in April of 1989. The Jungle Commando burnt this Central Suriname village to the ground as a reprisal for apparent collaboration with the army, and the entire population fled to Paramaribo. The army, in turn, burnt down some twenty houses in the village of Botopasi, as a reprisal for collaboration with the Jungle Commando. During the conflict the army detained over 100 Maroon men suspected of

being collaborators of the Jungle Commando, without ever being taken to trial. They were released after an intervention by the International Commission for the Red Cross..

There was no ethnic cleansing during the conflict, however. In the early stages of the fighting the National Army used public announcements to urge Maroons in East Suriname to move out of their respective areas of residence. As noted above, one village was totally destroyed and houses of other villages were burnt in East Suriname. These actions were not prompted by ethnic hatred, but primarily by the perceived need of the military to prevent the rebels from using communities as cover for their hostile acts. This is typical of a guerilla type war. The JC only maintained a relative small number of regular fighters under arms. In the different areas intermittent use was made of young volunteers to participate in the activities of the JC. The number of men in full time service was a little over 100, but the JC could field between 500 and 1,000 men at the height of its popularity. Communities in which leading members of the JC were born or raised, or were know to have resided, were viewed with particular suspicion.

However, there were several cases of outright human rights violations perpetrated by both the National Army and the Jungle Commando. Killings of civilians at Moi Wana and along the road to Pokigron allegedly by the military are examples of these violations. There were several guides of killing or torture of prisoners. At one point during the war the JC killed two National Army prisoners. It was claimed that the instruction from the JC headquarters in Stoelmanseiland—"do not take prisoners"—were not properly understood. Members of the JC killed the prisoners with machetes. After the war several shallow graves were found of Maroons who were summarily executed.

The conflict also produced a sizeable refugee population. At the end of 1986 and in early 1987 the National Army published announcements urging civilians living in the villages along the Cottica River to move to safer locations. A considerable number of houses along the road between Stolkertsijver, Mungo and Albina were repeatedly sprayed with bullets and many were burnt down. Thousands of residents of East Suriname fled to Paramaribo, while others crossed the border into French Guiana, and the refugee population abroad swelled to over 10,000 persons. Many Maroons living along the border with French Guiana fled across the river and settled in camps on French territory. The number of refugees was high enough to warrant a permanent presence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Suriname and French Guiana. The number of displaced persons who fled to the capital city outnumbered the refugees on foreign soil. They lived under very poor conditions in makeshift shelters.

Damage to the infrastructure and businesses was also considerable. On several occasions the Jungle Commando hijacked airplanes and held the pilots hostage. The rebels hijacked numerous vehicles belonging to Suralco and private persons. On several occasions power lines between the dam at Afobaka and Paramaribo were blown up with dynamite, resulting in prolonged power outages. When the JC was dislodged from Mungo in June of 1990, the rebels blew up the Suralco offices and damaged several other facilities. In the conflict zone the rebels seriously damaged roads with dynamite during attempts by the rebels to ambush passing military, and destroyed quite a number of bridges during

attempts to fend off the army. The Patamacca palm oil plantation was abandoned and suffered major losses. Almost all lumber activities in the area were shut down. Transport, retail and wholesale business suffered major losses, as entire stores were plundered and burnt down.

The fighting in Marowijne District and the destruction of Albina isolated southeast Suriname during the interior conflict. Maroons living further upriver were forced to turn to towns in French Guiana, such as St. Laurent, to purchase goods and supplies. The devalued Suriname guilders were not accepted on French soil. Maroons and members of the JC were forced to find a source of currency acceptable to French businesses. During the early 1980s the Marowijne, Lawa and Tapanahoni rivers had become preferred locations for gold dredges. Gold was accepted as a method of payment and Maroons living in the areas isolated by the war were forced to take up gold mining in order to be able to purchase supplies across the border. During the conflict the Jungle Commando began to collect impromptu “taxes” from gold miners working in the area, and eventually members of the JC became active in dredging for gold. While the interior conflict had a negative impact on the economic situation in the country as a whole, it spurred considerable activity in the gold mining sector of East Suriname. The conflict also took on an economic dimension, which would become manifest during the peace talks. The representatives of the JC demanded that the issue of access to gold mining concessions be included in the peace accord.

Throughout the conflict the government maintained an intense propaganda campaign against the Jungle Commando, which was depicted as a group of terrorists supported by the Netherlands and mercenaries. Conversely, the Jungle Commando waged a propaganda war in the Netherlands with the support of the resistance groups, and claimed to be fighting for the return of democracy.

In sum, the conflict started out as an all out civil war, with direct engagements and field battles, but as time wore on hit-and-run ambushes replaced direct engagements as the preferred tactic of the Jungle Commando. All-out war evolved into a crisis situation or low intensity conflict. There was a lower level of lethality; however, the level of social and economic disruption grew worse and the conflict dragged on. Government officials, teachers and medical personnel were not willing to risk their lives and their material possessions by residing in the conflict zones. At some locations a humanitarian emergency developed, and assistance was needed to sustain the local population. As it evolved, the conflict took on an increasingly political and ethnic dimension. From an economic perspective, the conflict was very destructive, despite some local upsurges in gold mining to sustain the JC and the local population in eastern Suriname. Serious human rights violations occurred throughout the conflict, and the ethnic make-up of the various groups that challenged each other, did bring about tensions, but fortunately these sentiments seem to have dissipated in the years after the peace was achieved.

*Substantive Issues*

At the outset the *substantive issues* seemed to revolve around a conflict of governing ideologies. The development of this conflict goes back to the 1980s when the military leadership took over the country. With this take-over the stage was set for a split between the main political ideologies. As the months passed political leaders of the nationalist and socialist parties gained influence with the young military leaders and began to play an important role in policy making. Ideas, which did not find their way into the traditional political platform, were now developed and promoted. These new ideas were fielded in the context of an unrepresentative form of government, which did not promote inclusive forms of power sharing. A manifest of the revolution was produced describing the “rise and fall” of the old political system and the lack of development, and the failures of the development efforts were attributed to colonialism and neo-colonialism and the weak national consciousness of the upper class which dominated the business community.

During the second phase of the conflict a new substantive dimension was added. Three years of conflict pitted the National Army against the JC. The guerilla group consisted for the most part of Aukaner Maroons and it had its support base for the most part in the Aukaner villages of East and Southeast Suriname. As the fighting developed, the Amerindian villages in the conflict zones began to suffer the negative consequences of violence and the lack of government control. They began to search for means to protect their settlement and to secure their interests in the region. It was the Amerindian groups who supported the Tucajana Amazonas, and they began to bring into the discussion the causes of conflict related to the status and well being of kin ordered societies. The Accord of Kourou was rejected by the Amerindians because they felt that incorporating ex-fighters of the JC into the police force would side step the issue of the status and well-being of people living in kin-ordered societies. The matter of the status of chieftaincy and land rights would not be addressed. These and other issues would eventually become essential components of the peace accord of August 1992. The rejection of the Kourou Accord was well received by Commander Bouterse and his supporters, who were dead set against any measures which would enhance the status of the JC, or give the ex-fighters some kind of official role in the state apparatus.

### *Parties to the Conflict*

Initially the *parties to the conflict* were the military leadership and the army they controlled, on the one side, and the group of young Aukaner Maroons that formed the Jungle Commando, on the other. The clash started out as a confrontation between the military leadership of the country and a regional indigenous community. But as the conflict evolved, the already tense political situation in the country prompted many to take sides. Those persons and groups supporting the revolution and the military leadership depicted the rebels as traitors and mercenaries, while opponents of the undemocratic government quietly hoped that Ronnie Brunswijk and his men would be able to challenge or defeat the National Army and thus damage the credibility of the military leadership.

The overview of the history of Suriname in Chapter I indicated that Suriname inherited from its colonial past multi-ethnic make-ups as well as a social divide between the coastal

area and the interior. It was also noted that ethnic and regional differences as such do not pose a threat to political stability, but that these conditions may be negatively exploited by one or more parties seeking to advance their interests. The interior conflict did not start as a clash between ethnic groups. Ethnic identity did become an issue, however, as groups living in the war zones were drawn into the conflict. The area in East Suriname where the conflict started is populated for the most part by Aukaner Maroons. However, interspersed between the Maroon settlements are quite a number of Amerindian villages, both Carib and Arowak. These communities ended up in the middle of the fighting. Many Amerindian youths were part of the National Army, and many more were recruited as the fighting continued. This situation ended up pitting Maroons in the Jungle Commando against Amerindians in the National Army.

As the fighting spread to Central Suriname, other Amerindian and Maroon communities were also dragged into the conflict. In fact, the Saramaka Maroons ended up fielding their own guerilla group, the Angula, with covert support from the armed forces. The Matawai Maroons fielded two groups, first the Mandela group appeared on the scene, and then the Koffiemaka announced its existence. These groups also seemed to have been supported by the National Army in their fight against the JC. Even though the conflict did not start out as an ethnic conflict, it did attain this dimension as the fighting spread to Central Suriname and more and more communities were dragged into the conflict.

### **2.3 The Causes**

In discussing the causes of the conflict, a distinction can be made between the more enduring structural conditions that led to the conflict, and the more immediate causes, including the enabling and triggering factors. In the discussion below a distinction will be made between the more enduring structural conditions, the systemic causes, the more recent enabling factors, the proximate causes, and the immediate causes, the triggering events. These distinctions can be illustrated with an example. In the case of the interior conflict of Suriname, over-dependence on development aid could be considered a structural condition, a systemic cause; dissatisfaction about the use and contribution of the aid to the well being of the people could be considered an enabling factor, a proximate cause; while the economic impact of the suspension of development aid after 1982 may have helped trigger the conflict. The suspension itself, however, could also be a proximate cause. After all, development aid can help lessen the negative impact of certain structural conditions on the lives of the people in the country. When aid is suspended, this positive mediating role ceases to exist. These are very fluid concepts that are used to describe hyper-complex situations. It is not always easy to decide if a factor is structural, enabling or triggering. Moreover, the factors that brought about the transition from a political dispute to a violent conflict in 1986 are numerous and difficult to identify. There will be no consensus among experts about the relative importance of the structural, enabling and triggering determinants, and yet, we should try to at least identify what we think are some of the key factors that contributed to the outbreak of the conflict. Let us look first at the structural considerations.

#### *Structural Determinants*

As we have seen in the brief overview of the history of Suriname, the countries' colonial legacy left it with a multi-ethnic population, but also with a socio-cultural and economic gap between the coastal area and the interior. These conditions by themselves need not be problematic. In general ethnic relations in Suriname are quite good, and relations between the coastal area and the interior have also been cordial. Ethnicity and the differences between the coastal area and the interior were not the driving factors in the interior conflict, but they became a factor once the conflict was set in motion. The initial conditions for the conflict, however, were set in Paramaribo, five years after the massive influx of development aid had started and had yielded almost no tangible result.

The take-over by the military in 1980 brought into focus the contrasting views entertained by politicians regarding the development of the country. On May 1, two months after the military took over the country, the appointed President Henk Chin A Sen presented a government statement on Independence Square calling for an overhaul of the government and the private sector. A process of renewal involving the political, social, economic, and educational system would be initiated. The statement noted that large-scale corruption, paternalism, deception during elections and electoral fraud had left Suriname a democratic country in name only. It was suggested that in reality the country was not a parliamentary democracy. Under the new system a law regulating internal democracy in organizations wishing to participate in the elections would force the parties to adopt more democratic decision-making procedures. The old political system was to be blamed for the lack of development, or the failures of the development efforts. The military government promised drastic measures to ensure that the conditions prior to 1980 would not return to everyday life. To the supporters of the democratically elected leaders of the past this promise sounded more like a threat than an assurance of a brighter future.

Not surprisingly the military and their revolutionary advisors opted to create ruling and administrative structures, which would serve to consolidate their power at the expense of the traditional political parties, churches, and other forms of assemblage and organization. Two such instruments were People's Committees (*Volks Comité*) and People's Militia (*Volks Militie*), which were largely grass roots organizations to mobilize mass support for the revolution on the one hand, and recruit support for the regime through new channels dominated by the revolutionary elites.

To be sure, regional representation in Suriname to this day is made difficult by language and cultural barriers, especially between the coastal area and the interior, as well as by the large distances. The highly centralized government finance system with limited return of revenues to the contributing regions is also a structural problem that still prevails. The latter highlights the contrast between the coastal area and the districts where major mineral and forestry extraction take place. No formal legislation exists to this day to establish the integration of the kin-ordered societies into the nation state. There is a limited government presence and control of the hinterland. These are all factors that existed then, and still exist today. The claim that the process of state formation is still incomplete, and that the democratic tradition is not fully developed, is reasonable. However, this does not mean that in the period prior to 1980 Suriname was a democracy

in name only. The historical overview indicates that the Suriname's democratic tradition made some important advances in the period 1948-1980. After the restoration of democracy in 1987 and 1991 the process of democratic development continued unabated. The discussion about the need for internal democracy in political parties is slowly beginning to take shape. The newer political parties are strongly advocating internal democracy, but this trend has not yet made significant inroads in a number of established political organizations.

In looking at the causes of the interior conflict at the *local level*, several structural conditions stand out. The fact that the status of traditional leaders is not legally defined, and that there are no territorial safeguards for the Indigenous and Maroon peoples may have something to do with the fact that their traditions were not respected at the time.

In the interior the People's Committees formed alternative governance that ran directly into conflict with the traditional authority of the Maroon chiefs. Pitting the People's Committee against the Chieftaincy and, in fact, trying to displace and ignore the traditional leadership as this revolutionary policy did, would be one of the key issues that led to conflict. Disregard for Maroon practices was widespread and Maroons themselves were stereotyped as retrograde. The coastal military leaders and their clique of supporters tended generally to hold all aspects of Maroon culture—religion, aesthetics, and language—in disregard.

The introduction of the money economy into the production for consumption economy of the Maroons and Amerindians also had a profound impact. As the reliance on imported goods increased, Maroons were forced to spend more and more time in money earning activities. The men were active in the lumber trade; the women in the Mungo area would produce ginger, peanuts and Chinese yams for sale in Paramaribo. This increased competition for resources. The government-owned lumber company and several private firms secured lumber concessions in the traditional residence areas of the Maroons, where they had harvested trees for over 150 years. Very few Maroon women were given title to land, and the gardens surrounding the villages closer to Mungo were often taken over by local residents or persons from town. These circumstances no doubt contributed to the erosion of the authority of the traditional leaders, who could do little to fend off occupation of land or forest by persons with official title from town.

At the *international* level, the over-dependence on external aid for foreign income could also be considered a structural determinant of the conflict. In early 1983 development aid was suspended after the execution of fifteen prominent citizens, including the dean of the bar association, a number of attorneys, several pressmen, and a leading labor leader. Though it represented a minor portion of the overall government budget, development aid was responsible for over 40 percent of the foreign currency earning of the country. Those appalled by the human rights violations committed by the undemocratic military government quietly welcomed the suspension and hoped that it would expedite the return to democracy. Officially, the suspension was depicted by an illegal unilateral act committed by the government of the Netherlands.

The structural over-reliance on the bauxite industry can also be considered a contributing factor. Fluctuations in this sector can and often have had a negative impact on the economy of the country. After World War II the bauxite industry became the most important foreign currency earner of the government and in the eighties this industry accounted for over 80 percent of Suriname's foreign income. Because it is an extractive industry, the reliance on the bauxite sector carries with it the risk that one day the resource that brought so many good tidings will be depleted. From a structural perspective, that is, in looking at objective changes in parties' material circumstances, we must note the mass layoff of Maroons in Mungo by Suralco in the mid-1980s.

In those days one of the main topics of discussion was the pending depletion of the reserves near the mining town of Mungo. The mines would be relocated further east to the Adjuma Hills, and Suralco, the mining company, would no longer need the infrastructure and facilities of Mungo. Surely the capital city of the Marowijne District would not become a ghost town, but a pullout by Suralco would have a very negative impact on the local economy. The company decided to cut back on services provided to employees and the Mungo community. Many lower ranking employees, such as gardeners and service providers, were laid off, or offered a transfer to new local contractor companies that paid considerably less. The company began negotiations to transfer the infrastructure and utilities to the government.

### *The enabling factors and triggers*

**In the case of the interior conflict it is difficult to distinguish the enabling and immediate causes. As the conflict escalated, different factors came into play, some of a more long-term nature and others more immediate. And yet, we will try to identify some of the major issues that fueled the conflict.**

As noted above, the unrepresentative form of government of the 1980s did not promote national unity, the situation led to an increase in political tension and instability. The country was ruled by military who had suspended the democratic institutions. Many did apparently not appreciate the impact of this suspension. In a multi-ethnic nation such as Suriname, which is the home to several kin-ordered societies along the coast and in the interior, democratic feed-back mechanisms, which mediate the effect of the structural conditions on peoples' lives and behavior, are essential mechanisms for preventing differences in interests from escalating into conflict. In addition to representing the people, democratic leaders have to be re-elected, and this too forces one to consider up-front the impact of certain decisions on the people who one represents. Under the military leadership of the 1980s few took decisions and a system of direct management of the country's affairs without need for lengthy consultations was the preferred *modus operandi*. The existing social divides, such as that between the coastal area and the interior, were further exacerbated by the approach of the young military leaders not experienced in achieving conciliatory solutions through diplomatic action.

In February of 1986 a palaver of Maroon tribal chiefs (*Gran Krutu*) was held at Poketi, one of the main Aukaner ritual villages on the Tapanahoni River. Several representatives from the government attended the meeting, including the District Commissioner of Marowijne. The Paramount Chief of the Aukaner Maroons called attention to searches by the military in Albina of boats belonging to Maroons about to travel up-river with goods



and provisions. The Maroons living along the Lawa and Tapanahoni rivers had for over one hundred years used Albina as a post for purchasing supplies. The town is located on the Marowijne River, the border between Suriname and French Guiana, and it is very difficult to distinguish a smuggler from a person transporting supplies upriver. The military, on the other hand, claimed that these actions were necessary to curb smuggling. The searches, however, were at times conducted in a hostile manner, with guns pointed at the occupants of the boats. The Chief asked the visiting delegation to convey his concern about the searches to the government.

Once the JC actions got underway, the struggle was depicted as an attempt to dislodge the military leadership of the country and bring about a return to democracy. The Surinamese resistance in the Netherlands, formed by leading figures who fled from the military in the early 1980s, supported the JC and this added an international political dimension to the conflict. The resistance raised funds and helped the JC secure weapons to fight the army controlled by the military leadership of the country. The Netherlands, France and the United States were also supportive of the JC, albeit indirectly or covertly. Over 30 million Dutch Guilders (around US\$ 13 million) in Dutch humanitarian aid was channeled into Eastern Suriname through the offices of the Moravian Church in St. Laurent. Some of this support, such as food, clothing, outboard motors and fuel, ended up in the hands of the JC.

The traditional Maroon leaders stood by powerlessly as the young militants in the villages prevailed over the moderates. The military fed the spiral of violence by answering every challenge by the Maroon rebels with a counter challenge. The harmed parties who felt justified in striking back fueled escalation. As the conflict escalated, third parties were drawn into it. The Amerindians probably felt that joining forces with the National Army would provide protection and further their interests, and this view was probably also shared by the Saramaka and Matawai Maroons who fielded their own forces to fight the Jungle Commando.

The situation was further complicated by economic decline at the national level. As noted above, in early 1983 development aid was suspended after the execution of fifteen prominent citizens. As a result of this suspension foreign exchange reserves fell precipitately and this trend continued into the years ahead, until the reserves were practically exhausted. It became harder and harder to secure foreign exchange and a parallel market developed for foreign currency such as US dollars and Dutch guilders. Uncontrolled deficit spending became the trend for the years to come and the high standard of living enjoyed by Surinamese declined as inflation began to take its toll. An almost last straw for interior dwellers was the recall of Suriname paper money at the end of 1985 and its replacement with new bills.

The impact on the economy of the villages was devastating. Some villages were left without a single regular wage earner. In this situation it was not to be expected that a foreign investor would be sensitive to the local impact of their decisions. If they had some advance indication of the events that were about to happen, management might have chosen a different way of doing what had to be done—increase competitiveness of

the bauxite industry, that is, cut costs, increase productivity and efficiency. This meant laying off several hundred workers.

Anthropologist Thoden van Velzen sums up the mood nicely:

“Armed resistance against the army started as early as 1984, when a small group of young Maroons, led by Ronnie Brunswijk ... seized government property and stopped trucks carrying luxury goods for the military elite from Cayenne to Paramaribo. The army retaliated with round-ups and other collective reprisals against Maroon communities on the coast. Maroons traveling from Paramaribo to their homes were stopped at checkpoints, where they had to strip to show they were not wearing any *obeahs* (spiritual icons). At some places, the army desecrated shrines and other places of worship, as if they represented a military threat. These measures caused widespread dissatisfaction and unrest among the population, and readied the scene for more ambitious actions...”

The crack down of the military on people of Mungo Tapu, the home village of Ronnie Brunswijk, seemed to have been one of the most immediate and direct causes of the conflict. The lack of respect shown for Maroon culture and traditions by the military made the situation worse. In dealing with the chiefs of Mungo Tapu, the military leaders showed no moderation in their words and actions. Perhaps inadvertently the military ended up creating an atmosphere that was conducive to conflict. As a result, Brunswijk and his rebel group received overwhelming support from other Maroon communities in the area, and he began to be depicted as a kind of folk hero. In the early days of the conflict Brunswijk was even supported by elderly Aukaner men, who joined his forces or supported them with religious rituals and with the preparation of charms. As the conflict wore on, this support would erode. His hero image faded as Brunswijk also took to heavy-handed means of dealing with local people and communities. His coercive actions provoked resistance, and the other Maroon groups who originally welcomed him as a hero took up arms to fight his rebel group.

#### 2.4 Early Attempts at Achieving Peace

The military made its position clear after the 1987 election by saying that “You don’t negotiate with terrorists.” The Front government was powerless and the Jungle Commando swung into action again, launching attacks now in central Suriname. Some exploratory talks between the Jungle Commando and members of the Surinamese Council of Christian Churches were held in French Guiana and at Brunswijk’s base at Langatabiki, but produced no results because of lack of government and military support. In 1989 President Ramsewak Shankar called for a general amnesty for all war-related violence in his New Year’s address. The National Assembly had passed such a law earlier in the year but had excluded cases involving human rights violations (such as summary executions, torture, and others). This exclusion provoked an angry response from the military that claimed that the law and its exclusions were aimed squarely at them and that they had the most to lose.

Nevertheless, the peace initiative in 1989 would pass from the Christian Council of Churches to the Front government. Members of the Front government had preliminary talks with the Jungle Commando at Schiphol Airport, in the Netherlands, and several months later resumed talks in French Guiana. Nothing concrete emerged until the venerable head of the East Indian party (the VHP) of the Front government, Jaggernath Lachmon, headed a series of negotiations at Portal Island in the Marowijne River, on the border with French Guiana. He and Brunswijk signed a document which called for an immediate cease fire, termination of the state of emergency in east and south Suriname, provision of representation in the National Assembly for war torn areas, and aid for resettlement of refugees. Subsequent negotiations stalled on Brunswijk's demand that members of the Jungle Commando become a unit of the National Police, a position adamantly opposed by the military and not supported at all by the President Shankar. The National Assembly dropped the provision calling for an armed unit of former fighters in the police. However, it continued defying the military—which was in reality against the peace treaty no matter what the compromises or conditions the National Assembly was willing to concede—when it voted in favor of the peace treaty.

The peace did not last long. Shortly after its passage by the parliament, an Amerindian counter-insurgency calling itself the Tucajana Amazonas opened hostilities, explaining that their grievance was to protest what had become known as the Kourou agreement of 1989, and to serve as opponents of what they proclaimed was an unconstitutional agreement between the Front government and the Jungle Commando, who they claimed were common terrorists. The government now confronted two armed groups in the interior with the Tucajana, many claimed, acting as allies of the military against the government, and Brunswijk's forces.

With this news, Brunswijk himself withdrew from the peace agreement, leaving the Kourou peace agreement with but one supporter, an increasingly weak civilian government. Remarkably, with the withdrawal of the Jungle Commando from the civilian supported peace efforts, the Commander of the Armed Forces, Desi Bouterse, started making overtures to strike peace with Brunswijk, and met him in 1989 in a town near Mungo. The meeting led to little more than propaganda, but served to illuminate the complex flux of parties and events in Suriname. By the end of 1989 the positions of the active parties privy to the Kourou peace accord saw the Jungle Commando willing to continue a dialogue although still technically at war with the military; the civilian government non-committal and, the military and Tucajana against the peace agreement as it stood.

All of the delicate and sometimes contradictory negotiations were mooted however in December of that same year when the military launched a second coup (the first was ten years before, in February 1980) and sent the Front government home in what has been called variously the “telephone coup” and the “Christmas Eve coup.” The military took over again and the abortive redemocratization of Suriname, started in 1987, came to an abrupt end.

The military leadership selected Johan Kraag, a former politician with the NPS block of the Front and elder statesman, as the new president, and Jules Wijdenbosch, a prominent member of the military-aligned NDP, as vice president. Elections would be held by mid-1991 and monitored by the OAS. The main concern then in the diplomatic circles in Paramaribo was that, with elections approaching, if legal procedures were followed and respect was shown for constitutional norms and laws—not only in political but also in criminal matters ... then the question of the use of force would not come up.

As the conflict wore on the number of Suriname refugees on French soil caused a political backlash. Crime rates in St. Laurent and in the vicinity of the camps increased and the local French population began to worry about the prospect of a permanent presence of the refugees in the area. With each year that passed the French authorities lost more and more sympathy for the struggle of the JC and hoped for a speedy resolution of the conflict, so that the almost 10,000 Surinamers could be repatriated.

With the demise of law and order in the interior, Maroon groups who had originally supported the JC began to demand the return of a government presence and formal institutions of social control. The heavy-handed manner of Brunswijk and his supporters also germinated an aversion against the situation. As the conflict dragged on, the quality of life in the war zone went from bad to worse. Schools remained closed in the interior and medical care was hard to come by. Young armed rebels could at any time demand support from the local population, and refusal was not taken lightly. With most of the businesses shut down, employment opportunities for those not active in the conflict had become almost non-existent.

The free and open elections of May 25, 1991, yielded the following results: New Front thirty seats, the NDP twelve seats, and the coalition DA '91 nine seats. The NDP was reasonably pleased with their results; up from three to twelve seats. The New Front coalition was not; seeing its vote share drop from forty-one to thirty. The new coalition DA '91 enjoyed the fortunes of winning an impressive nine seats and defined itself as a middle block of sorts. With its thirty seat majority the New Front was once again faced with forming a new government, although this time in a more complicated position than 1987. Besides the old challenges of military insubordination, economic collapse, and a guerrilla war still not sealed by a durable peace convention, they now had to negotiate with a new party, the DA '91 to find the votes for the two-thirds parliamentary majority (thirty-four votes) to pass legislation resulting in a change of the Constitution which also required a two-thirds majority vote.

The first task faced by the New Front government, headed by President Runald R. Venetiaan, was to reduce the power of the military, remove the leadership in place since the early 1980's and, if possible, return the military to the barracks. This series of negotiations, which resulted in the removal of Commander Bouterse from command in 1993, and replacing him with former officer Arthy Gorre.

With the military more or less under the control of the civilian government in early 1992, the New Front turned its attention to the resolution of the interior conflict. Efforts were

made to restart the Kourou negotiations. Initial discussions were held with Amerindians under the umbrella of the Council of Eight, a group of prominent Amerindians, in an attempt to repudiate the Tucajana and their leadership and to consolidate democratic Amerindian elements. It is far less clear what occurred with the Jungle Commando except to say that by late April 1992 government mediation between the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana resulted in some initial and modest success. A peace agreement was signed between Brunswijk of the Jungle Commando and Thomas Sabajo of the Tucajana, which called for the opening of the interior to travel and trade, with the clause “so long as all economic activity was of benefit to the local population.” However, both groups refused to turn in their weapons to the government.

By July 1992 the government reached an accord with the two armed groups agreeing that the parties involved in the civil war (the government, the military, the Jungle Commando, and the Amerindian Tucajana Amazonas) would accept and abide by negotiations and agreements. This agreement led directly to the Lelydorp talks of August 1992, and their successful outcome under the Peace Agreement.

In the prolonged series of negotiations there were still many moves to be made and points to be discussed. Would either the Jungle Commando or the Tucajana be allowed to undertake any sort of political-military activity in their domains? What would be done with the armaments of the two groups? How were questions of demobilization, the return of refugees, and resettlement to be addressed? And, finally, what guarantees would be provided for a just and equitable re-development of the interior following years of destruction and erosion of infrastructure?

### *The Lelydorp Talks*

The civil conflict continued with varying degrees of intensity until the Peace Accord, or formally the Agreement for National Reconciliation and Development, was signed between the government, including the military, on the one hand, and the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana Amazonas, on the other. The other three smaller groups agreed to become party to the accord after the negotiations had been concluded.

The urge for peace grew stronger and after the second restoration of democracy in 1991 almost everybody agreed that the interior conflict was causing more harm than good. On July 2, 1992, the Minister of Social Affairs and Housing, Willy Soemita, in his capacity as chairman of the Commission for the Advancement of the Peace Process, met with the leaders of the Jungle Commando. President Venetiaan chaired the meeting, held in the locality of Alliance, district of Commewijne. The parties agreed to work towards the signing of an all-inclusive peace agreement by August 1, 1992.

The negotiations, in the village of Lelydorp, outside Paramaribo, started on July 28, 1992, gathering representatives of the Jungle Commando, and the Tucajana Amazonas. The government of Suriname was represented by the Peace Commission, composed of members of several ministries and assisted by representatives of the National Police and the National Army. Ronnie Brunswijk, of the Jungle Commando, and Thomas Sabajo, for

the Tucajana, represented the illegally armed groups. The other three armed groups (Angula, Mandela, and Koffiemaka), although not participating in the original deliberations, joined the negotiations in the last stages, when success for the Peace Accord became evident, and accepted the final agreement.

On August 8, 1992, the government and the five illegally armed groups signed the “Agreement for National Reconciliation and Development” in a ceremony at the National Assembly.

Critical to the success of the peace accord was the establishment of a consultative body for the development of the interior, with representatives from the interior communities, further underlining the need to have the Indigenous and Maroon residents of the interior participate in political decision-making. The urgent need to deal with the status of Chieftaincy and land rights were also indicated by the inclusion of such topics in articles 10 and 13. The need for a broader framework under which the incorporation of the Indigenous and Maroon societies into the nation-state could take place was also suggested by article 11, which called for a discussion of the status of these societies in the context of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169. Other levels of complexity were referred to with the inclusion of article 12. While intended to improve regional representation, the two-year residence requirement for being elected to the National Assembly had, according to many persons from the interior, negative repercussions. Indigenous and Maroon representatives are not allowed to use their native languages during the debates in the National Assembly, and are forced to use their second or third language, Dutch. The skill to deliberate in Dutch requires a level of education most persons of the interior did not have an opportunity to acquire. Since most of the Indigenous and Maroon intellectuals lived in town, the two-year provision denied them the opportunity to put their educational skills at the service of the interior.

It should be noted that the need for mentioning the difference between the material conditions (systemic), and the political or institutional factors (proximate) was revealing because the accord assigned high priority to the former, while no obvious sign of prioritizing the latter is indicated. This distinction seemed to have had an impact on the implementation of the relevant provisions. Measures intended to improve material conditions were taken, while the implementation of the provisions related to the political and institutional factors lagged far behind. This most certainly undermined the objectives set out in article 2.2, relevant to the social, economic and political integration of the interior into the nation state.

Appropriately, the title of the agreement—Accord for National Reconciliation and Development—implied that getting the warring parties to lay down their arms was not enough; conditions that led to the conflict also had to be addressed. Measures intended to bring a halt to the immediate crisis had to be followed by structural interventions to ensure that such a conflict did not recur in the future.

The term “reconciliation” in the Accord title referred to the operational measures. These were measures intended to bring a halt to the immediate crises, and included the

demobilization of the illegally armed groups, which, according to the agreement would cease to exist, as well as the turning in and destruction of all military weapons. The return of confiscated property and the amnesty law would also be placed in this context.

The term “development” in the Accord implied structural measures intended to prevent such a conflict from recurring. These provisions anticipated wide-ranging political, economic and social interventions, including the reintroduction of health care, education, social security, food assistance programs, the rehabilitation of electricity and water services, infrastructure such as bridges and docks, and other transport facilities. Article 6, part 1, of the Accord states that the government should “design and execute a program in order to facilitate the reintegration in society of the former fighters.” Part 2 said that “the government shall, in consultation with other parties, and on the basis of a) the information provided, b) a selection procedure, and, if necessary, c) additional education and training, promote that the chances of the former fighters of the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana Amazonas to find employment are enhanced.”

Other points and protocols of the agreement were:

- Demining: the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana Amazonas would cooperate with the government in the identification, searching and pointing out the location of mines, unexploded shells, weapons, and weaponry placed in the interior by the combatants.
- Disarmament: the objective was to start disarming the illegally armed groups in the two weeks after the signing of the agreement. This was contingent on the publication of the Amnesty Act.
- Amnesty: the Amnesty Act of 1989 (which was not approved at the time) would be granted to those persons who, from January 1, 1985 to the date when the Act enters into force, were involved in hostilities.
- Third party property: the illegally armed groups would return all third party property and belongings confiscated in a 30 day period after the signing of the agreement.
- Security: the government would take measures to optimize security and to enforce

law and order in the interior through the National Police and military. A special unit of the National Police would be established for the interior, and former members of the Jungle Commando and Tucajana Amazonas might be considered to join it. Patrols by the National Army would also be involved in the maintenance of law and order. (The government did not accept this protocol)

- Illegally armed groups: after demobilization the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana Amazonas, as well as those illegally armed groups that later became part of the agreement, would cease to exist as operational groups.

## 2.5 Threats to Peace

### Returning to the Barracks

In mid-1991, free and fair elections were held in Suriname, months after the Christmas Eve “telephone coup” of 1990, and eleven years after the original military coup of 1980. The elections of 1991 were the second elections held following the 1980 coup and, like their predecessor in 1987, elected a democratic government seriously weakened by the events of the 1980’s. The 1991 victor, President Runald R. Venetiaan and the New Front political coalition, continued to face formidable threats to peace, both from remnants of the ex-fighters, particularly the Jungle Command of Ronnie Brunswijk and from the National Army itself, unhappy with a change in its commanding officer, former authoritarian leader Desi Bouterse, an issue which was to come to a head in 1993.

Desi Bouterse was the unelected, de facto head of Suriname following the military coup of 1980. With the election of the first free government in 1987 since the coup, then Colonel Bouterse became commander (*Commandant*) of the National Army. He continued to wield power and influence over the government of Ramsewak Shankar and his multi-party Front coalition. Following an alleged personal affront at the hands of the president, and sensing that he could capitalize on the growing economic frustration of the Surinamese people, Commander Bouterse launched a bloodless “telephone coup” (the government was telephoned at a Christmas Eve celebration at the presidential palace and dismissed by a senior military leader and associate of Commander Bouterse).

A handpicked civilian government with close associations to the military was installed with the promise that there would be elections in May of 1991. During that time the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) under President Johan Kraag and Vice President Jules Wijdenbosch, and the military under Commander Bouterse, consolidated power and public support.

Although the NDP performed decently in the 1991 elections the government was won by the New Front coalition, basically a revised and expanded version of the 1987-1990 Front government. President Venetiaan had several mandates to undertake in order to secure and strengthen democracy. With his installation, the president had unstable situations on two fronts. The Peace Accords were not yet signed with the warring groups in the interior and, on the urban front, Commander Bouterse was head of an anti-government armed forces.

In the government itself, an emboldened President Venetiaan began efforts in 1992, through his Minister of Defense S. Gilds, to remove Commander Bouterse from office and replace him with an officer whose allegiance was to the elected civilian officials. By early 1993 the situation would become dangerously strained, as the civilian government



feared that the military would oppose the removal of Commander Bouterse and, perhaps, might launch a military operation and once again sack an elected civilian government.

The New Front government realized that without the removal of Commander Bouterse there would be little chance of the military “returning to the barracks” and thereby reducing military influence and threat to democratic governance.

On January 30, 1993, Commander Bouterse was elected party chairman of the National Democratic Party, thus securing a continuing base of power and influence in the national political dialogue. On February 1 he resigned as commander in chief of the National Army (after President Venetiaan signed the resolution of removal on January 29). The acting commander of the military was Ivan Graanoogst, close associate of Mr. Bouterse and one of the principals in the military telephone coup of 1990.

In a March 13 meeting between the president, acting commander Graanoogst, and associate commanders B. Sital and Ch. Mijns, and minister of Defense S. Gilds, the military officers asserted that the president’s and the minister’s actions in the removal of Commander Bouterse was a conspiracy to threaten the security of the state. It was further asserted that the minister had attempted to foment insurrection in the ranks of the military by talking with subordinate officers without the approval or knowledge of senior commanders. The president replied that the armed forces were in a transitional stage from the unconstitutional 1980’s to the freely elected government of the 1990’s, and that the possibility should not be excluded that the question would arise to what extent the commanders of the 1980s would be able to function under the new constitutional relations which had been established between the armed forces and the government.

In April 1993, the government of Suriname appointed former military officer Arthy Gorre commander in chief of the National Army. He returned from civilian life to take the post during the change of military leadership from the authoritarian 1980’s to the current situation. Although there was some resistance and defiance by the former military commanders—particularly because Mr. Gorre did not come from within the military hierarchy, but from the outside—the situation stabilized and held. The foundation for a durable peace was laid in Paramaribo.

### New challenges

By that time problems also began to arise surrounding the implementation of the Peace Accord. Several challenging issues and problems were itemized:

- Government services in the east Suriname border town of Albina were not able to function properly, due to the lack of manpower, housing, proper equipment;
- Criminal activities in both Albina and Mungo were growing alarmingly, and the populations there were growing increasingly provoked;

- A general lack of coordination was evident between the government and its peace and reconstruction services, and the formerly illegally armed groups who seemed to be at the basis of the problems;
- Smuggling activities between Albina and French Guiana were taking place on a large scale and in an organized manner. Lack of a government security presence made it impossible for authorities to distinguish between legal and illegal river traffic;
- The number of houses occupied illegally was increasing, despite police surveillance;
- Robberies in broad daylight were commonplace;
- Women were forced to travel the streets accompanied by male relatives to avoid harassment;
- The Javanese community in Mungo considered the situation unbearable, and was ready to take the law into its own hands the moment one of its members became a victim;
- Workers in the Mungo Mine Workers Union threatened strike action if schools were forced to close because of the lawlessness, and the police did not intervene;
- Unemployment among the ex-Jungle Commando was extraordinarily high, and businessmen were reluctant to hire them;
- Crimes appeared to be committed also by persons who were not members of the former fighters, but who masqueraded as former combatants;
- Ex-Jungle Commando fighters repeatedly claimed that they did not believe the government was serious about implementing the Peace Accord. Disillusionment was widespread.

The Good Services Commission responded quickly by saying that if corrective measures were not taken the situation among the ex-fighters would escalate out of control. The government was called upon to install relevant services including police, customs, public works, health services, and good faith measures to assure the population that the Peace Accord remained in effect, despite logistical problems with its implementation.

The chairman of the Peace Commission, Romeo van Russel, informed the Mission that it had been exceedingly difficult to make contact with Ronnie Brunswijk, former leader of the Jungle Commando. Nevertheless, the government, concerned about the presence of former fighters involved in illegal activities, redoubled its efforts to locate and convince Brunswijk of the necessity to organize a *palaver*, or meeting (*Gran Krutu*) among all clan dignitaries of the Ndjuka tribe. The conference finally took place on May 31, 1993, and was attended by traditional authorities, the district commissioner of the district Sipaliwini

of interior Suriname, representatives of the Peace Commission, and the OAS Special Mission.

Nevertheless, at the end of the first week of July 1993 both the Jungle Commando and the Tucajana Amazonas again launched protest actions against alleged lack of action on the part of the government in implementing the Peace Accord. Barricades were erected on the east-west highway in east Suriname. Following a statement by former Tucajana Amazonas leader Thomas Sabajo—"in the interior they now think that the peace accord is a big zero," he said—barricades were erected by the former Tucajana Amazonas and the Angula on the roadways south of the international airport at Zanderij. The government seemed to lack the resources, personnel, and administrative capacity to effectively implement the Peace Accords it had endorsed. Impatience was growing, and protest action increasing, among the former fighters.

## **2.6 Nieuw Koffiekamp: A Case Study**

The issues raised by the land tenure and mining privileges dispute in Nieuw Koffiekamp resonate throughout the debate over the rights of indigenous people and the privileges of the state. As a case study, Nieuw Koffiekamp encapsulates all of the elements of the debate, namely land rights, and the role of traditional authority.

The main objective of this section is to present basic information on the problem of Nieuw Koffiekamp. The rights to parts of the Gros Rosebel gold concession (where the village of Nieuw Koffiekamp is located) are being contested by the villagers and the Canadian company *Golden Star Resources*. Both parties are claiming rights to the same territory and, if not resolved peacefully, these conflicting claims will continue to be a source of considerable friction, and may escalate.

### *The Commission for Nieuw Koffiekamp*

During the first week of June 1995, the Nieuw Koffiekamp conflict escalated and the government asked the Paramount Chief (*Gaaman*) of the Saramaka Maroons, Songo Aboikoni, to intervene. The Gaaman recruited officials from both Paramaribo and the interior to assist him in the effort to reach a peaceful solution to the problem. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the state-owned mining company Grassalco appointed representatives to this body that became known as the Commission for Nieuw Koffiekamp. Both the village council and the youth organization of Nieuw Koffiekamp were represented in the talks.

The Commission served to bring the parties into a dialogue and achieve a compromise. The issues at play were: Maroon culture, the local environment and pollution, the local economy of the Maroons, the recent large scale developments on the Gros Rosebel concession, and relevant local, national, and international instruments which should function to define and defuse problems such as this.

The National Assembly passed in April 1995 a Mineral Agreement consigning mineral exploration and exploitation rights to *Golden Star Resources* of Canada. It disregarded the presence of Maroons in the village of Nieuw Koffiekamp, located squarely in the middle of the Gros Rosebel concession. The area was calm immediately after the signing of the agreement, but when Golden Star began to ask the small-scale Maroon miners to leave the Gros Rosebel concession, tension built up. Talks were initiated in an effort to solve the problem, but not long thereafter problems surfaced again. Alternating periods of calm and tension followed throughout 1994 and 1995, when the paramount chief of the Saramaka intervened.

By September of 1994, hundreds of small-scale miners had taken up gold mining in the concession. *Golden Star* responded by erecting barriers and gates in order to keep the small-scale miners from reaching two main ore deposits. In late 1994 the Geological Mining Service and the District Commissioner intervened and agreed to set aside an alternative mining area for the small-scale miners.

Tensions flared again and in January 1995 and a government delegation initiated talks that led to another temporary agreement. An area of 8,000 hectares would be reserved for the Maroon miners provided they left the Gros Rosebel concession. Response from the Maroons was negative, as the option of building a new road to the alternative mining area turned out to be too expensive. By March 1995 the miners were returning to the Gros Rosebel concession.

The efforts of the *Gaaman* also highlighted an important concern on the part of government and the villagers. The Ministry of Justice and Police and other government agencies stressed that those persons with ties to the area should be assisted. During initial talks no clear distinction was made between persons with ties to Nieuw Koffiekamp and other migrant small-scale miners. As the talks progressed, the delegation representing Nieuw Koffiekamp began to appreciate the fact that to reach an agreement the rights—whatever they turned out to be—are granted in principle by a legally binding document, the Peace Accord. A peaceful resolution and the mutual coexistence of small-scale and corporate mining interests would require a comprehensive and systematic arrangement to prevent further conflict.

### *The Legal Context*

Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Suriname supports the land rights provisions of the Peace Accord because it grants mineral rights to the local population. The Constitution is the supreme law of Suriname and all other agreements, legislation and arrangements are subsidiary to its provisions. The Peace Accord, although not clearly written, grants villagers a "priority right" to conduct small-scale mining in designated "economic zones" around and near villages. The provisions are outlined in Article 10 of the Peace Accord.

The Mining Decree of the laws of Suriname also figures in the effort to identify zones that could be made available under the Peace Accord and Constitutional guarantees. The

Mining Decree gives the government considerable latitude to define the rights of companies and local populations. In effect, the Mining Decree provides for the right of the government to extend, revise, and alter concessionary agreements to and for miners of every size and scale in order to support and advance the interests of the state. Thus, the Constitution, the Peace Accord, and the Mining Decree provide a framework of understanding that can be interpreted as a course of action to provide a platform(s) for compromise.

Article 25 of the Mining Decree states that requests filed to secure the rights of exploitation must list all tribal villages in or near the requested concessions. The significance of this provision cannot be overlooked. It gives policy and law makers a clear indication of the number of local communities that will be affected by future or planned mining activities.

There are as well international human rights standards applicable to the Nieuw Koffiekamp situation. These call for the protection of the cultural integrity of indigenous and Maroon people, and that some form of land and resource rights be recognized and observed including the protection of traditional resource use patterns. With the signing of the Peace Accord, an important step was taken in the effort to realize these aims as set out in a variety of international instruments. However, the land rights provisions have not been acted upon yet nor in any way implemented with the writing of this guide (late 2001).

The Peace Accord also foresaw the establishment of mechanisms by which indigenous and Maroon people were able to effectively participate in decisions relating to their land and resource use and management. The Council for the Development of the Interior was established under the provisions of the Peace Accord (Article 4.1) with exactly this objective in mind. Unfortunately this body is not functioning effectively because indigenous people are not represented. Indigenous leaders have objected to the way in which the body was incorporated into the government administration, and have refused to field representatives to the Council for the Development of the Interior. This development is particularly unfortunate because the clock is ticking for the indigenous people of Suriname.

Many private firms are moving ahead with their activities in the interior, sometimes with consent of indigenous leaders and sometimes not. The government seemed reluctant or incapable of coming up with a definite policy; sometimes endorsing the activities of companies, sometimes powerless to stop or alter them, and sometimes recognizing the short-term interest of indigenous people. During the Wijdenbosch administration a second attempt was made to implement the Council for the Development of the Interior, in which indigenous people agreed to participate. However, government resources were insufficient to finance serious activities and any practical projects were left wanting. The Council for the Development of the Interior remains on the Venetiaan government's agenda at this writing."

*Summary*

Government sources on Nieuw Koffiekamp points out the following:

" a conflict fueled by contrasting ideologies rooted in two worlds very far apart from each other; Maroon and corporate culture. Land is of primary importance to Maroons. The social, political and economic system of Maroon society is deeply rooted in clan ownership of territory, and the threat to what Maroons consider traditional tribal territory is regarded with great seriousness. From the perspective of large mining companies, having full title and unlimited access to concessions under development is a condition *sine qua non* for developing a mine."

At the time of writing this guide in late 2001, the corporate mine at Gros Rosebel has been put on hold indefinitely pending approval for the feasibility and environmental impact studies, approval of permits and economic concessions demanded by the company, and, perhaps an increase in the price of gold on the international market. No agreement has been reached with the community of Nieuw Koffiekamp nor with other villages that find themselves in the same situation. According to *Golden Star Resources*, when and if the price of gold rises, relocation remains the only option for dealing with the community. The Maroons of Nieuw Koffiekamp rejected this position. The situation remains unresolved and in crisis; as it does throughout the interior of Suriname with Amerindians and Maroons alike.

## **2.7 Incorporating Peace-Building in Development**

Several other issues, which were related to the civil war but not caused by it, emerged to challenge peace and disturb the newly elected democratic New Front government. In 1992 President Venetiaan, after overseeing the removal of Constitutional clauses assuring military preeminence, initiated through his Minister of Defense procedures to remove Commander Bouterse as head of the Suriname army. The senior officers reacted with accusations of civilian meddling and threats, claiming that the president would be held responsible for the consequences of removing the Commander. The president held firm and restated the need to make a firm transition from the army of the 1980's to a renewed one appropriate for the 1990's. The situation came to a dangerous head in May of 1993. The government prevailed and civilian control of the military was established; a widely recognized precondition for democracy everywhere.

Several other delays on the way to stabilizing peace occurred in 1993 and 1994. Periodic roadblocks increased national anxiety, especially after the trauma of the civil war had placed people on edge and made them fearful of any activities that placed the security of the newly elected government under threat. The roadblocks themselves were not spontaneous protests of local conditions nor, necessarily, the random manifestations of frustration. There was organization and leadership to instigate pressure against a government that was developing programs designed to establish peace and security in the country as a whole; and to redefine power relationships both in the interior and the coastal area.

The occupation of the Afobaka Dam was a serious and visible problem that could have resulted in tragedy and significant damage to property. Ultimately this problem was defused and the situation normalized. But, these flare-ups and orchestrated events in the aftermath of the Peace Accord indicated that problems still remain in the post-conflict interior and could again lead to the initiation of violence and conflict.

The land tenure and mining privileges dispute in Nieuw Koffiekamp provide us with a case study that encapsulates almost all of the issues at play in the interior of Suriname. Without some sort of code which promotes a more equitable distribution of economic access to resources and a more inclusive and participatory form of decision-making there will likely be more Nieuw Koffiekamp-like disputes in the future. It will be a difficult and doubtless complex process to reconcile the conflicting views of exploitation and development held by coastal government and corporate interests and those ideas held by people in the interior.

The issues raised by Nieuw Koffiekamp will be dealt with again in Chapter 3 when we deal with democracy and development. The short case study was included here precisely because the solution or amelioration of Nieuw Koffiekamp problems were critical in the process of achieving and maintaining peace.

The process of achieving peace is the critical precondition for moving into the following phase (and chapter), that of democracy building and strengthening. The successes of achieving peace and defusing threats to civilian authority now pave the way to democracy building and the options Suriname faces. The options and instruments the country has at its disposal must address many of the root causes which remain and which led to the breakdown of peace and the threats to peace in the first place. The interior of Suriname is where solutions to the problems of land rights, exploitation rights, investment procedures, and the like will have to take place. The role of the state and the rights of its citizens will likely be re-defined here. As well, the over 900 traditional authorities of the interior provide a voice that a democratic government may wish to listen more closely to.

A general state of security has been established in Suriname; economic security, political security, and social and ethnic security. The next step is democracy, its challenges, options and rewards.

### Questions and Issues:

This chapter opened by posing a number of questions. Namely, what type of conflict was the interior civil war?; what were the causes?; what conditions contributed to its cessation?; and what were/are the post-conflict conditions in the country? Let us examine these issues more critically.

1. What were the ethnic dimensions to the war? Were more than two ethnic groups involved? Did the insurgency have personalistic motives as well as purely ideological?

2. Did the insurgency have widespread “grassroots” support? Was a refugee population displaced?
3. How did the civilian coastal population respond to the insurgency? Did they lend it support for its battle with a military-supported regime?
4. As early as 1989 the civilian government attempted to strike peace with the Jungle Commando but failed. Why was this? What hand did the military play?

What was the role of the Tucujana Amazonas counter-insurgency?

5. What issues and conflicts did the Peace Accord of 1992 have to deal with?
6. What were the immediate post-conflict threats to peace?
7. The Nieuw Koffiekamp issue included elements of both economic exploitation (gold) and land rights. What is the framework of (contradictory) law surrounding this question?
8. Think about the nature of peace and democracy in Suriname in the early 2000’s.

Can we anticipate more “conflict in development” in Suriname?

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## CHAPTER III

### DEMOCRACY: CHALLENGES AND OPTIONS

Chapter 2 has outlined the events and issues that resulted in the derailing of democracy in Suriname for more than ten years. Now, in the early 2000's, efforts are seriously underway to strengthen and consolidate democracy in Suriname. Thus, it is useful in this chapter to review some of the basic principles of participatory democracy and to examine and evaluate Suriname's capacity to meet these commonly agreed upon democratic pre-conditions and requirements. Hence, the “challenges and options” of the chapter sub-title.

What support and strengthening does Suriname require to promote its democracy is addressed in this chapter.

#### 3.1 Democracy and Development

##### *Democracy as Structure and Code of Behavior*

Let us examine some of the generally agreed upon tenants of democracy, and the options and experiences they can provide for strengthening democracy in Suriname. From that foundation we can then explicitly move to identifying the problems in Suriname's recent past which interrupted the democratic process and, also, the strengths in Suriname which helped in the transition and return to democracy, and which today are deserving of strengthening and consolidation.

We can be guided by the following principles:

- democracy involves the right of people to freely determine their own destiny;

- the exercise of this right requires a system that guarantees freedom of expression, belief and association, free elections, respect for the rights of individuals and minority groups, free media and rule of law and justice for all;
- private institutions and private sectors in free societies can contribute to the development of democracy.

### *Governance and the Political Process*

The Preamble of the Charter of the OAS establishes that representative democracy is an indispensable condition for the stability, peace, and development of the region. Under the provisions of the Charter, one of the basic purposes of the OAS is to promote and consolidate representative democracy, with due respect for the principle of non-intervention. Democracy requires a system of representative government in which leaders are selected in freely contested elections. A precondition for democracy is a multiparty system that allows free competition among different political parties representing diverse interests and viewpoints. Political parties that are weak, internally undemocratic, or incoherent frequently become the vehicles of individual or narrow interests and can be easily dominated by the military or state bureaucracy. Stable democracy, therefore, requires the development of internally strong and democratic political parties which welcome and draw upon civil participation far beyond that of the simple format of periodic elections.

Strengthening the legislative process is key as democracy suffers when a legislative system is weak or when government institutions do not work effectively together. The rule of law and the administration of justice figures strongly here. The function of justice is to balance the rights of the State and the individual, to protect these rights, and to make possible the orderly and peaceful governance of society. The executive and the cabinet technically form the government, however they are but one element in the democratic separation of powers principle.

Democratic control of the military and police, the security arms of the state, is an essential precondition for democracy. A military that is committed to a professional as opposed to a political role is a vital asset to any democratic system. Civilian expertise in military affairs must be cultivated and used, not only to exercise civilian control of the military but also to support the security forces when their services are called upon.

### *Pluralism*

Another essential element for democracy is the existence of a variety of independent organized groups representing diverse interests outside of the structures of political party politics. Vigorous, private, voluntary associations serve as interest groups, pressure groups and, ultimately, “schools of democracy,” accustoming their members to free discussion, accommodating differing views, and a respect for procedural rules. Stable and well organized civic associations help form the foundation of a pluralistic society and strong civic culture. Democracy depends on these mediating institutions, the voice of an

informed citizenry, which strengthen links to and participation in their government, to provide avenues for public policy making and in-puts to government.

Trade unions represent an organized force for representing the interests of common people in the political, economic and social life of a country. By giving democratic representation to working people and ensuring their inclusion in the political process by which decisions are made and power is distributed, labor unions help societies avoid the kind of sharp polarization that feeds political extremism and allows anti-democratic groups to exploit worker grievances.

A dynamic private sector with an active small business community can supply a counter-weight to limit state power. The private sector can remain healthy and independent only if it is genuinely free, which is to say, not beholden to a government that controls all the economic resources of society. The large business sector has its strong interests too and can serve to protect and maintain a free and open society which welcomes foreign investment. Also, other less well organized components of society such as women, youth and disenfranchised minorities aid the work of democracy building and strengthening.

#### *Education and Awareness*

The consolidation and maturation of democracy occurs only when citizens are knowledgeable about the democratic process and the know-how and willingness to exercise their rights and fulfill their civic responsibilities. Citizens need knowledge to make decisions about the constitutional use of authority, along with the skills and confidence to voice their concerns and to hold public officials accountable.

In this regard, free and uncensored newspapers, journals, public forums and the communications media are indispensable for democratic societies. Public participation through newspaper editorials, call-in talk shows, professional news gathering and guiding, all serve to aid government in the distribution of timely, informative and accurate news.

#### *Democracy in the Two Surinames*

Chapter One outlines the political and economic history of Suriname. The latter portion of the chapter considers the historical narrative, primarily political and economic issues, and the unfulfilled promise of independence for Suriname. In this section we take a closer look at the post-independence period but, this time, from a democracy-building point of view. That is, to examine the period in terms of what has been said about the general principles of democracy in the first section of this chapter, in order to come to terms with what democratic institutions failed in Suriname but also how these democratic institutions were renewed and, ultimately, led to the return of democracy.

Dr. Jules Sedney, a former Prime Minister of Suriname, writes that in Suriname democracy is much more than the legal order of things. Democracy rests on five pillars: democratic inclinations, or the socio-psychological commitment; regulations, the juridical

and institutional order; policies, the guiding of state direction; control, or supervision; and correction, or the alteration of government policy in light of prevailing circumstances.

The First Republic, from 1975 to 1980, opines Sedney, failed in these measures and paved the way for the military take over. The 1975 Constitution was a sound document but the pillars became quickly eroded. Democratic inclinations were mortgaged to economic gain. Policy-making fell short in addressing the rapid changes taking place in the country's first years of independence. There was little concern for control and correction was scarcely spoken of. The mentality of "don't worry" (*no span*) prevailed which created an atmosphere of "the devil may care, damn the consequences." Democracy was weak and the agitation of the military for a labor union soon erupted into a small-scale military coup which easily toppled the wounded democratic system.

Four phases characterized the undemocratic period of military rule (Sedney, pp. 115-34). Each of these phases indicates that only some groups in society supported the military government at the expense of other groups at any one time. It was not until all the groups acted in concert that there could be any attempt made to a return to democratic governance.

#### Phase I: The military supported by the Masses (1980-1982)

There was relief among many citizens that the young soldiers had overthrown the inept NPK II government. Individuals came forth to render support, while the masses gave their endorsement to the military leadership. But the masses were not organized--they were more or less a populist crowd-- since the military had gutted the only institution through which common citizens could participate in politics; the old political parties. With few serious private institutions to voice their needs, fears and ambitions the masses and elites alike watched as the juridical, administrative and institutional infrastructure of Suriname was systematically compromised and rendered dysfunctional. The ardor of the masses for the military would soon cool; but by that point it was too late. Surinamers became observers rather than participants and for some both in the country and outside the only means to remove the military was to itself use armed force. Several counter-coup attempts were launched, and failed.

Newspapers were censored, the police were put under tight control, the National Assembly was stripped of power and most of what would be conventionally called democratic institutions and practices were rendered powerless. The Constitution was suspended and the country was ruled by decree. There were no elections. Civilian Presidents were installed and removed. Government positions were filled by appointment. The head of the largest labor union and 14 other prominent Surinamers who were agitating for the return to democracy were rounded up and murdered on December 8, 1982.

#### Phase II: The Military and the Left (1983)

The wide appeal of the masses for the military regime collapsed finally in the aftermath of the murders. The military command began a search for a slender reed of support and found it in two left wing parties. No institutions of democratic governance nor any other of the vital organs of democratic process were consulted in this decision. The military recruited the support of the small political parties PALU and RVP in its attempt to shore up support and develop new internal economic programs and to recruit support in the international community. Suriname's traditional patrons and investors, the Netherlands and the United States, had withdrawn their financial and political support, as had virtually all other democratic countries.

The PALU, which had never won a seat in the National Assembly under democratic rule (nor had the RVP), was a proponent of self-determination, small scale development projects and a renewed nationalism which would guide Suriname to seek more South-South diplomatic ties. The PALU had been an ardent critic of the huge, and fanciful, west Suriname hydro-electric dam project. Development preferences were more in the area of housing developments and the local exploitation of local mineral and agricultural products.

The other small partner, the communist RVP, was far more interested in foreign relations formation and the geo-politics of revolution. They were admirers of the Cuban revolution and the efforts of the New Jewel Movement in revolutionary Grenada, and welcomed the support of the two countries, and a visit by Maurice Bishop. Ties were also formed with Nicaragua and Libya as the isolated military regime sought support and recognition. Following the ascent of these two parties to power it is no coincidence that such exile groups such as the Council for the Liberation of Suriname (*Raad voor de Bevrijding van Suriname*) sprung up in the Netherlands.

More democratic voices were silenced during this period. The University of Suriname was infiltrated and taken over by Marxist scholars. School books promoted the revolutionary agenda. Draconian methods of social control in the name of revolution, such as curfews, nullification of rights of assembly, and unexplained disappearances became routine. The military grip on control was shaken and weakened and the first glimmers of change, that is broader-based participation in the regime, began to appear. It was becoming evident that the military had to solicit and negotiate with the very democratic groupings it had removed from influence and power.

### Phase III: Military Leadership, the Private Sector and Labor Unions (1984-1985)

The revolutionary phase of military rule had alienated even those Surinamers who remained willing to give the military government a chance. In its isolation the military command opened negotiations with two groups from the private sector; small scale business owners and producers, and larger business enterprise owners. The goal was to establish a "Think Tank" (*Denkgroep*) and (an appointed) interim government. Willem Udenhout was appointed Minister-President with the instructions to recruit the private sector organizations, the Labor unions and the old political parties to support the creation of "Sustainable Structures of Democracy." A memorandum of 1984 entitled "Basic

Principles and Structures of Democracy” (*Basisprincipes en Structuren van Democratie*), authored by the two largest political parties, the VHP and the NPS, called for the return of democratic rules and participation of political party leadership in any organs or deliberations which would discuss the transition to democracy. The political parties’ participation would not be called upon by the military government yet however.

The Udenhout cabinet was composed of the military and their civilian supporters, three labor union representatives and two private sector cabinet members. The National Assembly was appointed and reinstalled with members from the same sectors as the cabinet itself. The National Assembly was not elected. Representatives from political parties were not appointed in either the cabinet or the National Assembly.

The transition and return to democracy was underway. Participation in governance, although not elected, was being slowly broadened.

#### Phase IV: Military rule, Private Sector, Labor Unions and Political Parties (1986-1987)

In 1985 a political accord was struck between the military leaders and the three major political parties; the VHP, the NPS, and the KTPI whereby they would be represented in cabinet and the National Assembly along with supporters of the military government, the labor unions and the private sector. The unspoken agenda for all except the military was for a return to democracy.

By 1986 the interior war had broken out. The military regime was under stress both by democratic forces along in the coastal area and an armed insurgency in the interior. Foreign involvement became more visible in supporting a return to democracy, while at the same time providing assistance to the armed rebels in the jungle interior. In December 1986, for the first time since the military take over, Commander Bouterse used the word “election” in a public speech.

Preparations were simultaneously underway for the writing of a new Constitution. If all went according to plan the draft Constitution would be approved in a public referendum in September 1987 and national elections would follow in November of the same year. The citizens overwhelmingly endorsed the Constitution. Elections were held and were won decisively by the Front. Democracy, weakened as it was, returned to Suriname. The labor unions were cooperative, the private sector was organized, the press was supportive and positive, and the masses, through their political parties, had expressed their wishes.

Democracy would falter again with the re-intervention of the military in civilian governance in 1990. Elections were again held in 1991 and the New Front again won decisively. The New Front finished its term and elections in 1996 brought President Wijdenbosch to power. Public protest of the deteriorating economic situation in 1999 shortened his term by one year. Elections in 2000 once again brought the New Front to power.

The lesson from this narrative, consistent with the opening of this chapter, is that when there is widespread participation in governance, coupled with a serious commitment to the principles of democratic behavior, the democratic system functions.

It is useful at this point to examine the options for supporting and strengthening Suriname's democracy by examining the list of democratic characteristics which were enumerated at the opening of this chapter. The list would suggest that Suriname is well on the way to consolidating its democracy. The list would also suggest that there are additional options Suriname might want to examine to further strengthen its democracy.

#### **The Road to Reform**

In early 2000, scarcely six weeks before the May elections, land rights for indigenous people once again became a priority issue. As pointed out in the profile of Suriname, systematic economic penetration of the interior began about 1875, but no serious attention was paid to providing the Amerindians and Maroons with any systematic recognition of title or statutory rights to the land that they had inhabited throughout the colonial period, and for Amerindians, well before that. With the recent re-introduction of large-scale gold and timber exploitation of the interior, particularly by large-scale international corporations, sizeable national corporations both state- and privately-owned, and urban-based local concessionaires, the question of the development of the interior and the rights of indigenous people once again became a burning issue laden with the potential of serious disagreement and possible conflict.

In 1991 a project proposal prepared by the Suriname Institute of Extension Services, Research and Study Supervision (IDOS) and the Faculty of Law, University of Amsterdam prepared a "talking points" document that provided a concept outline for a serious fieldwork project which would lead to land rights policy formation. It was not acted upon but serves here as a basic introduction to the background of the land rights issues at play and the urgent call for their equitable solution to address the needs of the state and the indigenous communities.

For Amerindians there exists no systematic corpus of legislation which explicitly regulates their property rights. In fact, the only operative legislation in documentary form is aimed at the property rights and concessions of the colonial power, with indirect and unclear reference to the rights of indigenous people. At best, this sort of legislation stipulates that the land rights and concessions to colonials should not "inconvenience" or "hinder" the indigenous population. In 1953, twenty-two years before independence, efforts were made to codify lands rights for Amerindians, but only a few communities near the capital of Paramaribo were involved in any meaningful fashion.

In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, peace treaties were signed between the colonial Government of Suriname and the warring, rebel Maroons. No special mention is made of land rights in the otherwise comprehensive peace treaties. Following the abolition of slavery in 1863 these treaties were amended but again included no reference to land rights other than an implicit assumption that Maroons could cut timber in the interior. Officials of the colonial government were instructed to encourage Maroons to exploit the

lumber in their residential areas and to sell this lumber in Paramaribo, thus reducing their dependency on subsidies from the Government.

Time and again, in the course of the introduction of new legislation regarding the cutting of timber, the mining of gold, or the harvesting of natural rubber products, the stipulation was made that the residential areas of Maroons and Amerindians should be respected. However, the size and range of the indigenous areas seemed to shrink with each subsequent introduction of new legislation until only the villages themselves were declared off limits. In the case of Nieuw Koffie Kamp a gold concession was granted on and surrounding an existing village. Today, lumber and gold concessions are granted to village and senior chiefs, thus allowing all of the subjects of the chief to profit from the concession. In practice, however, most of the chiefs have sub-leased these concessions to large local and foreign companies and labor. The use of the proceeds from such sub-leasing has been a frequent source of dispute at the village level between rival factions of those who profit and those who do not.

The measures taken in 1962 to accommodate some 6000 Saramaka Maroons (and a smaller group of Ndjuka), who were forced to abandon their traditional residence areas to clear the way for the ALCOA hydroelectric project in central Suriname, is a good indicator of the position taken by the Government with regard to the land rights of indigenous peoples. The Government took the position that it was obligated to compensate only those affected by providing them with an alternative residential area and a small house. Interestingly, one of the villages involved in this relocation program is Nieuw Koffie Kamp, now under threat of being relocated again for the second time in less than forty years. This relocation scenario was repeated in 1975, when the central Government prepared to develop a hydroelectric project in western Suriname. The indigenous Amerindian community was expected to vacate the area without compensation for their lands and gardens in order to make way for the construction of a new mining village. Fortunately for the Amerindians this did not occur as financing for the project did not materialize.

With independence in 1975 no measures were taken in the new Constitution in recognition of past tacit treaties and land rights proposals for Amerindians and Maroons, nor to establish legal recognition of their over 900 traditional authorities. The post-revolution constitution of 1987 failed to address these questions of land, timber and mining rights, and the statutory role of traditional authorities.

The internal war of 1986-1992, which drew Maroons, Amerindians, and the National Suriname Army into the conflict underscored the dangers of ignoring the economic and political needs of traditional populations in a modern nation state. The authority of traditional leaders and their institutions was challenged, young fighters lost a decade of schooling, mining and timber corporations were entering traditional territory at an alarming rate and leaving behind a trail of destruction and pollution. Young indigenous people boldly took action to mine and cut timber in the name of their own economic well-being. Today Maroons and Amerindians are demanding land rights, and the establishment of any serious, durable peace must address the combined problem of land



and mining rights and the need for constitutional recognition of indigenous people as full members of Suriname's polity.

Since the 1991 IDOS guide there have been three conceptual breakthroughs. Although laws have not been signed into force, there are signals that the issue has obtained priority in the eyes of the Government, and that discussions are underway as of April 2000.

The "Frame Work Agreement," signed by the Government and indigenous dignitaries alike on 1 April 2000, provides a number of resolutions upon which a national law can be based. The Agreement lays out in principle three critical areas of concern and guarantees for the Maroons and Amerindians on the one hand, and the Government of Suriname on the other.

The evening newspaper, *De West*, summarized the three component protocols on 3 April 2000. First, that the collective nature of Maroon and Amerindian societies in the interior should be recognized by the Government. Indigenous people therefore have the right to commonly share and make use of the natural resources, including gold and timber, in their traditional living areas. In forthcoming discussions, expected in 2001-02, the exact boundaries of these "zones of exploitation" will be established and recognized, according to Government announcements.

Second, that questions of the "national interests," vested in the power of the state to use its products and resources for the well-being of the entire national population, have to be discussed and refined. Prior to the signing of the Agreement, indigenous people would often refer to the so-called national interests as the "Paramaribo interests" (urban, capital accumulation) which returned little or nothing in the way of capital or services to the interior of Suriname. The Agreement proposes that when national interests in resource exploitation involve activity on what is recognized as Maroon or Amerindian zones of exploitation, that negotiations have to take place between indigenous leadership and government officials.

Third, and key to the signing of the Frame Work Agreement, is the issue of compensation by government for any natural resource exploitation that takes place on indigenous lands and zones of exploitation. A compensation fund is to be established by the Government based on a percentage of revenues acquired from national concessionaires and companies, as well as international concessionaires. This compensation fund, which derives from capital gains in the name of national interest, is to be used to compensate indigenous people for the intrusion of gold and timber companies on their ground, and will be further invested in infrastructure development and the extension of Government services. This clause and the idea behind it were introduced to the Suriname delegation of Paramount Chiefs (*Gaaman*) when they visited Ghana (of which a discussion follows in section 3.2 "Chieftaincy") and surely influenced the results of the Agreement dialogue by their input and experiences.

Finally, if after continued dialogue and negotiation the Agreement and its resolutions (*besluiten* in Dutch) are agreed upon, they would obtain the status of a Government

decree and enter the law (*staatsbesluit* in Dutch). The Agreement is currently (2001) under discussion and would provide for the first legal recognition of indigenous land rights for Maroon and Amerindian people.

### **3.2 Kin-ordered Societies and the State**

#### *Democracy, Representation and the Traditional Authorities*

Civic participation in the creation of public policy and maintaining the standards of good governance is critical for the functioning of democracy. The flow of information from government to its constituent groups and the responses of those groups to their representatives is critical in expressing grievances and concerns, voicing support or dissent, and, ultimately, shaping policy for both citizens and the state. Deliberately ignoring, manipulating or, in some cases, destroying these organs of public communication weakens democracy and often places it in peril.

In 1970, *Gaaman* Aboikoni of the Saramaka Maroons, in a reply to a question about independence for Suriname, replied:

“If you sit in the darkness and someone asks you what time it is, you don’t know [what to answer]. In the interior we need information. Just as a child grows to be an adult, then he can say: I can stand on my own two feet and be independent. ... We can at this point not determine if Suriname is ‘ripe’ enough for sovereignty; that is a position that the Suriname government has to decide and we ourselves will take into consideration.”

This quotation will serve as an introduction to the ambivalent policies that the central government of Suriname has had, and continues to have, towards the equitable incorporation of Maroons into the State through representative democracy and the equally ambivalent positions most Maroons hold in regard to closer association with the State and its institutions. Policies, incomplete and unimplemented as they were and are, aimed at obtaining this elusive goal from independence to the present, are summarized below.

Several months after independence, Prime Minister Henck Arron in a statement delivered in the main village of the Saramaka, said “... the position of Maroon traditional authorities will be in no way changed after independence. Rather, the Government will make every effort to strengthen their position.” The *Gaaman*, later disillusioned with the unfulfilled promises of independence, mentioned that if he were several years younger he would simply pull up stakes and lead his people across the Marowijne River to French Guiana.

His frustration was based on the fact that the Arron government did not address the question of interior representation and administrative restructuring and opted to do nothing. The Constitution of 1975 did not mention the traditional authorities in the interior at all. Maroon leadership was at best tolerated. No official recognition was

extended to them other than the ceremonial swearing in of already established Maroon leadership and providing them with a small stipend.

The erosion of traditional leadership, the dismantling of their administrative duties and a one-sided incorporation of Maroons into the State is not a creation of Prime Minister Arron alone, but was rather a continuation of State policies reaching back fifty years and more. In the 1950's District Commissioners and their local administrators (*Bestuurs Opzichters*) began more intensive contact with traditional authorities. The presence of police officers in the interior became more widespread in the 1960's creating inroads into the traditional Maroon legal system which had functioned for two and a half centuries. Dislocations were inevitable and troublesome for Maroons. It would not be until the 1980's that serious discussions over the power structure(s) of the interior and their relationship to the State would take place.

One of the first declarations of President Henk Chin A Sen, an early civilian leader of one of the military-dominated governments, was that the revolution called for a renewal of the political and administrative machinery of state. The political philosophy of the "revolution" called for the mobilization of people where they lived and worked, and during this period several models were experimented with. The idea of political decentralization to the workplace and village is not a new one, but for Suriname it was the first time that such policies were given serious consideration.

In January 1981 the Directorate of District Administration of the Ministry of Interior Affairs prepared a policy note which called for an Interior Affairs Division to be established within the Directorate of District Administration. Despite its intentions at restructuring, the note pointed out that traditional authorities were not civil servants and that they would remain subservient to Government. In fact, the policy note went on to contradict its intentions to decentralize and restructure, and actually called for more centralization and less recognition of traditional authorities and their preferred means of organization and administration. The management-thinking of the note was decidedly western and corporate: the traditional authorities must be brought together in a "foundation" where they could "more adequately identify their tasks;" "norms" must be established for the number of traditional authorities to represent standardized population conglomerates; and, among other things, an increase in the number of *Gaaman* to "better" provide administrative support to the Government. Nothing of substance followed from the guide.

In the 1980's, People's Committees (*Volks Comites*) were established in a number of villages in the interior. But, despite the revolutionary intentions to mobilize Surinamers – whether they wanted to be mobilized or not—these structures remained strange and alien bodies in the experiential world of Maroons; something imposed from above, from outside. However, it would not be until the Constitution of 1987 that serious thought was given to participation and representation through Constitutional means rather than artificial revolutionary programs of mobilization. Yet, the policy begged the whole question of mobilization by who and for what?

The earmark of the new effort of political democratization and decentralization, and the one tangible effort aimed at decentralization, and that was embodied in the 1987 Constitution, took place on a regional and sub-regional level through two representative bodies. The District Council (*District Raad*) and the Local Council (*Ressort Raad*). These elected bodies would in turn represent local issues to elected members of the National Assembly and be further supported by the newly established Ministry of Regional Development. However well-intentioned the policy was, several questions remained unanswered. What sort of relationship were these elected bodies to have with the traditional leadership and their administrative structures in the interior? This was not made clear in either the Constitution nor the laws.

In 1983 the number of administrative districts was increased to ten by including the huge interior district of Sipaliwini. In principle, the large interior district would allow for a more effective development of the district and its Maroon and Amerindian populations. Although the geographical boundaries of the State were redrawn, and were sensible, little serious attention was paid to the position which traditional authorities should play. Nevertheless, the interior district was allotted four seats in the National Assembly; a sizable number given the relatively smaller population compared to the coastal area and, especially, Paramaribo. The new Constitution required that candidates for office abide by a residency requirement, further assuring representation by Maroon and Amerindian leadership at the national level. And, in justifying the new district, the Minister of Regional Development, also a Maroon, opined that the Maroons and Amerindians of the interior should not be artificially divided into different Districts by geographical boundaries. Rather, they should be included in one District on the “basis of their common languages and shared residential areas.”

In 1986 the District Commissioner of Sipaliwini H. R. Libretto, himself a Maroon, called for greater participation and greater representation of Maroon peoples to define their own interests. In no way, he went on, was there an intention of weakening traditional authority but rather to pursue real decentralization. These efforts at policy correction were cut short by the Interior War that lasted from 1986-1992.

With the restoration of peace in 1992 the newly elected President Venitiaan of the New Front once again opened the question of participation and recognition of traditional leadership. In a discussion with four of the Maroon *Gaaman* the President pledged that the traditional administrative structures of the Maroons and the position of their authorities would be taken up in revisions of the Constitutions. However, this pledge was not addressed by President Venitiaan's government, nor were they considered by the following government of President Wijdenbosch.

President Venitiaan was reelected to the Presidency in 2000. The question of democracy, participation and representation of the interior remains an issue very much alive. Let us examine in more detail the role of kin-ordered and the State.

The Constitution of the Republic of Suriname defines the role and the status of the National Assembly and its members, outlines the responsibilities of the President and the executive branch, and stipulates the tasks of the judicial branch. To be sure, politicians will debate at length how the Constitution and other laws and decrees are to be interpreted, but at least there is a skeleton on which to base such discussions. For the 900 or more traditional rulers with leadership responsibilities in the interior, the situation is less clear cut. Neither the Constitution, nor the organic laws of the Republic of Suriname, mention traditional rule. The country is left today with a colonial heritage of two political systems, the National political system and traditional rule, the latter subordinated to the former, but without a legal basis defining this relationship.

This lack of legal recognition was always a concern to traditional rulers in the interior of Suriname. The recent encroachment, however, of determined multinationals seeking to fix legal claims on vast lumber and mineral concessions - cutting right through what for over two hundred years or more Maroons and Amerindians considered their subsistence resources - has turned this concern into panic. Cries for help and for recognition of some sort of rights, have spurred an abundance of reflection and discussion, but yielded no concrete results to date. Throughout these developments traditional rulers have been faced with the impossible task of trying to answer the questions of their subjects on these issues, questions for which neither the national legal system, nor traditional rule, can provide answers.

In an act of desperation, some traditional rulers appear to have opted for capitalizing on the wisdom conveyed by the adage "if you can't beat them, join them." A number of chiefs were approached by multinational lumber firms - impatient with bureaucratic delays in securing large-scale lumber concessions - and were asked to make available tracks of forest issued in the name of the village chief on behalf of the villagers, against reasonable compensation of course. An added incentive was employment for village youths, who were given equipment and supplies to harvest lumber. These revenues were more than welcome in villages strapped for cash, but here again the lack of a legal framework took its toll. In some villages, the revenues were deposited in the village fund, in others it is not always clear how these revenues were spent. From an environmental perspective, moreover, leasing a concession issued to somebody else has its appeal. The legal holder of the title, and not the lessee, is responsible for observing the forestry code.

In the gold mining sector several options of revenue sharing and partnerships have been explored and developed. Small- and medium-scale miners have approached traditional rulers and secured permission to work in traditional settlement areas, usually after agreeing to pay a 10% royalty to the chief. These agreements have no basis in law, however, since the Constitution specifies that minerals are the property of the State. Moreover, as a consequence of the absence of legislation regulating traditional rule, no formal procedures exist for receiving, monitoring and spending such revenues at the village level.

Due to the absence of legislation defining the authority of the traditional rulers, adjudicating disputes with persons wishing to engage in economic activities in or near

interior settlements can be onerous. To cite a recent example, an ex-civil servant of Amerindian extraction returned to his village near the Brazilian border with mining title in hand, asserting that the ensuing gold extraction activities would bring welfare and development to the isolated village. Within a week or so he returned to town, and complained to a local newspaper that he was abducted and threatened by the village chief. It was reported that the Chief had summoned the miner to put off his mining activities until the water level in the river rose again. The water level was very low, and the silting produced by the tailings would make it impossible for the villagers to use the water from the river. However reasonable the summons of the chief, from a strictly legal point of view he did not have the authority to prevent a holder of a mining right from working near the village.

Several persons from the interior who succeeded in securing legal title to gold prospects have argued that such title gives them the right to work in the interior without having to consider demands made by traditional rulers. Others, without legal title, have simply bypassed the traditional rulers and have gone on to conduct gold mining activities. Also impatient with bureaucratic delays in securing large-scale concessions, a number of gold mining companies have approached senior traditional rulers with proposals involving the leasing or sale of concessions in traditional settlement areas. Several chiefs have secured gold exploration concessions, and have concluded joint venture agreements or simply sold their rights to foreign exploration companies.

Due to the conspicuous absence of legal definition and delineation, and the protection such a framework would provide, the future prospects for traditional rule and the people they represent are disheartening. One observer noted, "in the tumult of the confrontation between global commerce and parochial ethnicity, the virtues of the democratic nation are lost and the instrumentalities by which it permitted peoples to transform themselves into nation and seize sovereign power in the name of liberty and the commonweal are put at risk."

The Government of Suriname, while showing respect for the market ideology, is not pulling back and is getting ready to aggressively intervene. A minerals institute and a national environmental institute are in the making, and several efforts are now underway to order and legalize the small- and medium-scale gold mining sector. If the Government wishes to retain traditional rule, however, in the course of this and similar restructuring efforts, it would do well to also consider the desirability of formalizing traditional rule. Traditional leaders at the local level could then work side by side with representatives of the National Government in forging and preserving the new order. A prominent Chief in Ghana noted: "Our political institutions need to play a complementary role rather than a competitive role with our traditional institutions in moving Africa forward." In order to bring about such a mutual gains approach, reforms and empowerment are needed. Suggesting how to go about this endeavor, the Chief writes:

"To achieve all this ..... our traditional institutions need some major reforms and empowerment. We must within ourselves eschew avarice, unnecessary litigation and unwarranted autocracy in order to enhance our own credibility. We also need

to modernize some of our cultural practices and religious beliefs to make them acceptable to the entire society.

On the flipside, our governments and political systems must also restore the respect and power needed to enable our traditional institutions to function effectively, as major catalyst of growth and development. Political leaders in Africa must stop undue interference in their traditional institutions in their greed for absolute power. For, whether we like it or not traditional institutions and cultural values will remain forever with us in Africa."

In Ghana, the country from which at least half of the African-Surinamers originated, four-and-a-half pages of the Constitution are devoted to Chieftaincy and related institutions, such as the National and Regional House of Chiefs. The Chieftaincy act alone consists of 67 articles.

Clearly, the problems of traditional rule in the two countries are not comparable in every respect. Almost every area of Ghana inherited some form of traditional rule, whether the institution is referred to as the "stool" in the south or the "skin" in the north. In Suriname, however, only the interior inherited, by way of the colonial experience, marronage, a system of traditional rule with roots in West- and Central Africa. In the intervening years since traditional rule sprouted roots among rebel slaves, a similar system developed among the Amerindian societies also living in the interior.

In contrast to the interior, however, the coastal and urban areas are inhabited not only by African-Surinamers, but also by descendants of indentured laborers originating in India and Indonesia. These ethnicities are incorporated fully today into the national political system. Nevertheless, a visit to Ghana for the Maroon chiefs seemed a very worthwhile undertaking, even if it was meant to contribute to a more circumscribed discussion on the future status of traditional rule, a discussion that is to be related to the geographical confines of the interior of Suriname.

With this purpose in mind, a delegation of 29 Surinamese departed for Ghana on August 27, 1997. The first week of the visit was dedicated to participating in the Third Pan African Theater Festival - Panafest. During the second week, a smaller delegation of three Paramount Chiefs and two senior Chiefs toured Ghana, seeking to learn more about the ways in which traditional rule has been institutionalized in Ghana. This delegation included a legal expert specialized in traditional rule with 35 years of experience in the civil service, an anthropologist and a sociologist.

On 3 April 2000 the headlines of Suriname's daily morning paper, De Ware Tijd announced, in bold headlines, "Three Centuries of Land Rights Problems Solved." It would seem that the shared experiences of the Chief's and government official's visit to Ghana had some influence and in-put into the policy decision framework. Many of the lessons learned in Ghana were incorporated into the groundbreaking document, and cited in the newspaper.

The land rights problems came to a head in the early 1990's when national and international gold and timber companies received from the government huge concessions to undertake exploitation of huge reserves in the Suriname interior. Often these concessions lay directly adjacent to or on the traditional hunting, planting and fishing areas of the traditional populations. In the case of Nieuw Koffie Kamp, discussed above, the village lay squarely in the middle of a huge gold concession leased to the Canadian-based Golden Star-Cambior multinational gold conglomerate. Conflicts arose throughout the interior over traditional rights to make use of the natural resources and the rights of indigenous people themselves to undertake gold mining and timber cutting on lands they have inhabited since the colonial period for Maroons, and since the pre-colonial period for Amerindians. In addition, mercury pollution of the rivers, destruction of the natural environment, and the by-products of modern fossil-fuel technology wreaked havoc on the traditional life styles and mode of production of the indigenous people.

As made clear in the preceding section on "Land Rights," which opened this chapter, there are a number of conflicting and contradictory constitutional clauses, Peace Accord agreements, resolutions, and laws at play in the question of land rights on the one hand, and the national interests of the State on the other. The experience in Ghana, and the role of traditional leadership there in the affairs of state, provided the indigenous leadership and Government officials of Suriname alike with a common vision of how such disputes could be approached and gave them a common language in which to deliberate it.

#### **The Succession of Indigenous Leaders**

The Government of Suriname and the Association of Indigenous Village Chiefs (VIDS) worked on the implementation of a project aimed at drafting guidelines for electing or designating village leaders in the indigenous communities. In many of the Amerindian communities in the interior of Suriname elections took place in the mid-1990's to install new village councils. In several cases, these elections were marred by conflict. There were differences of opinion among the villagers on many issues, including questions related to the boundaries of the village, the eligibility criteria for voters and candidates, the time needed to prepare for the elections and to campaign, the electoral procedures to be utilized, the transition period, the mandate of the village council and the leaders, and the length of the term the village council and leader should stay in office. The indigenous people themselves called for some unification and collective agreement on a form of elected succession, which would be accepted throughout the country.

According to historical sources, Amerindians in Suriname did not have a strongly developed leadership system before colonization. Only in times of war did strong leaders emerge on the scene. In the late nineteenth century, the central Government needed a more clearly defined leadership system in the villages, an identifiable authority that could maintain relations between the village and the national Government. A system was chosen which resembled the traditional authority of the six Maroon groups. The main difference is that Maroon nations in Suriname all have a Paramount Chief (*Gaaman*), while the Amerindians have representation only on the village level; thus, there are no



Paramount Chiefs but only Captains (*kapitein*) for local administration<sup>4[4]</sup> . Village councils are decidedly local as well and function to maintain peace, order, dispute resolution and external village relations.

The status of traditional Amerindian leaders is not legally recognized in Suriname, but is taken into consideration on a de facto basis. Amerindians say that in the past it was common that when a Captain or village councilor died, the position was inherited by a son. Thus political system was based on succession. This is the case for Maroons as well, whereby leadership positions are inherited through the matrilineal line. Increasingly however, elections have been used to select leadership. The elections were not formal or legalized but largely ad hoc, and elections themselves as still viewed as a relatively modern development. In some villages the inhabitants, often led by young people, or potential rival councilors, organized the elections themselves. When disagreements arose the Government often had to step in.

A series of guidelines for elections was implemented, emphasizing secret balloting, and a set agenda and time table for elections; every five years. Arrangements such as identifying village boundaries and eligibility requirements were also put in place. A representative of the District Commissioner's office was on hand to monitor proceedings.

In the period after the signing of the Peace Accord, a number of indigenous villages held elections to install new village councils or leaders. In several of these villages, the elections were marred by conflicts. There were differences of opinion among the villagers on a number of issues, including questions related to the boundaries of the village, the eligibility criteria for voters and candidates, the time needed to prepare for the elections and to campaign, the electoral procedures to be utilized, the mandate of the village council or leader, and the term during which the elected village council or leader should stay in office.

After the election of a new village council or leader, the Minister of Regional Development installs the new leader or village council on a recommendation by the District Commissioner. However, in those instances where the outcome of the elections is disputed, the Minister of Regional Development is reluctant to install the new leaders. The Government is concerned about the consequences of installing leaders who do not enjoy the support of the majority of their constituency.

The indigenous population has also complained about the negative impact of the resulting administrative uncertainties on the development of their villages. It has also been very difficult for businesses from the coastal area and abroad to conclude agreements with the villagers, because there is no clear leadership.

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<sup>4[4]</sup> The Captain of Kwamalasumutu claims *Gaaman* status as he represents a consortium of surrounding Captains as a senior Captain.

The objective was to design and develop guidelines for electing or designating members of village councils or village leaders at specified intervals or after the death or resignation of a village leader. These guidelines offer a solution for the problems inherent in centralized majoritarian rule, which many Indigenous people have with elections.

### **3.5 Opportunities for Strengthening Democracy**

Suriname has validated its democratic system with three free and fair OAS observed elections in succession: 1991, 1996, and 2000. The military dominated period is over and the country looks forward to the continuing renewal and further strengthening of the democratic process.

Pluralism is critical in a representative participatory democracy and is the energy behind the idea of a broadened civil society. Inclusion of diverse voices in the public forum strengthens democracy. Finally, education and awareness-building coupled with good communication and civic education forges a stronger public role and the institutions through which the public can make its voices heard.

The decade of the 1980's in Suriname taught us certain cautionary and valuable lessons. A democratically elected but weak and internally fragmented government crumbled under the stress of a military take-over. The military leadership then began its search for and recruitment of support from various sectors of society. Yet, the military during its seven years of direct rule, never succeeded in incorporating the participation of *all* groups in the process of governance. The transition and return to democracy for Suriname is almost a case study in expanding support through institutions that had been neglected or discredited by the military leadership. In the four periods of military rule which Jules Sedney outlines, there was rule with the support of the masses; rule with the support of the left; rule with support of the labor unions and private sector; and, finally, rule with the support of the masses, the labor unions, the private sector and the traditional political parties. It was this final broad-based stage that led to the return to democracy in 1987 and again in 1991.

Political party choice is not a problem for Suriname. Seventeen parties and/or coalitions contested the 2000 elections. Six coalitions and /or political parties won seats the National Assembly. The elections of 1996 were contested by far fewer political parties but still displayed a menu of choice for Suriname voters with five coalitions and/or political parties receiving representation in the National Assembly. Perhaps Suriname's leaders, in all fields and not just political, might wish to examine what other forums of participation and civic society, public policy making could be introduced to further root and make more effective democracy in Suriname.

The reality of the two Suriname's appears again in this chapter. The conditions in the hinterland for Maroons and Amerindians are far from ideal and large scale measures are required to restore and upgrade basic infrastructure.

The interior populations, what are called here kin-ordered societies, participate in national politics through political parties and have seats in the National Assembly. There are also, following the reforms in the 1987 Constitution, far more decentralized arms of the State in the interior through district-level and sub-district level elected councils. This presence, however, exists parallel to and sometimes in conflict with the traditional authorities of both Maroons and Amerindians. The over 900 traditional authorities in the interior are not recognized in the Constitution and this omission thus limits their capacity to more fully participate in national governance and to more effectively represent their peoples. Solving the questions over land rights, ownership, stewardship and rights to exploitation, particularly gold, will be critical in Suriname's near future. Peaceful settlement of these issues will require the inclusion of all parties concerned.

The Maroon Chiefs' visits to Ghana and Brazil, and the election of Amerindian leaders and village councils, are two projects worth noting. The Ghana visit allowed the Chiefs to see one version of how indigenous traditional leadership is incorporated into the State, while the Brazil consultation exposed to them new economic development ideas. The election of Amerindian village leaders and their councils is an important break through in promoting democratization in the interior.

The ideal structures and behavior of democracy outlined in the beginning of this chapter will remain an unfulfilled challenge for probably all but a very few democracies. Yet these principles serve to guide the way to a better and stronger democracy. Suriname is on this path now.

#### Questions and Issues:

The chapter opens with several agreed upon principles of democracy. Where do you see flaws and problems in the Suriname experience?

1. Jules Sedney opines that the revolution went through four distinct socio-political phases based on its recruitment of support. What were these phases and how did they differ vis-à-vis the support of democratic forces?
2. What are the issues surrounding the role of and incorporation of kin-ordered (tribal) societies into the modern state? Think in terms of: a) land rights, b) the role of traditional leadership and tribal authorities, and c) questions about cultural autonomy of indigenous people.
3. What measures to strengthen democracy do you see in the "two Surinamese?" What can be done at the political party level and National Assembly level in coastal Suriname? What measures are required in indigenous Suriname? How are the two worlds articulated without conflict?

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## **CHAPTER IV**

### **POLICIES: SURINAME, NETHERLANDS AND USA**

It should be no surprise to the reader that after over 400 years of a colonial relationship, the Republic of Suriname and the Kingdom of the Netherlands have a tangled, emotional and sometimes contradictory character. This continues to the present and the foreign policy of Suriname, despite the rhetoric of decolonization and diversification, remains Dutch-centric. Let us concentrate on the period immediately prior to independence and follow that with several dangerous epochs which involved not only the Netherlands but also Brazil and China.

#### Periods:

- 1973-1975: Forced march to independence
- 1975-1979: The Golden Handshake
- 1980-1982: The Coup and Dutch/US reaction
- 1983-1992: Returning to Democracy
- 1992-present: Diversifying policy of sorts; New players

#### 1973-1975

Suriname was a co-equal member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands with its international representation and defense undertaken by the Netherlands. A governor of Surinamese descent represented the Queen/Crown, while the United States, France and the USA maintained consulates.

The US government presence, although small, represented the immense financial investment of Alcoa.

Minister of Development Jan Pronk of the Netherlands began serious talks with Suriname on independence; in fact, the Dutch worked closely with pro-sovereignty Creole groups much to the dissatisfaction of East Indians. The billions of dollars in foreign aid to be called the “golden handshake” were agreed upon. The USA displayed no particular position on independence and began during this time to forge its embryonic “Suriname is a Dutch problem” policy; only now beginning to change in the early 2000’s. France was a bit more animated and was concerned that Dutch withdrawal would lead to instability.

#### 1973-1979

Billions of Dutch foreign aid dollars flowed into Suriname. Graft and corruption grew as monies were siphoned off from development projects, particularly the so-called “west Suriname” hydro-electric” project at Kabelabo and Apoera. Dutch concern mounted as the government weakened and fragmented under the strain of corruption and rumors follow that a rogue colonel in the Military Attache office was working with young soldiers to “influence” the government.

There was the first appearance of Chinese representation during this period. The Soviets sent a mission but would not build an embassy until after the 1980 coup. The United States and France continued to work as good neighbors but showed no particular interest one way or another, reasoning that “Suriname is a Dutch issue (and, later, a problem).

#### 1980-1982

The military coup of November 1980 resulted in the USA issuing the usual concerns about the interruptions of democracy. This of course was prompted by cold war circumstances and the coincident regional events in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Jamaica, Grenada, Guyana and, of course, Cuba. Suriname was not to disappoint the USA as the government began a headlong pitch into “revolution.” Suriname ambassadors and foreign ministers were called to Washington to make clear their government’s positions to the Reagan government.

With the presence of a high ranking official as Cuban ambassador to Suriname, and rumors of a substantial build up of Cuban representation country, Brazil and France began a more watchful and activist policy. They two would soon be involved in concerted action to de-stabilize the military government of Suriname in late 1982.

The infamous “assassinations” of December 1982 pressed the USA into action. Several high American embassy officials were accused of being “CIA agents,” and substantial evidence exists that a covert action was in the advanced planning stages in early 1983 before it was exposed and, to a certain extent ridiculed, by then Senator Barry Goldwater. The US government position was hostile and a small military aid program was terminated.

In late 1983, several days before the US-led intervention into Grenada, a high ranking Brazilian general entered Suriname and made clear in no uncertain terms that the Cuban presence in Suriname must be drastically reduced. Brazil and, certainly, French concern over the radical drift and Cuban and Libyan presence in Suriname concerned neighbors and friends alike.

The Dutch terminated their foreign aid development package except for small humanitarian grants. The reestablishment of this aid pack remains a contentious issue at the time of this writing.

### 1983-1992

This period witnessed not only a slow process of democratic consolidation but also a dangerous civil war with a number of covert players involved and a second coup. The period eventuated in free elections held in 1991 which saw for the second time the installation of a civilian government.

An appointed civilian government in 1983 of moderates and technocrats mollified the fears of the Dutch, USA, France and the Brazilians but did not in itself lead immediately to general and free elections. In 1985 an insurgency erupted in the interior of Suriname and suddenly ex-patriot groups in the Netherlands, and operatives of the Dutch, French and US governments advanced the efforts of the “Jungle Commando” as a stalking horse with which to put pressure on the military government to hold elections.

The pressure eventuated in elections but the first civilian government of 1987 was weak and fragmented and soon capitulated to military pressure in the so-called “telephone coup” of 1990. The US, in particular, supported by the Netherlands, France, Brazil and the Organization of American States began immediate pressure for new elections in 1991. A protocol was added to the OAS resolutions in Santiago, Chile that the organization would tolerate no more “illegal interventions or disruptions of freely elected governments.” The military was on notice in Suriname.

On notice to the extent that in late 1991 the US Ambassador to Suriname, in collaboration with his Dutch and French colleagues in particular, had to insinuate (once again) the possible use of external force should Commander Bouterse not relinquish his control of the military as recently elected President Venetiaan wanted. The coalition, led by the Dutch and with significant US support (and French as well), won out and Bouterse left.

(Although out of chronological order it is important to mention that Bouterse's fortunes did not necessarily decline. Once out of the military he became party chairman of the NDP and saw his party form the government after the 1996 elections. He was the power behind the scenes until he split with President Wijdenbosch in the late 1990s. In the 2000 elections he ran for parliament and won a seat representing his NND in coalition with KTPI in the Millennium Combinatie. Bouterse is wanted on international narcotics trafficking charges and has been implicated in murders, arms smuggling, drug running, and syndicated crime in the so-called "Suri-kartels.")

It was during this period that US policy towards Suriname began taking on a much higher level of visibility and action-orientation. Not only was democracy and stability an issue but, by the mid-1980's it was evident that narco-commerce and trafficking were reaching alarming proportions; particularly after the arrest of a high ranking military officer in Miami.

### 1992-present

There have been free and open elections in 1991, 1996 and 2000. Governments are serving out their terms. The military is under control and, perhaps, gutted and undercapitalized perhaps far too much to undertake its constitutional duties.

The Dutch continue to negotiate the restoration of their interrupted foreign aid package, still valued at over 300 million dollars. The Dutch argue for "sectoral" investment schemes (e.g., "rice sector," "infrastructure") while the Suriname government prefers "lump sum" disbursement to be decided later.

The French maintain a keen interest in their border with Suriname and monitor the flow of legal and illegal migrants and visitors to French Guiana. Recent efforts to assist in the rebuilding of the army barracks in Albina, Suriname are a French effort to assist the Surinamers in controlling their own borders. Many Maroon and Amerindian women deliver their babies in French Guiana and pay no expenses.

Brazil is concerned about its nearly 40,000 (mostly illegal) gold miners in Suriname and their safety.

China provides Suriname with bicycles, military uniforms and has recently paved (asphalted) several hundred kilometers of road in Suriname.

Finally, let us quickly examine the outlines of Suriname policy and US policy.

Suriname boasts of diversifying its diplomatic portfolio to include Brazil, China, Ghana, and the countries of MERCOSUR in South America. Suriname has become a member of CARICOM. Suriname, by virtue of its colonial history, has an ambassador to the European Union.

However, when all is said and done the two significant relationships Suriname has are with the Netherlands and the United States. The Netherlands occupies the attention of Suriname because of the outstanding foreign aid balance and the fact that nearly 300,000 Surinamers reside in the Netherlands; more than half the population of the country.

The United States is represented by Alcoa Aluminum of Pittsburgh, the single most immense and important financial contributor to the wealth of Suriname. New projects call for even more investment and employment. As pointed out, the US government still tends to maintain a “Suriname is a Dutch problem” perspective although this has been changing since the early 1990’s. During the mid and late 1990’s and accelerating into the 200’s we can see a clear agenda of US policy issues emerging which are complementary to and, quite often, independent of Dutch policy.

### US Policy Issues

- Maintain and Strengthen Democracy through both formal institutions and NGO’s
- Promote Human Rights Protection including gender equity
- Promote Environmental usage and conservation through sustainable development, park and preservation development, and land use projections
- Strengthen capacity of security forces through joint programs and training activities
- Joint narcotics interdiction efforts supported by the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Maritime Law Enforcement Agreement

### Questions:

1. Reflect on Chapter one, the Dutch colonial experience in the Caribbean and Suriname, and think about the overwhelming Dutch presence and control in the colony. This is, interestingly enough, coupled with the increasing American economic presence in the colony from colonial times though to today.
2. Think about the isolation of Suriname, even from its “natural” allies in the pre- and post-independence Anglophone Caribbean. It is really no wonder that Suriname “turned in on itself” and became isolated and out of control.
3. The collapse of the revolution led to Suriname re-thinking its role in the global economy, Radical politics failed and the only way forward was though incorporation into the financial and democratic markets. How and why did this happen? The US and Dutch presence was critical to promote international investment, recognition and approval.



4. The post-1992 interest in the rain forest and also the US government concern about narco-trafficking has concerned the US for nearly two decades now. The policy interest in Suriname is growing, now that Suriname is a formal member of the OAS and the Western Hemisphere. Shall we begin to raise US visibility in the country?
5. At what level and in what sectors should US visibility be increased?

Reading:

For this section, the following reading materials come from one single volume.

It is entitled The Dutch Caribbean: Prospects for Democracy and is edited by Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg, a Surinamer. The publisher is Gordon Breach from New York and the date of production is 1990. The articles most germane to this discussion are:

Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg, "Suriname: 1975-1989. Domestic and foreign policies under military and civilian rule" (pp. 17-33) and "Struggle for democracy in Suriname" (pp. 173-190).

Gary Brana-Shute, "Love among the ruins: the United States and Suriname" (pp. 191-202).

Tony Thorndike, "Suriname and the military" (pp. 35-62).

Michael Allen, "The Dutch Caribbean and transitions in United States-Caribbean Relations" and "Struggle and synthesis: toward theory for the Dutch Caribbean experience" (pp. 151-172).

Alma Young, "Decolonization in the Dutch Caribbean: lessons from the Commonwealth Caribbean" (pp. 253-268).

## **CHAPTER V**

### **THE DIMENSIONS OF PEACE AND DEMOCRACY**

#### **4.1 Lessons and Opportunities**

Suriname is a much different country today than the one of the 1980's regarding the promotion of peace and democracy. Recent political developments have shown that that the country has reached the democratic maturity to face its problems within a constitutional framework and internationally agreed upon democratic principles. What was before solved by force it is now debated democratically; and it can be said that there is no room for the political adventurism as that described in this guide. Obviously, it does

not mean that Suriname has solved all its problems. On the contrary, there are still many obstacles and much to be done by supportive governments and the NGO community. However, many lessons may be drawn from that involvement and from the efforts to reach the two objectives of peace and democracy:

- Conflict resolution situations presuppose that all the actors involved in a discussion speak the same language and, more importantly, that they use a vocabulary understood by all. Failures in attempts of peace negotiations occur when it is assumed that all participants have the same conceptual framework. Even when all sides have legal representation, the lack of understanding by members of one of the groups may have a negative impact on the results of the negotiations. Representatives with lower educational levels or different perceptions may tend not to agree with proposals because such proposals may be framed in terms totally alien and inappropriate to them and their cultural concepts.
- Vertical efforts by international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government to continue the work of promoting and consolidating peace and democracy will depend in the long run on the “ownership” of the process by the Suriname people. It is fundamental to reinforce initiatives already taken and to strengthen public institutions in order to project to the citizen of the city and of the interior the feeling of being invested in a democracy, that his/her vote and voice have power. The element of national stewardship is critical and all participants must perceive gain for the common good.
- Surinamers are proud of their country and, although they always welcome visitors, they certainly prefer a direct exchange among themselves rather than to be told what to do by foreigners. In this context, it is important that training and development skills be shared with local institutions, which, in turn, could pass on such information to other associations such trade unions, women’s groups, teacher’s associations, government officials, senior citizens, and youth organizations. The best form to convey democratic and peace values to the interior population is to reach out to their members through those associations directly linked with the educational and cooperative activities of the communities.
- Women have a clear, direct, and influential participation in Suriname’s public and private sectors, mainly in political and educational life. Programs in the areas of promotion of peace and democracy should involve a representative number of men and women at all levels, from the national to the community, to the villages in the interior.
- Information technology can be developed in order to use the Internet as a civic learning tool. The Internet can multiply scarce human and financial resources expended to gather and disseminate information. It can also encourage, as the Mission project with the National Assembly demonstrates, other governmental entities to share computer hardware and software and Internet resources, and effectively bring together and promote communication among parties with little or

no contact at all. With the establishment of a resources center and training at the National Assembly, albeit a small one, the Mission has helped enable a component of government to pursue its mission more effectively and efficiently. The strengthening of democratic institutions in the country through information exchange demands obviously more efforts, especially when dealing with the interior and its widely dispersed populations.

- In a multi-ethnic, highly complex society such as Suriname, great care and energy must be devoted to the creation of a forum with conditions for open and peaceful communication and dialogue. And, experience has shown us, such a forum can most successfully be constructed through the good offices of friendly governments and the NGO community. These actors can help to expedite dialogue by identifying common goals, assuring the equal participation of all stakeholders, thus assuring “shared ownership” of the process, and acting as a neutral and honest broker.
- The role of the NGO community is critical as they serve as another arm of society and platform for dialogue. Although the NGO community in Suriname was not designed with peace negotiation in mind their concern for community and national development, and citizen participation in social, political and economic development made them “natural” partners in the constituency for peace and democracy. Two groups stand out in particular in this effort: *Moi Wana*, a human rights group; and the Suriname Council of Churches, a bundle of religious organizations.
- Peace and democracy flourish under the rule of law, and the efforts of friendly governments and the NGO community were able to be applied successfully after a partial rule of law was re-established in Suriname following the elections of 1991. Without the Venetian government’s commitment to at least the basic principles of law no real further efforts could have been successfully made towards the resolution of conflict and the consolidation of democracy and the further strengthening of the rule of law. The legal community must take responsibility for legal and human rights in a country, and thereby create both the opportunities and obligations for all parties to be involved in the peace and democracy process. This simply means that the efforts of friendly governments and the NGO community were supported and promoted, and functioned in the larger context of a society and government that were committed to a return to peace and democracy. Without such commitment international organizations are faced with what are perhaps insurmountable odds. This was not the case in Suriname.
- The electoral system of Suriname indirectly supported efforts to reestablish peace and democracy by assuring that citizens in the urban area, along the rural coast and in the interior had to means to directly participate in the elections of officials to represent them and to have their voices heard in governance. Suriname is divided into electoral district with each district voting for and electing its own representatives. For example, the vast and thinly populated district of Sipaliwini is

allotted four parliamentarians. This distribution, or decentralization, of power results in widespread participation of Surinamers particularly in the legislative branch of governance. Consequently, members of interior groups which were once in conflict have the constitutional means for self-representation in the National Assembly, the highest political forum of the land. Without this opportunity, continued debate and dialogue could not be effectively promoted.

- Professionalization of the security forces, for police and defense forces, is critical to restoring stability to Suriname.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, let us return to what is perhaps the most important message of chapter III ("Democracy: Challenges and Options"). When there is widespread participation in governance by civil society, coupled with a serious commitment to the principles of democratic behavior, then the democratic system functions with equity and fair play. However, when groups and organizations are deliberately excluded from participation in their governance then the democratic system is weakened and wounded, and perhaps crumbles altogether

#### Questions and Issues:

1. Based on your knowledge of Suriname and US policy towards the region and, specifically, Suriname what would you add to this list?

#### Sources:

The Unit for the Promotion of Democracy of the Organization of American States, the United Nations and International Agencies of every ilk have a voluminous literature on democracy building and strengthening. Doubtless the best place to start would be in the Department of State's Office of Democracy, and also the Western Hemisphere Division in which Suriname is housed.

## **LIST OF SOURCES**

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One can either search for Suriname Lanic or directly access the site as follows:

[www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/sasuriname/](http://www.lanic.utexas.edu/la/sasuriname/)

Click on the following topics to access information and additional links, including chat groups:

Academic Research Resources

Arts and Culture

Business and Economy

Education

Environment

General

Government

Journals and Magazines

Newspapers (Note the Suriname newspaper “De Ware Tijd,” which has an English language summary daily.)

Portals, Directories and Search Engines

Radio and Television

Travel and Tourism

Do not hesitate to contact the author for additional references or suggestions.



When in Paramaribo take the opportunity to visit the Suriname Museum housed at the 17<sup>th</sup> century fortress in the old city and also to pass by the Anton de Kom University of Suriname outside the city.

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# THAILAND

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



### **NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER**

School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute

The **Self-Study Guide: Thailand** provides U.S. government U.S. Department of State personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Thai issues related to geography, history, culture, social issues, economics, politics, and foreign affairs. The guide is introductory - a self-study resource. Thai affairs are complex, and the reader is encouraged to explore issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals, and Internet sites listed in the appropriate sections.

The first edition of the **Self-Study Guide: Thailand** was prepared in June 2001 by Dr. Clark D. Neher, Professor of Political Science and Associate of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Northern Illinois University. The second edition includes updated information provided by David E. Jensen, Coordinator for Southeast Asia Studies at the Foreign Service Institute of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. The views expressed in this guide are those of the authors and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy of the U.S. Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

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Second Edition  
July 2005

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## *Geography and Population*

Thailand is situated in the center of mainland Southeast Asia, surrounded by the countries of Burma, Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia. It is one of the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), including Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Brunei. Along with the people of the other mainland nations, the Thais are predominantly Buddhist.

### **Geographic Features**

A prominent geographic feature of Thailand is the rivers that flow north to south. Most emanate from China's mountains and empty into the Gulf of Siam. The largest of these is the *Mekong* River, which forms part of Thailand's border with Laos before cutting through Cambodia on its way to the Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam. Another important river is the *Chao Phraya*, which served as the primary route of southern Chinese migration to Thailand.

Thailand's other major geographical feature is the northern mountain chain, home to many "hill tribe" groups. These people are isolated from the majority Thais and keep their own practices, rituals, and language. They engage in *swidden* agriculture, moving to new fields every few years while allowing the old fields to regenerate. As farmers move to new areas to plant crops, they burn the area to clear it. This method of agriculture is sometimes known as "slash-and-burn," and is viewed as a primary cause of deforestation.

### **Thai People**

The Thais who migrated down the rivers to settle on the plains practiced wet-rice agriculture. Canals were constructed along the banks for irrigation. Rice has remained the staple food of Thailand ever since. Indeed, the verb "to eat" in the Thai language is literally "to eat rice." Thailand's agricultural industry has diversified somewhat in recent decades, although rice remains its primary export.

Thailand has a relatively homogenous population – about 95 percent of the country's 65 million people are Buddhist and more than 85 percent speak a dialect of Thai and share a common culture. However, the population is ethnically diverse due to the arbitrary borders drawn by Western colonial powers. For example, many Shan and Karen people live in the mountainous areas of northern Thailand, though the bulk of these peoples are found in Burma. Similarly, Lao, Hmong, and other ethnic groups that originate in Laos also inhabit northeast Thailand, and some speak dialects that would not be understood in the rest of Thailand. Malay-speaking Muslims, most of whom reside in the southernmost provinces bordering Malaysia, comprise another significant minority group with about 2-3 percent of the total population.

The ethnic Chinese are also an important minority group in Thailand. Although they are now mostly wealthy urbanites, the first Chinese immigrants in Thailand were brought by Western

powers to provide labor in the tin mines and rubber estates. Today the Chinese own large corporations, banks, and lending agencies. Although they only constitute about 10-12 percent of Thailand's total population, they enjoy disproportionate economic influence. Unlike in many other Southeast Asian nations, however, the ethnic Chinese minority has experienced relatively little difficulty assimilating into mainstream society in Thailand.

Notwithstanding increasing urbanization, Thailand remains a predominantly rural society. Almost 70 percent of the population still lives outside of urban areas. Bangkok, with over 10 million people or about one-sixth of the total population, is Thailand's only metropolitan area. It is the country's political, cultural, and economic capital. The city suffers from crowded slums, environmental pollution, and an inadequate infrastructure. In the past several years, new expressways, a "sky train", and a subway have been built to help reduce traffic.

Thailand is divided into four major zones: North, Northeast, Central, and South. The Central region consists of the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority. The city remains the focus of urban migration, as per capita income there is about three and seven times greater than the Central (outside Bangkok) and Northeast regions, respectively. The Central region contains the most productive farms and abundant land. A massive, semi-arid plateau can be found in the Northeast, home to about 20 million Thais. The North, with a population of about 12 million, is the most mountainous region and is where numerous hill tribe people reside. Finally, the South includes about nine million persons and has rubber plantations, tin mines, and rice fields.

Thailand's agriculture had made large strides over the last three decades. Green revolution technology has been adopted, and multiple cropping has become the norm. Most farmers now use machinery instead of water buffalo. Sophisticated canal systems provide irrigation and miracle rice is standard. Much of the land is now planted with alternative crops. Nevertheless, poverty is still prevalent among the rural peoples, and the gap between the rural poor and the urban wealthy has grown over the last thirty years.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the principal geographic elements in Thailand that have affected its history and culture?
2. Is Thailand essentially homogeneous or heterogeneous? How so?
3. Has ethnic diversity in Thailand had a positive or negative impact on the stability of the nation?

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## *History*

### **The Original Thai People**

The Thai people are a synthesis of a wide array of cultures from within Southeast Asia and from areas outside the region, China and India in particular. The traditional belief has been that the Thais were pushed from the Nanchao kingdom in southern China's Yunnan Province southward into the river valleys of mainland Southeast Asia around the 11<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is now thought that a large group of Thais lived in the valleys for many centuries prior to the southward migrations. The weakening of the neighboring Burmese and Khmer (ancient Cambodian) civilizations allowed Thai ancestors to expand and consolidate their holdings. By 1300, branches of the Thai racial group, which included the Shans, Laotians, and Siamese, controlled the major valleys of a large portion of the Southeast Asian mainland.

### **The Sukhothai Kingdom**

The Thais rose in the wake of the collapsing Khmer Empire, which for four centuries had been a civilization of great splendor and brilliance based at Angkor. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Thais built the capital of Sukhothai in an outlying province of the Khmer. There, they established a monarchy headed by paternalistic kings. The Kingdom was ethnically diverse and less unified than subsequent ones. The Sukhothai era lasted from about 1238 to 1350.

### **The Ayuthaya Kingdom**

The paternalistic character of the Sukhothai kings contrasts with the more absolutist rule of the monarchy that developed in Ayuthaya. Located several hundred miles south of Sukhothai, Ayuthaya was the area to which the Thais fled when the Burmese and Khmer overwhelmed their capital. In 1350 a new king, Rama Thibodi I, established a capital at Ayuthaya that continued for the next 400 years. The autocratic Ayuthayan monarchs, similar to the Khmer kings, were less accessible to their subjects, and considered "lords of the universe."

In Ayuthaya, every Thai person was organized hierarchically by means of *sakdi na*, a system which ranked individuals based on the size of their land holdings. All interactions were determined by status differentiation.

### **Bangkok and the Rise of the Chakri Dynasty**

In April 1767, Ayuthaya fell to the Burmese. Thousands of Thais were slain or captured and the royal family and nobility were disbanded. A new ruler, King Taksin, the first king not an heir to the royal family, was crowned. The capital was first established at Thonburi and then moved in 1782 to Bangkok, a small fishing village on the Chao Phraya River fifty miles south of Ayuthaya. Taksin was succeeded by Rama I, the first of the Chakri kings, from whom the



present monarch descends. The kingdom rebuilt its devastated society and a long line of kings emerged under whose reign the modernization of Thailand occurred.

By means of judicious diplomatic skills and the adaptation of selected Western practices, the Kings coped with the demands of Western nations seeking commercial and imperial power. The most famous of these kings were Rama IV (Mongkut), and his son, Rama V (Chulalongkorn). Mongkut established a government outside the royal palace. Under his and his son's rule, Thailand underwent major political and societal transformations. Slavery and corvee labor were abolished, the principle of universal military conscription was established, and secular educational opportunities were expanded for persons of all classes. The kings' power was enhanced by these changes.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the entire bureaucracy was reformed to better meet the needs of the people. The society remained centralized, however, with most power emanating from the capital city. Following King Chulalongkorn's death, two weaker kings, Rama VI, or King Vachiravudh, and Rama VII, King Prachatiptok, ascended to the throne. The latter was the reigning sovereign when the absolute monarchy was overthrown.

### **The 1932 Revolt**

The coup of 1932 occurred in response to the king's aggrandizement of power and his reluctance for further reform. The republican elite, angered at the King's royalist retrenchment that often blocked the promotions of the noble class, led the revolt under the leadership of Pridi Phanomyong, a civilian law professor, and Phibun Songkram, an army colonel. This group of some fifty persons formed the "People's Party," a loosely knit, poorly organized structure based more on personal relationships than on formal rules, party discipline, or common ideology.

King Prachatiptok acquiesced to the demands of the coup leaders to save the monarchy, In March 1935, Prachatiptok abdicated the throne in favor of his nephew and closest heir, Prince Ananda Mahidon, who was studying in Switzerland. A new elite class from the bureaucracy and the military now held power, headed initially by a retired jurist, Phraya Manopakorn. This was the first of many power successions engineered through coups rather than through heredity. However, the 1932 coup did not produce a social revolution; the masses remained deferential toward the government, and were little affected by the change in leadership.

### **The Rise of the Military**

By 1938 the military faction, led by Phibun, gained dominance. Phibun assumed the Prime Ministership. He was a partisan of Japanese fascism and his government collaborated with the Japanese during World War II. Because of Phibun's acquiescence during the Japanese occupation and his decision to join the Axis powers, Phibun was forced to resign at the war's conclusion. Pridi emerged as the next Prime Minister, though his rule suffered a grievous blow with the death of young King Ananda, in June, 1946 (His younger brother, Bhumipol Adunyadej became Rama IX). Although debate remains as to the cause of King Ananda's death, Pridi was

alleged to have played a role. A group of army officers then seized control, and Phibun resumed as Prime Minister. The “fascist dictator” of the 1940s had become the “leader of the bastion of democratic forces” in the 1950s. He was eventually overthrown by an army general, Sarit Thanarat, who led the country until his death in 1963. Sarit abolished the constitution, dissolved the Assembly, banned all political parties, jailed suspected leftists, and declared martial law. He became famous as an economic developer, focusing on the Northeast, his home base. Through ruthless governance, he cut through bureaucratic incompetence and pushed through favored development policies. After his death it was revealed that Sarit had amassed a huge personal fortune. Thus acclaim for Sarit’s accomplishments was modified by the revelation of his personal corruption.

General Thonon Kittikachorn, Sarit’s deputy, became his successor 1963. Kittikachorn was Thailand’s eleventh Prime Minister since the 1932 coup. He clung to power until 1973 when the student revolt occurred against military rule. Under his leadership, Thailand became a leader in Southeast Asian international affairs. Political parties were reintroduced, and Thailand’s economic development underwent high rates of growth. However, Kittikachorn’s rule did not alter the bureaucratic-elitist system of government.

### **The Democratic Interregnum**

On October 14, 1973, Thais overthrew the top leadership. King Bhumipol Adunyadej appointed a civilian government. The major underlying causes of discontent included the political and economic mismanagement by the military, factionalism within the ruling administration, and the rise of an organized and aroused student population, supported by the citizenry and the King. The Thanom government was unable to cope with natural disasters including drought, unbalanced trade agreements (particularly with Japan), and unruliness of students. A violent crackdown by the military exacerbated the situation. In an unprecedented move, King Bhumipol intervened. He exiled the military rulers, appointed a civilian Prime Minister, and established a National Convention to write a new constitution.

The democratic period lasted only three years. During this period, the Thai economy slumped, American influence declined as American military bases in Thailand were closed, oil prices rose, high inflation weakened consumer demand, and labor strikes paralyzed industries. Students were the primary forces behind daily massive demonstrations. New civilian Prime Ministers, brothers Seni and Kukrit Pramroj, could not counter the opposition. Of further concern were the 1975 Communist takeovers of neighboring Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

The citizenry applauded the student-led revolt for bringing civilian-led government to power. Many Thais believed that democracy and progress would replace dictatorship and stagnation. However, the euphoria was short-lived. Their movement fragmented as leaders clashed over tactics, strategy, and ideology. A major rift developed between university and vocational students, with the latter becoming active in ultra right-wing organizations.

## **The Return of the Military**

At the same time, the military was reconsolidating to prepare for a return to power. The general population grew restive at the civilian government's inability to meet the new expectations of the citizenry. In October 1976, the military overthrew the democratic government again. It proclaimed martial law and abrogated the constitution. Thais were relieved that the era of "chaos" had drawn to an end, and that the administration would once again provide structure and discipline. Admiral Sangad Chalayu led the new military government, and established an Administrative Reform Council that included the leading military leaders. He appointed a civilian, Thanin Kraivichien, as Prime Minister. Thanin was a Supreme Court justice and close confidant of the King. The military chose Thanin because he lacked a political base and was perceived as being easily manipulated. Thanin proved to be less pliable than the military had expected. He moved forcefully in his suppression of suspected dissidents. His foreign policy was based on an anti-communist ideology that precluded improved relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Thanin's policies proved too rigid for the military. After months of unsuccessful attempts to moderate his views, military leaders in October 1977 executed another coup. General Kriangsak Chamanond became the new Prime Minister, and led the country until 1980 when General Prem Tinsulanond succeeded him.

The 1976 coup actually strengthened Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) fortunes, despite the doctrinaire anti-Communist policies of the Thanin administration. This crackdown sent the Communists into the jungles and mountains to join the insurgents. An estimated 4,000 students, intellectuals, politicians, labor leaders, and political activists joined this insurgency, swelling its ranks to around 12,000.

## **The Transition to Civilian Democracy**

Under General Prem's leadership, the military remained an important government institution. During this period, however, the country was transformed into a more democratic society. Prem appointed several civilian technocrats to his cabinet and relied on the freely elected legislature for support of his programs. Despite two coup attempts, Prem remained in power from 1980 until his voluntary resignation in 1988. His long tenure was a transitional period from military to civilian rule.

The clearest sign of democratization was Chatichai Choonhavan's rise to power in 1988. Chatichai became the first elected Member of Parliament to become Prime Minister since 1976. The smooth transition from Prem to Chatichai reflected the new optimism about Thailand's evolution toward democracy.

The military coup in February 1991 was a shocking assault on this notion. In retrospect, it is clear that democratization had not ended the factionalism that has long been a part of Thai politics. A source of discontent among coalition parties was that most of the popularity of the administration had been focused solely on Chatichai. Furthermore, corruption remained an

important part of the political process. The phenomenal economic growth rates of the 1980s brought large capital inflows, which became the targets of corrupt public officials. The military's stated motivation for the coup was the pervasive corruption of the kingdom's politicians.

On February 23, 1991, Supreme Commander Sundhara Kongsompong and Army Commander in Chief Suchinda Kraprayoon abrogated the constitution, dismissed the elected government, and set up the temporary National Peace-Keeping Council (NPKC) with powers of martial law. The coup was met with initial acquiescence. The NPKC established an interim constitution and named Anand Panyarachun, a distinguished civilian, as Prime Minister. Anand's appointment was universally praised, reflecting his impeccable reputation as a diplomat, administrator, and businessman. Anand ruled independently of the military and blocked its requests for more arms. He passed an election law and organized elections, which were held in March 1992.

Vote buying plagued the 1992 elections. To ensure that the military maintained its dominance, military-backed parties formed a joint campaign scheme to win a plurality of votes. The pro-military coalition nominated Narong Wongwan as the next Prime Minister. His credentials as a civilian, four-term elected Member of Parliament and former cabinet minister made him an attractive choice. However, the U.S. State Department confirmed that Narong had been denied a visa to the United States because of alleged involvement in drug trafficking. Following that realization, the military distanced itself from Narong, and supported General Suchinda as the new Prime Minister, despite his initial refusal to accept the position. When he was named, thousands of protesters demonstrated against Suchinda.

The conflict between Thailand's reverence for tradition and its plunge into modernity was the key factor in the events that drove Suchinda from office after only a forty-eight day reign. He bet that the military would prevail, and he underestimated the power of the ideal of democracy among the country's increasingly educated and sophisticated citizens. Suchinda did not understand that the days were long gone when the military could dominate every aspect of Thai politics. Thais were embarrassed that their country had suffered another coup just as much of the rest of the world was moving toward more open regimes. He misunderstood the reaction he would generate by approving a violent response to the anti-Suchinda demonstrations. When the crisis of May 1992 reached a stage of potential civil war, King Bhumiphol stepped in, and his extraordinary intervention forced the resignation of Suchinda and placed the immense prestige of the monarch on the side of democratic rule.

The establishment of a civilian administration was more difficult than the removal of Suchinda. In a second intervention, the King approved the return of Anand Panyarachun as Prime Minister. Most Thais greeted this appointment with enthusiasm. Once again, he made courageous and effective decisions that moved the kingdom closer to full democracy. In September 1992, another election was held and this time the civilian parties won a plurality under the leadership of Chuan Leekpai, the soft-spoken, moderate leader of the Democrat Party. He struck a balance between democratic rule and sensitivity to the traditional prerogatives of the military during his rule from September 1992 to May 1995. Chuan became at that time the

longest-serving elected civilian Prime Minister in Thai history, although this record has since been surpassed. His coalition fell apart as a result of differences among the ruling parties.

In the July 1995 election, the leader of the Chat Thai Party, Banharn Silapa-Archa, a billionaire businessman, emerged as the nation's new Prime Minister. Banharn's administration turned out to be ineffective, characterized by corruption, a lack of direction, personal dishonesty, and economic malaise. He was forced to call new elections in November 1996, which led to the emergence of a new ruling coalition with New Aspiration Party leader, Chavalit Yongchaiyut, as the next Prime Minister. Like Banharn, Chavalit was unpopular among Bangkok's elites and the leading newspapers. He was faced with two challenges – solving an economic crisis and drafting a new constitution.

In 1997, a currency crisis hit Thailand, and Chavalit was unable to resolve it. Chavalit resigned in November after holding office just 11 months. The country continued its economic turndown. The Thai baht lost half its value against the dollar, the stock market fell precipitously, and the International Monetary Fund was asked to help bail out the country with a loan of some \$17 billion. All these travails led to the reinstatement of Chuan as Prime Minister after he forged a new coalition of parties in the parliament.

The shock of the financial crisis created a widespread demand for change, especially in the political system which was perceived to have led to this disaster. A new constitution was approved in September 1997. Its principal aims were to restrict government corruption and to ensure a more transparent electoral process. Under the new constitution, Members of Parliament (MPs) must resign their parliamentary seats to take up cabinet posts, ministers are required to declare their financial assets before and after taking office, and the prime minister must be an elected MP. Candidates for the 200-member Senate (the upper house) must now be elected rather than appointed.

The new constitution calls for 500 members of the lower house, of whom 400 are to be directly elected in single-seat constituencies nationwide and the remaining 100 (called party-list MPs) are appointed to each political party in direct relationship to the proportion of votes they receive. Any party receiving less than 5 percent of the popular vote loses its right to any party-list MPs. Only MPs on the party list may be selected to join the cabinet.

Chuan led the country until 2001 when new elections led to an overwhelming victory for Thaksin Shinawatt, a billionaire telecommunications mogul and leader of the Thai Rak Thai (Thai Love Thai) party, who campaigned on a populist platform of economic growth and development. Thai Rak Thai won two seats short of an absolute majority in the lower house, and subsequently converted that into a majority of almost 300 out of the 500 seats by absorbing two other parties. Thaksin's Prime Ministership was in immediate jeopardy because of alleged corruption that threatened to force him from politics for a period of five years. However, the Constitutional Court, in an eight to seven vote, ruled that Thaksin could remain as Prime Minister. A majority of Thai citizens supported the decision.

Despite this shaky beginning, Thaksin progressively consolidated his hold on power and was able to complete a full four-year term as an elected Prime Minister for the first time in Thai history. His first term in office was not without controversy, however. Many criticized his Administration for using its powers to squelch dissent and weaken the institutions established in the 1997 Constitution to provide checks-and-balances on government authority. Others questioned some of the practices used in Thaksin's aggressive "war on drugs" in 2003, which resulted in the deaths of more than 2,000 people.

One of the most serious problems that emerged during Thaksin's first term was the resurgence of violence in the Muslim-dominated southernmost provinces, which had experienced sporadic, but relatively low-scale unrest for decades. More than 800 people were killed between January 2004 and mid-2005. The population in the affected region is largely of Malay origin and speaks a Malay-based dialect. It is still unclear who is causing the violence, but the Thai government blames Muslim separatists. The region is poor, unemployment is high, and there is a deep resentment of centralized rule from Buddhist-dominated Bangkok. The Thaksin government tried a variety of approaches, varying from more force to more negotiation to deal with the situation, but the violence has continued well into 2005.

Despite these problems, Thaksin's domestic popularity continued to grow through the end of 2004, aided by a growing economic recovery and strong support for his populist economic policies, the crackdown on drug dealers, and his quick response to a tragic tsunami storm in southern Thailand in December 2004. Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai party were re-elected in February 2005 with an even greater majority than in 2001, winning 377 out of the 500 lower house seats. His second administration took office in March 2005.

Military coups have served as the major means of succession in modern Thai political history. Despite managerial changes at the top levels, policy continuity has been a feature of this process. New leadership has been generally met with acceptance by the politically aware, as coups have rarely obstructed government processes or undermined nation, king, and religion – the principal underpinnings of the state. The May 1992 incident was a violent affair, perpetrated by a military bent on power. That violence changed the Thai citizenry's views on the acceptability of military rule and undermined Suchinda's legitimacy. The King's interventions were indicative of a system that had not yet established succession processes independent of the ceremonial head of government. The struggles between state officials and the military, and politicians and business elites, remain a centerpiece of Thai political activity. The battles for political will persist between this new Bangkok-centered middle class and the entrenched military. The Thais' capacity to cope with change by balancing tradition and modernity suggests that democratization will likely continue to establish deeper roots in the future.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the main external forces that have influenced Thai history? Are their effects more or less significant on Thailand's history than have been those of indigenous leaders and events?
2. How do Sukhothai and Ayuthaya differ in their impact on modern Thailand?
3. How did Thailand escape Western colonialism?
4. What are the prospects for Thailand continuing its progress toward civilian democratic governments?

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## *Culture*

### **Hierarchy**

Over the centuries, the Thais have developed particular patterns of interaction and a composite set of attitudes, beliefs, and values. These interactions and value patterns constitute the culture of Thai society. For example, scholars of Thai politics have long noted the importance of status and hierarchy in Thai relationships. When two persons interact, they automatically assess each other's status. Physical stance, language, and the gestures of a "status inferior" show deference, whereas those of the "status superior" show dominance and authority. This show of status has been socialized into the behavior of Thais since childhood, when they are taught to treat certain persons as superiors. Persons deemed of higher status have some combination of the following characteristics: greater age, wealth, education, prominent family background, professional occupation, and affiliation with the Buddhist priesthood.

Such emphasis on status has resulted in a vertically organized and integrated society. Relationships among equals occur, for example, in schools where classmates interact with their peers. However, relationships that are fostered for self-interested purposes, such as protection or services, take place between persons of different status.

### **Patron-Client Relationships**

Patron-client relationships, which are one type of hierarchical tie, integrate the entire society. Patron-client relationships are informal, two-person ties in which a person of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his or her resources and influence to provide benefits for a person of lower socio-economic status (client). Clients reciprocate by offering their patron deference, labor, or other services. Reciprocity assures that the relationship is not exploitative. If patrons make unreasonable demands upon or do not meet the needs of their clients, the latter may terminate the relationship. The flexibility of patron-client relationships keeps society from deteriorating into feudalistic practices.

Thailand's relatively few interest groups, weak political-party structure, and ineffective legislative bodies make it an ideal society for pervasive patron-client ties that substitute for more formal social institutions found in the West. These informal ties communicate information from the kingdom's leadership to the masses and, less effectively, from the masses to the leadership.

Groups of patron-client relationships also form among the political elite. He who rules in Thailand is dependent on the capacity of these groups to control the key positions of government. In recent Thai history, the configuration of groups within the military determines who rules. There is constant jockeying for position, and continual shifting of clients from one military patron to another. Once a particular faction prevails, there is a period of stability and consolidation as subordinates attempt to join the rulers. Patron-client ties act as an integrating mechanism by cutting across class and ethnic divides. Chinese businessmen, for example, are



integrated through their patron-client relationships with high-level bureaucratic and military leaders. Low-level civil servants have a stake in their ministry through patrons at higher levels.

Thailand is undergoing rapid changes in its political culture. As the society shifts from traditionalism to modernity, new values often conflict with those held by the older generation. The Thais' sense of identity and legitimacy toward the kingdom relates to the monarchy, the symbol of the Thai people. The traditional patron-client ties no longer can meet modern expectations and demands for a greater role in political processes. The democratic interregnum, from 1973 to 1976 is an example of the conflict.

## **Buddhism**

Buddhism is adhered to by about 95 percent of all Thais. Theravada Buddhism penetrated Thailand from India by way of Sri Lanka. Buddhism created a more egalitarian religious community and the religion was more easily assimilated to local cultures than was the previous hierarchical Hindu religion of the area.

Buddhism is not a God-oriented system of faith and worship. Beliefs such as the notion of a Supreme Being must not be taken on faith. Rather, all teachings must be evaluated in light of one's experience and reason. The Buddha points out the path on which to proceed, but all persons must tread the path themselves. The religion's most distinctive doctrine is karma, the notion of cause and effect. Good deeds will eventually benefit the doer of the deed, either in this life or in the next. Giving food to monks, refurbishing temples, leading the life of the middle path (moderation in thought and action), becoming a monk, and following the Buddhist precepts all are deeds that can make merit. The accumulated merit can help lead to a better existence, but the ultimate goal is nirvana, the complete cessation of suffering. To achieve nirvana, one must free himself from the cycle of karmic rebirth and live by the Four Noble Truths. The first Noble Truth holds that all existence involves suffering; the second teaches that suffering results from desire; the third teaches that suffering will cease when desire and greed cease; and the fourth indicates the Noble Eightfold Path that one should follow to bring suffering to an end. Buddhism emphasizes the need to withdraw from society to meditate and to protect the discipline that is necessary for achieving nirvana.

Some analysts explain the behavior of Thais in terms of their religious beliefs. For example, the Thai emphasis on superior-subordinate relationships is based on the Buddhist concepts of merit and karma. Deference to authority is explained by the Buddhist teaching that a person's lot in life is primarily a result of the virtue or immorality of his or her deeds in previous existences. People of high status are treated with respect because they are assumed to be good people who have accumulated great merit in past lives. These notions help explain the political passivity of Buddhists in Thailand and elsewhere. The Buddhist countries' low level of economic development is said to be rooted in a lack of greed and materialism, a belief fostered by the Buddhist idea that desire and greed cause suffering.

These explanations must be viewed cautiously. Buddhism is an important aspect of Thai culture, but Buddhists have different interpretations of their religion and display a wide range of motivations. Furthermore, deferential behavior was an operative force in Thailand before Buddhism was firmly established, though Buddhism may have strengthened it. Similarly, the Buddhists who build a temple may appear to be spiritually ascetic. However, Buddhist donors may view this as a way to guarantee a more comfortable life in their next existence instead of striving for self-perfection or the quenching of desire.

Buddhism contributes to the social fabric in a variety of ways. Buddhism provides a sense of national unity and identification that helps foster social stability and unity. Buddhism's inherent tolerance, flexibility, and lack of rigid dogma may have encouraged the spirit of compromise that is a hallmark of the politics of Buddhist nations, and the Buddhist emphasis on serenity and virtue mitigated the violence of rulers toward the ruled.

Modernization in Thailand has strained these traditional patterns. Urbanization and industrialization have upset the Buddhist ritual rhythms. Buddhism is becoming more worldly and practical. Traditionally, in Thailand the temples were the educational centers and the monks served as teachers. But in contemporary times, secular schools have been constructed and the monks seldom perform as teachers except in the most rural areas. Consumer capitalism has also made inroads, and the people are increasingly attracted to a variety of spirit cults.

### **The Family System**

Despite the patriarchal character of Thai families, women are not considered the "weaker sex." They are perceived as having high status in comparison to the women of China and India. Thai women have responsibilities for managing family budgets and influence on household decision-making. They are also becoming more active participants in the labor force. Although a woman is expected to be dutiful and obedient to her husband and his parents, this duty is not as important in Thailand as it is in China or India. Women cultivate the fields, interact with townspeople, own factories, maintain family stability, and discipline the younger generation. As the primary agents of family socialization, women are responsible for the education of the youth.

Thai families are becoming smaller. For centuries, Thai women averaged six births each. In the past two decades, however, family planning programs in Thailand have brought down the rate of population increase to about half what it was just two decades ago. Discussions about "the condom" have become acceptable in a society known for decorum regarding sexual matters.

### **Sex**

There is a sexual double standard in Thailand. Premarital sex is generally deplored, but this rule is applied more strictly to girls than to boys. Among higher-status and upwardly mobile families, girls who are thought to have had sexual relations before marriage are often ostracized.

A major blot on the reputation of Thailand is the easy availability of prostitutes. Thailand has developed a negative reputation for “commercial sex services” and “sex tourism.” It is difficult to explain this paradox of a large prostitution industry in the midst of a sexually conservative society that values female virginity. However, it must be remembered that only a small percentage of women engage in prostitution. Also, there is a double standard that promotes women’s virginity and faithfulness while condoning extramarital sex by men. The income from prostitution can be greater than that from other occupations, and many prostitutes send money to their families in the villages.

One result of prostitution has been a significant rise in HIV/AIDS infections in Thailand since the 1980s. The annual number of new HIV infections in Thailand reached a peak of about 143,000 in 1991. Alarmed Thai officials instituted an active campaign to increase public awareness of the disease and encourage the use of condoms as a preventive measure. As a result of these efforts, new HIV infections per year fell dramatically to about 16,000 in 2003. Nevertheless, the United Nations estimates that more than 50,000 Thais died of AIDS in 2003 and over 600,000 Thais (about 1.5 percent of the adult population) are currently living with HIV/AIDS. AIDS remains the leading cause of death among young adults in Thailand.

Many Thai men continued to patronize prostitutes even after the AIDS crisis began. However, in the past ten years a major behavior change has taken place. Thai men are no longer visiting prostitutes in such large numbers, because they fear catching AIDS and because their wives have made it clear that they will not sleep with husbands who continue going out. This change has helped bring the AIDS epidemic under greater control.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. How will modernization affect traditional patron-client relations in Thailand?
2. How has Buddhism affected the cultural values of Thais?
3. How does Thai family planning affect the country’s future?
4. Thailand is viewed as patriarchal, meaning that men dominate most sectors of society. How does that affect progress and change in the kingdom?

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## *Economics*

### **Agriculture and Village Life**

The majority of Thais live in rural villages made up of some one to four hundred households. The family is the basic unit of social organization. Agriculture is the center of life and rice farming the main means of livelihood. Many farmers are poor while a minority of landowners are disproportionately well off. Droughts and floods can bring disaster to subsistence-level peasants and their small farms. Villagers are also vulnerable to powerful people such as urban and rural landlords, urban business people, moneylenders, and public officials.

Until recently, many Southeast Asian villagers were caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty. Machinery, pesticides, and fertilizer were not yet widespread. Debilitating diseases sapped the farmers' energy, labor-intensive farming methods resulted in low levels of productivity, and harsh weather conditions threatened the harvests. The lack of surplus crops kept farmers from earning capital, and the lack of capital precluded savings and investment. Birth control was not yet practiced. Arable land became less available as the population expanded, and family farms shrank as they were divided among the children.

Poverty also caused many villagers to be committed to the status quo and to traditional methods of farming. This conservative trait stemmed from a "safety first" principle. Subsistence farmers avoided economic disaster instead of taking risks to maximize their average yearly income. Instead of thinking like adventurous entrepreneurs, they typically preferred arrangements with social superiors that would enable them to survive times of bad harvests.

In the past several decades, the conservative and withdrawn nature of Thai peasants has changed. Since the 1960s, the "Green Revolution" has swept over much of the region as many farmers have adopted and adapted new technologies such as pesticides, fertilizer, and machines. The once traditional and subsistence-oriented farms have become part of a cash economy that has replaced the traditional barter economy. As a result, the richest farmers have increased their wealth while the poorest continue to struggle. The gap between the rural rich and poor has increased.

Thailand contains about 50,000 villages organized into some 5,000 "clusters" known as communes. Thai villages are led by headmen who are usually elected to the position by the villagers. They are "middlemen" between villagers and government officials. Village group activity is based on a web of loose, reciprocal relationships. Farmers who receive assistance are expected to help others in turn, though no formal record is kept of who worked for whom or for how long.

## **Economic Development**

During the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, Thailand sustained a seven percent rate of real annual economic growth (measured in gross domestic product or GDP), a pace equaled by only a few other developing nations. In the late 1980s, the growth rate averaged over 10 percent, higher than in any other country. Coincident with these high growth rates was an increase in the export sector, which in the late 1980s grew by about 24 percent each year. Foreign investment also grew at a rapid rate, with Japan, Taiwan, the United States, Hong Kong, and South Korea the leading investors. Manufacturing replaced agriculture as the largest share of total Thai GDP.

Although the majority of the Thai people are involved in the agricultural sphere of the economy, the number of those in rice farming is decreasing. Thai farmers have diversified into crops such as vegetables, fruits, maize, tapioca, coffee, flowers, sugar, rubber, and livestock. Although rural areas have not developed as rapidly as urban environments, the standard of living in the countryside has improved since the 1970s. Nevertheless, the urban bias of Thai economic development is clear from both the emphasis on manufacturing and the higher percentage of budget allocations centered on Bangkok.

The kingdom's economic successes have been based on its commitment to free-market, export-driven policies, and political stability. While *coups* have commonly occurred throughout contemporary Thai political history, these have not undermined the continuity of the policy process. Furthermore, Thailand's ethnic Chinese minority has been a vital component of the country's economic engine. This group has provided leadership in banking, export-import manufacturing, industrialization, monetary policy, foreign investment, and diversification.

Liberal regulations governing foreign direct investment resulted in large capital inflows from industrial nations. This has improved Thailand's access to foreign credit, technical assistance, and international trade relations. Thailand has become a favorite site for production plants owned by Japanese, South Korean, and Taiwanese firms. The government's decision to move toward an export-oriented industrialization strategy has been central to the kingdom's economic growth.

## **The Asian Economic Crisis**

Nearly three decades of sustained economic development came to an abrupt halt in mid-1997 after the Chavalit administration, faced with depleted foreign reserves, floated the baht on the international exchange market. Within weeks, the currency and stock market plunged, losing about 40 and 70 percent of their values respectively. The International Monetary Fund, along with the help of other Southeast Asian nations, provided a \$17 billion bailout package for the Thai economy.

The Southeast Asian financial crisis occurred for several reasons. These include: weak political leadership, lack of fiscal discipline, corruption, the influx of short-term capital, and

growing offshore debt. Borrowed funds were spent on risky ventures – such as real estate and other investments that offered meager returns. As the Japanese yen depreciated throughout the late 1990s, the baht, which was pegged to the U.S. dollar, became overvalued. As a result, Thai labor and exports became more expensive and therefore less competitive on the world market. Speculators then bet on the devaluation of the baht, borrowing baht at one price and selling the currency back at a devalued rate, thereby making tremendous profits.

One obstacle to solving the crisis fully is the poor state of Thailand's infrastructure. Bangkok's gridlock traffic, despite recent improvements, continues to hinder economic development. Electricity and telecommunications are also unreliable. A second problem is the depletion of Thailand's natural resources. The government lacks the ability to enforce recent legislation aimed at curbing illegal logging. Flooding and landslides, exacerbated by deforestation, have killed hundreds of people and devastated human habitats.

Third, the AIDS crisis also has undermined economic growth. Billions of dollars will need to be spent on care for these victims. Fourth, the number of college graduates in the "hard" sciences and technology is not sufficient to meet developmental needs. Thai universities graduate only one-third of those needed in engineering. Public sector salaries cannot compete with those paid by the private sector.

Positive economic growth resumed in 1999 after two years of decline. Prime Minister Chuan's government claimed the country's economic recovery was a result of its strict adherence to IMF guidelines. Critics argued, however, that the economy was still in jeopardy due to a weak baht, deflation, and non-performing loans. Foreign direct investment had slowed, family businesses disintegrated, and ordinary Thais bore the greatest burden of the crisis.

The Thaksin government took office in February 2001 with the intention of stimulating domestic demand and reducing Thailand's reliance on foreign trade and investment. Since then, the Thaksin administration has refined its economic message, embracing a "dual track" approach that combines domestic stimulus with Thailand's traditional promotion of open markets and foreign investment. Weak export demand held 2001 economic growth to about two percent. Beginning in 2002, domestic stimulus and export revival fueled a stronger performance, with real growth at over six percent in 2003 and 2004.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why have Thailand's economic growth rates surpassed those of most other developing nations?
2. How will Thailand change as the economy shifts from agriculture to manufacturing?
3. What were the principal reasons for the 1997 Asian economic crisis?

4. How optimistic or pessimistic are you about Thailand's capacity to overcome the Asian economic crisis and to reassert itself globally and economically?

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## *Politics*

### **Constitutions**

The Thai propensity for changing constitutions has been referred to as *faction constitutionalism* – meaning, each successive draft reflects, legitimates, and strengthens major shifts in factional dominance. Thai constitutions have not been considered the fundamental laws of the land, but rather, have functioned to facilitate the power of the ruling regime.

Since 1932, Thailand has had sixteen constitutions. Six of these were democratic, holding the executive accountable to the parliament. The remaining constitutions either balanced the near-complete power of the Prime Minister against the military's control over the upper house, or provided for neither an elected parliament nor multi-party participation.

Thailand's most democratic constitution was drafted in 1997. It was designed to combat corruption, improve human rights, decentralize governance, increase the accountability of the Senate or upper house through direct elections, separate the executive from the legislative branch (by requiring ministers to resign from the parliament), enhance the authority of the judiciary, and strengthen political parties. The new constitution also called for a neutral and autonomous National Electoral Commission.

In 2001, the Constitutional Court opened a corruption case against Prime Minister Thaksin. The National Counter Corruption Commission charged that Thaksin had concealed assets as a cabinet member in 1997 by transferring shares worth billions of baht to his family, servants and close friends. The Constitutional Court found him innocent, and Thaksin remained as Prime Minister.

### **Military**

Since the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932, the Thai military has played the dominant role in Thai political history. It is the most organized institution in the kingdom, and its hierarchical structure is congruent with the nation's centralized political culture. Because Bangkok dominates every aspect of the country's political and economic life, the military has had only to control this one city in order to maintain its grasp over the entire kingdom. Army divisions that have jurisdiction over Bangkok can control those functions that are necessary for dominating society – defense, interior, and communications.

With Thailand no longer under threat from outside aggression, the military has moved more forcefully into the development arena. Communist insurgency, which had threatened Thailand in the 1960s and 1970s, had been quelled. This undermined the major rationale for military intervention in governmental affairs. Most scholars therefore suggest that the era of military coups has ended. The strengthened role of political parties and the parliament, plus a warming toward democratic civilian rule, also reduces the military's influence.

## **Bureaucracy**

For most of the contemporary era, Thailand has pursued a bureaucratic polity within the bureaucracy itself. The bureaucracy has been the bedrock of stability in a political system in which top leadership positions change unpredictably. Although coups may bring new factions into power, the bureaucracy maintains its conservative policy role. The formerly exclusive role of the bureaucracy has been widened in recent years by the new role of technocrats, who have attained important positions and brought a more rational mode to policymaking. The bureaucracy is no longer the only arena of politics, however. Extra-bureaucratic groups, including the parliament, political parties, and pressure groups, and the military, now play significant roles in determining public policy.

## **Parliament**

At one time, elections in Thailand were held only when the ruling group became convinced that it could reclaim victory. Today, elections provide more meaningful choices among candidates who represent alternative ideas. The bicameral Parliament, no longer the Prime Minister's rubber-stamp, engages in public debate over important issues. Today, both houses of the parliament are elected. In the past, the upper house or Senate was appointed and was comprised of military generals and protégés of the Prime Minister. The parliament includes a large number of Sino-Thai business executives, an indication that Thailand's ethnic Chinese minority is moving from the economic sector to involvement in politics as well.

## **Political Parties**

Thai political parties often center on individual personalities. The ruling Thai Rak Thai party is focused on the personality of Thaksin Shinawat. Without his leadership and money there would be no Thai Rak Thai. Nevertheless, there has been some institutionalizing of parties. The Democrats have been a party for over 50 years and have organizational structure down to the village level.

Most parties in Thailand are not truly ideological although they can be classified as liberal or conservative. Ideological positions are not paramount in campaigns because only a minority of voters makes choices based on issues. Parties continue to "buy votes" as well as "buy candidates" whom they believe can win elections. The Thai Rak Thai party bought dozens of candidates using funds from the vast fortune of the party's leader.

## **Monarchy**

Legally above politics, the Thai monarch is the nation's symbol. The monarch is the supreme patron who reigns over all, and is the leader and protector of the Buddhist religion. The prestige and veneration of the monarchy has grown since the coronation of King Bhumipol Adunyadej, who is the kingdom's longest reigning monarch, serving since 1946. In the 1980s the King became more involved in Thai politics, intervening against military *coup* attempts. The

King's most important intervention occurred during the 1992 crisis when he supported Anand Panyarachun to be interim Prime Minister.

The Thais' universal veneration for their monarch has raised concerns about a potential succession crisis. The King promoted his daughter Princess Sirindhorn to the rank of Maha Chakri (crown princess), thereby placing her in the line of succession along with her older brother, Crown Prince Vachiralongkorn. The crown prince has often been criticized for his lack of commitment and discipline, whereas the princess is admired for her dedication. Because the King is the symbol of all that is great in Thailand, a contentious succession could undo the present stability.

### **Democratization**

The history of politics in Thailand is largely a history of authoritarian rule. The strength of Thailand's semi-democracy is a function of the economic boom and the government's capacity to meet the needs of the citizenry. When basic needs are met, other non-democratic values become secondary. However, when a government is perceived as unable to meet citizens' needs, the values of security and stability take precedence. Hence, a severe downturn in the economy or an unexpected external threat to Thai sovereignty could undermine the evolution toward democracy.

Another threat to Thai democratization relates to monarchical succession. The Thais' veneration for their king is also directed more to his daughter than to the crown prince. Most observers expect that the Thais will likely acquiesce to the prince's ascension and simply ignore the monarchy, or tone down their attitude of veneration. In either case, the Thai monarchy will less likely be the kingdom's bedrock of stability and legitimacy.

Democracy thrives in a political culture supportive of its values. Modernization has brought high levels of education, literacy, free media, and travel – all of which have heightened Thais' awareness of democratic values. Traditionally, other values, such as security, development, deference, and economic stability, have taken precedence over citizen participation in governmental affairs. The status of democratization in Thailand is therefore tenuous.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. What are the primary institutions that affect Thai politics?
2. Why has the military dominated Thai politics?
3. What are the prospects for democracy in Thailand?
4. Who are some of Thailand's most effective leaders since the 1932 revolt?

5. What problems must Thailand overcome to become a functioning democracy?

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## *Foreign Affairs*

Thailand's foreign relations underwent significant change following the end of the Cold War. Externally, Thailand no longer faced the communist threat of its neighbors. Internal considerations have also brought changes in Thai foreign policy-making. Thailand's economic development and the rise of business and other non-bureaucratic issues have had a particular influence. New advisors viewed international and domestic changes as an opportunity for Thailand to reassess its foreign policy. New foreign policy options included normalization of relations with China and Vietnam.

Thailand's foreign policy today includes strong support for ASEAN in the interest of regional stability. In recent years, Thailand has also taken an increasingly active role on the international stage. When East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, Thailand, for the first time in its history, contributed troops to the international peacekeeping effort. Thailand has recently contributed troops to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since World War II, Thailand and the United States have developed close relations, as reflected in several bilateral treaties, economic and security assistance programs, and joint involvement in United Nations multilateral activities and agreements. The principal bilateral arrangement is the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, which facilitates U.S. and Thai companies' economic cooperation. Thailand and the United States are also among the signatories of the 1954 Manila Pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which stipulates that, in the event of armed attack in the treaty area (which includes Thailand), each member would "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes". Although SEATO was dissolved in 1977, the Manila Pact remains in force and, together with the Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962, constitutes the basis of U.S. security commitments to Thailand. Thailand continues to be one of five U.S. security allies in Asia, along with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. In December 2003, Thailand was designated a Major Non-NATO Ally.

### Discussion Questions

1. Is Thailand relatively safe from external aggression?
2. In the long run, did the United States prevail in its war in Vietnam?

### *Suggested Readings*

Clark D. Neher, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*, (Westview Press, Boulder, 1999)

## Time Line for Thailand

1238	Sukhothai Kingdom.
1350	Ayuthayan Kingdom.
1764	Burmese invade and destroy Ayuthaya but are expelled.
1767-1782	Thai recover under military leader Taksin; the Thai kingdom is united first in Thonburi and later in Bangkok.
1782	Chakri dynasty begins.
1851	Coronation of modernizer King Mongkut (Rama IV).
1893	Fighting between French and Siamese forces; Bangkok blockaded. Laos becomes French protectorate.
1909	Siam relinquishes northern Malay states to Britain in exchange for an end to extraterritoriality and a loan for railroad construction.
1932	Bloodless coup by army officers; monarch henceforth largely a figurehead.
1939	Name of country changed from Siam to Thailand.
1941	Thailand sides with Japan in World War II.
1946	Thailand forced to return ill-gotten territory to neighbors.
1947 - 1973	Series of military coups d'etat; abrogations of constitutions; periodic elections; dominance of government by military.
1973	Popular revolt against military. King Bhumipol Adunyadej (Rama IX) sides with student rebels. Three years of civilian democracy.
1976	Military seizes power following violent demonstrations. 1975 Constitution annulled.
1979	Legislative elections; followed by thirteen years' transition to civilian democratic rule, mostly under General Prem Tinsulanond.

- 1991 Bloodless military coup temporarily ends transition to democracy; provisional civilian Prime Minister, Anand Panyarachun appointed.
- 1992 Elections lead to Prime Ministership of General Suchinda. After 48 days he is ousted following large public demonstrations against him. Anand Panyarachun reassumes leadership. New elections lead to civilian democrat, Chuan Leekpai, as Prime Minister.
- 1995 New election leads to fall of Chuan and rise of Banharn Silapa-Archa and Chavalit as Prime Ministers. However, their rule is short because they could not manage the economy successfully.
- 1997 “Asian economic crisis” begins in Thailand with devaluation of the baht, the fall of the stock market, widespread unemployment, and an end to remarkably high economic growth rates. New Constitution adopted. Chuan Leekpai returns to the position of Prime Minister.
- 2001 Election provides Thai Rak Thai Party with absolute majority in parliament. Thaksin Shinawatt becomes Prime Minister. Constitutional Court meets to determine if Thaksin had engaged in corrupt activities while serving in a previous cabinet. He is acquitted of all charges and allowed to continue as Prime Minister.
- 2003 Thaksin launches controversial anti-drug campaign in which over 2,000 people are killed within three months.
- 2004 Long-simmering unrest in the Muslim-dominated provinces of southernmost Thailand erupts into violence. Several hundreds are killed in violence involving bombings and clashes between Thai security forces and armed militants.
- 2005 Thaksin and his Thai Rak Thai Party are re-elected with an even larger majority in the Thai parliament.

# MAP





## READING RESOURCES

### 1. Periodicals

- A. Bangkok Post
- B. Bangkok Nation
- C. Asia Week
- D. Far Eastern Economic Review
- E. Internet Sites
  - 1. Thailand culture and information: [www.asean-coci.iit.net](http://www.asean-coci.iit.net)
  - 2. Thailand: The big picture: [www.nectec.or.th](http://www.nectec.or.th)
  - 3. Thaifind: [www.Thaifind.com](http://www.Thaifind.com)
  - 4. Asia Society: [www.asiasociety.com](http://www.asiasociety.com) (occasional in-depth articles on Thailand)
  - 5. Bank of Thailand: [www.bot.or.th](http://www.bot.or.th) (economic data)
  - 6. Thailand's Board of Investment: [www.boi.go.th](http://www.boi.go.th) (current economic data)
  - 7. Business Day: [www.bday.net](http://www.bday.net) (Thailand's daily news on business)
  - 8. Parliament of Thailand: [www.parliament.go.th](http://www.parliament.go.th) (current politics)
  - 9. Thai Government Organization: [www.au.ac.th/sunsite/thai\\_gov](http://www.au.ac.th/sunsite/thai_gov) (guide to independent public agencies and ministries)
  - 10. Thai Culture: [www.thaicultureinfo.iirt.net/culture\\_field](http://www.thaicultureinfo.iirt.net/culture_field) (Thai music, film, and literature)
  - 11. Thai History: [www.geocities.com/Heartland/5226/brfhis.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/5226/brfhis.html) (Brief history of Thailand)
  - 12. Thai History: [www.asia-discovery.com/thai\\_history.html](http://www.asia-discovery.com/thai_history.html) (General overview of Thailand's history and country facts)
  - 13. CIA Factbook: [www.usa.or.th/embassy/embindex.html](http://www.usa.or.th/embassy/embindex.html) (CIA facts about Thailand)
  - 14. Thai Embassy: [www.thaiembdc.org](http://www.thaiembdc.org)
  - 15. Thailand: The Big Picture: [www.nectec.or.th/](http://www.nectec.or.th/) (Everything about Thailand)
  - 16. Center for Southeast Asian Studies:  
<http://www.corn.cso.niu.edu/acad/cseas/index.html> (Many links to Thailand sites.  
Learn the Thai language at the SEASITE site. A wealth of information on Thailand)

# Self-Study Guide: Tunisia



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS TRAINING CENTER  
School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The *Self-Study Guide: Tunisia* is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Tunisian issues related to history, culture, politics, economics, security and international relations. This guide should serve as an introduction and a self-study resource. Tunisian affairs are far too complex and broad to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is encouraged to explore the questions and issues raised in the guide by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the appropriate sections. Most of the referenced material can be found either on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

The first edition of the *Self-Study Guide* to Tunisia was prepared by L. Carl Brown, Garrett Professor in Foreign Affairs Emeritus at Princeton University

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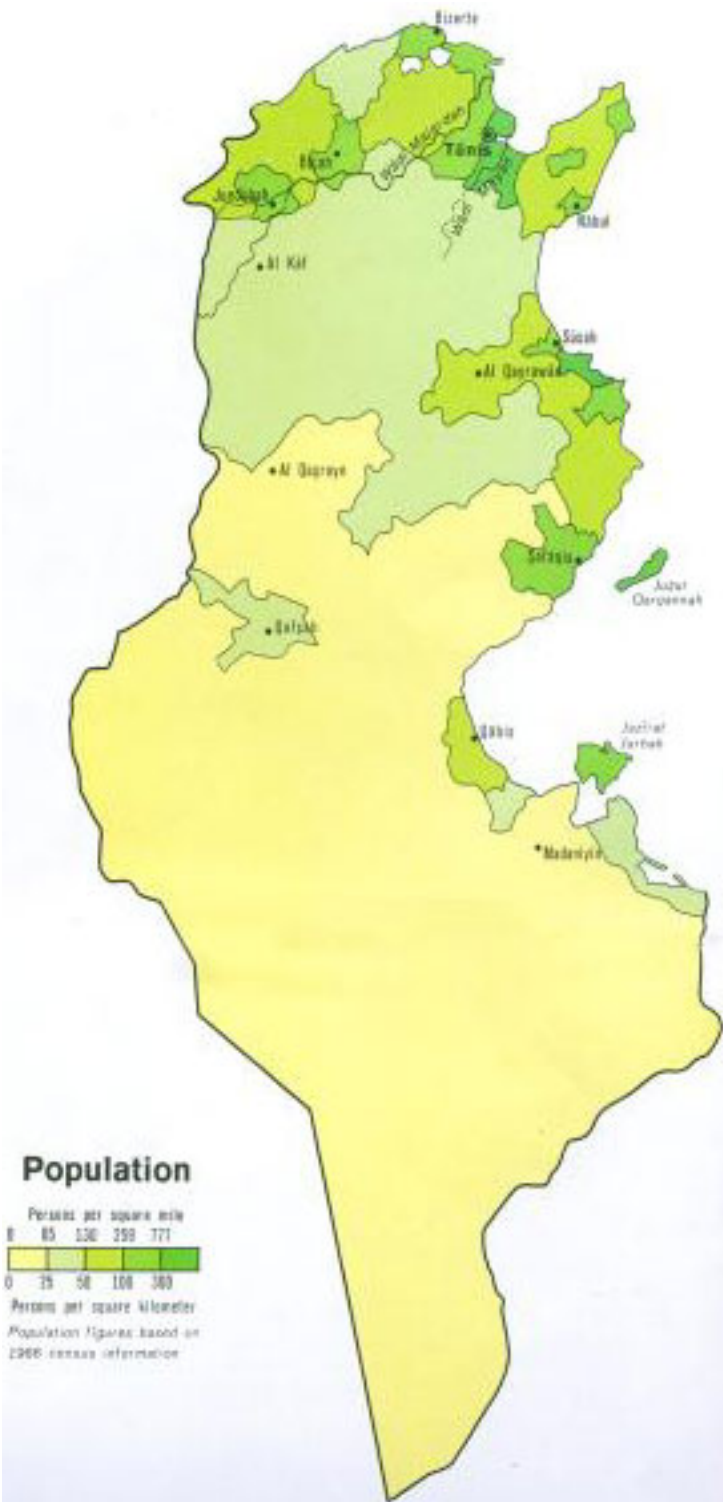
[Questions](#)

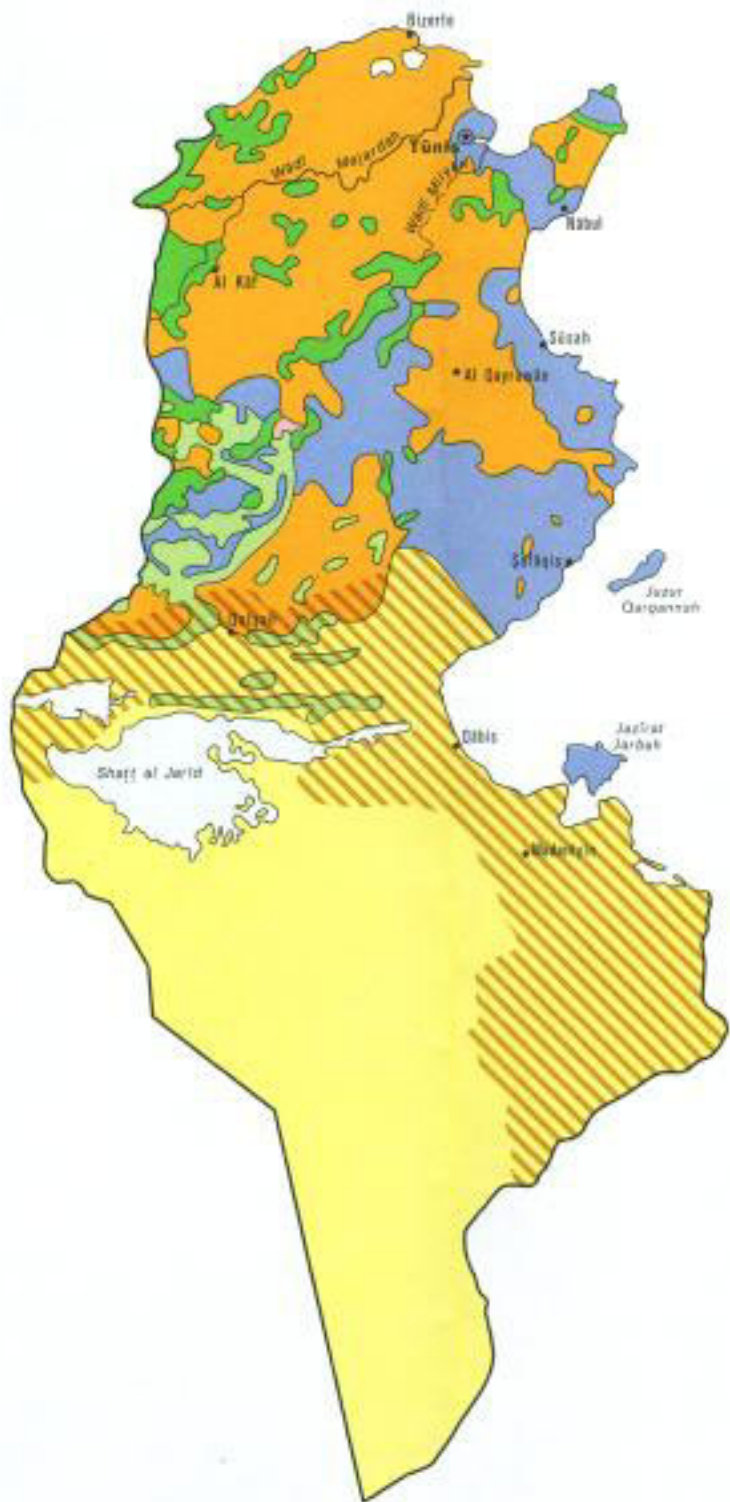
[Readings for Self-Study](#)

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## Maps







### Land Use and Natural Vegetation

- Forest
- Esparto grass
- Grains (primarily wheat and barley)
- Mixed cultivation
- Grazing
- Desert vegetation
- Salt marsh



### Economic Activity

#### INDUSTRY

- Tourism
- Petroleum refinery
- Petroleum pipeline
- Natural gas pipeline
- Steel mill
- Olive oil processing plant
- Superphosphate plant

#### MINING

- Oilfield
- Gasfield
- Phosphate deposits

#### COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

- Significant olive-growing area
- Significant vineyard area
- Date palm
- Citrus



Street Scene: Sidi Bou Said





Tunis Madina: Zitouna Minaret



Street Scene: Modern Tunis

## Introduction

Tunisia is Muslim, Arab, Mediterranean and African (MAMA). Its population today is almost 100% Muslim and Arabic-speaking. Located in the southcentral Mediterranean area, Tunisia has played a role in Mediterranean history from the time of Carthage to the present. Tunisia is also African or more precisely the easternmost portion of that distinctive geographical area -- the Maghrib.

With an area of 63,378 square miles (164,150 square kilometers) the Republic of Tunisia is slightly smaller than the state of Missouri. Its population of 9,593,000 is somewhat less than that of Michigan. Of the world's 217 states Tunisia ranks 91st in size and 80th in population. In other indices Tunisia fits in the category of developing countries. It has a young population (63.3% under the age of 30), but its present annual population growth rate (1.3%) is fairly low for the developing world (it was 3% in 1966). Tunisia's 1998 per capita gross national product (gnp) was \$2,060 (or \$5,169 in the more meaningful purchasing power parity measure) which places it above its neighbors, Algeria and Morocco but well below oil-rich states such as Libya and the states of the Arabian peninsula. Life expectancy has climbed from 45 years in 1960 to 55 years in 1970 and now, in 2000, 72.6 years.

## Physical & Cultural Geography

Tunisia as a distinctive territorial and cultural entity has been in existence centuries longer than the name. To early Muslim geographers this was Ifriqiyya, an adaptation of the term the Romans used to designate this land -- Africa. It was only from the 16th Century that the usage "Tunisia" began. When the Ottomans definitely wrested this territory from the Hapsburgs in 1574 they established a province that became, somewhat later, the Beylik of Tunis. From this it was but a short step in European languages to speak of Tunisia. As Africa or Ifriqiyya or Tunisia this country is part of the larger geographical landmass, including Algeria and Morocco, that medieval Arab geographers dubbed *Jazirat al-Maghrib* (the Westernmost island). In modern usage this is the Maghrib or North Africa (a confusing usage, Northwest Africa would be more accurate).

The Maghrib thus defined is bounded by the world's largest desert, the Sahara, on the South, by the Atlantic on the West and the Mediterranean on the North and East. Within these bounds a defining feature is the great Atlas mountain chain that forms an obtuse angle extending from the southernmost parts of Morocco in a northeasterly direction through that country, then turning Eastward across northern Morocco and Algeria in two separate chains, the Tell Atlas and the Saharan Atlas. Upon reaching Tunisia, however, these mountains have subsided to become less imposing hills, ending entirely before reaching Tunisia's eastern coastal region. In Morocco the difference in fertility and accessibility between the lands lying northwest of the Atlas chain and those in the southeast shading into the Sahara was such that French specialists during the time of the Protectorate bluntly labeled the former "useful Morocco" and the latter "useless". No such stark contrast is needed to describe Tunisia where mountains only occasionally reach the height of 4,000 feet (1,219 meters). Moreover, in Tunisia the mountainous areas lie mainly in the western part of the country and the more desert-like areas in the south. Although its northern and eastern areas are distinctively "Mediterranean" as contrasted with its drier steppe and desert hinterland, Tunisia's mountains and deserts do not chop up the country into discrete areas poorly controlled from a central point as is the case with Algeria and Morocco.

All three countries have long coastlines, but in Algeria and Morocco the few good natural harbors offer only limited access to the hinterland. Tunisia's almost 900 mile coastline, by contrast, is blessed with several good natural harbors that open to an accessible interior. This is the core area that has provided throughout the centuries, indeed, millenia the matrix for successive political and cultural communities. This core area is the territory lying east of the Atlas mountains that have at this point become hills, north of the Sahara, and open to the seas both northward toward Europe (a scant 90 miles separate Tunisia from Sicily) and eastward to the Middle East. Distances within this Tunisian core area were manageable even in pre-modern times. From Le Kef near the Algerian border to Tunis/Carthage is 280 km. Tunisia's second major city, Sfax, is 270 km from Tunis and readily reached by either sea or land following Tunisia's long coastal area facing east, the Sahil (Arabic = coast). The small town of Bin Gardane, a scant 26 km west of the Libyan border, is double that distance from Tunis (539 km), but Tunisia's core area ends well north of Bin Gardane.

Tunisia's manageable size and geographical configuration helps to explain why throughout history it has been politically organized around a single major city. During most of its long history that city has been Carthage or Tunis (the former now a suburb of the latter). For several centuries following the Muslim Arab conquest beginning in the mid-7th century Qairawan replaced Carthage as the political capital, and

for clear geopolitical reason. The Muslim Arabs, coming from the Arabian peninsula and Egypt, took the desert route avoiding the coast and created Qairawan as their desertport, just as the seagoing Punic invaders, also from the East some 1600 years earlier, made Carthage their principal seaport. The Muslims moved on to raze Carthage, denying it as a base for a possible Byzantine counterattack coming from the sea and established Qairawan (Arabic for "garrison camp") sufficiently far inland (57 km from Sousse on the coast) to be immune from Byzantine naval power. It was only in the 10th Century that the Fatimids moved Tunisia's political center back to the coast, establishing Mahdiya in 912 on a site that had once been a Carthaginian and thereafter a Roman port. By the 12th c. the strategic site in which both Carthage and Tunis are located was restored as the political center of the country, a status that Tunis has maintained ever since.

Tunisia today is a country of considerable uniformity when compared with the rest of the Maghrib or the countries of the Middle East. Its population is for all practical purposes totally Arabic-speaking and 99.5% Muslim. Moreover, except for a small minority of Ibadites (descendants of that earliest schismatic group in Islam, the Kharijites) located in the extreme south and on the island of Jerba, Tunisia's Muslim are all Sunnis. The once significant Jewish minority (perhaps 4-5% of the total population at its peak) has been reduced to a few hundred. The native Christian population that had long existed before the coming of Islam in the mid-7th Century disappeared by the 13th century (unlike the situation in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent where Christian Arabs have remained an important presence, still accounting for as much as 30% of the population in Lebanon and from six to ten percent in the other countries). What might have been a demographic change in modern times with the influx of European Christian settlers coming with French colonialism (1881-1956), peaking at almost 8% of the population, was quickly dismantled following Tunisian independence. Europeans now account for a miniscule 0.3% of Tunisia's population. The descendants of Blacks brought to Tunisia as slaves from across the Sahara amount to only a few thousands in the North, somewhat more in the southernmost areas.

If Tunisia provides a significant geographical and cultural uniformity when compared with the rest of the Maghrib and the Middle East it is not lacking in conditions that hamper unity. No natural geographical boundaries separate Tunisia from its neighbors to the West and East, Algeria and Libya. Tunisia's border with Algeria stretches more than 500 miles. The route following towns lying close to the Algerian border proceeding southward from Tabarka on the Mediterranean to Le Kef, Gafsa and finally Tozeur adds up to 275 miles. From Tozeur southward through the Sahara to Ghadames is almost the same distance, the latter half of that political border being quite literally no more than a straight line across the Saharan sands. The only border that offers any ecological or, for that matter, strategic significance is not that North-South political line dividing Algeria and Tunisia but rather the East-West natural frontier separating the area of hills, plateaux and forests to the north and the arid Sahara to the south. It is, accordingly, not surprising to find that from at least Roman times much of the Eastern Constantinois area of Algeria has often been linked to what was described above as the core area of Tunisia. The political boundaries of the Roman Africa Proconsularis in, for example, the 4th century C.E. extended as far West as Hippo Regius (now Annaba in Algeria), where St. Augustine (354-430) served as bishop. Born in nearby Thagaste (now Suq al-Ahras, in the Algerian interior 68 km from the Tunisian border) Augustine spent many of his formative years in Carthage.

A roughly similar geographical consistency characterizes Tunisia's border with Libya. It is a coastal plain shading into the Saharan emptiness where (until the age of fossil fuels) precise borders were undrawn and unnecessary. Indeed, throughout most of its history what is now Libya has been divided politically and culturally into a western portion (Tripolitania) linked to Tunisia and an Eastern portion (Cyrenaica, or Barqa to the medieval Arabs) that gravitated toward Egypt and the East. Tunisia's political borders as they now exist have, however, remained largely fixed since the 16th Century when the several Maghribi beyliks or deyliks loosely tied to the Ottoman imperium were established.

A geographical contrast within Tunisia is produced by a mountain range, the Tunisian Dorsal, extending from the Kasserine region just north of Gafsa northeasterly across Tunisia to taper out in Cap Bon (Tunisia's northeastern peninsula east of Tunis). The Dorsal, this last, tapering leg of the great Atlas mountains is a chain of hills, not lofty by Moroccan or Algerian standards, but sufficiently high to divide Tunisia into a rainfed North and an arid, semi-desert region to the South. The former, only some 20% of Tunisia's total area, produces more than two-thirds of the country's agricultural product.

Another major geographical region is the long coastal plain facing eastward, the Sahil, extending from north of Sousse to somewhat south of Sfax. This is an area with adequate moisture for olive cultivation and ready access to the sea for fishing and trade. The Sahil was not so fertile as to tempt French agricultural colonists, and the inhabitants of the Sahil with their small holdings almost completely resisted loss of their lands to the *colons*. A scholarly French Protectorate official, Henri de Montety, advanced the theory that the Sahilians, as olive cultivators had learned the economic lesson of delayed gratification, for some 12 to 14 years must pass before olive trees produce their first crop. Although this theory may not appear plausible when applied to the many olive cultivating areas world-wide, it is certainly true that Sahilians, more than any other group of Tunisians, took advantage during the Protectorate of French educational and cultural opportunities and also led the nationalist movement. The Tunisian George Washington or Kemal Ataturk, Habib Bourguiba, was a Sahilian born and buried in Monastir, and most members of Tunisia's first post-independence cabinet were Sahilians as well.

The lack of natural borders dividing Tunisia from its neighbors and the several regional differences within the country only modify slightly the larger comparative theme: With its small size, compact core area and welcoming coastlines Tunisia is more easily governed from within and more open to invasions and ideologies coming from abroad than the rest of the Maghrib or, for that matter, most of the Middle East. Tunisia in past centuries was more quickly and effectively integrated into the Roman world than either Algeria or Morocco, more thoroughly Christianized and then later more readily Arabized and Islamized. To this day the percentage of native Berber speakers in Morocco and Algeria is estimated to be respectively almost 40% and 25%. Tunisia has only miniscule pockets of Berber speakers found, not suprisingly, in the remotest southern pre-Saharan reaches of the country.

Tunisia has impressed observers throughout the centuries as being more civilized (in the measurable sense of being more urban and more settled) than its neighbors. A 14th century Egyptian Muslim traveller wrote "The inhabitants of Ifriqiyya are to be distinguished from the inhabitants of Morocco and all of the Maghrib lands by the gentleness of their character." And in commenting on this passage the French scholar, Georges Marcais insisted, "These are the psychological traits of long-established city

folk, the heirs of societies going back more than 2000 years, belonging to a country where the Carthaginian, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic civilizations have been successively superimposed, a country which owes to these successive rulers the framework, many times retouched, of its urban life." In the early 18th Century a perceptive observer, the Englishman Thomas Shaw, wrote "The Tunisians are the most civilized nation of Barbary. They have very little of that insolent and haughty behavior which is too common in Algiers.... " And the Frenchman Dr. Louis Frank who served the Bey of Tunis in the early years of the 19th Century and wrote one of the most perceptive accounts of that country observed that "of all the Barbary peoples the Tunisians are, in general, the most gentle and the most humane."

Questions:

What geographical factors distinguish Tunisia from its neighbors, Algeria, Morocco and Libya?

It is often observed that states in Africa and the Middle East emerged from the colonial experience with far from "natural" political boundaries. Is this true for Tunisia?

Why has the area of greater Tunis served as the country's political and cultural center during most of Tunisia's history? Under what circumstances did Tunis lose this distinction?

## Tunisia in History

In this sketch of Tunisian history "Africa", "Ifriqiyya" and "Tunisia" will be used as appropriate to the period covered.

From Carthage to the arrival of Islam:

### **Before the Common Era (B.C.E.)**

c. 10th c. Phoenicians founded Utica (village and ruins 33 km from Tunis on the road to Bizerte).

9th c. Carthage (Qart Hadasht - "new city", i.e. as distinguished from the older Utica) founded by Phoenicians coming from Tyre (in modern Lebanon). Legend has it that Carthage was founded in 814 by the Phoenician Princess Dido.

6th c. Carthage's maritime empire controlled the Western Mediterranean from Spain to Western Sicily.

5th & 4th c. Period of Carthaginian conquest and colonization of the Tunisian hinterland and warfare with Greek colonists settled in Eastern Sicily.

The Punic (from Roman name for Phoenicians) Wars between Rome & Carthage:

1st 264-241 Carthage lost remaining hold on Sicily

2nd 218-201 Marked by Hannibal's daring march across Northern Africa, Spain and on to attack Rome (crossing the Alps in 218), but internal divisions in Carthage and Roman generals Fabius and Scipio brought ultimate Roman victory. Scipio defeated Hannibal at battle of Zama in 202 (central Tunisia c.30 km north of Maktar. Precise location of both the battle and the city, Zama, uncertain).

3rd 149-146 Urged on by Cato's ringing demands that *delenda est Carthago*(Carthage must be destroyed) Rome sent its armies to defeat the Carthagians, raze Carthage and establish their capital at Utica.

Early 2nd c. Numidian Masinissa established kingdom posing a threat to Carthage.

112-105 Grandson of Masinissa, Jugurtha, challenged Romans but was eventually defeated. Roman army veterans given lands in Africa.

46 Julius Caesar annexed Numidia and created a Roman colony at Carthage which soon became the capital of Roman Africa. Roman policy of military colonization continued.

### **The Common Era (C.E.)**

1st to early 3rd c. Prosperity for Roman Africa with increased urbanization of sites that had once been Punic cities, e.g. in addition to Carthage, Bulla Regia (160 km west of Tunis), Dougga (110 km west of Tunis), Mactar (157 km southwest of Tunis) and Sbeitla (Sufetula, 165 km south of Tunis).

170 Tertullian b. Carthage. His rigorous interpretation of Christianity presaged later Donatism.

180 First known Christian martyrs in Africa

189-199 Victor I, first pope from Africa

202-203 Septimus Severus first Roman Emperor born in Africa

203 Martyrdom Saint Perpetua and others at Carthage.

248-258 Saint Cyprian bishop of Carthage

4th c. Donatist schism. Donatists hard-liners challenging Church leadership by those Christians who had knuckled under to Roman persecution (under Diocletian, 303-305), even surrendering the Scriptures (*traditores*).

411 Council of Carthage: Saint Augustine prevailed against Donatists

429-543 Vandals invade Africa, seizing Carthage in 439. Although they embraced the Arian doctrine and thus presented yet another schism the century of Vandal rule actually brought enhanced public order and prosperity for a time.

543-mid 7th c. Byzantine General Belisarius led campaign to defeat the Vandals and establish Byzantine rule in Africa.

595 Heraclius appointed exarch of Africa. In 608 he sent his son, also named Heraclius, from Africa to overthrow the usurper to the throne in Constantinople (and release from captivity his cousin and fiancée, Eudocia, and her mother).

608-641 Reign in Constantinople of Heraclius (the son). Hard-pressed by the Persians, Heraclius considered moving imperial capital to Carthage. Church in Africa strongly resisted adoption by Heraclius of the monothelite doctrine and many in Africa tempted to secede from the empire.

641 Constantine succeeded his father as emperor and sought impose Orthodoxy on the now staunchly Catholic Africa. This policy was then reversed following his short reign by his successor.

646 Exarch of Africa, Gregory, proclaimed himself Byzantine Emperor but remained in Africa.

The Muslim period to c. 1800:

647 1st Muslim Arab incursions into Africa. Army of Abdullah ibn Sa`d defeated Gregory who died in battle at Sufetula (Sbeitla). Gregory's captured daughter committed suicide by throwing herself off her camel.

655 2nd Muslim Arab incursion into Africa.

670 3rd Muslim incursion under `Uqba ibn Nafi`. Founding of Qairawan.

681-698 Resistance to Muslim Arab control from areas west of Ifriqiyya by Berber chieftains, first Kusayla (defeated 686) and then the mysterious al-Kahina (the priestess, who may have led a Jewish or Christian tribe). She held out from the 680s until her defeat in 698. Thereafter, Berbers joined forces with the conquering Muslim Arabs, e.g. Tariq and most of the soldiers crossing from North Africa to Spain in 711 were Berbers (the point in Spain where they landed called Jebel Tariq = Gibraltar).

698 Muslim Arab expulsion of Byzantines from remaining (northern) areas of Ifriqiyya.

c. 8th Century Consolidation of Qairawan as capital of Muslim Maghrib. Deemed by many the fourth holiest city of Islam after Mecca, Madina and Jerusalem. Kharijism, a rigorous and egalitarian doctrine and the first major schism in Islam, appealed to Berbers in North Africa causing revolts (c.740-771).



800-909 Period of Aghlabids, a dynasty of autonomous rulers accepting suzerainty of Abbasid caliphs ruling from Baghdad. Aghlabids adapted Abbasid administrative as well as urban and architectural practices to Ifriqiyya. Increased urbanization in Tunis as well as Sousse, Monastir and Sfax. Building of coastal fortresses ( *ribat-s*) along the Sahil, remains of which seen today in Sousse and Monastir. Aghlabids achieved conquests in parts of Sicily and Sardinia and raided Rome itself in 846.

909 Fatimid conquest of Ifriqiyya and ouster of the last Aghlabid ruler. The Fatimids (legitimists claiming descendants of Muhammad, his daughter Fatima and son-in-law Ali, should lead the Muslim community as caliphs) had organized a revolutionary movement against the Abbasids in the mountainous Kabylia area (Algeria, c. 100 km east Algiers) and moved from there against the Aghlabids in Ifriqiyya. This was the first leg of their campaign to challenge the Abbasids in Baghdad.

911 Fatimid leader, `Ubayd Allah, founds Mahdiyya.

935-948 Berber resistance to Fatimid rule, at times under banner of the earlier Kharijite movement.

969 Fatimids, moving from Ifriqiyya to conquer Egypt and found Cairo (al-Qahira, "the victorious") left the Berber Zirids to rule the Maghrib from Ifriqiyya (from 972).

972-1050 Zirid rule. In 1050 the Zirids having faced numerous Berber challenges often under the banner of anti-Fatimid Sunnism, renounced their Shi`i overlords, returned to Sunnism and offered allegiance to the Abbasids in Baghdad.

1050 Beginning of the nomadic Bani Hilal and Bani Sulaym invasion of the Maghrib. Muslim historical account assert that the Fatimid ruler in Egypt "unleashed" these bedouin tribes against the Zirids in retaliation for their treason. This westward movement was in reality a great migration that continued over the next century. The introduction of these many Arabic-speaking bedouin accelerated the Arabization of Ifriqiyya. The bedouin also brought a sharp rise in nomadism and a concomitant decline of urban life. Qairawan, sacked by these bedouin, lost its preeminence to Tunis after c. 1057.

1134 Norman King Roger II in Italy and Sicily conquered the island of Jerba. In the following years Normans seized most of the coastal areas from Tunis to Tripoli.

1159 Almohades, Berber dynasty arising from mountains of Southern Morocco, conquered Tunis. The Almohades, with a rigorous, puritanical and messianic doctrine (the founder, Ibn Tumart, was deemed the *mahdi*, the divinely guided), ousted the Normans from their coastal holdings, and reined in the power of the Arab nomads. Almohade rule in North Africa, including Ifriqiyya, lasting until the mid-13th Century, brought the end of native Christianity in North Africa.

1229-1574 Hafsid dynasty in Ifriqiyya. The Almohades gave a member of the Moroccan Berber Abu Hafs clan the governorship of Ifriqiyya in 1206. A Hafsid successor in 1229 declared his autonomy from

the Almohades.

1270 Crusading French King Louis IX (Saint Louis), landing at Tunis/Carthage to seize Ifriqiyya before undertaking a second campaign against the Mamluks in Egypt, died and was buried in Carthage. (During the French Protectorate period the hybrid Byzantine-Moorish style Cathedrale Saint-Louis, on the hill of Byrsa overlooking the Punic ports of Carthage was completed in 1890. Following independence the Tunisian Government, in an accord with the Vatican, converted the cathedral into a museum.)

14th c. Moroccan Berber Merinid dynasty threaten Hafsids in Ifriqiyya twice occupying Tunis (1348-50 & 1357), but Hafsids prevail.

1336 Ibn Khaldun, eminent scholar and historian born in Tunis. His celebrated *Muqaddima* (Prolegomena) is deemed the most impressive interpretation of Muslim history and culture. He died in 1406.

15th c. Peak of Hafsids prosperity. Great building and expansion of Tunis.

16th c. Decades-long struggle between Hapsburgs and Ottomans based on the Western and Eastern peninsulas flanking the Mediterranean, Iberia and Anatolia. For Ifriqiyya the principal events were:

1492 Expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain, many of whom came to Ifriqiyya joining those earlier immigrants from Spain who had begun to arrive since the beginning of Muslim decline there in the early 13th century.

1534 Khayr al-Din (Barbarossa), who had taken control of Algiers and proclaimed his allegiance to the Ottomans, wrested Tunis from the Hafsids ruler who then appealed to Emperor Charles V for help.

1535 Army of Charles V expelled the Ottoman Algerian forces and restored the Hafsids ruler (henceforth essentially a puppet). The Spanish built an imposing fortress at La Goulette, remains of which survive to this day.

1569 Ottoman Algerians again conquered Tunis

1573 Don Juan of Austria reconquered Tunis.

1574 Definitive capture of Tunis and incorporation of Ifriqiyya into the Ottoman Empire as an Ottoman province.

1574-17th c. Ottoman Tunisia soon became autonomous. At first the Ottoman-appointed governor (pasha) lost effective control to the Turkish *jund* (army) led by its designated leader, the dey. The 17th c. saw the rise to power of another official, the bey, especially during the period of one Murad (a renegade, i.e. convert from Christian lands, from Corsica) and his son Hammuda (1613-1666). It was Hammuda

who built the Bardo Palace, the official residence of the beys thereafter. From the time of Hammuda's sons and successors it had become the rule that the officer selected as dey must be approved by the bey. The dey's powers declined to become essentially the official in charge of security in Tunis. Both "dey" and "bey" were Ottoman titles.

1609 Many of the Moriscos, expelled from Spain by Philip III came to Tunisia. These years also brought Jews who had settled in Leghorn (Livorno, Italy) after having been driven from Spain during the Spanish Inquisition. Active in Mediterranean trade these new Jewish immigrants to Tunisia came to be called *Grana* (from Livorno) as opposed to the native Jews ( *twansa*- Tunisians).

1705 Husayn b. Ali became the founding bey of the Husaynid dynasty continuing until the beylik was abolished in 1957. Husayn's father was from Crete, his mother Tunisian.

18th c. Succession crises, harsh rule of Ali Basha (1740-1756) and invasions from Algeria, 1735 and 1756, the latter producing as well the sack of Tunis.

1759-1814 Greater stability and prosperity under Ali Bey (1759-1782) and Hammuda Basha (1782-1814).

### **Themes for Study and Discussion:**

1. Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Muslim Arabs, Fatimids, Zirids, Almohads, Hafsid and Ottomans -- all were outsiders who conquered Tunisia. At the same time the capacity of Tunisia to absorb the ideas and institutions coming from outside by contrast with its neighbors (with higher mountains, greater deserts, more nomadism and more isolated territorial enclaves) is manifest. The Phoenicians became Carthaginians. Roman Africa was the portion of the Maghrib most integrated with Rome and, for that matter, more integrated than many Roman provinces in Europe. Christianity was more deeply rooted in Tunisia than elsewhere in the area. The same for Islam and the Arabic language.

Tunisia throughout history has often been able to emerge from its conquered status and achieve autonomy. This happened with the Aghabids in the 9th c. and again when the Zirids renounced the Fatimids and Shi'ism, returning Tunisia to Sunni orthodoxy. The Hafsid, a Berber clan from outside became sufficiently rooted to produce Tunisia's longest dynasty in the Islamic period -- almost three and a half centuries. The "Tunisification" of the Husaynids (1705-1956) followed this pattern.

The extent to which Tunisia in pre-modern times was a proto-nation must not be exaggerated. The nation-state is, after all, a modern phenomenon in Tunisia as elsewhere. The clear difference between rulers and the ruled was eroded only slowly and unevenly in the modern period.

2. Ibn Khaldun's classic interpretation of the rise and fall of states posited less "civilized" folk in the countryside endowed with great group solidarity ( *asabiyya* - a French scholar translated it *esprit de corps*) and brought to a fervor by a religious message overthrowing dynasties ruling in the cities where

they have become effete. This interpretation explains amazingly well much of pre-modern Muslim history and especially Ibn Khaldun's own Maghrib. Tunisia, however, provided not the hinterland base for new dynasties but the settled and urbanized area conquered by the outlander. Thus, the Kharijites and the Fatimids coming from the mountains of Algeria, the Almohades from the mountains of Morocco or the earlier Almoravids (whose conquests stopped just short of Ifriqiyya) from the Moroccan Sahara. Even the Donatist schism, although clearly present in Tunisia (Africa) as well as beyond, was to some extent a challenge by the native population in the countryside to the Roman and Romanized people in the urban areas. No great hinterland challenge creating a new polity arose within Tunisia.

3. Piracy: Tunisia from the Ottoman period until the early 19th c. was one of the states known to the West as the "Barbary Pirates". Tunis, just like Algiers, Tripoli, and Sale in Morocco (the Salee Rovers), did shelter and sponsor piracy, or more accurately privateering. Captives seized in such maritime raids were taken to Tunis to be ransomed or held as slaves who were absorbed into Tunisian society. The mother of Tunisia's Westernizing Ahmad Bey (reigned 1837-1855), for example, was captured in 1798 as a young girl in a corsair raid on Sardinia.

Mediterranean piracy in its heyday from the 16th c. to the early 19th c. was an international relations "system" with its distinctive rules. Piracy in the Mediterranean (and beyond, many of the more notable pirates being from Britain) had existed for centuries. Even Julius Caesar was captured by pirates and had to be ransomed. Piracy was sponsored from both sides of the Mediterranean. The Knights of Malta preyed on Barbary shipping, and in one bumper year (1780) seized 240 Muslim vessels. Pirates from Malta also captured in the last two decades of the 18th c. almost one thousand Tunisians, especially from raids against Jerba, and the gulfs of Hammamet and Tunis. European piracy plus European efforts to bar Muslim merchant ships from access to European ports (often in violation of existing treaties) was part of the system which, on balance, disadvantaged Tunis and the Maghrib more than Europe.

Piracy existed along with trade. Tunis had resident European merchants as well as Christian captives awaiting possible ransom. Treaties with the several different European countries secured immunity of that country's ships from pirate attacks. Often, lesser outside states paid tribute in order to obtain such protection. Such was the case of the early United States.

Piracy or privateering was a form of pre-modern warfare before governments created and supported regular navies. Barbary piracy had a brief final resurgence when Europe was preoccupied with Napoleon, but it was already an anachronism. Thus, Napoleon's defeat of the Knights of Malta in 1798 (while en route to invade Egypt) is of a piece with Lord Exmouth's imposition of the abolition of corsairing on the Barbary States, including Tunis, in 1816. (A footnote to the fate of privateering: Following the Crimean War the states assembled at the Paris peace conference in 1856 agreed to abolish privateering and pressed other states to concur. One state, pleading the possible need to commission and arm merchant ships in time of war, refused to sign this international convention -- the United States.)

## Tunisia in Modern Times

Tunisia at the beginning of the 19th c. had a population of perhaps one million to at most one and a half million. Of this number from two-thirds to three-fourths were sedentary, the remainder nomadic or transhumants. The capital, Tunis, had a population of perhaps 85,000. This was over four times larger than the second city, Qairawan, with 20,000. Sfax may have had 10,000, Sousse and Bizerte possibly 6,000. The great difference dividing the nomad from the settled is illustrated by the *mahalla*, the annual tax collection foray into the remoter countryside which took the form of a military expedition. A scarcely less important cleavage divided the urbanites from the rural population. The inhabitants of the capital were the *baldiyya* (roughly, the bourgeoisie) who superciliously regarded the country folk as *Uffaqi* ("from beyond the horizon").

Ruling Tunisia was a governmental establishment offering a small provincial replica of its suzerain, the Ottoman Empire. The classic Ottoman idea of government sharply distinguished rulers from the ruled. The former were soldiers (men of the sword) and administrators (men of the pen). The latter were *ra`aya* (literally sheep). This clear distinction between rulers and the ruled held sway in Tunisia. Almost all of the ruling class were non-Tunisians. The founder of the dynasty of autonomous rulers, Husayn b. Ali, had, admittedly, been the son of a Turk (from Crete) married to a woman from a local tribe, but the mother of his son and successor was a Genoese slave. And the next three generations of rulers were also sons of either slave mothers or a cousin. So, too, for the army (*jund*). It was largely "Turkish" which meant recruits from outside of Tunisia or their offspring plus a number of recruits from the Berber *Zwawa* (Zouaves) tribe whose homeland was the Kabylia region of Algeria.

The elite of the ruling class were the mamluks. These were Christians taken while young from all over the empire or beyond (e.g. the Greek islands, Georgia, the Caucasus). Later converting to Islam, they were raised to be rulers. Perhaps about 100 in all from "toothless" children to the elderly, the mamluks made up virtually all the military commanders and cabinet ministers throughout the 19th c. even as the "recruitment" of new mamluks ceased early in the century.

The few native Tunisian members of the ruling class were some, but by no means all, of the local governors (*qaid-s*), the scribes (*kuttab*, sing. *katib*) and the local cavalry (*Spahis*). Even the Muslim *ulama* ("learned", i.e. in religious studies) were divided. Although most of the native Tunisians followed the Maliki legal system, the Ottoman Empire adopted the Hanafi system and its *ulamawere* favored as well in Tunisia. (Maliki and Hanafi are two of the four accepted Islamic legal systems -- or, roughly, "codes" for implementing religious law -- in Sunni Islam. Maliki mosques in Tunisia tend to have four-sided minarets, Hanafi mosques octagonal minarets).

Tunisian history in modern times is marked by the slow and sporadic move away from the classic Ottoman pattern sharply separating rulers from ruled -- largely provoked by the threats and attractions coming from Europe. Tunisia was a minor player in that great diplomatic confrontation known as the "Eastern Question". At the turn of the 19th c. neither the Ottoman Empire nor its autonomous parts (such as Egypt and Tunisia) were sufficiently strong to withstand the growing might of Europe, and it was only because the several European states could not agree on an orderly division of the Ottoman Empire that it lasted until after the First World War. Even so, dismemberment proceeded apace -- Greece, the Balkans, Algeria (French conquest beginning in 1830), the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the French

Protectorate over Tunisia beginning the previous year, 1881.

Responding to this challenge the Tunisian rulers used the weapons of the weak. The beylik sought to remain loyal to its Ottoman suzerain while guarding against any effort by Istanbul to assert direct control over its Tunisian province (as happened in 1835 to neighboring Tripolitania). At the same time the beylik needed to balance off the contending European powers. Most of the time this involved a cautious acceptance of French support in order to offset the British who in championing Ottoman integrity had no interest in an independent Tunisia. At the same time, the Beylik tried to keep French ambitions within bounds.

Tunisia's rulers also, like their contemporaries in Cairo and Istanbul, felt the need to strengthen their states by adapting European institutions and ideas. This strategy of "defensive modernization" followed a similar trajectory in all three places:

Efforts to Westernize the military, including conscription of the native population and enlarging the military establishment plus bringing in European military advisors, sending student missions to Europe, and working to achieve more self-sufficiency in producing military materiel.

These and other efforts at centralization enlarged government budgets and led by mid-century to a policy of deficit financing by means of European loans at usurious rates. When this brought governmental bankruptcy, the Europeans imposed debt commissions on these countries. These were the penultimate stage before outright European colonial rule, from 1881 in Tunisia and 1882 in Egypt.

More than ideas of military Westernization seeped in during these years. Certain members of the ruling establishment began to think in terms of limiting arbitrary rule with constitutionalism and of strengthening the state by getting the populace involved.

## Principal Dates:

1811 & 1816 Revolts of the Turkish *jund*. In response belik began to decrease size and importance of the *jund*.

1816 Lord Exmouth and British fleet demonstrate before Tunis

1819 Anglo-French naval demonstration before Tunis

1830 Beginning French conquest of neighboring Algeria

1831 Creation of first Westernized military, the *nizam* forces

1835 Re-establishment direct Ottoman control over Tripolitania

1837-1855 Westernizing reign of Ahmad Bey -- Major Events:

1840 Establishment of westernizing Bardo Military School

1840-1855 French military mission to Tunisia. The following years saw a major buildup of Tunisian military at great expense.

Abolition of Slavery:

1841 Closing of slave market in Tunis

1842 Children of slaves declared free

1846 Liberation of slaves

1853 Ahmad Bey radically reduced military to avoid bankruptcy 1854 Ahmad Bey, at great expense, sent troops to join Ottomans and allies in Crimean War against Russia

1857 "Fundamental Charter" (*Ahd al-Aman*). Strong European reaction to summary execution of a Tunisian Jew obliged bey to issue a decree offering basic rights and promising a constitution.

1861 Tunisian Constitution (offering modest but innovative forms of representation and limitations on authoritarian rule)

1864 Revolt throughout much of Tunisia led by Ali bin Ghadhaham protesting increased taxation. Constitution suspended.

1867 State bankruptcy

1869 Anglo-French-Italian financial commission imposed on Tunisia

1873-1877 Reformist ministry of Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi achieved some progress but he was forced out by cabal of European consuls and favorites of the bey.

1881 Having received the green light from European powers earlier (Congress of Berlin) France seized on a pretext to invade Tunisia and impose Protectorate. (Treaty of Bardo)

1883 Convention of La Marsa extending and formalizing French Protectorate

**Questions:**

1. What does the institution of the *mahallat* tell us about the nature of Tunisian government in this period?
2. What strategies were used by the Tunisian government to withstand pressures from Europe and the Ottoman Empire?
3. What is the meaning of the assertion that Tunisia in these years was a part of the Ottoman system in the process of "Tunisifying"?

## The Protectorate Period 1881-1956

Although the formal structures of beylical government remained, France implemented what amounted to direct rule. The French Resident-General controlled the bey, the Tunisian ministers in the cabinet were outnumbered by French ministers and were, in any case, monitored by the French Secretary-General, and alongside each provincial governor was a French *contrôleur-civil*.

Tunisia under the Protectorate attracted many European settlers who came to account for almost 8% of the total population. The early years brought more Italian than French settlers, and it was only in the late 1920s that the French settler population outnumbered the Italian (and then only because many Italians acquired French citizenship). Settlers perforce intensify the colonial experience anywhere. They obtain land and create small family farms or large agribusiness holdings. They open businesses. They demand schooling, housing, medical care, and -- all in all -- a standard of living such as exists in the *metropole*. And as citizens of the *metropole* they have political clout to influence policy. In Tunisia the existence of a large settler population did help to produce economic development, a modern transportation and communications network, good schools and hospitals -- but available mainly to the settler society.

All Tunisians were strongly marked by the Protectorate period. For example, French came to be widely used even by semi-literate Tunisians, but the cultural impact was uneven. A tiny fraction of Tunisian society received a first-rate, French-style education, but at the end of the Protectorate only 26% of the primary school age children and a mere 3% of the secondary school age were in schools. Considerable modernization took place in agriculture, but the modernized sector was not labor-intensive. Thus, only a limited number of Tunisians were involved.

Tunisians responded to the Protectorate along lines similar to what their ancestors had done in the face of earlier invasions. Little resistance was offered to what was rightly seen as overwhelming force, and what little armed response occurred was confined to the remoter southern regions. "Pacification" (that colonial euphemism), a matter of decades in both Algeria and Morocco, was in Tunisia a matter of months.

Thereafter, late in the second decade of Protectorate rule a small group, dubbed the "Young Tunisians" began to campaign for a more liberal Protectorate policy. This small group, more a club than a party, was made up largely of younger members of the pre-Protectorate elite that had rallied around the reformist efforts of Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi. They created in 1896 the *Khalduniyya*, honoring Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), which served as a kind of adult education facility and debating society. In this, they received the



support of the French Resident-General, Jules Cambon, one of the finer examples of a Protectorate effort to win over the native society. Later, from 1907 to 1912 the Young Tunisians presented their ideas in the newspaper *Le Tunisien* (n.b. in French, not Arabic, but an Arabic edition was begun in 1909). The Young Tunisians were at most only proto-nationalists. Favoring the adoption of French language ("instruct in French, teach the Arabic language" one Young Tunisian proclaimed) and methods they challenged the Protectorate authorities to honor their commitment to modernize Tunisia while exhorting their fellow Tunisians to break out of the "intellectual torpor".

The Young Tunisian organization was suppressed by the Protectorate authorities in 1912, and it was only after the First World War that the next Tunisian political movement emerged. This was the Destour, Tunisia's first nationalist party seeking a mass following. Leading the party was Abd al-Aziz al-Tha`albi who had been editor of the Arabic edition of *Le Tunisien*. The clarion call for this new movement was a short pamphlet he wrote published in 1919, *La Tunisie Martyre*. The book took the position that Tunisia was already fit for self-government and had been well embarked on appropriate modernization before being interrupted by the French Protectorate. That the party, organized in March 1920, adopted the name, Destour (more correctly, Dustur, Arabic for constitution) evoked the earlier short-lived Tunisian constitution 1861-1864 which was, indeed, the first written constitution in the Arab world or the Middle East.

Within a few years the Protectorate authorities estimated that the Destour Party had some 45,000 registered members organized in about 60 branches throughout the country. It was an impressive organizational feat, but the Destour remained rather tame, declining to identify with an abortive Tunisian effort in trade unionism in the 1920s, eschewing actions that might spark violence and repression, staying safely within the scope of petition and protest while offering conservative socio-economic positions. The party reflected the traditional values and interests of the *baldiyya* (the bourgeoisie).

Beginning in the late 1920s a group of provincials, especially from the *Sahil*, under the leadership of Habib Bourguiba (1902?-2000) began to challenge the Destour, and by 1934 they had created a break-away party that came to be called the Neo-Destour. Significantly the organizing meeting was not in Tunis but in the small village of Qasr Hillal in the *Sahil*. Theirs was a much more populist vision. They spoke out against the deplorable position of the Tunisian peasantry made even worse by the Great Depression. They supported the more successful effort at trade union organization in the 1930s. And they took risks in confronting the French Protectorate. Bourguiba himself spent eight years off and on in French jails from the 1930s to the 1950s. By the late 1930s the Neo-Destour had emerged as the strongest nationalist party.

Yet, Bourguiba (and here, as often, it is proper to let the man represent the movement) avoided the "all or nothing" tactical trap adopted by many radical colonial nationalist movements. He was willing to move in stages, and early on he worked to win over French opinion by lauding French values and insisting that the Protectorate authorities, the *preponderants*, were out of step with French interests.

Most surprisingly, even after the defeat of France in World War II and well before it looked like the Allies would defeat the Axis Bourguiba from his jail in France smuggled out instructions to party leaders predicting an Allied victory and demanding cooperation with France and the Allies ("Our support of the

Allies must be unconditional"). This was in August 1942.

It would be another 14 years before Tunisia attained independence. Those years witnessed a number of developments. After the Allied forces had ousted the Axis from North Africa ("Operation Torch", November 1942 to May 1943) the French authorities forced the abdication of Moncef Bey, making him the martyred hero. Had he lived he might have been able to lead Tunisia to independence, thereby reducing -- but not eliminating -- the Neo-Destour dominance, but he died in exile in 1948. Bourguiba in the years after 1943 sought support from the British and, even more, the Americans and for a time in 1945 and after looked for help from the newly formed Arab League. The U.S., however, while nudging the French toward reforms was reluctant to play a major role, and Bourguiba found even less help from the Arabs of the East caught up in their own problems and the looming crisis and war over Palestine.

The denouement leading to independence revealed again the Bourguibist capacity to proceed in stages. From 1954 to 1956 independence was achieved through various devices evoking such terms as "autonomy" and "interdependence". The French strategy after 1954 (when the Algerian revolt began) of scaling down other colonist commitments in order to concentrate on Algeria also aided Tunisia as well as Morocco. Algerians and certain of the more radical nationalists in Morocco and Tunisia championed a strategy of a unified Maghribi resistance until all three countries obtained independence. Bourguiba's Tunisia, as well as Morocco, opted to take the independence offered and then pressure France to move toward independence in Algeria. This decision occasioned the break between Bourguiba and his until then principal lieutenant, Salah bin Yusuf. The latter tried to organize armed resistance in the South and thereafter escaped to Egypt where he and his policy received Nasser's support.

Independence in 1956 was not complete. The issues of the large French landholdings and, even more, the continued existence of French troops in Tunisia as well as a major French base in Bizerte would not be worked out until several years later.

## Principal Dates:

1896 Founding of the *Khalduniyya* and beginning of the Young Tunisians proto-nationalist movement

1907-1912 Young Tunisian newspaper *Le Tunisien*

1912 Suppression of Young Tunisian movement

1919 *La Tunisie Martyre* by al-Tha`alabi and Ahmed Sakka

1920 Founding of the Destour Party

1934 Founding of breakaway Neo-Destour Party in Qasr Hillal

1938 Major Neo-Destour-led riots against Protectorate. Bourguiba again jailed.

1940 Vichy French rule in Tunisia following Nazi defeat of France.

1942-1943 American and British troops landed in Morocco and Algeria (Nov) & advanced eastward toward Tunisia. British 8th Army, following victories against Rommel's Desert Korps at El Alamein move westward from Egypt. Surrender of Axis at Cap Bon, Tunisia in May 1943.

1942 Following Anglo-American landings in North Africa in November, Axis occupied all of France (and Tunisia) and released Bourguiba and colleagues from French jail.

1943 Jan-April Bourguiba in Rome. Eluded Italian attempts enlist his support. Returned to Tunisia in April.

1943 May 14 Newly installed Free French administration deposed Moncef Bey.

1944-1945 Ferhat Hached organized *Union Generale des Travailleurs Tunisiens*(UGTT). Nationalist and anti-communist, the UGTT later worked closely with AFL-CIO (especially American union leader, Irving Brown) in organizing the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

1944-1948 Fleeing possible re-arrest Bourguiba left for Egypt, returning in September 1948.

1952 Jan: Bourguiba arrested again. Dec: French vigilante extremists assassinate Ferhat Hached.

1954 May: French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Indochina. July: Mendes-France governments offers Tunisia autonomy. Nov: beginning Algerian war.

1955 May: Franco-Tunisian agreement on autonomy. June: Triumphant return of Bourguiba from exile. Oct: Salah bin Youssef, opposing autonomy accord, expelled from Neo-Destour.

1956 Following earlier French agreement independence for Morocco France granted same to Tunisia. 20 March: Tunisian independence.

## Questions:

1. Tunisia, like the other North African states -- Algeria, Libya and Morocco, experienced intensive settler colonization. What was their impact?
2. Did the existence of settlers make decolonization easier or more difficult?
3. What distinguished the Neo-Destour from the Old Destour?

## Tunisia since Independence

**Domestic Policies:** The newly independent Tunisian government lost no time in implementing measures that might well be compared in their modernizing boldness to the earlier program of Ataturk's Turkey in the 1920s. A law was passed offering a broad spectrum of rights to women. Polygamy was abolished and divorce was to be regulated by the courts eliminating the man's arbitrary ability to divorce his wife. Moreover, the separate personal status courts presided over by qadis chosen from the ranks of the ulama were merged into a unified judicial system. The venerable religious seminary, Zitouna, and its many feeder secondary religious schools were incorporated into an equally unified national school system. All this clipped the wings of the ulama, viewed by Bourguiba as the spokesmen of a traditionalism that would derail efforts to create a modern state and society.

In the same vein Bourguiba, who had in the early 1930s championed wearing the female veil and the male chechia (or shashia, the distinctive Tunisian soft fez) as symbolizing authentic Tunisian culture, advocated modern dress after independence. Even more challengingly Bourguiba sought to wean Tunisians away from fasting during the Muslim month of Ramadan. Since fasting during daylight hours followed by feasting and celebrating throughout the night reduced productivity for a full lunar month, Bourguiba advanced the ingenious argument that Islamic law excused those engaged in *jihad* (holy war) from fasting and Tunisians, fighting a *jihad* against underdevelopment, were thereby exempt and should put in a full day's work. Fasting during Ramadan, however, proved to be too deeply embedded in the Tunisian's religious and cultural identity. Even Bourguiba's most progressive followers resisted. Bourguiba, ever the realist, backed down.

Impressive steps were taken in education, both qualitatively and quantitatively. A plan was adopted to attain universal primary education within 10 years with an equal push for expanding secondary and higher education. Fully one-quarter of the Tunisian national budget was devoted to education, and it was to be a modern education modelled on that of the French. Independent Tunisia also opted for a de facto bilingualism. The language of instruction in the primary years amounted to a seven to six ratio of Arabic to French, and in the secondary education roughly two-thirds of the instruction was in French. The leadership's drive to modernize, to avoid a lapse into traditionalism, was so strong that not only was Zitouna schooling merged into the unified national system but at a time of acute teacher shortage over 800 Zitouna-trained teachers were released as sub-standard.

A works project somewhat akin to the WPA of America's New Deal days was undertaken, financed in part by US aid. Also, the early post-independence years brought the dissolution of Tunisia's *habous* (the usual term in the Maghrib for *waqf*-- a religiously sanctioned system of mortmain placing the endowed property beyond the hands of either the state or individuals). A *habous* could be public or private. The former was designated for a public charitable purpose (e.g. creation or upkeep of a school, mosque or hospital). Proceeds of the latter went to the founder's heirs, thereby circumventing the fissiparous Islamic inheritance laws. The private *habous* reverted to a public purpose only when all beneficiaries died, and since inheritance could pass on from generation to generation this reversion might well be deferred indefinitely. A case can be made for the institution of *habous* serving the public interest (witness the role

of tax-exempt charitable foundations in the US), but the reality in Tunisia was that *habous* properties were poorly exploited. Their being returned to state control or private ownership did offer an economic incentive.

The abolition of the *habous*, like most of the other projects set afoot soon after 1956 all fit into the clear pattern of implementing party and state control over Tunisian society. In addition to their developmental impact these many radical reforms checked forces in the larger society that might sooner or later pose a challenge to the Bourguibist program. Thus, just as the secularizing nationalization and the unified judicial system undercut the social standing and prestigious job opportunities for the ulama the abolition of the *habous* hit not only the ulama (often earning fees as administrators of *habous* properties) but the middle and upper-class Tunisians who were more likely to seek such shelters.

Even more draconian was the *Haute Cour* that brought to trial not only the followers of Salah bin Yusuf but others who could be branded as having been collaborators during the Protectorate period. Established as early as April 1956 the *Haute Cour* continued in existence until October 1959. Its harsh revolutionary justice (but mild by 20th c. global standards - some 16 executions and several times that number of long prison sentences) might be justified against the Yusufists who were openly at war against the Tunisian government. Less excusable, however, was the deliberate design to humiliate and impoverish those whose major crime was not having toed the Neo-Destour line in the years leading up to the independence. Those so charged and sentenced included three former Tunisian prime ministers serving during the Protectorate years. In any case, the *Haute Cour* did serve to eliminate or cow opponents, present or potential, to the new Bourguibist regime.

Authoritarian centralization was also demonstrated in the tight control that came to be exercised over the several different organizations of youth, students, women, farmers, merchants and the trade unions (UGTT). The latter had the most potential to maintain some autonomy, having achieved considerable organization strength under the leadership of Ferhat Hached. Had he lived he might have been able to withstand Bourguiba's effort to control the UGTT. His successors had no such luck, although they put up more of fight than did the other different organizations brought under the broad umbrella of the Neo-Destour. Such centralizing control did not require all that much pressure or intimidation. Most of these several different groupings of Tunisian society had been created by Neo-Destourians. Their leaders as well as the rank-and-file were ardent supporters of the party and the Bourguibist program.

In this atmosphere the abolition of the beylicate in 1957 and the establishment of what amounted to a "presidential monarchy" was an easy step. Bourguiba moved from being prime minister to become president. The prime minister and the other members of his cabinet were from the beginning essentially subordinate to President Bourguiba, not answerable to the National Assembly. The years 1958-1959 also brought party reorganization that facilitated greater control from the top.

Independent Tunisia did not at first apply centralized control over the economy. This came only in the 1960s and is associated with Ahmad Bin Salah whose rollercoaster political career exemplified Bourguiba's method of defeating would-be rivals but then bringing back into power as chastened subordinates. Bin Salah, as secretary-general of the UGTT in 1956, had sought a more independent line

but Bourguiba handily managed to force him out. Thereafter, deemed broken, Bin Salah was brought back into power as Minister of Health. Then, in 1961 he was appointed Minister of Planning, a newly created position. Bourguiba had been won over to Bin Salah's radical notion of creating a centrally-planned Tunisian economy. Bin Salah seized upon the opportunity offered by the 1964 nationalization of the remaining French-owned agricultural lands to push through a scheme of state-controlled agricultural cooperatives. By the end of the 1960s these cooperatives accounted for about one-third of Tunisia's cultivable land and also one-third of its rural population. Never popular, however, the *dirigiste* venture into agriculture confronted further setbacks brought by a venerable Tunisian phenomenon -- bad weather which produced poor harvests from 1964 to 1968. Ben Salah persisted, even planning to move toward eventual state control over all cultivable lands, but mounting discontent proved overwhelming. The ministry backed down in 1969 and even allowed farmers to opt out of the cooperatives which almost all of them immediately did. Bin Salah was dismissed from office in September 1969, later brought to trial and imprisoned. He escaped prison in 1973 and went into exile.

Hedi Nouira, appointed prime minister in 1970 and serving for a full decade until incapacitated by a stroke in early 1980, brought in a more liberal economic policy. He was succeeded by Muhammad Mzali who served until dismissed in July 1986. Later in September Mzali, fearing a reprise of the Bin Salah affair, fled the country. Bourguiba's shuffling of posts thereafter continued erratically. Less than a year later in May 1987 Bourguiba replaced Mzali's successor, Rachid Sfar, and chose as prime minister Zayn al Abdin Bin Ali who also was the first person of military background to hold this top position. Only four months later, just when it seemed that Bourguiba would dismiss Ben Ali, the latter struck first. In a bloodless coup Bourguiba was declared incompetent to rule. Bourguiba lived on under mild house arrest in his native Monastir until his death on April 6, 2000.

The long reign of Bourguiba was terminated not so much because of poor economic performance. Although there were ups and downs and a few serious riots against the regime (especially in January 1984) Tunisia's economic performance over the long period compares not unfavorably with that of other developing states.

In the last few years of Bourguiba's tenure a few tentative steps away from single party domination were taken, but they proved to be largely window-dressing. More significant was Bourguiba's adamant stand against the small but growing body of Islamists. The Islamist party, for example, was denied the legal status granted several other parties in the early 1980s. The confrontation with Islamists reached a climax in 1987 which brought the breaking of relations with Iran (accused of supporting an Islamist coup against the Tunisian government), Islamist demonstrations and attacks at several sites, and then a trial of 90 Islamists. When the judgments against those accused were handed down in September Bourguiba deemed them too mild (he apparently sought several executions) and was planning for retrials when he was removed from power by the Bin Ali coup of 7 November. Although many observers believe that the Islamists were not a threat and could have been coopted, there is evidence to suggest that by 1987 at least some of the Islamists were planning a coup. The relations between government and Islamists in Tunisia bears comparison with developments in Turkey -- both secularizing regimes whose leaders, Bourguiba and Ataturk, opposed all Islamist tendencies.

Bourguiba had ruled too long, and his radical modernizing program which commanded considerable support in the early post-independence period gradually lost its luster. The man who aspired to make Tunisia a progressive, secular state and Tunisians active citizens, not passive subjects, was clearly better at preaching the message and imposing change by fiat than fostering the institutional development necessary for a functioning democracy. Elected president for life in 1974, Bourguiba became as autocratic as any bey had been. Behind the veneer of a mass party plus the organizations of students, farmers, businessmen, workers, women and many others was a patrimonial ruler who would make or break subordinates at will. And just as with the earlier beylicate an official losing favor might well face fines and imprisonment. Or, fearing worse, he might choose exile.

Bin Ali began his tenure promising moves toward multi-party democracy and liberalization. Over the next few months after November 1987 hundreds of political prisoners were released, including the Islamist leader Rachid Ghanouchi. Steps thereafter were again taken toward a multi-party system, and a small quota of seats in local and national assemblies was reserved for the opposition parties which did not fare well in elections still dominated by the highly organized governing party. Still, the Islamists were kept at bay. Their party *Al-Nahda* (renaissance), which replaced the *Mouvement de Tendance Islamique* (MTI), founded in the early 1970s, was not granted official status.

The governing party received a new name. The Neo-Destour that had become *Parti Socialiste Destourien* (PSD) in 1964 during the heyday of Ahmad Bin Salah was renamed in 1988 the *Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique* (RCD).

Most of those high officials closely linked to Bourguiba were dropped, and a new leadership emerged made up of technicians and those close to Bin Ali. Steps were taken to prevent another long hold on power such as Bourguiba had achieved. The title of president for life was abolished, and the maximum age for a president was set at 70. A president could be reelected for no more than two additional five year terms. Bin Ali regularized his presidency first in the 1989 election. His two reelections stipulated by the constitution have now taken place in 1994 and 1999 (with over 99% of the vote each time). Now, moves may be afoot to modify the constitution permitting an extension of Bin Ali's rule.

Bin Ali soon developed a very Bourguibist approach to wielding power. The structures of a functioning democracy were in place with assemblies, elections, courts, political parties and many professional organizations, but after the good beginning of releasing so many political prisoners Bin Ali reverted to a pattern of arbitrary arrests. The Islamists were especially targeted, and their leader Ghanouchi who in 1988 had issued the optimistic declaration that the era of injustice was over prudently chose voluntary exile the following year. Secular leaders and human rights advocates were also harassed or arrested, and outsider reports by Amnesty International, among others, present a somber picture. By the early 1990s the number of political prisoners (perhaps as many as 10,000) released by Bin Ali soon after November 1987 was probably matched by almost that number again in jails and often undergoing torture. Even in the late 1990s, after some improvements in response to outside pressures (e.g. the European Union and the US), Amnesty International claimed that Tunisia held at least 1,000 political prisoners.

The Tunisian government's response to its critics is that Tunisia is taking the realistic steps necessary to

stifle disruptive and even terrorist challenges from Islamists, is making steady progress toward greater democracy, and achieving good results in both economic development and social justice. The economic performance overall during the Bin Ali years, with modest steps toward privatization, has been impressive. Many years since 1987 have brought increases in gross domestic product (GDP) of five, six and even seven percent, and the years of lower growth stemmed largely from events beyond the control of the planners, especially that venerable blight affecting all North Africa - a fickle weather that brings sharp declines in agricultural productivity. Unemployment is high -- an estimated 15% of the economically active population, but no more than in many developing countries.

Thus, any evaluation of whether the government is stable and perhaps even popular with the majority of Tunisians must weigh a relatively good economic picture and high participation in local and national elections against the negative factors of Islamist agitation, student protests and the harassment of the regime's critics.

### **Questions and Issues:**

1. Can Bourguiba rightly be dubbed the Tunisian Ataturk?
2. Has Ben Ali merely brought Bourguibism with a new face?
3. Who are the Tunisian opposition forces? Are they united? Are they a threat to the regime?
4. Sketch the different economic policies adopted since independence and evaluate their results.

### **Foreign Policy since 1956:**

Tunisia in 1956 confronted foreign policy challenges not all that different from those facing the Tunisia of past centuries. Tunisia was, as in the past, a small state surrounded by more powerful states. And certain of the states looming large in Tunisia's foreign policy calculations were old familiars. This included France and Tunisia's immediate land neighbors, Algeria and to a lesser extent Libya. The Ottoman Empire was no more but the pressures for regional and religio-cultural loyalty now took the form of Nasserist pan-Arabism. The major new player in Tunisia's international relations game was the U.S.

Independence for Tunisia, and Morocco, was accelerated because France sought to concentrate on the revolution in Algeria (launched the last day of October 1954). The Algerian nationalists (FLN), who would face eight years of war 1954-1962), had wanted a united Maghribi front against France. So, too, had Tunisia's Salah bin Yusuf who had split with Bourguiba and the Neo-Destour on this very issue, rallied an armed resistance in the South, and when that failed fled to Cairo. Thus, Tunisia faced the prospect of regional neighbors who might at least seek to impose changes in Tunisian foreign policy and at most threaten the regime itself. This situation only increased with Algerian independence in 1962 and the advent of Qaddafi's pan-Arabist regime in Libya in 1969. Indeed, the assassination of Salah bin Yusuf



in August 1961, made feasible by a brief period of detente between Bourguiba and Nasser (following the July Bizerte crisis pitting Tunisia against France) was deemed necessary lest, as one Tunisian official starkly put it, "we see Salah bin Yusuf returning to Tunisia in an Algerian tank."

Bourguiba's regime thus sought to demonstrate that an independent Tunisia was better positioned to support the Algerian struggle for independence, and this required diplomatic pressure on France. Tunisia, however, could not afford to alienate the former colonial power. France was needed as a potential counter to Nasserist and other regional forces. Moreover, Tunisia still had to negotiate such issues as continued French forces in Tunisia, the naval base at Bizerte and the status of the agricultural lands owned by French *colons*. And Tunisia relied heavily on French foreign aid and technical support (e.g. some 20,000 French teachers) in those early years, for unless independence could bring in its wake a certain level of improvement the siren song of Nasserist or Yusufist radicalism might well attract significant numbers of Tunisians. The several crises noted in the chronology (Sakiet Sidi Yusuf, Bizerte, etc.) reveal the Bourguibist step-by-step tactics and his occasional miscalculations (as at Bizerte in 1961).

Bourguiba's Tunisia also sought close relations with the United States as well as other Western states. This was a natural extension of the Neo-Destourian tactic since 1940s of seeking to enlist US support in the decolonization campaign. All three parties, France, Tunisia and the US, were caught up in a complex diplomacy: Tunisia solicited American support as a buffer against pressure from France even while working to maintain good relations with France. France was concerned to protect its preeminent position in Tunisia against real or perceived incursion by the US. The US, consistent with its overall policy of insuring that decolonized states of the area would remain within the Western camp, sought to strengthen Tunisia while assuring France that it did not seek to challenge France's position in Tunisia and the Maghrib, even though the overall balance of forces in the area necessarily entailed a decline of French influence. All this took place during the first six years of Tunisian independence in the context of the continuing war in Algeria, the 1956 Suez crisis, and the heyday of both Nasserist and Soviet influence in the area.

Tunisia's pro-Western orientation made for rocky relations with Nasser's Egypt. Tunisia broke relations with Egypt in 1958, claiming to have uncovered a Nasserist plot to assassinate Bourguiba and overthrow the government. Relations were restored after the Bizerte crisis, but another break in relations followed Bourguiba's rash venture into Arab politics concerning the problem of Palestine. In a March 1965 speech given before Palestinian refugees in Jericho Bourguiba claimed that the Arabs should accept the UN 1947 partition resolution and proceed from there in Bourguibist step-by-step fashion to attain the best possible terms for the Palestinians. This created a firestorm throughout the Arab world. Although it is claimed that Bourguiba had received Nasser's support for such a proposal in Cairo before proceeding the Jericho, Nasser was quick to take the lead in repudiating Bourguiba.

Diplomatic relations with Egypt were restored at the time of the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and since Nasserism never recovered from that crushing defeat the old Egyptian-Tunisian tension was removed. By the time Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, signed a peace treaty with Israel (March 1979) the Arab world in its boycott of Egypt decided to move the headquarters of the Arab League from Cairo to Tunis. Tunisia since has become much more in step with the Arab world. Later, Tunis become the headquarters

of the PLO after it was forced from Lebanon following the 1982 Israeli invasion.

Egypt and the Arab East are, in any case, physically at some distance from Tunisia, and although swaying of public opinion or organizing coups can come from afar more tangible foreign policy challenges come from immediate neighbors. Both Algeria and Libya have been charged with organizing coup attempts against Tunisia, in 1963 and 1980 respectively. Tunisia's relations with Morocco can be seen in part as a balancing against pressures from Algeria. Or, on the other hand, when Morocco agreed in 1984 to union with Libya (never implemented and cancelled by Morocco two year later) Tunisia quickly lined up with Algeria and others to counter the move.

Tunisia had its own brief and abortive flirtation with Libya when Bourguiba, surprisingly, had agreed to a merger with Libya in January 1974. The deal, arranged by Tunisian Foreign Minister Muhammad Masmudi while the prime minister, Hedi Nouira, was out of the country was dismantled upon the latter's return. This set in motion a period of tense relations between the two countries that peaked in the 1980 incident.

Bourguiba's sudden acceptance of union with Libya, often explained as a deviation due to his poor physical and psychic health at the time, does, however, illuminate another theme. Bourguiba desired a role larger than Tunisia's resources permitted. This explains his earlier proposal for a bloc of Francophone African states or his ill-fated 1965 venture into the Palestine problem. And the Tunisia of Bourguiba did achieve a certain cachet (usually quite positive in the West, usually negative in the Arab world) that began to dissolve during the last years of the aging, ill and perhaps senile Bourguiba.

A dramatic foreign policy position taken by Tunisia under Bin Ali was Tunisian disapproval of the US-led actions taken in 1990-1991 to expel Iraq from Kuwait. This stance was popular with the Tunisian public that strongly supported Iraq. As a result, the US cancelled military aid to Tunisia and reduced economic aid from \$12.5 million to a mere \$3 million, and Kuwaiti investments in Tunisia ceased. In the following years Tunisia worked to re-establish damaged relations with Kuwait and the several other Arab states that had supported the actions against Iraq, with some success.

Throughout the Bin Ali years the regime's harsh repression of the Islamists and equally the few liberal critics become a foreign policy issue with human rights organizations and Western governments criticizing these actions. At the same time, however, Tunisia has been able to move forward in its economic ties with Europe. An agreement signed with the European Union in July 1995 provided for a 12 year transition period leading to Tunisia's integration into the European economic area as regards industrial goods with future negotiations planned to cover the agricultural and service sectors. This agreement came into effect in March 1998.

### **Principal Dates:**

1956 March: Independence

1956 Personal Status Code

1956-1959 Period of the *Haut Cour*

1957 Abolition of the beylicate. Tunisia becomes Republic.

1958 Tunisia breaks relations with Egypt

1958 French bomb Tunisian village Sakiet Sidi Yusuf. Anglo-American mediation overtaken by developments in France bringing De Gaulle to power

1961 July: French troops attack Tunisians at Bizerte

1961-1969 Period of Ahmad bin Salah's centralizing socialist efforts

1963 Algeria coup against Tunisia alleged

1965 March: Bourguiba's Jericho speech sparks fierce Arab reaction

1967 Jun: Six Day Arab-Israeli war

1974 Jan: Libyan-Tunisian merger agreement, soon abandoned

1974 Bourguiba designated president for life

1978 General strike severely repressed

1979 March: Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Headquarters of Arab League moved from Cairo to Tunis

1980 Jan: Libya coup against Tunisia alleged. Tunisians trained in Libya attack Gafsa

1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon ousting PLO which moved its headquarters to Tunis

1984 bread riots

1987 7 Nov: Bin Ali replaces Bourguiba in bloodless coup

1988 Socialist Destour Party becomes *Rassemblement constitutionnel democratique*(RCD)

1989 Tunisia joins Algeria, Libya, Mauritania and Morocco to form the Arab Maghrib Union (UMA).

1990-1991 Tunisia opposes U.S. led effort to expel Iraq from Kuwait

1995 Tunisian economic agreement with European Union

2000 6 April Bourguiba dies and is buried in Monastir

### **Questions and Issues:**

1. How have Tunisia's relations with the Arab states of the Mashriq changed since independence?
2. Does Tunisian foreign policy demonstrate a considerable continuity over time not just since independence but since the 18th Century if not even before?
3. Tunisia since independence has been generally well-regarded in the West, less so in the Middle East. Why? Is that image of Tunisia changing and, if so, why?

### **Governmental and Political Institutions:**

Tunisia's formal structures, as set out in the 1959 constitution with subsequent amendments, are those of a representative democracy -- a president presiding over the executive branch, a single chamber legislature, and an independent judiciary.

The reality, however, can at best be called a "guided democracy" in which a strong president, who also controls the monopoly political party, provides top-down governance. The president and the 182 members of chamber of deputies are elected by universal suffrage for five year terms. The president may be re-elected for two additional terms for a total of 15 years. Thus, Ben Ali must either step down in 2004 or push through a constitutional amendment permitting him to gain another term or more. In the last presidential election (1999), the first to have more than a single candidate, Ben Ali won a whopping 99.44% of the vote with the meagre remainder divided between two other contenders.

The president appoints the prime minister and the cabinet, the senior civil and military officials, including the judges, and the governors of the 23 regions. He has the power to dissolve parliament, propose legislation and legislate by decree when the parliament is not in session.

A constitutional provision specifies that the prime minister is responsible to parliament, but in practice both he and his fellow cabinet ministers, many of whom are technicians, are appointed and dismissed by the president.

The steps Ben Ali took after ousting Bourguiba in 1987 to make the governing system more democratic have had slight impact. Another effort to permit a multi-party system (as had been started in the early 1980s) was made, but the only significant opposition, the Islamists, remained expressly barred. The

ruling party, now renamed the *Rassemblement constitutionnel democratique*(RCD), has continued to dominate in all subsequent elections. The six small parties granted legal status under the new dispensation never managed to win all together as much as 10% of the total vote. No opposition candidate has won a seat outright, and these small parties have slight representation in parliament only because legislation has been passed setting aside 34 seats to be distributed among them. All 148 contested seats were won handily by RCD candidates. RCD dominance at the local level is equally secure. In the May 1995 municipal elections opposition candidates managed to win only six of the 4,090 seats cumulatively available and fared only slightly better in 2000 -- 243 of 4,128. The RCD controls all municipalities.

The RCD boasts almost seven decades of institutional history since it was formed in 1934 as a break-away party from the older Destour. As the Neo-Destour from that date until 1964 when it became the Socialist Destour Party (PSD) in 1964 and since 1988 the RCD this party has been a dominant force in Tunisian political and social life. It remains very much a mass party with a membership estimated at between 1.8 and 2 million divided into 7,800 cells which may be either territorial or professional. The last general congress of the party in 1998 (a party congress is usually held every five years) had over 2,000 delegates of whom 20% were women. Moreover, the party has established a loosely implemented series of quotas to facilitate membership of women and youth. Three out of five party members have entered the RCD since 1987.

What might be called the parliament of the party is the Central Committee with 89 members and the executive is its eight member *Bureau politique*. This party organization, in fact, mirrors that of the government in its "top-down" orientation. The central committee and the *bureau politique* are chosen subject to the approval of Ben Ali who is both president of the party and the Republic. The corporatist intertwining of party, government and professional organizations is well revealed in the central committee membership which includes, in addition to the president and the prime minister, all RCD cabinet members (excluding the two non-RCD cabinet ministers), other top government officials and the heads of the several different professional organizations such as the *Union nationale des femmes tunisiennes*.

Tunisia has avoided the burden taken on by the Middle Eastern countries of heavy military expenditures and equally heavy military involvement in politics. Its military expenditures have ranged between 3.6% (1985) and a low 2% (1995) of GNP and its armed forces total a modest 35,000 of whom 23,400 are conscripts. This amounts to 3.7 soldiers per 1,000 population, the lowest ratio in the Maghrib and much lower than in most Middle Eastern states (e.g. Egypt 7, Iran 8.8, Jordan 21.5 and Israel 29.2 per 1,000 respectively). The Tunisian official policy calls for conscription for all 20 year old males for one year of military service, but this can be avoided readily by pleading education, health or family concerns. Bin Ali, as noted, was the first military officer to play a leading role in politics.

Such a small military establishment can not be expected to do more than hold out for a limited time against any potential outside threat until other powers supportive of Tunisia can act. Domestic security forces, on the other hand, are numerous: 12,000 in the National Guard, a force directly responsible to the Minister of Interior, and 13,000 police. This amounts to one police officer for every 380 inhabitants

(compared to one for every 840 in Algeria and Morocco, 580 in Egypt and 318 in the US.)

### **Economic and Social Indicators:**

Governmental and political institutional rigidity over the years since 1956 can, however, be contrasted with considerable change in the Tunisian economy and society. The economy, where once agriculture predominated and phosphates were the largest export, has become more diversified. Today, an active population estimated at three million has:

25% in agriculture

33% in industry

40% in services

Of that total work force 800,000 (27%) are women. As with most developing countries unemployment is a problem. An official estimate puts unemployment at 15.4% of which half are under the age of 25. The actual rate is believed to be higher.

Agriculture now accounts for 25% of the working population but garners only 15% of the GNP. Most agricultural holdings are too small for economies of scale: 80% of the holding are under 20 hectares and only 3% are over 50. Olive cultivation, concentrated in the Sahil, continues to be important accounting for roughly one-third of the cultivated land. Tunisia ranks in most years as the world's fourth largest producer of olive oil.

Tunisia is also the world's fourth largest producer of phosphates, and for a brief time Tunisia has been able to profit from another natural resource -- oil, but only in a modest fashion when compared to neighboring Libya or the states of the Arabian peninsula. Oil was produced beginning in 1966 in the south and during most of the 1970s oil was the principal foreign currency earner, but none of these wells have been major strikes. It is estimated that Tunisian oil reserves may last only about another decade.

The most imposing change has been the rise of manufacturing which is now by far the major export item, especially textiles which in recent years have accounted for roughly one-third of total manufacturing and employs 280,000 workers.

These sector shifts got underway decades ago but received a major impetus following the economic crisis of the mid 1980s and the resulting efforts at moving toward a liberal, market-oriented economy (stimulated by pressures and inducements from outsiders, e.g the World Bank and the European Union). Involved in these plans have been efforts at privatization of state owned enterprises, but this has been slow. The public sector continues to employ 25% of the work force.

These moves toward a more diversified and developed economy have brought in their wake sharply

increased urbanization. Whereas in 1950 urbanites accounted for 25.9% of the total population they are now a sizeable 63%. Much of the change has taken place in the more "Mediterranean" north and east of Tunisia exacerbating the age-old problem of a less prosperous South.

As with all of the Maghrib (and Turkey) Tunisia has a considerable population living and working abroad -- some 610,000 of whom 450,000 (74%) are in Europe (350,000 or 57% in France) and 133,000 in other Arab countries (of which 97,000 in the Maghrib).

Another significant economic and social factor is tourism. Tunisia in the last five years has received annually a low of just over four million tourists to a high of almost five million. The tourist industry provides jobs for some 70,000 Tunisians and brings in as much as 16% of total foreign exchange earnings. Here, just as with manufacturing, the tourist sites are mainly those in the "Mediterranean" part of the country.

Education continues to rank high in governmental expenditure claiming 21% of the budget (6.1% of GNP). Almost universal primary school attendance has been achieved, and some 10% of the university age group are enrolled. Slightly more than 50% of those in higher education are women.

About 3% of Tunisia's GNP is devoted to health, and the decline in infant mortality offers a striking success story: From a tragic 132 infant deaths per 1000 births to 69 per 1000 by 1980 and down to 24 per 1000 in 1999. Tunisia has one doctor for every 1,280 inhabitants.

Tunisians are more mobile, healthier, wealthier, more urban and better educated than in the past. In comparative terms Tunisia ranks above the mean for all Arab states in all such indices (the low ranking of such states as Sudan, Yemen and even Egypt offsetting the higher rankings of the oil rich states), and falls in the middle of the "medium human development" states according the human development index produced by the UN Development Program (2000). Tunisia ranks quite high in estimates of recent developmental progress and in gender issues.

In sum, Tunisia gains a fairly high rating in basic social and economic indicators. As for democratization and advancement of human rights Tunisia presents a much less positive picture.

## **Conclusion: Tunisian Culture**

Here we return to the acronym MAMA with which we began. Tunisia has been a part of the Muslim world since the earliest days of Islam. Tunisians over the centuries have participated in the elaboration of Muslim culture, the mosque-university of Zitouna having played for centuries a role in the Maghrib equivalent to that of Egypt's al-Azhar throughout the Muslim world.

The Tunisian population is not only almost totally Arabic in speech and culture but has been for centuries. Even in the period of the Husaynid dynasty, nominally an Ottoman province, Arabic began to replace Ottoman Turkish as the language of government in the 19th Century. Ahmad Bey (r. 1837-1855),

for example, wrote to the Ottoman sultan in Arabic, pointing out that he wanted to be able to understand the message he was sending.

Yet, in today's Tunisia, in the fifth decade after independence, French is widely spoken, and many of the educated class (especially those born before independence) are likely to express their more serious thoughts and write their scholarly books in French. Tunisia's experience during the 75 years of French colonial rule was of an intensity that belies the usage "protectorate", and although much has faded since much remains. Add to this the many examples of Tunisia's orientation across the Mediterranean to Europe which remains physically and psychologically close. Tunisian emigrant workers go mainly to Europe returning with European ideas and artifacts. Europeans constitute the majority of tourists visiting Tunisia each year just as Europe accounts for most of Tunisia's foreign trade.

As for its African vocation the cultural evidence situates Tunisia within the larger region of the Maghrib, and the Maghrib while sharing much of the history and culture of the Mashriq, the Middle East, is distinctive. The spoken Arabic dialects of Tunisia and the rest of the Maghrib are to be distinguished from those of the Middle East. Architecturally, the Muslim mosques and public buildings carry on the Umayyad tradition as transferred to the Maghrib and Muslim Spain. The traditional Tunisian dress (now often superseded by Western modes) offers subtle differences, and in cuisine Tunisia shares with the Maghrib such dishes as cous-cous and tajin.

At the same time Tunisia's long history plus its striking linguistic, religious and cultural homogeneity make it very much an entity in its own right. Differences of class and region exist, but they are less than are to be found in most countries of the region. Moreover, these differences are largely worked out or fought out in the Tunisian context. The extremes of revolution and violent regime changes are less often to be found than in many other countries of the region, not just in past decades but in past centuries.

Tunisia's authorities like to boast that the majority of Tunisians are middle class, and that is presumed to be a source of stability and even a potential for democratic development. Such a high estimate cannot be accepted, but one interesting indicator merits mention: 78% of the Tunisian population own their own home.

Who are the opinion-molders and culture-bearers in today's Tunisia? Here is a mixed picture. From the earliest days of Bourguiba's long domination of political culture a relentless top-down informational program has accompanied political and social activity. This Bourguibist ideology obviously influenced Tunisians just as its moderation, good sense, absence of conspiratorial thinking, consistency of message to both friends and foes, and overall progressive pitch charmed outside observers. Bourguiba, like Ataturk, sought to be school teacher to the nation. For many years after 1956 Tunisian radio carried daily five minutes excerpts from Bourguiba's speeches addressing all manner of subjects, great and small, intended to guide Tunisians to modernity. A massive effort at the same time to write the history of Tunisian nationalism (which tended to become a hagiographical treatment of Habib Bourguiba) was also afoot.



In the first decades after independence this top-down informational program successfully matched the aspirations of many leaders in the arts and letters who also sought modernization in all its forms including a break with traditionalism, Western-style liberalism, women's liberation. Later, however, daily political life revealed increasing demands for political orthodoxy and Bourguiba's homilies paled, but the habit of controlling the message continued.

Tunisian radio and television are both government operated and controlled. The several French and Italian television programs that are retransmitted are occasionally stopped if they do not meet government approval. Tunisian national television is deadly dull, providing large doses of voice-over depictions of President Ben Ali addressing one or another gathering. Newspapers usually place a prudent governmental spin on their reporting. This makes it all the more important for the outside observer seeking to understand values and ideas to pay attention to those Islamists and others in exile, gauge the extent to which Tunisians follow European media or such interesting Arab media as the Al-Jazeera television in Qatar, and monitor the influence of the internet.

Beyond this, Tunisia today has a small movie industry, several well-regarded artists and writers, and a number of impressive historians and social scientists. A reasonably good effort to revive the traditional arts and crafts has been set in motion without lapsing into artificiality. The same holds for the traditional Tunisian (or Andalusian) music, but in both cases the strong commercial temptation to present kitsch to the tourist trade poses a threat.

That the Tunisian cultural effort continues to be split between French and Arabic may have a diluting effect, but on the other hand the exposure to those ideas from across the Mediterranean sparked some of the most exciting Tunisian intellectual effort starting as long ago as the modernizing political treatise of Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi written in 1867, and continuing with such works as the liberating break with older forms of Arabic poetry championed by Abu Qasim Chabbi (1909-1934, surely the modern Tunisian poet best known throughout the Arab world) or the existentialist play Al-Sudd (the Dam) written by Muhammad Messadi who also served as Tunisia's Minister of Education in the early years after independence.

## Questions:

1. The Tunisian Government would win applause and tangible support from Western governments if it could present a better human rights record. Why don't they work to that end? Do they truly see Islamists and the few other dissidents as a security threat? Are they haunted by the strife in neighboring Algeria since the late 1980s? Or does the legacy of top-down control still dominate their thinking as well as their actions?
2. Assuming the Tunisian ruling establishment is likely to consider only slow, staged moves toward democratization what kinds of steps might be acceptable?
3. How can an outsider most effectively evaluate public opinion and basic societal values in today's

Tunisia?

## Readings

A good self-study rule is to begin with the more general and interpretive sources, moving on from there to the detailed studies. A useful first step, accordingly, would be the country study on Tunisia by Kenneth Perkins.

Several general surveys include Tunisia within the context of the larger Maghrib. Two such histories of North Africa in the Islamic period are those by Charles-Andre Julien and Jamil Abun-Nasr. They are reliable chronological political histories, good to check facts but hardly the kind of book the non-specialist will read through.

More summary accounts, stronger on interpretation and with fewer details can be found in the books by Charles F. Gallagher and Richard B. Parker (who earlier served as US ambassador to Algeria and Morocco). Note also the strongly interpretative history of the Maghrib by the Moroccan Abdallah Laroui. Even more concise overviews are Gallagher's "A Note on the Maghrib" and the chapter by Michel Le Gall. Lisa Anderson has written a fine comparative study of state development in Tunisia and Libya in modern times (1830 to 1980). This is a book that should appeal to both historians and political scientists.

All these books, however, have been published more than a decade ago, some several decades ago, and cannot serve for the most recent times. Two more recent books also deserve mention. One, *Polity and Society in Contemporary North Africa* edited by I. William Zartman (several chapters in this work are cited below). Even more recent and confined to Tunisia is Emma Murphy's *Economic and Political Change in Tunisia*.

As for the basic data on contemporary Tunisia two good reference works updated and reissued each year are the Economic Intelligence Unit's *Tunisia Country Profile* (available on the web) and Europa Publications's *The Middle East and North Africa*. The year 2000 marked the 46th edition, and the editors have this reference work down pat -- Tunisia is covered in 49 small print, double-column pages, presenting a historical summary and especially detailed treatment of recent political and economic developments.

Nor should one overlook the utility of a good guide book. Two can be recommended -- the updated Baedeker and the Rough Guide. The pictures, the maps and the historical information keyed to each site covered should cause either of these books (preference to the Baedeker) to be dog-eared by the end of your tour of duty in Tunisia.

On Tunisia foreign policy see the interesting article by Mary-Jane Deeb on "Inter-Maghribi relations...", a splendid exposition of Maghribi-style balance of power diplomacy, and also the chapter by Deeb and Ellen Laipson. Nicole Grimaud's book covers the period from independence to 1995.

Mary-Jane Deeb also has a useful chapter on the Arab-Maghribi Union, and William Mark Habib treats Tunisia's relations with that other union, the EU.

For coverage of Tunisia's confrontation with the Islamists there is much to choose from including articles by Michael Collins Dunn, Abdelbaki Hermassi (two, one a general view of Islam in recent Maghrib history and the other specifically on Islamism in Tunisia), Henry Munson, and Susan Waltz. Mohamaed Elhachmi Hamdi's book offers an insider's view of Tunisian Islamists and also argues that the Islamists were preparing a coup in 1987 preempted by Bin Ali's ouster of Bourguiba.

A good study of that 1987 "constitutional coup" is Louis B. Ware's article. Ware offers in a second article one of the few studies of the role of the Tunisian military in politics.

Scholars of the Arab world given considerable attention to the issue of civil society, testing the theory that the existence of many thriving non-governmental organizations and associations facilitates democracy. Eva Bellin covers well the case of Tunisia, and in another article she treats relations between industrialists and the state in Tunisia.

As for the general pattern of politics and the role of the Neo-Destour/PSD/RCD the older study by Clement Henry Moore, *Tunisia since Independence* remains useful and can be updated by his later article on Maghribi political parties.

Not surprisingly, Bourguiba is the subject of several works. Two articles by Jean Lacouture, one in French and the other in English, provide a perceptive and highly favorable account, and I "revisited" Bourguiba in a recent article. A Tunisian team, Sophie Bessis and Souhayr Belhassen, offer a complete and more critical biography in two short volumes in French. Derek Hopwood has a biography in English. One interesting insider's view of Bourguiba is in the memoirs of Cecil Hourani.

On US-Tunisian relations in addition to the Gallagher and Parker books one can read the short essay by John Damis. The US became seriously involved in Tunisia only as late as during the Second World War. This early history can be recaptured in two solid articles in French by Juliette Bessis and Hassine Raouf Hamza. My essay on this subject, not yet published, is available in manuscript. It concentrates on the role of Hooker Doolittle, American consul-general in Tunis from 1941 to 1943. A street in Tunis is named for Doolittle, and the above three references will explain why.

This leads to the delicate Franco-American diplomacy concerning not only Tunisia but all of formerly French North Africa. A thorough treatment of this subject during the years 1943-1956, relying largely on available French public records, is the book by Annie Lacroix-Riz.

The above listing exceeds what even the most diligent student of Tunisia will find time to cover, and readers will necessarily be selective. What follows are a list of even more works on subject that may appear peripheral to immediate interests and needs but may, it is to be hoped, be just what some are seeking:

Two books on Carthage, one by B.H. Warmington and the other by David Soren et. al.

Susan Raven's *Rome in Africa* offers a readable survey of this subject.

The celebrated work of Tunisia's Ibn Khaldun is available in English translation by Franz Rosenthal but in three fat volumes. A one volume abridgement is more realistic, but even more economical of time and better presenting Ibn Khaldun's major ideas about Muslim politics and society is the short book of selections translated by Charles Issawi.

Lucette Valensi's engaging essays collected into a small book describe North Africa on the eve of modern times (including a good account of piracy).

*My Tunisia of Ahmad Bey* seeks to reconstruct Tunisian state and society as it existed in the middle years of the 19th century and to show the early Tunisian responses to Western threats and attractions. Lucette Valensi in her book, *Tunisian Peasants in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* offers a rich history-from-the-bottom-up account.

The Tunisian statesman, Khayr al-Din al-Tunisi, wrote in 1867 a political tract arguing the need for Westernization. He is rightly seen as precursor of the Young Tunisians and thereafter Bourguiba's Neo-Destour. This little work is available in English translation.

Henri de Montety (cited above p.4 for his theory of how being cultivators of olives shaped the upwardly mobile orientation of Sahilians) also wrote a stimulating article showing how the French Protectorate stimulated class mobility in his "Old Families and New Elites."

Tunisian architecture from Roman times (not enough remaining from the Carthaginian period) to the present is an attractive subject, and so, too, is the morphology of its cities throughout the ages. In Tunis, itself, the old madina offers one of the most attractive and best preserved examples of classical Islamic urbanism. Read on this general subject the chapters by Richard Ettinghausen and Hasan Fathy in my *From Madina to Metropolis* (and note the figure on p. 29 showing the juxtaposition of Western new and Islamic old in Tunis). Also beautifully done covering major cities but giving considerable attention to Tunis is the book by Andre Raymond. Those who would really wish to study Tunisian urbanism should contact Ms. Jamila Binous of the Society for the Preservation of the Madina and consult as well (even just studying the illustrations if the French text is too forbidding) the several studies of Tunisian architecture by Jacques Revault.

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# **TURKEY**

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this self-study guide is to provide basic background information on Turkey for persons being assigned there. The guide tries to present the information in a way that individuals can obtain a better understanding of the country and, as a result, have a more productive and pleasant tour of duty. You are encouraged to think about the questions raised at the end of each section and pursue those that interest you, drawing on resource materials at the end of the paper.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE**

The Republic of Turkey is situated in a near-rectangular peninsula that is bounded in the north by the Black Sea, in the west by the Aegean and in the south by the Mediterranean. A small part of the country's territory known as Thrace (Trakya) that encompasses 3 percent of Turkey's total territory and holds about 8 percent of its population lies in Europe. The main heartland of the country in the semiarid central plateau is called Anatolia (Anadolu). Observers have often depicted Turkey as a bridge between Europe and Asia due to its unique geography that straddles two continents. Turkey's total area, including lakes, is approximately 780, 576 square kilometers (302, 169 square miles) is greater than that of any European state. Turkey is two and a half times as big as Italy and about three times as big as the United Kingdom. Turkey is also one of the larger states of the Middle East, where its area is exceeded by only Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Egypt.

Thrace is separated from Turkey's mainland by two straits, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, and by the Sea of Marmara. Historically, the Turkish Straits have played an important geostrategic role: Tsarist Russia as well as the Soviet Union have sought to control them for access to their navies from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean while Britain and France, fighting against the Ottoman Empire, sought to force their navies through the Dardanelles in a failed attempt during the famous Gallipoli campaign in World War I. Much of Turkey's past and present importance stems from its strategic location as a land that, in addition to the straits and the maritime routes between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, also lies at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

At present, the Republic of Turkey has borders with eight neighboring countries in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. In the Balkans, Turkish borders with Greece and Bulgaria in Thrace extend to 206 kilometers and 240 kilometers, respectively. Neither boundary has been a subject for territorial disputes since the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. Turkey's neighbors in the Middle East include Syria, Iraq, and Iran. The 822 kilometers-long boundary with Syria--the longest among Turkish borders--has been a source of conflict between the two countries over the Alexandretta (Hatay) province on the Mediterranean. Syria has not formally accepted the transfer of the sovereignty of this province to Turkey by France in 1938 following a plebiscite. This issue remains a source of tension between the two neighboring states. In contrast, Turkey's 331 kilometers long boundary with Iraq has not been contested since its confirmation through the Ankara Treaty of 1926 between Britain and Turkey. The boundary between Iran and Turkey, which covers 500 kilometers, has remained unchanged since the Ottoman times. In the Caucasus, the demise of the former Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War has led to the emergence of three independent republics that border Turkey: Georgia (252 kilometers), Armenia (268 kilometers) and Azerbaijan (9 kilometers).

Turkey's highly complex geological structure was formed as a result of approximately 600 million years of earth movements and geomorphologic evolutions. The country possesses all types of geological formations of various eras. Turkey's topography is varied with high elevations, lofty mountains, plains, plateaus, and depressions. There are high mountain ranges that parallel the Black Sea in the north and the Mediterranean in

the south. The large plains in the central part of Anatolia separate these mountain ranges to the north and south of the country. The topography of Turkey displays significant regional variations. Western Turkey from the shores of the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara to the borders of central Anatolia includes some of the country's most fertile agricultural areas as well as several densely populated urban centers such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Bursa. Several of the so-called "Anatolian Tigers", cities such as Denizli that have grown and prospered largely through the development of textile industry in the 1990s, are also located in the Western region. In contrast, the Eastern region that stretches from the central heartland to the east and the southeast is marked with rugged mountains and mostly arid terrain that makes agriculture more difficult than in the West. Eastern Turkey is where the Euphrates (Firat) and the Tigris (Dicle) originate from: Both of these large rivers flow southward from Turkey and eventually join in Iraq before emptying into the Persian Gulf. Turkey's Black Sea region has high mountain ridges along the coast that separate the valleys in the interior from the Black Sea. The slopes of the mountains along the Black Sea coast also have dense forests. In the south, the Mediterranean region extends from the Taurus Mountains to the coastal area. The Mediterranean region has fertile soil and warm climate that makes it ideal for growing variety of citrus products. Additionally, its sandy beaches have made this region a booming area for tourism since the late 1980s.

Turkey is geologically located in the Alpine-Himalayan belt, which is one of the world's important seismic regions. Throughout history, Anatolia has witnessed numerous major earthquakes. In more recent times, the country has experienced several devastating earthquakes along major fault lines of tectonic weakness and earth movement. Beginning with the 1939 earthquake in the eastern city of Erzincan that claimed more than 20,000 lives, there have been seven major earthquakes along the fault line that stretches westward from eastern Anatolia. The latest of these took place in August 1999 around the industrial city of Izmit located on the Marmara Sea close to Istanbul. Officially, the number of fatalities from the Marmara earthquake was put at 18,000 but unofficial estimates went as high as 30,000. The magnitude of the earthquake (7.4 on the Richter scale) was also visible from the destruction of over 100,000 homes in and around the Izmit province. Due to its proximity to Istanbul and the westward direction of this particular fault line, the Marmara earthquake of 1999 has intensified the fears of many residents of Turkey's largest city about the possibility of a similar earthquake in the near future.

Turkey's climate is generally described as a dry, semi-continental variant of the Mediterranean type or alternatively as transitional between the Mediterranean and temperate continental regimes. The temperature conditions in winter become progressively colder towards the east where, at times, very intense cold is experienced. However, winters along the coastal areas and in the western regions of the country tend to be milder. In summer months, temperature differences tend to be less varied and, with the exception of the high mountains, most areas of Turkey experience hot weather conditions. In particular, the Mediterranean and the Aegean coastal regions experience hot and arid summers. In terms of rainfall, the wettest areas are the coastlands, especially the coastal mountain ranges along the Black Sea.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. Should Turkey geographically be considered an Asian or a European country?
2. How does Turkey's size compare with other countries in Europe and the Middle East?
3. What gives strategic importance to Turkish Straits?
4. Does Turkey have boundary disputes with any of its neighbors?
5. Why are most Turks concerned about a major earthquake in Istanbul in the near future?

### **HISTORY**

Since ancient times, the Anatolian peninsula has been host to numerous civilizations and empires. The Old Testament includes numerous references to Anatolia and its peoples, from the prophet Noah whose ark was said to have landed on Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey to Abraham who came from Edessa, which is the present-day city of Urfa in southeastern Turkey. Over the centuries, the land of the present-day Turkish Republic was inhabited by a variety of peoples belonging to different racial, ethnic, and religious communities. This long history of civilizations, states, and peoples makes Turkey a fascinating place for visitors who can see the remnants of Anatolia's rich historical legacy in numerous archeological sites and ruins that dot the country's landscape.



## ANCIENT ANATOLIAN WORLD

The oldest traces of human existence in Anatolia date back to the Stone Age, around 10,000 years ago. Archeological evidence from several sites in western and southeastern Turkey shows that by approximately 6,000 B.C. the evolution from hunting to settled communities that subsided on the cultivation of agricultural crops such as barley was completed. Catal Hoyuk, near the present city of Konya in central Anatolia, was one of the earliest urban settlements in the world with a population of approximately 5,000 inhabitants around 6250 B.C. Some of the major discoveries from the excavations at Catal Hoyuk are on display at the Archeological Museum in Ankara. Around 2500 B.C., with the discovery of copper, Anatolia entered the “Bronze Age” and became a principal supplier of metal for the military empires of Mesopotamia. During this period, a people known as the Hattians inhabited Anatolia whose name led the Egyptians to call Anatolia the Hattian land.

Towards the end of the third millennium B.C., Anatolia witnessed an invasion from the northeast. The invasion led to the destruction of existing communities and the rise of the Hittite kingdom as the dominant power. Speaking an Indo-European language who got their name because they were known as “kings of the Hattian land,” the Hittites distinguished themselves as warriors and merchants who managed to establish their control over Anatolia and northern Syria. The Archeological Museum in Ankara has an impressive collection from the Hittite period. The artifacts on display attest to the cultural accomplishments of the Hittites. After reaching the zenith of its power in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, the Hittite kingdom came to an end around 1200 B.C. when the Phrygians defeated the Hittites and destroyed their capital Hattusas (today known as Bogazkoy). From the destruction of the Hittite kingdom until the ninth century B.C., most of Anatolia was engulfed in turmoil and disorder. Order was restored when the Phrygians, who had a written script, based on the Phoenician alphabet and spoke an Indo-European language, established their capital in the city of Gordium near today’s Ankara and ruled most of central and western Anatolia during the ninth century B.C.

The Phrygians were surrounded by hostile neighbors in much the same way the Hittites had been. Their kingdom was overthrown by the Cimmerians in the seventh century B.C., and then absorbed by the Lydians who dominated Western Anatolia for about a hundred years (650-546 B.C.). A Thracian warrior group, the Lydians set up a powerful kingdom with its capital at Sardis and accumulated considerable wealth from the alluvial gold found in the tributaries of Gediz (Hermus) River. In Eastern Anatolia, on the other hand, the Urartian Kingdom existed from the eleventh until the last decades of the seventh century when it was destroyed by the semi-nomadic Schyrtian tribes from central Eurasia and the Medes who marched northward into Anatolia. The seventh century also witnessed the appearance of the Armenians who took refuge in the region around Lake Van region to escape the raids launched by the Cimmerians.

In 546 B.C. the Persians under King Cyrus invaded Lydia and conquered it. Persian power quickly extended to the Aegean coast of Anatolia where Greek settlers had formed

their communities. Although the Greeks repelled the Persians from the Aegean coast, the interior parts of Anatolia remained under Persian rule until Alexander the Great set foot in Anatolia in 334 B.C. and defeated the Persians. Alexander did more than just liberate the population of Anatolia from Persian rule. He also spearheaded the dissemination of Greek culture and his influence on Anatolia that lasted for centuries. The cities of Anatolia during the Hellenistic period built grand city walls, gymnasiums to educate the youth, theaters for plays and concerts and stadiums for races.

For a generation after the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. the history of Anatolia was one of civil wars between smaller Hellenistic kingdoms. This period came to an end with the advent of the Romans into Anatolia around second century B.C. By A.D 43, almost all of Anatolia was integrated into the Roman imperial system. During the course of the next several centuries, the Romans, originally pagans and republicans, were transformed into the Greek-speaking, imperial, and Christian Byzantines. But they continued to call themselves “Romans” which is why the Greeks of Anatolia and Cyprus are known, in Turkish as “Rum”, even today. One of the most important developments of the Roman centuries in Anatolia was the establishment of the empire’s capital at the Greek city-state of Byzantium by Emperor Constantine in 330 A.D. Until its conquest by the Ottomans in 1453, the city renamed Constantinople, remained the capital of the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire.

The expansion of Roman rule into Anatolia was accompanied by the growth of Christianity in the region. Christianity was introduced into Anatolia by Saint Paul, a native of the city of Tarsus. His missionary journeys through southern and western Anatolia between A.D. 45 and 58 laid the groundwork for the spread of Christianity. After withering years of severe persecution by the authorities, Christianity was finally granted official toleration in A.D. 313. During the course of the next two centuries, Christianity was firmly established as the dominant religion of the Byzantine Empire. The basilica of Hagia Sophia, which was constructed by Emperor Justinian in Constantinople in 532, became the center of Greek Christendom as well as one of the most highly acclaimed architectural masterpieces in the world.

The high point of the Byzantine Empire was the tenth century when under Emperor Basil II (976-1025), its territorial possessions expanded vastly to include Anatolia and Greece along with the Balkans, most of Italy, North Africa, Egypt and Syria. The Anatolian hinterland served as the primary source of both military manpower and tax revenues for the Byzantine Empire. However, the supremacy of the Byzantines began to face a serious challenge in the mid-eleventh century from the raids by the Turks into eastern Anatolia.

## **THE TURKISH CONQUEST OF ANATOLIA**

The Turks originated as tribally organized semi-nomadic peoples in Outer Mongolia, south of Lake Baikal and north of the Gobi Desert. Most of the Turkish tribes originally followed a shamanistic religion and worshipped elemental forces of nature. However, a significant number also practiced Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism. Turks first

encountered Islam following the Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century when Arab and Persian missionaries carried the message of Prophet Muhammad to the fringes of Central Asia. Later, they adopted Islam as their main religion as they moved westward from Central Asia to the Middle East. By the tenth century, majority of Turks had converted to Islam. The Turks of Central Asia spoke a language recognizably akin to that spoken in Turkey today and they began to use the Arabic script upon accepting Islam as their religion.

Among the many Turkish tribes in the fringes of Central Asia, one large group known as the Oguz inhabited the region north of Lake Balkhash. One clan of the Oguz, the Seljuks, moved westward and conquered all of Iran by 1054. The following year, the westward Seljuk expansion culminated with the capture of Baghdad, the capital of the Islamic Caliphate. The great Seljuk leader, Tugrul, had himself proclaimed Sultan, relegating the Caliph to a vague spiritual power with little political influence. Upon their conquest of Baghdad, the Seljuks established themselves as the principal power in the Middle East as well as champions of Sunni Islam.

The single most important event in the expansion of Turkish presence in Anatolia took place in 1071 when the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantine army at the battle of Malazgirt (Manzikert) in eastern Anatolia. The battle of Malazgirt opened up Anatolia for the Turks and they proceeded to the westernmost parts of the peninsula to the port of Izmir (Smyrna) on the Aegean Sea and Iznik (Nicaea) not far from Constantinople. Soon after the Seljuk conquest, the Anatolian plateau became a Muslim Turkish land. There was a large influx of Turkish tribesmen. While some settled into hundreds of villages, others remained nomads.

In 1076, the Seljuk Empire expanded its territories in the Middle East by gaining control over Syria and most of Palestine. The growing power of the Seljuks prompted Latin Europe to organize the First Crusade to liberate Jerusalem from Muslim rule. On their way to Jerusalem in 1097-1098, the Crusaders recaptured Iznik, defeated the Seljuks at Doryleum, and took Antioch. Crusading armies crossed Anatolia throughout the twelfth century but the Seljuks remained in control of it. The greater impact of the crusades on Anatolia came with the blow to Byzantine power following the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade and the seizure of the Byzantine throne in 1204. Although the crusaders were driven out of Constantinople in 1261, the Byzantium Empire survived for two more centuries as a state whose size and power was considerably diminished.

At the end of the eleventh century, the Seljuk Empire began to disintegrate. The tradition of dividing rule among members of the Seljuk dynasty eventually led to the rise of conflicts and wars within the Seljuk household. The Turks who had moved into Anatolia eventually formed a separate state called the Rum Seljuk Empire with its capital first in Iznik, and later in Konya. The name Rum was used to distinguish it from the Great Seljuk Empire and in reference to their territory that had once been part of the Roman/Byzantine Empire. The Rum Seljuk rule in Anatolia saw a flowering of urban civilization as a number of cities such as Konya, Sivas, and Kayseri became prosperous centers of

commerce and culture. At the same time, the administrative and governmental systems established by the Seljuks provided the basis for later Turkish rule.

In the thirteenth century, the Rum Seljuks were overcome by the invading Mongols from the East who defeated the Seljuk army and established their control in Konya. The Mongol campaign in Anatolia led to the destruction of several major cities in Anatolia and the demise of the Rum Seljuk state.

## **THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

The Ottoman Empire is the immediate precursor of the modern Turkish Republic. The Republic emerged out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire and the legacy of the Ottomans has had a strong impact on the new Republic.

The Ottoman Turks originated as a nomadic people who moved into northwestern Anatolia in the 12<sup>th</sup> century fleeing the invading Mongols. Initially, they were one of several small principalities in the western part of Anatolia. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the leadership passed to Osman I who is credited with establishing the dynasty that came to be called after his name as the Ottomans by the Europeans. Osman and his immediate successors managed to expand the frontiers of the new state first by absorbing neighboring Turkish principalities in Western Anatolia and then moving into the Balkans. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans had conquered most of the Balkan Peninsula along with western and central Anatolia. One of their most important military victories in the Balkans took place in Kosovo in 1389 when the Ottomans defeated the Serbs. The Ottomans encountered a temporary setback in Anatolia when they were defeated by the Mongol leader Timur (Tamerlane) near Ankara in 1402. In the battle, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezit was taken prisoner and he later died in captivity. However, the Ottomans recovered their power during the next two decades and resumed their raids into the Thrace and the Balkans. These renewed military campaigns expanded the Ottoman frontiers in the Balkans and southeastern Europe at the expense of various non-Muslim powers, especially the Serbs and the Hungarians.

Despite their successes in Anatolia and the Balkans, Constantinople eluded capture by the Turks until 1453. By this time, the once powerful Byzantine Empire had been reduced in size to its capital and the surrounding area. The Ottoman ruler Mehmet II, known also as Fatih (“the Conquer”) began to plan the conquest of the city upon assuming power in 1451. His predecessors had twice laid siege to Constantinople without success. However, under Mehmet II’s leadership, the Ottomans managed to capture the city on May 29, 1453 after a siege that lasted nearly two months. The conquest of the city, which the Turks called Istanbul, represented a major event in the development of the Ottoman Empire. It provided the Turks with one of the best-situated ports in the world and enabled them to control important trade routes. It also represented an important symbolic victory for the Muslim Turks who succeeded in capturing the capital of the Christian Byzantine state where the world famous Hagia Sophia was located. To highlight the religious

importance of the city's conquest, Mehmet II converted it into a mosque after removing its icons and covering its mosaics.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the Golden Age of the Ottoman Empire. Mehmet II's long and illustrious reign (1451-81) was followed by the successes of Bayezit II (1481-1512), Selim I (1512-20), and Suleyman I (1520-66). Under these four rulers, the frontiers of the Empire extended from the gates of Vienna in Europe to most parts of the Middle East and North Africa. Along with their military prowess, the Ottomans developed a strong bureaucratic and legal tradition that enabled them to rule over a vast empire that included numerous ethnic and religious communities. During the Middle Ages, the Ottomans generally showed greater tolerance toward those communities that did not share their religious beliefs in comparison with western European states. At the same time, the Empire achieved notable success in cultural matters and the arts. Ottoman Sultans built magnificent mosques in Istanbul and other major cities, displayed a keen interest in poetry, literature, music, and calligraphy. Sultan Suleyman I, called "Kanuni" ("the lawgiver") by the Turks and "Suleyman the Magnificent" by the Europeans, was renowned for his skills as a warrior. But he was also instrumental in the codification of the laws governing the Empire, especially in matters concerning taxation, land tenure, and related administrative issues.

The death of Suleyman the Magnificent marked the beginning of the reversal of the Ottoman fortunes. The Empire survived for another three centuries but encountered growing military, economic, and administrative problems. Following their unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman expansion into Europe came to a halt and the Empire began to lose its territories to European powers, most notably the Habsburgs. The Ottoman decline was due to a multiplicity of factors. The Empire's military might weakened with the corruption of its principal elite fighting force called the janissaries and its failure to keep up with new technological developments in the West. The Ottoman economy was adversely affected from decreasing tax revenues that resulted from territorial losses and inflationary spirals. The Empire suffered from poor leadership since most of the Sultans from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards displayed much less ability in statecraft than their predecessors. While the Ottomans had earlier benefited from the weaknesses of the European powers, this trend was reversed as the European states increasingly grew stronger and gained superiority over the Ottomans in later centuries.

Despite its decline, the Ottoman Empire managed to survive until the end of World War I. The rise of independence movements among the Serbs, the Greeks, and the Bulgarians during the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to the shrinking of the territory controlled by the Ottomans in the Balkans. The Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 brought a dramatic end to centuries long Ottoman presence in the Balkans. Russian territorial gains around the northern shores of the Black Sea and the Caucasus progressively increased during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In a misguided attempt to recover its lost territories, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of Germany and against Allied Powers. With few exceptions, the Ottoman armies were defeated in various campaigns in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Caucasus. An Arab revolt against Ottoman rule that was supported by the British and the French facilitated the loss of Ottoman domains in the Middle East.

By the end of World War I, victorious Allied armies occupied Istanbul, and proceeded to organize the partition of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Sevres that was presented by the Allies to the Ottoman officials in 1920 formalized the partitioning of the Ottoman lands among the British, French, Italians, and the Greeks. The Sevres Treaty also foresaw the establishment of an Armenian and a Kurdish state in eastern Turkey. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to a small principality in Anatolia with its capital Istanbul under the Allied occupation. The future of even this small political entity seemed bleak when the Greek forces invaded Anatolia and advanced toward Ankara in 1921.

## **THE TURKISH REPUBLIC**

The Treaty of Sevres was never implemented thanks to the growth of a nationalist movement, which managed to mobilize the population against the Allies and score decisive victories against the invading Greek forces during 1921-22. The nationalists also succeeded in defeating the Armenians in eastern Anatolia as well as forcing the French to withdraw from several provinces in the southeast. These nationalist gains led to the signing of a new peace treaty in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1923. The Lausanne Treaty affirmed the victories of the Turkish nationalist movement and undid the provisions of the Sevres Treaty regarding the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire among Allied powers and the establishment of independent Armenian and Kurdish states in eastern Anatolia. Through the Lausanne Treaty the nationalists regained all of Anatolia and eastern Thrace and established the territorial basis for the new Turkish Republic, which came into existence in October 1923.

One individual played a central role in Turkey's recovery out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal (later given the surname Atatürk or "Father of the Turks" by the Turkish parliament) is commonly regarded as the founding father of the Turkish Republic. Born in Salonica in 1881 when the city was still under Ottoman rule, Mustafa Kemal graduated from the War College in Istanbul and began his career in the Ottoman army, serving in several campaigns in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Balkans. A distinguished military officer, he gained further acclaim with his leadership in the Gallipoli campaign and the defense of the Dardanelles. Promoted to brigadier, Mustafa Kemal began to organize the nationalist movement after failing to persuade the last Ottoman Sultan to take a strong position against the occupation of Anatolia by Allied forces and the landing of Greek troops in Izmir. Within a fairly short period, he managed to establish contact with local nationalist groups in Anatolia and organize the resistance against the Allied occupation. By convening several congresses for the nationalists that served to lay the foundations for an alternative new political structure, Mustafa Kemal openly defied the legitimacy of the Sultan in Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal's stature as the leader of the national independence movement rose to a new level when the Turkish troops defeated the Greek forces in two major battles in 1921 and 1922.

Upon the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, Mustafa Kemal became its first president. From 1923 until his death in 1938, he was the undisputed leader of an authoritarian one-party regime in which the Republican People's Party (RPP) functioned

as its “official” party. The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a series of reforms that were introduced by Mustafa Kemal. These included the abolishment of the Caliphate (1924), the outlawing of the fez for men and the veil for women (1925), the replacement of shari’a with civil codes based on European models (1926), the adoption of a new Turkish alphabet and the change from Arabic to Latin script (1928), the extension of suffrage to women (1934), the adoption of surnames (1934), and the replacement of Friday with Sunday as the legal weekly holiday (1935). Ataturk’s reforms aimed at the establishment of a Western-oriented, secular state that would rigorously follow the path toward modernization and Westernization. In particular, the reforms sought to lessen the influence of religion in political institutions, educational processes, and legal system. Given the importance of Islam in the Ottoman Empire, the changes that were brought about by Ataturk amounted to no less than a large-scale cultural revolution in Turkey.

Upon Ataturk’s death in 1938, one of his principal associates, Ismet Inonu, was elected to be his successor by the National Assembly. Inonu’s major achievements when he served as Turkey’s second president from 1938 to 1950 were twofold. First, he managed to keep Turkey out of World War II through skilful diplomacy that required a delicate balancing act between the Allied and Axis powers. Second, Inonu engineered the transition from an authoritarian regime to democratic politics at the end of the war. By permitting the formation of opposition parties in 1946, Inonu initiated the democratization process within a multi-party system and competitive elections. This regime change was to have far-reaching political, economic, and social consequences for Turkey.

Turkey’s first truly honest elections in 1950 resulted in a landslide victory for the main opposition group, the Democratic Party (DP). Two of the DP’s founders, Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes, served as president and prime minister, respectively, from 1950 to 1960. The transition to democracy had shown that success in the elections depended largely on catering to the interests of farmers and peasants who made up nearly two-thirds of the electorate in the 1950s. The three electoral victories of the DP in 1950, 1954, and 1957 owed to the party’s ability to initiate rural development projects and show greater tolerance to religious traditions and practices than was the case under Ataturk and Inonu. However, the DP’s leadership increasingly grew intolerant of criticisms voiced by the political opposition, led by Inonu and his RPP. The government’s attempts to coerce the opposition eventually led to student demonstrations against the DP in Ankara and Istanbul. Amidst growing political instability, Turkey experienced its first military coup in 1960.

The 1960 military coup was staged by junior officers and it was broadly supported by the urban, educated, bureaucratic, and professional groups who had become disillusioned with the DP due to its authoritarian measures and its perceived deviation from the Republic’s strict secularist principles. Following an eighteen-month military rule, Turkey returned to democracy and competitive elections at the end of 1961. The two dominant parties of the 1960s and 1970s were the RPP and the Justice Party (JP), which was formed to capture the loyalties of the DP’s supporters after the DP was banned by the military following the 1960 coup. From 1961 to 1964, several coalitions led by the RPP were in power with Inonu serving as prime minister. Following its landslide victory in the

1965 parliamentary elections, the JP, under Suleyman Demirel's leadership, became the governing party. The JP repeated its success at the polls in 1969 but its tenure in office was cut short by the military intervention in 1971. Turkey's second experience with a military intervention was prompted both by the rise of radical leftist terrorist activism and factional competition for power in the armed forces. The so-called "coup by memorandum" (the armed forces had issued a memorandum that threatened a coup unless the government resigned) ousted Demirel from office. From 1971 until 1973, Turkey had civilian governments that were largely made up of technocrats with the military exercising power behind the scenes.

As in the case of the 1960 coup, the military interregnum in politics during 1971-73 was followed by the return to democratic politics. Since none of the parties could muster a parliamentary majority, Turkey experienced successive coalition and minority governments between 1973 and 1980. These center-left and center-right coalitions were formed by the two major parties of the center-left (RPP) and center-right (JP). Bulent Ecevit, who took over the RPP's leadership from Inonu in 1972, and Suleyman Demirel, leader of the JP, alternated in government as prime ministers. During the latter part of the decade, Turkey was engulfed in a protracted crisis that was brought about by an escalating wave of political terrorism and violence, governmental instability, and severe economic problems. Political violence initially erupted on university campuses in Ankara and Istanbul between radical groups on the far-right and extreme left. It then spread to other parts of the country when the traditional social and cultural cleavages based on religious sectarian (Sunni versus Alevi) and ethnic (Turkish versus Kurdish) differences were politicized and exploited by the warring factions of the rival ideological groups. The intensification of the crisis led to the third breakdown of Turkish democracy through a military coup in September 1980.

The 1980 coup led to the longest period of military rule in recent Turkish politics. The generals who stayed in power for nearly three years sought major changes in the Turkish political system by closing down all parties, banning their leaders from politics for ten years, drafting a new constitution that curtailed the activities of labor unions and civil society institutions, and introduced changes in the electoral system that aimed at reducing political fragmentation in the parliament. The main objective of the measures introduced by the military regime under Gen. Kenan Evren was to ensure political stability and prevent the recurrence of a crisis similar to the one that the country faced in the late 1970s. The bans on political parties and their leaders underscored the generals' belief that politicians bore the main responsibility for that crisis. The military regime (1980-83) also imprisoned thousands of leftist, rightist, and Kurdish militants who were suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. The regime's efforts to clamp down on militant groups led to a pronounced increase in human rights violations and infringement of civil and political liberties.

The resumption of electoral politics at the end of 1983 signaled the beginning of the transition from military to civilian rule. The military's scenario for the transition involved a contest between two newly formed parties, one of which was led by a retired general. Other potential contenders for power were vetoed by the ruling junta. However, the



officers reluctantly decided to permit a third newly formed party to enter the elections. Led by Turgut Ozal, who had served as the chief economic advisor to the military regime, the Motherland Party (MP) won a decisive victory in the 1983 elections. Throughout the 1980s, Ozal and his party dominated Turkish politics since the MP enjoyed a comfortable parliamentary majority and also controlled many municipal and local elective offices. First as prime minister (1983-89), and later as president of Turkey (1989-93), Ozal had a major impact on Turkey. He launched an ambitious economic liberalization program that emphasized privatization, free exchange rates, and export-oriented development. As a practicing Muslim who also had a Kurdish grandmother, he sought greater official tolerance toward both Islam and ethnic differences in Turkish society. Ozal's death in 1993 from a heart attack ended a period of remarkable changes in Turkish economy and society.

Another important development in Turkey during the 1980s was the reemergence of the Kurdish problem as a major issue. After posing a serious challenge to the Turkish state in the 1920 and 1930, the Kurdish question had remained largely dormant until it began to be politicized by leftist parties in the 1960s. However, it was only after the emergence of the PKK (Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan or Kurdish Workers Party) under the leadership of Abdullah Ocalan in the late 1970s that the Kurdish question gained prominence. The PKK chose terrorism as its principal strategy and it launched a campaign of political violence in the predominantly Kurdish regions in the southeast in 1984. Targeting Turkish security forces and Kurds who did not support the PKK, Ocalan's group advocated the establishment of a Kurdish state based on Marxist-Leninist ideology that would be carved out of existing Turkish territories. Faced with mounting fatalities and a serious challenge to the country's territorial integrity, Turkish security forces embarked on a large-scale anti-terrorism campaign.

Ozal's MP was the main loser of the 1991 national elections. The party finished second after the center-right True Path Party (TPP) led by veteran politician Suleyman Demirel. The TPP formed a coalition government with the center-left Social Democratic Party, which stayed in power until the next elections in 1995. Upon Ozal's death in 1993, Demirel left his post as prime minister to become Turkey's next president. In turn, Demirel was replaced by Tansu Ciller who was the country's first female prime minister. Turkey continued to be governed by coalition governments following the 1995 and 1999 elections since neither provided any one single party with a parliamentary majority. The 1995 elections witnessed the emergence of the Islamist Welfare Party (WP) as the strongest party. Led by the veteran Islamist politician, Necmettin Erbakan, the WP formed a coalition with Ciller's TPP in 1996. Turkey's first Islamist-led government had a turbulent stay in office and it was forced to leave power after a year under mounting pressure from the military and the country's secularist forces. The WP-TPP government was replaced by another coalition in which the MP, led by Mesut Yilmaz, served as the senior partner. The Democratic Left Party (DLP), which was formed by Bulent Ecevit in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup, also took part in the coalition. The DLP finished first in the 1999 elections and Ecevit became prime minister in a new coalition that also included the DLP, the MP, and the far-right Nationalist Action Party (NAP).

The rise and fall of successive coalition governments during the 1990s underscored the rise of electoral volatility and political fragmentation in Turkey. With the exception of the 1991-95 period, most of these coalitions were short-lived and failed to provide Turkey with stable and effective governance. The failure of the governing centrist parties to deal with economic and financial problems, especially their inability to bring down the inflation rate, which averaged 70 percent annually, undermined their popular support. In addition, they were also hurt with the widespread perception regarding their involvement in a number of major corruption scandals. The erosion of popular support for the center-right and center-left parties was evident in the 1995 and 1999 parliamentary elections. However, this trend became even more apparent in 2002 when the parties led by Yilmaz, Ciller, and Ecevit suffered their worst electoral defeats in more than a decade.

The clear winner of the November 2002 national elections was the Justice and Development Party (JDP). It was formed by the former mayor of Istanbul, Tayyip Erdogan, in 2001. Erdogan was a protégé of Necmettin Erbakan and he had been active in Turkey's Islamist movements and political parties. After Erbakan's WP was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1998, it reemerged as the Virtue Party (VP). However, the VP was also banned three years later. At that time, Erdogan decided to form his own party. Despite his long record as someone who wished to undermine secularism and distance Turkey from the West, Erdogan had gradually moved toward a more moderate position by the late 1990s. Unlike several Islamist parties that were led by Erbakan, Erdogan's JDP favored closer ties with the West and it refrained from pursuing policies that might provoke a confrontation with the secularist forces in Turkey, particularly the Turkish armed forces.

During the 1990s, the ascendancy of political Islam and the Kurdish issue posed two major challenges to the established principles of the Republic. The electoral successes of the Islamist parties increased the concerns of the secularists regarding the secular nature of Turkey's political institutions and educational processes. The polarization between the secularists and the Islamists reached its zenith after Erbakan became prime minister in 1996. This polarization culminated with his ouster from power under the threat of another possible military coup. In fact, some observers have called the muscle flexing by the army as a "post-modern coup" although the military did not, as in the case of the 1960 and 1980 interventions, actually seize power in 1997. The rise of political Islam, coupled with weak and unstable civilian governments, was one main reason for the increased influence of the Turkish military in politics. The other was the PKK's threat to Turkey's territorial integrity. In the early part of the decade, the PKK intensified its activism and terrorist campaign in the southeast. This was partly due to the emergence of a political vacuum in Northern Iraq following the 1990-91 Gulf War. The PKK established new bases near the Turkish border, which it used to launch raids into Turkey. In addition, many PKK militants slipped into Turkey among the refugees who were fleeing from Saddam Hussein's campaign against the Kurds in the aftermath of the Gulf War. In 1994, the Turkish military forces began a more pro-active strategy against the PKK, which included entry into northern Iraq to pursue the PKK's militants. This new strategy also included a large-scale pacification program that led to the evacuation of nearly 3000 Kurdish villages and small hamlets in the southeast. Although this policy intensified

Kurdish grievances against the state, it also significantly undermined the PKK's potential logistical support base. The capture and imprisonment of the PKK's leader Ocalan in February 1998 after he was forced out of Syria ended PKK's campaign of political violence and terrorism. After conceding military defeat, the PKK intensified its efforts to internationalize Turkey's Kurdish problem and to force the Turkish authorities to grant additional political and cultural rights to Turkey's Kurdish citizens.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. Why is Anatolia often viewed as the "cradle of civilizations"?
2. What historical links exist between the peoples of Central Asia and Turks living in Turkey today?
3. How did the Ottomans succeed in establishing a major world empire?
4. What were the principal objectives of Ataturk's policies and reforms?
5. What have been the main features of Turkey's experience with democratic politics since the late 1940s?

## **SOCIETY AND CULTURE**

Turkey has experienced rapid social and economic changes during the last half century. In 1950, it was a predominantly agricultural society where nearly two-thirds of the labor force was employed in the agricultural sector and lived in rural areas. Fifty years later, the share of the manufacturing and services sectors in the economy had surpassed that of agriculture and majority of Turkey's population lived and worked in cities and metropolitan centers. Until Turkey's transition to democracy in the aftermath of World War II, state officials kept Islam under close scrutiny. Since then, Turkey has experienced a gradual but unmistakable trend toward the reassertion of religious traditions and practices. Similarly, the ethnic and sectarian differences in Turkish society have become more apparent and politicized in recent years in comparison with the formative years of the Republic.

## POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, AND MIGRATION

Turkey's population between the country's first census in 1927 and 1950 increased from about 12 million to 21 million people. This modest growth rate changed dramatically during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to the national census in 2000, Turkey's population was 67.8 million. Recent years have witnessed a relative decline in average population growth rates. During the 1970-80 period, Turkey's population grew by 2.3 percent annually. In the period from 1990 to 2000, this figure dropped to 1.6 percent. Average annual population increase during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is expected to further decline to 1.1 percent. Despite this slowdown, the annual population increase in Turkey is still relatively high in comparison to that of European countries. Moreover, Turkey is a country with a young population. 30 percent of Turkey's population is in the 0-14 age group while those who are 65 or older constitute only 5 percent of the population.

Beginning in the late 1950s, Turkey has experienced large-scale migration from the rural areas to the cities. This massive migratory process has led to the swelling of the populations of Turkey's major cities. Istanbul, which had a population of about 800,000 until the 1950s, today has about ten million inhabitants or approximately 14 percent of Turkey's total population. Nine other Turkish cities now have populations with more than one million people. They include Ankara (4 million), Izmir (3.4 million), Konya (2.1 million), Bursa (2.1 million), Adana (1.8 million), Antalya (1.7 million), Icel (1.6 million), Diyarbakir (1.3 million), and Gaziantep (1.2 million). The migration from the countryside to the urban centers has had major social and political consequences. Many newcomers to the cities settle in the large shantytown areas surrounding the urban centers called *gecekondu* in Turkish. Most Turkish cities now have sprawling *gecekondu* districts where the urban poor live. Initially, when they are first established, these districts lack roads, electricity, and sewage systems. Over time, many *gecekondu* neighborhoods receive municipal services while new ones are built on the periphery of the cities. During the late 1970s, many leftist and rightist militant who joined terrorist organizations were recruited from the *gecekondu* districts in Istanbul and Ankara. In electoral contests in the 1990s, the urban poor living in the *gecekondus* provided strong support for the Islamist political parties.

Migration from Turkey to Europe and immigration into Turkey from the Balkans has had a major impact on Turkey. Faced by a labor shortage, Germany and other Western European countries began recruiting workers from Turkey in the early 1960s. During the next ten years, thousands of workers left Turkey for Europe in search of higher wages and better living conditions. Although Germany and other European countries formally ended this practice in 1973-74, the size of the Turkish migrant worker community in Western Europe continued to increase through family reunification and relatively high fertility rates. Today, with 2.5 million, migrants from Turkey make up Germany's largest "guest worker" community. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Scandinavian countries also have large numbers of people from Turkey who have settled permanently in these countries with no intention of returning to their homeland. Immigration into Turkey from the Balkans started with a major population exchange between Greece and

Turkey after the founding of the Turkish Republic. In accordance with the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, there was an exchange of about 500,000 Muslims from Greece with 2 million Greeks in Anatolia in 1927. In later years, thousands of Bulgarians, Romanians, and Yugoslavs of Turkish origin immigrated to Turkey. The latest waves took place in the 1980s when over 300,000 Bulgarian Turks fled to Turkey to escape forced assimilation and in the 1990s when about 25,000 Bosnian Muslims sought refuge in Turkey after the eruption of the ethno-religious conflict in Bosnia.

## **ETHNIC AND LINGUISTIC GROUPS**

Situated at the crossroads of two continents, Turkey has been home to a variety of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups over the centuries. As noted earlier, the Ottoman Empire was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state where dozens of different ethnic and religious communities coexisted in territories stretching from the Christian Europe to the Muslim Middle East and North Africa. The Ottoman defeats in the Balkans and the Caucasus during the empire's disintegration in the first two decades of the twentieth century led thousands of Turks and Muslims who had settled in these regions to seek refuge in Anatolia. As a result, the population of Turkey today includes large numbers of people who can trace their ancestry to the Balkans and the Caucasus.

Turks constitute the major ethnic group in Turkey, comprising approximately 80 to 85 percent of the population. The ethnic and racial origins of today's Turks are diverse. Some are descendants of Turkish groups who settled in Anatolia following the entry of the Oguz tribes into the peninsula, settling in the Central Anatolian plateau, or the coastal areas along the Black Sea, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean. Others are descendants from Turks who settled in the Balkans following the Ottoman conquests in southeastern Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These so-called Rumelian Turks were resettled mostly in western Turkey and the Thrace as the Ottomans lost their territories that nowadays include former Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria. There are also Turks whose ancestors lived in the Caucasus and Crimea. In particular, there are sizeable numbers of Turks who have Azeri, Chechen, Circassian, Dagistani, Georgian, and Crimean Tatar origins.

In addition to ethnicity, language is the other major defining attributes of the Turks. The Turkish language, with its several dialects, which are spoken in different parts of the country, acts as a common, unifying element among the Turks. Turkish is a member of the southwestern or Oguz group of the Turkic languages, the others being: the Turkic dialects of the Balkans, Azeri or Azerbaijani, spoken in Azerbaijan and northwestern Iran, the Qashqai of southern Iran, and Turkmen or Turcoman of northern Iraq. Until 1923, the language of Turkey was known as Ottoman Turkish, which had thousands of Arabic and Persian words. Under Ataturk, a major effort was made to purify the language and find alternatives to words of non-Turkish origin. The language reform of 1934 had mixed results. While it removed many words of non-Turkish origin, some of the alternatives that were introduced failed to gain popular usage. The language reform also proved to have long-lasting political ramifications. While the left-wing intelligentsia and followers of Ataturk's ideology prefer to use the so-called purified Turkish, the Islamists

generally sprinkle their writings with a large dose of words borrowed from Arabic and Persian.

Kurds constitute the second largest ethnic group in Turkey. Although there are no census figures, it is estimated that approximately 12 to 15 percent of Turkey's population (or between 8 to 10 million) is of Kurdish origin. Turkey has nearly 50 percent of the total Kurdish population in the region that is dispersed between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and former Soviet territories in the Caucasus. Kurds are ethnically distinct from the Turks and they have existed in Anatolia and Mesopotamia since the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Kurdish is also distinct from Turkish and it belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. In Turkey, two dialects of Kurdish are spoken: the Kermanji, which is used by the majority, and Zaza that is largely confined to several provinces in the southeast. Turkey's Kurdish population has been historically concentrated along Turkey's borders with Iraq and Iran. However, during the past four decades, large numbers of Kurds have moved to western Turkey and settled in major cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Kurds have also participated heavily in the flow of migrant workers from Turkey to Europe.

The Kurdish question in Turkey dates back to the formative years of the Republic. The Kurds resented Ataturk's emphasis on Turkish nationalism and his policy of radical secularism. Their opposition to the newly founded Republic took the form of several rebellions during the 1920s and 1930s, all of which were suppressed by the Turkish military. After staying dormant for the next three decades, the Kurdish issue reemerged in the 1960s when the radical leftist parties began to advocate greater cultural and political rights for the Kurds. The rise of the PKK and its campaign of violence in subsequent decades made Turkey's Kurdish problem a major issue in the country's domestic politics and foreign policy. Initially, the PKK called for the establishment of a separate, Marxist, Kurdish state that would be carved out of Turkey's existing territory. Later, it began to advocate a federal arrangement to replace Turkey's unitary administrative structure. The Turkish authorities have vigorously opposed these ideas. More recently, following Ocalan's capture and imprisonment, the PKK has announced that it would cease its activities in Turkey and work for a resolution of the conflict through democratic means. The organization has also changed its name from PKK to KADEK to highlight its new orientation. At present, the principal demands of the Kurds include greater cultural and political rights, reduction of the army's presence and role in the predominantly Kurdish populated provinces, and better economic conditions. In mid-2003, the Turkish government has passed an amnesty bill to entice the PKK's militants into giving up their arms and renouncing violence. Whether this measure will lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict remains to be seen.

Turkey's citizens of Arab origins constitute the country's third largest ethnic group. Numbering around 1 million, they are concentrated in the villages and small towns along the Syrian border. The province of Hatay (also known as Alexandretta) is predominantly made up of ethnic Arabs. As noted earlier, since it was ceded to Turkey by the French through a referendum in 1938, Hatay's status has been challenged by Syria, which views it as part of its territory.

The three non-Muslim groups in Turkey are the Armenians, Greeks, and the Jews. In the Ottoman Empire, they all had sizeable populations. Today, their numbers are much smaller than in the past. The shrinking of the Armenian and Greek populations is largely due to political causes. The large Armenian community in Eastern Turkey practically disappeared in the aftermath of World War I through civil conflict and deportations. The Armenians maintain that what happened during 1915-16 that resulted in the death of approximately 500,000 people represents genocide. The Turks, on the other hand, deny that there was genocide and argue that large numbers of Turks and Muslims also lost their lives at the hands of the Armenians during this turbulent period in history. Today, the Armenian population, which is estimated to be around 50,000, is concentrated largely in and around Istanbul. The number of Greeks in Turkey has similarly declined over the years. The eruption of the Cyprus conflict and the rise of tensions between Greece and Turkey resulted in new waves of Greek migration from Turkey. At present, the Greek Orthodox community numbers only a few thousand people who live mostly in Istanbul. The shrinking of Turkey's Jewish population was prompted primarily by the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. At that time, approximately 30,000 Jews immigrated to the newly established Jewish state. This process continued in the 1950s and 1960s, reducing the Jewish population to its present size of approximately 30,000 people. Like the Greeks and the Armenians, the Jews are concentrated in Istanbul.

## **RELIGION AND ITS ROLE IN SOCIETY**

Religion plays an important role in Turkish society. Turkey is a predominantly Muslim country, with nearly 98 percent of the population belonging to the Islamic faith. After their conversion to Islam beginning in the seventh century, the Turks became deeply involved in the expansion of Islam. In particular, the Ottoman march into Europe was primarily driven with a religious zeal that aimed at conquering the lands of the "infidels" in the name of Islam. When the institution of the Caliphate was brought from Cairo to Istanbul after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire became the center of the entire Islamic world. In the Ottoman Empire, Islam served as a source of political legitimacy for the rulers and a primary means of personal and communal identity for the empire's Muslim subjects. The Ottoman dynasty, as well as the majority of the Turks, belonged to the Sunni or orthodox branch of Islam. Along with this official Islam of the court and the administration, manifestations of what anthropologists refer to as "folk Islam" also flourished in society through a variety of sects and religious brotherhoods (or *tarikats* in Turkish).

Ataturk's radical secularization project sought to undermine the influence of Islam in Turkey, especially in political institutions and education. Measures such as the abolishment of the Caliphate and the shari'a dealt serious blows to religion. However, since the transition to democratic politics in the aftermath of World War II, Turkey has experienced a gradual but unmistakable trend toward the expansion of Islam in politics and society. Although Turkey today is one of the most secular states in the Islamic world, it is also a country that is going through a major redefinition of its identity, which stresses the importance of observing traditional religious practices, norms, and values. Until the

beginning of mass migration to the cities, religion played a more visible role in the daily lives of the people living in rural areas. Urbanization has altered this picture since most newcomers to the metropolitan centers bring with them their pious observance of Islam. The political ascendancy of the Islamist parties, as demonstrated most recently by the electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party in 2002, underscores the changing political climate in the country. At the same time, the growing strength of the Islamist parties and the trend toward further Islamization of society has increased the concerns of the Turkish secularists and it has accentuated the polarization between the Islamists and the secularists.

The majority of Turkey's Muslims (both ethnic Turks and ethnic Kurds) are Sunnis. However, approximately one-fifth of the country's population (or about 20 million) belongs to an offshoot Shi'a branch of Islam called the Alevi that includes ethnic Turks as well as ethnic Kurds. Like the Shii elsewhere in the Muslim world, the Alevi in Turkey are the followers of Ali, the son-in-law of prophet Muhammad. Apart from this, however, the beliefs and practices of Turkey's Alevi differ significantly from traditional Shi'a Islam as it is practiced in countries such as Iran. For example, unlike in Iran, the Alevi in Turkey do not have a hierarchical organization led by powerful religious figures and they have no mosques but community houses, called *cemevi*. The Alevi accept the basic Islamic creed: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger." However, their practices differ considerably from the Sunnis. In addition to the absence of mosques, they do not pray five times a day but only when they feel the urge or need; do not fast during the month of Ramadan or make the pilgrimage to Mecca; their services include both men and women; and their initiation rites include the consumption of alcohol. The Sunnis have historically viewed the Alevi as a heretical movement that is alien to real Islam. Since political Islam in contemporary Turkey is largely Sunni-based and supported, the Alevi tend to be strong supporters of secularism and fear that the ascendancy of Islam in society and politics could lead to their domination by the Sunnis. During the heyday of political violence in Turkey in the late 1970s, there was an alarming rise in bloody conflicts between the Sunnis and the Alevi in provincial Anatolian towns. Since then, there has been a steady trend toward the assertion of the Alevi identity and politicization of Alevi concerns and interests.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. What are the main characteristics of demographic change in Turkey?
2. What has been the social and political impact of uncontrolled urbanization?
3. What are the major characteristics of Turkish society regarding ethnicity and religion?
4. How has the Turkish government approached the Kurdish question?
5. What are the reasons for the ascendancy of political Islam in Turkey?



## **THE ECONOMY**

Economic development and growth have been the primary objectives of successive Turkish governments since the establishment of the Republic in 1923. During the past 70 years, there have been notable successes as well as serious problems in Turkey's economic development. The newly-established Republic faced truly dire economic conditions: protracted wars and conflicts during the final years of the Ottoman Empire had ravaged the country, majority of the population lived the rural areas and worked on the land using primitive agricultural methods, and Turkey lacked domestic or international capital that could be mobilized for industrialization. Seventy years later, the economic conditions in Turkey display a very different picture. Turkey has been transformed from a largely agricultural country into one with a rapidly growing industrial and manufacturing sector. Turkey now exports a broad range of manufactured goods as well as services to regional and international markets. Economic development and growth over the years have significantly improved the material conditions and well being of Turkey's citizens. However, Turkey's economic development has not been without its

problems. The country's economy has periodically encountered major crises, most recently in 2001, which resulted in a sharp drop in industrial productivity and a severe rise in unemployment. Although the Turkish economy has registered relatively high growth rates in the post-World War II period, its performance has been poor with respect to inflation and employment. Since the mid-1980s, inflation rates have hovered around 50-70 percent annually due to the failure of governments to exercise fiscal discipline and cut budget deficits. The economy has also not performed well in creating jobs for a growing young labor force and unemployment remains a perennial problem.

### **TRENDS IN ECONOMIC POLICY**

In the absence of significant private domestic capital or foreign investment, economic policies during the 1920s and 1930s emphasized the role of the state in fostering industrialization and growth. The establishment of the State Economic Enterprises (SES's) during the formative years of the Republican period represented an effort to promote industrialization under the aegis of the state. The dominant role of the state in the management of economic life remained a major characteristic of the Turkish economy well into the 1970s despite a noticeable growth of the private sector following the transition to democracy after World War II. During the period from 1950 to 1980, Turkish officials emphasized their commitment to a "mixed economy" in which the private and the public sectors would co-exist and play equally important roles in economic policy-making. In fact, however, until 1980, the Turkish economy remained largely under the control of the state and the public sector figured much more prominently than the private sector.

The rise to power of Turgut Ozal in Turkish politics led to a fundamental reorientation of the country's economic policies after 1980. Ozal, who had held high ranking positions in the economic policy-making bureaucracy, became the military junta's chief official in charge of the economy after the 1980 coup. As noted earlier, the military intervention of 1980 came in the wake of one of the worst economic crises in the Republic's history. The near collapse of the country's economy in the late 1970s created a favorable environment for major economic and financial reforms. The poor performances of the governments headed by Prime Ministers Demirel and Ecevit in managing the economy between 1974 and 1980 discredited both import substitution and statism as effective strategies for economic stability and growth. After successfully launching a stabilization program for economic recovery from the crisis, Ozal sought to liberalize the economy through a series of measures. These included a major policy switch from import substitution to export promotion, the abolishment of foreign-exchange controls, new laws to attract foreign investment, and emphasis on privatization schemes that aimed at the sale of the SES's. The performance of the Turkish economy during the 1980s reflected the impact of the changes that were implemented under Ozal's leadership. Following its recovery, the economy experienced a relatively high growth rate. The liberalization policies created a much better business environment for the private sector. The most striking results were achieved in the promotion of exports, which more than tripled between 1980 and 1987. The incentives granted to domestic and international investors paved the way for the emergence of tourism as a major sector in the economy. Ozal's efforts to modernize and

privatize the public sector had less striking but nevertheless significant results. The cutback of subsidies and the lifting of price ceilings forced the SES's to be more competitive and efficient. However, Ozal's policies failed in several areas. After a temporary decline in the early 1980s, Turkey was once again faced with a runaway inflation in the latter part of the decade resulting from expanding budget deficits. Economic liberalization also contributed to the widening gap between the higher and lower income groups as well as to a significant rise in political corruption.

Turgut Ozal's bold policies represented a watershed in the liberalization of an economy that had remained largely controlled and managed by the state since the founding of the Turkish Republic. Although Ozal disappeared from the political scene after his death in 1993, his views concerning the management of the economy continued to shape the outlook of the governments on the economy during the 1990s. This was most evident in the strong support given to expanding Turkish exports. While Turkey became the European Union's major supplier of textiles, Turkish manufactured goods (televisions, cars, refrigerators, etc.) managed to capture a respectable share of the regional markets. In addition, private companies from Turkey undertook a series of large construction projects in the Middle East as well as in the Russian Federation and the new Turkic Republics in Central Asia.

The Turkish economy during the 1990s was characterized by another legacy of the Ozal era: endemic high inflation resulting from excessive public spending and budget deficits. The decade also witnessed bouts of rapid short-term growth followed by recessionary trends, which prevented the economy from fulfilling its longer-term growth potential. The rise and fall of short-lived coalition governments during the 1990s represented another problem in the conduct and implementation of effective macroeconomic policies since these often led to a turnover in top ministerial positions in charge of running the economy. In 2001, Turkey was hit by one of the most serious economic and financial crises in its recent political history. The trigger for the crisis was the emergence of financial problems in the banking sector. The liquidity crunch faced by several banks turned into a major financial crisis when, following a heated cabinet meeting in which Prime Minister Ecevit and President Sezer exchanged heated words, the Prime Minister publicly declared that Turkey was faced with a political crisis. This sent shockwaves on domestic and international markets: overnight interest rates soared to 2000 percent, the Turkish lira was devalued by half against the dollar, and there was a massive capital flight out of Turkey. The crisis led to a sharp decline in business activity and rapid rise in unemployment. With respect to its destabilizing economic and social effects, the crisis that Turkey faced in 2001 displayed many similarities to the Argentinean crisis, which took place around the same time. However, Turkey did better than Argentina in its recovery from the crisis thanks to a \$7 billion loan from the IMF and speedy implementation of a series of monetary and fiscal reforms that were demanded by the IMF. Following its rise to power in 2002, the new JDP government continued the IMF-backed stabilization policies and Turkish economy appeared to be on the way to recovery.

## **FOREIGN TRADE**

The EU plays a major role in Turkey's trade relations. Imports from and exports to EU member states account for more than fifty percent of Turkish imports and exports. The signing of a Customs Union between Turkey and the EU in 1995 has enhanced the free circulation of goods between the two sides. In particular, the Customs Union has made a significant contribution to the expansion of textile exports from Turkey to Europe. Within the EU, Germany is Turkey's major trading partner. Trade with Germany accounts for nearly half of Turkish exports to and imports from the EU. Other EU members such as Italy, the United Kingdom, and France are also among important trading partners of Turkey.

Outside the EU, Turkey does a significant amount of trade with the Russian Federation, several Middle Eastern states, and the U.S. U.S-Turkish trade ties have grown since the mid-1980s. The volume of trade between the two countries rose from \$1.6 billion in 1985 to \$6.2 billion in 1998. The U.S. now ranks second after Germany in Turkey's foreign trade relations. The principal imports from the U.S are defense industry products, machinery, organic chemicals, cotton, and tobacco. Turkey's main exports to the U.S. are textiles, tobacco, and iron and steel.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. What were the reasons for the establishment of the State Economic Enterprises?
2. What role did the state play in Turkey's economic development?
3. What were the main reforms introduced by Turgut Ozal and how did they affect the economy?
4. What were the causes and consequences of the 2001 financial crisis?
5. Which countries figure prominently in Turkey's trade relations?

## **POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT**

Since its transition from an authoritarian one-party system to a multi-party system with competitive and free elections in the late 1940s, Turkey's political system has been based on democratic governance. However, Turkey's experience with democratic politics for more than half a century has also included several major crises leading to military interventions and temporary suspension of civil and political liberties. Turkey has made considerable progress in democratization over the years and represents an important example of a predominantly Muslim country that has had a strong commitment to the maintenance of representative institutions and processes. Yet, Turkey's democratic system is still not fully consolidated and it displays significant shortcomings in several important areas including political accountability, civilian supremacy over the military, and human rights.

### **THE CONSTITUTIONAL SETTING**

Turkey has had three constitutions since the founding of the Republic in 1923. The country's current constitution was drafted in 1982 by a commission of experts working under the aegis of the then governing military leadership. It went into effect the same year after it was approved in a national referendum. The 1982 constitution called for the continuation of the country's parliamentary system in which the prime minister, appointed by the president normally from the ranks of the party with the largest seats in the parliament, has the executive authority. The prime minister is the head of government and he or she is responsible for the coordination and implementation of government policies. While maintaining the country's parliamentary system, the 1982 constitution also increased the powers of the president. The president of the Republic is elected for a seven-year term by the parliament. Unlike the earlier 1961 constitution, the president is not required to be a sitting member of the parliament at the time of this election. A group of deputies not less than one-fifth of the full membership of the parliament can nominate a person for president from outside the legislature. The 1982 constitution gives the president a wide range of formal powers. Among the most important are the president's power to appoint the prime minister and other ministers, to request the parliament to reexamine bills, and to chair cabinet meetings if he or she wishes to do so. The 1982 constitution did not turn Turkey into a presidential or semi-presidential system but it did create a hybrid system in which executive authority is more diffused than before.

The Turkish parliament, called *Buyuk Millet Meclisi* (Grand National Assembly), has 550 members who are elected for a five-year term. Electoral districts are based on the country's 80 provinces (the largest administrative unit at the local level). Provinces with large populations, such as Istanbul and Ankara, have far greater representation in the parliament than others with small populations, such as Hakkari or Osmaniye. The strengths of the political parties in the parliament usually vary over the course of a legislative session due to the high rate of party switching among the deputies. In addition, there is usually a fairly high rate of turnover in parliamentary representation at each election. This trend was especially pronounced in the 2002 national elections when more than two-thirds of the deputies who won seats were newcomers to the parliament.

Turkey has experimented with a variety of different electoral systems over the years. Following the transition to democracy, elections were held according to plurality or winner-take-all system with multimember electoral districts. The outcome of the elections in the 1950s favored the strongest party at the expense of the others and led to disproportionately large parliamentary representation for the winners. Beginning in 1961, Turkey adopted the proportional representation (PR) electoral system in an effort to redress this problem. Since then different versions of PR have been in effect, with frequent changes in the mathematical formulae used in the allocation of parliamentary seats. The current electoral law is PR with national quota according to d'Hondt formula. In the Turkish electoral system, political parties prepare the lists of their candidates and voters cannot change the rank order on the ballots. Although parties are required by law to hold election primaries for the nomination of candidates to the parliament, this is not widely practiced. Instead, the leaders of the parties and their inner circle of associates commonly prepare the lists. This practice has provided party leaders with extensive authority over the party organizations and it has been a major reason for their long

durability despite repeated electoral failures at the polls. Another important feature of the electoral system in Turkey concerns the 10 percent threshold: To gain representation in the parliament, a party has to win 10 percent or more of the national vote. This high threshold was included in the 1982 constitution to limit political fragmentation.

Since its transition to democracy, Turkey has been governed by single party majority governments as well as coalition governments that have included two or more parties. Infrequently, there have also been minority party governments in power. The plurality system that was used in the 1950s enabled one party (the Democratic Party) to enjoy comfortable parliamentary majorities in successive elections and form the government by itself. Following the adoption of the PR system in 1961, Turkey had its first experience with coalition governments since no single party managed to control a majority in the parliament. This trend was reversed in 1965 and Turkey had a majority party government until 1971. During the period from 1973 to 1980, governments were formed either through coalition arrangements between two and more parties or through the use of minority government formula. In the aftermath of the 1980 coup, Turkey had nearly a decade-long period of majority party governments when Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party (MP) managed to win majority of the seats in the legislature. However, the increase of political fragmentation in the party system in the 1990s resulted, once again, the need to form the government through coalition partnerships among different parties. Turkey had its first majority party government in more than a decade when the Justice and Development Party obtained a parliamentary majority in the 2002 elections.

## **MILITARY'S ROLE IN POLITICS**

One of the major issues in contemporary Turkish politics concerns the role of the military in the political processes. Historically, the military has always been an important institution in Turkey. In the Ottoman Empire, the military constituted one of the major groups within the ruling establishment. The Turkish Republic was founded by a group of military men, led by Mustafa Kemal. Various public opinion surveys conducted during the past decade have shown that a majority of the Turkish population views the armed forces as the country's most trusted institution. The military has traditionally viewed itself as the guardian of the founding principles of the Republic, most notably secularism. It has intervened in politics to restore law and order during periods of escalating civil strife or when it viewed secularism coming under the threat of political Islam. Military rule in Turkey has been relatively short in comparison with military regimes elsewhere in the world and each intervention was followed by return to elections and civilian governments. In 1960, the military was in power for over a year, in 1971 it did not officially assume power but exercised it indirectly, and the military regime in 1980 lasted for approximately three years. After each intervention, the officers have either supervised the drafting of new constitutions (1961 and 1982) or amended existing constitutions (1971). They have also changed electoral laws and tinkered with the party system by banning parties and their leaders.

One of the principal constitutional channels used by the military to influence politics is the National Security Council (NSC), a body that was established in 1961 to provide a forum for coordination between the government and the armed forces. Although it was initially conceived as a consultative body, the NSC increased its role in the policy process, especially in the 1990s, when Turkey faced the double-threat of ethnic separatism and radical Islam. The NSC, whose membership is equally divided between several key government ministers and top commanders, often got involved in explicitly nonmilitary issues. In July 2003, the Turkish parliament passed a number of bills designed to conform Turkey to EU standards. One of these so-called “reform packages” aims to curtail the role of the NSC and redefine civil-military relations in Turkey. Whether this important new legislation will in fact lead to undermine the military’s influence in Turkish politics and usher in a new phase in civil-military relations remains to be seen.

## **POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PARTY SYSTEM**

Political parties have existed in Turkey since the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. Despite the absence of a democratic regime until the late 1940s, parties played an important role in national politics during the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1918) in the Ottoman Empire, and following the founding of the Republic during the one-party authoritarian period (1923-1946). However, the importance of parties in Turkish politics increased markedly after the liberalization of the country’s political system and the beginning of free and honest elections. Within a fairly short time following the transition to democracy, competing political parties extended their organizational networks throughout the country in the late 1940’s. Parties became the principal means for the recruitment of local and national political elites, mobilization of the voters in electoral contests, and representation of social and political interests and concerns of their supporters in local and national elective bodies.

The natural evolution of party politics in Turkey has been hampered by the successive military interventions in politics. By banning some parties and excluding their leaders from politics, the officers have sought to reshape the party system. In most cases, however, their efforts have been fruitless: banned political parties have reappeared on the political scene under new labels after a short hiatus and their former leaders have usually managed to reenter politics as well. This fact of Turkish political life was best illustrated by developments in the aftermath of the 1980 coup when the ruling military leadership banned all existing parties and excluded their leaders from participating in politics for up to ten years. But by the latter part of the decade, all the pre-1980 parties were back on the political scene, and with one or two exceptions, all were led, once again, by their former leaders.

Over the years, the strengths of political parties in Turkey have witnessed significant fluctuations. Some parties have disappeared from the political arena, whereas others have shown greater capacity for survival. During the 1990s, most of the parties on the center-right and center-left have seen an erosion in their votes while the Islamists expanded their popular support. In the 2002 national elections, only two parties managed to clear the 10

percent threshold and entered the parliament. The Justice and Development Party (JDP) of Tayyip Erdogan finished first with 34 percent of the votes, which provided it with a comfortable majority. The JDP as noted earlier, was formed in 2001 following a factional split from Necmettin Erbakan's Virtue Party. The party has its roots in the Islamist movement but it has adopted a relatively moderate orientation and its first year in government did not display an Islamist agenda. The other party, which succeeded in winning representation in the parliament, is the Republican People's Party (RPP). It received 19 percent of the total votes and won 178 seats out of the 550-seat legislature. The RPP is Turkey's oldest party and it was founded by Ataturk in 1923 to serve as the "official" party of the one-party system. Since the mid-1960s, it has been a leading force of center-left politics with a social democratic program. The party has been mired in protracted internal factional fights and appears to have lost the momentum that it had gained prior to the 2002 elections. It is led by a veteran politician, Deniz Baykal. Two-center-right parties that alternated in government during the 1990s, the Motherland Party (MP) and the True Path Party (TPP), led by Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller, respectively, have lost much of their popular support and both of these leaders were forced out of their positions following their parties' poor showing in 2002. Bulent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (DLP), which finished first in 1999 and became the senior partner of the coalition government from 1999 to 2002, suffered a dramatic loss in 2000 when its votes fell from 22 percent to 1 percent. Another partner of the coalition, the far-right Nationalist Action Party (NAP), also lost a significant portion of its votes in 2002 and failed to gain seats in the parliament. The pro-Kurdish DEHAP won 6 percent of the national vote and finished first in the Kurdish provinces. However, it, too, could not enter the parliament because of the 10 percent electoral threshold.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. What type of a system does the constitution provide for Turkey regarding the powers of the Prime Minister and the President?
2. What has been the political consequence of the electoral laws in Turkey?
3. What accounts for the influence of the military in Turkish political life?
4. How have the military interventions affected Turkey's party politics?
5. What factors have led to the decline in the popular support of the centrist parties?



## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

From the founding of the Republic until the mid-1940s, Turkey pursued a neutralist policy in foreign affairs. The bitter experience of Ottoman Empire's involvement in World War I which led to its demise and almost ended a sovereign Turkish state led Ataturk and his associates to shy away from international alliances in world politics. During the 1920s and 1930s, Turkey's energies were largely focused on domestic reforms and developments. The annexation of the Hatay (Alexandretta) province in 1938 was one of the few important foreign policy issues that preoccupied Turkish policymakers during the interwar years. Ataturk's successor as president, Ismet Inonu, continued the country's policy of neutrality and managed to keep Turkey out of World War II despite strong pressures from both the Allied and the Axis powers to join their side.

## **COLD WAR PERIOD**

At the end of World War II, the Soviet Union confronted Turkey with a major challenge: Moscow demanded territorial concessions in Eastern Turkey and a share in the control of the Straits. Faced with the Soviet threat, Turkey abandoned its neutral stance and sought to establish close political and military ties with the West. Fearful of further Soviet expansionism after Moscow's moves in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, President Truman responded to Turkey's search for deterrence and provided Turkey, along with Greece, with economic and military assistance through the Truman Doctrine in 1947. Turkey's bilateral ties with the U.S. grew rapidly in the next few years. Turkey sent troops to Korea in 1950 and joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. During the 1950s, the U.S. established numerous bases in Turkey, which served as valuable listening posts at a time when the Cold War between the two superpowers was intensified. In return for providing Washington with bases where nearly 30,000 American personnel served, Turkey became one of the largest recipients of U.S. military and economic assistance.

Turkey's role as a key state in NATO's Southern flank continued throughout the Cold War period. With nearly half a million soldiers, Turkey had the second largest army in NATO after the U.S. Despite extensive cooperation between Washington and Ankara on security issues, the bilateral relationship was not without problems. The eruption of the Cyprus conflict in the early 1960s, and American efforts to prevent a war between its two NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, created tensions in the bilateral ties. The late 1960s saw the emergence of student-led demonstrations against the U.S. with radical leftist groups taking the lead in organizing street demonstrations in Ankara and Istanbul. The bilateral relationship was sorely tested again a decade later when the U.S. Congress imposed an arms embargo against Turkey in response to the landing of Turkish troops on Cyprus in 1974. Although the embargo was lifted in 1978, it left a bitter legacy for the Turks. Nevertheless, the U.S.-Turkey relationship was soon back on track when both sides realized the importance of close ties in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of a radical Islamic regime in Iran in 1979.

## **POST-COLD WAR ERA**

Turkey is one of the countries that was most profoundly affected by the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the strategic and political landscape of Eurasia. This watershed in international affairs radically altered Turkey's foreign policy environment, creating opportunities to expand its regional role while also posing new risks and challenges. Observers have described Turkey's efforts to chart its course in the new international system in such terms as a policy of "new activism" or one that displayed signs of both "daring and caution." Indeed, compared to the Cold War years, Turkish foreign policy in the 1990s was significantly more assertive and activist. However, this did not imply the abandonment of moderation and caution that has traditionally characterized Turkey's approach to international and regional affairs.

During the 1990s, Turkey's assertive and active policies was most pronounced in the Middle East. Turkey had traditionally pursued a cautious and low profile policy toward

its southern neighbors. Turkey's decision to join the Allied coalition during the 1990-91 Gulf War marked a major departure from this established policy. The expansion of Turkey's role in the Middle East continued after the Gulf War. The principal reason was the escalation of the PKK's campaign of political violence and terrorism. To prevent the PKK from launching attacks in Turkey from its bases in Northern Iraq, Turkish troops periodically entered into Northern Iraq in pursuit of the Kurdish militants. In the 1990s, Turkey mobilized its troops near the Syrian border to send a strong signal to the Syrian regime, which had harbored the PKK's leader Abdullah Ocalan and provided logistical support to the PKK. This showdown with Syria led to the expulsion of Ocalan from Syria. The Kurdish issue was also a major reason in Ankara's decision to forge closer military and security ties with Israel. The signing of a military training and education agreement in 1996 ushered in a period of increased military, commercial, and cultural relations between Israel and Turkey.

The rise of the new Turkic Republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union provided Turkey with the opportunity to expand its regional influence in line with its new activist foreign policy orientation. Throughout the Cold War period, Turkey's relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus were almost nonexistent despite common ethnic and cultural ties. During the 1990s, Turkey expanded its political and commercial relations with Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. Turkey's efforts to expand its influence in these two regions were opposed by Russia and Iran. In particular, both countries were concerned about Turkey's participation in the export of Caspian energy resources to Western markets through the creation of an East-West energy corridor. Turkey, with Washington's backing, pushed for the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which would carry Azeri oil from the Caspian Sea to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean. By the end of the decade, the Russian opposition to this project had diminished considerably and the plans for the construction of the pipeline had made significant progress.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, there was a discernible increase in Turkey's interest and involvement in the Balkans as well. This was precipitated by the eruption of violent ethno-nationalist conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo, which had the potential to spill over into Turkey. Furthermore, ethnic conflicts in the region generated extensive interest and concern in Turkey due to the presence of large numbers of Turks who had migrated from the Balkans to Turkey over the years. To prevent the escalation of the conflicts, Turkey participated in the multilateral UN peacekeeping forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and deployed a small contingent of F-16 jets in Italy for use in NATO's air campaign against the Serb leadership during the Kosovo conflict. The 1990s also witnessed efforts by Turkey to develop closer political, economic, and military ties with Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In particular, the post-Cold War era saw a remarkable transformation in Turkey's relations with neighboring Bulgaria, which had remained strained throughout the preceding four decades.

Another significant improvement in Turkey's foreign relations concerned Greece. Although both countries had been allies within NATO, the relations between the two

countries deteriorated with the eruption of the Cyprus conflict in the early 1960s. The harassment of the Turkish Cypriot community on the island by the Greek Cypriot majority during the 1960s followed by the landing of Turkish troops on the island during the Cyprus crisis in 1974 led to the worsening of the ties between two NATO allies. In addition to Cyprus, the opposing positions of the two countries regarding a number of unresolved issues in the Aegean brought Ankara and Athens to the brink of armed conflict on several occasions. However, Greek-Turkish relations took a turn for the better in the aftermath of two major earthquakes that hit Turkey and Greece in August and September of 1999, respectively. The aid provided by the Greek relief organizations and workers to Turkey was reciprocated a month later by Turkish rescue teams a month later. These efforts paved the way for the so-called “seismic diplomacy” whereby the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers developed a close working relationship that led to a rapprochement after years of strained ties. Although serious differences over Cyprus and the Aegean remained, there was nevertheless a markedly improved environment in the bilateral relationship.

The Cyprus issue has been on Turkey’s foreign policy agenda for more than forty years. It has been a major irritant in Turkey’s relations with Greece, the U.S., and more recently, the EU. Following decades of British rule, the island became an independent republic in 1960 after lengthy negotiations between England, Greece, and Turkey. The newly established republic was based on an intricate power-sharing arrangement that sought to protect the rights of the Turkish-Cypriot minority (18 percent of the population) against the Greek-Cypriot majority (80 percent). However, this constitutional arrangement fell apart with the beginning of communal violence in 1962. Vastly outnumbered, the Turkish Cypriots began to clamor for intervention from Turkey for protection. Several Turkish threats to intervene were averted through American efforts during the 1960s. However, Turkey did intervene militarily in 1974 when the junta that was then in power in Greece staged a coup on the island to replace President Makarios with one of its henchmen. Turkish troops subsequently seized control of nearly half of the island. Since 1974, the island has remained divided and separated by a UN monitored “Green Line” that separates the two communities. The Turkish Cypriots established their own Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in 1984 but this political entity has been recognized only by Turkey. Numerous diplomatic efforts by the US, UN and the EU have not yet succeeded in resolving the dispute. The issue has become more complicated with the EU’s decision to admit the Greek-controlled southern part of the island--the internationally recognized body—as a full member in 2004. Over the years, the US has sought to mediate the conflict by periodically sending special envoys of ambassadorial rank. Washington’s approach has been influenced both by the desire to prevent an armed clash between Greece and Turkey over Cyprus and by the strong lobbying pressure brought on to the successive US administrations by the powerful Greek-American organizations.

Turkey’s long-standing goal to become a full member of the European Union (EU) continues to be a major issue in Turkish foreign policy. Turkey became an associate member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 through the Ankara Agreement. According to this agreement, Turkey could expect to become a full member of the Community within the next two decades after completing a three-phase accession

process. However, Turkey's aspirations for full membership soon ran into various roadblocks. Turkey's problems in consolidating its democracy, improving its human rights record, and stabilizing its economy constituted one set of problems. Europeans, in particular the Germans, were concerned about the prospect of new waves of worker migration from Turkey since 2.5 million Turkish citizens had already settled in Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe. The EU and Turkey entered into a formal custom union agreement in 1995, which created the closest economic and political relationship between the EU and any non-member country. In its Luxembourg Summit in 1997, the EU Council excluded Turkey from its list of formal candidates but this decision was reversed two years later in the Helsinki Summit. In its Seville Summit in 2002, the European Council reaffirmed that the implementation of the required political and economic reforms would bring forward Turkey's prospects of accession in accordance with the same principles applied to the other candidate countries. The reforms required by the EU include the abolition of the death penalty, improved rights for the minorities, and reduction of the military's involvement in politics. In addition to reforms, the EU also expects Turkey to work towards a solution of the Cyprus problem and reach an accommodation with Greece over the disputed issues concerning the Aegean. The new JDP government in Ankara has passed a series of reform bills to meet the EU's requirements. However, there are still a number of outstanding issues, most notably those concerning Cyprus and civil-military relations, and prospects for Turkey joining the EU as a full member still appear to be years away.

The U.S has been Turkey's most important ally in world politics since the Truman Doctrine in 1947, which provided aid to Greece and Turkey. Confronted with the Soviet Union's territorial demands at the end of World War II, Turkey eagerly accepted the development of close military and political ties with the U.S. For its part, the U.S. was also eager to build strong ties with Turkey given Turkey's strategic location at a time when Washington sought to "contain" the Soviet Union through alliances with countries bordering the Soviets. Turkey's participation in the Korean War and its inclusion in NATO further strengthened the relations between Washington and Ankara. Throughout the Cold War period, Turkey cooperated extensively with the U.S. through NATO's defense and security policies. The eruption of the Cyprus conflict did hurt the bilateral ties, especially when the U.S. Congress imposed an arms embargo on Turkey after the Turkish troops landed on the island in 1974. The lifting of the embargo four years later put the relationship back on track and Turkey's strategic importance for the U.S. was buttressed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of a radical Islamic republic in Iran in 1979.

In the post-Cold War period, the U.S.-Turkish relationship encountered new challenges as each country sought to define its role in the changing international system. Turkey's contribution to the Allied coalition in the 1990-91 Gulf War proved to be an important development that helped shape closer cooperation between the two countries in regional security issues in the Middle East, Balkans, and the Caucasus, Caspian energy development, and economic and commercial ties. However, the 1990s also witnessed divergence of policies between Ankara and Washington over Iraq and, to a lesser degree, Cyprus. To prevent further attacks by Saddam Hussein against the Kurds in Northern

Iraq, Turkey agreed to host Operation Provide Comfort (later renamed Operation Northern Watch). However, the emergence of a Kurdish political entity in Northern Iraq under the protection of Western powers led by the U.S. increased Turkey's concerns about the possible spillover of this development into its own heavily Kurdish populated regions in the southeast. Turkey did not support the U.S. plans to topple Saddam Hussein's regime for the same reason since it believed that this could lead to Iraq's fragmentation and the rise of an independent Kurdish state near its borders.

The war in Iraq in 2003 was a critical turning point in U.S.-Turkish relations. Majority of the Turks opposed the U.S. decision to go to war in Iraq. However, Washington viewed Turkey as an important part of its war planning and wanted to open a "Northern Front" by deploying up to 60,000 troops through Turkey. In return for its cooperation, Washington promised to provide Ankara \$6 billion in aid and loan guarantees. The newly elected JDP government reluctantly agreed to support the U.S. request but it failed to muster a parliamentary majority when the troop deployment bill was voted on March 1, 2003. The Bush administration was clearly disappointed with the outcome of the parliamentary vote and senior officials expressed their dismay at Turkey's Iraq war policy. The crisis in U.S.-Turkish relations in 2003 was the most serious problem in bilateral relations since the imposition of the Congressional arms embargo on Turkey in 1974. In the aftermath of the March 1 vote in the Turkish parliament, both sides have sought to take measures to repair the relationship. Given its proximity, Turkey is likely to play an important role in Iraq's reconstruction and return to stability. However, the war in Iraq has clearly altered the nature of the ties between Ankara and Washington and its effects are likely to have a long-lasting impact on how the U.S. views Turkey.

### **Self-Study Questions for Further Exploration**

1. What prompted Turkey to adopt a pro-Western foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II?
2. What role did Turkey play in the Western Alliance during the Cold War?
3. How did Turkey seek to cope with the changes that took place in the international system with the end of the Cold War?
4. What are the major developments in EU-Turkey relations?
5. Why has Iraq figured prominently in U.S.-Turkish relations since the 1990-91 Gulf War?

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# *Ukraine: A Self-Study Guide*



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The Self-Study Guide: Ukraine is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important Ukrainian issues related to history, culture, politics, economics, and international relations. This guide is meant to serve as an introduction and self-study resource. It replaces the self-study guide of 2005 largely because political and economic events over the past year have changed sufficiently to warrant a new assessment. In particular, the leadership of the Orange Revolution – the spectacular popular upsurge of 2004 that swept away one regime and brought to power another – has morphed yet again into a largely new political configuration. At the same time, Ukraine’s energy dependency on Russia, at a time of heightened aggressiveness on Moscow’s part towards its neighbors because of Russia’s energy superpower status, requires fresh analysis and discussion.

The reader or user of this guide are also encouraged to supplement his/her reading by referring to the books, articles, periodicals and web sites listed in the appropriate sections. A relatively up to date bibliography of books and materials can be found in the Area Studies Office along with this guide.

Final preparation of this guide was facilitated and enhanced by two individuals at the Foreign Service Institute. Colleen O’Shea, an intern in the summer of 2006, conducted research on a number of articles and helped write several key essays, including ‘Ukrainian Folk Traditions,’ ‘The Jewish Question,’ ‘Corruption,’ and ‘Energy Issues.’ Her scholarly interest in Ukraine and in the countries of the former Soviet Union proved to be of inestimable value. In addition, Nesreen Matarnah, an Administrative Support Assistant at the FSI, added greatly to the overall quality of the guide by finding suitable pictures, art embellishments, and maps. Both Colleen and Nesreen are to be commended for their service.

In the end, however, responsibility for the overall guide are fell to Dr. William Gleason, Chair for Ukrainian and Eurasian Area Studies at the FSI. The views expressed in this guide those of the authors or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the U.S. Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and non-profit use only.

November 2006

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## The Land: Geography, Climate and Environment in Ukraine

Ninety-five percent of Ukraine is comprised of flat plain or steppe, a characteristic that provoked the early geographer Rudnytskyj to suspect that “nine-tenths of Ukrainians have certainly never seen a mountain and do not know what one looks like.” Ukraine is comparable to the American Midwest, similar not only in landscape and foliage, but in rich soil as well, making Ukraine a breadbasket similar to Kansas or Nebraska. These two characteristics—flat plains and rich soil—have played an almost deterministic role in Ukrainian history, establishing agriculture as a profitable occupation while allowing easy access to numerous invaders.



Source: CIA Factbook

Ukraine is a country of 603,700 square kilometers, approximately 1300 kilometers from east to west and 900 kilometers from north to south. The country is bounded by the Black Sea on the south, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland on the West, Belarus on the North, and Russia on the East—borders carved out after centuries of expansion, contraction, and occupation. Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, is located in central northern Ukraine on the Dnieper River. The Dnieper is the largest river in Ukraine, snaking through the center of the country and flowing, like most rivers in the country, from northwest to southeast before emptying into the Black Sea. The Dniester River, which flows in Western Ukraine before cutting into Moldova, is the second largest river in the country. The average elevation in Ukraine is 574 feet and only 5% of the country—primarily near the borders—is mountainous. The highest point is Hora Hoverla at 2,061 m, part of the Carpathian Mountains.

Ukraine's soil is its most defining geographical characteristic. A substantial portion of the country is endowed with *chornozem*, a rich, black fertile soil that prompted Europe's first agricultural endeavors in Ukraine. In contrast to Russia, agriculture has consistently proved successful in Ukraine, and Russia's group farming techniques never became as prevalent in Ukraine. The very north of Ukraine contains a sandy soil with fewer nutrients than the rich chornozem, and salty chestnut soil is found near the Black Sea, but these soils cover a very small portion of the land. One-eighth of the country is forested, with most of these forests covering the northeast. Approximately one-third of Ukraine's land has been cleared for cultivation.

The climate of Ukraine is mostly mild, tempered by ocean air from the Atlantic and nearby seas. Although winters are more harsh in the East and summers more hot in the West, neither area generally experiences temperatures greater than 75° or less than 18° F. Crimea has a Mediterranean climate. Precipitation is largely unpredictable, with the only clear pattern being that much more rain falls—two to three times more—during the warmer seasons.

The Ukrainian government has long considered natural preservation a high priority, beginning with the creation of the Askania-Nova national wildlife refuge in 1875. Currently, the country protects thirty-nine national parks and reserves, some of the most prominent being the F.E. Falz-Fein Biosphere Reserve, Black Sea Nature Reserve, Danube Water Meadows, and Ukrainian Steppe Reserves. Despite these preservation efforts, the Soviet period seriously degraded Ukraine’s environmental conditions, and some of the most polluted areas in the world are now found in Ukraine. The Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1989 caused serious contamination, birth defects, and cancer in Ukrainian citizens living near the site, and the surrounding area will continue to be contaminated for thousands of years.

In addition, coal burning in Eastern Ukraine produces heavy air pollution and water pollution has contaminated some coastal areas of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov.



Source: University of Texas Libraries

Aside from environmental factors caused largely by Soviet domination and modernization, many of the tragedies—and fortunes—of Ukraine have been shaped by the lay and substance of the land. While the rich black plains and steppes of Ukraine have embraced and fed her people, this land has failed miserably in averting foreign invasions, repeatedly allowing tragedies wherein Ukrainian soil soaks up the blood of those it once fed.

As later sections on history will illustrate, Ukraine's endowment from nature has proven both a blessing and a curse.

### Questions for Study

- What nations and bodies of water bound Ukraine?
- What is the largest river in Ukraine?
- How much of Ukrainian land is mountainous and how much is forested?
- What kind of soil covers most of Ukraine and why is this important?
- What is the climate in Ukraine?
- What events have greatly affected Ukraine's environmental conditions?

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## **The People**

### *Population*

Ukraine is a large country, larger than any European country except Russia, or about the same size as Texas in the United States. As of 2006, Ukraine's estimated population stands at almost 47 million. During the Soviet period, a policy of Russian in-migration and Ukrainian out-migration prevailed, and the ethnic Ukrainian share of the overall population declined from 77 percent in 1950 to 73 percent in 1991. The final Soviet census (1991) revealed Russians to be largest minority, at 22 percent. Ten years later the 2001 census showed the same figure, with the remaining minorities constituting about 5 percent of the nation. This includes (in descending numerical order) Belarusians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles, and Jews.

Aside from specific numbers, the most salient feature of Ukraine's demographic history since 1991 is the precipitous drop off in the overall population, from a high of 52 million. The decline of 4 million over a 12 year period reflects the sharp deterioration of economic and social conditions as well as an emigration of large numbers, in particular to Israel, Canada, and the United States. Declining standards in healthcare and daily nutrition have yielded a lowering of fertility and life expectancy rates. Average life expectancy in Ukraine in 2000 was 68 years and in 2002 mortality rates exceeded birthrates by a ratio of

2:1. Male life expectancy is now about 65 years, mirroring widespread alcoholism and drug abuse. More tragically, by 2004, as in neighboring Russia, HIV/AIDS in Ukraine had reached pandemic proportions with no end in sight.

### *Ethnic Relations and Languages*

Before 1991, Russian was the required language of governmental administration and public life. Kiev, for example, was a Russian-speaking city along with the major urban centers of the eastern and southern region of Ukraine. That same year, immediately following the breakup of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian became the official language although in the Crimea, home to a large Russian-speaking majority, Russian remained. Similarly, despite the new policy, Russian was the preferred spoken language as well as the language of instruction in the Donets Basin and along the Dnipro river bend of south central Ukraine. And in 2004, in the midst of the hotly contested presidential election, Viktor Yanukovich, the Prime Minister and a leading presidential candidate, promised if elected to restore Russian to official status alongside Ukrainian.

Ukrainian and Russian, the two dominant languages throughout Ukraine, both belong to the East Slavic language family that also includes Belarussian. For native speakers, Ukrainian and Russian are mutually intelligible and millions of Ukrainians speak both languages freely. In addition, significant minorities in the Western regions of Ukraine speak Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian or Hungarian.

#### **Ethnic Composition of Ukraine**

	<b>2001</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>1989 % of total</b>
Ukrainians	37,542	77.8	72.7
Russians	8,334	17.3	22.1
Belarusians	276	0.6	0.9
Moldovans	259	0.5	0.6
Crimean Tatars	248	0.5	0
Bulgarians	205	0.4	0.5
Hungarians	157	0.3	0.4
Romanians	151	0.3	0.3
Poles	144	0.3	0.4
Jews	104	0.2	0.9

Source: Ukrainian National Census, 2001

Since 1991 – and in contrast to fears of many observers at the time of the implosion of the Soviet Union – ethnic relations between Ukrainians and Russians have been good. This success to date derives from several key factors, including a shared cultural history, a common faith (Eastern Orthodoxy) for most people, generations of intermarriage, and the government’s sensitivity to this issue. The 1996 Constitution enshrined both religious and ethnic rights and freedoms, rights that have been respected by virtually everyone across the various regions of Ukraine. Indeed, in sharp contrast to the treatment of ethnic minorities in several of the other former Soviet republics, Ukraine immediately bestowed full citizenship



on all non-Ukrainians. As a result, the largest ethnic Russian community in Ukraine – the largest numerically of any non-Russian republic of the former Soviet Union – accepted their new status and produced no nationalist parties or leaders. This fact was especially significant in Crimea, where a Russian naval fleet remained anchored at Sevastopol, a testimony to pre-1991 Soviet power and ambition.

### *Settlement Patterns*

Well over 50 percent of the Ukrainian population lives in the urban areas, a striking reflection of decades of Soviet industrialization and urbanization. Southeastern and south central Ukraine are home to the highest population densities, with large concentrations in the coal mining centers of the Donets Basin (Donetsk) and the Dniper Bend (Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk). Cities with population over one million in Ukraine are Kiev, Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, and Donetsk. The next largest cities are Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Kryvyi Rih, and Mykolaiv.

Although a majority of Ukrainians live in cities, a significant minority – approximately 30 percent – remain in the countryside. Of this number, most live in large villages, sometimes numbering up to 5,000 people, a reflection in part of the survival of the huge Soviet collective farms. Central Ukraine, with its fertile soil (the so-called ‘black earth’ or chornozem) and temperate climate conditions, accounts for the greatest number of rural inhabitants.



An old Ukrainian couple in the Carpathian Mountains. Photography by Jeremy Little.

### Questions for Study

- How big is Ukraine, compared to other European countries?
- Why has Ukraine’s population declined since the end of the Soviet Union?
- What are the dominant spoken languages of Ukraine?
- Why have ethnic relations between Russians and Ukrainians been good since 1991?

## History and Its Legacies

800	Ukrainian princedoms united by Vikings
980-1015	Volodymyr 'the great'
1019-1054	Yaroslav 'the wise'
1240	Mongols obliterate Kiev
1349	Polish occupation of Galicia
1596	Union of Brest; creation of the Greek Catholic Church
1632-1647	Petro Mohyla and educational modernization
1648	Cossack revolt under Bohdan Khmelnytsky; rise of the Hetmante
1654	Treaty of Perislav between Khmelnytsky and Moscow
1657	Khmelnytsky dies
1685-1686	Kiev Church dissolved into Moscow Church
1785	Abolishment of Cossak Hetmante
1880s	Ukrainian culture and history taught in Lembourg University during the reign of the Hapsburg Empire
Early 1900s	Ukrainians are elected to central Hapsburg Diet in Vienna
1914	Outbreak of WWI
1917	Bolshevik revolution
1918-1921	Ukraine tries and fails at independence, becomes part of the USSR in 1921
1932-1933	The great famine
1944	Western Ukraine becomes part of the USSR
1991	Ukrainian independence created through referendum on Dec.1; Kravchuk becomes president
1994	Kuchma defeats Kravchuk in the presidential election
1996	Ukraine adopts a new, internationally lauded constitution
1996	Introduction of the <i>hryvnia</i> , Ukraine's currency
1999	Kuchma is reelected and Yushchenko becomes Prime Minister
2000	Disappearance and murder of Gonggadze; Kuchma is accused as a participant in the affair
2001	Yushchenko is dismissed
2002	Parliamentary elections; <i>Our Ukraine</i> wins a plurality of seats
2004	Presidential elections and the Orange Revolution
2005	President Yushchenko takes Power
2006	Parliamentary Election in March; Party of Region
2006	Yushchenko (Party of Regions) appointed new prime Minister

## *Introduction*

The peculiarities of Ukrainian history are twofold: first, the fact that until 1991 Ukraine never existed as a true, independent state, and secondly, until that same date most of what we knew about Ukraine came from Russian secondary sources. The first point is explained by the fact that for over 850 years – from the destruction of Kiev and Kievan Rus by the Mongols in 1240 – Ukraine was a frontier region split between neighboring empires and states. Indeed, the Ukrainian word for Ukraine – Ukraïna – means ‘borderland,’ a word that perfectly expresses the central geographic determinant of a people whose identity had to be marshaled within other states, until 1991.

The second characteristic of Ukraine’s historic narrative comes from Russia’s long domination of most of Ukraine, a record stretching back to the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century when Ukrainians, under their Cossack leader Bohdan Khmelnytsky, called upon Moscow to aid them in the struggle for freedom from Polish overlordship to the West. Within decades Moscow had taken control of two thirds of modern day Ukraine and reduced Ukrainians to the status of “Little Russians,” the less than endearing term for their subjects for the next three centuries. As a result, after the mid 1600s, Russian writers and historians placed Ukraine within Russian history, and Ukraine was labeled either *Little Russia* or *South Russia* or *New Russia*. Whatever the name, except for a slice of Western Ukraine under the Habsburg Empire in the 1800s, Ukrainians lost their place as a distinctive culture and peoples until their sudden emergence in the aftermath of the collapsing Soviet Union in 1991.

### *Early History – Kievan Russia*

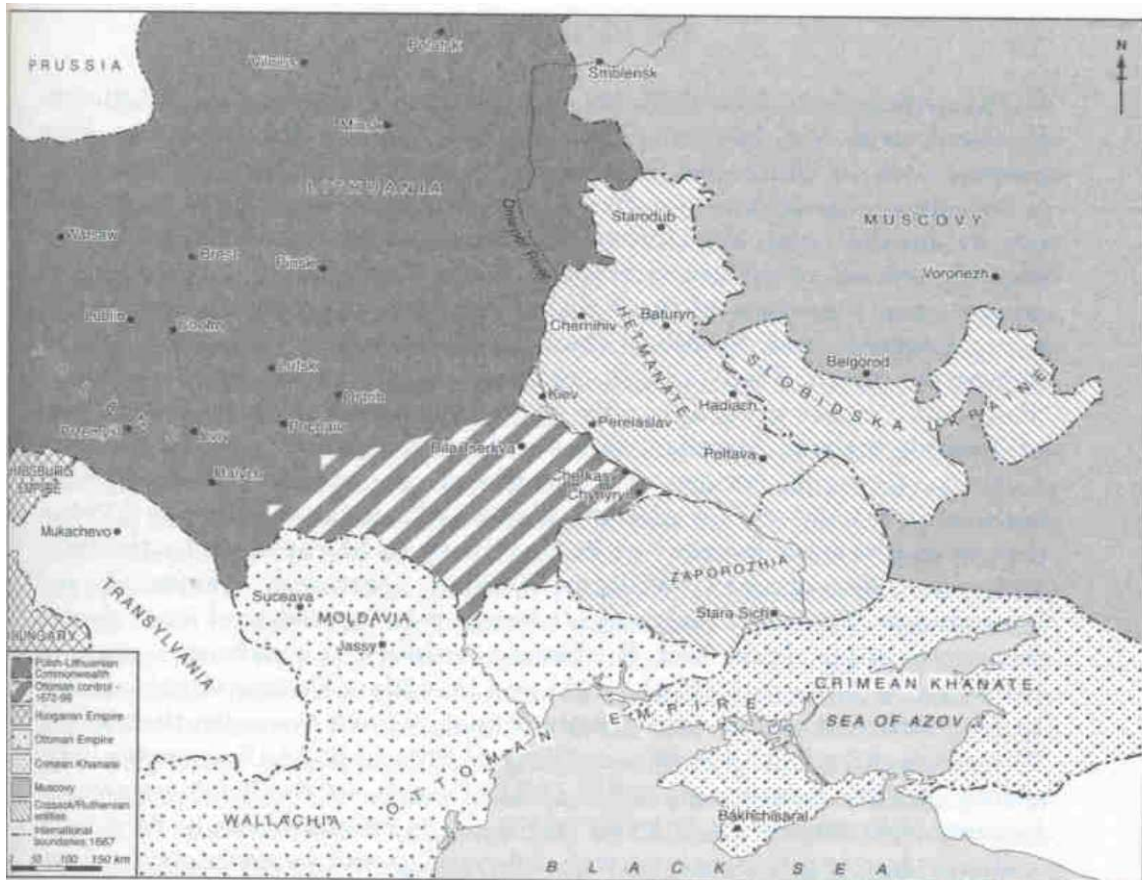
Ukraine’s earliest history is inseparable from that of other Slavic peoples whose original homeland in Eastern Europe stretched between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. Over time, as a consequence of successive migrations and invasions by peoples of both Asian and European origins, the Slavic agricultural tribes dispersed into the Western Slavs, (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks), the South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bulgarians), and the East Slavs (Russians, Belarussians, Ukrainians). Under nearly constant threat from nomadic horsemen from inner Asia, the East Slavs successfully established a loose collection of princedoms. By the 9<sup>th</sup> century these princedoms had been united by Scandanavian Vikings (known as Varangians or Norsemen), the center of which was Kiev.

From the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Kievan Rus, as it was known, was the dominant power in Eastern Europe, trading with Byzantium and in regular contact with the feudal states of Central and Western Europe. Within a few decades following its emergence, the Viking ruling elite was Slavicized and during the reign of Prince Volodymyr, Christianized in 988d within the Eastern orthodox faith. For over two centuries the Rus witnessed a literary flowering, architectural marvels, and the codification of a uniform system of customary law. The code – known as the ‘Law of Rus’ – was extremely progressive for its time, with fines more typical than corporal punishment or property seizure, and with equitable property (inheritance) and family rights for women.

At the same time, Kievan Rus was not a modern nation or state. As time passed the princes quarreled amongst themselves, a development that exposed everyone to a terrifying

reality – the appearance of the Mongolians, a massive nomadic army from the Asiatic steppes. The result was the violent obliteration of Kiev in 1240 by Batu, grandson of the legendary Mongolian unifier Genghis Khan. Kiev’s destruction was the first instance of the subjugation of the local population and the resultant scattering of the surviving Slavic population across a huge area from the open prairie lands of southern Ukraine to the thickly forested lands to the northeast. Thus, in Ukrainian history, 1240 is viewed as a symbolic date: the end of a once-united Eastern Slavic state and the gradual emergence of Ukrainians as a separate people, with distinct mentalities, institutions, and values.

*Polish-Ukrainian Commonwealth (In Dark) and Cossack Empire (Thin Stripes)*



*The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: the Origins of Ukrainian Identity*

Within 200 years of the Mongolian onslaught, Ukrainian territories were mostly under the rule of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. While direct Polish rule in Ukraine initially was limited to Galicia, an area of Western Ukraine, which changed suddenly in 1385 when Lithuania was drawn into the Polish realm following the dynastic linkage of the two states and the baptism of the Lithuanians into the Latin (Roman Catholic) church. The rapid diffusion of Catholicism among the Lithuanians and the equally significant diffusion of Polish language, culture, and ideas of political order – an elective monarchy for one thing – characterized the entire area. From 1350 to 1600 virtually all ethnically Ukrainian lands experienced the overwhelming impact of Polish cultural

predominance. By 1600, for example, Kiev was a Polish-speaking city with Catholic schools and a militant, proselytizing Jesuit faith. And it was exactly that development – the existence of militant Catholicism – that gave rise to the first offshoots of Ukrainian self-awareness.

The religious roots of Ukrainian identity assumed two forms, both growing out of the need of the Orthodox Church and faith to defend themselves. The first reaction was compromise with the Catholic hierarchy, an approach that led many Ukrainians to seek the protection of the Pope, but within an Orthodox context. The result was the Union of Brest in 1596, which placed the adherents under the authority of the Pope while allowing them to retain the traditional rite and church service. In time this movement came to be known as the Greek Catholic or Uniate Church.

The second reaction was reform from within, best illustrated by Petro Mohyla, the Kievan Metropolitan from 1632 to 1647. Mohyla founded the academy that bears his name to this day (and is now the main independent University in Ukraine). Mohyla's principal objective was to modernize the education of the Orthodox clergy in order to make them competitive and attractive to the people, principally to the Ukrainian aristocracy who had converted en masse to Catholicism for a half century. He updated the liturgy, revolutionized the program of religious education (introducing Greek and Latin over the ancient Church Slavonic), and insisted that the clergy engage in pastoral care across the greater community. By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Mohyla Academy was the leading educational institution in Eastern Europe and a magnet for scholars and scientists from many countries, including Russia.



If religion was the primary badge of incipient Ukrainian identity, the other shaping force across the same period was the Cossacks. To modern Ukrainian historians, the Cossack tradition – best encapsulated in the Cossack revolt of 1648 that led, momentarily, to a Cossack state – sets Ukraine apart from Russia politically. The Cossacks were free men fleeing the tyranny of encroaching serfdom in both Poland and Russia to establish farming and fortress communities across the wild, open steppes of southern Ukraine. The Orthodox faith unified the Cossacks and often came together to fight their great enemies to the south – the Crimean Tatars and Ottoman Turks. It was under the Cossacks that the term ‘Ukraine’ became widespread to describe the lands around the Cossack kingdom or ‘Hetmanate.’ Equally important, the idea of Cossack liberty and freedom as a distinguishing Ukrainian trait mushroomed in the mid 1600s, in contrast both to the Polish aristocracy to the northwest and Muscovite (Russian) autocracy to the northeast.

The Cossack era in Ukrainian history – and all it promised for an early modern Ukrainian state – came to an end in 1654 when the Cossack leader Khmelnytsky forged ties with Russia to achieve his goal of defeating the Poles. The Treaty of Pereiaslav between Khmelnytsky and Moscow brought Ukrainian lands east of the Dnipro river under Russian control. Over the next century, gradually and in defiance of Pereiaslav in which Moscow pledged to honor Cossack autonomy, the remaining remnants of Ukrainian freedom were lost to the Russian tsars. In 1785 the Hetmante, the last symbol of Cossack independence, was abolished and absorbed into the tsarist regime. At the same time, the collapse of the Polish Commonwealth and its subsequent dismemberment by Austria, Prussia and Russia, gave western Ukraine to the Austrian (Habsburg) Empire in 1795. The long period of Polish sway over Ukraine was over. Khmelnytsky



### *Ukraine Under Imperial Rule: Russia and Austria*

It is safe to say that the embryonic Ukrainian culture of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was almost completely destroyed by the Russian empire. Because Ukrainian identity revolved around local concepts of Orthodoxy and the Cossack tradition, the disappearance of these realities rendered Ukraine hostage to subsequent Russification. By 1800, Cossack autonomy was long gone. As for orthodoxy, while remaining in principle, in reality much was lost when the Kievan Church was swallowed up by the Moscow Church in 1685-86 and Tsar Peter the Great subordinated church to state by abolishing the patriarchate altogether in 1721. From the early 1700s onward, Russia's strategy of integrating Ukrainian leaders into a multi-ethnic state bureaucracy – in essence a dynastic empire in which all could serve but on the tsar's terms – meant that Ukrainian cultural revival remained the preserve of a tiny, culturally isolated intelligentsia and publicists.

In truth, were it not for the existence of another Ukraine under the Habsburgs, it is at least debatable whether Ukrainian identity would have survived at all, even in a cultural sense. As with their ethnic counterparts under Russian rule, Ukrainians under Austrian control were members of a multi-ethnic empire, subject to the seductions of an imperial state. However, in sharp contrast to Russia, the Habsburgs favored local rights and responsibilities. As early as 1781, elementary education became compulsory, mostly in the local language, and by the 1880s Ukrainian history and language were being taught at Lemberg University (now Lviv University) by Mykhailo Hrushevsky, Dean of Ukrainian historians. By the early 1900s Ukrainians were being elected to the central Diet in Vienna and had created a whole network of peasant cooperatives, land banks, reading rooms, and political parties across Galicia. In a word, the Galicians, in almost total contrast to their eastern counterparts under tsarist rule, had grown quite used to governing themselves. World War I would bring them their first opportunity.

### *The Hapsburg Empire (In Dark)*



### Questions and Issues:

- What are the peculiarities of understanding Ukrainian history?
- How did religion shape the formation of Ukrainian identity?
- How did the Habsburg experience contribute to the evolution of Ukrainian consciousness?

Suggested Reading: Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2002.

### *The Twentieth Century: Ukraine under Soviet rule*

World War I (1914-1918) brought a violent end to the age of empires. Within months the tsarist and Hapsburg dynasties disappeared, the former to a popular revolution from below, the latter to the war itself and allied treaties ending the conflict. In Russia, Ukrainians jumped at the chance to rule themselves, but the effort failed after four years (1917-1921) due to internecine strife between the competing factions and the destruction of independent regimes by the victorious Bolsheviks (Communists) in Moscow. By 1921, two thirds of Ukraine was again under Russian rule.

In western Ukraine, despite the hopes of local nationalists that the victorious Allies would recognize their claims for an independent state, the hopes were ignored and the people divided during the interwar period (1919-1939) between a reconstituted Poland, a newly created Czechoslovakia, and Romania. Notwithstanding their failed hopes, Western

Ukraine did not come under Moscow's control until 1944, when the Red Army seized this area from Nazi occupiers. For Western Ukrainians, memories of freedom and autonomy dating back to the pre World War I period remained embedded during the Soviet period.

From 1921 to 1991 the huge majority of Ukrainians lived under Soviet rule. During these seven decades Ukraine was subject to many wrenching changes: the transformation of the economy and society due to Soviet sponsored industrialization and collectivization of farming, and the imposition of Soviet marxism that promoted the notion of a superior Soviet system in the global competition with capitalism. During the 1930s one of the worst tragedies of modern times visited Ukraine when Joseph Stalin, the Soviet dictator, imposed a famine on Ukraine to eradicate the local peasantry (free farmers) and vestiges of cultural nationalism. According to official estimates (only revealed by the 1990s after the end of the Soviet era), at least 7 million died in the Great Famine of 1932-33.

To describe the Soviet impact on Ukraine in institutional and ideological terms alone, however, is insufficient. While millions died in the Great Famine, and Ukrainian nationalists were violently repressed, other millions from the village and urban working poor benefited from the Soviet state. These people – upwardly mobile men and women – staffed the Soviet bureaucracy with managers, technocrats, teachers, and engineers. They also provided a base of social stability for the ruling elite, a base that held for more than half a century.

By the 1960s and 1970s, as one author noted, a “real fear” existed among Ukrainian nationalists and dissidents that Ukraine would never attain sovereignty or self-rule. Soviet-Russian culture and ideology had sunk deep roots across the Ukrainian countryside and in the cities. Real hope of independence existed largely in the diaspora in Canada and the United States, along with a handful of dissidents in Ukraine, most of who were in jail or under close watch by the Soviet KGB.

How, then, did 1991 – complete independence and self-rule – happen? Three answers suggest themselves. First, the wholly unexpected emergence of a new, dynamic leader, Mykhail Gorbachev, who decided to engage the Soviet people nationwide in a dialogue in order to reform the increasingly moribund Soviet economy. By 1989 that dialogue meant that many local elements in Ukraine and elsewhere were being consulted broadly, a process that increasingly yielded uncontrollable results as people voiced their complaints and concerns.





Secondly, the world's worst nuclear accident in history at Chernobyl, north of Kiev, where an explosion on the morning of April 16, 1986 killed several dozen workers, spread radiation across a wide area (most of today's Belarus, and north-central Ukraine), and left millions susceptible to long term disease and illness. The impact on public opinion in Ukraine was devastating, made worse by the silence of the Soviet leadership for days after the explosion. That silence disillusioned millions of otherwise loyal citizens and left them open to suggestions for radical change and reform.

Third, the breakdown of communist party unity in Moscow as Gorbachev's reforms accelerated and exposed the underlying fissures in society, a breakdown that by 1990-91 emboldened elements in Ukraine, both within the local party leadership and the general population, to push for independence. By the summer of 1991 two factors, the spread of the popular movement Rukh (centered largely in western Ukraine and Kiev), and the decision of the Ukrainian Communist Party under Leonid Kravchuk to break with Moscow, took Ukraine to the edge of independence. Still, it was not until the so-called 'August coup' by Moscow conservatives against Gorbachev – a coup that was forcibly put down due to the emergence of the new Russian leader Boris Yeltsin – that Ukrainian leaders were emboldened to act. On August 24, three days after the suppression of the coup, the Ukrainian parliament declared independence by a vote of 346 to one. Three months later, on December 1, a national referendum secured a huge majority in favor of the newborn state.

Ukraine was born.

#### Questions and Issues

- How did the Soviet Union affect Ukraine and the lives of ordinary Ukrainians during the 1930s and beyond?

- What was the status of Western Ukraine during the 1920s and 1930s?
- What factors contributed to the emergence of independent Ukraine in 1991?

### Suggested Reading

Robert Conquest, Harvest of Sorrow (1986). The definitive examination of the Great Famine by a noted scholar. Includes a searing indictment of Western indifference to Ukraine in the 1930s.

On the period leading up to independence, there is Taras Kuzio and Andrew Wilson, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence* (1994)

### Politics in Ukraine



What a difference two years can make. In December 2004 – for 17 days before a transfixed, worldwide television audience -- the Ukrainian people literally stood up in Kyiv and other major cities to demand an end to corruption and bad governance, helping to initiate a wild series of events that came to be known as the Orange Revolution. To everyone’s amazement, including experts on Ukraine, almost none of whom foresaw the political zigs and zags, the people succeeded: by 2005 the old regime was gone, a new pro-western government was in power, and Ukraine seemed set to join humanity at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a time of global promise and integration.

Fast forward to late 2006. The Orange Coalition – the alliance of parties and political factions in support of the Orange Revolution – has collapsed. Viktor Yanukovich, the defeated presidential candidate in 2004, has miraculously re-emerged to become the new Prime Minister under President Yushchenko. Furthermore, Yanukovich’s comeback has the blessings of the people,



as his party (the Party of the Regions) received a plurality of votes in the March 2006 parliamentary elections, deemed to be the freest and fairest in Ukrainian history. And, to add insult to injury (at least from the perspective of 2004 and the Orange Revolution), the Communist Party now controls several key ministries in the Yanukovych government.

Two questions must be asked: What happened to change the political landscape so radically from 2004-2006, and where is Ukraine in all likelihood headed now?

The first question – what happened? – is easier to answer if for no other reason than hindsight offers the analyst a clear advantage. Many points surface, but three stand out:

- The ideological fallout between the leaders of the Orange Revolution in the first year of the Yushchenko Presidency;
- Yushchenko's personal shortcomings as a leader;
- The regional divide from East to West, a divide that reasserted itself in 2006 and became the dominant motif in the parliamentary elections.

The fallout within the upper echelons of the Orange Coalition should have been apparent almost from the beginning. In truth the Orange Coalition was a tactical alliance between key groups across the ideological spectrum, united mainly if not exclusively by a hatred of corruption and former President Leonid Kuchma. Once Kuchma was gone, the underlying differences between Yushchenko – an economist who favored free market solutions – and his Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko – a populist with socialist leanings – became clear. As a result, within a year Tymoshenko was fired and the anchor of the Orange Coalition – the crowd pleasing appeal of Yushchenko and Tymoshenko in December 2004 – imploded. In effect, then, the top leadership cannibalized itself.

In addition to the leadership fallout, President Yushchenko himself failed to govern effectively. Presented with a golden opportunity in early 2005 to steer Ukraine in a different direction, Yushchenko hesitated, preferring throughout much of the year to travel to the West to receive acclaim and recognition. Within Yushchenko's governing circle friction emerged between key advisors, with further delays in enacting the President's program. And, finally, Yushchenko often appeared disconnected from public affairs, seemingly content to dabble in hobbies and personal pursuits.

Personality differences and leadership foibles, however, do not sum up the declining fortunes of the Orange Coalition. Although Yanukovych lost the final presidential election of 2004, the margin of Yushchenko's victory was relatively small – about 51 to 48%. That in turn reflected the cohesiveness of the Yanukovych's political base in eastern and southern Ukraine, home to Ukraine's largest cities (except for Kyiv itself) and home to a large Russian minority with close ties to its easterly neighbor. Quarrels within Yushchenko's entourage as well as the President's inconsistent leadership presented Yanukovych and his followers with a golden comeback opportunity.

By 2006, with little to show for his Presidency, Yushchenko was in trouble, which surfaced in the form of a bitter defeat for his party in the parliamentary elections. Unwilling to reconcile with Tymoshenko, his original ally from the Orange Revolution,

Yushchenko offered the Prime Ministry to Yanukovich, to the disgust of many stalwart supporters of the beleaguered President but a short time earlier. By fall 2006, the improbable combination of Yushchenko and Yanukovich – bitter enemies during the Orange Revolution – was a fact.

Where does this leave Ukraine now and what are its prospects? First of all, it must be admitted that Yanukovich's victory suggests that Ukraine isn't so orange after all. It is at least arguable that the West, which bet heavily on Yushchenko, misread the nature of the Orange Revolution. For while 2004 did indeed mobilize millions with hopes for a new Ukraine, it was not, as often said, only a democratic awakening. Rather, it could be portrayed as the latest chapter in a contest for power within an elite circle that has misgoverned Ukraine since independence in 1991.

That explanation may account for the deep disillusionment of many Ukrainians for the inability of Yushchenko to root out corruption which pervades the government at all levels. Recall that one of the main reasons for the Orange Revolution was popular disgust with a political system that was wide open to bribery along with personal abuse and misuse of power.

Even if this interpretation is wrong – if, for example, Yushchenko sincerely wished to change the underlying ethos of government, but failed for personal reasons – other facts remain, with potentially serious policy implications for Ukraine and the West. First, Yushchenko's power has been diminished by constitutional reforms enacted in January 2006 that augmented the powers of the prime minister. In effect Ukraine is now a presidential-parliamentary system, with considerable leverage in the hands of the legislature and the ministers, many of whom answer directly to the legislature.

Secondly, the collapse of the Orange coalition along with the appointment of Yanukovich as Prime Minister means that Ukraine's westward movement will be slowed, if not arrested altogether. It means that neighboring states, such as Georgia and Moldova, could find it harder to continue their westward courses since Ukraine – a big state that straddles a large geographical expanse – may not be able to offer much meaningful support. It means that Poland, which championed Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions and played a key role in the Orange Revolution, is unsure of its eastern neighbor and hesitant to offer advice.

Finally, it means that Russia will be encouraged to step up its pressure on Ukraine, whether it be in Crimea, with a Russian majority and the Black Sea fleet, or with energy supplies, for which Ukraine is completely vulnerable. Some of this has already happened, as in January 2006 when Russia momentarily shut off gas supplies to Ukraine while claiming that Kyiv was siphoning gas transit deliveries to Europe. And although Russia soon backed down in the face of western outrage over what was perceived as political blackmail by Moscow, the point is clear: Putin is using, and will continue to use, energy exports to enhance Russia's international clout. The fact that Ukraine, with its many ties to Russia, ties that include language, religion, culture, and ethnic identities, currently is led by a Prime Minister with pro-Russian sympathies, disturbs many people both in Ukraine and in Eastern Europe and beyond.

The unraveling of the Orange Revolution against a backdrop of rising Russian assertiveness pose deep challenges for the West, and especially for the United States. In 2004, America championed the Orange Revolution, so much so that Moscow, angered by the turn of events in Kyiv, portrayed the Revolution as an “American plot” to weaken Russian influence across the East European expanse. By 2006 the momentum for Ukraine’s integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions, including NATO and the EU, has slowed substantially, in part because of fatigue within Europe over the breath-taking expansion of the EU in recent years. In the end, three related questions remain whose answers could go a long way in determining the strength and stability of Europe and the West:

1. Can Ukraine resurrect a coherent agenda of political and military reform or is the Yanukovych government destined to be but the harbinger of deeper splits and fissures within the country, with potentially disastrous consequences for the people?
2. Assuming a resumption of reform, can Ukraine convince an otherwise skeptical West to take it seriously, or are major western countries (i.e., France, Germany) so transfixed by their own energy security needs that they no longer care about Ukraine (or other former republics within the Soviet Union for that matter)?
3. Can the United States somehow convince European skeptics that Ukraine’s integration within the Euro-Atlantic institutions is important enough to be kept on the agenda, while telling Kyiv that it must continue to move forward or risk all?

#### Questions and Issues

- Why did the Orange Revolution go astray within two years?
- What are the principal consequences of the unraveling of the Orange Revolution?
- What challenges does this story present for Washington and for American policymakers?

## *America and Ukraine*



Delivering remarks with [Bennett Middle School Students](#) [President Leonid Kuchma](#), on signing a Ukraine-United States Joint Statement in [Kiev, Ukraine](#) June 5, 2000

Ukraine's importance for the United States derives from multiple factors: its size (the largest European country, excluding Russia); its strategic location, between a rapidly expanding European Union to the West and an increasingly authoritarian Russia to the East; its natural resources and function as a supplier of energy to countries of the EU; and the impact of Ukraine's domestic development on Russia's stability and democratic future.

Despite the evident importance of Ukraine for the United States, Washington was slow to react to Ukraine's independence in 1991 and thereafter. Only in 1994, with the signing of Trilateral Agreement between Russia, Ukraine, and the United States – an agreement in which Ukraine gave up all its nuclear weapons in return for assistance on cleaning up Chornobyl – did things change for the better. The amount of US assistance to Ukraine since Ukraine's independence now totals above \$3 billion.

From 1994-2000, American-Ukrainian relations improved dramatically and decisively. Bilateral cooperation ranged over a number of areas, including agriculture, defense conversion, energy, culture, science, and technology. Particularly impressive was the exchange of scientists and scholars in numerous fields as well as the opportunity for hundreds of Ukrainian students and teachers at all levels to travel to the United States and learn of American life and institutions face to face.

This pleasant interlude ended abruptly in 2000 when Heorhiy Gongadze, an independent, internet journalist, was murdered, allegedly on orders from top government officials, including President Kuchma. By 2001, the Kuchma regime, in its second term in office following re-election in 1999, had become an international pariah. Significantly, that development coincided with 9/11 and the warming of relations between Washington and Moscow, as Russian President Vladimir Putin rushed to offer assistance in the American-led war on Islamic extremism in the aftermath of the devastation of the Twin Towers in New York. For the next three years, from 2000-2003, relations between Kyiv and Washington froze, with little contact between high-ranking officials, although non-governmental assistance continued during this period.

Only in 2003, with the American attack on Saddam Hussein in Iraq and the offer by Kuchma of military and logistical assistance for that attack, did relations improve somewhat. President Bush was duly appreciative of Kyiv's support although, as 2004 dawned, words of praise from Washington were coupled with admonitions to Ukraine to assure free and fair elections for Kuchma's successor. In other words, the entire American-Ukrainian relationship was increasingly enclosed in a complex web of domestic and international events that made any simple characterization difficult if not impossible. On the one hand, clearly Washington's interest lay in Ukraine's emergence as a democratic state through a transparent presidential election, interest expressed by a steady stream of official visitors from America to Kyiv as 2004 unfolded. On the other hand, while welcomed, Kuchma's involvement in Iraq was perceived by many in the West and in Washington as an effort to buy time for his regime and to downplay criticism of possible fraud as the elections approached.

Whatever problems existed across 2004 evaporated in the drama of the presidential election at the end of the year. By the end of 2004, what had seemed unthinkable only weeks before – a post-Kuchma era dominated by democrats and leaders of progressive society – had transpired, due to the incredible surge of popular support for Yushchenko along with the outpouring of international acclaim for the new regime. The American role in that fast-paced drama was symbolized by Colin Powell, the outgoing American Secretary of State during the first Bush Administration, who roundly condemned the fraudulent results of the November 21 vote in which Yanukovych, the pro-Kuchma successor, won. His condemnation, along with the refusal of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in central Kyiv to end their protests, helped set the stage for the decision of the Ukrainian Supreme Court to overturn the November 21 vote and to call for a revote on December 26 that led directly to Yushchenko's election as President.

After the Orange Revolution, the US turned to Ukraine with praise and support. During President Bush's second inaugural speech in January 2005, Bush specifically praised Yushchenko for his victory in late December, coupling that praise with a commitment to freedom and democracy everywhere as the best guarantee of American security and stability. Scarcely a month later those words were given concrete meaning by a request from the Bush administration to the American Congress for a \$60 million dollar supplement for Ukraine to assist in the development of civil society and a free market. By the end of February, Bush and Yushchenko had met during the visit of the American President to Europe and the White House had extended an invitation to Yushchenko to come to Washington in April for talks on how to broaden the new dialogue and exchange.

The US believes that Ukraine's independence is still threatened by Russia, as evidenced by Russia shutting off gas to Ukraine in early January 2006. America thus would like to help Ukraine in its aspirations to become a NATO member, and later, and EU member. To help with such goals, the Millennium Challenge Corporation pledged \$45 million in June 2006 to help fight corruption (problems with combating public corruption disqualify Ukraine from receiving even more aid from the MCC). Additionally, US AID recently signed agreements working to support the rule of law in Ukraine through reforms and increasing transparency in the government. The US and Ukrainian governments have also signed agreements in the business and energy sectors, pledging reforms and improvements.

In the months since the elections, the country's dreams of continuing the Orange Revolution legacy have faded considerably. Supporters of the Revolution were disappointed by the appointment of business tycoons to Yushchenko's administration, despite his promises to separate business from politics. In the March 2006 parliamentary elections, no party won an overall majority, but the opposition Party of the Regions won a majority of seats. Following this turmoil, the Socialist party broke from its membership of the Orange Coalition, and formed a coalition with the Party of the Regions. The new coalition demands Yanukovich as prime minister, which would severely limit Yushchenko's power as president. Meanwhile, Yulia Tymoshenko calls for dissolving the parliament and holding new elections.

The current political situation in Ukraine is extremely fluid, with protesters again gathering on the Maidan, this time not to protest elections, but to protest the seeming dissolution of the government. With such an unstable government, at times it seems as though "Ukrainian fatigue" is setting in, as hopes for an effective democratic regime slip away. The political turmoil in Ukraine greatly affects the positive relationship that was growing between the US and Ukraine, and it is difficult to predict what will happen next.

Questions:

- Why is Ukraine important to the US?
- What was the importance of the 2004 elections to the US?

### *Ukraine and the EU*

With the election of Viktor Yushchenko, Ukraine has embarked on a new period in its history, one fraught with promise and peril. The promise is to build a stronger country through political, economic and social reform and to draw Ukraine into a closer relationship with Europe and the West. The peril is to squander the support of the population through half-hearted or mismanaged reform and continued corruption, thus aborting Ukraine's brightest moment since independence in 1991.

For Yushchenko, the most important long-term international goal is EU membership that will facilitate and strengthen Ukrainian democracy, civil society and a market economy. There are signs in early 2005 that this goal may take fruit, although historically the EU has shown scant interest in Ukraine. Indeed, under Kuchma, Ukraine regularly petitioned the EU to recognize it as a potential candidate for membership, only to be told that the petition was unacceptable. In part the traditional EU attitude reflected the difficulty facing the EU in digesting ten new Central and East European countries as well as in trying to decide what to do with Turkey's appeal for membership. In part, however, EU reluctance also drew on the belief of several key countries that Ukraine was in Russia's sphere of influence, and should remain so, rather than facing the formidable prospect of integrating a large, poor, and badly governed country.

That attitude began to shift in December 2004, when the EU sent Javier Solana, its foreign minister designate, to mediate the political crisis in Kyiv in the midst of the popular uprising. Other prominent EU figures were drawn in when Solana was accompanied by the



Polish President, Alexander Kwasniewski, and his Lithuanian counterpart, Valdas Adamkus. At the same time Lech Walesa, the hero of Polish Solidarity in the 1980s, traveled to Kyiv to speak on Independence Square, center of the Orange Revolution. And, following the vote on December 26 that brought Yushchenko to power, the European Parliament voted overwhelmingly for a resolution that asked Ukraine to be granted a “clear European perspective, possible leading to EU membership.” And although the resolution was nonbonding, it was, in the words of the prestigious Financial Times the best indication to date that “the EU’s door is open.”

By the end of January other developments were in the works. The EU was moving forward with a comprehensive package of measure to add substance to the stated desire for cooperation – the so-called EU-Ukraine Action Plan. This plan, as Solana noted in an article in the Weekly Mirror, foreshadows a “qualitatively new phase in our relationship.” It holds out the prospect for Ukraine of complete access to EU’s single market – the world’s largest of prosperous economies and affluent consumers. In addition to Solana, a key EU official, Ukraine retains the active support of Poland and Lithuania in its bid to join the EU and NATO. Thus, in April of this year, the Polish president promised to back Yushchenko’s efforts to have the EU soften its visa rules for Ukrainian scientists, medical personnel, and students.

In the end, and despite these hopeful beginnings, it will not be easy and the best that can be said about EU integration is that it is a long term objective. Ukraine is a large country with huge pockets of poverty and low wages, characteristics that make entry into the common market problematical. Poland’s Kwasniewski, Yushchenko’s most outspoken supporter, thinks that within 15 years Ukraine will be part of the EU. Pessimists and skeptics may feel vindicated, but if Yushchenko’s energy and determination are any indication, history may yet prove them wrong, as it did in 2004, when against all odds and predictions, the Ukrainian people stood up and voted for democracy and for the right to reclaim their European heritage.

### *Energy Issues*



When Russia shut off its gas supply to Ukraine in early January 2006, in the midst of a harsh winter, the world held its breath. Was Russia asserting its power, threatening Ukraine and the rest of Western Europe with discontinuing its gas supplies?

Russia was indeed trying to show its force and status on the world stage, although it denies such allegations. However, this was not the first time Russia has played the “petro-politics” game: it enforced similar tactics in the 1990s with the Baltic States, reduced gas

supplies to Ukraine in 1993 and 1994, in 2004 in Belarus, and stopped the flow of crude oil to Lithuania nine times between 1998 and 2000. Russian-owned Gazprom is known for its monopoly of Central Asian gas, creating major profits for Russia, and causing European consumers to worry about the dependability and security of their energy imports. When questioned about the incident during an online chat on the BBC's website, Russian president Putin denied any political motives. He stated that Russia will no longer give away its resources for peanuts, claiming that for fifteen years Russia sold gas under market prices and helped out its neighbors, but that now Russia must move to market principles.

Others suggest that one of Russia's motives was to express its unhappiness with President Yushchenko. In the 2004 elections, Russia supported Yanukovich, the losing candidate, and distrusts Yushchenko's policies of moving toward the West. Russia demanded a rewriting of the 2004 gas agreements, which are widely thought to have been written to aid Yanukovich's presidential hopes.

The demand for Ukraine to pay "world market prices" was settled in a manner no more transparent than in the past. Instead of submitting the case to international arbitration, the two countries settled it themselves. Five to six agreements signed in January 2006 by Russia and Ukraine remain private, and all Russian gas sent through Ukraine is contracted by RosUkrEnergo, widely considered to be a nontransparent company.

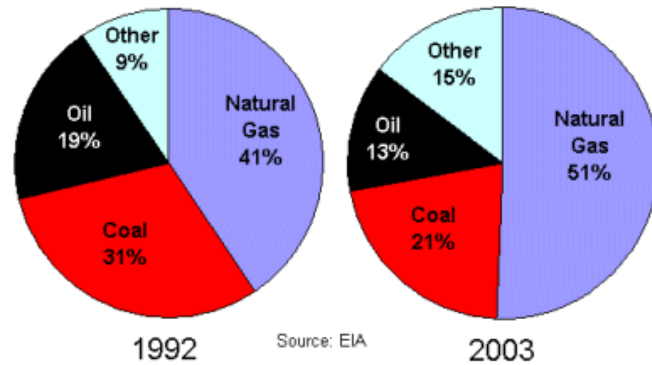
Ukraine's consumption of natural gas has increased since 1992, and it now accounts for over half of the total energy usage in Ukraine. There have been efforts to reform this sector, including a bill passed in 2001 encouraging alternative energy sector development through tax rebates, and the country is a member of the Methane to Markets Initiative, which pledges to reduce methane emissions. In July 2006, US AID launched a \$1 million campaign called US AID Ukraine Energy Efficiency Initiative Program, aimed at saving amounts of natural gas and to serve as a model for other businesses to emulate. As the December gas shut-off incident showed, there is still a lot of work to be done in this sector.

Ukraine is also the nexus of oil transit networks in the region: in 2005, Ukraine fed 67 percent of oil from Russia into the European oil market. However, the oil sector in Ukraine still reeks of corruption. Corrupt oligarchs still control gas deliveries from Russia and even domestic fields. Two-thirds of Ukraine's refineries were owned by Russian companies when Yushchenko came to power, and close to one hundred percent of the refined product that Ukraine exports is produced in Russian-owned companies. Russia completed a pipeline in 2001 that allows the oil to bypass Ukraine, effectively decreasing Ukraine's handling of its oil by 30 percent. Yushchenko has not made much progress in developing a system of fair investment, especially toward inviting Western investment, which means that the country remains dependent on Russia.

The *Oil and Gas Journal* reports that Ukraine has 395 million barrels of proven oil reserves, but Ukraine's refineries are working well below capacity, and thus the country is highly dependent on imported oil, primarily from Russia, secondarily from Kazakhstan. Ukraine would like to be a transit center for Central Asian oil by means of the Odessa-Brody pipeline and feasibility reports are being conducted currently.

Ukraine also remains dependent on coal, albeit less so than in 1992, as shown in the graph. According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 2003 Ukraine produced 63.5 million short tons of coal, but consumed 67 million short tons, making the country a net coal importer, despite their vast coal reserves. The coal industry continues to face woes: until the end of 2002, the coal industry was heavily subsidized, and over half of the mines were operating at a loss. Privatization efforts have been proceeding since 2003 at a slow rate. Additionally, 4,300 deaths since 1991 have been reported in the mines, making Ukraine's mines among the most dangerous worldwide. Since 1997, the World Bank has given over 300 million to help with restructuring Ukraine's coal sector.

Fig. 5: Components of Energy Consumption in Ukraine



In terms of electricity, the EIA reports that Ukraine's power sector is the twelfth-largest in the world in terms of installed capacity, which is at 54 gigawatts. Generation and consumption fell steadily after 1991, but have been trending upward since 2000. Ukraine could produce more than twice its energy needs, but problems with infrastructure and maintenance prevent it from doing so. The country has begun improvements through privatization efforts, the completion of two new nuclear plants, and more efficient usage procedures at other plants. In 2004, Ukraine exported 5.14 billion kilowatts to other countries such as Belarus, Moldova, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Ukraine is set to have its entire electricity grid integrated into the Union for the Coordination of Transmission of Energy (UCTE) by 2008.

After the gas shut-off crisis in January 2006, the world realized just how important Ukraine's role in providing and processing energy is. Because the energy sector in Ukraine is unstable and in need of much improvement, the world will continue to watch and assist the situation there.

Sources for further study:

US Energy Information Administration website on Ukraine: contains information about all energy sectors and is updated often.

<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Ukraine/Background.html>

## The Economy



A visit to Kyiv in 2006 is mind-boggling for anyone who has not seen Ukraine for the past decade. Even four years ago, for example, building cranes were conspicuous by the absence on the Kyiv skyline – today they dot the horizon and the air is heavy with the whirl of lifting gears and shouts from workers high overhead. Kyiv is in the midst of a building boom that shows no signs of slowing, let alone aborting. And not only in the city center – where retail shops and new businesses sprout almost daily – but along the periphery as well, where new homes arise like magic, testimony to the emergence of a new middle class, eager to buy and own property.

Now in its fifth year, the building boom is not the only sign that Ukraine's economy is taking off. Far from it. New cars flood the streets – expensive new SUVs and foreign imports – and drivers search endlessly for parking places, finally giving up and pulling onto the sidewalks already overflowing with impatient and well dressed consumers. Along the city's main boulevards, shoppers crowd into new department stores and retail shops, determined to spend their salaries and wages which have risen significantly since 2000. Indeed, aside from industrial manufacturing, it is consumer spending that is powering the economic surge, with consumer credit up by 75 per cent to date in 2006 alone.

All of this traces back to 2000, when President Yushchenko, then the Prime Minister under former President Kuchma, reformed the state finances and increased pension payments, helping to jumpstart an economy that until that point had been dead in the

water since Ukraine's independence in 1991. Those reforms generally are credited with providing the initial impetus for Ukraine's expansion AND for Yushchenko's political popularity that fueled his drive for the Presidency and victory during the Orange Revolution of 2004.

From 2000 the Ukrainian economy has grown at impressive rates and shows little sign of stopping. Kyiv is not the only recipient of the advance, although by far the most impressive to date. Other cities – Khar'kiv, Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk, L'viv, to mention four – also have benefitted. As a result, for the first time since 1991, international investors are beginning to take note: foreign direct investment has skyrocketed since 2004 to \$10 billion in 2005-2006, a figure equal in value to the cumulative total for the 14 prior years. True enough, as some might hasten to point out, Ukraine still lags woefully behind Poland and other East European countries when it comes to foreign direct investment, but the upward movement is remarkable, given the rate of increase and the potential for continuing investment targets.

Another sign of economic dynamism lies with the banking sector. This sector has seen a flurry of activity over the past eighteen months, as European banks have rushed in to acquire some of Ukraine's largest financial assets. Granted, the risks remain due to the absence of a credit control and accounting system on a level with the West. But the explosion of mergers and acquisitions is likely to continue as many European banks see Ukraine as a major source of growth. As a result, many key bankers predict that half of Ukraine's banks could come under control of European partners and holders by 2008, scarcely thirteen months away as of this writing.

None of the above suggests that Ukraine is home free when it comes to the economy. Big problems remain, foremost among them Ukraine's energy dependency on Russia (see above for additional analysis of Ukraine's energy problem). Agriculture lags, principally because many politicians refuse to sanction full property ownership in the countryside, a searing tribute to the Soviet legacy and to distrust of potential foreign ownership of Ukraine's fertile farmland.

Corruption also remains, with a handful of incredibly rich men who lined their pockets at everyone else's expense – and it is no accident that Ukraine has been dubbed an “oligarchical” economy par excellence. If outside investment is to continue, Ukraine must restructure its business system to reduce corruption and promote transparent business practices. There is no middle way now.

The latter point – the persistence of the oligarchs and their control of a corrupt economy – raises the final consideration here. Not long ago Ukraine's richest man, Rinat Akhmetov of Donetsk, said that Ukraine's economic future lay with the West, with European and North American markets and investors. Akhmetov is not alone in this sentiment, and the logic of this belief is that reform must come – big reform of Ukraine's convoluted business structures and underlying corruption – if he and others are serious. In other words, if Ukraine's oligarchs wish to continue their success, they are going to have to clean up their act, to put it simply. Otherwise they will be turned back and defeated by a lack of investment and of markets. They will have to retreat to the East, to Russia where

similar traditions of corruption and non-transparency exist, and where the future is also highly problematical. Do they fully realize this?

Thus, by the deepest of ironies, it may very well be that Ukraine's economic reforms and its economic future now rest in this hands of the very group that to date has stolen the lion's share of the national treasure. Can a generation of Ukrainian Rockefellers, Carnegies, and Kennedys be in the wings? Can Akhmetov rise above his natural instinct to make money through cronies and by underhanded means? These are questions worth pondering.

### *Ukrainian Reform Agenda*

Arguably, legal reform is the most pressing challenge facing Ukraine today. Without a just legal system, capitalism gives way to black markets and bribes, and attempts to gain justice get stymied by vacant courts and political agendas. From 2001 to 2002, small legal reforms took place on an incremental basis, but there were still not many programs in place. In the 2004 elections, the Yushchenko team placed reform high on its campaign platform. This created a wave of excitement in Ukraine because it meant that a politician finally had the political will to undertake the reforms so necessary toward inviting further foreign investment and moving toward entry to NATO and the European Union. After Yushchenko's victory, the country assumed reforms would be rolling along at a rapid pace. Unfortunately this has largely not been the case, leaving many feeling disappointed in the administration's progress. Some claim that the failure of the Yushchenko government has been its unfulfilled promises. Changes are finally on the government's agenda, although they have been slowed by the continuing political tumult.

The most notable push for reforms is taking place in the judicial realm, because ensuring justice is seen as critical in a civil society. At present, the public holds the judiciary in low regard, deigning the sector corrupt and disputing their judgments. In 2005, the American Bar Association together with Central and East European Law Initiative (CEELI) conducted a comprehensive judicial reform survey. The ABA CEELI Judicial Reform Index for Ukraine shows Ukraine scoring positively on just four out of thirty categories relating to judicial reform. Some of the group's biggest concerns were in relation to judicial independence:

improper influence on decisions by outside sources, lack of respect for judiciary decisions, lack of timely and proper enforcement of judgments, and opportunities for judges to be corrupted throughout their terms. The Criminal Code was established in 1960 and has just been amended since then, providing for a very unbalanced code. The Index found that the courts have overwhelming caseloads, but lack sufficient amount of judges to handle them.



Clearly, there is a lot of work to be done. The Yushchenko government recognizes this, and in May 2005, President Yushchenko established a Commission for Judicial Reform,

charged with developing reform proposals by the end of 2005. Curiously, this commission did not include any active judges, and only 4 out of the 40 participants were retired judges. To some, this meant that the people who knew best about what to reform were excluded from the process, as well as their opinions. The Commission developed a Concept plan outlining various judicial reforms. Critics denigrate the Concept as being very broad and theoretical; active judges complain that its ideas lack feasibility.

In May 2006, the President signed the Plan of Action established by the Commission for Judicial Reform. The Plan of Action covers a variety of reforms in addition to judicial reforms, but the courts were similarly not consulted concerning the Plan of Action. The Plan of Action calls for improving the judiciary system so that its procedure is on par of that of the European courts, which means that it needs to undertake a variety of measures, such as improving staff by creating a transparent selection process and requiring continuing education-type of courses judges, increase salaries and space, ensure adherence to the judicial oath, and keeping a register of all cases that is accessible to the public. There are many other measures outlined in the Plan of Action, including creating higher courts of civil and general jurisdiction and improving case distribution and workload, and all of these ideas require funding and commitment. Getting things moving beyond the paper is another task altogether, one which has been stunted by the lack of a Supreme Court Chairman, and because the Constitutional Court has not operated since October 2005 due to political reasons, leaving outside groups to claim that justice is being held hostage to political interests.

Outside of legal reform, other reforms such as tax, land, and religious reforms have also moved slowly. In 2001, Ukraine instituted changes to its tax code that lower corporate tax rates, decrease exemptions, and consolidate five income tax brackets into two. The new First Deputy Premier Mykola Azarov has recently stated that his goal is to start tax reform in 2007, and that taxes will soon be cut and import tariffs restored. Land reform has further privatized Ukrainian lands and provided for market-based agricultural financing. Reform of religious legislation has been instituted to guarantee the wide freedoms granted under the 1996 constitution and has proven successful.

Outside agencies have been helping to spur reform ever since Ukraine's independence. Most recently, US AID and the Ministry of Justice created a program to Combat Corruption and Strengthen the Rule of Law in June 2006, which means that both governments will be actively involved in planning and implementing activities to combat problems in Ukraine. Additionally instrumental in aiding reform has been the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which approved a \$45 million initiative to reduce corruption, strengthen the judiciary system, and improve governmental and administrative standards and regulations in Ukraine. The Corporation considers Ukraine a threshold country, which means that if Ukraine decreases the amount of corruption in the country, it may be eligible for more aid from the MCC. The US government also awarded a contract to Chemonics International in June 2006 to promote a rule-of-law program.

Despite this assistance, legal reform must ultimately be achieved by the Ukrainians themselves. Outside assistance can suggest language or specific reforms, but adopting—and, more importantly, implementing these reforms is a challenge unto itself. Legislators and legal enforcers need more than new laws alone: they need to understand

how these new laws work and the *ethics* that lies behind effective legal administration. The foundations for legal reform have been spelled out in the Concept and Plan of Action, and the next step is to establish a clear way to fulfill these goals and bypass the corruption that so often impedes change.

### *Corruption*

Ukraine’s pervasive corruption is a disease with the potential to destroy business, political, and educational interests and values. As of October 2005, Transparency International has placed the country 107<sup>th</sup> out of 159 countries—last place being the most corrupt—with a corruption score of 2.6 on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 meaning completely corrupt. Bribes and payoffs plague the government, business sectors, and higher education, while arbitrary rules, censorship, and even murder restrict Ukrainian media. In a country struggling to assert itself into the international sphere, corruption often holds Ukraine back.

The roots of corruption in Ukraine extend beyond the Soviet Era. Under the Russian empire corrupt practices became widespread, and the Soviet experience—typified by shortages, oligarchs, and few rubles to go around—only increased and solidified these practices. Over time, corruption became ingrained into local culture until bribery and dishonesty became taken for granted and viewed as the best and most efficient way to get things done. Indeed, in a system rampant with corruption, honesty and transparency often are prompting one to wonder whether Ukraine’s culture of corruption can ever be overcome. Current economic hardships and a lingering Soviet-instituted oligarchy have, if anything, made the problem worse today, paving the way for corruption in business, politics, media, and education.

Transparency International’s  
Corruption Percentage Index

Year	CPI	Ranking
2005	2.6	107/158
2004	2.2	122/145
2003	2.3	106/133
2002	2.4	85/102
2001	2.1	83/91
2000	1.5	87/90

Complicated and contradictory rules are the highest hurdle for businesses in Ukraine, difficulties that encourage payoffs to obtain business permits and evade taxes. Organized criminal groups often buy assistance from Ukrainian law-enforcement officials and bribe members of parliament to avoid financial disclosure. These circumstances lead to a widespread lack of transparency and disincentives for international investment.

Corruption in the political sphere is not limited to law-enforcement officers and members of parliament accepting bribes. Ukraine’s legal system lacks a reliable and adhered to judicial code of ethics, creating a system with a suspiciously high conviction rate where prosecutors have more influence than defense attorneys. Corruption also plagues elections: questionable media tactics skewed the 2002 parliamentary elections and critics charge both media and poisoning as rendering the 2004 presidential elections undemocratic. The new Plan of Action and its goal of reforming the judiciary is heartening, but only if the promised reforms take place.

Government regulations heavily constrain Ukrainian media. Most news and media sources adhere to these regulations, as deviance is heavily punished. The most brutal example of such punishment was the 2000 murder and beheading of Heorhiy Gongadze, a



journalist outspokenly critical of government corruption. Although Ukrainian President Kuchma denied any affiliation with the affair, subsequent evidence pointed directly back to him. In this way, the government controls much of the media, all but eliminating any reports of corruption and preventing media coverage advantageous to opposition groups.

The most discouraging sector for corruption, however, is Ukraine's universities, where the next generation is forming habits that will mold the future of the country. Corruption is rampant in institutions of higher learning, where students bribe entrance officials and professors on a regular basis, and Ukrainian students have the legal right to re-take any test, leading to widespread cheating. Although corruption varies among universities in Ukraine, the standards of integrity many graduates will meet if seeking further study or employment in the West are not only missing, but misunderstood.

Some argue that the culture of corruption plaguing Ukraine is unshakable while others contend that changes to exact improvement can be made. Through straightforward, enforced legislation, serious consequences for corrupt government officials, reduction of media regulations, and higher, strongly enforced standards in schools, Ukraine can make a turnaround. Yet with decades of corruption, little help for media, and a culture of corruption characteristic even in the young, the country's prospects for breaking free look grim. To break free from corruption, some Ukrainians and international investors are opting to break free from Ukraine.

***Ukraine's Cultural Rebirth:  
The National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy***



No institution symbolizes Ukraine's culture renaissance more vividly than the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Founded in 1632 by the reform-minded orthodox clergyman of Kyiv, Petro Mohyla, the Academy quickly became a leading educational center throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for scholars and churchmen from across Eastern Europe. Unfortunately that happy state of affairs did not last because by the early nineteenth century, Mohyla's doors were closed forcibly because of Russia's concern that culturally conscious Ukrainians might destabilize the tsarist empire.

Mohyla's doors remained shut under tsar and commissar – from 1817 to 1992 – when, like Ukraine itself, that is rather unexpectedly, the doors reopened and a new Academy emerged. One dedicated to the aims of its founder 360 years earlier: progressive education for Ukrainian young people, but this time with a secular twist.

The founder of the new Academy – and over a decade later its President – was a leader of Rukh, the coalition of democratically minded Ukrainian nationalists formed in 1989 to oppose communist rule. Vyacheslav Brioukhovetsky, and colleagues around him, saw the reestablishment of the once famous academy as their contribution to Ukraine's rebirth. From its reincarnation the school – renamed the National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy – was determined to uproot the system of nepotism and corruption that has plagued Ukraine in general and education in particular. The cutting edge of this broadside attack is the entrance exam that is graded anonymously at Mohyla. Today, Mohyla takes justifiable pride in being recognized across Ukraine as one of the very few educational institutions where admissions standards are based solely on a student's ability, rather than on cash or connections.

A second distinguishing feature of the Academy is its relationship to what might be termed the “outside world.” At Mohyla, the doors are wide open to Western educators. More Fulbright lecturers by far have taught at Mohyla than at any other Ukrainian university. One reason that Western educators (and not only Fulbright professors) are welcomed is that by official policy all students at Mohyla are proficient in English, one of two instructional languages, the other being Ukrainian. However, in addition, the faculty and students eagerly seek out western opportunities and contacts. And they are encouraged to do so by the administration and their peers. Mohyla's faculty regularly pull down Fulbright grants for research and/or teaching in the United States. Others journey to Germany or England under the auspices of similar programs for the same purpose.

Mohyla's existence throws into sharp relief several aspects of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian higher education. To begin with the most general, it reflects the proliferation of new schools at all levels and the diversification of higher education since the Soviet Union. By 2000, private universities and institutes comprised twenty percent of the student population. In one sense, the diversification of higher education reflects the realization of many parents and students that the old curriculum imparts skills and attitudes inherited from a highly centralized planning system ill adapted to the new economy and to conditions in the global age.

Diversification also mirrors a critical and often overlooked aspect of Ukraine's transformation during the first post-communist years: the emergence of an entrepreneurial mentality, and not only in business, that is risk prone in support of an idea or vision, in this instance in education. Dozens, perhaps hundreds of men and women across the education spectrum, from the ground floor up, have cast their fate and reputations with creation of bold, new educational ventures and enterprises. To that extent one can speak of the existence of an entrepreneurial drive that has gone unmeasured in the literature on educational reform and merits a fuller study.

Mohyla's success in promoting a progressive curriculum and in attracting western assistance also underscores the necessary ingredients of a reform agenda, whether in higher

education or beyond. To put it simply, reform lasted and deepened at Mohyla because it was there to begin with, in the stated mission of the University and the philosophy of its founding president. Reform will outlast Briukhovetsky because it is bigger than any single individual or, in this instance, any group of individuals. It IS the University. Seen from this perspective, western assistance to Mohyla works because it facilitates local actors.

At the same time, the key question for Mohyla – and for other reform minded ventures and initiatives (whether in education or public policy or business) – is sustainability. Kyiv-Mohyla is not a rich institution, although compared to many Ukrainian universities, it is relatively well off. Certain departments, such as the graduate level economics program, are generously endowed from without (Eurasia Foundation). But what happens when the Foundation pulls out? When the spigot is turned off? This is the challenge facing entrepreneurs and reformers across the spectrum in Ukraine.

Finally, Mohyla's success story – including the challenge of sustaining the progressive momentum embodied in the University – points to an overwhelming need if schools at every level are to go forward in Ukraine. And that is the imperative of carrying institutional change into the heart of Ukrainian education, which is the pedagogical university where a new generation of teachers is being trained. The battle for the future of Ukrainian learning and culture is being fought and will be won or lost in the main pedagogical universities. That is where thousands of new teachers are being trained, teachers who will fan out across a vast land to classrooms in the 20,000 plus schools. For Ukraine to prosper in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these universities will have to follow Mohyla's example and encourage active learning, creative thinking, and a new curricula. It can be done, as Mohyla and Ukraine's cultural history strongly suggests.

## *Religion in Ukraine*



Stories of religion in Ukraine are stories of solidarity and rivalry, characteristics of a state struggling with identity and religious freedom. Although some Ukrainians see a national religion as central to national identity, current constitutional standards prohibit state acknowledgement of any national religion—and rightly so. While Ukraine's constitution grants commendable rights for religious freedom, the struggle between this freedom and religion-based national identity has put the state in a relative quandary, a quandary exhibited in part by clashes between adherents of the Moscow and Kiev Patriarchates of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In July of 1995, a controversy arose over the burial place of Patriarch Volodymyr, a Patriarch under the Kiev branch of the Church. His followers felt he should be buried in St. Sophia's

Cathedral, but adherents of the Moscow Patriarchate forbade such a burial for an apostate priest and called out the Kievan police for support. The clash left Patriarch Volodymyr's coffin buried under the sidewalk just outside the cathedral and members of both Patriarchates unsatisfied with the outcome. *(Photograph: St. Michael's Church in Kiev by Jeremy Little)*

Quandaries such as this will be overcome only through time, as the interplay between national identity and religion matures. Indeed, the state has only recently re-entered the religious sphere after the long draught caused by Communism: in 1990, only 15% of Ukrainians considered themselves religious, while that number has risen to 70% today. In addition, 14% of people in Ukraine attend church weekly, contrasted with 3.6% in Russia. This increased religiosity resurrected the impact of religious history and demographics on Ukraine and brought to the forefront issues of national/religious identity and separation of church and state.

The overwhelming dominance of Orthodox religions in Ukraine can be traced back to Prince Vladimir's acceptance of Byzantine Christianity in 988 AD. This Orthodoxy survived despite invasion by the Mongols in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and a four-century occupation by Poland (although Poland's Roman Catholicism left a definite legacy). In 1596, the Union of Brest waged solidarity between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Ukraine and paved the way for establishing a Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church came into being in the 1820's and 30's, created in an effort to form a specifically Ukrainian church. In the mid 1900s many churches came under persecution, but none faced persecution as strong as that waged against the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which was eliminated by the tsars and heavily punished under Stalin. The fall of Communism brought religious revival and rivalry, reflected by acceptance of new Western religions such as Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses and deeper splits in existing Ukrainian churches. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which had traditionally looked toward the Moscow Patriarchate as its head, split to form the UOC Kiev Patriarchate, a separation influenced by nationalistic ideas and newfound independence.

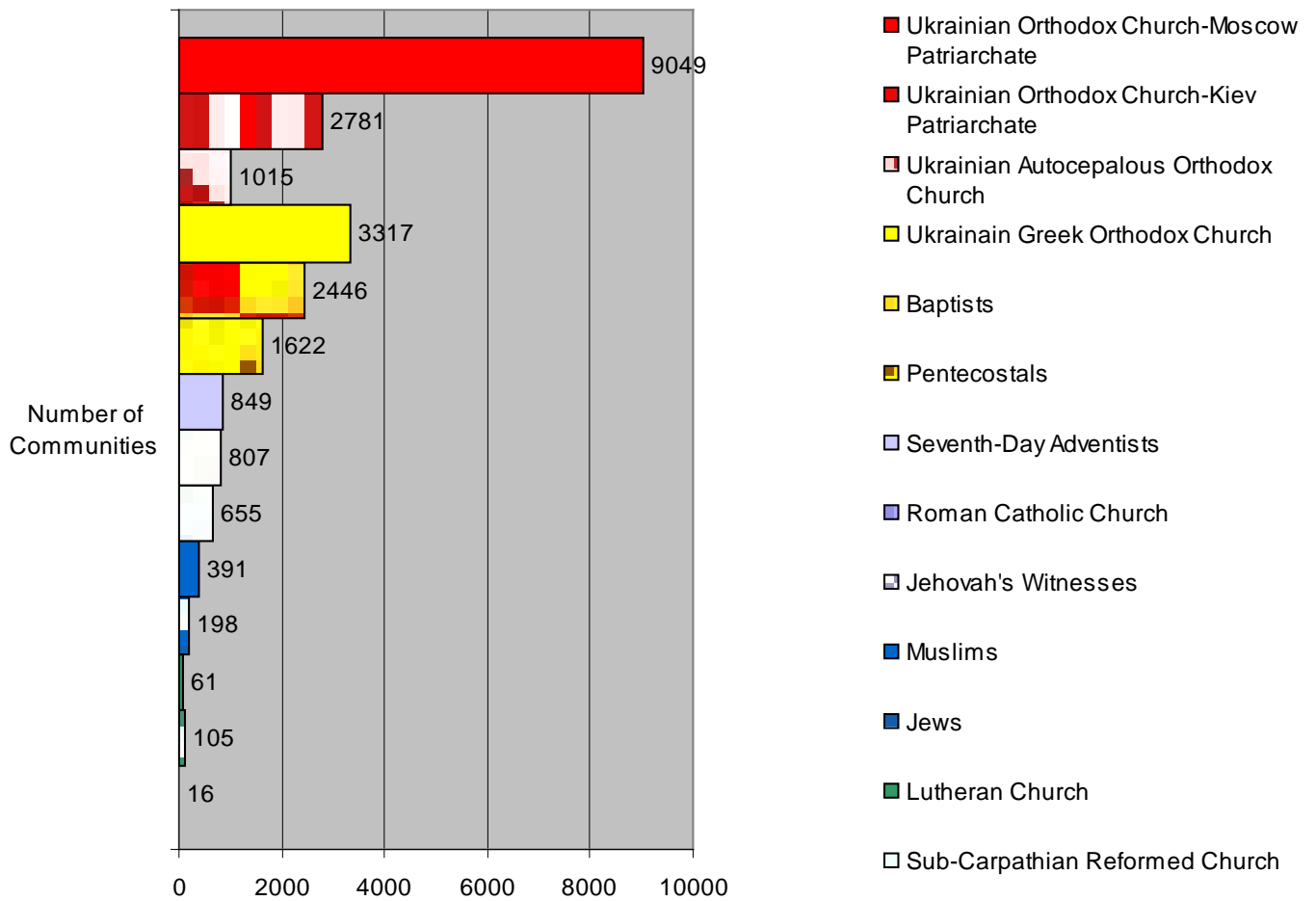
The current demographics of Ukrainian religion reflect much of this religious history. Ninety-seven percent of churches in Ukraine are Christian, and half of all Christians belong to one of three main Orthodox churches: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP), Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kiev Patriarchate (UOC-KP), or Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. The UOC-MP and UOC-KP are primarily found in central and southeastern Ukraine while the

*The Geography of Religion in Ukraine*



Autocephalous Church is primarily found in Western Ukraine. Although official records show that the UOC-MP has substantially more communities than the UOC-KP, some surveys have shown that the Kiev Patriarchate has greater membership than the Moscow Patriarchate (10.7% of the population compared to 17.8%, respectively), illustrating the questions of property and ownership created when churches break apart, as buildings are required to create communities. Major Catholic churches in Ukraine include the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church, mostly in Western Ukraine, and the Roman Catholic Church, which is primarily in Central Ukraine. The UOC–MP, UOC–KP, Autocephalous Church and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church are the four major churches in Ukraine. In addition, there are a number of protestant churches, the largest being the Baptist church, which is found throughout the country. The Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, Sub-Carpathian Reformed and Lutheran Churches are also well established in Ukraine. Jews and Muslims—the latter located primarily in the Crimea—make up small but important religious groups in Ukraine, while non-traditional groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses have also taken root.

Religious Communities in Ukraine



The history and demographics of Ukrainian religion prompts some Ukrainians—primarily in Eastern Ukraine—to consider the Ukrainian Orthodox Church as “the Ukrainian Church,” and membership in this church is associated with a certain degree of

Ukrainian-ness. Some are even so bold as to suggest state-building through the church and support state favoritism toward “Ukrainian” churches to reinforce a Ukrainian state. In addition, it is the view of many that Orthodoxy is genetic, yet a nationally-oriented Ukrainian will not belong to the UOC-MP. At the same time, Western Ukrainians are receptive to new religions from the West (and more receptive to religion in general) and harbor the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which stands as a reminder of persecution in the past. In these respects, religion reflects the demographic and political differences between East and West and is a critical factor in the creation of a Ukrainian national identity.

Although some Ukrainians have pushed for state favoritism of particular churches, Article 35 of the Ukrainian Constitution declares “the Church and religious organizations in Ukraine are separated from the state, and the school—from the Church. No religion shall be recognized by the state as mandatory.” In addition, the constitution provides everyone with “the right to freedom of personal philosophy or religion.” Ukraine has effectively upheld these standards, exhibited by the State Department’s Human Rights Report, which notes only the difficulties of some groups in gaining land to build religious structures—difficulties all groups experienced proportionately. Despite those pushing for a national church that will define what it means to be Ukrainian, it should be noted that no one church commands a majority of the population; religion in Ukraine is quite diverse, especially when compared to other European nations.

National/religious identity and religious freedom are two great forces at work in Ukraine. Although recent events have suggested a conflict between the two, many Ukrainian leaders—and even the Pope, during his seminal visit in 2001—see solidarity between the two notions. Ukraine and her people are still trying to find themselves, a search that often involves religion. Only as Ukrainian identity becomes more tangible and defined can religion can grow stronger in its separation from the state, a separation mandated by law, by international standards, and by the human spirit.

### Questions for Study

- What are the four primary religions in Ukraine?
- What are the roots of Ukrainian Orthodoxy?
- Into which two patriarchates is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church separated, and why is this significant?
- What percent of Ukrainians consider themselves religious?

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RISU (Religious Information Services of Ukraine). [www.risu.org](http://www.risu.org)  
*An excellent resource for statistics on Religion and up-to-date bulletins.*

*The Jewish Question:  
An Answer or a Tragedy?*



*Above: Jewish Cemetery in Berezhany. Photo taken by me in January 2001.*

What should be done about the Jews? This question has lingered in Ukraine for as long as the Jews have lingered, shouting for attention when 15<sup>th</sup> Century Polish occupation brought a wash of Jews to Ukraine and becoming less pertinent only as Jews emigrated from Ukraine by the thousands in the twentieth century. Indeed, the demographic trends of Jews in Ukraine have largely determined the magnitude and response to the Jewish question, turning a deep historical concern into a relatively peripheral issue.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Polish occupation, Poles used Jews as middlemen in trade with Ukrainians, a situation that made Ukrainians feel robbed and cheated; they perceived the Jews as making a large profit at Ukrainian expense. From these days prevailed a widely held perspective of Jewish affluence bought by treachery, a socioeconomic perspective that in reality never did exist. Although Ukrainian Jews have historically lived in urban areas and held professional positions, they are not generally wealthier than the average Ukrainian, nor do they obtain wealth at Ukrainian expense.

Three main waves of Jewish emigration from Ukraine coupled with the Holocaust have significantly altered the demographics of Ukrainian Jews. The first wave of emigration came with the 1917 revolution and radical alteration of the economic and political system. Jews, many of whom created a comfortable living through study and work, disagreed with the new system and its mandates of state property. A large number of Jews opted to leave

the country instead of facing persecution for refusing to support the new system. Two decades later, the remaining Jews had to confront the horrors of WWII. The Holocaust in Ukraine killed more than 1 million Jews—but many Ukrainian citizens were killed as well, making an emphasis on Ukrainian Jews during the Holocaust a controversial matter. Although both the Holocaust and Soviet system systematically oppressed Jews, emigration was extremely difficult and costly, if not impossible. In the 1970's the United States made deals with the USSR to allow Soviet emigration in return for political favors in Europe, bringing on a second wave of Jewish emigration from Ukraine, where many Jews fled to Israel, Canada, the United States, and Germany. The fall of the USSR marked the third wave of immigration, a process that continues today.

In many ways, the Holocaust and waves of immigration have essentially 'answered' the Jewish question for Ukraine: in cities where 5,000 Jews were found thirty years ago, there are only 1,000 present today; in place of questioning where Jews fit in society, there is questioning of where Ukrainian identity is found. In addition, serious economic concerns that affect all Ukrainian citizens have pushed ethnic tensions to the background. Although perspectives of Jewish-Ukrainian relations differ, the Jewish question has largely been answered by emigration—emigration initiated by the tragedies of historical perspectives, the Holocaust, and Soviet oppression. These tragedies, however, have largely faded into the past as oppression on the government level has evolved into to little more than discussions on the kitchen table level. Thus, while the question “What should be done about the Jews?” has historically troubled Ukrainians, today it lingers as a waft of the past, a once-unanswered question of tragedy that has all but been transformed to an unspoken—yet implied—answer of “nothing; many of them are gone.”

Questions for further study:

- What Jewish organizations exist in Ukraine?
- How has Jewish emigration affected foreign relations between Ukraine and Israel, Canada, the United States, and Germany?
- What age groups of Ukrainian Jews are left in Ukraine? How does this affect their quality of life?
- How do anti-Semitic attitudes in Ukraine function within the larger context of Europe?

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## *Ukrainian Folk Traditions*

Ukraine has a rich history of folk customs, stories, and art. Although Russian and Ukrainian traditions are similar and sometimes viewed as one and the same, Ukrainian folk culture is distinct and in many ways embodies what it means to be Ukrainian. The two most important types of Ukrainian folk art are *pysanky*, elaborately decorated Easter eggs, and *rushnyky*, embroidered hand towels. Both contain designs symbolizing family, marriage, life and death. *Rushnyky* are often used in Ukrainian weddings, which themselves are filled with traditions, including wedding marches, somber ceremonies, and riotous celebration afterwards. Fairy tales, folk tales, and suspicion of witchcraft are also distinguishing Ukrainian traditions, and many stories put an intriguingly strong emphasis on women.



Ukrainian folk traditions are observed most prominently in village life, and the onset of urban migration has diluted the influence and pervasiveness of folk traditions. At the same time, many urban Ukrainians have connections to the villages and old traditions and periodically go back to visit their homeland and observe village customs. One French professor at Mohyla University in Kiev—a very well educated professor who had studied in France for many years—once told her friend she was going to “my village” for the weekend, illustrating how even the most educated and urbanized of Ukrainians have ties to village life and customs. These traditions are at the heart of Ukrainian history, and even as the country transitions to a modern economy and migration movements redefine the importance of folk traditions, Ukrainians look upon these customs as part of themselves—as part of their identity.

### Questions for Study

- What are four aspects or attributes of Ukrainian folk traditions?
- Where are folk traditions most commonly observed?

### Sources for Further Study

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## *Women in Ukraine*



A top official of Ukrainian President Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party (left) and former prime minister Yulia V. Tymoshenko exchange folders with signed documents — an agreement to reunite the estranged allies of the Orange Revolution in a coalition following parliamentary elections. (Photo: Sergei Supinsky / AFP-Getty Images)

Much has changed since the Soviet Union's fall, and Ukrainian women are among those who are learning to adapt to the new world. Those intrepid enough to plunge into the employment pool face discrimination and earnings well below male counterparts, or have to resort to “entertainment” careers to survive. In desperation, others leave as “Ukrainian brides” for affluent Western men. While women can still obtain good education, it does not make their futures any easier.

During the Soviet era, women were supposed to be liberated by having outside employment, but most were overwhelmed by the double hardship of having a job and having taking care of a family. For some women, the new era means that they have a right to not work and a right to resume their traditional place in the home. Other women have continued to work, despite the setbacks women face in the Ukrainian workforce, such as unequal wages and positions as compared to men with equivalent qualifications. The average yearly earned income for men in 2002 was \$6,493, while the average earned income for women was \$3,429. According to the Human Rights Watch in 2003, the Ukraine Ministry of Labor's responses to gender discrimination in the workplace were subjective and unmethodical. Most women interviewed in the report were unaware that they could report unfair labor practices. The Human Rights Watch also reported in 2005 that women make up 80 percent of the unemployed in Ukraine.

Against these incredible odds, there are some success stories, such as Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, ranked the world's third most powerful woman by *Forbes Magazine* in 2005. Ukrainian women athletes have shown that they can compete at the highest levels: swimmer Yana Klockhova won two Olympic gold medals in the 2004 Games and the women's gymnastics team placed fourth.

Some headway toward helping women in the job market has been aided by the Women's Economic Empowerment project, sponsored by the US Agency for International Development and various Ukrainian NGOs. Since the project's inception, almost 13,000 Ukrainian women have received business training, and more than 1,000 of these women have started or expanded their own businesses. Non-governmental agencies such as Women's Information Consultative Center (WICC), which was founded in 1995, are also hard at work educating and informing women in Ukraine.

Another serious problem facing Ukrainian women is the massive human trafficking industry, be it in the realm of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Eastern Europe is a bastion for trafficking: people are sent from there to the rest of Europe, the Middle East, or Russia. Many women from rural areas in Ukraine unwittingly become victims of trafficking when they try to get jobs in the cities, while others simply submit to prostitution and claim that such a choice was unavoidable if they wanted to advance in the world.

The US State Department's Trafficking in Humans Report of June 2006 states that the Ukrainian government is not doing enough to combat the problem, although they are taking significant steps, such as establishing an anti-trafficking department in 2005 and cooperating with NGOs and international organizations to help victims.

Ukrainian women face other problems common to women in countries of the former Soviet Union: outnumbering and outliving men. As a consequence of these factors, there are many single mothers in Ukraine, as well as a low birth rate. The divorce rate in Ukraine is high, varying from 40 to 64 percent, depending on the source, and highest in urban centers. No system of child support payments exists, making life even more difficult for single mothers and creating a new backlash against having children.

Ukrainian women will continue to face challenges in the coming years, but they will undoubtedly meet these challenges with the same strength that has served them for centuries. After surviving communism, World War II, and a complete overhaul to democracy, Ukrainian women shall prevail against the odds.

#### Questions for further study:

- What are some of the most significant problems facing Ukrainian women today?
- What are some things that have been done to empower women?

#### Sources for further study:

- Kuehnast, Kathleen, ed. *Post-Soviet Women Encountering Transition: Nation Building, Economic Survival, and Civic Activism*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004.
- Bohachevksy-Chomiak, Martha. 1988. *Feminists Despite Themselves: Women in Ukrainian Community Life, 1884-1939*. Canadian Institution of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1988.

# Resources



**1. Readers Guide for Ukraine** is available at the School of Professional and Area Studies/FSI.

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## **2. Suggested Periodicals:**

- Current History
- East European Constitutional Review
- Foreign Affairs
- Foreign Policy
- Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs
- Post-Soviet Affairs
- Post-Soviet Geography
- Problems of Post-Communism
- Russian Review
- Russian Social Science Review
- Slavic Review

## **3. Web Resources**

Particularly useful is the Art Ukraine, a daily website at [www.artukraine.com](http://www.artukraine.com). This website provides a compendium of reports, including speeches by leading Ukrainian officials, on current events.



# THE UNITED KINGDOM

## A Self-Study Guide



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Winston Churchill's oft-repeated laconic statement about us and the "Brits"—that we are two great peoples separated by a common language—serves as a warning about how different we are and how little we know about each other. This Self-Study Guide is intended to provide U.S. Government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of The United Kingdom, mainly historically and politically, as a partly Romanized island country, a constitutional monarchy, a union of peoples on whose empire as recently as a century ago the sun never set, a multi-ethnic society. It is a digest describing the Isles' specific characteristics, but it is also much more than that. The author presents the past and present insistently leading the British to an overwhelming question about their own identity. It is among other things an essay on a nation seeking to define itself anew in a post-imperial, post-cold war, perhaps even post-modern and post-national setting. As such, this guide is designed as an introduction, as an orientation, and as a mild provocation. It intends to provoke the reader's interest, which can be satiated to some extent by consulting the readings to which reference is made along the way.

The first edition of the Self-Study Guide to The United Kingdom was prepared by Dr. Robin Niblett, Executive Vice-President of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Senior Fellow in that group's European Program. The views expressed in this Guide are those of the author or of attributed sources and do not necessarily reflect official policy or the position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center. This publication is for official educational and non-profit use only.

First edition  
July 2002

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THE UNITED KINGDOM

## Introduction

1997 – 2001 has been a period of intense change for the United Kingdom at the social, economic, and political levels. The ruling Conservative party has suffered an electoral collapse and ideological splintering and appears unelectable for the foreseeable future. A “new” Labour party has embarked upon fundamental constitutional reform to a polity and society hidebound by tradition. A surprisingly quick transition to a stable monetary economy has not slowed the continuing demise of the country’s once proud welfare state. By any measure, the last four years have been stressful for a country with such deep historical roots. The people of the United Kingdom have not yet decided whether to support the Labour party’s campaign to “re-brand” and reinvent the country, or whether to resist and choose a future as a “Little,” but more predictable England.

This guide provides a template for thinking about the challenges that the United Kingdom currently faces. It examines Britain’s physical and historical roots; its political and constitutional structure; its domestic economic structure and

performance; and its relations with its strategic partners – the United States and the member states of the European Union. The paper also pays special attention to one of the most fundamental decisions currently facing the country – whether to pool sovereign control over its currency and monetary policy alongside the other members of the European single currency, the euro.

# I. Environment and Its People

## Location / Geography

Located off the north western edge of the European continent, the United Kingdom is known as an island nation, although its domestic sovereign territory also comprises the northern portion of Ireland (see figure 1). It is separated from its nearest continental neighbor, France, by what the British call the English Channel and the French call “La Manche” (now linked, however, by the undersea Channel Tunnel between Dover and Calais). The United Kingdom also includes a collection of small nearby islands, with the Shetlands furthest to the north and the Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey) to the south off the French coast.

The United Kingdom contains large swathes of arable land across the South, the Midlands, the North, into the southern part of Scotland, and across Northern Ireland.

Fishing has long provided a source of food and income for the people, although over-fishing, especially in the North Sea between the United Kingdom and Norway, has depleted stocks and reduced catches considerably in the past decade.

After heavy clearing of forests for farming and, in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, for house and shipbuilding, Britain’s forests have declined to 7% of land cover. England’s only significant range of mountains, the Pennines, runs down the center of the island. The tallest mountain in the British isles, Ben Nevis, is found in Scotland at 1,343 meters.

The United Kingdom has a modest climate, rarely declining below 30 F in the winter, even in the colder north, and rarely reaching above 85 F in the summer. Rainfall can be persistent, even in the summer months.



**Population:** 58 million

**Area:** 244,820 sq. km. (94,525 sq. mi.); slightly smaller than Oregon.

**Cities:** *Capital*--London (metropolitan pop. about 7.1 million).

**Other major cities:** Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Bradford, Manchester, Edinburgh, Bristol, Belfast.

**Terrain:** 30% arable, 50% meadow and pasture, 12% waste or urban, 7% forested,





1% inland water.

**Land use:** 25% arable, 46% meadows and pastures, 10% forests and woodland, 19% other

Figure 1 from CIA World Factbook [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

## Resources

The United Kingdom possessed historically extensive mineral resources, such as tin, iron ore, copper, and coal. While tin and copper reserves were exhausted in the early nineteenth century, domestic coal production continued to serve as a backbone of the British economy – fuelling the industrial revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and then providing the bulk of the power to drive the country’s electrical grid into the 1980s. Starting in the 1980s, however, domestic coal production was gradually priced out of the domestic market by cheaper imports and the increasing cost of mining ever-deeper seams. In

the 1990s, gas has made significant inroads into Britain's generating capacity; to the extent where the new Labour government chose to limit future gas-powered plant construction to ensure a diversified power grid for the near future. Since the late 1970s, Britain has benefited greatly from oil and gas resources in the North Sea, which have not only supplemented domestic consumption, but provided a useful boost to Britain's current account.

## Religion

Most British are baptized into the Anglican Church (sometimes known as the Church of England). However, regular church attendance by Anglicans has declined steadily to a 6% minority of the population today. Nevertheless, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Church's highest ordained priest, still acts as a focal point for the country's "moral conscience," and the Church's institutional role in British society is underpinned by the titular role of the monarch as the head of the Church and "defender of the faith."

Anglicans today comprise 45% of the population, Roman Catholics 15%, Muslims 3.5%, Hindus 0.6%.

### Immigration

Britain possesses a self-perception as a relatively integrated racial society, drawn from the early and nationwide abolition of slavery in 1833 (the trade in slaves was abolished in 1807) and subsequent lack of a racial protest movement and body of law built around the fight against racial discrimination. The most significant waves of immigration in recent times have come from the West Indies in the waning days of British colonial control and then from the former colonies of the Indian Empire – India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Today, West Indians and South Asians comprise about 3% out of a total British population in 2000 of approximately 59,500,000. The self-perception of an integrated society, however, bears closer examination. Minority groups are poorly represented in the judicial profession, in the police, the military, and among politicians. In 2000-2001, violent riots erupted in cities across the North of England involving the second generation of Asian immigrants, many of whom live in economically depressed urban areas and are believed to have suffered academically and economically from a rigid adherence to multiculturalism among immigrant groups.

## Muslims in Britain

The sense of a growing cultural divide, especially between Britain's Muslim population and the rest of Britain's citizens, has been thrown into sharp relief by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the discovery of British Muslim citizens among Al Qaeda's forces in Afghanistan; by the infamous case of Richard Reid, the "shoe bomber;" and by the British origins of the ring-leader in the kidnap and execution in Pakistan of Daniel Pearl, the Wall Street Journal reporter. The fact is, however, that Britain's Muslim population is highly diverse, reflecting successive waves of Muslim immigration. This started in the 1950s, following the Hindu-Muslim violence and political turmoil in the Indian subcontinent that led to the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the 1960s, Africanization policies in countries such as Kenya and Uganda led to an influx of East African Asians, many of who were Muslims. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the arrival of Iranians fleeing from the Iranian revolution. In the 1980s, members of political dissident groups from Arab countries, such as Shi'as from Iraq, and other dissidents from the Gulf states also made their home in the UK.

As a result of this "staggered" pattern of immigration, British Muslims are a diverse grouping, differing in their level of education, their social and economic conditions, their degree of integration into British society, their links to their home countries, and their commitment to political activism. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis appear to be the most disadvantaged economically; suffer the highest levels of unemployment (as high as 40% among Pakistani men in 1994); and have the lowest levels of academic achievement. Nearly half of Britain's Muslims and the majority of Arabs and Iranians live in and around London. Other major concentrations include Birmingham, where Muslims constitute 8% of the city's total population, and Bradford.

The vast majority (around 85%) of Britain's Muslims are Sunnis. Within the Sunni and Shi'a communities (the latter originating primarily from Iraq, Iran, and other Arab states) there is also great religious and political diversity, with different religious schools competing for influence and with dividing lines drawn primarily between traditionalists and activists and between traditionalists and modernists. Nevertheless, there has existed in the UK since the mid-1990s an extremist fringe, among which five groups stand out in particular: (1) the Supporters of Sharia (SOS), based in north London and bringing together members who had worked or fought in Afghanistan and Bosnia, (2) the Al-Muhajirun, which supports Islamic movements in current secular Arab states, (3) Jihad, which had ostensibly maintained relations with Osama bin Laden, (4) Gamaa Islamiyya, an offshoot of the Muslim Brothers based in Egypt (accused of the 1997 Luxor attack), and (5) the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), an umbrella group for the most militant of Algeria's Islamic movement.

Crucially, there is very little in the way of assimilation of the Muslim community within British society. Most Muslims see their mosque-based communities as the central focus of their social lives. Muslims in Bradford, Birmingham, and the East End of London live largely in closed communities. Despite a growing involvement in local politics and a turnout at parliamentary elections that parallels other British communities (voting primarily for Labour), Muslim representation in Parliament is very low.

A central issue of concern since September 2001 has been the extent to which Middle Eastern and other countries provide support to Muslim groups in the UK in order to exercise some form of political influence. Saudi Arabia provides large quantities of assistance for the building and maintenance of mosques, while countries such as Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Libya provide lesser amounts for the same purposes. Nevertheless, a number of Britain's Muslim groups are active opponents of the current regimes in the Arab world, an issue that has caused tension between the British government and its Arab allies.

Looking ahead, the greater cause for concern lies in the rising militancy of many young Muslims in Britain. 51% of Pakistanis were born in Britain and yet they and their counterparts from Bangladesh and Kashmir increasingly identify themselves as Muslims first and by their ethnic group second. This does not reflect so much an adherence to the religious principles of Islam as much as an emphasis on Muslimness in order to develop their political identity. Riots in Muslim-dominated neighborhoods first in 1996 and most recently and violently in the summer of 2001, reflect a frustration among young Muslims that neither their parents' passivity nor the British establishment can protect their interests from economic deprivation or growing racial attacks.

### **The British Class Divide**

At the same time, some of the most distinctive sources of societal division in the British system derive not from issues of religious persuasion or ethnic background, but from a "class divide" that continues to be sustained by a two-tiered education system. Wealthy children are sent to private, often boarding, schools (confusingly termed "public schools for those schools that cater for children from 13-18), while the majority of children go to state, "comprehensive" schools, where expected standards of educational achievement are, in general, noticeably lower. Education is mandatory in the U.K from ages 5-16. While the number is declining, a substantial percentage of children still leave school at 16. At the same time, only about 18% of British students go on to college education, although this number is on the increase. The government is trying to move to a more American system, promoting higher education while lessening costs to government through a new focus on student loan schemes.

While access to promising careers in banking, industry, and many service sectors is now based to a far greater extent on meritocracy, top-level positions in finance and among barristers and the judiciary continue to be the preserve of the privately-educated class. One of the most noticeable features of the United Kingdom is the extent to which, the moment a person utters their first sentence in a conversation, it is possible to tell from their accent whether they have benefited from

a private or comprehensive education, with the former sharing a common “upper class” accent and the latter revealing their regional origins and, thus, their “lower” / “working” class roots.

<p><b>People</b>          Population (July 1999 est.): 59.1 million.          Annual population growth rate (1999 est.): 0.24%.          Major ethnic groups: British, Irish, West Indian, South Asian.          Major religions: Church of England (Anglican), Roman Catholic, Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), Muslim.          Major languages: English, Welsh, Irish Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic.</p> <p>Education: <i>Years compulsory</i>--12. <i>Attendance</i>--nearly 100%. <i>Literacy</i>--99%.          Health (1999 est.): <i>Infant mortality rate</i>--5.78/1,000. <i>Life expectancy</i>--males 75 yrs.; females 80 yrs.          Work force (1999, 28 million): <i>Services</i>--75.2%; <i>manufacturing</i>-- 15.6%; <i>construction</i>--6.5%; <i>agriculture and fishing</i>--1.9%; <i>energy and water</i>--0.8%.</p>	<p>Questions:</p> <p>-What efforts are local and central governments making to better integrate Britain’s immigrant communities into British society?</p> <p>-Is Britain finally transitioning into a classless society, where position is</p>
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determined by merit more than heritage?

### Further Reading:

Islam, Europe’s Second Religion: New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscapes. Shireen Hunter, ed. Praeger, 2002.

Britain TM: Renewing Our Identity. Mark Leonard. Demos, January, 1997

## II. History and its Legacy

### The Birth of England and the British People: A Tale of Invasions

At the outset, Britain was inhabited by Iberian tribes between 600 and 400 B.C. However, Britain became primarily a Celtic nation as Celtic tribes moved into the British isles from Gaul (France), the Danube Basin and areas North of the Alps. The word “Breton,” derived from the name *Pretanikai nesoi*, given to the people of the British isles by the Greek explorer Pytheas in 325 B.C., signified “the land of the tattooed men,” a practice much favored by the Celts.

Julius Caesar undertook the first Roman invasion of Britain in 54 B.C., but, for a century after Caesar’s departure, Britain was forgotten by Rome, being a source of only the most meager tribute. It was not until 43 A.D., under the emperor Claudius, that Rome undertook a full occupation that extended to the mountain regions of Wales and Scotland (Hadrian’s wall still stands as a testament to the Roman Empire’s northernmost reach). The Romans bequeathed to Britain excellent roads and a number of carefully constructed towns in Roman style (Bath contains some of the most elaborate Roman ruins from this period; “Londinium” owes its roots as Britain’s capital both to its port and its location as the cross-section between Roman roads cutting from North to South).

Rome’s rule of this far-flung colony decayed during the third century, as Rome’s legionnaires became separated from their capital and its generals sought to maximise their power at the expense of a decaying core. By the time of Rome’s collapse in 410, most of the legions had departed, leaving behind a people unprepared to protect themselves from war-like neighbors on the British isles and off their coast. Angles, Jutes, and Saxons crossed the sea, warlords and marauders who filled the vacuum, pillaging the country and destroying its infrastructure. Within a hundred years, few traces of Rome’s

occupation remained. Even the language lost most traces of its Roman influence, unlike Mediterranean countries closer to Rome's center, and acquired instead the Anglo-Saxon linguistic base that lasts to this day. Direct traces of Britain's Celtic heritage, especially in terms of language, are most prevalent in Wales, where Welsh remains the primary local dialect, and in parts of Scotland.

Angles and Saxons, rather than establishing a new race in Britain, added their Germanic influence to the pre-existing mixture of Iberian, Celt, and Roman genes which had preceded them. Their kings also put up little resistance to the arrival of Christianity from Wales and from Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries. Starting from the eighth century, all of England formed part of the Roman Church.

That same century, however, saw the arrival of marauding attacks by Norsemen from what now constitutes Denmark, Sweden, and Norway – the next wave of outsiders to embark upon an invasion of England. By 851, one hundred Danish ships sailed up the Thames estuary and took London by storm. Full Danish control of England and its disunited Anglo-Saxon kings was prevented only by the legendary King Alfred. Having drawn a line between Danish and Anglo-Saxon control of England, the scene was set for King Canute's uniting of the two groups in 1016. Despite this bold act, competition for the crown of England between diverse ruling families eventually drew England's last major foreign invasion over from the North of France, where William the Duke of Normandy linked to one of the families and backed by the Pope in Rome, laid his claim to the throne. After defeating his rival Harold, at the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror was proclaimed King of England in 1066, paving the way through his reign for the emergence of what we now recognize as the British nation and its particular institutions.

Before reviewing the history of Britain's institutions of government, it is worth noting that Britain, unlike most of its European neighbors, was sheltered for the next millennium from further invasion.

## **Britain's Two Distinctive Institutions**

# **The monarchy**

Several features define the United Kingdom. One of the most central is the monarchy, which, from William the Conqueror onward, has provided England, and then the United Kingdom its head of state in an unbroken line, except for a brief period from 1649 – 1660 (described below) through to the present day.

The dynastic lines of the British monarchy started with William the Conqueror (1066 – 1087) and his Norman and Angevin successors, William II (1087 – 1100), Henry I (1100 – 1135), Stephen (1135 – 1154), Henry II (1154 – 1189), Richard (1189 – 1199), and John (1199 – 1216).

Next came the Plantagenets, with their inter-linkages with the French royal family, Henry III (1216 – 1272), Edward I (1272 – 1307), Edward II (1307 – 1327), Edward III (1327 – 1377), Richard II (1377 – 1399), Henry IV (1399 – 1413), Henry V (1413 – 1422), Henry VI (1422 – 1461), Edward IV (1461 – 1483), and Richard III (1483 – 1485).

Then the Tudors, Henry VII (1485 – 1509), Henry VIII (1509 – 1547), Edward VI (1557 – 1553), Mary (1553 – 1558), and, most famously, Elizabeth I (1558 – 1603).

Since Elizabeth left no direct heir, then came the Stuarts, with their Scottish ties, James I (1603 – 1625), Charles I (1625 – 1649), Charles II (1660 – 1685), James II (1685 – 1688), William and Mary (1689 – 1702), and Anne (1702 – 1714).

Finally, there are the Hanoverians, with their German family ties, George I (1714 – 1727), George II (1727 – 1760), George III (1760 – 1820), George IV (1820 – 1830), William IV (1830 – 1837), Victoria (1837 – 1901), Edward VII

(1901 – 1910), George V (1910 – 1936), Edward VIII (1936 – abdicated), George VI (1936 – 1952), and Elizabeth II (1952 – present day).

While the monarchy has demonstrated a remarkable persistence through nearly one thousand years, its control on the levers of power has declined dramatically, first, following the execution of Charles I in 1629 at the command of Parliament; then after George I and the arrival of Hanoverians, when ministerial power became the prerogative of the government and not of the monarchy. Finally, in the last one hundred years, since the death of Queen Victoria, the indirect power of the monarchy has also been on the wane, as we shall discuss below.

Britain now possesses a “constitutional monarchy,” meaning that the monarch still acts as the titular head of state, but apart from having the right to dismiss Parliament and call a new election, he or she exercises no authority over the government in the exercise of its duties.

### Questions:

-The British monarchy has retained an unbroken line as the country’s head of state for nearly 1,000 years. Will the monarchy retain this position for the next 100 years? What chances are there of a republican movement appearing in the UK?

### Further Reading:

History of the British Monarchy. David Starkey. September, 1999.

The Monarchy and the Constitution. Vernon Bogdanor. November, 1997.

A History of Britain: At the Edge of the World 3500 BC-1603 AD. Talk Miramax, October 2001.

A History of Britain: Wars of the British, 1603-1776. Talk Miramax, 2001.

A History of Britain Vol. 1: At the Edge of the World? 3000 B.C.-A.D. 1603. Simon Schama BBC Consumer Publishing. October, 2000

A History of Britain Vol. 2: 1603-1776. Simon Schama. BBC Consumer Publishing. October, 2001

## The History of Parliament

A second defining British institutional feature is the Parliament. First called into being under Edward I (the Confessor) around 1305, it possessed from its earliest days a distinguishing characteristic of today: two houses – an upper chamber (now known as the House of Lords), composed initially of bishops and the higher nobility (barons), whose seats were passed forward by birthright, and a lower chamber (now known as the House of Commons), composed initially of appointments from the petty nobility (knights) and burgesses (well-to-do merchants). In Edward’s day, the purpose of the Parliament was to enable the King to consult and legitimize the imposition of taxes on these different classes of the state. It did not control spending, voting on taxation, or the right to make laws, all of which remained the prerogative of the King. By instituting this two-chamber system from the outset; however, England avoided the emergence of the deep-seated hostility between the classes that came to haunt most continental countries, including France in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite its limited powers, especially in the face of such strong Tudor rulers as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, the institutionalization of Parliament led gradually to its emergence in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century as a political presence if not a political force within the United Kingdom. Parliament's gradual acquisition of political power emerged from its clash with James I, the first of the Stuarts, who took the throne after the death of Elizabeth in 1603. James I sought to impose on Parliament the doctrine of the divine and hereditary right of kings, whereby the king became a sacred personage and Parliament merely recorded his divine ordinances. This absolutist doctrine which was also espoused by Charles I, his successor, deeply offended the Commons. The desire of both kings to improve relations with catholic Spain and France also went deeply against the grain of the mass of the people and the Commons. A deep rift opened between James' and Charles' favoring of a "High Church," more tolerant of catholicism, and the growing calvinism and puritanism of the English people. In 1629, the clash between parliament and Charles I came to a head, with Parliament introducing the "three resolutions," passing final authority over spending from the monarchy to parliament and, in response, Charles I disbanding Parliament. There ensued civil war in England from 1642-46 and, with the defeat of the royalist forces, Parliament's decision to execute Charles I in 1649, with the encouragement of Oliver Cromwell, head of the Puritan army.

England's ensuing flirtation with republicanism proved short-lived as the people quickly grew wary not only of the rigid policies of the puritans, but also of the seeming tyranny of a parliament controlled by the Cromwellian army, and then a country with no Parliament controlled by Cromwell. With Cromwell's death, Charles II, Charles I's son, was recalled from France to take the throne. Despite this restoration, the balance between monarchy and Parliament had been changed for good. Although Parliament did not impose a cabinet between itself and the King, it did control the revenues at the King's disposal and prevented him from having a standing army.

The further transformation of the monarchy into its current constitutional role took place after the death of Queen Anne, when, childless, Parliament refused to turn for succession to her Catholic brother. Instead, in 1714, they reached out to George I, great grandson of James I, who had been brought up in Germany (Hanover) and spoke no English. With his arrival, ministerial responsibility shifted to Parliament, with the monarchy in an elevated form of constitutional supremacy only.

## Parliament Today

This relationship between the British monarchy and Parliament has now evolved to the point where the monarch is head of state in name only. Elections to the House of Commons, whose members are divided today primarily between members of the Labour and Conservative parties, are designed to produce a majority party that is then invited by the monarch to form a government. Britain's "first-past-the-post" electoral system, whereby members of parliament (MPs) are elected in winner-takes-all constituencies around the country, leaves little room for the sort of small parties fostered by countries that practice variants of proportional representation (whereby seats in parliament are apportioned as a percentage of the overall vote). The leader of the winning party becomes Prime Minister and has considerable discretion within party rules to choose his or her cabinet. With a clear majority in Parliament, the only real check on the power of the government is exercised by the House of Lords.

However, the House of Lords (whose membership and terms of office are currently under review by Tony Blair's "New Labour" government--see below), is entitled only to review legislation passed by the House of Commons, and may reject it only a maximum of three times, before the amended legislation can be forced through by the government. The Lords' main influence, therefore, derives from its ability to embarrass and expose excesses in government legislation. This can have impact, especially since the House of Lords has tended to demonstrate an independent streak, even when its majority has matched the political hue of the party in control of the Commons, as Margaret Thatcher discovered on a number of occasions and Tony Blair is now discovering over the issue of the curtailment of civil rights in the wake of September 11.

## Questions:

-What sort of check does the House of Lords actually apply upon the House of Commons?

-The British Parliament has been called the “mother of all Parliaments.” Can Parliament retain its vibrant position as the forum for genuine public debate and the airing of popular grievances in an era of increasingly Presidential governance?

### Further Reading:

Parliament. Nathaniel Harris. Hodder Wayland. November, 2001.

## The British Empire: A Lasting Legacy

Britain’s recent history as an imperial power that, at its zenith, stretched across four continents, has had a defining impact not only on Britain’s position in the world, but also on the psyche of the British people. The rise and demise of the British Empire can be traced back initially to the reign of Elizabeth I. During her reign, the British established their first precarious fishing communities on the coast of Newfoundland and also attempted to establish a colony on what they called Virginia. Elizabeth’s reign, also marked the beginning of Britain’s mastery of the seas, with Francis Drake and other British mariners developing ships and naval techniques that held the upper hand over those of the 16<sup>th</sup> century’s principal empire: Spain. British colonization of North America did not really get into full swing until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, especially with the wake of the persecution of the Puritans after the restoration of the monarchy. At the same time, England acquired its first colony in India, when Bombay was ceded to British control as part of the dowry offered to Charles II.

Gradually, over the next three centuries, the British Empire took shape. After the loss of the American colonies in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, it still extended at its height in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under Queen Victoria from Canada and the West Indies on the American continent, across key ports in the Mediterranean (Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus) to North Africa (Egypt and Palestine) and down East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa) across what are now the Gulf States to the “jewel in the crown” – India – and thenover, again to Burma, Malaysia, and Singapore, through portions of the Indonesian archipelago (Borneo, New Guinea), down to Australia and New Zealand. In addition, the British Empire also controlled key ports around the world, such as Hong Kong and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

At the heart of the success and longevity of such a far-flung empire was not just the British Navy, but also, the effort of successive governments to grant an element of autonomy to those parts of the empire where large communities of the caucasian race had taken root. The key to this British approach was the establishment in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century of the Commonwealth of Nations, which was composed of Dominions, encompassing major English-speaking colonies such as Canada, South Africa, and Australia. In the Dominions, government was by self-representation, but with a Governor General consulted on the selection of ministers and serving as the link between the government and the country’s head-of-state – the British monarch.

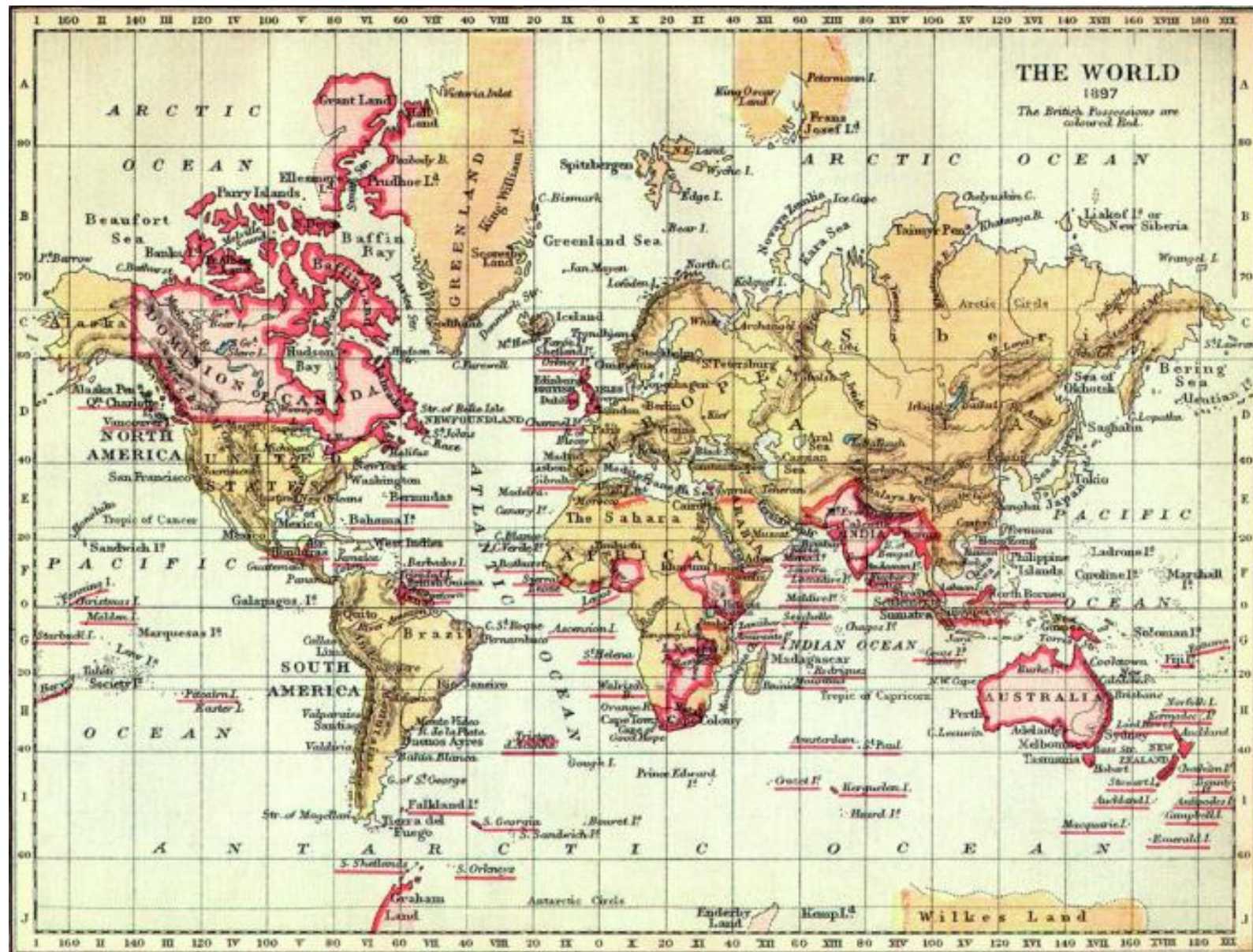
Most remarkable, however, was the way in which the British controlled colonies that were not granted self-representation, not only in Africa, but, most notably, in India. There, 5,000 British administrators, backed by 75,000 troops and 150,000 native troops, held 350 million Indians in peace (with the occasional riots) and instituted significant improvements in land cultivation, irrigation, education, and health across the sub-continent.

In the wake of the first World War, Britain succeeded in holding together the bulk of its empire. In the case of the Dominions, these received separate representation in the League of Nations. Through the Imperial Conference of 1926 and the second Statute of Westminster in 1931, the British Parliament gave up the power to legislate for the Dominions on



either internal or external matters; transferred the right to make peace or war and to negotiate treaties to them also; and agreed that Dominion Prime Ministers would derive their power directly from the Crown. In 1921, Ireland was given a separate status as the Irish Free State, although the northern part of the island, largely protestant, retained its link to the United Kingdom. In 1936, Britain relinquished control of Egypt, but retained control over the Suez Canal.

### Map of the British Empire, 1897



from <http://www.btinternet.com/~britishempire/empire/maproom/pinkbits1897.htm>

The Second World War, however, had more devastating consequences for the British Empire. Britain finished the war deeply in debt and unable to sustain the costs of maintaining its far-flung possessions around the world. In Asia, Britain never recovered from the material or psychological impact of its ouster by the Japanese, abandoning Burma and Ceylon in 1947 and Malaysia, after coping with a Communist insurgency, in 1957. In 1945, the Labour government in London followed through on its electoral pledge and, in the face of growing popular agitation and religious discord, offered India full independence in June 1948. Britain left Palestine the same year. Its withdrawal from its African colonies and its island possessions in the Caribbean continued through the 1960s and 1970s, as the British relinquished, in most cases voluntarily, the remnants of their empire. The bulk of these former colonies became members of the Commonwealth, in

many cases keeping the British monarch as their titular head of state and preferential access for their modest exports to the British market, but with full political control over all aspects of government.

By the 1990s, the British Empire had shrunk to a few outposts some of accidental relevance (for example, Gibraltar, Belize, and a number of Caribbean islands), some of strategic or economic importance (for example, Hong Kong and the Falklands). However, the self-perception of being a former imperial power, underscored in the continued use of the term “Great Britain,” still animates the British public and its day-to-day politics.

### Questions:

-How was Britain able to conduct such a relatively painless withdrawal from Empire after World War II? What has been the legacy of its rapid withdrawal (Kashmir, Palestine)?

-How does Britain square its circle of an insular public-suspicious of ‘foreigners’-with its legacy of colonial ties and continuing global diplomatic influence?

-How important a role can the Commonwealth play in the future?

### Further Reading:

The British Empire. Jane Samson, ed. Oxford University Press. June, 2001.

The British Empire, 1558-1995. T.O. Lloyd. Oxford University Press. November, 1996.

## III. The United Kingdom today

### Constitutional and Political Structure

Britain’s political institutions -- the Parliament and Monarchy, in particular – continue to play a central role both in the British people’s perception of their national identity and in outsiders’ perception of Britain’s national uniqueness, more so than do the political institutions of other West European countries such as France and Germany. This is due partly to their long history, but partly also to the fact that the British political establishment has consciously built the concept of the “United Kingdom” around these institutions. It is important to note, therefore, that, since the mid-1980s, the British people’s confidence in their institutions has declined significantly and that these institutions are trying to find a new sense of purpose.

*The Monarchy:*

Confidence in the monarchy, already low in the early 1980s at a little over

## Government

**Type:** Constitutional monarchy.

**Constitution:** Unwritten; partly statutes, partly common law and practice.

**Branches:** *Executive*--Monarch (head of state), Prime Minister (head of government), cabinet.

*Legislative*--bicameral parliament: House of Commons, House of Lords; Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, and Northern Ireland Assembly. *Judicial*--magistrates' courts, county courts, high courts, appellate courts, House of Lords.

**Subdivisions:** Municipalities, counties, parliamentary constituencies, province of Northern Ireland, and Scottish regions.

**Political parties:** In Great Britain--Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats; also, in Scotland--Scottish National Party; in Wales--Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales). In Northern Ireland--Ulster Unionist Party, Social Democratic and Labour Party, Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Fein, Alliance Party, and other smaller parties.

**Suffrage:** British subjects and citizens of other Commonwealth countries and the Irish Republic resident in the UK, at 18.

25%, dropped in the late 1990s to 18% (at the same time, confidence in the Church of England, associated for many with Britain's regal establishment, fell from 52% to 25%). An important reason for this decline, in contrast to the rising popularity of the Spanish royal family, for

example, is that the British monarchy has appeared hide-bound throughout the 1980s and 1990s in a Victorian and imperial time-warp that has increasingly weakened the bonds of respect between the Royal Family and its "subjects." Members of the royal family constitute the pinnacle of Britain's hierarchical social structure and enjoy the requisite life-style involving fox hunting, polo, and horse racing. Public appearances are encrusted in imperial pomp and ceremony. All aspects of their daily life reinforce the appearance of separateness.

The arrival of two "outsiders" -- Princess Diana and Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York -- as spouses to Queen Elizabeth's two eldest sons in the early 1990s, far from popularizing the Royal Family, threw into sharp relief the foreignness of the Royal Family's attitudes and behavior. Princess Diana's public critique of Prince Charles and the Royal Family, "the firm," following the collapse of their marriage resonated strongly with the majority of the British population. Perhaps as a result, her death in 1997 has served as a watershed for the Windsors. Members of the Royal Family and their advisors now understand the importance of providing a more open and informal access to the public, one that encourages an impression of inclusion rather than the social separation of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Judging by the huge popular demonstration of goodwill toward the monarchy during the Queen's jubilee celebrations in 2002, the monarchy may be able to recapture some of its past affection and respect in the hearts and minds of the British people.

Prince Charles, represented by his son Prince William, may now serve as the bridge to a more modern British Royal Family, which has a strong chance of holding on to its position as the sovereign head of the British state.

### Parliament:

Public confidence in the Parliament also declined in the 1990s, from 54% to 10% by one estimate in 1997. Sixteen years of uninterrupted conservative government had, by 1997, jaded the opinion of the British electorate toward the public service ethos of members of Parliament, and newspapers feasted on a series of trivial but persistent "sleaze" (corruption) attacks on conservative MP's. At the same time, the conservative party's increasingly dismal electoral showings in Scotland and Wales over this period, combined with its refusal to countenance any form of devolution of power to regional assemblies, fed a growing popular resentment at the over-centralization of political power in London. The arrival of the "New Labour" government in May 1997 coincided with a new desire among the electorate to experiment with changes in their modes of governance, especially decentralization. As we shall see below, Tony Blair has embarked upon a program of constitutional reform that will affect both Parliament's modes of operation and its standing in the future.

# Domestic Politics

Domestic politics in Britain have undergone a seismic shift since the 1997 defeat of the Conservative Party. The scale of the Labour Party's victory in 1997 was remarkable. Labour gained 146 seats for a total of 418 (no losses) out of the total 631. The Conservatives lost 178 to finish with 165 (no gains). Equally extraordinary was the fact that the Labour Party held on to this lead four years later in its June 2001 election with a loss of only 6 seats, the first time in its history that the Labour Party has won a second consecutive electoral term. At the heart of this shift in British politics has been the rapid and radical program of reform that Prime Minister Tony Blair has pushed through the Labour Party.

## *Labour Party*

The policy agenda for "New Labour" was hatched principally by two individuals: Tony Blair, party leader since 1994, and Gordon Brown, now his Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister) with the effective strategic guidance of Labour party consultant and later MP, Peter Mandelson. Blair and Brown advocated from the outset a pragmatic and market-oriented approach to managing the British economy, an approach entirely free of old Labour dogma. In a bold move prior to the 1997 electoral campaign, Blair convinced the Party to abolish Clause 4 of its constitution, which supported the nationalisation of important industries and public services. During the 1997 campaign, Brown promised to abide by the Conservative Party's spending plans for the first two years of the new government and to maintain income tax (including the top rate of 40%) at existing levels for the life of the parliament. By sticking to these pledges through to 2001, New Labour was able to dispel fears among the British middle classes about the party's old "tax and spend" habits.

"New Labour" is to all intents and purposes a social democratic party shorn of most of the welfarist / corporatist baggage of its continental European social democratic counterparts. It represents a radical departure in recent British politics in that a "Labour" government has unavowedly adopted a largely "conservative" approach to its fiscal policy and its microeconomic management of the country. Brown, in particular, and a small group of his U.S.-educated advisers believed that Britain can lead the way in defining and implementing a new paradigm for economic growth, social solidarity, and the role of government -- what Blair has called a "third way." Blair's argument was that, having veered between the extremes of capitalism and socialism for the past fifty years, Britain is now in a position to carve out a middle course between the two extremes.

Tony Blair's ability to pursue this objective has been buttressed by the imposition of an iron discipline within the Labour party. The party is now far more tightly organized than the conservatives ever were, with centralized cabinet control extending from Parliamentary candidate lists to the press releases of government ministers. The deeper question is whether the party as a whole really has undergone a radical conversion to a Christian Democrat philosophy, combining belief in the market system with strong social policies. A number of Labour MPs, supported by the traditionally more radical local Labour party activists, still see the conversion as tactically expedient, but flawed in principle. Their influence, however, has remained limited due to the realisation of the majority of Labour supporters that Labour was only able to escape from the political wilderness by taking the middle ground away from the conservatives. Internal opposition has also reflected the political inexperience of the new intake of Labour MPs in 1997 and the presence of benign domestic economic conditions.

As New Labour approaches the first-year anniversary of its 2<sup>nd</sup> electoral victory, Tony Blair's position has been weakened by a number of factors. The most important are:

- A failure to translate macroeconomic stability into tangible social gains for the public;
- Rising levels of crime;

- An over-emphasis on “spin” (presentation) over policy (substance)

Current state of the parties in the House of Commons

<b>Labour</b>	411
<b>Conservative</b>	164
<b>Liberal Democrats</b>	52
<b>Scottish National Party/Plaid Cymru (SNP 5/ PC 4)</b>	9
<b>Ulster Unionists</b>	6
<b>Ulster Democratic Unionist Party</b>	5
<b>Sinn Fein (Have not taken their seats)</b>	4
<b>Social Democratic &amp; Labour Party</b>	3
<b>Independent</b>	1
<b>The Speaker and 3 Deputies (Do not normally vote)</b>	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>659</b>

Government majority - **167**

- Blair’s perceived preference for foreign policy over domestic issues;
- The “sleaze” factor (political scandals), which voters had previously associated with the conservatives and most of which appeared to involved seeking political favors in return for party donation;
- An underlying tension with Gordon Brown over the latter’s desire to take over leadership.

### Questions:

-What has been Tony Blair’s political philosophy? What is or was the Third Way?

### Further Reading:

Blair’s speech at the last Labour Party Conference in Brighton, Oct., 2001.

The Rise of New Labour. Robin Ramsay. Pocket Essentials. January, 2002.

## Conservative Party

Along with losing over half its seats in 1997, the Conservative Party lost its claim to being the party of the Union, stripped of its last remaining MPs in Scotland and in Wales. Even after making some modest gains in the 2001 election, the party

of Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher has been reduced to a southern, rural, English party. The retirement and defeat of many of its most talented members in 1997 has left it demoralized and deeply split along two axes: between Thatcherite, tax- and welfare-cutting conservatives and more moderate patricians who want to do battle with Blair in the middle ground, and also between cosmopolitan, business-friendly pro-Europeans and an anti-European conservative heartland.

William Hague, appointed to be the Conservative Party's dynamic young new leader in Blair's mold in July of 1997, was unable to lift the party out of its state of demoralization and internecine warfare. Following its second severe electoral defeat in June 2001, Hague resigned as leader of the opposition. A bitter leadership contest ensued involving Michael Portillo, former Defence Minister and seeming heir to the Thatcher mantle, Kenneth Clarke, the pro-European Chancellor in John Major's government, and Iain Duncan-Smith, standard-bearer for the traditionalist and anti-European wing of the party. To many people's surprise, Duncan-Smith captured the majority of party members' votes in the September 2001 run-off against Clarke and will now lead the conservatives to the next election. Commentators warn uniformly of the uphill task that he will face, given his lack of past government experience and the ideological rigidity of the wing of the party that he represents. In the last 12 months, however, Duncan-Smith has surprised many commentators by demonstrating a steady hand in trying to steer his party toward the compassionate conservatism that proved so successful for George Bush Jr.

At best, however, Duncan-Smith has succeeded so far in stabilizing the party and preventing its further collapse. There is still little sense of an alternative social and economic vision upon which the conservative party could campaign toward an electoral victory.

### **Questions:**

-From what segments of the electorate is the Constitutional Party now drawing its support? Has this party lost its popular base?

### **Further Reading:**

Duncan-Smith speech at the last Conservative Party Conference in Blackpool , Oct., 2001.

## **Key members of cabinet**

**Tony Blair, Prime Minister**

**John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister and First Secretary of State**

**The Lord Macdonald of Tradeston, Cabinet Office Minister and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

**Robin Cook, President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons**

**Andrew Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions**

**Barbara Roche, Minister of State and Deputy Minister for Women**

**Christopher Leslie, Parliamentary Secretary**

**The Lord Williams of Mostyn**, Leader of the House of Lords

**Patricia Hewitt**, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

**Lord Falconer**, Home Office Minister

**Gordon Brown**, Chancellor of the Exchequer

**Estelle Morris**, Secretary of State for Education and Skills

**Jack Straw**, Foreign Minister

**Geoff Hoon**, Minister of Defense

**Clare Short**, Minister for Overseas Development

**Alistair Darling**, Minister of Transportation

**Charles Clarke**, Minister without Portfolio and Party Chair

**Alan Milburn**, Health Minister

**Margaret Beckett**, Secretary of State for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs

**Dr. John Reid**, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

**Paul Boateng**, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

### **Liberal Democrats**

Despite building on their strong 1997 showing and gaining a record number of seats (52) in the 2001 election, Liberal Democrats, members of Britain's traditionally under-represented third party, face two fundamental problems. First, the scale of the Labour parliamentary majority means the government has no need for Liberal Democrat support in order to pass legislation. Second, the traditional Liberal Democrat claim to represent the center ground between the old politics of the left and right has lost its meaning. New Labour has taken possession of the political center, leaving the Liberal Democrats searching for a distinctive agenda that does not draw them toward the unelectable side of left-wing politics.

## **UK and Northern Ireland: An Evolving Political Relationship**

The Northern Ireland Assembly was established under the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, The Assembly is the prime source of authority for all devolved responsibilities. It has full legislative and executive authority - that is, the power to make laws and take decisions on all the functions of the Northern Ireland Departments. Power was devolved to the Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont Castle and its Executive Committee of Ministers on December 2, 1999. The devolved government is responsible for transferred matters, such as Enterprise, Education, Health, Agriculture, Environment and Culture.

The biggest source of contention between Protestant Assembly members and Sinn Fein (the IRA's political wing) has been the IRA's refusal to decommission its weapons stockpiles. While political harmony was never a likely or achievable pre-requisite of a long-lasting peace in Northern Ireland, arms decommissioning by the paramilitaries has always been considered essential. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) has sustained its official cease-fire despite sporadic acts of violence by the splinter group, "Real IRA." However, security sources believe the IRA alone has enough weaponry to equip a small country's army and sustain a campaign for at least a decade. The IRA's arsenal was amassed over several years, some of it smuggled in from America and continental Europe, but most of it in several shiploads from Libya in the mid-1980s.

In May 2000, the IRA, which had given its support to the Good Friday Agreement, said it would not give up any of its weapons but would allow an independent inspection. At Stormont, the atmosphere soured over the IRA's refusal, leading ultimately to the resignation of David Trimble, first minister and leader of the Ulster Unionist Party on July 1, 2001. The IRA agreed a plan to put arms beyond use but withdrew it after the assembly was temporarily suspended. As the assembly crisis deepened, the IRA began decommissioning and placing arms beyond use, a move that led to Ulster Unionists returning to the power-sharing government as Trimble returned to be first minister on October 27, 2001. In response, the British government began scaling back its military presence. The loyalist UDA/UFF ceasefire was declared over and its associated political wing, the Ulster Democratic Party, was dissolved.

Actual decommissioning began in October 2001 with an announcement by the IRA that it had "implemented the scheme agreed with the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD)... in order to save the peace process."

In April 2002, the IICD announced that the IRA had decommissioned a second "substantial" amount of weapons. The IRA said in a statement that it had taken the step in an attempt to stabilize the peace process. Although continuing sectarian violence and hatred may undercut formal political efforts, the decommissioning process and the continued functioning and influence of the Northern Ireland Assembly will remain important forces in implementing a workable peace in this volatile area.

## **New Labour's Policy Agenda**

Blair and his ministers have sought to put their commanding domestic political position to active use in four areas: (1) constitutional reform, (2) the economy, (3) welfare reform, and (4) Britain's international relations, especially with Europe.

### **1. Constitutional Reform**

One of the main themes of Tony Blair's first parliament was to initiate a sweeping series of constitutional reforms that are transforming the political face of Britain. These reforms included:



- the devolution of the bulk of governmental affairs in Scotland to a national parliament in Edinburgh, and the transfer of more limited powers to national assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland (the latter determined by the progress being made in the Good Friday peace accords);
- the removal of the rights of hereditary peers to vote and, for the majority, to sit in the House of Lords, Britain's upper chamber of parliament;
- the establishment of a Commission to examine the feasibility of a new voting system for the House of Commons. The impetus is to find a way to shift away from the current complete reliance on the "first-past-the-post" system to a new system involving a modest amount of proportional representation and incorporation of the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law;
- A deliberate effort to shore up public support for the monarchy by advising it on ways to present a more popular public image. The execution and debate over these reforms are not without risk.
- Scottish devolution could lead to demands for a referendum on independence and, thus, the break-up of the United Kingdom. The surprising surge in the popularity of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) after the establishment of the Scottish Assembly took government ministers, many of whom are Scots, aback. Blair saw devolution as strengthening the Union, but it may have the opposite effect. Pressure for Scottish independence may come about not only because of growing popular support for statehood, but also because of the existence of an EU that lowers the costs of independence for small countries by providing them with a large free trade area for their goods and services and a credible common currency.
- The creation of the Scottish parliament and Welsh Assembly has led to calls, including within the conservative party, for the creation of an English Parliament or, along the same vein, for the exclusion of Scottish ministers from playing a leading role in both the British and Scottish parliaments. One concern is that, as the running sore of Europe continues to alienate the Conservative Party's traditional business constituency and its pro-European, pragmatic wing, the party may turn away from its traditional "unionist" stance and boil down to a core membership that feels most comfortable promoting a new form of English nationalism.
- Although the Blair government rushed forward in its first term to abolish the voting rights of hereditary peers, it has not come yet to an agreement on a new system to elect members to the upper chamber. As a result, new members continue to be proposed to "life Peerages" by the three major political parties and approved by the government of the day, a system that, far from promoting a new form of political balance to the lower house, smacks of the very cronyism that reform was meant to purge.
- Removing the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords has also raised further questions about the legitimacy of the monarchy, the archetypal hereditary institution. Nevertheless, there appears to be little popular appetite for its replacement with a Presidential system and few other viable alternatives.

### **Question:**

-Is Britain genuinely becoming a de-centralized state? What new powers have regional or local governments actually acquired in the last five years?

-How will reform of the House of Lords affect policy-making in the UK?

### **Further Reading:**

The State We're In. Will Hutton. January, 1996.

## 2. The Economy

The Blair government's record on the economy has been much clearer and, overall, the record is a good one. In particular, the decision to stick by a fiscally stringent approach has produced impressive results.

- The budget ran a 2% surplus as a percentage of GDP in 2001, its third year in surplus (in 1993-94, Britain posted a 7.8% deficit);
- Government debt dropped in 2001 to 32% of GDP (compared to 62% in 1998, 57% in 1999, and 47% in 2000);
- Inflation hovers around 2%, one of the lowest rates in the EU and way below the rate of 9.5% in 1990;
- Unemployment fell below 1 million in 2001 for the first time since 1975, representing a jobless rate of 3.4% and contrasting to a current EU average of 8.5% .
- The ratio of general government spending to GDP dropped below 39% in 2000, in contrast, for example, to Germany's level of 47%.

These impressive figures have been underpinned by important structural characteristics of the British economy. As competition for global capital investment increased in the 1980s, conservative British governments adapted the domestic regulatory environment, introducing flexible labor markets, lowering non-wage labor costs, reducing the role of organized labor, and taking the lead in public sector privatization, strategies with which many other industrialized countries are still grappling. Britain also provided low taxation levels, with a corporate tax level of 30% and employers' social security level of 12%.

As a result, Britain benefited in the early to mid-1990s from large levels of foreign direct investment (FDI), becoming the third largest recipient of FDI in the world in 1996.

The Labor government has not rolled back any of these sources of attraction for foreign investment. In 1999, the United Kingdom attracted \$82 billion in FDI out of the EU's total \$302 billion (France, by comparison, attracted \$40 billion). One in five people employed in the British manufacturing sector now works for a foreign company. Foreign firms have brought not only financial investment, but also new work and management practices.

**GDP** (2001, dollars in million): \$307,116

**Annual growth rate** (2000): 3.0%.

**Per capita GDP** (1999): \$24,300.

**Natural resources:** Coal, oil, natural gas, tin, limestone, iron ore, salt, clay, chalk, gypsum, lead, silica.

**Agriculture** (1.8% of GDP): *Products*--cereals, oilseed, potatoes, vegetables, cattle, sheep, poultry, fish.

**Industry** (31.5% of GDP): *Types*--steel, heavy engineering and metal manufacturing, textiles, motor vehicles and aircraft, construction, electronics, chemicals.

**Trade** (1999): *Exports*--\$267.6 billion: manufactured goods, fuels, chemicals; food, beverages, tobacco. *Major markets*--U.S., Germany, France, the Netherlands, Ireland. *Imports*--\$311 billion: manufactured goods, machinery, fuels, foodstuffs. *Major suppliers*--Germany, U.S., France, the Netherlands, Japan.

Equally important to the British economy's recent success was the decision by Gordon Brown early in "New Labour's" first term to give the Bank of England nominal independence and, thus, introduce a greater level of macroeconomic stability to the British economy.

Foreign and British companies alike have benefited from this benign economic environment. Not only is Britain a location for globally competitive FDI, it also boasts a number of the world's leading multinational and global companies, including GlaxoWellcome, ICI, Shell, BP, BAE SYSTEMS, Diageo, Reuters, and BT. These companies have taken a lead in entering into cross-border alliances and mergers in an effort to reap the benefits of corporate consolidation and an expanded market base so as to compete at a truly global level. Despite its exclusion from the Eurozone since 1999, The City of London remains one of the world's two leading financial centers, with a workforce of over 800,000 (more than the entire population of Frankfurt) and a currency market turnover that is greater than that of New York and Tokyo combined. British firms also hold leading global positions in creative service industries such as advertising, the music industry, film and animation, retailing, and computer games. Overall, the British economy, rather than being a source of embarrassment, has started to serve as a source of national pride in recent years.

Underlying these positive statistics, however, are some important concerns. UK interest rates, although low by historical standards, remain higher than those of its continental partners in EMU. In part, this reflects the markets' suspicion of Britain's past economic volatility and its boom and bust cycles of the 1970s and 1980s. It also reflects a concern that UK unemployment has hit its structural floor. Public sector unions, resentful after several years of Conservative and Labour pay-restraints, may soon demand real pay increases, especially now that Labour's second term has been secured. UK interest rates also reflect reservations about Britain's ability to keep inflationary pressures in check indefinitely while staying outside EMU.

Relatively high interest rates have also helped keep the exchange rate of the pound sterling versus the Euro at punitive levels: the Euro is currently equivalent to approximately 0.65 pounds, representing a 60% appreciation since 1996. Companies that invested in plant capacity in the United Kingdom as a base to access the EU and world markets have been especially hard hit (60% of UK manufactured exports go to the Eurozone).

There is also a persistent negative side to Britain's economy. Try as it might, Britain has been plagued since the 1950s by economic decline relative to other European countries and globally. Part of this decline is subjective. Despite its strong roster of multinational companies, cutting-edge service providers, and technology start-ups, Britain is still perceived to excel in areas that are rooted in the past such as classic craftsmanship (clothes and sports cars) and traditional foods. More significantly, however, a thirty-year history of low economic productivity and low quality, and not just the recent high level of the pound, has undermined the competitiveness of the British manufacturing sector, excluding it not only from predictable areas such as the electronic appliances sector, but even the mass car industry.

Part of the reason for this decline is the legacy of having been the world's first industrialized country, a fact that has complicated Britain's transition to the just-in-time and knowledge era economies. However, Britain's 90 Nobel Prizes for science (second only to the United States) and its long list of significant technological inventions since the second World War (from the radio to the fiber optic cable), although a great testament to the creativity of British scientists and inventors, also expose the difficulty British companies face in translating their genius into marketable products and successful business ventures.

There are some who argue that the City of London's fixation on shareholder returns has trapped Britain in a state of economic short-termism that starves businesses of the stable investment capital necessary for long-term economic modernization and growth. Gordon Brown, however, has announced that one of his priorities for New Labour's second term is to improve the microeconomic environment for business innovation and competitiveness. Within two months of taking power, he announced sweeping changes to Britain's anti-monopoly system, with tough penalties outlined for price-fixing and other uncompetitive practices. More recently, he has proposed introducing bankruptcy laws that will mirror more closely the U.S. approach.

Britain will need several years of sustained, inflation-free growth before the economy will be able to recapture the ground lost in relation to its West European and other trading partners since the early 1980s. A priority for British policy-makers and business leaders alike over the next decade will be to ensure that Britain sustains its current comparative economic advantages while raising the competitiveness of British manufacturing and service industries in those areas that have suffered the greatest recent decline. This will be a tall order. Over this period, other European governments may undertake some of the structural domestic reforms that underpin Britain's recent economic competitiveness. And, as is discussed below, the government's decision on whether to join the Eurozone and pool its monetary policy with its EU partners will influence significantly Britain's future economic competitiveness.

### **Further Reading:**

The UK Economy. Malcolm Sawyer, ed. Oxford University Press, August 2001.

### **3. Welfare Reform: Britain's Fraying Public Services**

A further defining characteristic of Britain the last three decades has been the deteriorating state of its public services, particularly in the key areas of health, education, and transportation. Having focused in its first term on securing its macroeconomic credentials, New Labour has made improving Britain's public services its highest domestic priority for the next four to five years.

## **Education**

New Labour appears to be acutely aware of the challenges that economic globalization poses to Britain over the coming decade. Tony Blair's stated in the lead-up to his first term that the priorities of his new government would be "education, education, education," partly reflecting his assessment that this area will be central to the country's competitiveness in a "knowledge" economy. And yet, New Labour enters its second term presiding over one of the worst-performing school systems in the developed world. 7% of pupils in England and Wales still leave school with no academic qualifications. In mathematics, Britain ranks 17<sup>th</sup> in international assessments for 13-year-olds. Sadly, the British debate over education has been trapped on the field of social engineering (the need to provide, non-selective "comprehensive" schools to counter the existence of privately-funded "public schools").

Realising the seriousness of the situation, the new government has not been afraid to take on the teachers' unions in an effort to drive up education standards through a new regime of testing and school league tables, approaches they inherited

from the conservative party. Progress has been made since 1997, with school classes falling below thirty per class across the board and improving test results for children from 16 through 18. The government has also sidestepped the battle over the fairness of “selective” schools by encouraging the emergence of “specialist” schools that reserve 10% of their intake for children with a special aptitude in, say, modern languages or technology. In higher education, the government has stuck by the introduction of tuition fees and the gradual switch to a loan system to replace the old state-funded maintenance grants. However, it continues to limit the ability of universities to charge “top-up” fees, as in the United States, despite the growing crisis in university funding.

## National Health System (NHS)

Access to publicly-funded national health coverage from the cradle to the grave is seen as a fundamental right in the United Kingdom since its introduction after the second World War. The decaying state of the NHS, a thorn in the side of past conservative governments, has now become the Labour party’s problem. Having promised to “save the NHS” as part of its 1997 election campaign, the Labour government has been embarrassed to preside over a series of scandals involving improper patient treatment, a vicious nationwide flu epidemic in 1999-2000 that brought the NHS to its knees, and the release of several reports highlighting poor survival rates in the UK for illnesses that are far better handled in other countries. There are still over 1 million people on hospital waiting lists and Britain has a low rate of doctors per head compared to its EU partners.

The government’s solution is to spend a significant amount of additional funding over the next two to three years on hiring additional doctors and nurses, and building new hospitals. The government’s aim is to take health spending from its current 5% of GDP closer to the EU average of 7%, leading to a growth in the NHS of a third in real terms. As a result, Gordon Brown’s April 2002 budget contained the government’s first increase in direct taxation since it came to power in 1997. The 1p. (one penny) increase in National Insurance contributions is designed to pay for the UK’s biggest ever increase in health spending. Funding for the National Health Service will rise by an average 7.4% in real terms per year, increasing from £65 billion this year to £106 billion in 2007. The budget reflects the government’s desire to be able to defend its health record in the next election campaign in 2005-06. Nevertheless, improvements in health care will take a number of years to enact and will depend not only on financial infusion, but also on painful changes to management of the national health service that have yet to be agreed.

## Transportation

Transportation has been one of the government’s weakest policy areas, according to opinion polls, with over half of the public dissatisfied with the government’s performance to date. The problem is that rectifying what the Treasury Ministry in 1999 called, “an overcrowded, under-planned, and under-maintained transport system” will take decades, not the lifetime of a single government. Compared with Germany and France, Britain spends barely half as much on transportation as a percentage of GDP. The result is that rolling stock is outdated, tracks are ageing (at a terrible cost in injuries and lost lives in 2000-01), and car drivers face constant delays. The proportion of roads subject to serious traffic delays is three times higher than in France and five times higher than in Germany.

The government has set in train a major program to upgrade “strategic” portions of roads that constitute the major bottlenecks in automotive travel and to spend 29 billion pounds to expand rail passenger and freight traffic over the next ten years. It is also encouraging local authorities to invest heavily in light rail, trams, and other rapid-transit systems. The problem is that, as economic prosperity increases in the

UK, car ownership levels could still increase by 10% before they reach levels in France and Germany.

Despite the government's financial commitment to improve public services, there is a growing danger that results will come too late to prevent real damage to the reputation of the Labour Party and to Tony Blair directly. Another fatal rail crash in May 2002 caused by poor rail maintenance highlighted once again the bankruptcy of the current transportation system.

### Questions:

-How does UK spending on public services compare with its EU partners?

-What structural reforms has the government launched to modernize higher education and increase university attendance?

### Further Reading:

Class War. Chris Woodhead. Little, Brown. March, 2002

Dilemmas in UK Health Care. Carol Komaromy, ed. Open University Press. January, 2002.

The Future of Health: Health Care in the UK. Liz Kendall. Institute for Public Policy Research. June, 2000.

## Foreign Policy

### Britain's International Role

During the course of the twentieth century, Britain changed from being the world's leading imperial power to being a middle-ranking country with only fragments of its once global empire under its governance. Despite the decline in its relative diplomatic influence and economic prosperity that accompanied de-colonization, Britain has continued to play the role of a global power into the start of the twenty-first century as a result of its position as one of the world's recognized nuclear powers, its permanent membership on the UN Security Council, and its participation in the Group of Seven leading industrialized countries. Britain's role in these organizations reflects not simply a hangover from its Great Power past and status as a Second World War victor, but also its desire to protect its still sizeable global network of trading links and foreign investments.

The Labour government is determined to continue to preserve its position as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council; of the G-8; and as a leading member of the Commonwealth. Although permanent membership of the UN and the G-7 may be expanded by 2007, Britain is unlikely to lose its individual seat in these fora. Two factors play to its advantage.

First, Britain is well-placed to continue playing a central role in international military operations and thus sustain its much-vaunted ability to “punch above its weight” in international diplomacy. New Labour's Strategic Defense Review of July 8, 1998 laid out a far-reaching plan to modernize the British armed forces and prepare them for involvement in international crisis management and response. The review highlights Britain's plans to build a new, more flexible and rapidly deployable “tri-service organisation,” including a joint Royal Navy / Royal Air Force fixed wing force, a joint battlefield helicopter command, joint army / RAF ground-based air defense organization, and a deployable joint force headquarters. The British government's ability to project these forces around the world should be supplemented by the purchase of new strategic lift assets and also by the purchase of two new aircraft carriers in the latter half of the next decade.

British defense capabilities are underpinned by a strong domestic defense industry, led by BAE Systems which is already engaged in the process of European defense industrial consolidation and has moved aggressively to build a transatlantic presence accessing both the U.S. and global defense markets. This will give the government additional leverage to determine future European and NATO military requirements and to buttress its foreign policy goals through exports of military equipment.

Second, Britain's global influence has also been leveraged by its close political relationship with the United States. Since 1945, government officials and policy élites in both countries have shared a sense of responsibility for upholding not only European, but also global security. Since the end of the cold war, they have sought to strengthen the NATO Alliance to this end. The UK's conventional military prowess and its shared willingness to use military force, a rare tendency among industrialized democracies in recent years, have bolstered the bilateral U.S.-UK security relationship.

## **Britain and the United States after 2000**

During the cold war, Britain served as America's leading security ally, an alliance cemented in intelligence sharing and sensitive military cooperation. At critical moments since the end of the cold war, Britain's utility to the United States has been significant -- in the bombing of Libya, in operation Desert Storm, in the anti-Saddam alliance since 1991, and now, most recently, in the coalition fighting international terrorism in Afghanistan and beyond. Notwithstanding these continuing examples of close bilateral cooperation, the context for the UK-U.S. relationship is far more complex now than during the cold war.

- Both the Bush Senior and Clinton administrations placed Germany, not Britain, at the center of their post-cold war European foreign policies, reflecting Germany's central position and influence in an undivided Europe.
- The Bosnian and then Kosovo conflicts demonstrated how British and American approaches toward and tactics within post-cold war crises could diverge in ways that would have been unthinkable during the cold war.

- Britain has been very concerned by the unilateralist stance taken in the first eighteen months of the new Bush administration on issues as varied as the Kyoto Protocol, the preservation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, the International Criminal Court, and the Chemical and Biological Convention.
- In contrast to its conservative predecessors, the Blair government has made improved relations with its EU partners and Britain's adoption of a leadership role within the EU one of its strategic foreign policy priorities. Having excluded itself from the first wave of monetary union, the logical focus for UK leadership has been in helping develop the EU's security and defense identity. This was apparent in Blair's launch with President Chirac at the Anglo-French summit on December 4, 1999 the intention for the EU to develop a common defense policy and capability. The emergence of a defense dimension to the EU will give Britain greater flexibility in the future to pursue EU foreign policy objectives which the United States may not wish to be involved in or to support. It may also cause new friction within the Anglo-U.S.-relationship.

The aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11 has had a paradoxical effect on U.S.-UK relations. On the one hand, British solidarity with the United States and the "specialness" of the US-UK relationship were underscored by Tony Blair's immediate commitment of UK special forces to the operations in Afghanistan as well as by the shared human losses in the attacks on the World Trade Center. Tony Blair's very personal commitment to the U.S. campaign against global terrorism raised hopes in London that this would give the British government the opportunity to draw the Bush administration into a more considered and multilateral approach to its foreign policy priorities. On the other, the realization that the United States would give its allies only a limited military role in the immediate battle against Al Qaeda and the Taliban and that it would seek no advice on how to prosecute the broader campaign against terrorism, quickly eroded support within the Labour Party for Tony Blair's approach. The "axis of evil" speech and the U.S. emphasis on the need to confront directly the potential combination of states producing weapons of mass destruction and suicidal terrorist groups has raised serious concerns within the British political establishment that, in its effort to be a good ally, the United Kingdom may get dragged into an ever-expanding, U.S.-led global war against terror. The treatment of Al Qaeda prisoners (including a few British citizens) in Guantanamo Bay exacerbated UK concerns. Tony Blair's staunch defense of the principles behind the U.S.-UK alliance and of the need to tackle rogue regimes such as Saddam Hussein's (a position which is supported by a majority of the British public if not of the Labour party) have not prevented the rise of public taunts in the press and television media that he has become "America's poodle."

At heart, the aftermath of September 11 has exposed significant differences between U.S. and UK perspectives on the threats to their security, their experiences of how to deal with terror, and their foreign policy priorities. Like most Europeans, the British public does not perceive Al Qaeda as presenting a major or an existential threat to their safety, unlike many Americans who have been traumatized by the suddenness, brutality, and scale of the attacks on their soil. The British have lived with terrorism for nearly three decades in the form of the campaign by extreme Irish nationalists for unification with the Republic of Ireland. Most British believe that, while military action can bring a short-term sense of success or vengeance, it has little long-term impact on the motivation of the



terrorists or on their ability to pursue what is a relatively easily sustainable campaign, given the asymmetric character of terrorist military strategy. Military action must be accompanied by a political vision of how a solution can be achieved.

Few UK citizens perceive this sort of longer-term vision among the current U.S. administration. Instead, they share a European skepticism of the apparent uni-dimensional nature of the U.S. campaign against international terror. Epitomizing this divergence of views is the question of how to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. Even Tony Blair has chosen not to endorse George Bush's characterization of Ariel Sharon as a "man of peace." Instead, there is a near-universal perception in the United Kingdom that Israeli insistence on continuing with its settlements policy on the West Bank has provoked Palestinians into extreme acts and into the hands of extremists. The British desire to open a dialogue with the government of Iran is also emblematic of the underlying differences between the United States and the United Kingdom in their approaches to foreign policy challenges beyond the ones of fundamental national security.

Many in the British government and Foreign Office believe that Britain's aspirations to lead in Europe and maintain its special relationship with the United States need not be mutually exclusive. Tony Blair takes every opportunity to make explicit the full commitment of his government to the Atlantic Alliance. However, he recognizes, as do most senior officials, that Britain's value to the United States as a strategic bilateral partner will be enhanced through its position as a leading member of the European Union, particularly in the fields of foreign and security policy.

Nonetheless, from a British perspective, the search for a reinvigorated partnership with Washington may still lead to difficult choices. The U.S. administration will continue to look for British political support for policies that are often at odds with the views of leading EU member states such as France and Germany. Areas where the United States seeks to influence Europe include accelerating EU enlargement to central and eastern Europe, sustaining sanctions on Saddam Hussein, containing Iran, supporting Turkey's membership of the EU, and opening EU markets to U.S. farm products and other sensitive products and services. After September 11, the long-term campaign against terrorism could open new divergences between Washington and European capitals. U.S. expectations on these issues will bring home to British policy-makers the fact that Britain cannot easily seek to maximize its global influence through partnership with the United States and simultaneously exercise leadership in Europe. Hard choices will have to be made and, occasionally, we can expect the UK to line up in European solidarity rather than always in transatlantic partnership.

### Questions:

-What concrete forms of bilateral cooperation now underpin the "special" UK-US relationship? Intelligence-sharing? Weapons acquisition? Military training and operations? Coordination of diplomatic initiatives (South Asia, Middle East, UN)

## Further Reading:

Anglo-American Relations since 1939. John Baylis. Manchester University Press March, 1997.

A Special Relationship. John Dumbrell. Palgrave Macmillan November, 2000.

## Britain and Europe

Blair's new focus on partnership with the European Union belies the fact that a defining feature of Britain has been its geographical and psychological detachment from the European continent. It is an axiom that Britain is part of Europe, but not of it. As Winston Churchill famously suggested, a "United States of Europe" might be in British interests, but, of course, would have to exclude the United Kingdom.

Reliance on the empire and then on the Commonwealth after 1945, however, proved to be no substitute for U. K. membership of the European Community. Despite this hard lesson, the lack of British historical or cultural affinity with the fears and ambitions of the founding countries of the European Community has not been mitigated by successive EU enlargements nor by the success of the EU in promoting the growth of a single European market that now accounts for 50% of British exports. The British continue to perceive European integration as a uniquely economic exercise and, since joining the European Community, UK governments have been an obstacle rather than a dynamic contributor to almost all broader European integration initiatives. Moreover, to the extent that the growth of the EU as a political entity has reflected a Franco-German entente, successive British governments have sought to weaken this alliance which appears to be achieving a political dominance over European affairs that Britain had long fought to avert.

British official Euroscepticism is nurtured by the feeling among many in Britain that the United States, not the European Union, is Britain's ideal global partner. This predisposition to look westwards across the Atlantic is reciprocated by U.S. politicians who see in Britain an important bastion for Anglo-Saxon, free-market economic principles that have traditionally been shunned by other EU governments. During the latter half of the 1990s, strong economic growth and falling unemployment in the United States and the United Kingdom has been contrasted to the high levels of joblessness in continental EU, confirming the impression that most EU governments remain trapped in a rigid social market system from which Britain would do well to remain detached.

The innate public British Euroscepticism is fed by an unremitting diet of Euro-bashing by the British press, from broadsheets such as "The Daily Telegraph" to family newspapers such as "The Daily Express," to tabloids such as "The Sun" and "The Star." Anti-European headlines, articles, and editorials frequently refer to Germans and other Europeans in terms drawn from the Battle of Britain and the blitzkrieg. Rubbishing the EU, of course, is good copy, a fact which politicians now complain about throughout Europe. In Britain's case, however, the high degree of North American newspaper ownership combines with the instinctive British antipathy towards Europe to produce a particularly

vitriolic form of anti-European coverage.

Just as in 1957, Europe is emerging from a transitional period following revolutionary systemic change. Just as Britain made choices to remain apart from the search for European institutional construction during the last European transition in 1945-57, so did the conservative government in 1989-97, rejecting monetary union and other key aspects of the new EU agenda such as the Social Chapter and the Schengen agreement. As in the early 1960's, however, Britain may now be psychologically prepared to make more formal commitments to Europe that will have a far-reaching impact on all aspects of Britain's development.

The Labour party under Tony Blair certainly offers Britain the chance to build a more constructive relationship with its EU partners in the near future. Notwithstanding important differences in national emphasis, New Labour's ascendancy to power coincided with the broad social democratic wave that swept over Western Europe in the latter half of the 1990s. Under New Labour, Britain has relaxed the previous conservative obsession with guarding Britain's national "sovereignty" and its constant harking back to the days of British national grandeur. In essence, Blair would like to offer a pragmatic "third way" not only for Britain, but for European integration also, promoting greater levels of EU competence and qualified majority voting where practicable, but preserving national control over key aspects of policy such as defense and taxation.

Aside from Europe's defense capability, Blair has applied his government's energies toward two other aspects of European integration, economic reform in the EU and the EU's political evolution.

### **Question:**

-How has Britain's late entry into the European Community influenced the evolution of its relationship with Europe since then? **Further Reading:**

This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair. Hugo Young. October, 1999.

Success and Failure in British Foreign Policy. Peter Mangold. Palgrave Macmillan. October, 2001.

The Pro-European Reader. Dick Leonard, Mark Leonard. Palgrave Macmillan. November, 2001.

The Eurosceptical Reader 2. Martin Holmes. Palgrave Macmillan. November, 2001 "A Britain and Europe: Devolution and Foreign Policy," International Affairs Vol. 74, #1, 1998, p. 106. "Coalitions and the Future of UK Security Policy." Whitehall Paper 50. RUSI. London, 2000. "European integration and defence: the ultimate challenge?" Chaillot Paper 43. Institute for Security Studies of WEU. Paris, 2000.

## **UK and EU Economic Reform**

The Lisbon summit of EU leaders in March 2000 was seen as an important breakthrough by the UK government in its efforts to convince its European partners of the complementarity between UK-style deregulation initiatives, including reform of labor and financial markets, and a social economic model applicable to left of center governments, all of whom wanted to find a way to match the productivity growth of America's "new economy."

In an effort to benchmark the EU against the United States, the United Kingdom has pushed aggressively at subsequent EU ministerial meetings and summits for a range of government-led initiatives that would help Europe become, "the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010." These initiatives include the creation or adoption of:

- Integrated financial markets by 2004;
- An EU E-commerce directive;
- An EU-wide Single European Patent;
- A pan-European diploma for IT skills;
- A strategy from promoting the biotechnology industry;
- Internet access for all schools;
- Full liberalization of gas, electricity, and transport markets by 2003;
- An Action Plan to reduce regulatory burdens on small and medium-sized firms;
- Targets for reducing unfair state aids.

Comparisons have been made between the initiatives of the Blair government and those of the Thatcher government in the mid-1980s favoring the creation of the Single European Market. The fact is, however, that implementation of much of the Lisbon agenda will depend not on legally binding directives (as with the Single European Act) or on formal treaty commitments (as was the case when EU governments sought to achieve EMU convergence), but simply on peer pressure and the sharing of best practices. Under these conditions, the pace of reform is proving frustratingly slow for the British government.

## UK and EU Political Integration

Since his rise to power and benefiting from his strong domestic parliamentary base, Blair has moved methodically into an area – EU political integration -- that has been a minefield for British politicians in the past. In this context, the Nice summit of EU leaders in December 2000 proved a significant success from the UK point of view:

- The successful conclusion at Nice of the EU's most recent Intergovernmental Conference has enabled the EU to move ahead with negotiations to complete an eastern enlargement by 2004, an important British policy priority;
- The re-weighting of national votes in the EU Council of Ministers favored the UK, but was pushed by France, allowing the UK to protect its political capital;
- The process of qualified majority voting was kept away from key areas of British concern, such as taxation;
- The British allowed the concept of "reinforced cooperation" (deepening of integration among groups of EU member states in targeted areas) to move ahead, while keeping defense out of this new procedure.

Prior to the Nice summit, Tony Blair gave a major speech in Warsaw in the summer of 2000, responding to previous speeches by German Foreign Minister Fischer, French President Chirac, and Commission President Prodi, and laying out Blair's own bold vision of where the EU should be going. Key proposals included:

- A "Charter of competencies" for the EU, rather than a legally binding constitution, defining the relationship between Europe's local, regional, national, and EU levels;
- The right for the European Council of EU leaders to set an "annual agenda for Europe," in collaboration with the European Commission;
- Team EU presidencies; and a smaller Commission;
- The creation of a "second chamber of the European Parliament;" involving nationally elected MPs. The chamber would provide political rather than legal review of the levels at which EU decisions are taken and implemented in the future;
- The emergence of the EU as a "superpower, not a superstate" on the world stage;
- The notion that the foundation of the EU should remain the democratic nation state.

On February 21, 2002 at The Hague, a few days before the official launch of the European convention that will finalize plans for a new treaty in 2004, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw called for sweeping reforms in the EU and the way the intergovernmental Council of Ministers ought to work. Britain does not accept a written constitution, as favored by Germany and France, and would rather see an EU driven by its member states, although it had indicated its willingness to accept certain concessions on further EU integration (such as in the areas of asylum and immigration policies). The Labour government's blueprint has drawn criticism from the Conservative party, and has received mixed

reviews in other EU capitals.

## Question:

-How does Britain's domestic structure of governance influence its vision for Europe's political evolution?

## UK and EMU

Whatever Blair's success in drawing Britain into the inner circle of EU strategizing through an active role in European defense and the single market, the decision of his government to remain outside the project on monetary union continues to call into question Britain's position as a truly European power and also limits Blair's political influence in EU decision-making circles.

There was little expectation that the UK could join EMU at its launch on January 1, 1999. However, more concrete hopes that the UK would join by the beginning of 2002, when the transition phase ends and national currencies are abolished, have also proved to be premature. On October 27, 1997, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown announced to Parliament that, although the government saw no constitutional objection to the UK entering EMU, economic factors made it highly unlikely that the UK will be in a position to join until after the next legislative election, that is, after 2002. He then laid out "five economic tests," widely seen as providing political room for manoeuvre rather than an economic roadmap, which Britain would apply before deciding whether to join.

Whatever the personal convictions of Tony Blair and Chancellor Brown toward British EMU membership (and both are believed to be in favour, although holding the key to the five economic tests is an important tool in Brown's personal political arsenal vis-à-vis Blair), the lack of any rational debate about the EU outside elite circles over the past ten years and the obsessive "Europhobia" of the Murdoch and tabloid British press (key backers of Blair in the election) make the outcome of any referendum highly unpredictable. As is often observed, Blair is partly to blame for the lack of a more rational debate, having muzzled the pro-EMU business community in the lead-up to the 2001 election for fear of allowing the issue to tarnish Labour's campaign. However, it is clear that the opponents of EMU have assembled a well-organized campaign that is able to play on a combination of British political and economic fears:

- Why repeat the experience of the UK's short-lived experience of the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) from which it was evicted in 1992?
- The Eurozone is not an optimal currency area (there is little labor mobility, no federal transfers, different levels of economic development) that may eventually collapse;
- UK economic performance is way ahead of its neighbors in terms of unemployment levels, FDI attractiveness; inflation rate. Why risk it?

- Internet readiness is more important and the UK is already ahead;
- The UK will be exposed to the pensions meltdown awaiting most continental European economies after 2010;
- Euro membership will spill over into EU-harmonized taxation, a U.K. bogeyman;
- Euro membership will spill-over into an EU economic government and, then, an EU, federal superstate, another bogeyman;
- The UK has more similarities and closer economic ties to the United States than to the EU.

It is important to understand that the United States remains an alternative political and economic pole in the minds of Eurosceptics and the media. British conservative politicians such as John Redwood have called for the UK to join NAFTA and abandon the EU, echoing the views of a number of U.S. politicians and commentators such as Newt Gingrich and Bill Safire. Even Condoleeza Rice, in an interview with the Daily Telegraph in July of 2000, said a Bush administration, while not wanting to drive a wedge between the UK and EU, would be open to how to expand NAFTA across the Atlantic.

Despite the large obstacles to Euro membership, the government's delay in joining EMU exposes Britain to two important risks in the near-term.

1. First, Britain may pay an economic price.
  - British companies will have to continue to hedge against currency instability for the bulk of their export business.
  - With the continuing over-valuation of the pound relative to the Euro, British exporters may see a further erosion in the price competitiveness of their exports.
  - Exclusion from EMU may also provide foreign investors with an excuse not to continue to use Britain as a favored direct investment location in the near future.
  - UK fiscal and monetary policy may end up being tied to targets which the British government will have played no role in establishing, but from which it might feel politically unable to disengage, at least so long as it is attempting to shadow the Euro so as to maintain the option to join.
2. Second, Britain will certainly pay a political price. At a time when France and Germany are looking to redefine their bilateral relationship under the post-cold war leadership of Chirac and Schroeder, there should be a real opportunity for Blair's government to take the leadership role in the EU that it has claimed. However, it will be difficult for Blair to craft a durable leadership position for the UK outside EMU on any of the issues central to the EU's political and economic integration, such as EU enlargement and structural economic reform.

Instead, the EU's most important new political initiatives are likely to emanate from within the Euro-club, with proposals, bargains, and coalitions coordinated at a bilateral Franco-German level or among the Euro-11 before the British government has a real opportunity to react. French and German proposals for certain forms of tax harmonization and majority voting on taxation may be an unpleasant foretaste of the future for the Blair government.

On the other hand, unlike joining the European Community, which was interpreted at the time as an economic decision, EMU confronts the British public with the "bogeyman" of far greater political centralization of power in Brussels. The most worrying trend from Blair's perspective was seeing how the entry of EMU was immediately followed by a rapid push by Socialist governments in Europe for a start to corporate and withholding tax harmonization, a source of great concern to a tax-averse British public and "new" Labour party.

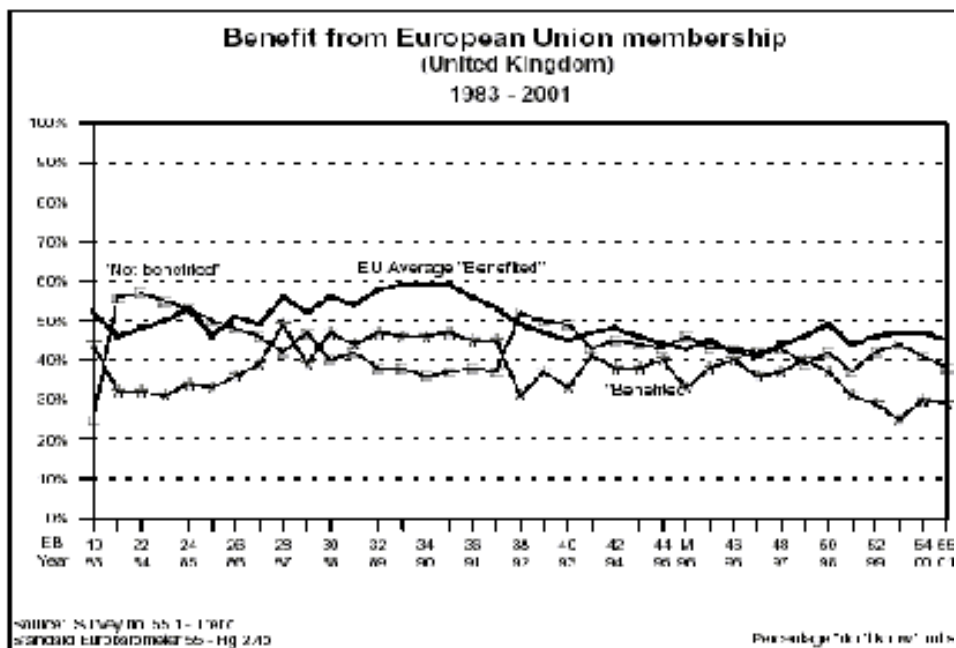
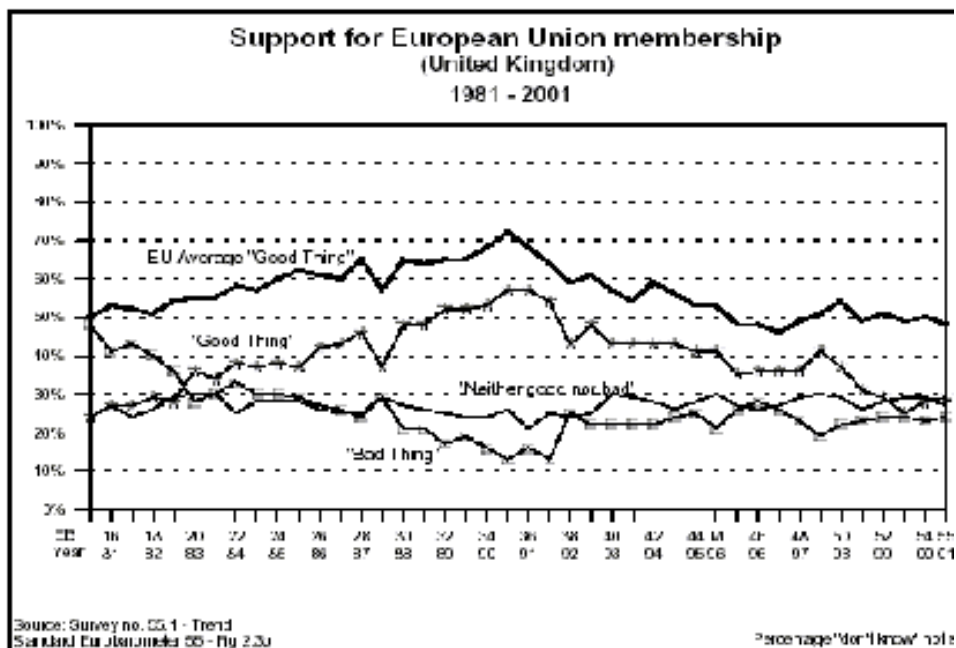
The choice of when to join does not lie entirely in Blair's or Brown's hands. Britain has always found it difficult to converge its economy with those of its EU partners due to its higher levels of non-EU trade, its tendency to make more home loans on variable interest rates than its partners, and the fact that it is the only oil exporter in the EU. Economic pragmatism as much as political ambivalence is at the heart of Britain's continuing hesitation about acceding to the single currency.

## **Current State of Play on the EMU debate**

Poll figures have shown that the percentage of voters opposed to UK membership of the monetary union has held steady at around two thirds of the voting public. At first sight, therefore, the Blair strategy of holding back on a formal decision and date to join EMU makes sense. After 2002, any turbulence that is likely to have surrounded the early phase of EMU will have subsided, thereby making a referendum on whether to join less controversial. The British public will also become accustomed to seeing and using the Euro. Moreover, the reality of exclusion may also increase demands from UK business for Britain to join, as it did in the case of EC membership in 1960s. Conservative party "heavy-weights" such as former Prime Minister Edward Heath, Michael Heseltine, and Kenneth Clarke have all come out in favor of Britain preparing now "to join a successful single currency." Under these conditions, the underlying pragmatism of the British public -- a majority of which already supports an EU role in areas as diverse as trade, environment, and crime fighting -- may translate into majority support for British EMU membership in a referendum. It is worth noting that a 1971 Gallup poll found a majority of 59-23% against membership of the European Community. The British electorate still voted in favor of EC membership in the 1975 referendum four years later.



## UNITED KINGDOM



While public opposition remains high, so does the percentage of people, 68%, who believe they will be using the Euro by 2010.

Earlier in 2001, Blair indicated to Parliament that the government would make a decision on whether to hold a referendum on EMU entry within two years of the new parliament. The defeat of the conservative party in the 2001 summer elections with its strong anti-Euro message has called into question the solidity of the anti-EMU movement's appeal. Having been re-elected and riding high on the post-September 11 wave of personal popularity, Blair strengthened his rhetoric at the Labour Party conference in October in favour of joining the Euro.

To support Blair's rhetoric, the British economy appears to be converging steadily with its EMU partners. Interest rates, from being double in the UK to the Eurozone rate in 1999 (at 6% to 3%), are now only one percent apart. Inflation in the UK, at around 1%, offsets a less over-valued exchange rate. The IMF concluded recently that UK-EU economic divergence from 1987-98 was largely a result of interest rate decisions, not structural divergences. And leaders of Britain's manufacturing businesses have made it plain to the new government that they expect a decision soon. Nick Scheele, Ford's European chairman until September 2001, said his company's investment in the UK is based upon the assumption that the UK will join the Euro by 2006, reflecting the fact that 60% of the UK's manufactured exports go to the Eurozone.

However, the choice for Blair remains a very risky one. On the one hand, it is hard to tell whether the British economy's convergence is structural and sustainable or temporary. Within the Treasury and the Bank of England, there is the fear that inflation may once again slip out of control if the UK is forced into a "one-size-fits-all" Eurozone monetary policy. The UK economy also remains very sensitive to short-term interest rate shifts – with both companies and households still holding a large amount of floating interest rate loans (in 1999, this included 73% of all mortgages). Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, has expressed his concern that the UK and Eurozone economies may not converge but "pass like ships in the night."

Ultimately, Prime Minister Blair has to show to the British public that the EU is becoming more like the UK before he can confidently try to convince the public to support Euro entry. However, the more successful Gordon Brown's management of the domestic UK economy, the harder it is for Blair to make the case for the UK joining the Euro. While the British people are indeed pragmatic, they will need to hear a convincing case about why not joining would be a problem for the UK. That case cannot be made based on the performance of the British economy in 1999-2001. Can it be made in the next two years?

### **Further reading:**

Strategic Defense Review (1998).

Tony Blair's speech in Warsaw (October 6, 2000)

## CONCLUSION

There are those that argue that unless a majority of British people are able to unite around a new sense of national identity, Britain will face an uphill task not only in holding together the United Kingdom and in building a new basis for social cohesion, but also in meeting the external challenges of economic globalization. The Blair government certainly appears to have set out consciously to “re-brand” Britain not as the fusty, former imperial power and keeper of great traditions, but rather in the image of “Cool Britannia,” a vibrant country that can draw on its ethnic and national diversity, its creativity and eccentricity, as well as on its heritage as an economic “hub” between the Western and Eastern hemispheres to try to engineer a gradual shift both in internal and external perceptions of Britain in the new millennium. The results will take time to show. However, judging by the declining legitimacy of Britain’s institutions over the last decade and the longer-lasting decline in national self-confidence, an effort to re-brand Britain is probably worthwhile.

Just as important, the concept of Britishness depends upon an external context. Britishness was never inherited, but learned in the eighteenth century and was bound up with the creation of the British empire. It connoted a sense of imperial mission, of “Britannia ruling the waves,” and of enemies (France and Spain) that sought to challenge British global interests. All Britons, whether they were English, Scots, or Welsh, were involved in promoting and protecting Britain’s interests against external aggressors, most recently against Britain’s newest enemy, Germany, a crucial episode in the conflict being the heroic “Battle of Britain.” With the loss of the empire from 1950 onwards and the forging of ever-closer economic and cultural ties with Britain’s traditional European enemies, the concept of Britishness has lost its external moorings. Margaret Thatcher’s efforts to re-galvanize the British spirit by appealing to new enmities (limited to Argentina over the Falklands) and old (France and Germany after 1990) were backward looking; an effort to recreate the past. Ultimately, the international and domestic context in which Britain found itself in the last decade of the twentieth century could not support this campaign and her efforts failed.

Tony Blair is attempting to create a new sense of Britishness: one that mixes in some of the old (Britain as a world player; with a strong sense of history and belief in the strength of its institutions of governance) with some of the new (Britain as a partner to European integration and a nation not afraid to modernize its institutions and society). He has made a good start, but there is a long way to go.

# VIETNAM

## SELF STUDY GUIDE



NATIONAL FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
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School of Professional and Area Studies  
Foreign Service Institute  
U.S. Department of State

The **Self-Study Guide: Vietnam** is intended to provide U.S. government personnel in the foreign affairs community with an overview of important issues related to history, geography, politics, religion, culture, economics, and international relations. The guide serves only as an introduction and should be used as a self-study resource. Vietnam is far too complex and diverse a society to be covered in any depth using only the text in this guide. The reader is therefore encouraged to explore the questions and issues introduced using the Internet site guide and articles and books listed in the bibliography. Most of the bibliographic material can be found either on the Internet or in the Foreign Service Institute or Main State Libraries.

Professor Zachary Abuza of Simmons College prepared the first edition of this Guide in 2002. The second edition includes updated information provided by David Jensen, Coordinator for Southeast Asia Studies at the Foreign Service Institute. The views expressed in this guide are those of the authors and attributable sources and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of State or the National Foreign Affairs Training Center.

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Second Edition: December 2006

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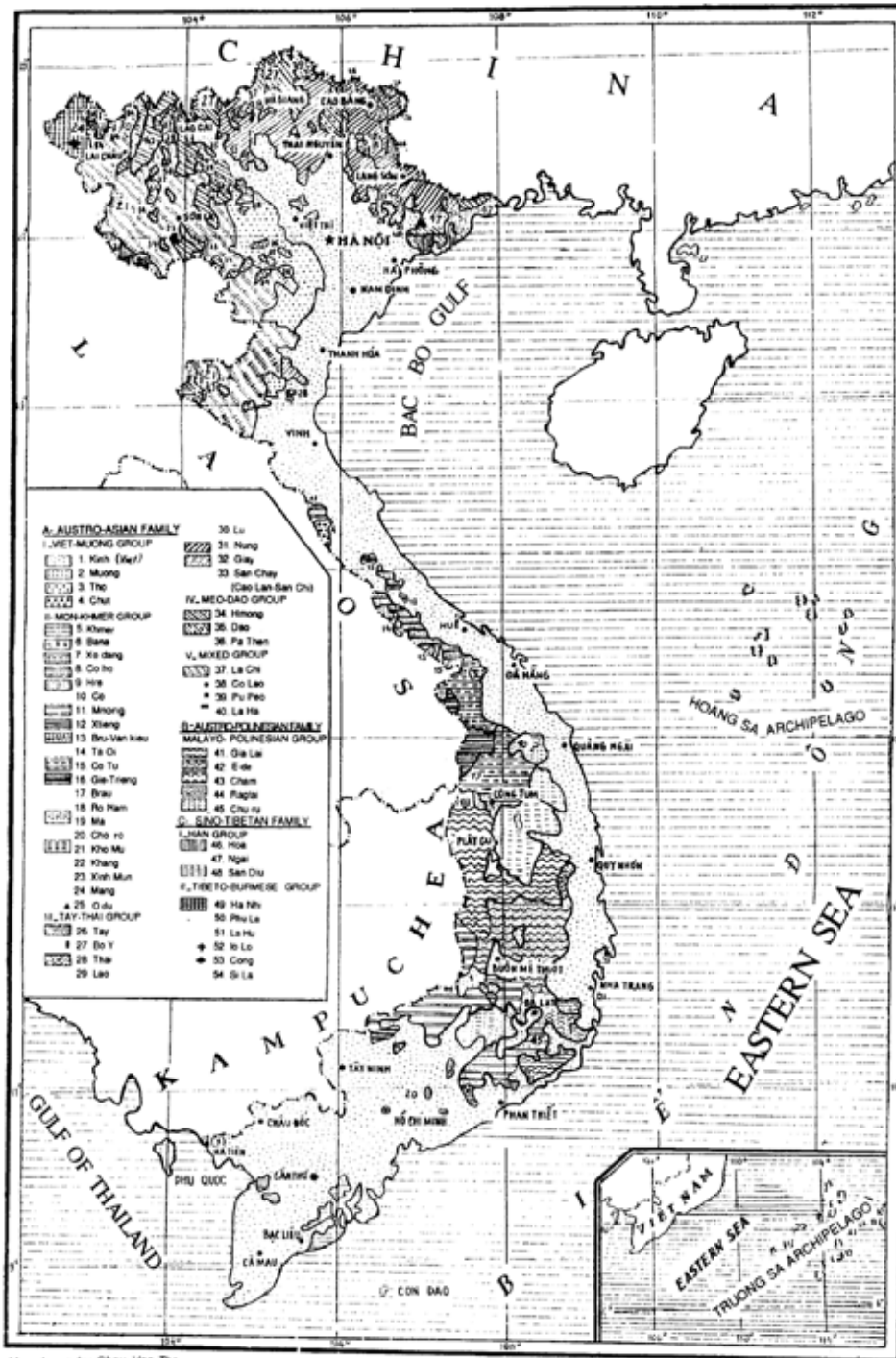
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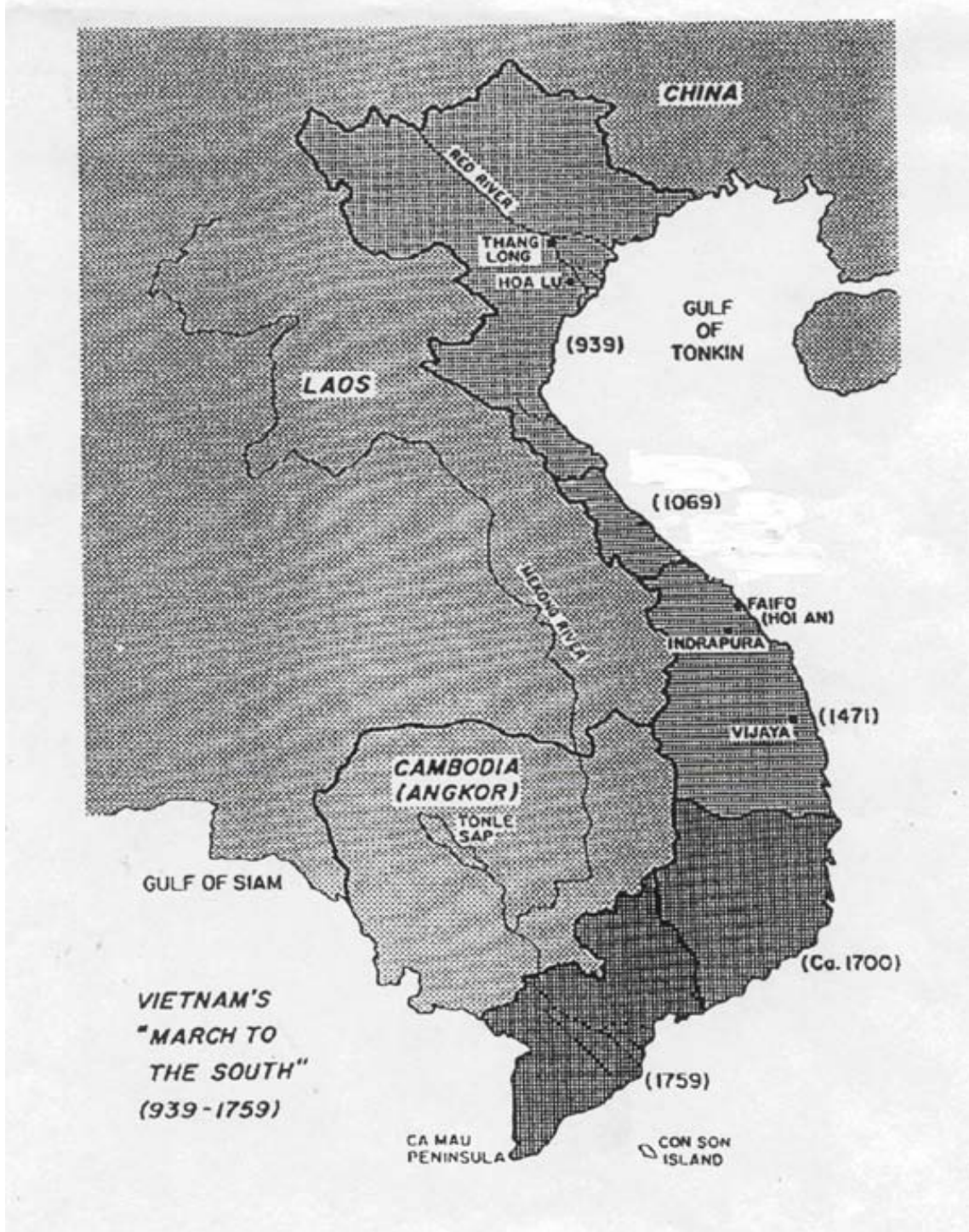
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# ETHNO - LINGUISTICAL MAP OF VIETNAM



Map drawn by Chau Van Tho





## Chronology

- 258 BC Au Lac state created in northern Vietnam.
- 111 BC Au Lac became part of Nam Viet (Tonkin) province in China when conquered by Han Dynasty forces.
- 39-40 First uprising against the Chinese, led by the Trung Sisters.
- 939 Ngo Quyen defeated the Chinese, ending 900 years of Chinese rule.
- 1058 The Temple of Literature and Confucian examination system was established.
- 1284 Tran Hung Dao defeated the 500,000-man Mongol army.
- 1406 China invaded with the avowed purpose of reinstating the Tran dynasty.
- 1418 Le Loi, a southern aristocrat, led a ten-year revolt against the Ming Dynasty culminating in the founding of the Le dynasty in 1428.
- 1527 Le Dynasty was weakened by a civil war fought between two families, the Trinh in the north and the Nguyen in the south; both claimed to fight in the name of the emperor.
- 1615 Jesuit missionaries began arriving.
- 1627 French Missionary Alexander de Rhodes adapted Vietnamese language to Romanized script; paved way for French domination.
- 1771 Tay Son Rebellion.
- 1787 French Missionard De Pigneau enlisted the support of Louis XVI for the pretender to the deposed Nguyen family. French missionary activity increased.
- 1788 Le Dynasty emperor appealed to the Qing court to intervene and fight the Tay Son. Tay Son launched a preemptive strike, defeating the 10,000-man Chinese force. Le emperor fled to China.
- 1802 Nguyen Dynasty founded.
- 1847 First French military expedition clashed with Vietnamese forces. New Vietnamese emperor vowed to rid the country of Christianity.

- 1861 French captured Saigon and much of the Mekong Delta.
- 1862 Treaty of Saigon ceded 3 southern provinces to the French. Cochinchina established.
- 1863 French extended their control over Cambodia, making it a French protectorate.
- 1866 French began a two-year expedition on the Mekong.
- 1873 French attacked Hanoi. Freedom of navigation on Red River and French trading privileges negotiated in 1874.
- 1883 French seized Hanoi.
- 1883 Annam and Tonkin became French protectorates.
- 1884 Treaty of Hue. China forced to withdraw from Vietnam.
- 1885 Treaty of Tianjin. China renounced all claims to Vietnam.
- 1887 Indochinese Union founded.
- 1893 Laos became a French protectorate after Franco-Siamese conflict.
- 1911 Ho Chi Minh left for France where he became a founding member of the French Communist Party and agitated for Vietnamese independence.
- 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Ho tried, but failed to negotiate Vietnamese independence.
- 1924 Ho Chi Minh sent to Moscow for training by the Comintern.
- 1925 Ho Chi Minh founded Thanh Nien (Revolutionary Youth League) in southern China.
- 1930 Indochina Communist Party founded by Ho Chi Minh.
- 1940 Japan invaded Vietnam, but allowed Vichy French colonial authorities to continue administrating.
- 1941 Viet Minh established.
- 8/1945 Japan surrendered.
- 9/1945 Ho Chi Minh declared independence and the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) on September 2. Emperor Bao Dai abdicated.
- 10/1945 150,000 Chinese troops occupied northern Vietnam.

- 1946 Franco-Viet Minh talks held. In March, a preliminary agreement was reached. But the French high commissioner Admiral d'Argenlieu rejected the agreement. Ho and a DRV delegation left for France in May. D'Argenlieu violated the March agreement by establishing an independent government for Cochin China.
- 9/1946 Fontainebleau Conference collapsed.
- 11/1946 French bombed Hai Phong harbor. Ho told supporters to evacuate the cities. Franco-Viet Minh war began.
- 1949 Elysee Agreement signed between Bao Dai and the French establishing the state of Vietnam.
- 1950 Military and economic aid agreement negotiated between the newly established People's Republic of China and the Viet Minh.
- 1952 France gave Cambodia and Laos independence.
- 5/1954 French forces defeated at Dien Bien Phu. In Geneva Accords, Vietnam was divided at the 17th Parallel with elections scheduled in two years.
- 1955 Diem defeated Bao Dai in a referendum and established Republic of Vietnam (RVN). President Diem announced that national elections will not be held. US supported Diem; began supplying aid and training Diem's army. Hanoi launched a violent land reform campaign, causing an economic crisis in North and mass flood of refugees to South. Hanoi ordered followers in the South to wage a "political war" in south, but not to fight.
- 10/1957 Insurgency began.
- 1958 Diem launched a half-hearted land reform campaign in the South. By 1960, three-fourths of the land still remained in hands of 15 percent of population.
- 1959 Communist network in the South devastated. LDP Central Committee in Hanoi, alarmed by how quickly Diem consolidated his power, changed its strategy in the South and authorized armed struggle.
- 11/1960 Attempted military coup on Diem and his brother Nhu who became more dictatorial.
- 12/1960 Hanoi founded the National Liberation Front (NLF), a Communist-led shadow government/resistance movement, in the South. Dubbed the Viet Cong, by 1961 the NLF had 300,000 members and controlled one-third of the South.
- 4/1961 Kennedy advisor, Walt Rostow, called for a proactive policy in Vietnam.

- 5/1961 500 US soldiers and military advisors sent to Vietnam. US began covert attacks on North Vietnam.
- 11/1961 Max Taylor, head of US MAG, called for the dispatch of an 8,000-man task force to assist RVN forces in a "combat support role" to "boost morale."
- 1963 Hanoi began to actively supply Viet Cong and infiltrate its own troops to the South.
- 5/1963 Diem's forces fired on Buddhist protestors in Hue, causing monks to self-immolate themselves to protest Diem's authoritarianism. In August, Diem launched raids on Buddhist pagodas across the country, arresting 1,400 monks. US Ambassador Lodge began to meet secretly with generals to plan coup.
- 8/1963 Lodge received intelligence that Diem and Nhu were secretly meeting with Viet Cong to negotiate a settlement.
- 10/1963 US cut off aid to South Vietnam to force Diem to reform.
- 11/1963 Diem and Nhu assassinated in a military coup. President Kennedy also assassinated in same month. President Johnson committed himself to not "losing" South Vietnam.
- 12/1963 US began to formally link Viet Cong activity to Hanoi and decided that Hanoi must be punished for aggression.
- 1/1964 General Nguyen Khanh launched another coup, with US support.
- 8/1964 Gulf of Tonkin Incident. US began bombing of North Vietnam. Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed, which gave President Johnson the authority to take "all necessary measures in support of freedom" in Southeast Asia.
- 2/1965 LBJ ordered sustained bombing of the North to deter them from aiding Viet Cong. Coup launched against Khanh by General Nguyen Van Thieu.
- 4/1965 LBJ ordered a massive increase in US force levels to 184,000 troops (up from 23,300 in 1964) and authorized them to engage in combat operations. By end of 1965, there were 200,000 US troops.
- 12/1965 US army commander Westmoreland requested an increase to 443,000 men. The JCS approved 542,000 men for 1967.
- 1966 China, engulfed in the Cultural Revolution, increased aid to Vietnam.
- 9/1967 Nguyen Van Thieu was pressured by the US to hold elections. Although they were rigged, Thieu only took 35 percent of the vote.

- 12/1967 LBJ announced willingness to seek a negotiated settlement and suspended the bombing of the North as a good will gesture. Hanoi rejected Johnson's 14-point peace proposal.
- 2/1968 Tet Offensive. Though costly for Communist forces, the anti-war movement in the U.S. gained momentum.
- 3/1968 LBJ ordered a temporary halt to the bombing, and offered a total cessation "if American restraint was matched by restraint in Hanoi."
- 4/1968 Hanoi announced willingness to meet; first direct talks were held in Paris in May.
- 10/1968 Talks continued, but President Thieu resisted making concessions, waiting to see what position the newly-elected U.S. president would take.
- 11/1968 Nixon elected President. He announced during campaign that he "had a secret plan to end the war," but was determined he would not be first US President to lose a war.
- 5/1969 Viet Cong representatives in Paris offered a 10-point peace proposal that called for unconditional US withdrawal, establishment of a coalition government that would not include President Thieu, holding of national elections, and establishment of an independent and permanent government structure in the South. Nixon's counter-proposal called for the simultaneous withdrawal of US and North Vietnamese troops, and the holding of an internationally-monitored national election.
- 6/1969 Nixon's Midway speech announced the withdrawal of 25,000 US troops as a goodwill gesture, and a policy of "Vietnamization" of the war. Troop levels fell from 542,500 in 1969 to 474,000 in January 1970, to 139,000 men in December 1971.
- 9/1969 Ho Chi Minh died. Power was consolidated by the hardliner, Le Duan.
- 4/1970 Nixon realized that this was his last chance. The US would need to launch a major offensive, as it was withdrawing most of its forces. Bombing of the North was intensified. Neutral Cambodia was invaded to close the Ho Chi Minh Trail and eliminate Viet Cong sanctuaries.
- 2/1971 "Vietnamization" of the war was put to the test as the South Vietnamese army was defeated by the North in a series of battles. US secretly reentered negotiations with Hanoi in Paris. Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met 12 times.
- 7/1971 Kissinger went to Saigon to meet with Thieu.
- 10/1971 Thieu was re-elected with widespread electoral fraud, but believed he had mandate to negotiate with the North. Talks broke down and the US resumed bombing of the North.
- 2/1972 Nixon met Mao in Beijing.

- 3/1972 Hanoi for first time openly sent its forces across the 17th parallel, taking several provinces. US retaliated by bombing Hanoi and Hai Phong.
- 4/1972 Nixon secretly arrived in Moscow and demanded that the Soviet Union pressure Hanoi to stop the invasion of the South. On 25 April, peace talks resumed in Paris.
- 5/1972 US mined Hai Phong and other northern harbors.
- 9/1972 Peace talks resumed. Hanoi made a major concession by dropping demand that Thieu be removed before a cease-fire could be established, but refused to withdraw its forces. Thieu rejected this agreement.
- 12/1972 Peace talks broke down. Nixon ordered a massive bombing campaign to push Hanoi back to the negotiating table.
- 1/1973 Negotiations resumed. Washington halted bombing and mining. Agreement to end the war was signed. Cease-fire began on 27 January.
- 2/1973 Kissinger met with North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong in Hanoi.
- 6/1974 Large-scale fighting resumed.
- 4/1975 Saigon fell to North Vietnamese on 4/30/75. Two weeks earlier, Phnom Penh fell to Khmer Rouge.
- 5/1975 Vietnamese currency abolished in the South as part of the "socialist transition."
- 1976 Vietnam formally reunified. Socialist Republic of Vietnam was founded.
- 12/1976 With the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Hanoi began to talk about an "Indochinese Federation", angering Cambodia.
- 3/1977 Pol Pot, convinced of Hanoi's plot to annex Cambodia, began massacring ethnic Vietnamese.
- 4/1977 Ethnic Chinese property seized in Saigon. About 133,000 refugees fled to China.
- 6/1977 Hanoi tried to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the border war with Phnom Penh. China lashed out at Hanoi.
- 7/1977 Viet-Lao Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation approved.
- 9/1977 Pol Pot made high profile visit to Beijing, which pledged full support to Khmer Rouge.

- 12/1977 Vietnamese forces launched an attack into Cambodia in retaliation and then withdrew.
- 2/1978 Hanoi decided to establish and fund an anti-Pol Pot regime in Cambodia.
- 5/1978 China announced the termination of all aid projects in Vietnam. Hanoi, fearful of a "fifth column", began to "sell" exit visas for ethnic Chinese, starting the "boat people" crisis. Some 250,000 immediately fled; more followed later.
- 6/1978 Hanoi joined the CMEA Soviet trade bloc.
- 11/1978 Hanoi signed a 30-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviets; massive economic and military aid began flowing to Hanoi from Moscow.
- 12/1978 Vietnam invaded Cambodia, driving Khmer Rouge into Thailand. Hanoi established a puppet government led by Khmer Rouge defectors.
- 3/1979 China invaded Vietnam to "teach Hanoi a lesson for its ungrateful and arrogant behavior."
- 1982 The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, nominally headed by Prince Sihanouk but dominated by the Khmer Rouge, was established with American, Chinese and ASEAN support to fight the Vietnamese. The VCP's 5<sup>th</sup> Party Congress held in midst of economic crisis. Some Chinese styled economic reforms were implemented.
- 3/1985 Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Soviet Union.
- 7/1986 6th Party Congress. Nguyen Van Linh was rehabilitated and appointed General Secretary (Le Duan died shortly before). *Doi Moi* launched and a liberal foreign investment code promulgated.
- 1988 Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach unveiled Resolution 13 which radically redefined Vietnam's security policy. Thach called for the withdrawal of troops in Cambodia and the need to better ties with the ASEAN states.
- 7/1988 Jakarta Informal Meeting linked Vietnamese withdrawal to end of external support for warring Cambodian factions.
- 9/1989 Hanoi completed withdrawal from Cambodia.
- 10/1991 Paris Peace Accords signed, ending the Cambodian conflict; at same time, Soviet aid program terminated and most of Soviet forces stationed in Cam Ranh Bay withdrawn.
- 6/1991 VCP's 7<sup>th</sup> Congress. Do Muoi elected General Secretary, Vo Van Kiet became Prime Minister, and Le Duc Anh President. In wake of socialism's demise in Eastern Europe, political reform was thoroughly rejected.



- 11/1991 China and Vietnam renormalized diplomatic relations.
- 1992 Vietnam became an observer in ASEAN.
- 1994 President Bill Clinton lifted economic embargo on Vietnam.
- 1995 Vietnam became a full member of ASEAN; diplomatic ties between the US and Vietnam were established.
- 1996 VCP's 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Political stalemate and factional infighting caused policy gridlock.
- 1997 Ambassador Douglas "Pete" Peterson arrived in Hanoi as the first U.S. Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- 2000 President Clinton visited Vietnam.
- 4/2001 VCP's 9<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Nong Duc Manh elected General Secretary.
- 12/2001 U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement came into force.
- 2002 Elections for National Assembly produce a larger, younger, better educated legislature.
- 2003 An outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is confirmed in Hanoi, but the Vietnamese government moves swiftly to contain the problem.
- 2004 Outbreak of avian influenza (bird flu) emerged. The government's quick response helped contain the threat, but did not eliminate it.
- 2005 Prime Minister Phan Van Khai made official visit to the U.S. The National Assembly passed the country's first anti-corruption law in response to growing domestic criticism.
- 4/2006 VCP's 10<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Nong Duc Manh re-elected General Secretary. Nguyen Tan Dung became new Prime Minister and Nguyen Minh Triet the new President.
- 11/2006 Vietnam hosted APEC Leaders Meeting. President George W. Bush attended.
- 12/2006 Vietnam approved as 150<sup>th</sup> member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- 12/2006 U.S. restored permanent normal trade relations with Vietnam.

## The Natural Setting

### 1. The Land

Vietnam's total landmass is 331,114 square kilometers (127,243 square miles), and includes a 4,200 square-kilometer territorial sea zone. It measures some 3,444 kilometers from its northernmost border with China to its southernmost tip in the Gulf of Thailand. Vietnam is only 600 kilometers at its widest point and 50 kilometers at its narrowest.

The country has a rugged and diverse topography. Two-thirds of Vietnam is covered in mountains and forests. The highest point is Fan Si Pan, which is 3,144 meters. The remaining third of the country includes plains, midlands, mangrove swamp, and forests. About 20 percent of the land is under cultivation, mainly with wet rice paddy. The paddy, and hence the majority of the population, is concentrated in the two major river deltas, the Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong Delta in the south.

The capital is the northern city of Hanoi and other major cities include: Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Can Tho and My Tho.

Vietnam has a long frontier. Its inland border stretches 4,639 kilometers and abuts three states: China (1,281 km), Laos (2,130 km), and Cambodia (1,228 km). Vietnam has had territorial disputes with both Cambodia and China. A border treaty was concluded with Laos in 1977. In December 2000, after years of negotiations, China and Vietnam concluded an agreement on the demarcation of their land border. In November 2005, Vietnam and Cambodia ratified an agreement which reaffirms the basic boundary line mapped by the French in 1954. This agreement also sets a deadline of December 2008 for completing full demarcation, including the positioning of border markers.

Vietnam has a 3,444-kilometer coastline, and claims a 200-mile continental shelf and exclusive economic zone, and a 12 nautical mile territorial sea.

Vietnam has outstanding maritime claims in both the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea. After 10 years of negotiations, China and Vietnam agreed in December 2000 to the demarcation of the Gulf of Tonkin. Vietnam claims both the Spratly and Paracel Island chains in the South China Sea. China seized the Paracel Islands in 1974 from the Republic of Vietnam regime. Vietnam currently occupies several reefs and atolls in the Spratly Islands, though China seized a number in 1988 in a brief naval skirmish. Vietnam has continued to claim the Spratly Islands, which are also claimed in their entirety by China and Taiwan, and in part by the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. Since its membership into ASEAN in 1995, Vietnam has downplayed its claim and *de facto* adopted a policy of maintaining the territorial *status quo*. Vietnam has used ASEAN as a platform to put pressure on China to sign a code of conduct in the South China Sea, and has rejected China's offer of joint development.

Vietnam has had successful negotiations with Thailand regarding the demarcation of their shared maritime boundary, and an effective dispute resolution mechanism is in place to adjudicate disputes over fisheries and natural gas exploration. These agreements have come at the expense of Cambodia, with whom Vietnam also has a maritime boundary dispute. Vietnam is a coastal state and has many important ports, including Hai Phong and Vinh in the north, Hue, Da Nang, Cam Ranh, and Nha Trang in the center, and Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho in the south. Vietnam's long coastline and adjacent plains make the country susceptible to annual typhoon flooding.

## **2. Plants, Animals, and the Environment**

Despite decades of war, Vietnam's ecology is highly diverse. There are approximately 12,000 species of plants, 270 species of mammals, 770 species of birds, 180 species of reptiles, and 80 species of amphibians. Several of these species are unique to Vietnam. About 365 species of animals are threatened with extinction, of which 67 are endangered. The government has pledged to defend its bio-diversity, but poaching and logging are endemic.

Although nearly three-quarters of Vietnam's land area is covered in forests and mountains, its forests are being felled at an unsustainable rate. Forested land fell from 44 percent of land area in 1943 to less than 20 percent today (2006). Much was destroyed or has not recovered from the war, when 72 million liters of herbicides destroyed over 2 million hectares of forests. Throughout the 1990s, Vietnam lost about 110,000 hectares of forest annually due to illegal and legal logging. Slash and burn agriculture, practiced by many of the ethnic minority hill tribes, contributes to deforestation as well as soil erosion and flooding. There have been some official attempts to reforest. In the 1990s, the government had an ambitious target of reforesting 100,000 hectares per year; the target is currently twice that.

Vietnam's fisheries are also in jeopardy of being over exploited. There are over 300,000 fishermen and the government considers aquaculture products as a key export commodity. Water pollution also threatens marine life populations.

Vietnam's rapid urbanization has caused a number of environmental concerns. Urban infrastructure development has been unable to keep pace with rapid rural-urban migration, and safe water and sanitation are at low levels. Lax environmental enforcement, especially with regard to industrial waste, has served to attract foreign investment.

## **3. The Climate**

Vietnam's climate is mostly tropical. In the north, the climate is sub-tropical, averaging 17.2 degrees Celsius and 29.2 degrees Celsius in winter and summer, respectively. The monsoon season in the north lasts from mid-May to mid-September. The southern climate is tropical with two distinct seasons: dry and rainy. The average summer temperature is 29.7 degrees Celsius and the average winter temp is 24 degrees.

The average amount of rainfall is 1,800 mm in Hanoi, 2,900 mm in Hue and 2,000 mm in Ho Chi Minh City. Heavy or prolonged monsoon rains can result in serious flooding. Tropical storms are common in the autumn and monsoons and typhoons frequently devastate the central region.

### ***Study Questions***

1. In what way has Vietnam's history been shaped by its geography?
2. What is the likely impact of Vietnamese economic development on the environment and natural resources?

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

- Cima, Ronald J. (ed.), *Vietnam: A Country Study* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1989).
- Dieu, Nguyen Trong, *Geography of Vietnam* (Hanoi: The Gioi, 1995).
- Thao, Le Ba, *Vietnam: The Country and Its Geographical Regions* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1997).

## The People

### 1. Demographics

With a population of more than 82 million (2004 estimate), Vietnam has one of the largest populations in Southeast Asia. It is an agrarian nation; about 80 percent of the population lives in the countryside. The country is densely populated, with an average of 250 people per square kilometer. Most of the population lives within the two delta regions, the Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong River Delta in the south. The Red River Delta area is the most densely populated region in the country. For example, Thai Binh province has a population density of over 1,000 people per square kilometer, over four times the national average. The mountain regions are sparsely populated; though they comprise almost two-thirds of the country's territory, only 12 percent of the population inhabit them. There have been repeated attempts since 1975 to force people from the coast to migrate to the mountainous regions and border areas.

Vietnam has become a more urbanized state, both as economic policies that encourage industrialization have taken hold and as the growing socio-economic gap between the poor countryside and the urban centers draws migrants from the over-populated interior of the country. Despite the growth in urban areas around the country since 1986, the two largest cities, Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), account for about 50 percent of the urban population.

Vietnam's population exploded in the second half of the 20th century. The population in 1945 was 20 million. From the 1940s to 1960s, the birth rate was 4.6 percent and the overall population growth rate was around 3.4 percent. After the war, in 1979, the birth rate fell to 3.25 percent, though the overall growth rate remained an alarming 2.63 percent. Since the economic reform program *doi moi* was implemented in late 1986, the government has attempted to implement a two child policy. The population growth rate in 2004 was estimated at 1.02 percent.

Vietnam's population is very young; over 60 percent the population is under the age of 30, meaning that Vietnam is on the verge of a large demographic bubble. Vietnam is already struggling to cope with the 1.3 million new entrants to the workforce every year.

Fifty-percent of the population is female, though that rate is much higher for older age groups because of the war. There is a problem, as in other Asian countries such as China, of female infanticide due to strong cultural preferences for male offspring.

### 2. Ethnic Groups

Vietnam has more than 50 individual minority groups, though about 85-90 percent of the population are ethnic Vietnamese. Other major ethnic groups include: the Chinese, Khmer, Cham, Hmong, and Thai. The smallest ethnic groups are on the verge of cultural extinction, with only a few hundred members left. With the exception of the Chinese and Khmer, most of the ethnic minorities live in the mountainous regions of the country.

Vietnam's more than two million ethnic Chinese, concentrated mostly in southern Vietnam, constitute Vietnam's largest minority group. Long important players in the Vietnamese economy, the Vietnamese of Chinese ancestry have been active in rice trading, milling, real estate, and banking in the south and shop keeping, stevedoring, and mining in the north. Restrictions on private sector economic activities following reunification of the north and south in 1975, together with a subsequent general deterioration in Vietnamese-Chinese relations, sent chills throughout the Chinese-Vietnamese community. In 1978-79, about 450,000 ethnic Chinese left Vietnam by boat as refugees (many were officially encouraged and assisted) or were expelled across the land border with China.

The second largest ethnic minority grouping, the central highland peoples (formerly termed Montagnards or mountain people), comprise two main ethno-linguistic groups sometimes called the Malayo-Polynesian and Mon-Khmer. About 30 such groups of various cultures and dialects are spread over the highland territories.

The third largest minority is the Khmer Krom (Cambodians), which numbers about 600,000 and is concentrated near the Cambodian border at the mouth of the Mekong River. Most are farmers. Other minority groups include the Cham (remnants of the once-mighty Champa Kingdom which was conquered by the Vietnamese in the 15 century), Hmong, and Thai.

The government's policies towards the ethnic minorities have changed over time. For example, following the partition of the country in 1954, the North Vietnamese government established two "autonomous zones" in the mountainous north and northwest of the country, the region from which the Viet Minh launched their anti-colonial struggle against the French. These zones were enshrined in the 1960 Constitution. Following the reunification of the country in 1975-76, the Government abolished the "autonomous zones." Having fought so long for national unity, the government in Hanoi wanted to centralize control, and it had no desire to share power with ethnic minorities. Hanoi took a harder line towards these groups because many of them in the Central Highlands region (the Hmong and Montagnards, in particular) served as mercenaries and scouts for the Americans during the war. Ethnic tensions were exacerbated in the late 1970s when the government forcibly resettled hundreds of thousands of internally displaced peoples. The government settled these migrants in "New Economic Zones," which consisted of land in the border regions inhabited by ethnic minorities that the government sought to reclaim, cultivate, and bring under more effective central control.

Ethnic tensions resurfaced in the 1990s. Large-scale hydroelectricity projects forced the government to relocate hundreds of thousands of people. In addition, the large-scale cultivation of coffee in the Central Highlands region has led to the government's encouragement of large-scale migration to the region, through land allocation and other economic incentives. The net result has been that in provinces such as Kon Tum and Gia Lai, where ethnic minorities once comprised a majority of the population, these groups are now in the minority. Land allocation to ethnic Vietnamese plantation owners has also compromised the traditional slash and burn system of agriculture of the hill tribes. In early 2001, ethnic tension peaked again as thousands of hill tribesmen demonstrated in the provincial capital of Buon Me Thuot.

The election of Nong Duc Manh, an ethnic Tay, to the post of General Secretary of the Vietnam Communist Party in April 2001, was thought to ameliorate some of the ethnic tensions. Yet as a majority of the ethnic minorities are evangelical Christians, they often feel persecuted on religious grounds as well (see below).

### **3. Healthcare**

Recent improvements in healthcare have allowed Vietnam's population to live longer and healthier lives. Despite its status as a developing country, the quality of life for Vietnam's population is relatively high. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam regime was quick to establish a nation-wide network of health care in 1954, that despite little funding, penetrated to the local level and did much to improve people's lives. Life expectancy, which was only 40 years in 1950, had increased to 68 for males and 74 for females by the year 2005. The infant mortality rate has correspondingly fallen from 45/1000 live births in 1995 to 26/1000 live births in 2005. In 2005, the death rate had fallen to 6.26 deaths/1,000, while the birth rate remained high at 21.62-births/1,000 population. The total fertility rate in 2005 was approximately 1.94 percent.

Despite some development successes, Vietnam remains a poor country, with annual per capita income in 2005 of about \$640 (or \$2,700 in purchasing power parity). Moreover, per capita caloric intake has fallen in many areas, and more than 40 percent of Vietnamese children are malnourished. Sanitary conditions are still poor and only about 40 percent of the total population have access to clean water. Apart from malnutrition, the most common affliction, Vietnam also has high rates of malaria, dengue fever, typhoid and cholera. About 220,000 Vietnamese are living with HIV/AIDS (2003 estimate), representing an adult prevalence rate of 0.4%.

Vietnam has a strong network of basic healthcare services. Ninety percent of the total population, and nearly 100 percent of the urban population, has access to basic healthcare. Yet, the government spends relatively little on it; about 85 percent of healthcare spending comes from individual citizens. Investment in healthcare has not kept pace with the growing population, and the number of hospital beds and nurses per 1,000 people has declined in recent years, though the number of doctors has increased.

### **4. Education**

Vietnam has an excellent primary school system, and the country boasts developed country-rates of adult literacy. Adult literacy totaled over 90 percent of the population in 2002, 87 percent for females and 94 percent of males.

Yet investment in education has not kept pace with population growth. Although primary education is universal, there is a shortage of qualified teachers, and most are underpaid. Within schools, pedagogical tools and equipment are lacking, while facilities are in poor condition, if they exist at all.

A disproportionate amount of educational funding goes to urban and sub-urban areas.

Educational opportunities for ethnic minorities are minimal to the alarm of the international community.

There are over 100 institutions of higher education, 55 are clustered in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, which adds to a rural-urban education gap. Less than 2 percent of the population has received tertiary- or graduate-level education.

## **5. Labor Force**

The labor force is around 43 million (2004 estimate), but growing by around 1.3 million people a year. Most of the labor force is unskilled: 63 percent are engaged in agriculture, while industry and the service sector employ the remaining 37 percent.

### ***Study Questions***

1. What are the challenges posed by Vietnam's youthful population?
2. What is Vietnam's policy towards its ethnic minorities?

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

- *Background Note: Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, July 2006).
- Jameson, Neil, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).



## Culture

### 1. Traditional Confucian Culture

Historically, Vietnam was constantly under Chinese domination or the threat of it. One of the mechanisms Vietnamese leaders used to assuage the Chinese was to adopt Chinese political and cultural institutions. This process of Sinicization imposed Confucian culture at every level of Vietnamese society. The imperial system established a powerful mandarin class, selected through a Confucian examination system.

The rigid teachings of Confucianism emphasize proper social relationships, a rigid code of conduct that defines the rights and duties of individuals within a hierarchical society. Confucianism defines proper behavior based on social roles. The family is the microcosm of society. Confucian doctrines have also established a set of rigid guidelines of behavior, conduct, and duties. The five principle relationships (*ngu luan*) are: ruler-subject; father-son; husband-wife; elder brother-younger brother; and friend-friend. The hierarchical relationships have established a pecking order that creates inequality in traditional society. If everyone accepts one's position and fulfills one's duties, this would lead to social harmony. It is an asymmetric system of prescribed rights and duties.

At the heart of Confucianism is a respect for authority, as benevolent and sage leaders rule unchallenged, legitimized by the "mandate of heaven." Only when the leader fails to provide for the nation do the people have the right to rebel.

### 2. The Role of Women

Traditional Confucian teachings have prescribed roles for women as daughters, wives, and mothers. Vietnamese women are expected to follow the "three submissions" (*tam tong*) to male authority. A woman must obey her father during childhood, her husband during marriage, and her eldest son when she reaches widowhood. Women are taught the four virtues (*tu duc*), a code of ethics for proper conduct and behavior. *Cong*, or labor, is the art of "mastering cooking, sewing, and embroidering." A woman's physical attractiveness (*dung*) is "to be only attractive to one's husband, but not enticing to others." Women are also expected to have appropriate speech, (*ngon*) by being "self-demeaning and rigidly polite rather than assertive or imaginative." Finally, one's proper behavior (*hanh*), is to be "honest and loyal to one's superior."

The status of women changed little under French colonialism, though more entered the commercial workforce while daughters of the elite were educated. Ho Chi Minh, however, saw women as being a revolutionary force and argued that the Confucian family system was one of sources of Vietnam's backwardness. Ho recruited women into the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) and recognized the necessity of the women's involvement in the war effort. The Trung sisters, two of Vietnam's venerated heroines who expelled the Chinese in 1 AD, were emulated as national heroes and symbols of patriotism.

Once in power, the ICP focused on equality of sexes by expanding rights and addressing issues of women. In the 1960's, the Family and Marriage Act established the legal marriage age at 18, and

women had the right to choice of partner and to remarry without losing the claim to their children and property.

Many women were eager to join the ICP, which was an escape from the traditional prescribed roles and provided the opportunity for a modern, anti-feudal approach to women's roles by rejecting traditional authoritarian ideology of Confucianism, especially the social hierarchy.

Once the war against the Americans started, women's issues were diverted and were never fully re-addressed, although women's participation in both fighting and economic production was crucial to sustaining the war effort. For the first time, women dominated factory work, and by the late 1960s, over 40 percent of local level leaders were women. Yet, after reunification, patriarchal culture re-emerged. Women's status declined as the veterans returned home, and women were displaced and resumed their traditional roles within the home.

Although women are granted full equality under the constitution, Vietnam remains a patriarchal society, and women are under-represented in the higher echelons of management, business, and government.

Confucianism, which considers the scholar-official as the top of society, looks down on the merchant class. Consequently, Vietnamese women are often times found working in the informal business sector of the workforce. Rural women work the farms and are involved in animal domestication. They also supplement their income by engaging in sideline production of small handicrafts and local trading.

Women have benefited from the opportunities of the reform era. They are an important component of the urban white-collar workforce and now attend higher education in higher rates than their male counterparts.

### **3. Family Life**

Vietnamese society is centered on family life that consists of a multi-generation household. The parents are the supreme authority in this single and well-integrated hierarchically structured unit. "The sense of family [has] included the deceased and those not yet born in a single fabric of spiritual unity and material well-being."

In Confucian systems, children are forever indebted to their parents. This debt (*on*) can never be repaid and must be manifested through filial piety and respect. This continues after death when ancestors are worshipped in family altars within the homes and on special holidays when graves are visited.

At a young age, a girl performs household chores in preparation for life with her future in-laws. Girls were traditionally given limited education because they were considered as a liability since they will "marry out" of the family and become a "possession" of the husband's family. Therefore, little money and time is typically invested in the future of the girls reiterating the cultural preference for sons. Once married, women must earn the respect and loyalty of her new

family. Her main purpose is to continue the family line by having a male heir. The eldest son is expected to carry on the family line and care for his widowed mother.

#### **4. Language**

Vietnam's official language is Vietnamese. It is a Sinic-based language, though it uses a Romanized script. It is a difficult language with five tones and distinct regional differences. French is spoken primarily by the older generation. Russian is widely spoken by those trained in the former Soviet Union from the 1950s through the 1980s. English is now the official second language of the country. Among the country's minority groups, Chinese, Khmer, and tribal languages are spoken.

#### **5. National Holidays**

September 2 is the country's Independence Day, which celebrates Ho Chi Minh's Declaration of Independence from French colonial rule in Ba Dinh Square, Hanoi, on September 2, 1945.

The most important holiday is Tet, the lunar New Year. Tet falls between the end of January and the middle of February, depending on the year, and lasts for 3-4 days. The holiday embodies Vietnamese culture, and its importance is difficult to over-state; it has the components of a national day, a holiday of thanksgiving, and a New Year celebration rolled into one. During Tet, the country shuts down, as people spend 3-4 days visiting with friends and family. Since the economic reform program was implemented in 1986 and the people have become wealthier, Tet has become more elaborate and commercialized, as gift giving is now the norm.

Other official holidays include: May Day (May 1st), Armed Forces Day, and Women's Day. In accordance with the socialist regime, all holidays are non-secular.

#### **6. Religions**

There is a paradox about religion in Vietnam today. On the one hand, there are more religious worshippers in Vietnam today than at any other time. About 80 percent of the population is considered at least nominally Buddhist, often practicing an amalgam of Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucian traditions that sometimes is called the country's "triple religion". There are also an estimated 6 to 8 million Roman Catholics, officials of Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religions claim more than three million adherents each, and estimates of the number of Protestant Christians, located primarily in the northwest and central highlands, vary from an official government figure of 500,000 to claims by the churches of 1.6 million or more. Ancestor worship, Buddhist festivals, folk religions, and cults around historical figures are also commonplace. It appears that there is a significant growth of believers across the country.

On the other hand, while the government has shown little concern about individual faith, it is clearly concerned about the growth of organized religion, its authority structure, nation-wide network, and cadre of adherents. While promising freedom of religion for individuals, the

government has gone out of its way to control religions and prohibit any autonomous religious activity. There is deep-seated historical mistrust of religion. It was in the name of missionary freedom that France invaded and colonized Vietnam, and the government sees the Catholic Church as a vestige of colonialism.

Religion has always been politicized in Vietnam. Buddhists were active in the anti-war movement in South Vietnam, and Catholics in the North were often allies of the French against the Viet Minh. The Hoa Hao and Cao Dai sects raised their own armies and fought the Communists. The Catholics were closely allied with Ngo Dinh Diem's regime.

The Vietnam Communist Party fears the growth of organized religion and strives to maintain control over all religious activity. The VCP believes that religions pose a threat to their monopoly of power. Religions, with their nation-wide network of churches and adherents, a hierarchical authority structure, and charismatic and morally upright leadership who are able to disseminate information and mobilize their congregations, are a potential challenge to the VCP's monopoly of power. While freedom of religion for the majority of individual practitioners is being realized, the state seeks to control the six official religions, their leadership, and their organizations. Religious leaders who circumvent party control are persecuted and often imprisoned. Moreover, religion is perceived as a key component of peaceful evolution, and the VCP is convinced of the subversive role that the Catholic Church played in the collapse of Polish and East German Communism. The VCP sees religion as a primary mode through which foreigners can interfere in Vietnam's internal affairs, whether through direct control of church organization and scripture, or through proselytizing. The Vatican, for example, often clashes with Hanoi over the right to appoint Bishops. As the Vietnamese government considers religion to be an arm of the state, the appointment of church leaders is not a suitable role for the Vatican.

The government has also prevented churches from engaging in social work. An example that portrays the party's fear of organized religion was its reaction to the attempts by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam to distribute relief aid to the victims of flooding in the fall of 2000. Confronted by the worst floods in 40 years, the government, while courting international relief aid for the nearly four million affected people, shunned relief support mobilized by local Buddhist temples and waged an all out campaign against the monks trying to contribute to relief efforts. While Australia, the UN World Food Program, and the International Committee of the Red Cross were all active in relief aid for the 190,000 people in need of emergency assistance, there was little that the international community could do for the approximately four million people who lost homes, livestock, or crops. Yet, at the domestic level, the state feels that if it were to lose its monopoly on the distribution of goods and services, its political authority will dissipate. Such civic organizations cannot be countenanced.

As a result of this profound fear, the Vietnamese government goes out of its way to control religion in several ways (note: Vietnam's 1992 constitution does not guarantee 'freedom of religion' in the fullest sense, but rather 'the freedom to believe or not believe in a religious faith'" -- Article 70). First, religion is controlled through its incorporation as an organ of the state and through the denial of its autonomy. For example, the VCP tried to co-opt the UBCV after reunification in 1976. When church leaders refused to submit to party control, the UBCV

was banned, and an official church, the Vietnam Buddhist Church, was then established under the party's mass-organizations umbrella organization, the Vietnam Fatherland Front. The UBCV has requested official recognition since 1981, but has been rebuffed. It is the same for the other religions as well. Each church has an officially sanctioned and elected ruling body that does the state's bidding; for the Catholics, it is the Bishops' Council of the Vietnam Catholic Church. In 1999, the Hoa Hao were forced to organize a leadership council under state control.

Second, as the state controls all religion, it also controls seminaries, and maintains sole responsibility for the ordination, appointment, and promotion of clergymen. As such, the state is able to apply a political litmus test to ensure that clergymen remain loyal to the Communist regime that they serve. Third, the government appropriated all church properties beginning in 1954 in the north and 1975 in the south. As all religions are organs of the state, all their properties belong to the state. Only 5-10 percent of all Buddhist properties in the south have been returned. To this end, we have seen the spread of "house churches" (*tin lanh*). Fourth, all church publications, from texts, to prayer books, to the writings of the monks and priests must receive official permission and the state has broad interpretive powers regarding church publications.

Vietnam does not ban religion. But the Communist Party forces it to operate in a bureaucratic maze, and any deviance is dealt with harshly.

### ***Study Questions***

1. How has the status of women changed throughout history? Have the promises made to women by the VCP gone fulfilled? In what ways has economic reform contributed to or hindered women's progress?
2. Does freedom of religion exist in Vietnam? Why does the VCP go out of its way to control religion?

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

- U.S. Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report*, 2006.
- Jameson, Neil, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- Marr, David G., *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

## History

### 1. Early History

Until recently, the early history of Vietnam, as that of the other states of Southeast Asia, was shrouded in mythology and a lack of scholarship. But in recent years, a much clearer picture of this early period has been emerging, thanks to academic research in a variety of disciplines. The first major historical marker that we now see clearly is the Kingdom of Van Lang, a feudal state founded in the first millennium BCE in the Red River Valley. Van Lang was populated by the ancestors of the Vietnamese, the Lac, who manufactured the celebrated Dong Son drums during their flourishing Bronze Age civilization. In 258 BCE, a South China war lord, Thuc Phan, conquered Van Lang and combined it with Au Viet, the hilly upland region along the Sino-Vietnamese border, thereby creating Au Lac. It was the first Vietnamese state combining the lowlands of the Red River Valley with the surrounding uplands extending northwards toward the Chinese border.

Au Lac did not long endure, not at least as an independent state, for it became a tributary and then an integral part of Nam Viet, a Cantonese kingdom that included Viet peoples living along the southern coast of China and the northern coast of Vietnam bordering the South China Sea. Then, in 111 BCE the dynamic and expansionist Han dynasty seized Nam Viet and integrated Au Lac into their imperial system as the province of Giao-chi.

The Chinese ruled Au Lac for just over 1000 years with, needless to say, major consequences for Vietnam. Among them were: (1) the implanting of many aspects of Chinese civilization, among the most important of which were the use of Chinese as the language of government and literary expression; (2) the dissemination of Chinese art and cultural forms; (3) the use of Confucian classics as the core of the education system; and (4) the migration of Chinese into Giao-chi, where they formed a Sino-Vietnamese ruling class which drew its wealth and power from a dyked and canal-fed, wet rice agriculture. However, in evaluating the effect of Sinication in Au Lac, it is important to be aware that it most manifestly did not result in a Confucian culture, as Chinese culture at the time was not Confucian but more complex, including many Hindu and Buddhist ideas that were brought to China from the sub-continent via the overland trade route. It is important to recognize also that Chinese influence was limited to Giao-chi. In the center and south of Vietnam, the situation was quite different. There the trading and sea-faring Chams were in the process of “localizing” the many Indian and Islamic ideas and institutions with which they had become familiar while conducting an extensive trade with the Indian sub-continent and Arabia.

This Chinese political and cultural invasion had two important consequences. First, it generated a millennium-long resistance by all classes and segments of the society that from time to time erupted in dramatic events, such as the revolt of the aristocratic Trung sisters in 40 CE. After the great Tang dynasty weakened and then was overthrown, the Vietnamese defeated the Chinese in a celebrated naval battle on the Bach Dang River in 938 and in 967. The Vietnamese emperor Dinh Bo Linh declared northern Vietnam independent in 967, naming it Dai Co Viet.

In the ensuing 600 or so years, politics in Dao Co Viet centered on dynastic struggles at home and struggles on its northern and southern borders, events which were, to be sure, interrelated. The dynastic struggles in Vietnam resulted in the rise of the Ly dynasty in 1009, the Tran in 1225, and the Le in 1426, the founder of which, Le Loi, renamed the country Dai Viet (or Great Vietnam). A subsequent Le emperor, the great Le Thanh Tong, (1460-1498), replaced Buddhism, which had been dominant under the preceding Tran, with Confucian institutions, e.g. the Confucian legal codes, the Confucian examination system, and a Confucian-inspired strict hierarchical government system. While these initiatives most surely were partly responsible for the success of the Le at home and on the northern and southern borders (of which more below), they were not enough to ensure its continuing dominant position. In 1527, the Le dynasty was overthrown by Mac Dang Dung. Although the Le did succeed later (in 1592) in ousting the usurping Mac and in replacing them on the throne, the Le ruled in name only. Two powerful, lordly families exercised the real power; the Trinh in Hanoi and the Nguyen in the South, both of which, along with the Le, were ousted by the Tay Son rebellion in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Vietnam's border problems in the North were essentially defensive, to hold back one after the other of aggressive Chinese dynasties. They did so by an astute strategy of resistance and recognition. The Mongols three times invaded Dai Viet in the 13<sup>th</sup> century; three times invaded Hanoi; and in each case they were later forced to withdraw. Each time the Vietnamese, in an effort to establish a *modus vivendi* with their powerful neighbor, agreed to a tributary relationship. Later, in 1406, the Ming seized Hanoi, but they were driven out by the Vietnamese in an all-out war of resistance led by Le Loi. Once again the two sides established a tributary relationship.

In the south, the issue was Vietnamese expansion, not defense. During the Chinese period, the Vietnamese and Chams had fought off and on over trade and territory. Then, after independence, the Vietnamese began a centuries-long campaign to subdue their rivals to the south, a campaign which would yield rich results, such as access to land, people, and maritime commerce along the South China Sea. In 1252, Dai Viet invaded Champa in response to numerous Cham raids; in 1307, Dai Viet acquired Cham territories north of present-day Da Nang; and in 1471, Le Tang Tong, continuing what has often been referred to as the *nam tien* or the "March to the South", led Vietnamese into Vijaya, which, after the fall of Indrapura some years earlier, had become the capital of Indianized Champa. The southern-based Nguyen lords, who conquered all of Champa and most of the Mekong Delta, undertook the last stages of this campaign. In the wake of military conquest came the principal agents of Vietnamization, i.e., the migrating peasants in search of lands and Vietnamese government officials, who each in their own way extended the reach of Vietnamese culture and society, quickly laying the base for a regional state.

## **2. The Colonial Era**

In 1627, the swashbuckling French Jesuit missionary, Alexander de Rhodes, led a mission to Vietnam. The Jesuits had trouble in the North with the Trinh Dynasty, which was suspicious of the Christians and unfavorable to the Romanization of the Vietnamese language. The Nguyen Dynasty of the South was more accommodating, however, and showed interest in Western guns and trade. Strengthened by this new weaponry, the Nguyen Dynasty continued its march south

along the coast to the fertile Mekong Delta. By 1750, Champa was defeated, and the entire Mekong delta region had been conquered from the Cambodians.

In 1777, the peasant-led, Tay Son Rebellion defeated the Nguyen and Trinh Clans, as well as the Le Dynasty. Nguyen Anh, the pretender to the Nguyen clan, which ruled the South, believed himself to be the rightful heir to the throne. Anh joined forces with a French priest, Pigneau de Behaine, who appealed to France to intercede on Anh's behalf. In 1787, a reluctant France agreed to send 1,650 soldiers, weapons, and ships. In return, Vietnam would cede to France the port of Danang and Paulo Condore Island, and make commercial privileges "to the exclusion of all other European nations." After Louis XVI reneged on the deal a few days before the masses stormed the Bastille (July 1789) sparking the French Revolution, Pigneau went to India where he convinced French merchants to give him money, guns, troops, and ships by exaggerating the wealth and trade potential of Vietnam. Though he returned to Vietnam with only a few hundred soldiers, this proved adequate to capture Saigon. Anh then moved north to Hue and Hanoi, which fell in 1802. France built forts and ensconced itself in Saigon, while Nguyen Anh declared himself Emperor Gia Long, and consolidated the Nguyen Dynasty. He established his court in the central city of Hue. For the first time in centuries, Vietnam was a unified entity. But an independent and unified Vietnam was short-lived, due to French colonial expansion.

Gia Long ruled from 1802-1820 and was succeeded by his son Minh Mang, who ruled from 1820-1841. Minh Mang, a Confucian, was xenophobic towards the West and its missionaries. In 1825, he was so concerned about the growing number of converts that he issued an edict declaring Catholicism heretical, and in 1833 ordered the arrest and execution of missionaries. This was the excuse that France was waiting for – the justification for intervention.

In 1840, Minh Mang sent a diplomatic mission to France, though by this point, the European powers were set in their imperialist ways. In 1841, the British launched the Opium War, pressuring France to acquire its own colonies. France was interested in Indochina, but only as a back door route to China. In 1843, a French fleet was permanently moored in Vietnamese waters to protect missionaries and French commercial interests. Under the pretext of protecting missionaries, France sent an expedition force to Vietnam. A small group landed in Danang on August 31, 1858. In 1861, the French captured Saigon and pushed south through the Mekong Delta. In 1862, Emperor Tu Duc signed the Treaty of Saigon, which ceded three southern provinces around Saigon and Paulo Condore to France, guaranteed freedom of religion, opened three ports to Europeans, and forbid Vietnam's transferal of any other rights or territory to another European power.

The French new territory, officially known as Cochin China, was ruled under a French legal code. French rule in Cochin China was brutal, and from the outset was challenged by wide-scale peasant protests. But Cochin China began to adopt a very different political and legal culture. The ceding of Cochin China had a lasting impact, manifested in the failed 1946 negotiations between Ho Chi Minh and the French, who argued that the region was French territory rather than a part of Vietnam.



In 1863-1864, the French, interested in using the Mekong to trade with China, established a “protectorate” over Cambodia. In 1867, France seized the three southernmost provinces of Dai Viet and incorporated these into Cochin China. The 1866-1868 exploration of the Mekong convinced the French of the benefits of an Indochinese empire, though they concluded that the Mekong was un-navigable and thus could not be used to reach the Chinese interior. France then set its sights on the Red River in Tonkin. In 1873, Admiral Dupre declared the Red River open to trade and unilaterally lowered the tariffs to favor European traders. This caused an outrage among Vietnamese merchants and justified a small army led by French merchants to seize Hanoi. The French sent an official, Philastre, to sign a new treaty. In return for the French withdrawal from Tonkin, in 1874, Emperor Tu Duc recognized French suzerainty over all of Cochin China (including the territory seized in 1867) and granted them trading rights on the Red River.

The French were again denied access to the Red River, and the new French government responded. Prime Minister Jules Ferry argued that “colonial policy is the daughter of industrial policy” and was the first Prime Minister to make imperialism one of his central platforms. In 1882, French defeated the Nguyen army and seized Hanoi, and then the French parliament authorized five million francs for a full-scale expedition in Tonkin. In 1883, the French Navy arrived at the mouth of the Perfume River outside of Hue. The following year, the Treaty of Hue was negotiated, but not signed. Annam and Tonkin became French protectorates. In 1885, the Vietnamese revolted in what became known as the Battle of Hue, though they were defeated.

In 1887, the French founded the Indochinese Union, composed of Cochin China, Annam, Tonkin, and Cambodia. This later included Laos, which the French gained as a protectorate after negotiating a treaty with Siam in 1893.

By 1895, the Indochinese protectorates had fallen into terrible budget deficits, due in part to mismanagement and because of the squabbles of the *residents superieurs*, who separately ruled the four protectorates and Cochin China, over scarce government resources. Until 1897, Vietnam was never ruled as a single colonial entity. The French divided the country into three regions: Cochin China, Tonkin, and Annam. In 1897, the new Governor General created a self-sufficient Indochinese Union, something that would become a profit-making venture for France, free of subsidies from French taxpayers. Doumer’s first priority was to centralize control of Indochina, concentrating power in the hands of the Governor General.

### **3. The Anti-Colonial Struggle**

What was fiscally sound for the French put a huge burden on the Vietnamese peasantry. There were sporadic revolts against French Colonial rule: for example, the 1908 uprising in Hanoi; the massive anti-tax revolt in Annam; the 1916 rebellion in Cochin China and Annam; and the 1930 uprisings in Tonkin and Annam. Organized anti-colonial struggle developed in the 1920s and 1930s. The most important groups were the nationalist VNQDD, which modeled itself on the KMT in China, and the Indochina Communist Party, founded in 1930 by Ho Chi Minh. The origins of the ICP date back to 1925 when Comintern official and Vietnamese nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh founded the Revolutionary Youth League in southern China. Hobbled by factionalism, the group was defunct by May 1929. After uniting feuding Communist groups that

operated in southern China, Ho founded the Indochina Communist Party in 1930. The group operated clandestinely, as French colonial authorities imprisoned many of its leaders. The ICP grew, however, into a pre-eminent, anti-colonial force.

To widen its appeal, Ho created in 1941 a broad nationalist united front, under the ICP's leadership, known as the Viet Minh. The ICP was dissolved, however, to assuage fears that Communist forces would not dominate the new coalition government. Viet Minh troops waged a guerilla war against the Japanese and Vichy French troops. Following Japan's surrender, Ho's Viet Minh marched into Hanoi and declared the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) on September 2, 1945. However, it did not control a majority of the territory in the North, as much was in the hands of rival political parties.

Despite Ho's declaration of independence and the establishment of a Viet Minh-dominated National Assembly, nationalist Chinese troops continued to occupy the north while the French returned to reclaim their colonial possession. In early 1946, Ho signaled his willingness to negotiate with the French. Although the French had defeated the Viet Minh in the south, they were interested in an overall political settlement. The talks were intense, as both sides knew that without a settlement, there would be war. Jean Saintaney, the French negotiator, was under pressure from French businessmen to demand a separate Cochin China. Ho compromised for a referendum at a later date. Under the 1946 Preliminary Agreement between the French and the Viet Minh, France would recognize the DRV as a "free state having its own government, parliament, army, and finances, forming part of an Indochinese Federation" and the "French Union." Ho agreed to allow the stationing of 15,000 French troops to replace the 180,000 KMT forces.

But the agreement came to naught as the High Commissioner for Indochina, Admiral d'Argenlieu, refused to endorse the agreement and invited the Viet Minh to Dalat for "further talks" regarding Cochin China. At an impasse, Ho left for Paris and, in his absence, d'Argenlieu violated the agreement by declaring a Republic of Cochin China in the name of France. In Paris, the French government yielded nothing, especially regarding Cochin China and the Fortainbleau Conference ended in failure on September 13, after 8 weeks of talks. Ho sent Pham Van Dong and his delegation back to Hanoi, where he remained until the 19th after initialing the *modus vivendi* which maintained an independent Cochin China. Knowing that he would be under fire from Viet Minh hardliners, Ho returned to Hanoi uttering, "I have just signed my death warrant."

It was clear from the start that the French had no intention of fulfilling the agreement, and violent confrontations between the returning French troops and the Viet Minh erupted immediately. When the Viet Minh refused to disarm and decamp in Hai Phong, D'Argenlieu dispatched French warships to bomb the city. Ho ordered the Viet Minh to the jungles to begin a long guerilla war.

The French were always looking for political alternatives to Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh. The man upon whom they increasingly relied was the last emperor, Bao Dai. Bao Dai, installed on the throne by France in 1932, had abdicated in 1945, giving his "Mandate of Heaven" to Ho. He remained a national symbol, however, and served as an advisor to the Viet Minh for one year

before departing for Hong Kong. Fearful of a Bao Dai/Viet Minh alliance, the French courted the emperor, offering to dissolve the Republic of Cochin China and establish the State of Vietnam. Anti-Communists lobbied Bao Dai to sign the agreement to marginalize Ho and the Viet Minh, but the protocol fell far short of independence. On March 8, 1949, Bao Dai and the French president signed the Elysee Agreement, which established France's recognition of some Vietnamese autonomy, but preserved French control over defense, foreign policy, and finance.

Despite the establishment of a puppet government, the French were bogged down in a guerilla war. From 1946-1950, the Viet Minh controlled much of the countryside, especially in northern Vietnam. The Viet Minh established an effective local administrative system.

The Viet Minh were no match for the superior French forces. It was not until the Chinese Communist Party's victory in China in October 1949 that the tide turned, when Ho successfully negotiated with Beijing for military aid. With this aid, Viet Minh forces defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

#### **4. Geneva Agreement**

Following their defeat at Dien Bien Phu, the French were desperate to negotiate a political settlement that would somehow protect their commercial interests in Cochin China. France was under intense pressure from the US to not negotiate with Ho and to find a non-Communist alternative. After secret talks with the Chinese, a settlement was reached and forced on the Viet Minh leadership.

To save face for the French, and minimize the possibility of American intervention along its southern border, the Chinese forced the Viet Minh to give up much of the territory it had captured. Although in 1954 the Viet Minh controlled most of the country, it was pressured to accept the temporary division of the country into two zones that would be unified through a national election. Contention arose over the location of the dividing line and the timing of the national elections.

Pham Van Dong, the head of the Viet Minh delegation, argued that the country should be divided along the 13<sup>th</sup> Parallel, a boundary that encompassed most of the territory occupied by the Viet Minh at that time. Dong wanted to hold elections as soon as possible to capitalize on Ho Chi Minh's enormous nationwide popularity. Likewise, he did not want to give any southern leaders time to consolidate their rule. France demanded that the country be divided along the 18th Parallel to reflect its traditional claim over Tonkin. Likewise, the French wanted a five-year period before national elections to allow for the southern government to consolidate and legitimize itself and for France to protect its commercial interests. A compromise was brokered by the Soviets: division at the 17th Parallel, along the Ben Hai River, with national elections to be held in two years (1956). A period of 300 days was allowed for regrouping, during which almost 130,000 people moved north, while as many as 900,000 people (mainly Roman Catholics) moved to the south. France won more at the negotiating table than it could on the battlefield, while the Viet Minh had all of their military victories nullified.

## 5. A Nation Divided

The elections were never held, and the country remained divided. Two diametrically opposite socio-economic and political systems were established in the respective halves of the country – the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North, and the Republic of Vietnam in the South.

In the North, the LDP was the sole political force and implemented an authoritarian political system and Stalinist economic program. The LDP's land reform program, implemented in two phases between 1954 and 1960, was brutal and hampered production. Over 15,000 people were killed during the process. At the advice of Chinese advisors, Maoist-style "people's courts" were established and "class labels" were applied to all members of society to identify and liquidate the landlord class. Wide-scale violence and peasant unrest led the LDP to sack its General Secretary and revise its policies. The economy was industrialized through massive amounts of Soviet and Chinese assistance. Caught in the middle of the Sino-Soviet dispute, Hanoi walked a diplomatic tight rope, seeking to maintain good relations with both Moscow and Beijing. The LDP also imposed a strict system of control over its writers and artists, beginning in 1954. There was an inevitable conflict of priorities between the desire to implement a Socialist revolution in the North, and the policy of 'completing the revolution' in the South.

In South Vietnam, an anti-Communist, but authoritarian regime was established under Emperor Bao Dai. His Prime Minister, Ngo Dinh Diem, outmaneuvered him, and declared his presidency in October 1955. Economically, culturally, and militarily, South Vietnam under Diem moved out of the French orbit and into the US sphere of influence. The RVN soon became dependent for its survival on US aid.

From 1954 to 1963, Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother Nhu dominated the politics of South Vietnam. Coming from a family of Roman Catholic mandarins, Diem was anti-French and anti-Communist. He became Prime Minister at the behest of the US in June 1954. His position was initially insecure. By October 1955, however, he was strong enough to hold a referendum, the result of which enabled him to depose Bao Dai and to proclaim himself President of the Republic of Vietnam. He also repudiated the Geneva declaration and rejected plans to hold elections. During the next few years, he attempted to destroy the Viet Minh (or, as he termed it, Viet Cong) network in the South. Many Communists and their sympathizers who had remained in the South in 1954 were imprisoned. In May 1959, the Communist leadership in Hanoi was alarmed at the devastation of their southern network and authorized a political and limited military campaign in the South. In December 1960, the Communists created the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF), to unite opposition to Diem, which was already mounting.

Diem had alienated almost every sector of society. The hunt for Viet Cong led to repression in the countryside. His failure to implement meaningful land reform, combined with his policies that angered the rural population (such as establishing strategic hamlets) drove the peasantry into

the arms of the NLF. Favoritism towards the Catholic Community and repression of Buddhist monks vexed the majority Buddhist community, while students and intellectuals were under suspicion of being supporters of the NLF.

Determined to prevent any Communist advance in Southeast Asia, President Kennedy provided US troops (numbering 8,000 by the end of 1962) to act as advisers to the South Vietnamese army. US confidence in Diem declined, and in November 1963, he was killed in a military coup with tacit US approval. However, the new government was equally unable to defend itself against a growing rural guerrilla movement whose ranks were swelling with peasantry spurred by the lack of meaningful land reform. During the latter half of 1963, Hanoi adopted a more offensive strategy. By the end of that year, the situation of the Saigon government was precarious. President Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, committed the US to a policy to defend South Vietnam at all costs.

The failure in Vietnam was not a military but a political one, as no legitimate government in the south with a broad base of popular support was ever formed. The junta that replaced Diem lacked legitimacy and was fraught with factionalism and political rivalry. Soon afterward, a second military coup occurred in January 1964, led by General Nguyen Khanh, who himself was overthrown in February 1965 by a group of younger officers led by the air force commander, Air General Nguyen Cao Ky. A nominally civilian government under Phan Huy Quat was followed, in June 1965, by a new military regime, with Lt.-Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu as Head of State and Nguyen Cao Ky as Prime Minister.

## **6. The American War**

Hoping to capitalize on this political turmoil, the LDP ordered the infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into the south of the country in 1963. This provoked a concurrent escalation of American troops dispatched to reinforce the Saigon Government. An incident involving US ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964 enabled President Johnson to obtain unrestricted authority from the US Congress, and he used the power granted to him to deal with the Vietnamese situation without any formal declaration of war. The number of US forces in Vietnam increased from 23,000 at the beginning of 1965 to more than 500,000 by March 1968; in addition, contingents were sent from the Republic of Korea, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand. As a result, the conflict escalated into a war of major proportions. The Communists sent regular North Vietnamese troops to the South, and became increasingly dependent on aid from China and the USSR. The US commenced aerial bombardment of the North in March 1965.

A measure of political stability returned to Saigon while Nguyen Van Thieu held the presidency from October 1967 until 1975. Yet his regime remained unpopular and illegitimate, unable to implement any meaningful reforms for the majority of the population.

In January-February 1968, the Communists launched a major offensive in urban areas to coincide with the lunar New Year (known as *Tet*). It was on a larger scale than any previous operation, and included attacks on Saigon, Hué, and many other towns. There was also heavy fighting just south of the 17th parallel. The *Tet* offensive, although a military defeat for the Communists, forced the US government to reconsider its policy. Faced with a major financial crisis and increasing opposition to the fighting, President Johnson decided against a further expansion of the war. Discussions between American and North Vietnamese representatives began in Paris in May. In October, Washington and Hanoi agreed to extend negotiations, and the US suspended its bombing raids against the North. However, heavy bombing remained an essential component of US strategy in the South, and the talks failed to produce a cessation of armed conflict.

In January 1969, after Richard Nixon's inauguration, the informal talks in Paris were transformed into a formal conference between representatives of the US, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the NLF. In June 1969, the NLF was supplemented by the creation of a new provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam. During 1969-70, the conflict continued; although the US began to withdraw its own troops, fears that the North Vietnamese might take advantage of the withdrawal led the US, ironically, to intensify the war. The most spectacular was the invasion of Cambodia in April 1970, following US-supported moves to overthrow the Government of Prince Sihanouk in Phnom-Penh. Equally important was the 'Lam Son' operation of February 1971 in Laos, which damaged North Vietnamese supply lines even though it ended in South Vietnamese retreat. By this time, the Communist war effort in the South was dependent on the presence of North Vietnamese regular troops.

In March 1972, with US forces reduced to about 95,000, the North Vietnamese launched a new offensive, which led to some of the most intense fighting of the war. The US government reacted by renewing its bombing of the North and by mining Haiphong and other harbors. By September it was clear that the situation had reached an impasse, while in the US itself there was mounting pressure to bring the war to an end. Secret meetings in Paris between President Nixon's foreign policy adviser, Dr Henry Kissinger, and Le Duc Tho of the Vietnamese Politburo, beginning in 1969, showed some progress following Dr Kissinger's visit to Moscow in September 1972. However, for reasons that remain unclear, in December, US planes conducted the heaviest bombing raids of the war against North Vietnam. Only after that was the cease-fire agreement finally signed in Paris in January 1973.

The Paris Agreement provided for the complete withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam, together with the return of US prisoners of war, by the end of March 1973. That part of the agreement was fulfilled. However, the remaining terms of the agreement, including provisions for political freedom in the South and the creation of a National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, were ignored during the next two years. For the US, the war was over. Since 1961, America had suffered 45,941 combat deaths and over 10,000 deaths from other causes in Vietnam, as well as 150,000 casualties. In the same period, nearly 2 million Vietnamese on both sides, both combatants and civilians, had been killed in the war.

For the Vietnamese, however, the war was not yet over. The Paris Agreement provided for a cease-fire, without any requirement that North Vietnamese forces be withdrawn from the South. In July 1973, the US Congress made illegal any further US military action in Indo-China. The international commission set up to supervise the cease-fire was unable to prevent frequent outbreaks of fighting between the two sides, while the North Vietnamese were now free to undertake a final offensive. Following the fall of the entire province of Phuoc Long in January 1975, the pace was accelerated. By the end of March, the Communists controlled Hué and Danang and were advancing southwards along the coast. In April, they threatened Saigon. Thieu resigned, to be succeeded for a few days by his Vice-President and then by General Duong Van Minh. On 30 April, the last members of the US embassy and other personnel were evacuated and the Communists entered Saigon, which they renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

#### COST OF US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM: 1960-1975

YEAR	TROOP LEVELS <sup>1</sup>	KILLED HOSTILE	KILLED NON-HOSTILE	WOUNDED HOSTILE <sup>4</sup>	WOUNDED NON-HOSTILE <sup>5</sup>	POWs	MIAs <sup>6</sup>	WAR SINC
1960	900	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1961	3,200	11	2	2	1	0	0	0
1962	11,300	31	21	41	37	0	0	0
1963	16,300	78	36	218	193	0	0	0
1964	23,300	147	48	522	517	3	4	4
1965	184,300	1,369	359	3,308	2806	74	54	54
1966	385,300	5,008	1,045	16,526	13567	97	204	204
1967	485,600	9,377	1,680	32,369	29654	179	226	226
1968	536,100	14,589	1,919	46,796	46021	95	294	294
1969	475,200	9,414	2,113	32,940	37276	13	176	176
1970	334,600	4,221	1,844	15,211	15432	12	86	86
1971	156,800	1,381	968	4,767	4169	11	79	79
1972	24,200	300	251	587	634	105	209	209
1973	0	237 <sup>b</sup>	34	24	36	2	2	2
1974	0	207 <sup>b</sup>	19	0	0	0	0	0
1975	0	113	47	18	32	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202846<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>46,483</b>	<b>10,386</b>	<b>153,329</b>	<b>150,375</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>1,334</b>	

1 As of Dec. 31 of each year

a Average troop strength, 1960-72

b All but 12 deaths in 1973 and all in 1974 were changes in status of persons previously listed as missing in action

4 Required hospital care

5 Did not require hospital care

6 The Defense Department listed 728 men missing in action (MIAs) as of Dec. 31, 1976. The discrepancy between this figure and the year-by-year total was attributed by the Pentagon to changes in status of persons originally listed as missing and later declared dead or returned from captivity.

7 Estimates by fiscal year. Includes only expenditures that would not otherwise have been spent on national defense.

Source: Department of Defense

## 7. Reunification and Stagnation

The period from the fall of Saigon in April 1975 to mid-1976 was one of transition. The NLF's wartime platform, which established that following the war's conclusion, South Vietnam would continue to be administered by its own administration, independent from the DRV, and the transition to socialism would be gradual, was abandoned. The war ended suddenly and on Hanoi's terms without any need for negotiation with a South Vietnamese regime. To that end, Hanoi believed that they had every right to formally reunify the country under its control and begin the rapid socialization of the southern economy.

In May 1975, revolutionary committees were created at all levels in the South. The South had its distinct problems – its 'national democratic' revolution was still incomplete, whereas the North was already in the stage of 'socialist' revolution. A first priority in the South was to bring the economy under control. Private banks were closed, and the traders who had dominated the Saigon economy under Nguyen Van Thieu were accused of hoarding commodities, and their stores were confiscated. Their savings (in piastres) were rendered valueless by the introduction of a new currency that could be regulated more easily. The state took steps to control, if not to own, capitalist enterprises left behind by foreign investment while foreign banks and enterprises were no longer allowed. Former members of the South Vietnamese army and civil service were obliged to undergo 're-education' courses, in camps where study was combined with labor. More than 300,000 Saigonese officials were sentenced to long-term re-education.

In November 1975, a reunification conference was held in Ho Chi Minh City, presided over by Truong Chinh (representing the North) and Pham Hung (representing the South), which formally decided that reunification should take place through elections to be held throughout the country during 1976. Accordingly, a single National Assembly was elected in April, and when it met on 2 July, it declared the inauguration of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, with its capital in Hanoi. The Assembly also established a committee to draft a new constitution. The new government included a few members of the former provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam, but it was dominated for the most part by the existing Political Bureau of the Vietnam Workers' Party, which was renamed the Communist Party of Vietnam at the fourth Party Congress in December.

In 1976, Vietnam joined the IMF and the World Bank, and in 1977, it sought Western investment in Vietnamese industrial projects. That year there were moves towards the 'normalization' of relations between Vietnam and the US, which abandoned its opposition to Vietnamese membership of the UN, a body Vietnam joined in September 1977. Normalization talks broke down over Vietnam's demand for war reparations, which the US Congress had forbidden.

But despite these tentative overtures to the capitalist world, Vietnam became closer tied to the socialist camp. By 1978, a new phase of economic transformation led to the abolition of private



trading and street markets in the South and the unification of the currencies (March-April 1978). These changes were accompanied by a program to convert agriculture to a system of cooperatives, to transform private industry in the South, and to step up the 'redeployment' of labor from cities to the New Economic Zones (NEZs).

Important political changes occurred during 1980-81, starting with a government reshuffle in January 1980. In December 1980, after four years of debate, a new constitution was adopted, under which a newly-elected National Assembly met in July 1981 and appointed both a State Council (a collective presidency) and a new Council of Ministers. Truong Chinh became President of the former, and therefore Head of State, while Pham Van Dong remained Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister), with slightly reduced powers. Le Duan, still dominant in the Communist Party, was not included in either of the principal state organs. The party's fifth Congress, twice postponed, was held at the end of March 1982. It became clear, from the reports of preparatory congresses at provincial level, that the party was divided and that some elements in the leadership were being blamed for the country's severe economic failures. When the Congress met, a number of prominent figures were dropped from the new Politburo (including Vo Nguyen Giap) and others from the Central Committee. A number of younger men were promoted, but the generation of the 1950s had still not relinquished control.

## **8. The Third Indochina War**

Throughout the war years, Vietnam was entrenched in the socialist camp. Dependent on both the USSR and China to support its war effort, Vietnam walked a tight rope following the 1959 Sino-Soviet split. But relations with China broke down following the Sino-American rapprochement in 1971, and Hanoi considered the Shanghai Communiqué to be a betrayal. Beijing wanted America off its borders and therefore put pressure on Hanoi to negotiate an end to the war. Following the 1973 Paris Accords, Beijing warned Hanoi that "the broom of the north should not sweep the south," an explicit warning not to renew the war in the South. Yet one year after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords, Hanoi's troops had begun the Ho Chi Minh campaign to conquer the south. Saigon fell on 30 April 1975, angering China.

Two weeks earlier, Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, and in December 1976, Hanoi's Communist allies in Laos, the Pathet Lao, took over Vientiane. Hanoi immediately set out to establish the Indochina Federation, ostensibly under its control. China wished to maintain direct relations with Cambodia and Laos independent of Hanoi, thereby thwarting Soviet ambitions in the region. The Lao acquiesced to Hanoi, but the xenophobic Khmer Rouge, who believed that the Vietnamese had territorial designs on Cambodia, refused to join. Almost immediately, the Khmer Rouge launched violent attacks across the border into Vietnam to regain the Khmer Krom region of the Mekong Delta, ceded to Vietnam by the French. Vietnam appealed to Beijing to control their clients, but Beijing stepped up the flow of military aid and diplomatic support for the Khmer Rouge.

Vietnam rejected ASEAN, which it considered to be a tool of the American imperialists, and demanded that the other Southeast Asian states join with the “progressive nations,” i.e., the three Communist Indo-Chinese states, to establish a new regional grouping under Hanoi’s leadership.

Disputes over sovereignty in the South China Sea also hampered relations. China seized the Paracel Islands in 1974 from a contingent of RVN troops, angering Hanoi. In 1977, the Chinese Government presented a memorandum stating that Vietnam had not honored agreements made in the 1950s concerning Sino-Vietnamese borders (both on land and in the Gulf of Tonkin).

The final irritant was Vietnamese policy towards ethnic Chinese residents (also known as ‘Hoa’ people), which had become so severe that vast numbers of them were taking to ships in the South China Sea. The ethnic Chinese dominated trade and money lending in South Vietnam and were hence targeted in the drive to socialize the economy; China, however, saw it as a politically motivated attack on its nationals. Vietnamese authorities did not prevent their departure, but charged large sums in gold or Western currencies for exit papers. More Chinese also crossed into China at this time. By mid-1979, it was estimated that there were 200,000 refugees from Vietnam in China, and perhaps another 200,000 had reached other countries of Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Australia. Many thousands more were thought to have drowned at sea. As a result of a UN conference in July, Vietnam agreed to an “Orderly Departure Programme,” sponsored by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); by June 1992, about 354,500 people had left the country in this way. Illegal departures continued nonetheless.

Until this point, China maintained its economic aid to Vietnam. Between May and July 1978, however, it abandoned all projects, leaving the Vietnamese more dependent on the USSR and Eastern Europe. Alarmed at the rapid deterioration of ties with Beijing, especially after its retaliatory strikes against Cambodia in early 1978, Hanoi openly sided with the Soviet Union. In November 1978, it joined the Soviet trading bloc, CMEA, and signed a 30-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, an explicit anti-Chinese security treaty. The Soviets soon after established a naval and SIGINT base in Cam Ranh Bay. This facility, the largest Soviet military base outside of the USSR, was located directly across the South China Sea from the American naval base at Subic Bay and the Clark Air Force base in the Philippines. By 1984, there were several thousand military and civilian advisers from the USSR in Vietnam.

From September 1977, the potential brewed for military confrontation between Vietnam and Cambodia (or Kampuchea, as it was known between 1976 and 1989). It became clear in late 1978 that the Chinese were unable or unwilling to escalate their own military involvement, and it was impossible for the Cambodians to hold out indefinitely. In December 1978, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in support of the Kampuchean National United Front for National Salvation, a group comprised of Khmer Rouge defectors. The Vietnamese gained control of Phnom Penh and other major Cambodian centers during the early part of 1979, enabling a pro-Vietnamese Government under Heng Samrin to take power (although Pol Pot forces continued to resist in more remote areas). In February 1979, this Government signed a treaty of friendship with Vietnam, comparable to one already signed with Laos, and accepted the continuing presence of Vietnamese forces.

Infuriated by the arrogant behavior of its former client state, China launched a punitive attack on Vietnam on February 17. This pedagogical war was brief but costly, particularly for the Chinese, who suffered 20,000 casualties and the sacking of the five provincial capitals along its the border during two weeks of combat. The Chinese declared victory and withdrew in March. Negotiations held in April and May produced no formal agreement, but it was decided in May to exchange prisoners of war. Throughout the 1980s, daily armed skirmishes occurred along the border.

Despite an annual average of \$1 billion in Soviet military aid, Vietnam spent up to one-third of its national budget on defense and security. With over one million men under arms, Vietnam had one of the largest standing armies in the world.

The Khmer Rouge was not eliminated, however, and with Thai and Chinese assistance, it regrouped and rearmed. During the 1980s, Vietnam had between 100-200,000 troops in Cambodia, but it was never able to stamp out the Khmer Rouge guerilla forces. An annual cycle evolved; in the dry season, the Vietnamese were able to capitalize on mechanized armor and greater mobilization and firepower. In the rainy season, with mechanized armor all but incapacitated, the Khmer Rouge regained lost territory.

Although the Cambodian people were grateful that the Vietnamese unseated the Khmer Rouge, the Vietnamese were seen as an illegitimate occupying force. The Communist KPRP regime that the Vietnamese installed lacked popular legitimacy as well, and its economic policies kept the country impoverished.

In the early 1980s, tension between Vietnam and Thailand led to greater involvement of ASEAN member states in the Cambodian question. In 1982, ASEAN brokered an alliance between the Khmer Rouge and two non-Communist guerilla movements. The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, nominally headed by Prince Sihanouk, retained Cambodia's seat in the United Nations, which routinely criticized Vietnam for its illegal occupation of the country. The guerrillas established base camps along the border between Cambodia and Thailand, but in early 1985, the Vietnamese captured and destroyed the bases of all three resistance groups. Nonetheless, it was never able to defeat the guerrillas. In 1984, Vietnam announced that it anticipated total withdrawal from Cambodia within 5 to 10 years. In August 1985, the official deadline was established as 1990. However, there was little reason to believe that the governments in Hanoi and Phnom Penh genuinely desired a compromise with the forces of Democratic Kampuchea, who continued their attacks within Cambodia during 1986. Meanwhile, the Chinese maintained pressure on Vietnam's northern frontier, forcing a dispersal of Vietnamese forces.

With the adoption of the economic reform program in December 1986, Vietnam sought to improve its foreign relations. The new economic policy of export-led growth and courting of foreign direct investment (a law on foreign investment was passed in 1987) necessitated improved ties with Western countries, Japan and ASEAN. Extricating itself from the Cambodian quagmire was the foremost goal. The Jakarta Informal Meetings created a formula whereby, in return for Vietnamese withdrawals, foreign aid to the guerillas was phased out. In September 1989, Hanoi completed its unilateral withdrawal from Cambodia, though foreign observers never

monitored the troop pull out and reports continued that Vietnamese troops continued to fight along side their Cambodian allies.

The collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe had a profound effect on the leadership in Hanoi. This, coupled with its failure to resolve the Cambodian civil war, forced the Vietnamese leadership to seek détente with China. A secret summit between the leadership of the two Communist parties was held in Chengdu in September 1990. In October 1991, one month following the Paris Accords which ended the Cambodian civil war and established a UN peacekeeping force, the Chinese and Vietnamese re-normalized relations.

## **9. Doi Moi and Economic Reform**

The ongoing quagmire in Cambodia, combined with economic mismanagement and a disastrous campaign to collect agriculture in the south, led to a severe economic and food crisis. The death of General Secretary Le Duan in mid 1986, allowed for a leadership transition. At the VCP's 6th Congress in December 1986, Nguyen Van Linh, purged from the Politburo in 1982, was appointed Prime Minister. Linh was brought back to the party's Secretariat in early 1986 in recognition of the success of his economic reforms in Ho Chi Minh City. Linh implemented Chinese-style agricultural production contracts and other market-based reforms. His economic reform program, known as *doi moi*, or renovation, entailed linking Vietnam to the global economy, by courting foreign investment and adopting a development strategy based on export-led growth.

Yet Linh faced difficulty in pushing through his reforms. The recalcitrant bureaucracy feared that the market reforms that he was espousing would dilute their power. So Linh called on journalists and writers to expose corruption to pressure the bureaucracy to push through economic reforms. There was a real loosening of ideological constraints, and great literature emerged that attacked the regime and provided the first accurate portrayals of life for the ordinary North Vietnamese soldiers and civilians before and after the war. This literature reflected the malaise in society and antipathy towards the corrupt and entrenched regime.

This ideological liberalization, known as *coi moi*, was short-lived. The collapse of communism in many countries had a sobering impact on the Vietnamese leadership, creating an ideological backlash and bringing closer ties with China, a fraternal socialist state. At the 7<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1991, the VCP adopted Chinese-style economic reforms, but rejected any movement towards political pluralism. Shortly thereafter, relations with China, which had been strained by the Cambodian crisis, were normalized.

In the first half of the 1990s, the economy raced ahead, and there was considerable excitement as Vietnam was poised to become the next Asian "tiger" economy, but stasis quickly set in. The Asian financial crisis hit Vietnam hard. Compounding the economic crisis was a political statement that prevented a robust response. Political factions were never more divided and there was complete gridlock in the policy-making process.

In June 1996, the Party held its 8<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, and the top three leaders, Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet, President Le Duc Anh and General Secretary Do Muoi, all refused to step down from their posts without concurrent moves by the others. Although Kiet and Anh did resign in September 1997, there was no consensus on who would replace Do Muoi. In the end, the conservative head of the VPA's General Political Department, Le Kha Phieu, was elected as a compromise candidate. Phieu hoped that he could bridge the rift between advocates of economic reform and ideological conservatives, but he was unpopular and endeared himself to neither faction.

Widespread peasant unrest in Thai Binh province in 1997 to 1998 posed a real challenge to the Vietnamese leadership. Over 2,000 police were dispatched to the province to put down the unrest. Although the leadership condemned the systemic corruption that was the cause of the peasantry's anger, more arrests were made of peasants than of corrupt cadres. The incident prompted several senior party leaders, including General Tran Do, to speak out about the party's loss of legitimacy and the need to "broaden democracy." Do was expelled from the VCP in January 2000.

Economic stagnation hurt the party's legitimacy, already under attack because of rampant corruption. Le Kha Phieu launched a major two-year campaign to eradicate corruption in May 1999, though the crusade was a failure. Although several thousand cadres were disciplined, reprimanded, or expelled from the party, most were low-level officials, while senior party officials remained immune from criticism.

Political gridlock continued, and in October 1999, the politburo rejected a long-negotiated trade agreement with the United States. Although the politburo approved the agreement ten months later, the leadership remained divided.

Large-scale peasant unrest again shook Vietnam in February 2001, this time in the politically sensitive Central Highlands, an area predominately populated by ethnic minorities. The Communist party leadership blamed the unrest on the United States and FULRO, an ethnic minority organization that allied itself with the US during the war. In reality, the unrest was in response to corruption, the large-scale relocations of ethnic Vietnamese to the Central Highlands, and the loss of land used for slash and burn agriculture to coffee plantations.

At the VCP's 9<sup>th</sup> Congress in April 2001, the Central Committee ousted General Secretary Le Kha Phieu, despite his endorsement by the Politburo. Central Committee members, the largest group of which are provincial-level officials, were dismayed at the ongoing economic recession. In Phieu's place, the Central Committee elected the reformist Nong Duc Manh, the head of the National Assembly and long-rumored illegitimate son of Ho Chi Minh. The Central Committee elected a smaller Central Committee (135 members down from 170) and politburo (15 members down from 19 members).

During his first term in office, Nong Duc Manh fostered continued progress toward economic reform measures favoring a greater role for the private sector, while retaining VCP control over political matters to maintain support from conservatives within the party. Under his leadership,

the Party decided that Vietnam needed to open up more to the world, in part to create new jobs to avoid social unrest and in part to respond to concerns about China's growing involvement in the region. Party leaders decided that WTO membership was critical. They also encouraged closer links with the U.S., including exchange of military visits, allowing U.S. ships to visit Vietnam, and setting the stage for high level visits between the political leadership of both countries.

Efforts were also made to clamp down on growing concerns about corruption. The party began disciplining government employees for corruption and put senior officials on notice that they were not beyond the reach of the law. Seven members of the Central Committee and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, for example, were sacked in May 2004 for allowing a swindle in a firm supervised by his Ministry.

At the tenth Party Congress in April 2006, Nong Duc Manh was re-elected as Secretary General of the Party, in a move widely seen as a vote of confidence for his success in maintaining party unity. During the Congress, he emphasized that corruption was damaging the party's leadership authority and that intensifying the fight against corruption would be a top priority in his second term.

### ***Study Questions***

1. How has Vietnamese history affected its behavior in the 20th Century?
2. What were the domestic causes of the Vietnam War?
3. How has Vietnam's policy towards Laos and Cambodia affected its overall relations with the region?

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

#### *Histories*

There are libraries full of books on the Vietnam War. The following are good overviews:

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## **Government and Politics**

Vietnam is a one-party socialist state. The Vietnam Communist Party dominates all power and tolerates no opposition. Constitutionally, Vietnam is a republic, and Marxism-Leninism/Ho Chi Minh thought is the official ideology.

There are four key problems with politics and governance in Vietnam. First, Vietnam's system of governance is hampered by its inheritance from the world's three great bureaucratic cultures: the Chinese, French, and Soviet Stalinism. Second, the country is fraught with inter-locking directorates in which the VCP permeates almost every level of administration. Despite attempts since 1987 to separate the functions of the party and the state, the VCP still micro-manages the government. Third, the country is hampered by weak communications and infrastructure, which makes organization and policy implementation difficult. The country also has strong natural tendencies towards decentralization. Fourth, corruption is endemic, both because of low salaries, but also because of unclear property rights.

### **1. The Vietnam Communist Party (VCP)**

The VCP is the leading organ of state and society. It is an elite organization with only some 2.3 million members despite a concerted effort to recruit new and younger ones. The party maintains its dominance of society through a system of interlocking directorates whereby at every level of the government, the military, and state-owned enterprises, there is a corresponding party organization that wields ultimate power. There has been an effort since 1986 to eliminate dual hats and end party interference in government business. Nonetheless, senior government officials are all senior party officials, and party membership is seen as a requisite for career advancement.

According to Party statutes, the highest body is the VCP's National Congress, which is held every five years and was most recently comprised of 1,176 delegates from different party cells throughout the country and various bureaucracies at the Tenth Party Congress in April 2006. In between Party Congresses, power is vested in the VCP's Central Committee. The Central Committee, currently at 160 members (with an additional 21 alternate members), has ranged from between 35 and 170 members over the years. The Central Committee usually meets at least twice a year, with each plenum focusing on a specific issue. At the end of each plenum, a communiqué is issued and passed down through the party apparatus for study and implementation.

The Central Committee has become younger and better educated. The composition of the Central Committee has changed, and the largest portion of members are provincial leaders. The military has a bloc representation on the Central Committee of between 11-13 percent of seats.

The Central Committee has a number of specialized Commissions with full-time staff members. The most important of these is the Organization Commission, which makes all decisions regarding personnel and appointments.



The Central Committee elects the elite decision-making body, the Politburo. The Politburo currently has 14 members, down from a high of 19 members. It is the ultimate decision-making body in the body, and though it usually does not get involved in the day to day implementation of policy, it sets major ideological guidelines and its Secretariat oversees day-to-day policy implementation. The Politburo always includes the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior, and the Head of the Central Committee's Organization Commission.

Heading the Politburo is the VCP General Secretary. Although collective leadership is the hallmark of Vietnamese politics, the General Secretary is considered *primus inter pares* and is able to set the overall ideological tenor.

Beneath the Central Committee is the VCP Secretariat that is responsible for the day to day administration of the party and policy. The Secretariat was previously abolished in 1996, as there was too much overlap with the Politburo, and was replaced with a five-man Standing Board of the Politburo. This new arrangement was later deemed inadequate, however, and The Secretariat was reinstated at the 9<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 2001.

Each of the country's 61 administrative units has a party committee and is ruled by a powerful party secretary. The deputy party secretary is the head of the provincial government, though the party secretary occasionally holds both positions simultaneously. The party system is replicated beneath the provincial level at the district and the village level.

## 2. Government

Vietnam has been governed by four constitutions since its founding in 1945. Each one reflected a different set of national security and historical circumstances. The 1946 Constitution was a vague document that established a broad-based unity government in order to harness all political support for the anti-colonial effort. The 1960 Constitution was enacted in North Vietnam to legalize the radical transformation to a socialist economy; the document was explicitly socialist and anti-American. The 1980 Constitution was enacted to deal with the reunified country and legalized the Communist Party's political leadership. The current constitution, enacted in 1992, reorganized the government. Article 4 established the VCP as the leading organ of the society, though the VCP is now supposed to operate within the framework of the law. The constitution also reflects the regime's fear of Communism's collapse in Eastern Europe, stating that it is the military's constitutional duty to defend not only the country, but also the socialist regime. Yet the 1992 Constitution also legalizes a multi-sector economy, including the private sector.

According to the Constitution, the National Assembly is the highest political decision-making body in the country, yet it has traditionally been nothing more than a rubber stamp for party decisions. It has fought to expand its role and autonomy since *doi moi* was implemented in 1986. Until then, the 450-member Assembly was solely a rubber stamp.

Under General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh, the National Assembly was authorized to hold substantive debate over issues. In 1988, 36 percent of delegates voted against the party's

candidate to become Prime Minister, Do Muoi, instead supporting the southern reformist Vo Van Kiet. In the mid-1990s, they began to televise the Assembly's biennial sessions.

By the late 1990s, the NA had become far more powerful and assertive, often challenging the party and government's line, though it still does not have true autonomy. In a way, it has been able to flex its muscles out of necessity, as economic reform makes a comprehensive set of laws necessary. The National Assembly cannot introduce legislation – only debate, alter, amend and pass bills.

The Communist party has traditionally controlled membership in the National Assembly. Although “independent” candidates have been eligible since the 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in 1992, the party must first vet them and all elections are directed by the party's umbrella organization for mass organizations the Vietnam Fatherland Front. Less than 20 percent of the delegates are not party members.

The National Assembly technically elects the Prime Minister, who is the head of government. The Assembly must approve cabinet appointments and it has forced many cabinet ministers to resign. Yet in reality, the Politburo and Central Committee first decide all of these decisions. A system fraught by “interlocking directorates,” members of the government derive most of their power from their party position. All senior government officials are party members. Almost all of the 21 Cabinet ministers are members of the VCP Central Committee.

Beneath the Prime Minister is a varying number of Deputy Prime Ministers. The Deputy Prime Ministers are each in charge of certain sectors (e.g., the former foreign minister Nguyen Manh Cam became Deputy Prime Minister in charge of foreign affairs and foreign economic relations). A Deputy Prime Minister has oversight of several ministries.

There are currently 18 ministries. These are vertical organizations, and coordination is weak. Most have representation in each of the provinces. In addition to the line ministries, there are several state-level national commissions and committees, such as the Central Bank and the State Inspectorate, whose heads have ministerial rank.

As established in the Constitution, the Head of State is the President, who is also the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. From 1991 to 1996, the President was the former Minister of Defense Senior General Le Duc Anh. He was far more powerful than his successor Tran Duc Luong. On paper there was no difference. But in reality, Anh controlled promotions and patronage networks throughout the military. He had a vast power base. Luong was installed without a power base, and has no authority over the military. Thus, the post of Presidency became more ceremonial.

The country is divided into 64 administrative units, 59 provinces and five centrally controlled municipalities (Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Can Tho, and Da Nang). The number of administrative units has changed over time to meet different needs and challenges of the central government. France divided the country into 61 provincial units. Following division in 1954, both the DRV and RVN governments sought to centralize control over their respective halves of

the country, though they approached the task in different ways. In the south, the number of provinces proliferated, to keep them poor, small and dependent on the central government. In the north, where the leadership sought to impose central planning, it consolidated the number of Provinces. After reunification in 1975, the number of provinces again was reduced to thirty-four. Yet these provinces were too large and were able to withstand pressure from the central government. Since 1991, the central government has broken down the provinces and the number has increased to 61 units.

A governor and a provincial-level People's Committee rule each province. This committee is indirectly elected by district-level people's committees which, in turn are indirectly elected by local-level (wards in cities, villages in the countryside) people's committees.

### **3. Vietnam People's Army (VPA)**

The Vietnam People's Army (VPA) is one of the key political institutions in the country. In addition to its role in defending the country's territorial integrity, it has important political and economic functions as well. According to the 1992 constitution, the VPA holds a legal obligation to defend the socialist regime against subversion attempts, and the Communist Party's control of the VPA is assured through the "dual hat system" and corresponding network of political commissars and party cells at every level of the military. The VPA has a bloc of 10-13 percent of Central Committee seats and nearly all of the officers are members of the VCP.

The VPA has approximately 500,000 troops: about 410,000 army, 13,000 navy, 30,000 air force, and 40,000 border defense personnel. Over half of the army has been demobilized since withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989. During the 1980s, in addition to an average \$1 billion in annual military assistance from the USSR, Vietnam spent over 30 percent of its budget on its security forces. Since then, the VPA's budget, like its size, has been cut in half.

It augments this decline in revenue by engaging in economic activities. In addition to producing most of its own food and manufacturing much of its own equipment and material, the VPA has vast economic holdings in civilian products, including manufacturing, hotels and tourism, and transportation. Revenue from these ventures amounts to nearly 50 percent of its budget.

Most of Vietnam's military equipment is from the former Soviet Union and dates back to the 1980s. Vietnam has had a hard time maintaining much of these weapons. During the 1990s, Vietnamese defense officials made several trips to the former Soviet Union to purchase spare parts and limited amounts of advanced weaponry, including S300 surface to air missiles (akin to the US Patriot Missiles), 6 SU-27 fighters, and 2 Tarantul-class missile attack vessels. Vietnam has also purchased coastal patrol craft from Australia and South Korea. In 2001, it entered into negotiations with India to establish a joint venture to produce naval vessels, though nothing to date has come of this.

In short, Vietnamese military planners are woefully aware of shortcomings in their arsenal, especially vis-a-vis the rapid military expenditures among China and the ASEAN states.

Vietnam's has lagged far behind, but until the economy becomes more developed, the VPA will continue to receive limited funding for new arms acquisitions.

#### **4. Judiciary**

The judiciary is weak and is subject to influence by higher authority. The Vietnamese legal system blends Marxist legal concepts, in which the judiciary's *raison d'être* is to defend the socialist state, with remnants of the old French civil code. Through personnel appointments and ideological directives, the Vietnamese Communist Party indirectly controls the judiciary. The Ministry of Justice was shut down from 1961 to mid-1980s when the advent of economic reform necessitated the massive codification of laws.

Vietnamese trials do not meet international standards. Trials are usually closed. There are few lawyers and judges have rudimentary legal training, often appointed to their position on the basis of political criterion. Verdicts seldom go against state interests, though this causes problems with the international business community.

#### **5. Mass Organizations**

The VPA exerts its control down to the grass roots through a network of mass organizations that are controlled through an umbrella organization, the Vietnam Fatherland Front. The most important mass organizations are the Vietnam Peasants Association, the General Confederation of Trade Unions, the Vietnam Woman's Union, the Ho Chi Minh Youth League, and smaller organizations such as the Vietnamese Writers Association. As discussed below, all religious organizations must be legalized and part of the Vietnam Fatherland Front. By controlling each of these organizations, the VCP is further able to penetrate grass-roots level of society.

#### **6. Political Dissidence and Pressure for Reform**

Vietnam is a repressive regime, but it is not a police state. Since the introduction of economic reforms in 1986, there has been a gradual liberalization, especially in the arts, though political and religious dissent is still dealt with harshly.

Calls for political reform within Vietnam are interesting for a number of reasons. First, they come not from outside the polity, but from within and often from the highest echelons. The leading dissidents are not disenfranchised malcontents, but are often life-long party members who have impeccable revolutionary credentials. And unlike outsiders who have nothing to lose by challenging the state, the Vietnamese dissidents have everything to lose – their positions and status, including those of their children and family. The major exception to this has been a few southern dissidents, many of whom gained their political consciousness protesting the Republic of Vietnam regimes, and members of both the Catholic clergy and the outlawed United Buddhist Church of Vietnam, who have protested against the government's control of religion. Unlike Eastern Europe, where the forces of change were autonomous groups in society, those in Vietnam are still weak. There is no independent labor movement, even an underground one. Moreover, the size of the urban proletariat is relatively small.

Because most of these dissidents are party members, they appear to be a nascent loyal opposition, rather than a subversive counter-revolutionary grouping. These dissidents do not want to be dissidents. Having dedicated most of their lives to the revolution, wars of liberation, and the party, they are patriotic, and many remain loyal to the party, though are unhappy with its policies implemented since reunification. And even if they are more critical of the party, few deny the important role that it has played in the nation's independence.

Most dissidents see themselves as a loyal opposition within the party who want to raise issues and policies that will strengthen Vietnam and rejuvenate the party. In the Confucian-Marxist tradition, the intellectuals are bound to the state and career advancement is linked to loyalty to the regime. Their demands are thus reasonable and moderate. For these individuals, serving as a loyal opposition and making demands on the party and government is not only a right, but also a duty.

The dissidents have thus far been unable to gain a wider following because they represent such diverse interests and have few bases of institutional support. Dissidents, which include life-long Communists, supporters of the old Saigon regimes, Buddhist monks, and intellectuals wanting freedom of expression, often mistrust one another. Thus divided, Hanoi has been able to isolate and control them.

### ***Study Questions***

1. What political reforms have been implemented in Vietnam?
2. How has the National Assembly's power changed over time?
3. What is the political role of the Vietnam People's Army.

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

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## **Foreign Affairs**

### **1. Post-Cambodian War Foreign Policy**

Hanoi's resolution of the Cambodian civil war brought immediate improvements in relations with other Asian states, particularly with Japan and the ASEAN member states. Following withdrawal from Cambodia, these countries began investing in Vietnam and became key export markets for Hanoi. This influx of foreign exchange was essential, because in 1991 Vietnam lost all subsidies from the former USSR. Diplomatic ties expanded rapidly, starting with Australia, Japan, and other European states. In February 1993, President Mitterrand of France became the first Western head of state to visit Vietnam. Vietnam joined ASEAN in 1995. In that same year, it also normalized diplomatic relations with the United States. Since then, Vietnam has strived to maintain an omni-directional foreign policy, eschewing a formal alliance with any one country.

### **2. The United States**

Relations between Vietnam and the US remained an exception to the general improvement in Hanoi's relations with the outside world during 1991-94, owing largely to the lingering problem of the more than 2,600 US servicemen listed as 'missing in action' (MIA) during the Vietnam War. In October 1990, however, the Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Co Thach, met leading US officials in Washington (the first visit there by a Vietnamese delegate in 15 years) to discuss the UN peace plan for Cambodia and the possible release of information concerning the MIAs. The meeting represented a significant move towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In early 1991, a US representative was stationed in Hanoi to supervise inquiries into the MIAs, the first official US presence in Vietnam since 1975. In April, the US proposed a four-stage program for the establishment of normal diplomatic relations with Vietnam, conditional on Vietnamese co-operation in reaching a diplomatic settlement in Cambodia, and in accounting for the remaining MIAs. In March 1992, relations improved further when the US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Solomon, visited Hanoi, the most senior US official to do so since 1986. In exchange for enhanced co-operation on the MIA issue, Solomon announced that the US would grant Vietnam \$3 million in humanitarian aid, though the embargo remained in place and despite criticism from US allies in the region. In October 1992, following the discovery of more than 4,000 photographs of the remains of MIAs, discussions took place between the Vietnamese Minister of Foreign Affairs and the US Secretary of Defense, Richard Cheney.

Expectations that a Democratic administration under President Bill Clinton would lead to the early normalization of relations between Vietnam and the US were not realized. Nevertheless, in July 1993, the US did withdraw its long-standing opposition to loans to Vietnam from the IMF, the World Bank, and the ADB. The resumption of large-scale external aid was expected to give impetus to the improvement of the country's infrastructure, regarded as essential for its economic development. However, despite increased Vietnamese efforts to assist in the search for MIAs and the stationing of US diplomats in Hanoi from August 1993, President Clinton announced in

September a renewal of the embargo against Vietnam, which he later lifted in February 1994.

In May 1994, Vietnam and the US agreed to open liaison offices in their respective capitals; the US opened its office in Hanoi in February 1995. President Clinton announced the restoration of full diplomatic relations on 11 July. In the following month, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Hanoi to inaugurate the new US embassy there. In April 1996, a US commercial office was opened in Hanoi. In May 1997, Ambassador Douglas “Pete” Peterson arrived in Hanoi as the first U.S. Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

In April 1997, US Secretary of the Treasury Robert Rubin visited Vietnam and signed an agreement settling a US \$150 million debt issue outstanding since the end of the Vietnam War. During the course of his visit, Rubin stated that Vietnam would be required to undertake a series of measures, such as protecting intellectual property and agreeing to a trade accord, before the US would grant Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status (now referred to as Normal Trade Relations or NTR). Although an agreement on intellectual property rights was signed, negotiations on a trade agreement initially made little progress in the face of US demands that Vietnam open its markets, remove various trade barriers, abandon investment licensing, and grant ‘national treatment’ to US banks, law firms, and advertising agencies.

In late June 1997, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a brief visit to Hanoi, where she signed an agreement on copyright protection and urged Vietnam to initiate *doi moi 2* (renewed reforms). In March 1998, however, Vietnam’s co-operation with the US on a resettlement program for Vietnamese boat people resulted in President Clinton’s decision to waive the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the 1974 Trade Act. This amendment prohibits the US from trading with or providing investment funds to countries that do not permit free emigration. As a result of the waiver, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Export-Import Bank were permitted to commence operations in Vietnam. (Note: OPIC provides special insurance cover for US firms doing business in Vietnam, while the Export-Import Bank provides loans to US companies to assist their exports to Vietnam.) During 1998, Vietnam and the US intensified negotiations on trade and aviation agreements. In late September 1998, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nguyen Manh Cam, made an official visit to the US at the invitation of the US Secretary of State.

In February 1999, President Clinton affirmed that Vietnam was ‘fully co-operating in good faith’ in all areas of bilateral relations in which the US itself sought progress (particularly in the area of joint searches for the remains of MIAs). Vietnam also intensified its co-operation with the US on immigration issues. Following some initial difficulties, the Vietnamese Government gave permission for refugees in overseas camps to return to Vietnam for processing, in preparation for emigration to the US under the Resettlement of Vietnamese Returnees Program. It also expedited the processing of former re-education camp detainees. Improved Vietnamese cooperation in these areas led to President Clinton’s agreement to the second waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. As a result, US export promotion and investment support programs

offered by the Export-Import Bank, OPIC, the US Department of Agriculture, and the United States Trade and Development Agency were permitted to recommence.

In 1999, Vietnam and the US also made substantial progress in their negotiations of a Bilateral Trade Agreement, and considerable progress was achieved in particular during the eighth round of negotiations held in mid-June. During negotiations, Vietnam was reluctant to grant the US access to certain protected sectors, such as telecommunications. The most contentious issues during the final round of negotiations were those of non-tariff barriers and tariff reduction schedules. Vietnam sought an eight-year time frame for the full implementation of the agreement, whereas the US insisted on a time frame of four years. On July 25, Vietnam and the US announced a final agreement in principle upon the terms of the Bilateral Trade Agreement. However, following a tense meeting between US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the General Secretary of the Communist Party Le Kha Phieu, hopes that the trade agreement would be signed at the APEC summit, held in the September in Auckland, New Zealand, were dispelled. In October, the Politburo rejected the trade accord. The Vietnamese Government attempted to renegotiate certain provisions of the agreement, although the US refused, offering only to clarify certain aspects. The US made efforts to continue discussions on the issue, with a series of high-level visits in the first half of 2000.

US Secretary of Defense William Cohen travelled to Vietnam in April 2000, after the Vietnamese authorities had twice postponed his visit. Although the visit represented progress in improving bilateral military links, the Vietnamese Government was reluctant to support Cohen's suggestion that Vietnam and the US were potential allies against 'growing hegemony' in the region and to allow port visits of US naval vessels. The US praised Vietnam for its cooperation regarding the search for MIAs, although Hanoi made little progress in appealing to the US Government for aid to locate the remains of some 300,000 servicemen. Cohen's visit coincided with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of Saigon, which the Vietnamese celebrated throughout April. The anniversary generated some tension, following the assertion by US Senator John McCain that he and other captured US servicemen had been tortured. A resolution by the US Congress condemning the Communist regime in April also prompted hostility. The continued effect of Agent Orange used in South Vietnam during the war remained a contentious political issue; the US Government agreed to conduct joint research, but refused to pay reparations.

In July 2000, newly-appointed Trade Minister Vu Khoan, travelled to Washington at the invitation of US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. As expected, the bilateral trade agreement was finally signed. Vietnam was accorded Normal Trade Relations, lowering tariff rates on exports from about 40% to 3%. The US ceded to Vietnamese demands that foreign companies would only be allowed to become minority partners in the telecommunications sector. In return, Vietnam accepted a three-year period of introduction for other components of the accord, as opposed to the four years that had been previously negotiated. The agreement laid the foundations for Vietnamese membership of the World Trade Organization, which ultimately occurred in 2006.



President Clinton visited Vietnam in November 2000, the first visit by a US President since the country's reunification in 1976. Clinton received a chilly reception from the leadership; General Secretary Le Kha Phieu gave the president a 45-minute lecture on US imperialism, the Vietnam war, and the triumphs of socialism. In contrast, however, the US President received a warm welcome from the general Vietnamese public.

Relations between the former adversaries have become deeper and more diverse in the years since political normalization. The two countries have broadened their political exchanges through regular dialogues on human rights and regional security. They signed a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) in July 2000, which went into force in December 2001. In 2003, the two countries also signed a Counter-narcotics Letter of Agreement, a Civil Aviation Agreement, and a textile agreement. In November 2006, President George W. Bush came to Vietnam to represent the US at the annual meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which was hosted that year by Vietnam. In December 2006, the US Congress agreed to extend Permanent Normal Trade Relations to Vietnam, thus ending the need for annual reviews.

As of April 27, 2005, the US Government listed 1,836 Americans still unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, including 1,398 in Vietnam. Since 1973, 747 Americans have been accounted for, including 523 in Vietnam. The US considers achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing and unaccounted for in Indochina to be one of its highest priorities with Vietnam.

Since entry into force of the BTA in 2001, increased trade between the U.S. and Vietnam, combined with large-scale U.S. investment in Vietnam, demonstrate the maturing U.S.-Vietnam economic relationship. In 2005, Vietnam exported \$5.93 billion worth of goods to the U.S. and imported \$0.86 billion of U.S. goods. Similarly, U.S. private sector direct investment in the Vietnamese economy increased by \$147 million in 2005 alone. Direct flights between Ho Chi Minh City and San Francisco also began in December 2004.

### **3. China**

Vietnam's China policy is complex. On the one hand, China is a fraternal socialist state, an ideological comrade, a model for political and economic reform, and a close ally during the war years. On the other hand, China is a country that has a several thousand-year history of domination of Vietnam. This has created a legacy of mistrust and antipathy towards China. Despite ideological solidarity, China has been a potential threat to Vietnam's territorial integrity. The slow pace of negotiations over numerous territorial disputes between the two countries, along their land border, over the Gulf of Tonkin, and in the South China Sea, has reinforced Hanoi's suspicion of China's intentions towards Vietnam and Southeast Asia in general.

Several confrontations between the nations have reinforced Vietnam's fears over Chinese aggression in South China Sea. There was the 1988 clash in which two Vietnamese naval vessels were sunk by the Chinese military. In another incident, a Chinese oil rig was towed into waters claimed by Vietnam in Gulf of Tonkin. Also, China awarded an oil concession to a US firm on Vietnam's continental shelf. After a decade of talks, negotiations were concluded in late 2000 to demarcate the land border and the Gulf of Tonkin. No agreement has been reached on the South China Sea.

To manage this complex relationship, Hanoi has adopted a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, it reinforces ideological and historical ties to China, citing fraternal socialist identity and the dilemmas that both countries face as they justify continued Communist rule in the face of market reforms and the decline of the ideological basis of their rule. On the other hand, Vietnam has striven not to become dominated by China, and it has adopted an "omni-directional" foreign policy that seeks to balance the historical ties to China. In 1995, Vietnam joined ASEAN in large part to "balance" its relations vis-à-vis China. Although ASEAN is not a formal alliance, Vietnam believed that China deemed its relations with ASEAN too important for its own development to risk a confrontational policy against one of its members. In short, there would be a "trans-ASEAN" cost that would moderate China's Vietnam policy.

Under the tenure of General Secretary Le Kha Phieu, there was a tilt towards China. There was an economic rationale for his behavior. Vietnam was interested in learning from the China's reform experience, especially with regard to dealing with the private sector and reforming or privatizing state owned enterprises (SOEs). Phieu also believed that closer ties with China would help resolve their longstanding territorial and other bilateral disputes. Phieu came under attack for this, however, because most Vietnamese policy makers do not believe that China will reward Vietnam for its quiescence; they believe that, for Beijing, such behavior is expected of a former vassal state.

Under the new leadership of General Secretary Nong Duc Manh, Vietnam has pursued a more balanced relationship with China. It has expanded its trade relations with other East Asian neighbors as well as with countries in Western Europe and North America. As mentioned above, it has also encouraged closer relations with the U.S. in political as well as economic areas.

#### **4. Russia**

Ties between Russia and Vietnam cooled following the demise of the Soviet Union. Vietnam was aghast at the Soviet Communist Party's dissolution and the voluntary surrender of power and most bilateral contacts. All aid programs and trade subsidies from Moscow ceased. Russia demanded repayment of Hanoi's outstanding loans, but a dispute arose over the valuation of the ruble-denominated debt. The Russians demanded nearly \$11 billion. Relations further soured, as Russia became the key arms supplier to China, improving Beijing's military capabilities.

In June 1994, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense traveled to the former USSR to re-negotiate the 1978 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The new document stipulated bilateral

consultations in the event of a crisis and no defensive obligation. Vietnam and Russia also reached an agreement on \$180 million of arms and spare parts. The Russians were interested in “maintaining and developing” their naval and SIGINT base in Cam Ranh Bay, whose lease expired in 2002, but negotiations snagged on Vietnam’s demand for an increase in annual rent for the base.

Ties improved in 1998 when a Russian firm and PetroVietnam received a joint license to build a US \$1.1 billion petroleum refinery at Dung Quat in central Vietnam. Bilateral relations further improved in March 2001 with the visit of President Vladimir Putin, which was the first visit ever to Hanoi of a Russian head of state. Putin nearly erased all of Vietnam’s debt to the Russia, with the objective to ensure Russia’s affordable use of Cam Ranh Bay. Nonetheless, in mid-2001, Vietnam rejected any Russian attempt to renew the lease and announced their plans to develop the facility into an export-processing zone.

## **5. Laos and Cambodia**

Although Vietnam pulled its troops out of Laos in 1989, Vietnam continues to wield considerable influence in this small, neighboring nation. There is no country with which Vietnam has a more comprehensive bilateral relationship. Ties cooled in the early 1990s when Laos sought to improve ties with China. But the Lao regime’s more open policy led to factional infighting and a renewed sense of maintaining political allegiance to Hanoi. Vietnam stepped up military assistance to Laos in 2000 and reportedly re-introduced troops to help the Lao confront a resurgent Hmong insurgency, though it publicly denied this. In recent years, Vietnam has built several new roads into Laos in order to link Vietnamese ports more closely with the land locked, but resource-rich Laos. Ideologically, the two states remain close, and there is a plethora of bilateral exchanges each year from all political, economic, cultural and military organizations.

Vietnam’s relationship with Cambodia has been more complex. Despite his installment in Cambodia by the Vietnamese, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen has exercised considerable independence from Hanoi, and on occasion has angered his former patrons by taking a hard line position on the issue of Vietnamese settlers in Cambodia. The Vietnamese Government was concerned by the Cambodian National Assembly’s adoption in August 1994 of a new immigration law, which, it claimed, contravened international agreements on human rights and would lead to discrimination against the Vietnamese minority in Cambodia. While this approach has upset Vietnam, it is politically popular for Hun Sen who has condoned pogroms against ethnic Vietnamese. Border disputes have been another ongoing irritant in the bilateral relationship, but these may have been resolved, at least for now, in a border agreement reached by the two governments in November 2005.

Although Vietnam’s relationship with Laos and Cambodia differ, Hanoi continues to concentrate its diplomatic resources in maintaining cooperative relations with these strategic border states. It remains wary, however, of growing Chinese influence in both Laos and Cambodia.

## **6. ASEAN**

In July 1992, Vietnam signed the 1976 ASEAN Treaty on Amity and Co-operation, and was granted observer status at its annual meeting of foreign ministers. In July 1994, Vietnam became a founding member of the ASEAN Regional Forum, a security discussion group. In July 1995, at ceremonies in Brunei, Vietnam became ASEAN's seventh member. On the same occasion, Vietnam announced its intention to join the ASEAN Free Trade Area.

Vietnam's accession to ASEAN occurred several years before most observers expected. The primary reason was China's aggressive stance over the South China Sea and Spratly Islands. China's claims overlap both the continental shelf and claims by the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia, as well as Vietnam. Many in ASEAN saw the wisdom of bringing Vietnam in to help shore up its collective position vis-a-vis China.

Vietnam's membership into ASEAN has not been without controversy. At the 31st annual ASEAN ministerial meeting in July 1998, Vietnam opposed a Thai and Philippine initiative to modify ASEAN's long-standing policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member countries. Angering the original members of ASEAN, Vietnam established a caucus of new members, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, all of whom single-party authoritarian regimes. Many analysts have argued that this grouping of countries has often limited ASEAN's ability to develop a more united effort in promoting democracy in the region.

## **7. Japan**

In September 1993, full diplomatic relations were re-established between Vietnam and Japan. By the mid-1990s, Japan had become Vietnam's largest aid donor and principal trading partner. It remains the largest aid donor, the leading source of foreign direct investment, and the second largest market of Vietnamese exports, after the US. In 1999, the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Phan Van Khai, made an official visit to Japan. Each country extended "most favored nation" trading status to the other, and Japan pledged continued assistance programs in Vietnam.

## **8. Other Western States**

Australia was the first Western country to restore diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Beginning in 1995, Australia began consultative dialogue on human rights. In 1997, Australia opened a regional security dialogue with defense officials in Hanoi; the first formal dialogue took place in May 1998. The Vietnamese Prime Minister, Phan Van Khai, paid an official visit to Australia in March 1999. During that visit, Australia announced it would increase its official development aid to Vietnam; a separate agreement on co-operation in the areas of education and training was also signed.

In February 1993, President Mitterrand of France became the first Western Head of State to visit Vietnam since its reunification. He was followed in early 1995 by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in early 1997 by the Chief of Staff of the French army. In November 1997, President Jacques Chirac of France made an official visit to Vietnam, which was hosting a

summit meeting of French-speaking countries.

Vietnam has always had close relations with the Scandinavian countries, in particular Sweden, which was the only Western country to maintain diplomatic relations with the DRV regime during the war. Sweden has also concentrated much of its bilateral development assistance in the Southeast Asia region to Vietnam.

### ***Study Questions***

1. Why is Vietnam's relationship with China so complex? How does Hanoi "cope" with China?
2. What benefits does Vietnam enjoy from its membership in ASEAN?
3. What are the prospects for improved relations with the United States?

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## **The Economy and Infrastructure**

Despite rapid economic growth in recent years, Vietnam is still a relatively poor, densely populated country. Its economy remains based on agriculture, primarily wet rice cultivation, with around 60 percent of the labor force working in agriculture. Vietnam continues to be a leading exporter of agricultural products, such as coffee, rice, pepper, and cashew nuts. However, the relative importance of agriculture to the economy declined to about 21 percent of nominal GDP in 2005, down from about 40 percent in 1991. Vietnam's industries have been growing by more than 10 percent annually, and industry (including construction) contributed about 41 percent of GDP in 2005, compared to around 23 percent in the early 1990s. By this measure, Vietnam is a rapidly industrializing economy. Industry is relatively diversified, and all sub sectors have expanded over the past decade, with particularly rapid growth in steel products, garments, footwear, cement, and car and motorcycle assembly. Mining (mainly oil and gas) accounted for around 10 percent of industrial GDP in 2005. The services sector has grown steadily over the past decade, but its share of GDP has fallen, dropping to around 38 percent in 2005 from 44 percent in the mid 1990s.

### **1. Colonialism to Communism**

In 1945, Vietnam inherited an economy from the French that was poor, underdeveloped, exploited, and geared to serving the colonial regime. The French, who had colonized Vietnam from the 1860s, changed landholding patterns, created millions of landless peasants and day laborers who worked on French-owned plantations, and imposed taxes that kept the peasantry in a cycle of indebtedness. State monopolies and limited attempts to industrialize also distorted the economy, which was then shattered by nine years of anti-colonial war between 1946 and 1954.

Following the 1954 Geneva Peace Accords that divided Vietnam at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel, the two competing regimes implemented different economic policies. In North Vietnam, the Communist regime under the Lao Dong Party (LDP) socialized the economy. In the countryside, the LDP implemented a two-phase land reform program to redistribute land and abolish "landlordism". The implementation of this policy was marked by mass violence as Maoist "class labels" were applied. After two years, massive peasant unrest caused the party to slow down the implementation of land reform. Despite an increase in the amount of collectivized land, per capita agricultural output fell. The state monopolized the harvest and marketing of the rice, paying the peasantry below-market prices for their crops, so that the urban proletariat could receive subsidized food.

The urban economy of the North was also socialized in a strategy of Stalinist industrialization. Private enterprise was abolished, trade was monopolized by the state, and the North began a process of heavy industrialization with massive amounts of Chinese and Soviet aid. Between 1955 and 1965, North Vietnam received \$457 million and \$364 million in Chinese and Soviet aid, respectively. Central economic planning was adopted and the country was put on Soviet-style five-year plans. All economic resources were directed to the war against U.S.-backed South Vietnam after 1963, causing economic dislocations.

In South Vietnam, the economy was a quasi-capitalist system. Unlike in the North, land in South Vietnam was inequitably distributed. This infuriated the peasants who supported the Communist-backed Viet Cong National Liberation Front, which promised land reform. The South Vietnamese regime's base of support came from the landlord class, which resisted land reform and the peasants suffered under absentee landlordism, high rates of landlessness, and high taxation.

The South Vietnamese regime was dependent on U.S. economic aid, which by 1963 amounted to more than \$1 billion. But unlike North Vietnam, South Vietnam invested little of that aid in industrialization; the economy remained overwhelmingly agrarian. As in the North, the war caused massive dislocations. The government became increasingly dependent on U.S. aid, having lost much of its own revenue. The economy was also racked by inflation and smuggling, and was dominated by an enormous black market.

## **2. Reunification, the Socialist Transition, and Economic Malaise**

Following reunification under North Vietnam in 1976, Hanoi socialized the southern economy. Private enterprise was abolished, land was collectivized, and wholesale, retail, and foreign trade were nationalized. The ethnic Chinese, who dominated the South Vietnamese commercial sector, were persecuted and fled en masse. Additionally, radical currency reform wiped out capital holdings. There was a postwar economic malaise following the loss of Chinese aid in 1978, the imposition of an international trade embargo after Vietnam's December 1978 invasion of Cambodia, and the huge domestic expenditures (amounting to one-third of Vietnam's budget) for the Cambodian occupation.

Vietnam joined the Soviet-led trade bloc, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), in 1978 and received approximately \$1 billion in Soviet economic aid annually during the 1980s. Much of the aid was wasted, however, and the country suffered huge trade deficits. The leadership believed that the collectivization of agriculture in the South would lead to net gains in output, but there were food shortages as output could not keep pace with the postwar baby boom. In 1982, agriculture in the South was partially de-collectivized, and Hanoi began to experiment with Chinese-style agricultural production contracts. By 1986, triple-digit inflation and severe food shortages had wracked the economy.

## **3. *Doi Moi***

The 6<sup>th</sup> party congress of December 1986 adopted an economic reform program known as *doi moi*, or renovation. Agriculture was completely de-collectivized, and fifteen-year contracts for individual production units were granted. As a result, Vietnam went from a net importer of rice to the world's third largest exporter within a year. Vietnam also became the world's second largest producer of coffee robusta. Market forces were introduced and central planning was eliminated for all but essential commodities. Vietnam rejected a model of heavy industrialization in favor of sectors in which its economy had a comparative advantage: agricultural commodities (rice, coffee, rubber); natural resource (oil and natural gas) exploitation; and labor-intensive manufacturing. The labor market was freed up. Foreign investment was courted, and the

government marketed the country as an offshore center for manufacturing. Currency reform eliminated the inflationary forces caused by an overvalued currency and the black market. Having withdrawn from Cambodia in 1989, Hanoi began to renew ties with the international community. Embargoes were eased, and bilateral and multilateral lending and development assistance resumed. This was essential, because Hanoi lost all Soviet aid and subsidies by 1991.

Since 1989, real GDP growth has averaged almost 8 percent a year. GDP in 2005 reached \$53.1 billion. Inflation, which was in the triple digits in 1986, was brought down to a low of 3.6 percent in 1997 and is currently 8.4 percent. Per capita income more than doubled from \$220 in 1994 to \$638 in 2005, with a related reduction in the share of population living in acute poverty. However, regional differences in average income are wide, with \$638 per capita for the whole country on average, but about \$1,800 in Ho Chi Minh City and much lower than average in poorer provinces of the central and northern highlands.

#### **4. The Internationalization of the Economy**

The most significant change in the Vietnamese economy in recent years has been its moves toward greater internationalization. Since 1987, when Hanoi passed a Law on Foreign Investment, Vietnam has adopted a strategy of growth that is based on the integration into the international economy through export-led growth and foreign direct investment.

Vietnam's principle exports are, in order of importance: petroleum; textiles and garments; footwear; marine products; furniture; electronic parts; rice; coffee; and rubber. Its principle imports are: machinery and parts; refined petroleum; steel; and textile inputs. The direction of trade has shifted away from CMEA states. Vietnam's principle markets are: the US; Japan; Australia; and China. China is the leading source of imports, followed by Singapore, South Korea, and Japan.

Vietnam has sought to attract foreign investment in its industrial sector. The Government sees foreign investment as an intrinsic part of its reform program for state owned enterprises (SOEs). Unwilling to privatize or close SOEs for fear of exacerbating unemployment, the government forced the larger SOEs to take over the weaker ones. Hence, the number fell from 12,000 to less than 6,000. But these SOEs remain inefficient and dependent on subsidies; over half are in the red financially.

Vietnam has participated in international economic and trade forums. Following its membership into ASEAN in 1995, Vietnam pledged to reduce its tariffs in accordance with the AFTA by 2003. In 1996, Vietnam began the application process for WTO membership, which was completed and approved in December 2006. In November 1998, Vietnam became a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), and in November 2006, Vietnam hosted the annual meeting of APEC leaders, which included U.S. President Bush.

Tourism has become an important and growing source of revenue. There were a record 3.5 million tourist visitors to Vietnam in 2005, up from 1.6 million in 1996.



While the country has moved toward a more market-oriented economy, the Vietnamese government still holds a tight rein over major sectors of the economy, such as the banking system and state-owned enterprises. The government has plans to reforming key sectors and privatizing state-owned enterprises, but implementation is slow. Greater emphasis on private sector development is crucial for job creation. Urban unemployment has been rising in recent years, and rural unemployment (estimated to be between 25 and 35 percent during non-harvest periods) is already at critical levels. Layoffs in the state sector and foreign-invested enterprises combined with the lasting effects of an earlier military demobilization further exacerbate the unemployment situation.

The entry-into-force of the Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) between the U.S. and Vietnam in December 2001 was a significant milestone for Vietnam's economy and for normalization of U.S.-Vietnam relations. Implementation of this agreement, which includes provision of trade in goods, trade in services, enforcement of intellectual property rights, protection for investments, and transparency, is fundamentally changing Vietnam's trade regime and helping liberalize its economy. The BTA gave normal trade relations (NTR) status to Vietnamese imports in the U.S. market. Bilateral trade between the two countries has expanded dramatically, reaching \$6.8 billion in 2005.

## **5. The Limits of Incomplete Reform**

### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for about 80 percent of the country's population, though its share of GDP has fallen from 42 percent in 1989 to 21 percent in 2005. The initial reforms that de-collectivized agriculture improved the standard of living in the countryside; beginning in the late 1990s, however, there was widespread unrest as a result of corruption, inequitable distribution of land, and the many new taxes and fees.

Paddy rice production (wet rice cultivation) dominates agricultural output. The introduction of the contract system led Vietnam from being a net importer of rice to the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest exporter in 1997, behind Thailand but surpassing the US. Vietnam exported 3.6 million tons of rice in 2005, earning over \$1 billion in revenue.

But agriculture has become more diversified. Vietnam is now the world's largest exporter of robusta coffee, which is used for instant coffee. It also exports large quantities of peanuts, rubber, tea, maize, and cassava. Large-scale animal processing, such as exists in Thailand, has not occurred in Vietnam. Animal husbandry remains a household-based industry.

Lack of land and credit hinders rural growth, as well as poor access to markets and inefficient farming techniques. Under-employment in the countryside also remains a problem and migration to the cities is putting inordinate pressure on urban infrastructures.

### ***Industry***

The Vietnamese economy slowed down in the mid-1990s, hampered by its half-capitalist, half-socialist system. Vietnamese authorities slowed implementation of the structural reforms needed to revitalize the economy and produce more competitive, export-driven industries. Although the government pledged to reform inefficient SOEs and liberalize trade, it failed to implement a comprehensive solution. Although the number of SOEs has been halved, these firms continue to pose a considerable economic burden. Privatization is subject to political sensitivities, while the country's dynamic private sector is denied both financing and access to markets. There is concern over high rates of unemployment. Complicating SOE reforms is a banking crisis, brought on by large debts and non-performing loans. In addition, the revenue base remains small and tax collection sporadic.

### ***Infrastructure***

Vietnam is hampered by a weak physical infrastructure. There are only 126,000 km of roads, according to official statistics, less than half of which are paved. Over 10 percent of the country's villages are inaccessible by road for at least one month a year. A second north-south highway is currently under construction via the Central Highlands along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This project has been criticized for its dependence on forced labor and negative environmental impact. Vietnam is in desperate need of more investment in its highway infrastructure.

There are 3,260 km of railways, though the rail system is overburdened and outdated. Vietnam has several important ports, including Hai Phong, Quang Ninh, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, and Can Tho, which handled 34 million tons of freight in 2005, up from 4.5 million tons in 1993.

In 2005, Vietnam's total electricity-generating capacity was 53.3 billion kilowatts. More than eighty percent of this was hydroelectric, while the remainder was obtained from fossil fuels. Electricity consumption nearly matches production. More dams are being constructed and the government's goal is to double existing hydroelectricity output. This has caused ethnic tensions as over 100,000 people have undergone forced migration make way for the reservoirs.

Vietnam's telecommunications sector has been expanded and upgraded since 1991. In 2005, there were 5.7 million telephone lines. Between 2000 and 2005, the penetration rate of mobile phone subscribers rose tenfold to ten subscribers per 100 popular, although this remains low compared with around 12 in Thailand and 28 in China. Internet services, which became available in mid-1998 in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are expensive, but there were about 4.3 million users in 2005.

### ***Study Questions***

1. What problems does Vietnam face as it moves from a centralized economy to a market-based one?
2. How can Vietnam alleviate its growing unemployment crisis?
3. Which sectors of the economy have benefited from *doi moi*?

### ***Suggestions for Further Reading***

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