

Kazakhstan

2016 Country Review

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Chapter 1

Country Overview

Country Overview

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia and one of the most sparsely populated in the world. The people known as Kazakhs, a mix of Turkic and Mongol nomadic tribes, have inhabited the region since the 16th century. The area was conquered by Russia in the 18th century, and Kazakhstan became a Soviet Republic in 1936. The country became independent in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Kazakhstan is endowed with considerable mineral resources, including significant oil and natural gas reserves, as well as vast areas of arable land. The country has made significant progress in transforming its economy since its independence in 1991, and its economic performance has been impressive since the late 1990s. However, economic growth slowed sharply in 2008 and 2009 with rapidly falling oil prices and tightened liquidity conditions for banks as a result of the global economic crisis. In more recent times, Kazakhstan hopes to benefit from the newly launched Eurasian Economic Union composed of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Politically, while critics have questioned the presidency of long-serving Nursultan Nazarbaev, the fact of the matter was that under that strongman leadership, the country enjoys stability.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Asia
Population:	18157122
Climate:	continental, cold winters and hot summers, arid and semiarid.
Languages:	Kazak (official) Russian (spoken by two-thirds of population and used in everyday business)
Currency:	tenge
Holiday:	Independence Day is 16 December (1991), Republic Day is 25 October, Victory Day is 9 May
Area Total:	2717300
Area Land:	2669800
Coast Line:	0

Kazakhstan

Country Map



Asia

Regional Map



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Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

Origins and Identity

The origins of the Kazakh people, and even their name itself, are matters of historical debate. First emerging as an identifiable group in the 15th century, the Kazakh people were a mix of indigenous Turkic tribes, which had been in the area since the eighth century, and nomadic Mongols, who invaded the area in the 13th century. Originally Kazakhstanis differed little from their Turkic neighbors - the Uzbeks, the Kyrgyz, and the Karakalpaks - but political divisions and different economic development caused them to enter the 19th century as distinctly different from the other three peoples.

The language of the Kazakhs belongs to the same family of Turkic languages, as do the languages of the Kyrgyz, the Uzbeks, and the Turkmens. Kazakh, a mix of spoken Kazakh with Arabic and Tatar elements, became a literary language in the 1860s. Until 1926, Kazakh had an Arabic script; from 1926 until 1940, it had a Latin alphabet; and since 1940, it has had a Cyrillic alphabet. In spite of the significant numbers of Russians and other ethnic groups in the republic, the Kazakhs have retained very high usage of their own language.

Russian Influence on the Kazakhs

Russians had limited and intermittent contacts with the Kazakhs between the mid-16th century and the beginning of the 18th century, when Russia began to exert control over them. Harassed by their neighbors, particularly the Kalmyks, in 1731, the nomadic Kazakhs placed themselves under the protection of the much more powerful Russian state. Afterward, Russian penetration into Kazakhstan was unremitting and included building a network of forts and settling the land with Russian farmers.

Despite a series of Kazakh rebellions against them, Russian expansion continued, and by the second half of the 19th century, Kazakhstan was firmly under Russian control. The czarist policy of ending Kazakh nomadism and of settling the land with Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews continued. The new settlers received huge portions of the most fertile land. An almost exclusively

non-Kazakh class of workers began to appear, and a budding industry, operated by the new immigrants, began to grow. These developments threatened to destroy the traditional form of existence of the Kazakh pastoral nomads.

The indigenous population's resentment against the settlers, as well as against conscription of Muslims into the military, erupted as a major rebellion in 1916. Although it was quickly suppressed, the rebellion set the stage for the nationalist movement in Kazakhstan, following the February Revolution of 1917. Kazakh nationalists established a national government and engaged in an armed struggle against both pro- and anti-Bolshevik Russian forces.

By mid-1919, however, weakened by the struggle, Kazakh nationalists sought accommodation with the Bolsheviks. In August 1920, the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic was established for the Kazakhs (until the mid-1920s Russians called them Kyrgyz) within the Russian Republic. In 1925 it was renamed the Kazakh Autonomous Republic and became a union republic in 1936.

The Bolshevik Revolution, and the Civil War that followed, further disrupted the traditional life of the Kazakhs. Many Kazakhs left with their herds for China and Afghanistan. Almost a million died from starvation in the famine of 1921-22. The rest were soon faced with forced collectivization, and a continuous influx of Russians and other people gradually reduced the Kazakhs to a minority in their own land. Kazakh leaders, even Kazakh communists, who protested these policies were purged or executed, first in the late 1920s and then during the purges of the Great Terror in the 1930s.

Towards Independence

By 1989, the 8.1 million Kazakhs constituted the fifth most populous nationality in the Soviet Union. More than 6.5 million, or 80 percent of the Kazakhs, lived in the Kazakh Republic, by far the largest of the five Soviet Central Asian republics. In fact, after the Russian Republic, it was the second largest republic of the former Soviet Union, with a territory of over 2.7 million square kilometers. It was also the least homogeneous of all the union republics. In addition, more than 1.5 million Kazakhs lived in other parts of the Soviet Union, with the largest concentrations in the Uzbek and Russian republics.

In 1989, no nationality constituted a majority of the 16.5 million people in the Kazakh Republic. The Kazakhs accounted for nearly 40 percent of the population. Ethnic Russians, with about 38 percent, were the second most populous nationality in the Kazakh Republic. From 1959 to 1989, the Kazakhs had showed a steady increase in their share of the republic's population. Simultaneously, the percentage of ethnic Russians in the total population had declined. Ethnic Ukrainians and ethnic Germans, the next two largest minorities, whose individual shares made up about five and six percent of the population, respectively, also had declined from 1959 to 1989.

Meanwhile, in 1984, Nursultan Nazarbayev was appointed chairman of the council of ministers (the head of government). In 1989, Nazarbayev became the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK). He was elected chairman of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet (also known as the Supreme Kenges) in February 1990, and, after the CPK won a sweeping majority of the seats in the March 1990 Supreme Soviet elections, Nazarbayev was elected to the newly-created position of president of the Supreme Soviet.

Kazakhstan declared its sovereignty from the Soviet Union on Oct. 26, 1990. Then, on Dec. 1, 1991, Nazarbayev was the only candidate in Kazakhstan's first direct presidential elections. He received 98.8 percent of all the votes cast and became the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which formally declared independence on Dec. 16. Kazakh independence brought into sharp relief the long-suppressed ethnic and religious grievances between non-Muslim ethnic Russians - a legacy of Stalin's resettlement policies - and Muslim Kazakhs.

Note on History: In certain entries, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used. A full listing of sources is available in the Bibliography.

Political Conditions

Background Information

Since 1991, Kazakhstan has undergone several constitutional changes. The Supreme Kenges enacted the first post-independence constitution in January 1993. The populace approved the second constitution in a nationwide referendum in August 1995. This constitution created a bicameral parliament consisting of a Senate and a Majlis (national assembly) and did away with the Supreme Kenges. Important constitutional changes, primarily pertaining to the electoral system, were proposed by President Nazarbayev in September 1998 and enacted by parliament in October 1998.

Since establishing its independent statehood, Kazakhstan has held a series of parliamentary elections. The first were held on Mar. 7, 1994, for the Supreme Kenges and were declared null and void by the Constitutional Court in February 1995. The second were held on Dec. 5, 1995, (for the Senate) and on Dec. 9 and 23, 1995, (for the Majlis or National Assembly). The third were held on Sept. 17, 1999, (for the Senate) and on Oct. 24, 1999 (for the Majlis). In the case of the Senate, half the members were indirectly elected in 1999 and the rest were up for indirect election

in 2002. The most recent direct parliamentary elections to the Majlis or National Assembly were held in 2005.

In addition to parliamentary elections, three presidential elections have been held. The first presidential election was held in December 1991 before Kazakhstan had formally declared its independence. Nazarbayev was elected for a five-year term. He ruled by decree from December 1993, when the Supreme Kenges dissolved itself, to March 1994, when a new Supreme Kenges was elected. He ruled by decree again, from March 1995, when he dissolved the Supreme Kenges (after the constitutional court had ruled the March 1994 election results null and void) until the parliamentary elections of December 1995. In April 1995, Nazarbayev's tenure as president was extended until Dec. 1, 2000, by a national referendum. More than 95 percent of those who went to the polls voted in favor of extending Nazarbayev's term. More than 91 percent of the potential electorate participated in the poll. Under pressure from parliament, however, Nazarbayev agreed to stand for re-election in January 1999, and was reelected, winning nearly 80 percent of the votes cast. As he was elected for a seven-year term, the next presidential election was expected to be held in 2006. In the early part of that year, he was re-elected again handily, in what was criticized as being a flawed election. Regardless, President Nursultan Nazarbayev has been - and continues to be - Kazakhstan's central political figure and primary foreign and domestic policy-maker.

A series of prime ministers have held office since 1991. Sergey Tereshchenko was prime minister from 1991 until 1994. Akezhan Kazhegeldin held office from 1994 until 1997. Nurlan Balgimbayev was prime minister from 1997 until 1999. Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev followed until 2002, and was succeeded at that time by Prime Minister Imangali Tasmagambetov until 2003. In that year, Daniyal Akhmetov became the new head of government.

Political Developments

At present, there are a number of political parties in Kazakhstan. They exerted little influence in the January 1999 presidential elections, where candidates seemingly ran on the basis of positions previously held rather than on party affiliation, except for the Communist Party candidate. Several significant opposition candidates, notably former Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin, never made it to the slate, and the elections were criticized as biased in favor of incumbent President Nazarbayev.

Nine parties competed for the 10 proportional representation party list seats in the October 1999 "Majlis" (government body) elections: the Agrarian Party, the Alash (Patriot) Party, the Azamat (Citizens') Party, the Civil (or) Civic Party, the Communist Party, the Kazakhstan Renaissance (or Revival) Party, the Otan (Fatherland) Party, the People's Congress of Kazakhstan, and the Republican Party of Labor. The Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan (RPPK) boycotted the proportional representation party list contests, after the party's leader, former Prime Minister

Akezhan Kazhegeldin, was barred from competing.

While there were 64 party-list candidates, 547 candidates competed for the 67 single-member district seats. In addition to members of the nine parties listed above, members of the Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan, trade union nominees, nominees of other public associations, and non-partisans stood in the single-member district contests.

The Agrarian Party, the Civil (or) Civic Party, the Kazakhstan Renaissance (or Revival) Party, and Otan are considered pro-Nazarbayev, pro-government parties. Opposition parties divide into two camps: those that are willing to pursue reform within the current system and those that wish to do away with the existing presidential system. Generally speaking, Alash, Azamat, the People's Congress, and the Republican Party of Labor fall into the first camp. The Communist Party and the Republican People's Party fall into the second camp.

In brief, the pro-Nazarbayev party, Otan (Fatherland), won 24 seats, more than double the number of any other political party. The closest challenger, the Civil (or) Civic Party, garnered 11 seats. The Communist and Agrarian parties each won three seats, and the Republican People's Party won one. Thus, pro-government parties had control of 38 out of the 77 seats in the Majlis, while opposition parties held control of four seats. Candidates not affiliated with a particular political party won 35 seats. Meanwhile indirect elections to the Senate were also held.

Opposition parties and international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) sharply criticized the parliamentary elections. In its final election report, the OSCE did commend Kazakhstan for "improving the legislative framework for the election," for the increased pluralism of the election, and for allowing election monitors. The OSCE, however, asserted that the election had been "... severely undermined by (1) illegal interference by executive authorities; (2) unfair campaign practices by parties closely associated with existing power structures; (3) threats of bureaucratic, administrative, and judicial measures jeopardizing media operations; (4) bias by lower level election commissions for candidates and parties favored by regional and local officials; and (5) intimidation and obstruction of the electoral campaign of opposition parties and candidates."

In the aftermath of the election, opposition parties such as the RPPK and the Communist Party, joined with several non-governmental and human rights organizations to form the Forum of Democratic Forces. The forum demanded that the parliamentary elections be declared invalid; members of the international community not recognize the election results; new parliamentary elections (both for the Majlis and the Senate) be held; and new regional and local elections also be held.

Despite the expectation of his retirement in 2006, in June 2000, President Nursultan Nazarbayev was granted lifelong political powers and influence. The law also grants him lifelong immunity for

any criminal offenses except acts of treason.

The extension of Nazarbayev's immunity came at a time when international investigations were being carried out against the President and his cronies for allegations of bribery and money laundering. Under a United States (U.S.) investigation concerning a bribery scandal for U.S. oil contracts, it was revealed that up to US\$60 million dollars had been diverted into Swiss bank accounts controlled by top Kazakh government officials, including the president.

Corruption aside, human rights organizations and Western countries have long been dismayed by the human rights situation in Kazakhstan. In the past few years the government has been cracking down on religious freedoms, the free press and political dissent.

For several years the Kazakh government has been concerned about the rising Islamic insurgency that has been rife in Central Asia. In the wake of the events of Sept. 11, 2001 in the United States, new changes to the Religion Law were put in motion to regulate and deter Islamic extremism in Kazakhstan.

According to the United States Department of State's 2001 International Religious Freedom Report, "In part of its campaign to prevent the development of religious extremism, the Government sent to Parliament a draft series of amendments to the National Religion Law that would have placed significant restrictions on religious freedom. It included provisions that would have banned extremist religious associations; increased from 10 to 50 the number of members required to file for registration of a religious organization; limited the right of registration for Muslim groups to those recommended by the Mufti's organization; forbidden missionary activities, including charity activities conducted by citizens if these activities are not formally declared to local authorities in advance; prohibited giving children a religious education or bringing them into religious groups against their will; and authorized local officials to suspend the activities of religious groups that conducted a religious activity outside of the place where they are registered."

Meanwhile, Pope John Paul II held an historic visit to Kazakhstan in Sept. 22-24, 2001, and won praise from the leader of Kazakhstan for "protecting the world from Islamophobia." President Nursultan Nazarbayev thanked the Pope for going ahead with the visit despite the "troubled situation in the world" and for pointing out that religion should not be blamed for the attacks. In his homilies to the Kazakh people, the Pope emphasized that all controversies between nations must be resolved by negotiations and dialogue, not force of arms. Thanking the Pope for visiting Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev also addressed the terrorist attacks on the United States: "The tragedy that happened in the United States presents a threat of division and confrontation between civilizations and religions." Thousands of riot police and security agents lined the main streets of Astana, with agents marking the route of the Pope's motorcade. Roman Catholics make up just two to three percent of the population of Kazakhstan, a country sometimes referred to as being at the point where Europe meets Asia and Islam meets Christianity. The majority religions are Islam

and Russian Orthodox Christianity.

In mid-2001, United States congressmen invited the self-exiled former Kazak prime minister (1994-1997) and leading member of the RPPK, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, along with other Kazakhstani member of the press and opposition leaders to testify on the human rights situation in Central Asia in a hearing entitled, "Silencing Central Asia: The Voices of Dissent." The day Kazhegeldin was to speak in front of the United States congressional hearing, Kazakhstan's government subpoenaed Kazhegeldin on Capitol Hill to return immediately to Kazakhstan to stand trial over what many believe to be trumped up corruption charges. Days earlier, Kazakh authorities also refused to let a newspaper editor and a political representative of the RPPK - both of whom were invited to speak at the congressional hearing - to leave the country.

For both the United States government and Kazak opposition, this move by the government was a political slap in the face. The United States condemned what it described as the Kazakh government's repressive actions towards the movement of the opposition. It also strongly condemned Kazakh interference and contempt for United States official proceedings. For many, the attempt to silence political dissenters at a human rights hearing truly revealed the deterioration of human rights in the country.

Nevertheless, in December 2001, President Nazarbayev met with United States President George W. Bush and declared a common commitment to strengthening a long-term, strategic partnership. The meeting was of strategic importance in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States, as well as the subsequent military efforts in nearby Afghanistan aimed at routing out Islamic militants.

In November 2001, Rakhat Aliev, the president's son-in-law and the person who was largely expected to take the presidential reigns once Nazarbayev retires, handed in his resignation as deputy head of the country's National Security Council (NSC). This resignation was handed in after the political opposition accused Aliev of misuse of power by using the NSC to spy on opposition parties, and blasted him for allegedly controlling a large portion of the media; his wife Dariga, the president's daughter, owned a number of media outlets and runs the state-owned news agency, Khabar. Aliev vehemently denied the allegations and, in turn, accused his accusers of slander. Though the President accepted the resignation on Nov. 17, 2001, Nazarbayev reassigned Aliev with the post of deputy head of the presidential security services.

At the time, this move sent a clear signal to the opposition that Aliev would still remain close to the office of the president. However, several weeks later Aliev was sacked again and it appeared unlikely that he would indeed be the president's predecessor. The scandal was unprecedented on two levels: a) this was the first time that media and political opponents had so openly criticized a relative of the president; and consequently b) it was also the first time the public was made aware of internal political conflict.

On Nov. 18, 2001, prominent business leaders and reform-minded politicians announced the commencement of a progressive, entrepreneurial-centered political organization, the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan. The Democratic Choice called for greater democratic, political and economic reform, and an independent judiciary and legislative body. The creation of the Democratic Choice was done partly in response to the scandal surrounding Aliev, a person many members of the opposition believed was a major obstacle in gaining access and favors from the president. It had been suggested that many had hoped President Nazarbayev would distance himself from Aliev in the face of such accusations, thereby new channels of political and economic discourse would be opened. As the desired effect was not achieved, the disgruntled individuals created a new political party.

Within days of the announcement, several government officials who were members of the Democratic Choice were sacked from their posts for participating in an organization promoting what Prime Minister Tokayev called Kazakhstan's "political destabilization." Other government deputies and ministers handed in their resignations protesting Tokayev's condemnation of the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan.

On Jan. 28, 2002, Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev stepped down from his position and the government was dissolved. That same day, President Nazarbayev appointed Imangaliy Tasmagambetov as the new prime minister of Kazakhstan. Prime Minister Tasmagambetov had hoped to bring the sacked ministers and officials back into the graces of the ruling party, but as the months progressed it seemed that this would be unlikely.

Analysts called the events a political showdown between competing economic interests veiled in the rhetoric of reform. On one side, there was the president, his family and the political elite who control financial policy and media interests in the country, and who intend to keep hold of their power. On the other hand, there was the growing business class who also want a piece of the political pie.

In the aftermath of the late 2001 turmoil, President Nazarbayev began systematically cracking down on the independent media and political dissent. On Jan. 25, 2002, President Nazarbayev gave the Prosecutor-General orders to arrest and bring to trial all those who criticize the president or his family. Eleven days later, the president warned businessmen to steer away from politics and focus strictly on business pursuits. By early March 2002, eight independent television stations were closed.

By early April 2002, two leaders of the opposition, co-founders of the Democratic Choice, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov and Muhtar Ablyazov, were accused of corruption. The two accused men denied the charges and claimed that their arrests were politically motivated. While Ablyazov was arrested, Zhakiyanov sought refuge in the French Embassy; however, he was later handed over to

police and was placed under house arrest. On March 28, independent television station, TAN TV, was set to cover a rally held in protest of political repression but gunmen opened fire on the station's equipment.

In the meantime two plots to assassinate the president were revealed and the Forum of Democratic Forces, who had been speaking out against the president, adopted the slogan "Kazakhstan without Nazarbaev." This slogan would ultimately become the name of a new pro-parliamentary republic political party that had developed out of a coalition between the PRRK, Azamat and the National Congress.

In late April 2002, more corruption allegations were levied at President Nazarbaev concerning a U.S. \$1 billion "secret fund," which held the revenues of the partial sale of the Tenzig oilfield. While the government defended the fund as a security blanket in case of a future economic crisis, the opposition and independent media found themselves silenced when expressing their condemnation of the government's fund.

In May 2002, the independent press came under violent attack. On May 3, 2002, there was an arson attack against the Ak Zhaiyk publishing house in Atyrau and Tan TV in Almaty was vandalized. On May 21, the editorial office of the independent Kazakhstani newspaper, Soldat, was robbed and the perpetrators severely injured two journalists. On May 22, the Almaty office of the independent newspaper Delovoye Obozreniye Respublika was firebombed and destroyed.

For next several months, a spate of arrests and imprisonments ensued, causing opposition activists to accuse the government of preventing dissent. In July 2002, the co-founder of Democratic Choice and former energy minister Mukhtar Ablyazov (mentioned above) was sentenced to six years in jail, allegedly for abuse of office. Ablyazov was pardoned and released almost a year later. Then, in August 2002, the other co-founder of Democratic Choice, Galymzhan Zhakiyanov, was likewise jailed for alleged abuse of office.

Meanwhile, earlier in 2002, both the parliament and president approved aforementioned legislation, called the Religion Law. But in April 2002, the Constitutional Council rejected the new draft of the Religion Law as unconstitutional.

Also in 2002, indirect elections for half the seats in the Senate were held.

In January 2003, an independent journalist and frequent critic of the president, Sergey Duvanov, was found guilty of sexual assault in a case involving a minor. Observers and human rights groups said that the case was spurious and the trial had not been fair. They also claimed that the case against Duvanov was orchestrated by the government in an attempt to strangle media criticism.

Many analysts believed that as President Nazarbayev and his government continued to marginalize

the opposition, the opposition would just become more radicalized. The new opposition has been supported by the business class and, as such, has possessed the financial means to press their agendas in the media, despite the recent violence. As such, it can be expected that the political situation in Kazakhstan will remain volatile for some time to come.

On the domestic political front, in early 2003, the energy minister informed the country's parliament of the intent to work with Russia to build a new nuclear power plant. Although the details of the proposal were hazy and needed to be worked out, it was explained the plant would likely cost about \$2 billion to construct, and the site being considered was at Lake Balkash, northwest of Almaty. Environmentalists expressed outrage at the plan noting that Kazakhstan still had not dealt with the massive amounts of nuclear waste that had been deposited in its borders from years of control by the former Soviet Union. They advocated purchasing energy from other surrounding countries -- many of which possess proven energy reserves -- rather than the construction of a nuclear facility.

In June 2003, Prime Minister Tasmagambetov was ensconced in controversy surrounding land reform legislation. As a result, the prime minister resigned and was replaced by Daniyal Akhmetov. The law at issue, which provided for private land ownership, passed successfully through Kazakhstan's parliament.

In early 2004, Kazakhstan's national oil company announced it would begin construction on an oil pipeline to China later in the year. The pipeline was intended to export the country's substantial oil reserves in an easterly direction toward China, which requires energy sources for its expanding economy. Caspian region oil has usually moved in a westward direction via the Black Sea or it has been exported to Russia. The decision to build a pipeline across the central plains of Kazakhstan to China represented a consolidation of a burgeoning relationship between Beijing and the countries of Central Asia. In addition to the construction of the pipeline to China, Kazakhstan has also forged an agreement with a consortium of oil companies in regard to Kashagan -- one of the largest newly discovered oilfields in the Caspian region.

In the fall of 2004, elections to the Mazhilis, the lower house of Parliament, were held. Contesting the election were Otan, President Nursultan Nazarbaev's party, and Asar, a party created 10 months before by Dariga Nazarbayeva, the president's elder daughter, and Ak Zhol, the moderate opposition party. Opinion polls showed Otan and Asar to be the two leading parties.

Otan touted its economic success in recent years and President Nazarbayev encouraged voters to choose stability over the promises of the opposition. He also warned that they might seek to redistribute the country's oil wealth. For its part, the opposition argued that more of the country's people could be benefiting from the oil riches, instead of it going to "a narrow circle of government officials and oligarchs."

On the day of the election, September 19, 2004, more than 1,000 international observers from 44 countries were present to monitor the elections. The Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was represented by 297 observers. The OSCE said that the run-up to the election had been marred by irregularities and that the two leading parties had dominated campaign advertising. It also noted that there had been insufficient voter preparation for electronic voting. Media monitoring conducted by the "Elections and Democracy" concluded that there had been widespread media bias despite regulations meant to ensure equal media access. Still, election day was peaceful and there was no violence reported.

Four days after election day, Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission announced that the president's party, Otan, had garnered 60 per cent of the vote and seven of the ten seats distributed by party slates. Pro-presidential Asar, pro-presidential AIST bloc of the Civic and Agrarian Parties, and the opposition party Ak Zhol received one seat each. Among 67 single-mandate constituencies, Otan won the plurality of seats although AIST, Asar and seven independents won seats. However, not all the constituencies produced first round winners leading to a second election round on October 2, 2004. The final results certified by the Central Election Commission showed that Otan won 42 of the 77 seats in Parliament, followed by the election bloc AIST which took 11 seats, then Asar which took four seats, and then the opposition Ak Zhol and pro-presidential Democratic Party of Kazakhstan each claiming one seat. Independent candidates accounted for the remaining 18 seats.

Soon thereafter, Zharmakhan Tuyakbay, the parliamentary speaker, resigned in order to call attention to the problematic elections.

In early 2005, the court ordered the dissolution of an opposition party, Democratic Choice, on the grounds that it affected the country's security by asking supporters to protest against parliamentary election results. By the spring of 2005, many of the country's opposition forces combined their efforts and founded a new political faction called "For A Just Kazakhstan." The movement was led by former Parliamentary Speaker Zharmakhan Tuyakbay.

In late 2005, just ahead of presidential election, an opposition figure and former mayor of Almaty, Zamanbek Nurkadilov, was found dead at his family's home in the capital. A revolver was found at the scene by his side. An official inquiry found that his death had been a result of suicide, however, the family's lawyer challenged this finding, saying that it was not possible for Nurkadilov to shoot himself twice in the chest and then finally shoot himself in the head. The opposition seized upon the strange circumstances of his death and accused the government of ordering Nurkadilov's killing. The opposition then claimed that he had been killed because he had dared to accuse the president of being involved in corruption and scandal. Meanwhile, the government and its supporters alleged that Nurkadilov may have been killed by antagonists within his own opposition faction. Regardless, President Nazarbayev sent a telegram of condolence to the family of the deceased politician.

In presidential elections in early December 2005 in Kazakhstan, President Nursultan Nazarbayev -- in power since 1989 -- won 91 percent of the votes cast and another term in office. The main opposition candidate, Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, who garnered only 6.64 percent of the vote share, charged that there had been "multiple violations." He said, "We will take all legal measures to protest the official results of the voting and will press for this election to be declared invalid." But for his part, President Nazarbayev countered with an assertion that the results showed the people's desire to maintain the status quo. To this end, he noted, "We're talking not about revolutions but evolutions." He also said that Kazakhstan had voted in favor of calmness and stability.

International observers, such as the poll-monitoring body of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in Europe, said that the election failed to meet international democratic standards and were thusly characterized as "flawed." Ballot box stuffing, intimidation of the opposition, limits on political discourse, restrictions on campaigning, and media bias, were reported and effectively prevented meaningful competition, said the OSCE, although the group did note that there was some measurable improvement since the last elections. Despite those improvements, however, the OSCE described the actual election process as such: "The voting was generally calm and peaceful, but the process deteriorated during the count, which was viewed as bad or very bad in one out of four counts observed. Unauthorized persons interfering in polling stations, cases of multiple voting, ballot box stuffing and pressure on students to vote were observed during voting and during the count, observers saw tampering with result protocols and a wide range of procedural violations."

In early 2006, President Nursultan Nazarbayev was inaugurated into office for another term.

A month after Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev won re-election, opposition leader Galymzhan Zhakiyanov was released on parole after half of his seven-year sentence in prison. He served his sentence in a remote prison in the north -- an area that became associated with political exiles from Russia during the time of Stalin. Zhakiyanov has been regarded as one of the main voices of political opposition in Kazakhstan. As the founder of the Democratic Choice Party, he called for political reforms; however, he was arrested shortly after the party was created. He had served as a provincial governor and was found guilty of abuse of power while in office. Zhakiyanov and his supporters have claimed that those charges were politically motivated and spurred by a desire by President Nazarbayev to neutralize a possible political rival. Zhakiyanov's return was met with a gathering of supporters in the city of Almaty.

In February 2006, another opposition figure, Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly, was found in a car shot to death in the hills next to Almaty. His bodyguard and his driver were also apparently killed with him. It was the second death of an opposition figure under strange circumstances in several months and it left the normally-peaceful country in a state of shock. As noted above, Nurkadilov, another opposition politician, had been killed shortly ahead of the presidential elections.

A few weeks after Sarsenbaiul's murder, Interior Minister Baurzhan Mukhamedzhanov said that a senior parliamentary official was responsible for ordering the killing. He cited personal enmity, sparked by certain articles that had published in the media, as the motivation. As before, the opposition said that the apparent explanation was hardly the real or total story. They accused the government of placing the blame on one politician, using him as a scapegoat, while obfuscating the identities of those really responsible for orchestrating Sarsenbaiul's death.

At Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly's funeral, thousands of people were present to not only show their respect, but also protest his killing, which, as noted above, had left the Kazakh people in a state of shock. Mindful of the outraged public, the government said it would call on the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation to assist in the investigation of the matter.

By June 2006, when the trial into the murder of Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly commenced, his family was accusing the government of a massive cover-up. Ten people were put on trial including the parliamentary official who allegedly ordered the murder. In addition, five members of a special forces unit were arrested in connection with carrying out the murder.

In January 2007, Prime Minister Daniel Akhmetov resigned from office, effectively ending the tenure of the cabinet. No reason was issued for his resignation, which was accepted -- seemingly on positive terms -- by President Nazarbayev. Cabinet minister were expected to stay in office in a "caretaker" capacity until a new government could be formed.

At the helm of that interim government would be Deputy Prime Minister Karim Masimov. Kazakhstan's parliament soon approved Masimov as the new prime minister, who said that "continuity in the principle of government is one of the most important conditions of sustained economic and social development."

Meanwhile, Akhmetov was to take on the cabinet portfolio of the Ministry of Defense, and outgoing Economic Minister Aslan Musin was named as Deputy Prime Minister.

In May 2007, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev was presented with a political challenge by his son in law. Rakhat Aliyev, who was married to President Nazarbayev's eldest daughter, Dariga Nazarbayeva, had served as ambassador to Austria. The politician, who also made a name for himself as a businessman and media mogul, was sacked from that position on May 26, 2007 after accusing the president of being corrupt, participating in vote-rigging, and allowing the country's security services to function in an illegal manner. Aliyev also accused the Kazakh government of having not clear political direction, and suggested that he was better positioned to lead the country.

On the other side of the equation, President Nazarbayev issued a formal criminal investigation into claims that Aliyev orchestrated the kidnapping of two bankers. As well, the government closed

two media operations owned by Aliyev -- a television station and a newspaper.

Whether or not Aliyev's claims held credibility, the fact was that the dissonance within the president's family had now evolved into a political fracas. Despite Aliyev's claim that he wanted to advance Western-style democracy in Kazakhstan, many citizens appeared to believe that his motivation was more likely rooted in the desire to advance his own financial and political interests.

In the background of this power struggle was the fact that President Nazarbayev, who has been Kazakhstan's leader for close to two decades, consolidated his political power by changing the constitution, thus enabling him to contest the presidency without term limits. The move, however, did not include the same provision for future presidents, who would now be limited to two terms of five years instead of seven years. Other changes included increasing the number of seats in parliament from 116 to 154.

In June 2007, President Nazarbayev dissolved parliament and scheduled early elections for Aug. 18., 2007 -- ahead of the scheduled election date in 2009. The decision was announced at a meeting of the president's Nur-Otan party. Critics of the president said that the early election was intended to facilitate the aforementioned reforms, which also included the consolidation of his presidential power.

Later in June 2007, the daughter of President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was set to divorce her husband, Rakhat Aliyev, who was embroiled in the aforementioned political feud with her father. The decision by Dariga Nazarbayeva to divorce Rakhat Aliyev appeared to indicate her position in the unfolding personal and political drama.

August 2007 saw elections to the country's new parliament take place in Kazakhstan. Official results showed that President Nursultan Nazarbayev's Nur-Otan party won 88 percent of the vote share and all the seats in the legislative body.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) observed that while the election in Kazakhstan was a step along the path of greater representation and democracy, and while ballot casting at polling stations was conducted in a smooth and calm manner, the elections failed to meet international standards. Indeed, the OSCE drew attention to the lack of transparency in the vote count at more than 40 percent of polling stations. The OSCE also noted that the seven percent threshold required to win parliamentary representation was unnecessarily high, and worked to the advantage of the president's party.

Meanwhile, the opposition criticized the election for being unrepresentative of the will of the people. To that end, Burikhan Nurmukhamedov, a leader of the opposition Ak Zhol party, said, "The outcome absolutely does not reflect the actual alignment of political forces and the social support they draw."

The election results and assessment had consequences well beyond the domestic political sphere of Kazakhstan. To date, the country has never held an election that was certified to be free and fair by international standards. President Nazarbayev said that his country embraced democracy and expected that the parliamentary elections would shift perceptions in a positive direction. At stake was the fact that Kazakhstan was hoping to win its bid for the position of chairman of the OSCE in 2009 and, as such, was anticipating a positive OSCE report on the election process. The OSCE's overall assessment was not expected to be helpful in that regard.

In March 2008, President Nazarbayev's former son-in-law, Rakhat Aliyev, was at the forefront of the political landscape when he was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in absentia. His sentencing came in the aftermath of a trial, which ultimately reached the verdict that he was guilty of orchestrating a coup d'etat. The court found that Aliyev, along with 16 others, had been behind the training of elite forces, as well as the clandestine importation of military equipment, ultimately aimed at the overthrow of the government. It was the second sentence against Aliyev who, only two months earlier, was sentenced for 20 years for kidnapping and directing a criminal gang. For his part, Aliyev -- who was now living in exile in Austria -- has denied the charges, and characterized the case against him as being politically motivated. He was unlikely to actually face repercussions at home since Austria has denied an extradition request from the government of Kazakhstan.

In February 2009, foreign relations took center stage when Kazakhstan agreed to a request from the United States to permit the transfer of non-military cargo across Kazakh territory to fight the war against Islamic extremists in Afghanistan.

In April 2009, the focus was on the domestic scene as President Nazarbayev said his country was ready to construct a nuclear fuel bank, in keeping with a 2005 proposal by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The nuclear fuel bank would vitiate any need by other countries to develop their own fuel. Indeed, it could well preclude some of the newest -- and most controversial -- aspirants from having to develop their own national nuclear programs. The concept has found positive resonance both by the United States and Russia.

In June 2009, legislation was passed instituting increased control over internet communication. At issue was the law's provision that public forums, blogs and chat rooms were to be regarded as mass media, thus subjecting them to greater scrutiny and regulation. In effect, a blogger or forum poster could potentially be accused of breaking the law simply by expressing an opinion on the internet.

Later in the year, human rights was on the agenda with the case of a human rights activist, Yevgeny Zhovtis, who was convicted of manslaughter in a car accident case. Zhovtis lost a legal appeal in court prompting charges by human rights groups that Zhovtis had not received a fair trial.

At the close of the year, strategic energy politics constituted the focus of the landscape in Kazakhstan. Notably, France and Kazakhstan signed a collection of energy and business agreements, including a deal that would facilitate the transportation of French military supplies en route to Afghanistan where NATO troops have been fighting Islamic extremists. As well, China and Kazakhstan touted the opening of the Kazakh section of a natural gas pipeline linking China with Central Asia.

At the start of 2010, Kazakhstan gained the distinction of being the first former Soviet state to function as the chair of the the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), its own democratic and human rights credentials notwithstanding. That being said, in an effort to show seriousness of purpose, President Nazarbayev played a central role in negotiating the exit of deposed President Bakiyev in neighboring Kyrgyzstan from the scene of conflict, and in order to prevent destabilization of the region. Bakiyev.

Update

A year later in January 2011, as the North African country of Tunisia experienced political transformation ending the long-standing tenure of President Ben Ali in that country, Kazakhstan appeared to be taking a different path. In this Central Asian country, the Kazakh parliament approved amendments to the country's constitution, effectively paving the way for President Nursultan Nazarbaev's term in office to be extended to 2020. Much like Tunisian ousted President Ben Ali, Kazakh President Nazarbaev had been in power since the late 1980s. Again, akin to the case of Ben Ali, Nazarbaev was surrounded by a coterie of family and friends believed to benefit from nepotism and corruption. For now, though, Nazarbaev's power and authority was on track to be reified by the constitutional amendment, which would itself be ratified by referendum.

But in something of a reversal, as political unrest and the demand for democratic reform extended beyond Tunisia to other parts of the world, President Nazarbayev said on Jan. 31, 2011 that an early presidential election would be held instead of the referendum, which had been earlier proposed. In an address, President Nazarbayev said, "I am putting forward a proposal to hold an early presidential election, despite the fact that this will reduce my current term by nearly two years." He continued, "Based on the best interests of the country, I have decided not to hold a referendum." That referendum aimed to decide if Nazarbayev's presidency would be extended until 2020, as discussed just above. In conjunction with that announcement, Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council ruled out the proposed referendum on extending Nazarbayev's presidency until 2020, on the grounds that such a referendum would run counter to the country's constitution.

As noted here, these developments in Kazakhstan occurred as Egypt was immersed with anti-government protests, and as Egyptian citizens demanded that long-serving President Hosni Mubarak step down from power. Clearly, long-serving rulers with a reputation for autocracy were

at risk as the Tunisian winds of change spread not only across Northern Africa and the Arab world to Egypt, but as far as Kazakhstan where President Nazarbaev was now re-thinking his objective of expressly holding onto power without elections.

Domestic terrorism occurred on the political landscape in 2011. Notably, on Nov. 12, 2011, a suspected Islamic militant carried out an attack in the southern city of Taraz in Kazakhstan. The Islamic extremist opened fire killing two security forces and two civilians. As the assailant hijacked a car, he also killed two police officers who were in pursuit. The assailant ultimately died as he detonated explosives strapped to his body, killing a fifth police officer in that final action of violence. Several other police officers were injured as the Islamist -- described as "a follower of jihadism" -- carried out his rampage.

The incident shocked Kazakhs and raised the alarm in Taraz and across the country. Kazakhstan, like many former Soviet republics in Central Asia, has been home to moderate Muslim populations. Given this context, attacks of this sort have been rare. That being said, the country has seen a rise in bomb attacks in recent times. A month prior, two bombs were detonated in the western city of Atyrau, killing only the attacker. In that case, a previously unknown Islamist militant group, Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate), claimed responsibility. Earlier in the year, a suicide bomber attacked a regional security building in the northern city of Aktobe. In that case, there was a handful of injuries. No information was available on the likely assailants, although suspicion fell on either Islamic militants or syndicates of organized crime. Any such eruptions of militant-tinged violence are regarded as part of a disturbing trend in the region, as Islamic Jihadists spread their campaigns of terror across the globe.

Meanwhile, the early presidential election was set for April 3, 2011. In March 2011, a month ahead of the presidential election, Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission announced the conclusion of registration of presidential candidates, and the official start of the election campaign. Four candidates would be contesting the presidency: current Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev, Kazakhstan Communist People's Party Central Committee Secretary Zhambyl Ahmetbekov, Ecologist Mels Eleusizov, and Gani Kasimov, the leader of Kazakhstan Patriots Party.

On election day -- April 3, 2011 -- voter turnout was high, attracting close to 90 percent of the electorate, and registering increased participation from the previous election in 2005, where turnout was around 77 percent. Exit poll data from two polling outfits gave President Nazarbayev an overwhelming victory. Kazakhstan's Association of Sociologists and Politologists said that the incumbent president was on track to carry 95 percent of the vote, while the Institute of Democracy gave him 95.1 percent.

The veracity of the vote, given Nazarbayev's performance at the polls, would likely evoke debate as election monitors have decried elections in Kazakhstan as being far from free and fair in the past. That being said, President Nazarbayev's strong performance was clearly attributable in part to the fact that the Nur Otan party aligned with him carried out an effective and disciplined

campaign. While the president's rivals and the opposition factions complained that they had been given little time -- only a few months, as discussed above -- to prepare for the election, they were likely not helped by the fact that the opposition ranks in Kazakhstan were divided and failed to rally around a single candidate. Moreover, experts have noted that no one opposition candidate had the standing to wage a competitive race against President Nazarbayev, who has been in power for more than 20 years. In fact, in a bizarre development, it was reported that one of the president's own rivals contesting the presidency had voted for Nazarbayev. Ecologist candidate, Mels Yeleusizov, said: "I am sure that the current president will be the victor, so I am giving him my vote as well."

For his part, President Nazarbayev hailed his election victory as follows: "You don't win an election on election day, but much earlier, with your deeds, with all we have done these 20 years. This is the grade of the examination which we have passed."

Note that Kazakh President Nazarbayev on April 8, 2011 foreclosed the possibility of early parliamentary elections in the country. Elections to the lower house of parliament, or the Majilis, were scheduled to be held in 2012. The president could have chosen to dissolve parliament and call fresh elections, with an eye on speeding up political reforms. Clearly, that route was not to be taken and the elections would go forward in 2012.

In mid-November 2011, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev dissolved the lower chamber of parliament and called for early parliamentary elections to be held in January 2012. According to a presidential decree published on an official newspaper, the election from party lists would be held on Jan. 15, 2012, with other deputies to be chosen on Jan. 16, 2012 by a non-partisan consultative body loyal to Nazarbayev. The call for elections came when the lower chamber, dominated by Nazarbayev's ruling Nur Otan party, asked the president to dissolve the chamber in a move aimed at democratizing the political scene in the country. The dominance of the Nur Otan party has resulted in charges that Kazakhstan is a de facto "one party" state. The call for amendments to the electoral law, along with the holding of fresh elections, were collectively aimed at opening up the political process in the country.

Indeed, months earlier, as political unrest and the demand for democratic reform extended across the Arab world, President Nazarbayev championed the notion of an early presidential election, aimed at ratifying his grip on power -- and avoiding the same fate as the leaders of Tunisia and Egypt who had long served their countries along quasi-autocratic lines. He had initially called for a referendum to ratify an extension of his grip on power until 2020. But instead, the president opted for the more democratic path. At the time, President Nazarbayev said, "I am putting forward a proposal to hold an early presidential election, despite the fact that this will reduce my current term by nearly two years." He continued, "Based on the best interests of the country, I have decided not to hold a referendum." The parliamentary elections in 2012 -- especially if they went off in a more inclusive manner, with greater opposition participation -- would clearly be an extension of the semi-

democratizing thrust in Kazakhstan.

The parliament of Kazakhstan consists of the Senate and Majlis (National Assembly). At stake in these elections were the seats in the Mazhilis (107 seats; 9 out of the 107 Mazhilis members are elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, an appointed advisory body designed to represent the country's ethnic minorities; non-appointed members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms). Note that the election would be witnessed by international monitors.

Apart from the ruling Nur Otan party, led by President Nursultan Nazarbayev, the other parties contesting the election were the opposition Ak Zhol party, All National Social Democratic Party, Adilet party, Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan, Party of Patriots, and Auyl party. Despite the participation of these various parties, pre-election surveys showed that Nur Otan would likely hold onto power and retain its majority in the Majilis. The opposition Ak Zhol party, however, was expected to do well at the polls and gain representation in parliament.

In keeping with these predictions, once the votes were counted it was clear that Nur Otan was headed for a landslide victory, having secured over 80 percent of the vote share. It would, therefore, continue to dominate the lower house of parliament and would have control over about 83 seats in that body. That being said, Ak Zhol garnered 7.46 percent of the vote, and the Communist People's Party received 7.2 percent. Those two parties would also enter parliament, albeit with significantly less power given their lesser number of corresponding seats. Indeed, Ak Zhol and the Communists would control eight seats respectively.

Speaking of his party's election victory and his political mandate, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said, "The people of Kazakhstan have once again given carte blanche to the party; they voted for unity, national stability, further development and the programs I had proposed." Opposition parties, however, railed against the election results and continuing dominance of the ruling party.

Note that as of the start of 2014, Serik Akhmetov was serving as prime minister and head of government. But in April 2014, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev appointed his chief of staff, Karim Masimov, as his new prime minister. The president explained that he made the change in administration because he had concerns that the previous government, led by Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov, had not been proactive about implementing his plan to advance innovation and to develop small businesses. To this end, he said, "The first quarter of the year is already over, but unfortunately the government has not presented yet its clear vision of the work that needs to be done. It worries me deeply."

President Nursultan Nazarbayev thus said he made the appointment of Masimov with an eye on working cooperatively with global finance institutions and attracting foreign investment. Indeed, Masimov had the apparent credentials for the post having served as prime minister from 2007 to 2012, and navigating the country through the global financial crisis.

In August 2014, President Nursultan Nazarbayev moved to streamline the government of Kazakhstan. Included in the plan was a reduction in the total number of cabinet ministries from 17 to 12, as well as the consolidation of energy sector functions into a "grand" Energy Ministry, which would also have control over energy protection. President Nazarbaev said that it was "time to concentrate the entire energy sector in the hands of one person" and promptly named his ally and stalwart, Vladimir Shkolnik, as that "one person." In addition, the Ministries of Industry and New Technologies, Transportation and Communications, Communications and Informatics, and the National Space Agency were to be merged into another large entity -- the Ministry of Investments and Development. Aset Isekeshiev, the former minister of the now-defunct Ministry of Industry and New Technologies would head the consolidated was named to head the new Ministry of Investments and Development. Other changes included -- but were not limited to - the dissolution of the Financial Police, with its functions moved to the agency responsible for anticorruption efforts, while the ministry responsible for emergency situations transferring its duties to the Interior Ministry.

Foreign Relations/Global Security Note

In the last week of February 2015, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in United States arrested and charged three foreign nationals with conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. According to the criminal complaint, the three men sought to join the notorious terror group, Islamic State. The criminal complaint also alleged that the three men had determined that if they were unable to travel to Syria to join Islamic State, they would shift their focus and carry out attacks in the United States, including the attempted assassination of President Barack Obama.

The men -- Abdurasul Juraboev and Abror Habibov of Uzbekistan, and Akhror Saidakhmetov of Kazakhstan, came to the attention of federal authorities due to their postings on a Uzbek language website. Federal agents said that Juraboev purchased an airplane ticket to travel from New York to Istanbul, presumably with the intent of traveling on to Syria where he intended to join Islamic State. But Juraboev was also accused of conspiring to carry out the possible assassination of the United States leader, as illustrated by his posting to an Uzbek-language website, which read as follows: "I am in USA now but we don't have any arms. But is it possible to commit ourselves as dedicated martyrs anyway while here? What I'm saying is, to shoot Obama and then get shot ourselves, will it do? That will strike fear in the hearts of infidels." Meanwhile, Saidakhmetov was likewise accused of intending to join the notorious terror group, while also plotting attacks on the United States homeland. In a conversation with an informant, Saidakhmetov was reported to have said, "We will go and purchase one handgun ... then go and shoot one police officer. Boom ... Then we will go the FBI headquarters, kill the FBI People." Saidakhmetov was arrested at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York as he tried to board a flight bound for Turkey, allegedly en route to Syria where he would join Islamic State. The charges against Habibov

involved providing material assistance to Saidakhmeto.

Each of the three defendants, if convicted, faced a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. In her announcement of the arrests, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Loretta Lynch, warned that the threat of foreign nationals posing a threat to the United States and its allies was a growing one. Lynch, who was President Obama's nominee to replace outgoing Eric Holder as the United States new attorney general, said, "The flow of foreign fighters to Syria represents an evolving threat to our country and to our allies."

Primer on 2015 presidential election in Kazakhstan

An early presidential election was set to be held in Kazakhstan on April 26, 2015. The next presidential election was actually scheduled to be held in 2016; however, the country's president, long-serving Nursultan Nazarbaev, announced in February 2015 that the vote would be brought forward one year and now be held in April 2015. In a national address, Nazarbayev declared, "In the interests of [our] people ... and to fulfil the demands of the law, I took a decision and, in line with paragraph 3.1 of the national Constitution's Article 41, signed a decree to set the early presidential election for April 26." Nazarbaev continued by noting that the Kazakh people would be supportive of the move to hold an early election, in the interests of political stability, as he said, "People understand that we need to strengthen stability and unity in our society." Nazarbaev's candidacy for the presidency, as the nominee of Kazakhstan's ruling Nur Otan party, would be formalized in March 2016 -- a month ahead of the election, which was ultimately expected to extend the incumbent president's rule.

Background --

President Nazarbaev was elected chairman of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet or Supreme Kenges in 1990; he was elected as president for a five-year term by universal suffrage in December 1991; he was re-elected in 1999 for a seven-year term. His was extended to 2000 via a nationwide referendum. Thus, the 1999 presidential election was held pre-term. He was again re-elected in 2005.

President Nazarbaev has extensive authority: Only he can initiate constitutional amendments, appoint and dismiss the government, dissolve parliament, call referenda at his discretion, and appoint administrative heads of regions and cities. In 2007, presidential power of President Nazarbayev was consolidated by changing the constitution so that he could contest the presidency without term limits. The move, however, did not include the same provision for future presidents, who would now be limited to two terms of five years instead of seven years.

In early 2011, the Kazakh parliament approved amendments to the country's constitution,

effectively paving the way for President Nursultan Nazarbaev's term in office to be extended to 2020. But in something of a reversal, as political unrest and the demand for democratic reform extended beyond Tunisia to other parts of the world, President Nazarbayev said on Jan. 31, 2011 that an early presidential election would be held instead of the referendum, which had been earlier proposed. In an address, President Nazarbayev said, "I am putting forward a proposal to hold an early presidential election, despite the fact that this will reduce my current term by nearly two years." He continued, "Based on the best interests of the country, I have decided not to hold a referendum."

That referendum aimed to decide if Nazarbayev's presidency would be extended until 2020, as discussed just above. In conjunction with that announcement, Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council ruled out the proposed referendum on extending Nazarbayev's presidency until 2020, on the grounds that such a referendum would run counter to the country's constitution. Now, all eyes were on April 2011 when a presidential election would be held.

In that early presidential election, which took place in April 2011, voter turnout was high, attracting close to 90 percent of the electorate. The election result gave President Nazarbayev an overwhelming victory with around 95 percent of the vote share.

The veracity of the vote, given Nazarbayev's performance at the polls, evoked debate as election monitors have decried elections in Kazakhstan as being far from free and fair in the past, and certainly not a competitive contest. That being said, President Nazarbayev's strong performance in 2011 was clearly attributable, in part, to the fact that the ruling Nur Otan party carried out an effective and disciplined campaign. The president's rivals and the opposition factions were not helped by the fact that the opposition ranks in Kazakhstan were divided and failed to rally around a single candidate. Moreover, experts have noted that no one opposition candidate had the standing to wage a competitive race against President Nazarbayev, who has been in power for more than 20 years.

The 2015 polls --

All expectations were that the 2015 contest would end in a similarly favorable manner for President Nazarbaev, who has been known at home as "Papa."

It should be noted that irrespective of questions about the president's lock on power, investors were applauding this likely result due to their desire to see continued stability in Kazakhstan. Seizing upon this economic reality, and issuing no illusions about his quasi-autocratic grip, the president's campaign motto has been "A strong state and economy come first."

On election day on April 26, 2015, the voters of Kazakhstan went to the polls to cast their ballots. The president's rivals in the 2015 contest included Turgun Syzdykov, the candidate of the

Communist Party, and Abelgazi Kusainov, an independent; neither contender was expected to pose a credible threat to Nazarbaev. For his part, the president expressed confidence that voters would reward him with another term in office. As he went to cast his own ballot, he was quoted as saying, "I am confident ... Kazakhstanis will vote for stability in our state, to support the policy which the country has so far been following under my leadership." As expected, after the ballots were counted, it was President Nazarbaev who claimed victory with an overwhelming 97.5 percent of the vote share.

While Western critics might well regard that result as grounds for questions of election rigging, the fact of the matter was that President Nazarbaev likely did not have to resort to such tactics. With most of his serious political rivals jailed, exiled, or killed under suspicious circumstances, challenges to President Nazarbaev's firm grasp on power were to be regarded as perfunctory. Indeed, the other presidential contenders in this 2015 contest were not being taken seriously.

Of course, President Nazarbaev's own popularity in a country that appeared to embrace autocratic strongman leadership could not be ignored. An Ipsos-MORI poll taken just before the 2015 election that showed that 91 percent of Kazakhstan's citizens were satisfied with Nazarbaev's rule. The fact of the matter was that despite the uncompetitive nature of the election, there were long lines of voters willing to ratify President Nazarbaev's leadership and his position as the "Leader of the Nation."

Primer on 2016 parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan

Parliamentary elections to Kazakhstan's lower house was scheduled to take place on March 20, 2016. At stake would be the composition of the Majlis (National Assembly), which was composed of 107 seats. Note that nine of the 107 Mazhilis members are elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, a presidentially appointed advisory body designed to represent the country's ethnic minorities; non-appointed members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms. With the previous elections being held in 2012, these 2016 elections were actually being held ahead of schedule and appeared geared at ensuring the government retained its strong legitimacy as the economy suffered due to the price of oil. Once the voters went to the polls and the ballots were counted, it was clear that long-serving President Nursultan Nazarbaev's Nur Otan party had won more than 82 percent of the vote share, effectively retaining its strong hold on parliament. Five days later, there was an internal vote in parliament ratifying the government of Prime Minister Karim Masimov.

-- April 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Political Risk Index

Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment

Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	3.5
Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8

Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9

China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5

Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4
Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8

Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8
Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3
Ireland	8-8.5
Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9

Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6
Liberia	3.5
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9

Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5
Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5
Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7

Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5
Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6.5-7
Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5

Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5
Seychelles	7
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8

Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6.5
Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6

Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The [Political Risk Index](#) is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the

combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)
2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)
3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)
4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)
5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)
6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)
7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)
8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)
9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)
10. corruption (the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), [Libya](#), [Syria](#), [Iraq](#) and [Yemen](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected [Syria](#) where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory. [Iraq](#) has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. [Libya](#) has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; an issue in [Libya](#) have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. [Yemen](#) continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels, secessionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between [Iran](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#). Conversely, [Tunisia](#) and [Egypt](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, [Zimbabwe](#) continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring [Zimbabwe](#) with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. [Somalia](#) also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in [Kenya](#). On the upside, [Nigeria](#), which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. [South Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Burkina Faso](#), [Burundi](#) and [Guinea](#) have been downgraded due to political unrest, with [Guinea](#) also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as [Serbia](#), [Croatia](#), and [Hungary](#), due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, [Singapore](#) retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have affected the rankings for [Mexico](#), [Guatemala](#), and [Brazil](#). [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the [United States](#) maintains a strong ranking along with [Canada](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the [United States](#) to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Political Stability

Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The [Political Stability Index](#) is calculated using an established methodology* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government

and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7
Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6

Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5
Brazil	7
Brunei	8
Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6

Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5
Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5

Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7
East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4
Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5

Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6
Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4
Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6
Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9
India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5

Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8
Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2
Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5
Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5

Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8
Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5

Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5
Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6

Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9
Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9
Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5
Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5

Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6

Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	8.5
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5

Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power (free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)
2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability
3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights
4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance
5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")
6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection
7. level of unchecked crime and corruption
8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security
9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation
10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically --

has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, [Afghanistan](#), and [Somalia](#) -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both [Afghanistan](#) and [Somalia](#) continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In [Afghanistan](#), while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In [Somalia](#), while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in [Somalia](#), but across the border into [Kenya](#) with devastating results/ Also in this category is [Iraq](#), which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, [Libya](#), and [Yemen](#) have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. [Syria](#) has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddhafi landscape of [Libya](#) has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is [Yemen](#), which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secessionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a [Iran](#) and Sunni [Saudi Arabia](#).

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](#), the landscape had calmed. In [Egypt](#), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia](#) -- the country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](#), [Egypt](#), and [Bahrain](#) have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe](#) has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the

dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](#), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali](#) was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso](#) and [Burundi](#) as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](#), an attempted coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](#), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan](#) -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea](#) has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola heath crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine](#) was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia](#) was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. [Serbia](#) and [Albania](#) were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while [Romania](#) was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#) were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. [Greece](#), another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, [Greece](#) was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, [Germany](#), [France](#), [Switzerland](#), the [United Kingdom](#), the [Netherlands](#), and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, [Nepal](#) was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. [Cambodia](#) was very slightly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government

remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and China retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in [Pakistan](#) resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, [Haiti](#) retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. [Mexico](#) was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. [Guatemala](#) was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. [Brazil](#) was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. [Argentina](#) was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. [Venezuela](#) was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. [Colombia](#) was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States. Meanwhile, the [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Costa Rica](#), [Panama](#), and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, [Fiji](#) was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, [Maldives](#) has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Freedom Rankings

Freedom Rankings

Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR" and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	
Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	
Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	
Argentina*	2	2	Free	
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	
Australia*	1	1	Free	
Austria*	1	1	Free	

Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free
Bahamas*	1	1	Free
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free
Barbados*	1	1	Free
Belarus	7	6	Not Free
Belgium*	1	1	Free
Belize*	1	2	Free
Benin*	2	2	Free
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free
Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free
Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free
Brazil*	2	2	Free
Brunei	6	5	Not Free
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free
Burma	7	7	Not Free

Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	↑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	
Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	↓
Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	↓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	
Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	

Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	
Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	↓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	
Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	
Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	↓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	
Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	

Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	
Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	
Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	
Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	
Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	↓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	

Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	
Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	↓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	
Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	
Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	
Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	

Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	↑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	↓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	
Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	
Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	
Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	↑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	

Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	↓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	↓
North Korea	7	7	Not Free	↓
Norway*	1	1	Free	
Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	
Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	

Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	↓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	↓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	
Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	
San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	
Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	

Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	↓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	
Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	
Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	
Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	
Switzerland*	1	1	Free	↓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	

Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	
Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	↓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	
Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	
United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	
Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	

Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	↓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.

↑ ↓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.

Available at URL: <http://www.freedomhouse.org>

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

Human Rights

Overview of Human Rights in Kazakhstan

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a multiparty democracy but is essentially ruled by one party,

President Nursltan Nazarbaev's Otan Party. The government's human rights record is marred by several serious violations. In the past year, legislation has been enacted, which has expanded the authority of the executive branch and eroded legal protections for human rights. Members of the security forces routinely torture, beat and otherwise mistreat detainees and prisoners. Arbitrary arrest and detention, especially of political dissidents or political opponents, are problems. Prison conditions are harsh and extremely unhealthy. The judiciary is not independent of the rest of the government and therefore it is virtually impossible for those who dissent against the government to receive a fair trial. The government infringes on the privacy of citizens, and new legislation grants prosecutors the authority to monitor individuals. Those who are not ethnically Kazakh are discriminated against both by the government and society as a whole. Freedoms of the press, religion, assembly, and association are also limited arbitrarily by the government. Discrimination against people with disabilities and children is widespread, as is human trafficking.

In June 2009, media freedom was a focus issue when legislation was passed instituting increased control over internet communication. At issue was the law's provision that public forums, blogs and chat rooms were to be regarded as mass media, thus subjecting them to greater scrutiny and regulation. In effect, a blogger or forum poster could potentially be accused of breaking the law simply by expressing an opinion on the internet. Later in the year, human rights was on the agenda with the case of a human rights activist, Yevgeny Zhovtis, who was convicted of manslaughter in a car accident case. Zhovtis lost a legal appeal in court prompting charges by human rights groups that Zhovtis had not received a fair trial.

Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

See Social Overview in Country Review for full list.

Human Poverty Index Rank:

Not Ranked

Gini Index:

31.5

Life Expectancy at Birth (years):

68.5 years

Unemployment Rate:

7.6%

Population living on \$1 a day (%):

N/A

Population living on \$2 a day (%):

N/A

Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):

19%

Internally Displaced People:

N/A

Note-16,000 refugees

Total Crime Rate (%):

N/A

Health Expenditure (% of GDP):

Public: 1.9%

% of GDP Spent on Education:

3.0%

Human Rights Conventions Party to:

- International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Signed but not yet ratified)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Conventions on the Rights of the Child
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

*Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life-expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the United Nation's Human Development Report since 1993.

*Human Poverty Index Ranking is based on certain indicators used to calculate the Human Poverty Index. Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, adult literacy rate, population without sustainable access to an improved water source, and population below income poverty line are the indicators assessed in this measure.

*The Gini Index measures inequality based on the distribution of family income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality (income being distributed equally), and a value of 100 perfect inequality (income all going to one individual).

*The calculation of the total crime rate is the % of the total population which has been effected by property crime, robbery, sexual assault, assault, or bribery (corruption) related occurrences.

Government Functions

Constitution

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a constitutional republic. The first post-independence constitution was adopted in January 1993; a new constitution was adopted by national referendum in August 1995. This constitutional republic has an ever-stronger presidency, with remaining power divided among executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Executive Authority

The president is the head of state. The prime minister, ministers, and heads of state committees are appointed and may be dismissed individually or collectively by the president. The president also appoints the following:

- three of the seven members of the Constitutional Council
- seven of the members of the Senate, the upper house of parliament

- the heads of local government units in the oblasts and major cities
- all diplomatic representatives of the state
- the highest commanding officers of the armed forces
- the chairperson of the State Budget Committee

With the consent of both houses of parliament, the president also appoints the head of the National Bank and with the Senate, the Procurator General and the chairperson of the National Security Committee.

The president is authorized to prioritize draft laws for consideration by parliament and, once adopted, to either sign them into effect or to exercise power to veto them. In order to override a presidential veto, both houses of parliament must generate a vote of at least two thirds of all members. The parliament may delegate its legislative powers to the president for a period of up to one year. The president, moreover, may dissolve parliament in the following cases:

- when insurmountable differences arise between the houses of parliament or between parliament and another branch of state power, giving rise to a political crisis, and
- when parliament votes no confidence in the government or twice refuses to give its consent to the appointment of a prime minister.

Finally, the president may call national referenda and adopt decrees and resolutions implementing legislation.

Note: In 2007, presidential power of President Nazarbayev was consolidated by changing the constitution so that he could contest the presidency without term limits. The move, however, did not include the same provision for future presidents, who would now be limited to two terms of five years instead of seven years. In 2010, the Kazakh parliament approved amendments to the country's constitution, effectively paving the way for President Nursultan Nazarbaev's term in office to be extended to 2020. But in something of a reversal, Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council ruled out the proposed referendum on extending Nazarbayev's presidency until 2020, on the grounds that such a referendum would run counter to the country's constitution.

Legislative Authority

Kazakhstan has a bicameral parliament, comprised of a lower house (the *Majlis* or national assembly) and an upper house (the Senate). Prior to the constitutional amendments proposed by

President Nazarbayev in September 1998 and enacted by parliament in October 1998, both the Senate and the *Majlis* were elected for four-year terms. Currently, each house is elected for a six-year term.

Of the 47 members of the Senate, seven members are appointed by the president, while other members are elected by local assemblies to serve six-year terms.

The lower house has 107 seats. Nine out of the 107 *Mazhilis* members are elected from the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, which represents the country's ethnic minorities; members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms).

To win office, candidates must receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast. If no candidate receives more than 50 percent in the first round election, a second round is held between the top two finishers. In the runoff, the candidate who receives the most votes wins. In the first round, even unopposed candidates must receive more than 50 percent of the votes cast to win seats. To win proportional representation seats, a party must receive at least seven percent of the total votes cast.

Judicial Authority

Judicial power in Kazakhstan is exercised within the framework of a unitary court system divided into three tiers. The Supreme Court is a court of general appellate jurisdiction (and, in certain contexts, a court of original jurisdiction) with power to review all judicial decisions rendered by lower courts including those of the military courts. The Supreme Court, however, is divided into specialized collegiums with one collegium reviewing cases in each of the following four areas: economic, civil, criminal, and military. The Supreme Court also may issue normative resolutions based upon court practice. These normative resolutions form binding precedents for courts subsequently considering similar cases and as such, form part of the corpus of active law of Kazakhstan.

At the next tier below the Supreme Court are the oblast courts, the Almaty City Court and the Military Court of Troops. The Oblast and Almaty city courts are courts of general jurisdiction, which may function as courts of original or appellate jurisdiction, depending upon the gravity or importance of a case assessed according to rules of civil and criminal procedure. Like the Supreme Court, the Oblast courts are specialized into collegiums. The oblast courts, moreover, exercise powers of appellate review over the decisions of district courts. Unlike the Supreme and Oblast courts, the district courts are exclusively courts of general and original jurisdiction and are not organized into specialized collegiums. Finally, the Military courts are courts of original and specialized jurisdiction.

While Kazakhstan does not have a Constitutional Court, per se, cases before the courts which give rise to questions challenging the constitutionality of laws or sub-law acts and which appear to infringe the rights or liberties of individuals are suspended and reviewed by the constitutional council. The constitutional council may declare the law or sub-law act unconstitutional, rendering that law or sub-law act without legal force and issue normative resolutions that then have the force of law.

Administrative Divisions

Kazakhstan is divided into 14 oblasts (regions) and the territories of Almaty and Astana, each of which is headed by a provincial governor (*akim*) appointed by the president. There are also city and village governments. The devolution of governmental authority from central to sub-central units occurs at several tiers from national to oblast levels, and then to the district level, with the city of Almaty occupying the status of oblast, and other major cities the status of districts. Local governmental power is divided between representative bodies called *maslikhats* and local executives called *akims*. Each oblast (including the city of Almaty) has an *akim* (appointed by the president) and a *maslikhat*. Each major city has an *akim* appointed by an oblast *akim*. The deputies of *maslikhats* are elected for four-year terms on the basis of universal and equal suffrage.

Government Structure

Names:

conventional long form:

Republic of Kazakhstan

conventional short form:

Kazakhstan

local long form:

Qazaqstan Respublikasy

local short form:

Qazaqstan

former:

Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic

Type:

Republic with strong presidential power

Executive Branch:

Head of State:

President Nursultan A. NAZARBAYEV (chairman of the Supreme Soviet from 1990; president since 1991)

Primer on presidential election in Kazakhstan

(April 26, 2015)

An early presidential election was set to be held in Kazakhstan on April 26, 2015. The next presidential election was actually scheduled to be held in 2016; however, the country's president, long-serving Nursultan Nazarbaev, announced in February 2015 that the vote would be brought forward one year and now be held in April 2015. In a national address, Nazarbayev declared, "In the interests of [our] people ... and to fulfil the demands of the law, I took a decision and, in line with paragraph 3.1 of the national Constitution's Article 41, signed a decree to set the early presidential election for April 26." Nazarbaev continued by noting that the Kazakh people would be supportive of the move to hold an early election, in the interests of political stability, as he said, "People understand that we need to strengthen stability and unity in our society." Nazarbaev's candidacy for the presidency, as the nominee of Kazakhstan's ruling Nur Otan party, would be formalized in March 2016 -- a month ahead of the election, which was ultimately expected to extend the incumbent president's rule.

Background --

President Nazarbaev was elected chairman of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet or Supreme Kenges in 1990; he was elected as president for a five-year term by universal suffrage in December 1991; he was re-elected in 1999 for a seven-year term. His was extended to 2000 via a nationwide referendum. Thus, the 1999 presidential election was held pre-term. He was again re-elected in 2005.

President Nazarbaev has extensive authority: Only he can initiate constitutional amendments, appoint and dismiss the government, dissolve parliament, call referenda at his discretion, and appoint administrative heads of regions and cities. In 2007, presidential power of President Nazarbayev was consolidated by changing the constitution so that he could contest the presidency without term limits. The move, however, did not include the same provision for future presidents, who would now be limited to two terms of five years instead of seven years.

In early 2011, the Kazakh parliament approved amendments to the country's constitution, effectively paving the way for President Nursultan Nazarbaev's term in office to be extended to

2020. But in something of a reversal, as political unrest and the demand for democratic reform extended beyond Tunisia to other parts of the world, President Nazarbayev said on Jan. 31, 2011 that an early presidential election would be held instead of the referendum, which had been earlier proposed. In an address, President Nazarbayev said, "I am putting forward a proposal to hold an early presidential election, despite the fact that this will reduce my current term by nearly two years." He continued, "Based on the best interests of the country, I have decided not to hold a referendum."

That referendum aimed to decide if Nazarbayev's presidency would be extended until 2020, as discussed just above. In conjunction with that announcement, Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council ruled out the proposed referendum on extending Nazarbayev's presidency until 2020, on the grounds that such a referendum would run counter to the country's constitution. Now, all eyes were on April 2011 when a presidential election would be held.

In that early presidential election, which took place in April 2011, voter turnout was high, attracting close to 90 percent of the electorate. The election result gave President Nazarbayev an overwhelming victory with around 95 percent of the vote share.

The veracity of the vote, given Nazarbayev's performance at the polls, evoked debate as election monitors have decried elections in Kazakhstan as being far from free and fair in the past, and certainly not a competitive contest. That being said, President Nazarbayev's strong performance in 2011 was clearly attributable, in part, to the fact that the ruling Nur Otan party carried out an effective and disciplined campaign. The president's rivals and the opposition factions were not helped by the fact that the opposition ranks in Kazakhstan were divided and failed to rally around a single candidate. Moreover, experts have noted that no one opposition candidate had the standing to wage a competitive race against President Nazarbayev, who has been in power for more than 20 years.

The 2015 polls --

All expectations were that the 2015 contest would end in a similarly favorable manner for President Nazarbaev, who has been known at home as "Papa."

It should be noted that irrespective of questions about the president's lock on power, investors were applauding this likely result due to their desire to see continued stability in Kazakhstan. Seizing upon this economic reality, and issuing no illusions about his quasi-autocratic grip, the president's campaign motto has been "A strong state and economy come first."

On election day on April 26, 2015, the voters of Kazakhstan went to the polls to cast their ballots. The president's rivals in the 2015 contest included Turgun Syzdykov, the candidate of the Communist Party, and Abulgazi Kusainov, an independent; neither contender was expected to

pose a credible threat to Nazarbaev. For his part, the president expressed confidence that voters would reward him with another term in office. As he went to cast his own ballot, he was quoted as saying, "I am confident ... Kazakhstanis will vote for stability in our state, to support the policy which the country has so far been following under my leadership." As expected, after the ballots were counted, it was President Nazarbaev who claimed victory with an overwhelming 97.5 percent of the vote share.

While Western critics might well regard that result as grounds for questions of election rigging, the fact of the matter was that President Nazarbaev likely did not have to resort to such tactics. With most of his serious political rivals jailed, exiled, or killed under suspicious circumstances, challenges to President Nazarbaev's firm grasp on power were to be regarded as perfunctory. Indeed, the other presidential contenders in this 2015 contest were not being taken seriously.

Of course, President Nazarbaev's own popularity in a country that appeared to embrace autocratic strongman leadership could not be ignored. An Ipsos-MORI poll taken just before the 2015 election that showed that 91 percent of Kazakhstan's citizens were satisfied with Nazarbaev's rule. The fact of the matter was that despite the uncompetitive nature of the election, there were long lines of voters willing to ratify President Nazarbaev's leadership and his position as the "Leader of the Nation."

Cabinet:

Council of Ministers; appointed by the president

Legislative Branch:

Bicameral Parliament (Parliament):

Consists of the Senate and Majlis (National Assembly); Senate (47 seats; 15 members are appointed by the president; other members are elected by local assemblies; members serve six-year terms, but elections are staggered with half of the members up for re-election every three years) and the Mazhilis (107 seats; 9 out of the 107 Mazhilis members are elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, a presidentially appointed advisory body designed to represent the country's ethnic minorities; non-appointed members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms)

Note on Senate:

Indirect elections last held in August 2011

Senate Election Results:

percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - Nur Otan 16;

Primer on Elections to Majlis (National Assembly):

Parliamentary elections to Kazakhstan's lower house was scheduled to take place on March 20,

2016. At stake would be the composition of the Majlis (National Assembly), which was composed of 107 seats. Note that nine of the 107 Mazhilis members are elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, a presidentially appointed advisory body designed to represent the country's ethnic minorities; non-appointed members are popularly elected to serve five-year terms. With the previous elections being held in 2012, these 2016 elections were actually being held ahead of schedule and appeared geared at ensuring the government retained its strong legitimacy as the economy suffered due to the price of oil. Once the voters went to the polls and the ballots were counted, it was clear that long-serving President Nursultan Nazarbaev's Nur Otan party had won more than 82 percent of the vote share, effectively retaining its strong hold on parliament. Five days later, there was an internal vote in parliament ratifying the government of Prime Minister Karim Masimov.

Judicial Branch:

Supreme Court (44 members); Constitutional Council (7 members)

Constitution:

First post-independence constitution adopted January 28, 1993; new constitution adopted by national referendum August 30, 1995

Legal System:

Based on civil law system

Administrative Divisions:

14 provinces (oblystar, singular - oblysy) and 3 cities* (qala, singular - qalasy); Almaty Oblysy, Almaty Qalasy*, Aqmola Oblysy (Astana), Aqtobe Oblysy, Astana Qalasy*, Atyrau Oblysy, Batys Qazaqstan Oblysy (Oral), Bayqongyr Qalasy*, Mangghystau Oblysy (Aqtau), Ongtustik Qazaqstan Oblysy (Shymkent), Pavlodar Oblysy, Qaraghandy Oblysy, Qostanay Oblysy, Qyzylorda Oblysy, Shyghys Qazaqstan Oblysy (Oskemen), Soltustik Qazaqstan Oblysy (Petropavlovsk), Zhambyl Oblysy (Taraz)

Note:

administrative divisions have the same names as their administrative centers (exceptions have the administrative center name following in parentheses); in 1995, the Governments of Kazakhstan and Russia entered into an agreement whereby Russia would lease for a period of 20 years an area of 6,000 sq km enclosing the Baykonur space launch facilities and the city of Bayqongyr (Baykonur, formerly Leninsk); in 2004, a new agreement extended the lease to 2050

Political Parties:

Adil-Soz [Tamara KALEYEVA]

Confederation of Free Trade Unions [Larissa KHARKOVA]

Foundation for Support of Civil Initiatives [Nurul RAKHIMBEK]

International Legal Initiative [Aina SHORMANBAYEVA]

Kazakhstan International Bureau on Human Rights [Yevgeniy ZHOVTIS, Chairman of Bureau's Council, Roza AKYLBEKOVA, director]

Legal Media Centre (sometimes known as the North Kazakhstan Legal Media Centre) [Diana OKREMOVA]

Public Foundation for Parliamentary Development [Zauresh BATTALOVA]

Republican Network of International Monitors [Daniyar LIVAZOV]

Transparency International [Sergey ZLOTNIKOV]

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Principal Government Officials

Leadership and Cabinet of Kazakhstan

Executive Branch:

Head of State:

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Cabinet:

Council of Ministers; appointed by the president

Pres.

Nursultan NAZARBAYEV

Prime Min.

Karim MASIMOV

First Dep. Prime Min.

Bakytzhan SAGINTAYEV

Dep. Prime Min.

Dariga NAZARBAYEVA

Min. of Agriculture

Asylzhan MAMYTBEKOV

Min. of Civil Service Affairs

Talgat DONAKOV

Min. of Culture

Arystanbek MUKHAMEDIULY

Min. of Defense

Imangali TASMAGAMBETOV

Min. of Economic Integration

Zhanar AYTZHANOVA

Min. of Education & Science

Aslan SARINZHIPOV

Min. of Energy

Vladimir SHKOLNIK

Min. of Finance

Bakhyt SULTANOV

Min. of Foreign Affairs

Yerlan IDRISOV

Min. of Health & Social Development

Tamara DUYSENOVA

Min. of Internal Affairs

Kalmukhanbet KASYMOV

Min. of Investment & Development

Aset ISEKESHEV

Min. of Justice

Berik IMASHEV

Min. of National Economy
Yerbolat DOSAYEV
Sec., Security Council
Nurlan YERMEKBAYEV
Chmn., Ctte. for National Security (KNB)
Vladimir ZHUMAKANOV
Prosecutor Gen.
Askhat DAULBAYEV
Chmn., National Bank
Daniyar AKISHEV
Ambassador to the US
Kayrat UMAROV
Permanent Representative to the UN, New York
Kayrat ABDRAKHMANOV

-- as of 2016

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

Biography of President

Name: Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev

Date of Birth: July 6, 1940

Place of Birth: Chemolgan, Kazakhstan

Civil Status: Married

Children: Three children

Education

Educated Higher Technical Course at Karaganda Metallurgical Combine
Higher Party School of Central Committee

Key Positions

1969-1984 Secretary, Temirtau City Committee of Kazakh Communist Party

1973-1977 Secretary, Party committee of Karaganda Metallurgical Combine

1977-1979 Second, then First Secretary, Karaganda District Committee of Kazakh Communist Party

1979-1984 Secretary, Central Committee of Kazakh Communist Party

1984-1989 Chairman, Council of Ministers of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic

1989-1990 Chairman, Kazakh Supreme Soviet

1989-1990 U.S.S.R. People's Deputy

1989-1991 First Secretary, Central Committee of Kazakh Communist Party

1990-1991 President, Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic

1991-Present President of Kazakhstan

1993-Present Head of the People's Unity Party (PUP)

Foreign Relations

General Relations

Kazakhstan has stable relationships with all of its neighbors. Kazakhstan is a member of the United Nations, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and North Atlantic Cooperation Council, and will serve as chairman in office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010. It also is an active participant in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Partnership for Peace program. Kazakhstan also is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization along with Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan established the Eurasian Economic Community in 2000 to re-energize earlier efforts at harmonizing

trade tariffs and the creation of a free trade zone under a customs union. Kazakhstan is the founding member of the Conference for Interaction and Confidence in Asia. Kazakhstan also engages in regional security dialogue with ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). At the start of 2010, Kazakhstan gained the distinction of being the first former Soviet state to function as the chair of the the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Regional Relations

As a founding member of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the customs union with Belarus and Russia, Kazakhstan has close relations with its former Soviet republic neighbors.

Central Asia

At a meeting of the representatives of the Central Asian Economic Association, held June 8, 2000, in the Kazakh capital of Astana, delegates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan adopted a plan for the integrated development of the Central Asian Economic Association until 2005 and the establishment of a single economic space. The plan calls for the coordination of the four countries' custom laws. According to reports from the region, it is expected that efforts will be undertaken to prevent illegal financial operations, to cooperate in the fight against economic crimes as well as to draw up intergovernmental documents on the use of water and energy resources.

President Nazarbayev observed that five years have passed since the group began cooperating within the Central Asian economic space. While it is not yet a union, he said, establishing a union is the group's goal. In the course of the five years the group adopted 150 documents at the level of heads of state, governments and ministries. The heads of state have signed 68 of them and some 90 percent of these documents have been put into effect. A free trade regime has been introduced among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan and, with some exceptions, Uzbekistan Energy exploration and consumption; natural resources, security and drug trafficking are key elements of regional negotiations and relations. "Today, curbing terrorism and drug dealing is one of the most important tasks facing the Central Asian region," Kazakh Prime Minister Kasymzhomart Tokayev said following the regional meeting. Tokayev said the documents adopted reflect the region's positions on cooperating in the fight against the spread of extremism, terrorism and drug dealing. He pointed out that it was not only Central Asian nations who were paying attention to the issue of combating terrorism and extremism but also states which "play an important role in the region."

The presidents of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Islam Karimov exchanged views on measures to fight international terrorism and religious extremism.

Economic Cooperation Organization

Another, this one larger, regional organization is the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), which consists of these states: Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. ECO's principal purpose is economic cooperation. Other issues include communication and humanitarian cooperation.

Concerns Over Afghanistan and The Threat of Terrorism

Events in Afghanistan have been another source of concern for the region. Before the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (U.S.), the governments of the four countries addressed the United Nations Security Council, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in which they expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of attention from the international community, particularly the United Nations and other international organizations, to the situation in Afghanistan. The group pointed out again that the problem of Afghanistan was not a regional or local one. The Afghan problem, they noted, was assuming a very dangerous nature not only for the Central Asian region, but also for many other countries which are far away from Central Asia. They emphasized that terrorists were being trained in Afghanistan and 70 percent of the drugs produced in the world come from Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev said on Sept. 24, 2001, that his country was prepared to back the United States in its battle against terrorist bases in Afghanistan. Nazarbayev said Kazakhstan had accepted a request from the United States to grant the use of its air space. He also said Kazakhstan would also be prepared to provide the use of military bases and airfields if they were asked. The country's president also said he believed that the leaders of the other Central Asian countries were ready to give similar backing to the United States.

In order to discuss coordination of actions in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States, Russian President Vladimir Putin on September 23 held talks with leaders of five Central Asian nations. The nations, all former Soviet republics, were Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which are close in proximity to Afghanistan.

Pipeline Politics

The primary oil pipeline used by Kazakhstan starts in Atyrau in Kazakhstan and goes north to Russia. A second pipeline, which also starts in Atyrau is under construction. This pipeline also passes through Russia, but heads west, over to the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. Kazakhstan is interested in non-Russian pipelines that would allow Kazakhstan greater export autonomy. To that end, Kazakhstan has contemplated a pipeline east, to the People's Republic of China, which would most likely be prohibitively expensive.

At least two other proposed pipelines, discussed throughout 1999 and into 2000, might prove of interest to Kazakhstan in future years. The first is an oil pipeline to connect Baku in Azerbaijan through Georgia and Turkey to Turkey's Mediterranean port, Ceyhan. The second is the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline, which would run from Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan, across the floor of the Caspian Sea to Baku in Azerbaijan, through Georgia, to Erzurum, Turkey.

The presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey on the "sidelines" of the Organization signed several agreements concerning the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline for Security and Cooperation in Europe summit in Istanbul in November 1999. These three countries and Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan signed additional agreements concerning the shipping of the latter two states' oil via the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline. Also in Istanbul, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, and the United States signed an agreement on the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline.

In early 2004, Kazakhstan's national oil company announced it would begin construction on an oil pipeline to China later in the year. The pipeline was intended to export the country's substantial oil reserves in an easterly direction toward China, which requires energy sources for its expanding economy. Caspian region oil has usually moved in a westward direction via the Black Sea or it has been exported to Russia. The decision to build a pipeline across the central plains of Kazakhstan to China represented a consolidation of a burgeoning relationship between Beijing and the countries of Central Asia. In addition to the construction of the pipeline to China, Kazakhstan has also forged an agreement with a consortium of oil companies in regard to Kashagan -- one of the largest newly discovered oilfields in the Caspian region.

Russia

Kazakhstan's relations with neighboring Russia can best be summed up by President Nursultan Nazarbayev's response to a journalist's question about Russia. Nazarbayev, with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright next to him at a joint press conference in the Kazakh capital, said: "I am kind of surprised that we still have remnants, even back in the West, of some imperialists' kind of thinking. The government has to face one direction or another, they say. You know in the history of our people we have fought forever in trying to gain our independence and, our independence finally won, now our major tasks are providing for the economic welfare of our people and for our own physical independence-that is number one. You know, Russia is our God-given neighbor and nobody really has a chance to choose who his or her neighbor is going to be. Look, we have a common border with Russia of over 7,000 kilometers and Russia is our economic, cultural and political partner. And now that we're neighbors, geographically, we would like to establish with Russia a very fine partnership on an equal basis so that we are equal partners in economics, in politics, and just be good neighbors. You know we, Kazakhstan, our territory lies both in the European part and in the Asian part and what we would like to do is get ourselves to a position

where we can enjoy universally-accepted human values and share them along with everybody else." However, while the Kazakhstani president is striving for equality with Russia, officials in Moscow are striving to recreate another union with, at least, its former Central Asian republics.

The leaders of Russia and five former Soviet republics discussed on May 24, 2001, establishing a regional rapid reaction force. President Vladimir Putin and leaders from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were considering ways to tackle instability in Central Asia and the Caucasus. The six-member collective security group brings together Moscow's most loyal allies among the broader, post-Soviet grouping, the Commonwealth of Independent States. The joint forces would be geared toward fighting the threat of Islamic extremism and drug smuggling in Central Asia. Kyrgyz Defense Minister Esen Topoyev said the proposed force would be based in his country's capital, Bishkek, and be formed from battalions from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Russia, under a Russian commander. Russia has made the battle with Islamic extremists the cornerstone of its efforts to increase its security ties with other ex-Soviet states. Putin has referred to an "arc of extremism" stretching from Afghanistan to Chechnya to Kosovo.

In 2006, Russia and Kazakhstan were discussing the prospects of pursuing power generation facilities and uranium enrichment jointly. In particular, Kazakh Prime Minister Danial Akhmetov (head of government at that time) and the head of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom) were discussing a plan to design and build nuclear power-generating units for a future nuclear power plant. On the matter of collaboration, Akhmetov said, "We should have common energy policy in all areas, including nuclear industry and nuclear energy. We have a number of hydrocarbons energy infrastructure projects, and consider it expedient to step up nuclear cooperation with Russia." He also indicated that the priority of Russian-Kazakh nuclear cooperation is "to design and build state-of-the-art nuclear power-generating units and bring them to the world market." Akhmetov and Kiriyyenko were also set to explore uranium development and the possible creation of a uranium enrichment joint venture.

Disputes within the Caspian Sea Countries

Disputes among Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Turkmenistan over Caspian Sea boundaries have not been resolved fully and may provide the catalyst for additional conflict in the region. The five nations surrounding the Caspian Sea have been divided for many years over who owns the resources in the sea and the seabed. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, the three nations with oil near their coastlines, have wanted the Caspian divided into national sectors, while the remaining two nations, with little or no oil or gas near their coasts, have wanted the sea's resources to be shared by all five nations.

Kazakhstan and Russia have made progress in determining an agreement concerning the division of boundaries in the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan and Russia, along with Azerbaijan have agreed to

dividing the sea floor into the national sector while keeping the water free. However, Iran and Turkmenistan want the sea divided into five equal sectors.

China

Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Russian President Vladimir Putin and presidents of four former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan met June 14-15, 2001, in Shanghai for a two-day conference of the so-called "Shanghai Forum." The discussion focused on regional security and terrorism. With the members' defense and security officials also in attendance, joint military exercises and united efforts to combat Central Asian drug trade was also on the agenda. Several nations in Central Asia, including China, are to varying degrees grappling with separatist or rebel groups, many of which draw inspiration and material assistance from Afghanistan's Taliban. China is rapidly expanding its economic focus on the underdeveloped western region, where Chinese Muslims have staged several small-scale uprisings. As for the missile shield issue, Russia and China are bonded by shared opposition to the United States' plans to deploy such a defense plan.

Kazakhstan's Nuclear Fuel Bank Proposal

In April 2009, the focus was on the domestic scene as President Nazarbayev said his country was ready to construct a nuclear fuel bank, in keeping with a 2005 proposal by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The nuclear fuel bank would vitiate any need by other countries to develop their own fuel. Indeed, it could well preclude some of the newest -- and most controversial -- aspirants from having to develop their own national nuclear programs. The concept has found positive resonance both by the United States and Russia

Update

In 2009, strategic energy politics constituted the focus of the landscape in Kazakhstan. Notably, France and Kazakhstan signed a collection of energy and business agreements, including a deal that would facilitate the transportation of French military supplies en route to Afghanistan where NATO troops have been fighting Islamic extremists. As well, China and Kazakhstan touted the opening of the Kazakh section of a natural gas pipeline linking China with Central Asia.

At the start of 2010, Kazakhstan gained the distinction of being the first former Soviet state to function as the chair of the the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), its own democratic and human rights credentials notwithstanding. That being said, in an effort to show seriousness of purpose, President Nazarbayev played a central role in negotiating the exit of

deposed President Bakiyev in neighboring Kyrgyzstan from the scene of conflict, and in order to prevent destabilization of the region. Bakiyev.

Other Significant Relations

Relations with United States

The United States (U.S.) was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan's independence from the former Soviet Union and the two countries have since retained positive diplomatic relations.

Kazakhstan's relations with the United States also improved when the country eliminated its nuclear weapons' stockpile and signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

U.S.-Kazakh cooperation in security and non-proliferation has been a cornerstone of the relationship. Kazakhstan showed leadership when it renounced nuclear weapons in 1993. The United States has assisted Kazakhstan in the removal of nuclear warheads, weapons-grade materials, and their supporting infrastructure. In 1994, Kazakhstan transferred more than a half-ton of weapons-grade uranium to the United States. In 1995 Kazakhstan removed its last nuclear warheads and, with U.S. assistance, completed the sealing of 181 nuclear test tunnels in May 2000. Kazakhstan has signed the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty (1992), the START Treaty (1992), the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1993), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (2001). Under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, the United States has spent \$240 million to assist Kazakhstan in eliminating weapons of mass destruction and weapons of mass destruction-related infrastructure.

Today, relations between the two countries are guided by petroleum supplies, drug trafficking and the fight against terrorism.

In December 2001, President Nazarbayev traveled to the U.S., meeting with President Bush at the White House to discuss the future investment climate in Kazakhstan, cooperation in the war against terrorism, the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and U.S. support of Kazakhstan's entrance in the World Trade Organization.

In February 2009, foreign relations took center stage when Kazakhstan agreed to a request from the United States -- now led by the Obama administration -- to permit the transfer of non-military cargo across Kazakh territory to fight the war against Islamic extremists in Afghanistan.

Foreign Relations/Global Security Note

FBI arrests two Uzbeks and one Kazakh national of seeking to join Islamic State and plotting to kill President Obama

In the last week of February 2015, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in United States arrested and charged three foreign nationals with conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. According to the criminal complaint, the three men sought to join the notorious terror group, Islamic State. The criminal complaint also alleged that the three men had determined that if they were unable to travel to Syria to join Islamic State, they would shift their focus and carry out attacks in the United States, including the attempted assassination of President Barack Obama.

The men -- Abdurasul Juraboev and Abror Habibov of Uzbekistan, and Akhror Saidakhmetov of Kazakhstan, came to the attention of federal authorities due to their postings on a Uzbek language website. Federal agents said that Juraboev purchased an airplane ticket to travel from New York to Istanbul, presumably with the intent of traveling on to Syria where he intended to join Islamic State. But Juraboev was also accused of conspiring to carry out the possible assassination of the United States leader, as illustrated by his posting to an Uzbek-language website, which read as follows: "I am in USA now but we don't have any arms. But is it possible to commit ourselves as dedicated martyrs anyway while here? What I'm saying is, to shoot Obama and then get shot ourselves, will it do? That will strike fear in the hearts of infidels." Meanwhile, Saidakhmetov was likewise accused of intending to join the notorious terror group, while also plotting attacks on the United States homeland. In a conversation with an informant, Saidakhmetov was reported to have said, "We will go and purchase one handgun ... then go and shoot one police officer. Boom ... Then we will go the FBI headquarters, kill the FBI People." Saidakhmetov was arrested at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York as he tried to board a flight bound for Turkey, allegedly en route to Syria where he would join Islamic State. The charges against Habibov involved providing material assistance to Saidakhmeto.

Each of the three defendants, if convicted, faced a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. In her announcement of the arrests, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Loretta Lynch, warned that the threat of foreign nationals posing a threat to the United States and its allies was a growing one. Lynch, who was President Obama's nominee to replace outgoing Eric Holder as the United States new attorney general, said, "The flow of foreign fighters to Syria represents an evolving threat to our country and to our allies."

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see

Bibliography for research sources.

National Security

External Threats

No foreign country poses an immediate military threat to Kazakhstan. In 2005, the territorial disputes with Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan were over as Kazakhstan agreed to demarcate their boundaries. The creation of a seabed boundary with Turkmenistan in the Caspian Sea is still unresolved however.

Crime

Kazakhstan is a regional narcotics trafficking hub. Significant amounts of cannabis and smaller amounts of poppy are cultivated there. Most illicit substances produced in Kazakhstan are transported to neighboring countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Kazakhstan also serves as an interim destination for Southwest Asian heroin bound for Russia and the rest of Europe. Outside of drug trafficking and related crimes, theft, fraudulent activity, and corruption are fairly prevalent in Kazakhstan.

Insurgencies

There are no insurgencies operating inside Kazakhstan that pose a direct threat to its government or general population. Kazakhstan has enjoyed generally stable conditions since receiving its independence from the former Soviet Union in December 1991. A number of organizations operating in the region have generally advocated the overthrow of secular governments throughout Central Asia and their replacement with Islamic regimes, however (see below section on terrorism).

Terrorism

Given their agendas and histories, regionally based Islamic militant organizations pose a credible risk to Kazakhstan. In addition to al-Qaida, two of its affiliates have a significant presence in Central Asia: the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement. Both have demonstrated a willingness to perpetrate attacks outside of their base

countries in pursuit of an Islamic fundamentalist agenda. A fourth organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HT) has also attracted the attention of the United States government as a possible catalyst of terrorist violence in the region.

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) seeks the overthrow of the Uzbek government and its replacement with an Islamic regime. Like al-Qaida, IMU is also virulently anti-Western. In addition to attacks in Uzbekistan, the organization has been linked to a number of terrorist incidents in Kyrgyzstan, including the 1999 abduction of four United States (U.S.) climbers and the 2000 abduction of four Japanese geologists and eight Kyrgyz soldiers. The Kyrgyz government also blames IMU for the December 2002 bombing of a bazaar frequented by foreigners and the May 2003 bombing of a bank in Osh. Officials in Kyrgyzstan interrupted a plot to bomb the United States Embassy and a nearby hotel there in 2003. IMU is believed to have fewer than 700 total members.

Similarly oriented, the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is based in China's western Xinjiang Province. It is comprised of ethnic Uighur separatists who seek to establish an independent "Eastern Turkistan," an area that would include Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China's Xinjiang province. Likewise, ETIM has demonstrated an anti-Western bent. The U.S. Department of State reports that from 1990 to 2001, ETIM orchestrated over 200 acts of terrorism in China, which resulted in at least 162 deaths and over 440 injuries. In May 2002, Kyrgyz officials deported two ETIM members to China for allegedly plotting to attack the United States embassy in Kyrgyzstan, and other U.S. interests abroad. The U.S. Department of State indicates that ETIM's agenda to create a pan-Asian, Turkic state does not enjoy widespread support among China's ethnic Uighurs. The group's total membership is unknown, but it is believed to have few operatives. As of September 2004, ETIM and IMU had not attempted to attack any targets in Kazakhstan. Their affiliation with the al-Qaida network and their demonstrated willingness to perpetrate attacks outside of their homelands both point to a credible risk that they may do so in the future, however.

The United States government has identified a fourth organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HT), as a potential threat to the greater Central Asian region. Unlike al-Qaida, IMU, or ETIM, however, HT is not believed to be responsible for any acts of violence. Founded in the Middle East in the 1950s, HT is a secretive organization that generally advocates a strict interpretation of the Sharia, Islamic law. It has evolved into a transnational organization, drawing support from Muslims throughout Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In Central Asia, HT has traditionally been comprised of ethnic Uzbeks. More recently, it has begun recruiting new members in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and, to a lesser extent in Kazakhstan. Like other Islamic Fundamentalist organizations active in the region, HT preaches the overthrow of Central Asia's secular governments and their replacement with Islamic regimes. Since the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, HT has adopted a decidedly militant tone. The organization's leaflets have praised suicide attacks in Israel, denounced the presence of coalition forces in Central Asia, claimed that the United States

and the United Kingdom are at war with Islam, and called upon Muslims to defend their faith by engaging in jihad with those countries. Thus, HT's rhetoric, rather than its actions, makes it a potential threat to the security of Central Asian countries. Though it has not committed any acts of terrorism, it clearly promotes violence in the name of an orthodox interpretation of Islam.

In 2004 alone, over 20 members of terrorist organizations were either detained and extradited to adjacent countries, or were handed over to foreign partners. The use of Kazakhstan by wanted members of terrorist and extremism groups is an alarming problem to the authorities in Kazakhstan as well as the rest of the international community.

International terrorism has a strong foothold in Kazakhstan and is a serious threat to the stability of the whole region. It is the most serious problem that needs to be addressed by not only Kazakhstan but by the rest of the international community.

Indeed, domestic terrorism occurred on the political landscape in 2011. Notably, on Nov. 12, 2011, a suspected Islamic militant carried out an attack in the southern city of Taraz in Kazakhstan. The Islamic extremist opened fire killing two security forces and two civilians. As the assailant hijacked a car, he also killed two police officers who were in pursuit. The assailant ultimately died as he detonated explosives strapped to his body, killing a fifth police officer in that final action of violence. Several other police officers were injured as the Islamist -- described as "a follower of jihadism" -- carried out his rampage.

The incident shocked Kazakhs and raised the alarm in Taraz and across the country. Kazakhstan, like many former Soviet republics in Central Asia, has been home to moderate Muslim populations. Given this context, attacks of this sort have been rare. That being said, the country has seen a rise in bomb attacks in recent times. A month prior, two bombs were detonated in the western city of Atyrau, killing only the attacker. In that case, a previously unknown Islamist militant group, Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate), claimed responsibility. Earlier in the year, a suicide bomber attacked a regional security building in the northern city of Aktobe. In that case, there was a handful of injuries. No information was available on the likely assailants, although suspicion fell on either Islamic militants or syndicates of organized crime. Any such eruptions of militant-tinged violence are regarded as part of a disturbing trend in the region, as Islamic Jihadists spread their campaigns of terror across the globe.

Kazakhstan is now party to all twelve of the international conventions and protocols pertaining to terrorism.

Foreign Relations/Global Security Note

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Defense Forces

Military Data

Military Branches:

Kazakhstan Armed Forces: Ground Forces, Navy, Air Mobile Forces, Air Defense Forces

Eligible age to enter service:

18 for compulsory service; 19 is legal minimum age for volunteers

Mandatory Service Terms:

24 months for conscripted service

Manpower in general population-fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 2,909,999

females age 16-49: 3,528,169

Manpower reaching eligible age annually:

males: 125,322

females: 119,541

Military Expenditures-Percent of GDP:

1.21%

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

Kazakhstan is the largest country in Central Asia and one of the world's most sparsely populated. The nation is endowed with considerable mineral resources, including significant oil and natural gas reserves, as well as vast areas of arable land. Kazakhstan has made significant progress in transforming its economy since its independence in 1991. When the Soviet Union dissolved, the centrally-planned economic system collapsed, and the sharp decline of demand for Kazakhstan's traditional heavy industry products caused a steep drop in output. With successful implementation of economic reforms, the country's economic performance has been impressive since the late 1990s.

From 2000 to 2007, Kazakhstan's economy enjoyed an extended period of very rapid growth, with real GDP averaging around 10 percent annually. The good performance was underpinned by the development of the oil sector, prudent macroeconomic policies, structural reforms, and increased access to global financial markets. However, economic growth slowed sharply in 2008 and 2009 with rapidly falling oil prices and tightened liquidity conditions for banks as a result of the global economic crisis. On the back of substantial public foreign assets built up during the boom years and low public debt, the government responded to the crisis with a significant anti-crisis program to help mitigate the impact of the global recession. Government support and stronger activity in the mining and manufacturing sectors contributed to a growth rebound in the last few months of 2009, and economic recovery took place in 2010 thanks largely to rising commodity prices. Despite large government support to banks, however, the financial sector remains under stress, reflecting the banks' vulnerability stemming from the combination of a low deposit base, the reliance on foreign funding, and risky lending practices. To address the banking sector's weaknesses, it is important to continue strengthening financial sector regulation and supervision, while continued government support in lending should be well focused to avoid future bad credits. By 2010, the banking sector began to recover after several banks completed billion-dollar debt restructuring programs while others got help from the state. Kazakhstan's Halyk Bank reported a doubling in net income and an improvement in the quality of its loan portfolio in 2010. Also in 2010, Kazakhstan joined the Belarus-Kazakhstan-Russia Customs Union in an effort to boost foreign investment and improve trade relationships. The country initiated a diversification program aimed at developing targeted sectors such as transport, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications and food processing. In February 2011, a renewable energy consortium announced potential plans to invest \$1 billion to build two wind farms in southern Kazakhstan, in hopes of making the region not as dependent on imported electricity. Overall, growth was strong in 2011 as high commodity prices and sound economic

policies helped spur activity in transport and communications and domestic demand. Kazakhstan tightened fiscal policy, maintained excellent bank liquidity and allowed a greater exchange rate flexibility to help its economic performance, according to the International Monetary Fund.

After having remained subdued for three years and reflecting the recovery in domestic demand, bank credit to the economy as of May 2012 had climbed by 15 percent over the previous year — partly funded by deposits of state-owned companies and special lending programs. By June 2012, Kazakhstan's troubled bank BTA had begun formal talks with its creditors with the goal of moving forward on its debt restructuring plan. A draft debt restructuring plan was approved by a Kazakhstan court in May. Looking ahead, the IMF predicted the country overall would see continue to see robust growth in 2012 and 2013 with increased nonoil activity.

As of October 2013, the Kazakh economy was still growing at a healthy rate, foreign direct investment was strong and inflation contained. Meanwhile, central bank head Grigory Marchenko abruptly resigned that same month, blaming family reasons. He denied he was leaving over disagreements over pension reform. Also in October 2013, Reuters reported that the country's current account surplus had declined by 63 percent in the first half of 2013 compared to the same period in 2012 as exports slid and lower prices for Kazakh oil and metals further cut revenue. The country was now Central Asia's largest economy and the second-largest post-Soviet oil producer after Russia, holding 3 percent of the world's recoverable oil reserves.

Growth slowed drastically in the first quarter of 2014, reflecting weaker external demand, especially from China and Russia, the confidence effects of regional tensions, the February devaluation of the tenge on domestic demand and slower production in the mining sector. Inflation, on the other hand, has climbed, fueled by the devaluation and amid heightened external uncertainties. .

In February 2014, Kazakhstan's central bank devalued the national tenge currency by 19 percent in an effort to ease speculative pressure on the domestic foreign exchange market, support exporters of oil and industrial metals and sustain economic growth.

Then, in August 2014, Kazakhstan created a new super-size energy ministry as its economy suffered from the closure of a giant oilfield and the collapse of exports to Ukraine and Russia.

Real GDP growth in 2014 was projected at 4.8 percent, one percentage point below earlier projections, despite the expected positive contributions from the fiscal stimulus. At the same time, headline inflation was expected to further increase to around 9 percent in 2014. Officials have taken more aggressive steps to reduce the large stock of Non Performing Loans (NPLs), and have committed to enhancing the monetary and fiscal policy frameworks. The newly launched Eurasian Economic Union - with Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia as members - will formally come into effect in January 2015, while accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was expected later in 2014.

During 2014, Kazakhstan's economy was hampered by Russia's slowing economy, the weakening ruble, falling oil prices, and problems at its Kashagan oil field. Kazakhstan devalued its currency, the tenge, by 19 percent in February and in November the government announced a stimulus package to cope with the economic challenges. As planned, the Customs Union evolved into the Eurasian Economic Union in January 2015.

Real GDP growth slowed during the first quarter of 2015 due to weaker external demand, the impact of lower income and profitability (resulting from lower oil prices) and confidence effects (reflecting regional developments) on private consumption and domestic investment. At the same time, Kazakhstan's real effective exchange rate (REER) had appreciated over the past year, mainly reflecting the depreciation of the ruble and sharp appreciation of the U.S. dollar, against which the tenge was managed.

In June 2015, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development said its lending on projects in Kazakhstan was set to hit a record high of around \$1 billion for the year as the country worked to diversify its oil-based economy. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev was said to have ordered the government to develop "green energy" projects, agribusiness and small and medium-sized businesses. Then, in mid-July 2015, following the decline in sovereign spreads and reduced currency pressures, the authorities successfully issued a \$4 billion sovereign bond and widened the exchange rate band.

The Asian Development Bank in August 2015 approved a \$1 billion loan for Kazakhstan in an effort to help stabilize its economy. The announcement came a day after Kazakhstan abandoned a trading corridor for its tenge currency and introduced a freely floating rate that weakened the tenge by 26 percent against the dollar. In early September 2015, Reuters reported that Kazakhstan and China had signed 25 agreements worth \$23 billion, aiming to move cooperation dominated by raw materials to products with greater added value.

"We have actively cooperated with China for more than 20 years, mainly in the energy sector and in extracting other raw materials," Nazarbayev's site (www.akorda.kz) quoted him as saying during a meeting with Chinese businessmen in Beijing. "Yesterday during our constructive talks with President Xi Jinping we agreed to create 45 joint facilities, and agreements were signed on 25 of them worth a total of \$23 billion." In March 2015, China and Kazakhstan had signed 33 agreements worth \$23.6 billion and covering areas from hydropower to steel, state news agency Xinhua reported at the time.

Looking ahead, real GDP growth in Kazakhstan was projected to decelerate to an estimated 2 percent in 2015.

Economic Performance

Following robust growth with annual real GDP averaging around 10 percent from 2000 to 2007,

growth slowed sharply in 2008 and 2009 as a result of the global economic crisis before rebounding in 2010-2012.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 5.8 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: 4.3 percent

Inflation was measured at: 18.3 percent

Updated in 2015

**Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.*

Supplementary Sources: Reuters, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank and Central Asia Online

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	27,571.89	30,346.96	35,275.15	38,033.06	37,663.08
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	26.387	10.065	16.240	7.818	-0.9728
Consumption (LCU billions)	12,829.84	14,855.25	19,124.95	20,620.20	20,990.27
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	2,941.97	3,543.80	3,634.36	3,918.50	3,988.83

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	6,204.64	7,514.03	8,440.30	9,100.18	11,610.02
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	13,123.05	13,680.51	13,492.59	14,547.48	10,516.55
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	7,527.61	9,246.63	9,417.05	10,153.30	9,442.59

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	16.674	16.912	17.165	17.422	17.683
Population growth (%)	1.460	1.427	1.496	1.497	1.498
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	1,653,585.76	1,794,403.87	2,055,062.82	2,183,048.12	2,129,903.3

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	15,494.79	16,269.47	17,245.67	17,671.80	18,257.35
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	7.500	5.000	6.000	2.471	3.313
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	177.943	186.527	204.545	215.219	206.290
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	17.569	4.824	9.660	5.218	-4.1488

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	5,997.11	6,796.05	7,130.92	8,711.45	8,875.63
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	22.323	13.322	4.927	22.165	1.885
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	27.703	26.923	25.262	24.768	20.383
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	7,638.32	8,170.30	8,911.32	9,419.88	7,676.77
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	1,641.21	1,374.25	1,780.40	708.430	-1198.8650
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	5.952	4.528	5.047	1.863	-3.1831

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	9,752.24	10,522.67	11,598.12	12,816.32	12,691.64
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	14.964	7.900	10.220	10.503	-0.9728
Lending Interest Rate (%)	10.830	9.157	9.792	9.208	11.457
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.400	5.292	5.225	5.042	5.042

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	146.621	149.113	152.129	176.050	193.139
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	38.163	29.735	26.790	24.960	5.561
Trade Balance % of GDP	20.294	14.611	11.554	11.554	2.851
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	29.215	28.299	24.692	28.961	24.148

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	188.049	203.517	231.876	216.036	195.005
Exports (\$US billions)	89.503	91.746	88.692	82.633	54.451
Imports (\$US billions)	51.341	62.011	61.902	57.673	48.890

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	270.646	245.656	248.000	275.879	281.342
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	1,637.51	1,594.76	1,652.67	1,680.62	1,727.82
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	1,366.86	1,349.10	1,404.67	1,404.74	1,446.48
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	436.140	510.302	554.446	544.473	582.093
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	401.216	779.106	721.906	670.231	733.210
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	-34.9241	268.804	167.461	125.758	151.117
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	95,375.29	104,786.82	102,876.88	97,122.61	99,336.82
Coal Production (1000s st)	125,912.97	130,871.42	130,685.95	130,527.79	127,487.00

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	30,537.68	26,084.60	27,809.07	33,405.18	28,150.18
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	7.804	7.561	8.040	7.935	7.980
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0010	0.0030	0.0063	0.0123	0.0135

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.5779	0.5245	0.5295	0.5891	0.6007
Petroleum Production (Quads)	3.496	3.428	3.540	3.671	2.949
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	2.918	2.904	3.011	3.082	2.348
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.4449	0.5205	0.5655	0.5554	0.5937
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	0.4088	0.7921	0.7348	0.6934	0.6401
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0360	0.2716	0.1693	0.1381	0.0464
Coal Consumption (Quads)	1.908	2.096	2.058	1.942	1.987
Coal Production (Quads)	2.567	2.778	2.748	2.611	2.299
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	0.6598	0.6826	0.6902	0.6681	0.3123
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0780	0.0756	0.0804	0.0794	0.0798
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum-WTI (\$/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub (\$/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian (\$/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	12.911	11.719	11.830	13.160	13.421
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	7.076	8.279	8.995	8.834	9.444
Coal Based (mm mt C)	54.660	60.053	58.959	55.661	56.930
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	74.646	80.051	79.785	77.655	79.795

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	471.443	508.378	563.848	658.454	606.491
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	481.067	518.847	566.941	674.158	628.319
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	9.624	10.469	3.093	15.704	21.829
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	127.131	147.967	188.413	201.679	180.884
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	133.345	169.452	202.057	224.115	211.142
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	6.214	21.485	13.644	22.436	30.257
Rice Total					

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Consumption (1000 metric tons)	346.661	351.115	344.432	376.919	338.164
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	346.994	350.824	344.149	376.852	366.994
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	0.3331	-0.2903	-0.2825	-0.0667	28.829
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	16.000	71.000	74.000	146.641	138.407
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	-16.0000	-71.0000	-74.0000	-146.6409	-138.4069
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	7,396.00	7,830.00	4,891.00	4,279.79	4,158.06
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	-7396.0000	-7830.0000	-4891.0000	-4279.7914	-4158.0642

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	19,855.99	2,406.22	8,919.00	7,988.44	6,744.13
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	22,681.57	9,893.40	13,918.96	13,039.75	10,852.64
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	2,825.58	7,487.18	4,999.97	5,051.31	4,108.52

World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary (\$/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary (\$/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	118,642.30	118,642.30	118,642.30	121,110.43	106,028.30
Copper Production (1000 mt)	335,739.19	370,473.55	362,256.62	403,800.39	363,092.44
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	217,096.89	251,831.25	243,614.32	282,689.96	257,064.14
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	40,057.94	40,057.94	44,943.24	39,500.86	35,729.72
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	317,382.72	316,883.66	318,388.34	317,768.73	310,189.22
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	277,324.78	276,825.72	273,445.10	278,267.87	274,459.50
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	20,386.16	20,386.16	20,386.16	20,386.16	20,386.16
Lead Production (1000 mt)	110,391.87	87,268.31	89,504.77	88,699.37	82,085.08

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	90,005.71	66,882.15	69,118.60	68,313.21	61,698.92
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	646.434	2,923.75	814.841	566.971	528.709
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	-646.4340	-2923.7490	-814.8410	-566.9707	-528.7093
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	34.281	39.215	24.992	26.458	21.382
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	-34.2810	-39.2150	-24.9920	-26.4580	-21.3823
Gold Consumption (kg)	15,908.64	24,149.48	41,340.36	45,729.27	40,494.84
Gold Production (kg)	41,620.27	44,742.13	48,150.15	53,949.52	54,036.27
Gold Exports (kg)	25,711.63	20,592.65	6,809.79	8,220.26	13,541.42

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Silver Consumption (mt)	275,337.25	201,086.25	296,793.00	489,547.04	406,314.19
Silver Production (mt)	704,348.71	1,015,660.81	1,057,098.61	1,270,866.70	1,197,049.8
Silver Exports (mt)	429,011.46	814,574.56	760,305.61	781,319.66	790,735.63

World Metals Pricing Summary

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Copper (\$/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc (\$/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin (\$/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead (\$/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel (\$/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold (\$/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver (\$/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

Economic Performance Index

Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
North Americas					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
Western Europe					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
Central and Eastern Europe					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
South and Central America					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
Caribbean					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
Middle East					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
Asia					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
Pacific					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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Chapter 4

Investment Overview

Foreign Investment Climate

Background

Kazakhstan, the largest of the former Soviet republics in territory, excluding Russia, possesses enormous fossil fuel reserves and plentiful supplies of other minerals and metals. It also has a large agricultural sector featuring livestock and grain. Kazakhstan's industrial sector rests on the extraction and processing of these natural resources.

Foreign Investment Assessment

Openness to Foreign Investment

Shortly after declaring its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan began a series of broad-based reforms in an effort to move from a planned economy to a market economy, and to attract foreign investment.

Although the Kazakhstani government has made great strides in improving foreign investment legislation, key concerns remain, including the vagueness of laws, contradictory legal provisions and poor implementation, especially at the local level of government. For instance, the lack of clarity in tax laws allows for creative interpretations by the Tax Police and other government agencies.

Customs always presents challenges to foreign firms. Customs officials often interpret Customs regulations arbitrarily. Government downsizing and the move to the new capital, Astana, have seriously compounded problems surrounding implementation of legislation. The State Agency on Investments, established in late 1996 and advertised as a "one-stop shop" for foreign investors, has had a mixed record in its attempts to resolve investment issues.

Beginning in 1997, there has been a trend to grant preference to domestic investors over foreigners in most state contracts. September 1999 amendments to the oil and gas law requiring oil companies to use local goods and services represent an extension of this trend. The current administration has complained publicly that previous privatizations were executed too quickly and did not allow for the involvement of domestic investors. Also expressed is the need to "protect" domestic producers from outside competition. However, it is unclear whether domestic investors have the medium-to-long term financial capacity to support major projects and whether domestic investors have the strong management and technical skills to rejuvenate largely bankrupt Kazakhstani industries. To help develop local industry, the government enacted changes to legislation, published Sept. 1, 1999,

requiring all oil and minerals companies to use domestically produced goods and services when available. In recent years, the Kazakhstani government has enacted four major pieces of legislation affecting foreign investment. These are:

- The Law on Foreign Investment, 1994 (amended in July 1997);
- The Tax Code of 1995;
- The Law on State Support for Direct Investment, 1997;
- The Law on Government Procurement, 1997.

Poor implementation of these laws and reforms remains the key obstacle to business in Kazakhstan. Important concerns remain, for example, in the area of government tenders, despite new legislation and government promises that tendering will be conducted in an open and fair manner. Tenders are sometimes issued just a week ahead of the application deadline, thereby limiting competition.

Kazakhstan's generally liberal investment regime means that no sectors of the economy are closed to investors. The government of Kazakhstan remains both an implicit and explicit player in attracting foreign investment. Government officials, sometimes at the highest level screen foreign investment proposals. Major projects, such as the Caspian offshore production sharing agreement (PSA) and the Karachaganak PSA, bear the President's personal imprimatur. The screening process itself is not a significant impediment to investment in terms of limiting competition or protecting domestic interests. However, the process is often non-transparent and can slow investment decisions.

Transparency of Regulatory System

Transparency in the application of laws remains a major problem in Kazakhstan and an obstacle to expanded trade and investment. Foreign investors complain of moving goalposts and corruption. While foreign participation is generally welcomed, some foreign investors point out that the government is not always evenhanded and sometimes reneges on its commitments.

There are numerous transparency problems connected with the customs regime in Kazakhstan. These include the following:

- Granting customs exemptions stipulated in the Law on Foreign Investment continues to be problematic. Although such exemptions were stipulated in the original law of 1994, Customs has failed to issue any regulations or instructions for its implementation. Instead, Customs decides claims in an ad-hoc manner, which has resulted in inconsistent and unclear application of the law. According to investors, it is very difficult sometimes to get Customs to accept that certain imported goods are for personal use.
- Kazakhstan has adopted the international tariff nomenclature as the basis of its Tariff Schedule.

However, the government has not published the Tariff Schedule in full. According to businesses, this leads to unnecessary delays in processing and increased costs for importers. Certain disputes between importers and customs officers connected with customs classification might be avoided if the importers had access to the full tariff schedule (up to nine digits).

- Each year customs issues a number of orders, regulations and instructions of general application. Neither customs nor any other entity publishes these administrative documents in any systemic way. To the extent that these rules have been distributed to the public, customs has relied in the past on general media or private legal information services, which have published only selective customs rules, and then not necessarily in a timely manner. In late 1996, customs took a positive step toward improving dissemination of the legal information when it began to publish a bulletin for sale to the public for approximately \$4.00. Unfortunately, due to lack of funding, publication of the bulletin has not been regular.
- Customs does not generally consult industry for its views on proposed new regulations and procedures, or amendments to existing requirements. Generally, customs develops a rule in whole, and announces it to the trade community without the possibility of modification, often shortly in advance of the effective date. The result frequently is a rule or procedure that involves difficulties and controversy in implementation, which may not have been foreseen by customs but which might have been avoided had the trade community been consulted. Because the trade community is not forewarned about the new rules sufficiently in advance to adjust, it can suffer unnecessary delays and costs.

Labor Force

Total: 7.95 million estimated

By occupation: agriculture 20%, industry 30%, services 50%

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture products: grain (mostly spring wheat), cotton; livestock

Industries: oil, coal, iron ore, manganese, chromite, lead, zinc, copper, titanium, bauxite, gold, silver, phosphates, sulfur, iron and steel; tractors and other agricultural machinery, electric motors, construction materials

Import Commodities and Partners

Commodities: machinery and equipment, metal products, foodstuffs

Partners: Russia 39%, Germany 8.7%, China 6.2%, US 5.6%

Export Commodities and Partners

Commodities: oil, oil products, ferrous metals, chemicals, machinery, grain, wool, meat, coal

Partners: Bermuda 17%, Russia 15.2%, Switzerland 13%, China 12.8%, Italy 7.8%

Telephone System

Telephones- main lines in use: 2,081,900

Telephones- mobile cellular: 1.027 million

General Assessment: service is poor; equipment antiquated

Domestic: intercity by landline and microwave radio relay; mobile cellular systems are available in most of Kazakhstan

International: country code - 7; international traffic with other former Soviet republics and China carried by landline and microwave radio relay and with other countries by satellite and by the Trans-Asia-Europe (TAE) fiber-optic cable; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat

Internet

Internet Hosts: 21,984

Internet users: 250,000

Roads, Airports, Ports and Harbors

Railways: 13,601 km

Highways: 82,980 km

Ports and harbors: Aqtau (Shevchenko), Atyrau (Gur'yev), Oskemen (Ust-Kamenogorsk), Pavlodar, Semey (Semipalatinsk)

Airports: 315; w/paved runways: 67

Legal System and Considerations

Kazakhstan's legal system is based on the civil law system.

Dispute Settlement

There have been a number of investment disputes involving foreign companies in the past several years. While the disputes have arisen from unrelated, independent circumstances, they are all

linked to alleged breaches of contract or non-payment on the part of Kazakhstani state entities. The disputes involve, in some instances, more than \$100 million.

Either the Collegium for Economic Matters or the Collegium for Civil Matters handles disputes between legal entities in Kazakhstan. In general, when the dispute is between commercial entities, the matter will be decided by the Collegium for Economic Matters. When the dispute is between a commercial entity and the government, however, the particular forum that would hear the case is less clear. Jurisdictional issues are outlined in the new Civil Procedural Code, which was approved by Parliament July 13, 1999.

Kazakhstan is still in the process of building the institutional capabilities of its court system. Until this is complete, the performance of courts in the country will be less than optimal. Further problems exist in having a judgment enforced (including, for example, having a government official seize a debtor's property and sell it to pay the debtor's liabilities). A judicial executor system is only beginning to be established by the Ministry of Justice. Given this lack of development, there is ample opportunity for interference in judicial cases, be it by private parties or by government officials.

General commercial law principles are established in Kazakhstan's Civil Code.

The July 1997 amendments to the Foreign Investment Law provide foreign investors involved in disputes with the State with clear and unequivocal access to international arbitration. This access is restricted to arbitration fora located in states that are signatories to the New York Convention for the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards. The U.S. is a signatory state. In addition, the amendments provide the automatic consent of the state to the dispute settlement option selected by a foreign investor.

The law contains a definition of investment disputes referring to "authorized state bodies." An authorized state body is a state entity that has the right to act on behalf of the Republic of Kazakhstan within its competence as established by legislative and normative legal acts. It does not, therefore, include a comprehensive set of state bodies or even the central state bodies. In order for a dispute to qualify as an investment dispute (and on this depends the right to refer to foreign arbitration fora), the state body itself must have been authorized to act or contract. From this it follows that lack of authority to act/contract would leave the dispute outside the definition of investment dispute. The right to foreign arbitration would then fall. Care should be taken with contracts to ensure that the contracting state body is indeed authorized. The State Agency for Investments can assist with this. Authorized bodies change frequently.

If the foreign investor requests investment dispute settlement abroad (and the government is one of the parties to the dispute, through its authorized bodies) then the consent from the government is automatic. If the government, through its authorized bodies, is the initiator of the action then the

court process of Kazakhstan is utilized in the absence of a written preference from the foreign investor. If the foreign investor declines to make a choice of forum then the state body is authorized to apply to the court system of Kazakhstan. Judicial bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan settle disputes (other than investment disputes) between foreign investors and citizens or legal entities of Kazakhstan.

If a dispute does go to international arbitration, awards rendered by certain arbitration fora should be enforced in Kazakhstan in accordance with the law. These fora are the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes tribunals, any tribunal applying the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Arbitration rules, the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce, and the Arbitration Commission at the Kazakhstan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In October 1995, Kazakhstan ratified the New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitrage Awards.

Despite such safeguards, however, there continues to be great practical difficulties for foreign investors in enforcing arbitrage awards against government enterprises in Kazakhstan, particularly given the near-bankruptcy of many such enterprises.

Kazakhstan's bankruptcy regime suffers from a complex bankruptcy law, passed in early 1997. Amendments that would somewhat simplify the law and speed up proceedings have been submitted to the Kazakhstani Parliament but not yet approved. Creditor rights are set forth clearly under the current law on bankruptcy. It is possible, however, that some of these rights may be eroded by the amendments currently before Parliament.

Kazakhstan's bankruptcy agency became a self-financed government-owned enterprise in 1997. As yet, the role this quasi-agency would take in bankruptcy proceedings is still unclear. In general, the Kazakhstani government has a moderately good record of addressing investment disputes. However, foreign investors have often had to endure protracted negotiations with working-level officials, only to have the highest levels of the government make key decisions on the future of a given investment. Most investors generally prefer to handle investment disputes "in the corridors," fearing a real or perceived backlash from the government if the case were to be made public.

Kazakhstan has made excellent progress in developing a proper platform for a functioning legal system with the assistance of USAID. However, while there are good laws "on the books," effective means for enforcing property and contractual rights are underdeveloped. For example, the constitution does not establish an independent judiciary. While the judiciary is trying hard to develop its own identity, "telephone law" (that is, a phone call to the "right people") is often cited by Kazakhstanis as the way court decisions are handed down. Judgments of foreign courts only sometimes are accepted in Kazakhstani courts, and enforcement is very difficult. While there is a well-written set of commercial laws on the books, there is virtually no system of case law to establish important precedents for future commercial disputes. This is another area in which

USAID experts hope to make improvements.

Corruption Perception Ranking

See corruption index from Transparency International for Kazakhstan's current ranking. Typically, this country is ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. (according to this ranking).

Cultural Considerations

In Kazakhstan, elders are treated with the utmost respect. In this regard, it is important that one be sure to stand up when a Kazakh elder enters the room. It is important that the visitor to Kazakhstan show elders the same respect that their own countrymen give them. During dinner the most honored guest is usually the eldest and will be presented a boiled mutton's head.

It is also important to know that unlike other countries in the region, Kazakhstan's government does not mix religion with politics, and as a result, women's lifestyles are not as restricted as those found in other predominately Muslim countries. Nevertheless, one should respect the Muslim traditions inside mosques, including the removal of shoes. In addition, women are expected to cover their hair, shoulders and legs before entering a mosque.

For more information see:

United States' State Department Commercial Guide

Foreign Investment Index

Foreign Investment Index

The Foreign Investment Index is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5
Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9

Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6

Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5
Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5

Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5
East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5
Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5

Ghana	5.5
Greece	5
Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a
Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8
Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8

Israel	8.5
Italy	8
Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5

Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5
Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5
Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5
Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5
Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5

Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5
Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5
Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5
Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6

Peru	6
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5
Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7
San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7
Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5

Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5
Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5
Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5

Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5
Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7
Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5
Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5

Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5
Zimbabwe	3.5

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the [United Kingdom](#), [Iceland](#), [Switzerland](#) and [Austria](#). However, in all these cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased. Other top tier countries, such as [Spain](#), [Portugal](#), [Ireland](#), and [Italy](#), suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case. Slovenia and [Latvia](#) have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern [Ukraine](#) fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring [Russia](#).

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in [Japan](#) in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both [India](#) and [China](#) retain their rankings; [India](#) holds a slightly higher ranking than [China](#) due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for [Mali](#) and [Nigeria](#) versus the [Central African Republic](#), [Burkina Faso](#), and [Burundi](#). [Mali](#) was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a new government in [Nigeria](#) generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the [Central African Republic](#) was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of [Burundi](#) and [Burkina Faso](#) to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eyebrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in [Libya](#) and [Algeria](#) have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these

countries as well. [Syria](#) incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. [Iraq](#) saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. [Yemen](#), likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, [Egypt](#) and [Tunisia](#) saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like [Pakistan](#), [Afghanistan](#), [Somalia](#), and [Zimbabwe](#) maintaining their low ratings.

The [United States](#) continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of [Mexico](#), there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In [Argentina](#), a default to bond holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to [Cuba](#) due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the United States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International: [Corruption Perceptions Index](#)

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by

the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3
5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0
8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0
8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5
12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4

16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0
17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1
22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9
25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1
27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5
31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6

34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2
35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4
39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9
43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2
46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7
49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5

52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4
54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1
56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9
61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9
63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5
66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6

69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5
71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3
75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8
84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7

84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8
89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9
89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7
97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4
99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2

106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4
106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1
111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2
111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3
111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8
120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3

120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1
126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9
130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8
130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8
139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7

139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6
143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5
146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4
146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8
154	Côte d'Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2

158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5
162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0
162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0
168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3
168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8
175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7

178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5
180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4

Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

According to Transparency International, the [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of [Serbia](#), is not listed above. No calculation is available for [Kosovo](#) at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, [China](#) claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a [United States](#) domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: <http://www.transparency.org>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Competitiveness Ranking

Competitiveness Ranking

Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2
Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2

Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1
Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0
United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0
France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5
Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1
Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3

Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2
Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4
Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8
Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4
Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2
Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1

Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1
Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6
Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2
India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6
South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1
Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16

Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0
Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15
Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1
Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5
Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0
Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5

Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5
Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12
Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3
Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7
Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a
Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4

Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3
Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12
Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1
Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6
Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13

Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3
Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1
Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9
Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6
Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21
Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2

Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7
Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4
Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The [United States](#) falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by [Sweden](#) and [Singapore](#) in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of [China](#) continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries
- [Germany](#) moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- [Switzerland](#) tops the rankings

Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: <http://www.weforum.org>

Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Taxation

Corporate tax

The corporate tax rate is 30 percent, although companies with land as the key productive asset are taxed at 10 percent on income derived from land use, and a zero percent rate is applied to companies operating in special economic zones. In addition to corporate tax, branches of non-resident companies also are expected to pay branch profits tax of 15 percent of net "after-tax" income.

Individual tax

Individual tax rates are progressive rates and are as high as 20 percent. As well, there is a 15 percent withholding tax on dividends.

Capital gains

Capital gains are taxed as income, however, gains from securities are not treated as taxable income but are, instead, subject to a tax rate of 15 percent.

Indirect tax

The rate of value-added tax (VAT) is 15 percent. VAT is applicable to all goods, work, and services, including imports into Kazakhstan. No VAT is paid on exports except to other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, where by agreement, exports are fully taxed and imports are not taxed (origin principle). There are exemptions for the lease and sale of land and residential buildings, financial services, public infrastructure projects and international transport.

Note:

The United States Department of Commerce Business Information Service for the Newly Independent States Commercial Overview of Kazakhstan provides the following taxation information:

Companies formed in Kazakhstan under Kazakhstani law are taxed on worldwide income. Income earned by a foreign company or person through a permanent establishment in Kazakhstan is taxed in Kazakhstan. Branches of foreign entities are taxed on Kazakhstani source income (where services are performed, not where paid for). Income from a Kazakhstani source to a non-resident and not related to a permanent establishment, is taxed at the source of the payment, and further, on the total income without deductions, excluding labor that is taxed as personal income.

Tax payment is based on the calendar year, with annual declarations due by the end of March of the following year (and tax payment within ten days of declaration). Annual financial statements are due on April 30 following the reporting year.

Kazakhstan's tax code, enacted in April 1995, is considered by tax experts to be among the most comprehensive in the NIS. In general, taxes are applied universally within the Code, allowing only a limited set of exemptions. The Code essentially applies the international model of taxation, which is based on the principles of equity, economic neutrality and simplicity. In December 1996, a treaty on the Avoidance of Double Taxation between the United States and Kazakhstan came into force. A number of treaties on the avoidance of double taxation were ratified in 1998, including with the Czech Republic, France, Sweden, Bulgaria, Turkmenistan, Georgia, South Korea, Germany, Belgium and Mongolia. On the negative side, however, the administration of the tax code and the tax treaty is not as efficient, transparent, or consistent as it should be. There is a broad recognition of this by the Kazakhstani government, though, and a program to reform the system of tax administration is currently underway. However, U.S. and foreign firms often complain of harassment by the tax police via unannounced inspections and other methods. In 1998 the government limited the number of visits which can be made by government bodies in the course of a year to small businesses, but tax inspections were unfortunately excluded from the limitation.

Kazakhstan's tax code, currently in amendment, applies an international taxation model based on principles of equity, economic neutrality, and simplicity. Resident persons and local enterprises pay taxes on worldwide income; foreign enterprises and non-residents pay taxes only on income from local sources. One is a resident and tax-liable for both direct and indirect income in Kazakhstan if one has been physically present in Kazakhstan for 183 days in any

consecutive 12-month period. Taxes are fairly reasonable; penalties are not. Although there is no tax code provision, holidays can be granted in certain cases as incentives for foreign investment.

All tax laws must be contained in the tax code, which covers taxation at all levels of government: central, oblast, and local. The three most important taxes in the code are the Enterprise Profits Tax, the Individual Income Tax, and the Value Added Tax (VAT).

The tax code has provision for tax relief. This includes deductions "of expenses from the annual aggregate income of corporations and individuals connected with its derivation" (Article 14). There is provision for deduction of interest on loans (Article 16), on allocations to Reserves for insurance and subsurface users (Article 18), R&D (Article 19) and Loss Carry Forward (Article 27). In addition, there are exemptions on income derived from activities such as mortgage lending by banks (Article 34 1-8), leasing activities (Article 34 1-9) and on investments in government securities (Article 34-3). There are provisions that replicate the terms of the Law on State Support for Direct Investment where investment agreements are made with the Agency for Investments (Article 34-8). Tax holidays can be granted to certain investors by the agency under the new Law on State Support for Direct Investment.

Foreigners must register with local tax authorities and receive a tax registration number within ten days of beginning work under contract in Kazakhstan, or when they become otherwise tax liable as a resident, or receive Kazakhstani sourced income at 500 times a monthly computed basis (about \$4,500/year). Foreigners paid abroad must make quarterly estimated payments of income tax and a yearly income tax declaration (due March 31 the following the tax year). Foreigners paid locally will have their individual income tax withheld at the source of payment.

A number of double tax treaties were ratified in 1998. This includes agreements with the following countries: the Czech Republic (November 1998), France (November 1998), Sweden (July 1998), Bulgaria (July 1998), Turkmenistan (July 1998), Georgia (July 1998), Republic of Korea (July 1998), Germany (November 1998), and Belgium (November 1998).

Stock Market

The Kazakhstan Stock Exchange listed a total of 18 companies by the end of the 1990s.

For more information on the Financial Market of Kazakhstan: <http://pavlodar.com/eng/>.

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Culture and Demography

Kazakhstan is a multiethnic country with over 100 ethnic groups. The country's largest ethnic groups are Kazakhs (estimates range from 42 percent to over 50 percent) and Russians (estimates range from 30 percent to 37 percent). Russians are concentrated in the north and in large urban areas, whereas Kazakhs are the predominant ethnic group in rural areas. Other ethnic groups in Kazakhstan include Ukrainians, Germans, Uzbeks, Uygurs, Tatars, Tajiks, Belorussians, Bashkirs, Chechens, Dungans, Ingushs, Jews, Kurds, Kyrgyzs, Dargyns, Meskhetian Turks and others.

Interestingly, Kazakhstan is the only former Soviet republic in which the ethnic group for which the republic was named constituted less than 50 percent of the population. Large numbers of Russians and Ukrainians also migrated to Kazakhstan in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, after Central Asia became part of the Russian Empire. During World War II, the population base was further expanded when Germans, Tatars, and others were deported to Kazakhstan from other parts of the former Soviet Union. Another extensive wave of Russian and Slavic migration to Kazakhstan occurred in 1954 when the former Soviets decided to cultivate the land in northern Kazakhstan. Although Russians outnumbered Kazakhs in the republic in the late 1950s, by the 1980s, this demographic trend reversed. By the time that Kazakhstan became an independent republic in 1991, many Germans and Russians began to leave, large numbers of Kazakhs settled in the republic from the neighboring Central Asian states and from Mongolia.

Language in Kazakhstan is a contentious and politicized issue. The 1995 constitution states that Kazakh and Russian are officially recognized state languages. Despite pressure to speak Kazakh for national interests, a majority of Kazakhs speak Russian in everyday life, business and academia, and some linguistic experts suggest that as many as 40 percent of the country's population is not fluent in Kazakh. Kazakh is part of the Nogai-Kipchak subgroup of northeastern Turkic languages, which belong to the Uralic-Altaic language family. It is heavily influenced by both Tatar and Mongol, and it is very similar in its linguistic elements to the Kyrgyz language of neighboring Kyrgyzstan. Kazakh was first written only in the 1860s, using Arabic script. In 1929, Latin script was introduced. In 1940, Stalin decided to unify the written materials of the Central Asian republics with those of the Slavic rulers by introducing a modified form of Cyrillic. In 1992, the idea of a Latin-based alphabet was advanced, but was never fully implemented due to the likely

expenses incurred in the proposed implementation of changes. To day, the Kazakh language is considered to be culturally important, but Russian often tends to be lingua franca on the street.

In terms of religious affiliation, almost half the Kazakh population is Sunni Muslim (47 percent), while Russian Orthodox makes up a substantial and sizeable portion of the population (44 percent). The rest of the population consists of Protestant denominations, Roman Catholics and Jews. Like several other predominantly Muslim countries in the Central Asian region, Kazakhstan is a moderate country in regard to religion.

Human Development

Almost the entire Kazakh population can read and write. Literacy estimates range from 97 percent to 99 percent for the entire population. This high rate of literacy appears to be a consequence of the former Soviet influence and the support of state funds on education. Although there is a shortage of educational facilities, amenities, and pay for teachers is low, Kazakhstan still enjoys a better system of education than many of its neighbors.

About 2.8 percent of GDP is spent in the country on educational expenditures. About 4.3 percent of GDP is spent on health expenditures. Access to sanitation, water, and health care is considered to be generally good.

In the post-Soviet years, a lack of funds, deteriorating facilities, and a short supply of both pharmaceuticals and doctors, have adversely affected the public health system in Kazakhstan. Although average life expectancy rates are at the respectable level of 68.5 years (63 years for men and 74 years for women), child health care is poor and infant mortality rates as well as contagious diseases are on the rise. Indeed, several potentially epidemic diseases, such as diphtheria, viral hepatitis, cholera, tuberculosis, bubonic plague and AIDs, have all been recorded in Kazakhstan.

One notable measure used to determine a country's quality of life is the Human Development Index (HDI), which has been compiled annually since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, knowledge and education, as well as economic standard of living. In a recent ranking of 169 countries, the HDI placed Kazakhstan in the high human development category at 66th place.

Note: Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI, which is calculated and updated annually, offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for research sources.

Human Development Index

Human Development Index

Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The [Human Development Index](#) (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh
3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon

5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)
6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Suriname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo
13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros
14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti
19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania

22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire
23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea
30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali
34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad

37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau
38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

Source:

United Nations Development Programme's [Human Development Index](http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/) available at URL: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score
1	Denmark	273.4
2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67
7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33

10	Canada	253.33
11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67
19	Norway	246.67
20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67
25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33

28	Belgium	243.33
29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240
37	Honduras	240
38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33
43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33

46	Spain	233.33
47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230
55	Trinidad and Tobago	230
56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33
61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220

64	Indonesia	220
65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67
73	Mauritius	216.67
74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33
79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210

82	China	210
83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67
91	Yemen	206.67
92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200
97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67

100	Cape Verde	193.33
101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190
109	South Africa	190
110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67
115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33

118	Haiti	183.33
119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180
127	Mozambique	180
128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67
133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33

136	Romania	173.33
137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33
145	Central African Republic	163.33
146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160
151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67

154	Latvia	156.67
155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67
163	Rwanda	146.67
164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140
169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33

172	Armenia	123.33
173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as [Denmark](#), [Iceland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Switzerland](#), [Austria](#) resided at the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index. African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bag with Saudi Arabians reporting healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? *Psychtalk* 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

Happy Planet Index

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the [United States](#) will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1

2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1
4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5
12	Egypt	60.3
13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9
17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3

20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8
22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3
30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2
31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5
35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9

38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2
40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3
48	Armenia	48.3
49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1
53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8

56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7
58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0
66	Slovenia	44.5
67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9
71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5

74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3
76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7
84	Hong Kong	41.6
85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4
89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5

92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2
94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7
102	Australia	36.6
103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0
107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3

110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7
112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0
121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1
125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2

128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9
130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9
138	Burkina Faso	22.4
139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8
143	Zimbabwe	16.6

Source: This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).

Methodology: *The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL: <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/>*

Status of Women

Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank:

61st out of 140

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:

Not Ranked

Female Population:

8.0 million

Female Life Expectancy at birth:

74 years

Total Fertility Rate:

2.0

Maternal Mortality Ratio (2000):

210

Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:

5,600-43,000

Ever Married Women, Ages 15-19 (%):

7%

Mean Age at Time of Marriage:

23

Contraceptive Use Among Married Women, Any Method (%):

66%

Female Adult Literacy Rate:

99.3%

Combined Female Gross enrollment ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools:

87%

Female-Headed Households (%):

33%

Economically Active Females (%):

61.2%

Female Contributing Family Workers (%):

N/A

Female Estimated Earned Income:

\$5,221

Seats in Parliament held by women (%):

Lower or Single House: 10.4%

Upper House or Senate: 7.7%

Year Women Received the Right to Vote:

1924

Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:

1924

*The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index which measures the average achievement in a country. While very similar to the Human Development Index in its use of the same variables, the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in terms of life expectancy, enrollment in schools, income, and literacy in accordance to the disparities between males and females.

*The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite index measuring gender inequality in three of the basic dimensions of empowerment; economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources.

*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of babies born to women during their reproductive years. A TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement rate; once a TFR of a population reaches 2.1 the population will remain stable assuming no immigration or emigration takes place. When the TFR is greater than 2.1 a population will increase and when it is less than 2.1 a population will eventually decrease, although due to the age structure of a population it will take years before a low TFR is translated into lower population.

*Maternal Mortality Rate is the number of deaths to women per 100,000 live births that resulted from conditions related to pregnancy and or delivery related complications.

*Economically Active Females are the share of the female population, ages 15 and above, whom supply, or are able to supply, labor for the production of goods and services.

*Female Contributing Family Workers are those females who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.

*Estimated Earned Income is measured according to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US dollars.

Global Gender Gap Index

Global Gender Gap Index

Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Country								
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3
Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1
New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5
Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9
Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8

Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40
Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46
Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43
Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17
Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22

Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62
Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27
Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38
Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44
Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32
Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49

Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39
Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68
Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77
Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52
Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72
Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78

Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73
Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54
Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65
Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84
Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95
Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80

Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a
Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67
Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48
Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93
Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88
Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94

Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85
Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101
Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106
Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115

Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114
Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	0.5960	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103
Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121
Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122
Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123

Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

*new country 2010

Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as [Iceland](#), [Norway](#), [Finland](#), and [Sweden](#) have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, [France](#) has seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the [United States](#) has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. [Canada](#) has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americans in the realm of gender equality. [Lesotho](#) and South African ranked highly in the index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite [Lesotho](#) still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The [Philippines](#) and [Sri Lanka](#) were the top

ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context. The [Philippines](#) has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the [United Arab Emirates](#) held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

<http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende>

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

Culture and Arts

Content to come!

Etiquette

Cultural Dos and Taboos

- Among Muslims, the traditional Muslim greeting is "A-salaam a-laykum" ("Peace be upon you"), to which the reply is "w-laykum o a-salaam" ("And upon you be peace"). Be sure to exchange greetings whenever meeting friends or strangers. For greetings in rural areas, it is polite to first ask about the health of the host's livestock and then ask about the host's health.

- Note that titles are preferable to first names, especially in the case of elders or superiors. Although Western culture tends to utilize more casual modalities of communication, adhering to a traditional and formal style of interaction, especially among elders, is advisable.
- One should be sure to stand up when a Kazakh elder enters the room. Elders always receive the utmost respect. It is important that the visitor to Kazakhstan show elders the same respect that their own countrymen give them. During dinner the most honored guest is usually the eldest and will be presented a boiled mutton's head.
- If one is invited to dinner, guest's whose parents are still alive must never carve into any meat dish. According to their traditions, an elder will slice meat for those who are too young, even if the "youngster" is sixty.
- Animal husbandry as well as nomadic customs and practices are key aspects of traditional Kazakh life, and in fact, are influenced by one another. For example, traditional curses and blessings may invoked disease or fecundity among animals, and good manners require that a person ask first about the health of a man's livestock when greeting him and only afterward inquire about the human aspects of his life.
- The traditional Kazak dwelling is the yurt, a tent consisting of a flexible framework of willow wood covered with felt. Yurts, when properly constructed, can be climate controlled for optimal coolness in the summer and maximized warmth in the winter. Generally, men enter the yurt from the right side while women enter from the left. Although they are used less frequently these days as a primary dwelling place, they are still considered to be a symbol of Kazakh identity. In this regard, demonstrators and hunger strikers erected yurts in front of the government building in Almaty during he demonstrations of 1993. Yurts are also frequently used for decorative purposes in restaurants and other public buildings.
- Because Islam was introduced to Kazakh culture in the 17th and 18th centuries, the religion was not fully assimilated until later, and along the way, it was integrated with indigenous shamanistic and animistic beliefs which prevail today. For example, tradition holds that separate spirits inhabit the earth, sky, water, and fire, as well as domestic animals. As such, honored guests in rural parts of the country are treated to a feast of freshly killed lamb. These guests are sometimes asked to bless the lamb and to ask its spirit for permission to partake of its flesh.
- Unlike other countries in the region, Kazakhstan's government does not mix religion with politics, and as a result, women's lifestyles are not as restricted as those found in other predominately Muslim countries. Nevertheless, one should respect the Muslim traditions inside mosques, including the removal of shoes. In addition, women are expected to cover their hair, shoulders and legs before entering a mosque.
- Normally, one should be prepared to remove one's shoes before entering a building or a home.

Be sure not to walk on prayer mats, which will likely be present in Muslim households.

- One should use the right hand in preference to the left as the left hand is considered unclean among Muslims. Never take or give anything with the left hand. In particular, one should never eat with the left hand. This is a particularly important rule when people are eating from a common bowl or when eating with one's hands. In such cases, especially among Muslims, be sure to use the right hand, in keeping with Islamic protocol. Likewise, one should avoid gesturing with the left hand while making sure that gifts are received with the right hand. Of course, it is acceptable to use both hands when one is insufficient. One should also avoid pointing at another person, and one should never use the North American "thumbs up" gesture as is considered to be vulgar throughout the Muslim world.
- There are also a number of prohibitions and customs involving food that one should adhere to when dealing with Muslims. For example, one should note that the consumption of alcohol or pork is not allowed. Any gifts made using these substances are inappropriate.
- Generally, visitors are urged to acquaint themselves with the calendar and traditions of Islam, such as the fasting, daily prayer and practices. Praying five times daily, for example, is customary and affects the schedule of all events and practices in Muslim countries. During the period of Ramadan, for instance, fasting and prayer is mandatory for Muslims during this holy time.
- In the realm of protocol, one should not enter a room or home without knocking or coughing to announce one's presence. One should also not shout, laugh too loudly or sing during meal times. Note that it is appropriate to cover the mouth when laughing.
- In conversation, good topic choices include history, current or modern achievements, sports and culture. Generally, any controversial discussions about politics or religion should be avoided. Before embarking upon any kind of business discussion, one should ask after one's counterpart's health and life.
- If one is invited into a Kazakh home, it is customary to take a gift to the host or hostess. Baked goods, chocolates, or a bag of sweets, are good choices. More elaborate offerings, such as a beautiful ornament, possibly from one's own country, would constitute an acceptable gift between business associates.
- One should be aware that despite the fact that Kazakhstan is home to a large Muslim population, this is not a particularly conservative culture. Kazakhs are increasingly aware of popular culture on global scale and enjoy participating in popular cosmopolitan offerings such as international business, "Hollywood" entertainment, rock and pop music, and more Westernized dress. Indeed, Kazakhs appear to have developed a taste for American, Chinese and Turkish action movies, as well as old Soviet movies and Mexican soap operas on television.

• In rural areas, one's self-presentation should be restrained. Likewise, in Muslim circles, clothing should be appropriately discreet. In urban centers, business wear is typically more conventional; suits are the norm for both men and women, although some industries may allow more casual attire to be worn. Western women should try to be dignified in regard to makeup and jewelry. Tight, revealing clothing is not acceptable, while shorts, bikinis and short hems are objectionable. The rules for men's attire are not as strict, but men must keep their chest covered in public and should never wear shorts in public. Both men and women should dress modestly. There are, however, exceptions among the youthful, non-Muslim populations.

Travel Information

Please Note

This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.

For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

International Travel Guide

Checklist for Travelers

1. Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evacuation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.
2. Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.
3. Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.
4. Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.
5. Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure to leave a travel itinerary.
6. Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.
7. Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.
8. Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.
9. Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.
10. For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of citizenship.
11. Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.
12. If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or

toddlers. Note also that whether one is male or female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.

13. Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.

14. Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.

15. Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is suggested.

Tips for Travelers

- Get adequate insurance before you arrive. Local medical facilities are inadequate and private care is expensive.
- Check with your embassy, consulate, or appropriate government institution related to travel before traveling.
- Bring enough money for your trip. Travelers checks are not normally accepted. US\$ are the most widely accepted foreign currency.
- Keep valuables in a safe place and out of public view.
- If you are staying longer than a couple of weeks, or intend to go off the beaten track, register with the Embassy on arrival.
- Get a visa to cover your entire stay before you arrive and make sure you register with the local authorities if you intend to stay longer than three calendar days. Don't overstay your visa, even by only a few hours.
- Enter next of kin details into the back of your passport.
- Don't carry drugs; penalties can be severe.

- Don't take unofficial taxis. Arrange transport from the airport before you arrive and watch out for false greeters who have got hold of your name from passenger lists.

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Sources: *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers

In terms of business customs, Kazakhstan is more European than Asian. It is customary to shake hands and call people by their first names at business meetings, as well as at informal get-togethers. However, men generally do not shake women's hands in company. Business attire is generally a suit and tie for men, and a suit or business dress for women. Small gifts (pens, company logo pins, memo, and books) are frequently given at the end of an initial meeting as a token of appreciation. Business cards are the norm, often in both Russian and English.

Kazakhstani businessmen are generally less direct than Western businessmen, and what can be accomplished in a few meetings in the some countries might take more in Kazakhstan, requiring patience and discipline on the part of the visiting businessmen. An experienced and competent interpreter can add invaluable context to your business meetings.

It is common in Kazakhstan to have dinner with business contacts, but usually only after establishing business contacts in a more formal setting. Business attire is worn. Usually diners share a bottle of vodka or cognac and offer toasts, stating their desire for a fruitful business relationship and warm personal relations between partners. After-hours informal meetings, dinners and toasts, as well as weekend hunting and barbecues can be very important to forge business relations.

Sources: *United States Department of State Commercial Guides*

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html - new

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

Visa Information from the Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html>

Passport Information from the Government of Australia

<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx>

Passport Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/passport_passeport-eng.asp

Visa Information from the Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/visas-eng.asp

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro

<http://www.visapro.com>

Sources: United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Country-Specific Travel Information from United States

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Advice by Country from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>

General Travel Advice from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/General>

Travel Bulletins from the Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/>

Travel Tips from Government of Australia

<http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/index.html>

Travel Checklist by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/checklist_sommaire-eng.asp

Travel Checklist from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/checklist>

Your trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

A safe trip abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Tips for expatriates abroad from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html

Tips for students from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html <http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/broc>

Medical information for travelers from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

US Customs Travel information

<http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/>

Sources: United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia; Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers

<http://www.travlang.com/languages/>

<http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/index.htm>

World Weather Forecasts

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

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

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

Worldwide Time Zones, Map, World Clock

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

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

International Airport Codes

<http://www.world-airport-codes.com/>

International Dialing Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm>

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

International Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/phones.htm>

International Mobile Phone Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/mobilephones.htm>

International Internet Café Search Engine

<http://cybercaptive.com/>

Global Internet Roaming

<http://www.kropla.com/roaming.htm>

World Electric Power Guide

<http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm>

<http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm>

World Television Standards and Codes

<http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm>

International Currency Exchange Rates

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World

<http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html>

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/>

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

International Chambers of Commerce

<http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html>

World Tourism Websites

<http://123world.com/tourism/>

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.usembassy.gov/>

United Kingdom Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/find-an-embassy-overseas/>

Australia's Diplomatic Posts Around the World

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/>

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html>

Canada's Embassies and High Commissions

<http://www.international.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/embassies-ambassades.aspx>

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World

<http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm>

Safety and Security

Travel Warnings by Country from Government of Australia

<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/>

Travel Warnings and Alerts from United States Department of State

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

Travel Reports and Warnings by Government of Canada

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp

Travel Warnings from Government of United Kingdom

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/>
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll>

Sources: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

United States Department of State Information on Terrorism

<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/>

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926>

Government of Canada Terrorism Guide

<http://www.international.gc.ca/crime/terrorism-terrorisme.aspx?lang=eng>

Information on Terrorism by Government of Australia

<http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/index.html>

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety

<http://www.faasafety.gov/>

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)

<http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html>

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information

<http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp>

Information on Human Rights

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/>

Sources: The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the Government of Canada, the Government of United Kingdom, the Government of Australia, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk

Information

Diseases/Health Data

Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.

As a supplement, however, reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --

Guinea - Ebola

Liberia - Ebola

Nepal - Earthquake zone

Sierra Leone - Ebola

Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --

Cameroon - Polio

Somalia - Polio

Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone

Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -

Australia - Ross River disease
Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles
Brazil - Dengue Fever
Brazil - Malaria
Brazil - Zika
China - H7N9 Avian flu
Cuba - Cholera
Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu
Ethiopia - Measles
Germany - Measles
Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
Kyrgyzstan - Measles
Malaysia -Dengue Fever
Mexico - Chikungunya
Mexico - Hepatitis A
Nigeria - Meningitis
Philippines - Measles
Scotland - Mumps
Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)
Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya
Throughout Central America - Chikungunya
Throughout South America - Chikungunya
Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya

**For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>**

Health Information for Travelers to Kazakhstan

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout Eastern Europe and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Risk for

malaria exists only in small southern border areas of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. Travelers to these areas should take chloroquine to prevent malaria. For more detailed information about malaria in this region, see Malaria Risk and Prevention in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/easteurp.htm>).

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination may be required for entry into certain of these countries if you are coming from a tropical South American or sub-Saharan African country. (There is no risk for yellow fever in Eastern European and NIS countries.) For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm>).

An outbreak of diphtheria is occurring in all the states of the former Soviet Union. Travelers to these areas should be sure that their diphtheria immunization is up to date.

Tickborne encephalitis, a viral infection of the central nervous system occurs chiefly in Central and Western Europe. Travelers are at risk who visit or work in forested areas during the summer months and who consume unpasteurized dairy products. Vaccine for this disease is not available in the United States at this time. To prevent tickborne encephalitis, as well as Lyme disease, travelers should take precautions to prevent tick bites (see below).

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
- Hepatitis B, if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
- Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for 11- to 12-year-olds who did not receive the series as infants.

To Stay Healthy, Do:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember:

boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.

- If you are going to visit risk areas for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals), and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks as a deterrent to ticks.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).

What You Need To Bring with You:

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects.
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. The insecticide permethrin applied to clothing is an effective deterrent to ticks.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See above for more information about water filters.
- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home:

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area. If you become ill after your trip—even as long as a year after you return—tell your doctor where you have traveled.

For More Information:

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS).

For information about diseases-

Carried by Insects

Lyme disease, Malaria

Carried in Food or Water

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy ("mad cow disease"), Cholera, *Escherichia coli*, diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact

Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, also check the Diseases (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm>) section and the Health Topics A - Z (<http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm>).

Note:

Kazakhstan is located in the Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States (NIS) health region.

Sources:

The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm>

Chapter 6

Environmental Overview

Environmental Issues

General Overview:

Most of Kazakhstan 's environmental problems stem from the Soviet era.

Current Issues:

- high levels of air pollution due to low octane fuel usage
- poor disposal of hazardous wastes (more than 17 billion tons of hazardous materials are stored in landfills)
- land and soil degradation
- heavy metal contamination of surface water
- pollution in the Caspian Sea
- soil pollution from overuse of agricultural chemicals such as toxic pesticides
- soil salinization from faulty irrigation practices
- high levels of radioactivity and associated high incidences of oncology as a result of its position as the site of defense industries and test ranges of the former Soviet Union

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):

43.4

Country Rank (GHG output):

36th

Natural Hazards:

- earthquakes in the south
- mudslides around Almaty

Environmental Policy

Regulation and Jurisdiction:

The regulation and protection of the environment in Kazakhstan is under the jurisdiction of the following:

- Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
- Ministry of Agriculture

Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

N/A

International Environmental Accords:

Party to:

- Air Pollution
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Desertification
- Endangered Species
- Hazardous Wastes
- Ozone Layer Protection
- Ship Pollution

Signed but not ratified:

- Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol

Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):

Kazakhstan signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1999 but has not yet ratified it.

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

GHG Emissions Rankings

Country Rank	Country
1	United States
2	China
4	Russia
5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom
9	Canada

10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico
13	France
14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia
21	Ukraine
22	Poland
23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands
27	Kazakhstan

28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela
31	Argentina
32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates
39	Algeria
40	Nigeria
41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines
45	Vietnam

46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal
49	Colombia
50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden
57	Syria
58	Libya
59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland
63	Turkmenistan

64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco
67	New Zealand
68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador
75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia
77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia
81	Yemen

82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain
85	Angola
86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala
93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar
95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia
99	Ghana

100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia
103	El Salvador
104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan
111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia
113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania
117	Nicaragua

118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania
121	Georgia
122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania
129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea
131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo
135	Benin

136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti
139	Congo, DRC
140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger
147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso
149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan
153	Sierra Leone

154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali
157	Seychelles
158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia
165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau
167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada
171	Lesotho

172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa
175	Cape Verde
176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros
183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati
Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong
Not Ranked	Liechtenstein

Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco
Not Ranked	San Marino
Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

* European Union is ranked 3rd
 Cook Islands are ranked 184th
 Niue is ranked 186th

Global Environmental Snapshot

Introduction

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20th century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments, environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential—for instance, public health and education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage—for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining—can seem justified insofar as such activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

Regional Synopsis: Africa

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the

Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure

systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

Key Points:

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

Regional Synopsis: Central Asia

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

Key Points:

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

Regional Synopsis: Europe

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests. Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many

Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20th century was a century fixated on oil, the 21st century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

Key Points:

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70 percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

Key Points:

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks, contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the

late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

Regional Synopsis: North America

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies—a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20th century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results

with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

Polar Regions

Key Points:

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

Global Environmental Concepts

1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases

The Greenhouse Effect:

In the early 19th century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the

sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19th century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20th century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the [United](#)

[States](#), the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

*** See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. ***

2. Air Pollution

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the [United States](#). It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

3. Ozone Depletion

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural

photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (ODS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

4. Land Degradation

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

Desertification and Devegetation:

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation."

As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies, are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

Deforestation:

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for

the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to

sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

5. Water Resources

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

Freshwater:

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western [United States](#), current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant

on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.
- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.
- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionuclides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater

supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

Marine Resources:

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

6. Environmental Toxins

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionuclides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remedial approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment. Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the [United States](#), how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in

North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in [China](#), elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

More About Biodiversity Issues:

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "[Biodiversity Assessment](#)"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity. The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The [United Kingdom](#) identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas

occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

United Nations Environmental Program. URL: http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

<http://www.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

<http://climatechange.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>

World Resources Institute.

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

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

<http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/>

International Environmental Agreements and Associations

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Introduction

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.
2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discussions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, [Japan](#) in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990 levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the [United States](#) (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and [Japan](#), are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on

developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries - - with the obvious exceptions of [India](#) and [China](#) -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries. Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and [Japan](#), are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto

Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, [Germany](#), in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCCC's 7th Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, [Morocco](#), to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as [Russia](#), [Japan](#) and [Canada](#) agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the

Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto, Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.

Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and [United States](#) President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in [Mexico](#) City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as [South Africa](#), had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. [Bangladesh](#) identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The [United Kingdom](#), [Australia](#), [Mexico](#) and [Norway](#) also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012, would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But [Australia](#) went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as [China](#) and [India](#). Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like [China](#) and [India](#), with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, [China](#) -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, [China](#) had announced it would reduce the

intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, [China](#) was now accusing the [United States](#) and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the [United States](#) -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with [Japan](#) for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, [China](#) demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on [India](#) -- another major player in the developing world and a country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in [India](#), who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in [India](#) was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and [India](#) were joined by [Brazil](#) and [South Africa](#) in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in [Denmark](#) would be

classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, [Tuvalu](#) demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their citizens. [Tuvalu](#) also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from [Kiribati](#) joined the call by drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of [Kiribati](#) could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as such as [Tuvalu](#) and [Kiribati](#) in the Pacific, and the [Maldives](#) in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant [Saudi Arabia](#) was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the [United States](#) demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. [United States](#) President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the [United States](#) Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the [United States](#) Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, [United States](#) Environment Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the [United States](#) was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17 percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US\$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of [Sweden](#) -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by [China](#) and [India](#), appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to shore up support for a new climate change, [United States](#) President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the [United States](#) and [China](#). At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its

expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The [United States](#) argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for \$100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in [Qatar](#) extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of [Nauru](#), a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: "We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us."

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with [United States](#) President Barack Obama's request for \$60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the [United States](#) and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around \$10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance (for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as [Kiribati](#) and [Tuvalu](#), are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including [Fiji](#), [Kiribati](#), [Samoa](#) and [Tonga](#), and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in [Qatar](#) (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: <http://aosis.org/>

Special Report

COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP) in Paris, [France](#), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence

was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States](#) leader acknowledged that the accord was not "perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have."

Former [United States](#) Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accomplishments ensconced in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing

energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century

- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- \$100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, [Denmark](#), in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as [China](#) and [India](#), objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the \$100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around \$44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the \$100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the [United States](#), which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be

anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, [China](#) and [India](#) were not held to the same standards as the [United States](#) and European countries. In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in sea level. Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of [Tuvalu](#) issued this dismal reminder: "Tuvalu's future ... is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of [Tuvalu](#). No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?" It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find consensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the [United States](#) and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as [Russia](#), [China](#) and [India](#), there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), [Fiji](#), and the [Marshall Islands](#), called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy

and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of [Kiribati](#), “Imagine living in a place where you know it’s going to go away someday, but you don’t know what day that wave’s going to come over and wash your home away.” He added, “It’s a disaster we know is going to happen.” Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as [Kiribati](#). Stone explained, “For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion,” Stone explained. “So it’s not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it’s also about the day that there’s just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island.” Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, “If you look ahead 50 years, a country like [Kiribati](#) could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere.”

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the [United States](#). He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk. In a formal statement, Debrum declared: “We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to survival.” Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, “Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era.”

Debrum of the [Marshall Islands](#) espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, “Climate change won’t stop overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer.”

Editor's Entry on [Environmental Policy](#):

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including [Kiribati](#), [Tuvalu](#), the [Marshall Islands](#), [Fiji](#), among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and climate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being uninhabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in [France](#), with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human beings across the world.

1. Major International Environmental Accords:

General Environmental Concerns

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Accords Regarding Atmosphere

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1979

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1992

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Vienna, 1985 including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Depleted the Ozone Layer, Montreal, 1987

Accords Regarding Hazardous Substances

Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, Bamako, 1991

Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel Convention), Basel, 1989

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, Helsinki, 1992

Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region (Waigani Convention), Waigani, 1995

European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), Geneva 1957

FAO International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides, Rome, 1985

2. Major International Marine Accords:

Global Conventions

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention 1972), London, 1972

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by Protocol of 1978 relation thereto (MARPOL 73/78), London, 1973 and 1978

International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage 1969 (1969 CLC), Brussels, 1969, 1976, and 1984

International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage 1971 (1971 Fund Convention), Brussels, 1971

Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response, and Co-operation (OPRC), London, 1990

International Convention Relation to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties (Intervention Convention), Brussels, 1969

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Montego Bay, 1982

Regional Conventions

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft (Oslo Convention), Oslo, 1972

Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution from Land-based Sources (Paris Convention), Paris, 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), Paris, 1992

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1974 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1974

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area (1992 Helsinki Convention), Helsinki 1992

Conventions within the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Bucharest, 1992

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region, Cartagena de Indias, 1983

Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern African Region, Nairobi, 1985

Kuwait Regional Convention for Co-operation on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Pollution, [Kuwait](#), 1978

Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Region of the Mediterranean Sea (Barcelona Convention), Barcelona, 1976

Regional Convention for the Conservation of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Environment, Jeddah, 1982

Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, Noumea, 1986

Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and Coastal Area of the South-East Pacific, Lima, 1981

Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, Abidjan, 1981

3. Major Conventions Regarding Living Resources:

Marine Living Resources

Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), Canberra, 1980

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), Rio de Janeiro, 1966

International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), Washington, 1946

Nature Conservation and Terrestrial Living Resources

Antarctic Treaty, Washington, D.C., 1959

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), Paris, 1972

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Nairobi, 1992

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Bonn, 1979

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Washington, D.C., 1973

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), Ramsar, 1971

Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), Paris 1994

FAO International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources, Rome, 1983

International Tropical Timber Agreement, 1994 (ITTA, 1994), Geneva, 1994

Freshwater Resources

Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, Helsinki, 1992

4. Major Conventions Regarding Nuclear Safety:

Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency (Assistance Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident (Notification Convention), Vienna, 1986

Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANE)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

7. Other Networking Instruments

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

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The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:

- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Nauru
- Cuba
- Palau
- Holy See
- San Marino
- Korea, North
- [Serbia](#) & Montenegro
- Liberia
- Somalia
- Liechtenstein
- Tonga
- Monaco
- Tuvalu

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Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US\$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: <http://www.undp.org>

Note on [History](#) sections

In some CountryWatch Country Reviews, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used.

Environmental Overview

Environmental Profiles: A Global Guide to Projects and People. 1993. Linda Sobel Katz, Sarah Orrick, and Robert Honig. New York: Garland Publishing.

The Environment Encyclopedia and Directory, 2nd Edition. 1998. London: Europa.

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: <http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming>

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/>

Global Warming Information Page. URL: <http://globalwarming.org>

Introduction to Global [Environmental Issues](#), 2nd Edition. 1997. Kevin Pickering and Lewis Owen.

London: Routledge.

Trends: Compendium of Data on Global Change. URL: http://cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/trends/emis/em_cont.htm

United Nations Environmental Program. URL: http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: <http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/>

United States Department of Energy, Country Analysis Briefs. URL: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/contents.html>

World Climate Data Online. URL: <http://www.worldclimate.com>

World Directory of Country Environmental Studies. 1996. The World Resource Institute.

World Factbook. US Central Intelligence Agency. Washington, D.C.: Printing and Photography Group.

1998-1999 World Resources Guide to the Global Environment by the World Resources Institute. May, 1998.

1998/1999 Yearbook of International Cooperation on Environment and Development. 1998. London: Earthscan Publications.

Note on Edition Dates:

The earlier edition dates are noted above because they were used to formulate the original country reviews and serve as the baseline for some of the information covered. Later editions have been used in some cases, and are cited as such, while other more recent online resources (cited above) contain recent and ever-updated data sets used for research.

Other Sources:

General information has also been used in the compilation of this review, with the courtesy of governmental agencies from this country.

News Services:

CANA Daily Bulletin. Caribbean Media Agency Ltd., St. Michael, [Barbados](#).

Central and Eastern Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for Central and Eastern Africa.

Daily News, Panafrican News Agency. Dakar, [Senegal](#).

PACNEWS, Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association. Suva, [Fiji](#).

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Washington D.C. USA.

Reuters News. Thomson Reuters. New York, New York. USA.

Southern Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for Southern Africa.

Voice of America, English Service. Washington D.C.

West Africa Report, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs - Integrated Regional Information Network for West Africa. 1998-1999

Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

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Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61 October, 12, 2003.

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Examples:

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. "People." *CountryWatch.com: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *CountryWatch.com: France*. Online. Available URL : http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_topic.asp?vCOUNTRY=61&SECTION=SOCIAL&TOPIC=CLPEO&TYPE=TEXT. October 12, 2003.

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