

Kyrgyzstan

2016 Country Review

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Country Overview	1
Country Overview	2
Key Data	4
Kyrgyzstan	5
Asia	6
Chapter 2	8
Political Overview	8
History	9
Political Conditions	11
Political Risk Index	43
Political Stability	57
Freedom Rankings	73
Human Rights	85
Government Functions	87
Government Structure	90
Principal Government Officials	98
Leader Biography	102
Leader Biography	102
Foreign Relations	105
National Security	111
Defense Forces	114
Chapter 3	117
Economic Overview	117
Economic Overview	118
Nominal GDP and Components	121
Population and GDP Per Capita	122
Real GDP and Inflation	123
Government Spending and Taxation	124
Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment	125
Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate	126
Data in US Dollars	127
Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units	128

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS	130
World Energy Price Summary	131
CO2 Emissions	132
Agriculture Consumption and Production	133
World Agriculture Pricing Summary	135
Metals Consumption and Production	136
World Metals Pricing Summary	138
Economic Performance Index	139
Chapter 4	151
Investment Overview	151
Foreign Investment Climate	152
Foreign Investment Index	156
Corruption Perceptions Index	169
Competitiveness Ranking	181
Taxation	190
Stock Market	190
Partner Links	191
Chapter 5	192
Social Overview	192
People	193
Human Development Index	195
Life Satisfaction Index	199
Happy Planet Index	210
Status of Women	219
Global Gender Gap Index	222
Culture and Arts	231
Etiquette	231
Travel Information	235
Diseases/Health Data	244
Chapter 6	249
Environmental Overview	249
Environmental Issues	250
Environmental Policy	250
Greenhouse Gas Ranking	251
Global Environmental Snapshot	263
Global Environmental Concepts	274

International Environmental Agreements and Associations	288
Appendices	312
Bibliography	313

Chapter 1

Country Overview

Country Overview

KYRGYZSTAN

Located in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is known for its uncommon and rustic beauty. Landlocked and mostly mountainous, and with a small agricultural and industrial production base, Kyrgyzstan's economy is vulnerable to natural disasters and external shocks. The country remains one of the poorest in the world, with about 35 percent of its population living below the poverty line.

Kyrgyzstan was formally annexed to Russia in 1876. It became a Soviet republic in 1936 and achieved independence in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its first post-Soviet ruler was Askar Akayev who governed with a strong hand. Kyrgyzstan's autocratic rule by President Askar Akayev ended in the spring of 2005 when a mass uprising, known as the Tulip Revolution, drove him from power.

In July 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiyev -- then Kyrgyzstan's acting president -- won a landslide victory in the presidential election. In April 2007, Bishkek (the capital city of Kyrgyzstan) saw several days of protests of more than 10,000 people. Protestors called for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and demanding fresh elections. At issue was the promise of reform that came with the Tulip Revolution. Such expectations have resulted in little poverty alleviation and anemic anti-corruption progress. Months later, Bakiyev dissolved parliament and called snap elections in a bid to ratify his agenda. That ratification came with the results from the election, which gave victory to Bakiyev's Ak Zhol party. The opposition said the vote was fraudulent. A new test of democracy was on the horizon in 2009 with the presidential election in July 2009 in which Bakiyev was re-elected to power amidst criticism from international monitors about irregularities.

Anxieties about a slide into autocratic rule came to the fore at the start of 2010 when opposition leader, Ismail Isakov, was jailed for eight years for corruption. That action sparked new protests and renewed outrage by the opposition and its supporters from among the Kyrgyz citizenry. Public furor gave way to the ousting of Bakiyev from office in April 2010 and the formation of an interim government, led by Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of a coalition of opposition groups. As noted above, Otunbayeva's interim government has presided over a transition to constitutional government and facilitated democratic elections.

Kyrgyzstan's population, totaling over five million, consists predominantly of Kyrgyz (estimates range from 52 to 56 percent of the total population), Russians (18 percent), Uzbeks (13 percent), Ukrainians (three percent), Germans (two percent). That being said, Kyrgyzstan boasts being

home to as many as 70 distinct ethnic groups.

Most of the ethnic Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan live in the southern Ferghana Valley. The Ferghana Valley is actually divided between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, resulting in a complicated ethnic mixture of peoples living in a region that does not neatly correspond with the contemporary political borders. Indeed, the ethnic composition is not limited to Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks, but also includes Meskhetian Turks, Arabs, Uyghurs, and Slavs -- all of whom have also populated the region for centuries as well, and many of whom could be characterized as nomadic and who traditionally move freely across the area now defined by geopolitical boundary lines.

Osh -- the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan -- is home to a significant ethnic Uzbek community and the originating site of the mid-2010 ethnic violence in the country. Tensions between dominant Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have been ongoing for several years, and largely involve housing, land, and water, rights. Indeed, 1990 saw similar clashes with hundreds dead at that time. But in 2010, the ethnic dimension of that more recent conflict was baffling. It was possible that the conflict in 2010 was rooted in the same type of fight for resources experienced in 1990, and exacerbated by the political tensions surrounding Bakiyev being ousted from power. However, even though the southern part of the country has been a stronghold of former President Bakiyev, ethnic Uzbeks have not displayed any significant opposition to the interim government.

Note that elections were held in 2010 and 2011, which aimed to restore stability to the country. After parliamentary elections in 2010, a presidential election followed in 2011. Newly elected Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev took office on Dec. 1, 2011.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Asia
Population:	5913292
Climate:	Dry continental to polar in high Tien Shan; subtropical in southwest (Fergana Valley); temperate in northern foothill zone.
Languages:	Kirghiz (Kyrgyz) (official), Russian (official)
Currency:	1 som (KGS) = 200 rubles
Holiday:	Independence Day is 31 August (1991), National Day is 2 December
Area Total:	198500
Area Land:	191300
Coast Line:	0

Kyrgyzstan

Country Map



Asia

Regional Map



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Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

Historians tend to disagree on the early history of the Kyrgyz. The term Kyrgyz was first used in the eighth century in reference to the tribes occupying the upper reaches of the Yenisey River. In the 10th century, these tribes apparently migrated southward, searching for new pastures.

By the 13th century other, more aggressive, tribes arriving in the region, particularly the Mongols forcibly drove these people toward their present homeland. By the early 16th century, they were the present-day Kyrgyz Republic's predominant people. Modern Kyrgyz are a mixture of the original Turkic-speaking nomadic herdsmen and their Mongol conquerors.

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, the Kyrgyz people alternated between periods of tribal independence and foreign conquest. The Kalmyks in the late 17th century, the Manchus in the mid-18th century, and the Kokand Khanate in the first half of the 19th century overran them.

Russian conquest of the Kyrgyz began in the mid-19th century, and by 1867, they were absorbed into the Russian Empire. The Tsarist government did not recognize the Kyrgyz as a separate national entity or political unit. Kyrgyzia, along with other Turkic nations of Central Asia, was included in Russian Turkestan, created in 1867.

Kyrgyzia became a major area of Russian colonization, with Russians and other Slavs given the best land to settle, reducing the extent of grazing lands available for the Kyrgyz nomads considerably. Kyrgyz resentment against Russian colonization policies and conscription for noncombatant duties in the army led to a major revolt throughout Russia's Central Asian territory, including Kyrgyzia. Casualties were high on both sides, and thousands of Kyrgyz fled with their flocks to Afghanistan, the Pamirs and China.

After the 1917 Russian Bolshevik Revolution, the Bolshevik attitude toward the Kyrgyz was no more progressive than that of the tsarists. In fact, they consolidated their control and continued the colonial policies of the tsarists. This was met with determined Kyrgyz opposition in the ensuing years. Resistance efforts, however, were ultimately unsuccessful as the Bolsheviks defeated both Kyrgyz nationalists and foreign interventionists.

In 1919, Kyrgyzia was included in the newly established Turkestan Autonomous Republic, under the aegis of the Soviet Union. In 1924, the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast was created (it was called Kara-Kyrgyz to distinguish it from the Kazakh Autonomous Republic). In 1925, it was renamed the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast and then renamed once again in 1926 as the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic. It became a union republic in 1936.

In the mid-1920s, after the Basmachi Rebellion, a popular Turkic nationalist movement that swept former Turkestan from 1918 to 1924 and into 1931, the Soviet government softened its former colonial policy. The Soviet administration permitted traditional Kyrgyz culture to flourish, promoted the creation of native leadership and slowed the influx of Slavs into the region.

In the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s, however, these policies were replaced by Stalin's program of forced de-nomadization and collectivization. In addition, his program of Russification replaced Kyrgyz intelligentsia and leadership with an ideologically acceptable Stalinist elite. Some Kyrgyz protested by slaughtering their herds or driving them into China, but by 1933, about 67 percent of the nomads were collectivized, the intelligentsia was decimated, and the Kyrgyz political cadres were purged.

Despite the turmoil, the Kyrgyz were eventually able to achieve some industrialization, a higher standard of living, substantial achievements in education, and even increases in the population. They continued, however, to be one of the least urbanized major nationalities in the Soviet Union.

During the 1970s, for example, only 14.5 percent of the Kyrgyz across the Soviet Union lived in urban areas. Within the Kyrgyz Republic, they constituted less than one-fifth of the republic's urban population. In comparison, Russians residing in the republic were the most urbanized segment of the population, with more than half of them living in towns and cities. By 1989, the Kyrgyz Republic was the second-least urbanized republic in the Soviet Union, with 40 percent of its population residing in urban areas. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bishkek, the capital and largest city within the Kyrgyz Republic, contained less than 38 percent of the population.

Like other Muslim groups in the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz people registered tremendous population growth in the period from 1959 to 1979. While the population of the Soviet Union as a whole grew by 15.8 percent between 1959 and 1970, the number of Kyrgyz increased by 49.8 percent. As a result, the proportion of Kyrgyz in the republic steadily increased, while the Russian share of the population declined despite ongoing Russian immigration into the republic.

By 1989, the Kyrgyz, for the first time in decades, constituted a majority within their own republic with 52 percent of the population. Russians, with almost 22 percent of the population, were second. Other minorities included Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Germans and Tatars. To date, conflicts between the Kyrgyz people and Uzbeks have been a source of concern. Religion, however, has not

been a source of concern as Islamic fundamentalism is neither popular, nor considered a cause for anxiety in this predominantly Sunni Muslim nation.

The Kyrgyz language, which belongs to the Turkic linguistic group, has three regional dialects. A Kyrgyz literary language was not fully developed until the Soviet period. It merges all three dialects and incorporates Iranian, Arabic and Russian elements. Like other Turkic languages of Central Asia, the Kyrgyz language first used an Arabic script, which was replaced by a Latin script in 1928, and finally by a Cyrillic one in the early 1940s. Kyrgyz is spoken as a native language by about 99 percent of those living in the Kyrgyz Republic. Russian and Uzbek are also spoken.

In 1990, the Kyrgyz Republic declared itself independent, but leaders retained confederative relations with other republics of the former Soviet Union. In 1991, the country joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and elected its first president. It was internationally recognized as a sovereign state.

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

Independent Kyrgyzstan Under Akayev

After independence in 1990 as well as the post-independence election of President Akayev, Kyrgyzstan retained a confederative relationship with the former Soviet Union and its constituent states, and in 1991 joined the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). The Soviet-era constitution was not replaced until 1993. In the interim, the Communist Party was discredited for opposing sovereignty, democratization and market reforms.

A number of new parties and voices proliferated under the new system, the most significant of which was the Kyrgyzstan Democratic Movement, an umbrella organization of about 40 groups. Many of these groups have had special agendas. These groups include: Erkin, which calls for elevating the rights of ethnic communities; Asar, which calls for improving housing and infrastructure for the less fortunate; Aqiqat, a student movement calling for democratization; the Slavic Fund Party, which upholds the interests of Russians and other Slavs; and a newly-revived Communist Party. In the early 1990s, some of these groups, such as Erkin and Asaba, split from the umbrella organization to form their own parties.

At a summit of Kyrgyzstan's parties in 1993, President Akayev could not achieve consensus on his reform program. This impasse was typical of the post-independence period of the 1990s, which has been characterized by conservative opposition to political and economic reforms. Nevertheless, Akayev remained in power, although some of his cabinet did not. In 1993, the finance minister was dismissed, and the agriculture minister was removed primarily as a result of resistance to International Monetary Fund (IMF) demands for liberalization.

Despite the fact that Akayev was accused of complicity in a gold embezzlement controversy that year, he assailed widespread crime and corruption in government, stating that it "paralyzed" state authority and slowed political progress. He also complained that the police were not carrying out anti-corruption decrees. In addition, he warned that corruption was draining the country's revenues, and therefore having a significant adverse economic effect. As a result, he appointed a Communist Party leader to deal with corruption among officials, most of who were holdovers from the communist era. The move was criticized by Erkin's chairperson who suggested that Akayev was trying to "save the country" by using those who had earlier brought it to collapse.

Notwithstanding the governmental gridlock, Kyrgyzstan's human rights record was considered by many observers to be better than that of other Central Asian countries. Akayev cooperated with the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, acted to uphold rights of ethnic minorities, and refused to suppress opposition party activities, as exemplified by his condemnation of the police for arresting an Uzbek activist in 1992. Kyrgyzstan even sponsored a human rights conference in the capital that year. While the press law -- passed in 1992 -- requires all media to register with the government, and to eschew inciting violence or ethnic friction, an opposition party press is allowed to operate and no publications are supposed to be censored. Meanwhile, religious parties are generally banned, and religious practice must not endanger public order. The freedom of religion is, however, upheld and protected.

In 1994, new legislation was instituted that abolished the existing legislature, and replaced it with a smaller bicameral body. Elections for positions within the new legislature were held in 1995; results ran along clan/ethnic lines and were contested widely. At the end of 1995, a new presidential election was called; Akayev won a commanding victory and was effectively re-elected. In 1996, the elimination of certain cabinet positions and a reshuffle of posts were decreed. 1996 also saw the dismissal of the interior minister on grounds of corruption.

Later that year, a constitutional referendum on increased presidential powers was held and approved. While this change was not unlike the trend in most ex-Soviet republics toward authoritarianism, the decline in the economy also reinforced Akayev's desire for a more authoritarian governmental structure. Although in his governing style Akayev consistently showed a preference for strong executive power, human rights watch groups -- who once approved of the Akayev regime -- later decried the consolidation of presidential power, and recorded violations of

the freedom of association, as well as a lessening of protection of the free press.

Notwithstanding the more autocratic structure created by the new constitution, the government's reform plan continued to face formidable opposition in legislature. Conservative resistance delayed the privatization of state enterprises, while divestments that had taken place were fraught with administrative chaos and allegations of corruption.

In the late 1990s, Akayev's vision was to make Kyrgyzstan the "Switzerland" of Central Asia. To this end, governmental transition continued. New changes in government were announced by Akayev in April 1998, cutting the number of deputy prime ministers from three to one, disbanding one ministry, reforming another to a state agency, and reshuffling the principal officials.

Multiparty elections for the 65-member Legislative Assembly and 45-member Assembly of People's Representatives were held on Feb. 20, 2000. Runoff elections were held on March 12, 2000. More than 70 percent of the 2.5 million voters reportedly participated in the first election since independence. Some 500 candidates sought election. Despite the large number of candidates and potential voters, observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were critical of the fairness of the process. OSCE observed that a number of candidates and some parties had been prevented from running in the election on technical grounds. The Democratic Movement of Kyrgyzstan (DMK), the main opposition alliance, was, for example, banned from participating in the election by a local judge, although the DMK's leader, Felix Kulov, was permitted to run for a People's Assembly seat as an individual.

The Communist Party had a strong showing in the parliamentary elections, winning 27.7 percent of votes. The Union of Democratic Forces (18.6 percent), the Democratic Party of Women (12.7 percent), and the Veteran's Party (eight percent) won the next largest numbers of votes. All of these parties were aligned with President Akayev. Accordingly, the election results indicated that the legislature might lack independence from the president, and that the same trend toward more authoritarian regimes seen in neighboring countries had carried forth in Kyrgyzstan as well. But, given Kyrgyzstan's lack of experience with either Western-style loyal opposition parties or independent courts, some observers noted that just the fact that elections were held, however flawed the process, represented a step forward.

Askar Akayev was re-elected president on Oct. 29, 2000, with 74.5 percent of the votes cast. In December 2000 Kurmanbek Bakiyev was nominated by Akayev to replace Muriliyev as Prime Minister. Bakiyev was voted in by the parliament.

In the two years following Akayev's election Kyrgyzstan was rocked by continuing political turmoil. The key issues in the political controversy centered around repression of dissent by opposition parties expressing their views on a number of issues. These issues included corruption, the transfer of border land by Kyrgyzstan to China, as well as the negotiations by the government

on border treaties with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The turmoil came to a boil in June 2001 as opposition leaders in the parliament demanded that the government stop all work on placing demarcation posts along the Chinese-Kyrgyz border until the treaty -- which resulted in the cessation of 125,000 hectares of land to China -- could be reviewed and approved by the parliament. The protests did not stop the demarcation work from going forward, however, and the dispute between the opposition members of parliament and the President continued.

In January 2002, one of the key opposition leaders, Azimbek Beknazarov was arrested and charged with abusing his power as a former prosecutor in Toktogul. The residents of the Asky district where Beknazarov was elected began protests of his arrest and ultimate conviction in March 2002. Residents and other supporters of Beknazarov said that the charges were politically motivated and ultimately were the result of his criticism of transfer of the disputed land (mentioned just above). The protests became deadly as police opened fire on a demonstration in Toktogul, killing five protesters and wounding ten others.

The killings set off a round of national protests. In February 2002, a human rights activist -- Sherali Nazarkulov -- died during a hunger strike which had been undertaken to protest Beknazarov's arrest. In March 2002, several people were killed during protests in the regional capital of Jalal-Abad. The situation resulted in nationwide protests.

The impact of these incidences presumably contributed to the government's formation of a commission to review the incident and the ultimate resignation of the government of Prime Minister Bakiyev in May 2002. President Akayev appointed Nibolai Tanayev to be the new prime minister. Meanwhile, Beknazarov was given a one-year "suspended" sentence for his alleged crimes and subsequently freed. Also around mid-2002, the parliament ratified the controversial border agreement with China.

In June 2002, the parliament passed a draft law granting amnesty to all persons charged in connection with the violence including the police officers involved in the shootings and the protesters accused of assaulting police officers and damaging property.

By November 2002, opposition protests ensued with many people demanding the resignation of the president. Several demonstrators were arrested while the new prime minister accused the opposition movement and those involved in the demonstrations of destabilizing the country.

The political situation turned deadly in December 2002 when a bomb exploded at a market in Bishek, killing seven people. Whether or not the incident was connected with opposition activism was unknown. By May 2003, another explosion in the city of Osh left one person dead. Six individuals were arrested in connection with the attack. The location of that attack -- Osh -- was in

a region in which militants from both Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been known to operate.

Earlier, President Akayev had initiated a constitutional reform process, which initially included the participation of a broad range of government, civil, and social representatives in an open dialogue. The reform process resulted in a February 2003 referendum which was intended to sanction the constitutional changes aimed at redistributing powers of government. The referendum was passed in favor of the changes, however, observers said there were numerous irregularities in the voting. As well, critics accused the Akayev regime of attempting to further consolidate its strong powers.

By June 2003, the issue of Akayev's political hold on power was revisited when the lower house of parliament passed legislation which would exempt the president from prosecution.

In October 2003, foreign relations took center stage when a Russian air base was established in Kant. Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the opening of the air base, which has been located in close proximity to the one used by United States forces since the launch of the war against terrorism.

While the political situation on the ground in Kyrgyzstan regained some degree of calm, the underlying issues of dissent, political power and border treaties, continued to put pressure on the Akayev government throughout 2004. In fact, pressure on his government would continue well into the start of 2005 when parliamentary and presidential elections were expected to take place. With the forthcoming elections in mind, the country's opposition parties formed a coalition for the purpose of strongly challenging pro-government parties and players.

On the domestic front in early 2005, President Akayev announced that the Paris Club of creditor nations had agreed to write off 60 percent of Kyrgyzstan's external debt. The president noted that this was clearly a vote of confidence in his country. Undoubtedly, Akayev was hoping to benefit from the good news in the minds of the voters with the elections just around the corner.

Voters went to the polls in Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary election in February 2005. In one district, voting was delayed due to the disqualification of certain candidates. Results, however, were inconclusive in 40 of the 74 seats up for grabs and paved the way for a second round of voting. Voting in the second round of elections took place in mid-March. While European observers said that the elections failed to meet international standards and as opposition groups complained of violations, election officials on the ground expressed satisfaction with how things transpired.

The parliamentary vote was to precede the presidential election, which was set for later in the year when President Askar Akayev was scheduled to step down from power after over a decade at the helm. Critics had expressed fear that the parliamentary election was a way to extend his political influence in a clandestine manner after he left office.

Kyrgyzstan after Akayev: The Events from 2005 to the present

By late March 2005, President Akayev was reportedly ousted from office. He fled the country following a mass assault by protestors on the presidential compound in the capital city of Bishkek on March 24, 2005. The protests followed parliamentary elections in which -- as noted above -- there were charges of violations. Members of Akayev's regime, including Akayev himself, who was thought to have sought refuge in Russia, expressed the belief that he had been ousted in an "anti-constitutional coup" by opposition forces. (Note: Akayev had been in power for 15 years and had been viewed as something of a reformist in Central Asia. His more authoritarian stance in recent years may have played a role in the collapse of his regime.)

Opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev appeared on the country's state television station, suggesting that the opposition forces had taken control of the government. Several key opponents of Akayev's regime noted it was a victory for the people of Kyrgyzstan rather than a victory for the opposition factions. Indeed, crowds of people congregated for mass celebrations in the Ala-Too Square. Celebration, however, quickly expanded to include lawlessness and looting on a large scale.

Earlier, protestors clashed with both civilians in the streets as well as police in riot gear. As the protests approached the presidential compound, however, police seemed increasingly unwilling to intervene. Interior Minister Keneshbek Dushebayev warned the crowd to behave lawfully but also noted that no violent measures would be used against peaceful demonstrators. Only days prior, when protests were heating up, Prime Minister Nikolai Tanayev said he hoped to resolve the matter through dialogue rather than violence.

These tumultuous developments occurred on the heels of parliamentary elections in mid-March 2005 and began with popular demonstrations in southern Kyrgyzstan. By the last week of March, protestors dominated the main town square in the southern city of Osh, while authorities attempted to remove people from official buildings in the area. Meanwhile, there was an assault by about 10,000 protestors in Jalal-Abad on a police station. Elsewhere in the region, protestors took control of the airport to ensure that reinforcements could not be brought in.

Experts on the ground in the southern part of the country said that the region, which is located close to the border with Uzbekistan, was heavily populated by ethnic Uzbeks. As such, ethnic discord may have been at the heart of the imbroglio that gave rise to the ousting of Akayev and the ensuing political turmoil. Ethnic Uzbeks typically have not had a great deal of trust for the majority Kyrgyz who dominated Akayev's government and capital city of Bishkek. They have pointed to the deaths of several protestors in similar rallies a few years ago, as well as the deaths of hundreds in inter-ethnic violence back in 1990.

The protestors in the southern Uzbek-dominated part of the country claimed that the results of the parliamentary election in early 2005 were fixed and that President Askar Akayev's party used fraudulent means to win the elections. (Note: Election results garnered a strong showing for those aligned with Akayev in parliament.) Faced with such turmoil, the government said it would declare a state of emergency but opposition forces did not respond favorably to that proposition. Later, President Akayev's office announced that the Kyrgyz leader had demanded a review of the results of the parliamentary elections in select areas where there had been a "strong public reaction." But by the time of the collapse of Akayev's regime on March 24, 2005, Kyrgyzstan's Supreme Court had declared the disputed election results to be invalid.

In the week following the ousting of Kyrgyzstan's president Askar Akayev, two rival parliaments claimed legitimacy, thus creating anxiety that further political dissonance would destabilize the country. In response, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation sent its top official to help mediate the dispute. The country's Supreme Court had earlier nullified the results of the parliamentary elections, which had given rise to the political fracas in the first place. The country's highest court ruled that the old parliament held legitimacy. The country's acting leader, Kurmanbek Bakiev, expressed support for that ruling. However, other political factions claimed that the term of the old parliament had expired and, as such, the new parliament held authority. The imbroglio led to heated debate between the two competing parliaments with both claiming power. Meanwhile, even as the country's interim leader announced a date for presidential elections on June 26, an envoy from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation said it was unlikely that the June date would be feasible.

By the close of March 2005, the old parliament agreed to dissolve while the newly-elected parliament found concordance in recognizing Bakiev as both acting president and prime minister.

Then, in early April 2005, ousted Kyrgyzstan President Askar Akayev reportedly agreed to tender his formal resignation. Akayev made the decision following discussions with a parliamentary delegation from Kyrgyzstan at the Kyrgyz embassy in Moscow. The decision also followed the judgment by Kyrgyzstan's Constitutional Court which stated that Akayev could legally resign while in exile.

In the lead-up to presidential elections scheduled for June 2005, the former head of Kyrgyzstan's security department who had been recently released from prison, Felix Kulov, said he would not stand as a candidate. Instead, Kulov expressed interest in taking over the job of prime minister -- if acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev continued in that role following the election. The decision by Kulov effectively narrowed the field of presidential contenders and made it easier for Bakiev, for whom he would have been the key competitor.

While Kulov commanded support in the northern part of the country, Bakiev enjoyed strong support in the south, which has typically been more politically volatile. Kulov, who was one of

former President Askar Akayev's main opponents had been imprisoned for corruption and abuse of power during the time of the former president's regime. As intimated above, he had been released from jail soon after Akayev was deposed. He then began to stake a name for himself by taking control of the country's security situation during that period of chaos in March 2005. The Supreme Court of the country overturned the charges against him a month later, which Kulov said had been politically motivated in the first place. That meant that he was legally able to stand for public office.

His power-sharing "deal" of sorts with Bakiev had been well-received; it was intended to facilitate post-election stability in a country that has been plagued by unrest and violence in recent times.

Indeed, an act of violence hit the political landscape in June 2005 when parliamentarian, Jyrgalbek Surabaldiyev, was shot to death in the capital city of Bishkek.

Also in June 2005, a protest in the capital city of Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan ended when police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. The demonstrators, numbering in the hundreds, had occupied part of the main government building. About 20 people were reported to have been injured during the altercation. The demonstrators were protesting the barring of a candidate in upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for July 2005.

The country had been in a state of tension since its former leader fled in March 2005. Acting President Kurmanbek Bakiev had been faced with a challenge. How was he to assert his authority in a climate in which interest groups now believed that the way to spur political response and desired results was via public protest?

Regardless, the country was clamoring for action in dealing with corruption. In this regard, mid-2005 saw a noted opposition figure and anti-Akayev antagonist, Azimbek Beknazarov, appointed to the position of prosecutor-general. Beknazarov promised that he would lead the fight against corruption.

On July 9, 2005, Kyrgyzstan's acting president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, won a landslide victory in the presidential election. Early results by the Electoral Commission suggested that Bakiev garnered about 90 percent of the votes cast. Turnout slightly exceeded the necessary 50 percent mark in the first presidential election since the ousting of President Askar Akayev.

Bakiev's landslide victory was largely due to the aforementioned agreement forged with Felix Kulov, who had been viewed as his main rival.

The agreement aside, critics noted that the election was problematic because there was no real competition for Bakiev. Instead, none of his five competitors contesting the election managed to poll over 5 percent. For his part, Bakiev rejected such criticism saying that the Kyrgyz people were

given the opportunity to democratically choose a new leader.

On August 14, 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiev was officially inaugurated as president of Kyrgyzstan, a month after winning the Central Asian state's presidential election in a landslide victory, as noted above. He took the oath of office on the country's constitution in Bishkek's central square.

Bakiev said that his main goal as president would be to eradicate corruption. Along this vein, he said he expected professionalism from members of his government, noting that service would be based on merit rather than connections and cronyism. Also on the president's agenda would be improvement of the economy in a country where 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. To achieve economic improvement, Bakiev would have to steer the country toward the development of the tourism, hydro-electric and mining industries. Another issue on Bakiev's agenda was to be foreign policy. In fact, shortly after being elected, Bakiev challenged the presence of a United States airbase in Kyrgyzstan, which has been located near the capital city of Bishkek since 2001. Apparently, the United States Pentagon has been informed that it may maintain its base in Kyrgyzstan -- but only for long as it carries out military operations in Afghanistan.

A month later, attention was focused on government formation. The process was hardly seamless with parliament rejecting several proposed government members, including Roza Otunbayeva, who had been a primary figure in the opposition as well as being instrumental in the overthrow of former president Akayev. Around the same period, Azimbek Beknazarov was fired from the position of prosecutor-general. The situation suggested that governance in Kyrgyzstan was bound to be a complex affair with varied alliances and factionalism.

Also in September 2005, Bayaman Erkinbayev, a leader of the country's Olympic Committee was found dead. His death was a complication across a political landscape that was becoming increasingly difficult.

In October 2005, protestors in Kyrgyzstan took to the streets to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Felix Kulov. Their calls came days after a member of parliament, Tynchbek Akmatbayev, and two of his aides, were shot dead during a visit to Moldavanovka prison, located just outside the capital city of Bishkek. The parliamentarian and his aides were visiting a medical facility attached to the prison, for the purpose of examining the poor living conditions, when they were taken hostage and then killed. The prime minister reacted to the demonstrations by saying that they were illegal. Nevertheless, he said, "If the president and parliament find reasons for my resignation, I won't object." Kulov's political survival, however, became less of an issue when the government had to deal with unrest that was spreading from prison to prison. In the end, several other deaths ensued and the authorities were compelled to use forceful means to put an end to the chaos.

In early 2006, Raatbek Sanatbayev, a candidate for the presidency of the Kyrgyz Olympic committee, was shot dead. Sanatbayev was vying for the position, which, as noted above, came open after the violent death of his predecessor, Bayaman Erkinbayev.

Political dissonance with President Bakiev led to the resignation of Parliamentary Speaker Omurbek Tekebayev in the spring of 2006. Also around that period [April 2006], the country's Minister of Industry, Almazbek Atambayev, resigned as a result of policy differences with President Bakiev. In the backdrop of these developments within government, the president was also dealing with increasing hostility and dissatisfaction from the public at large. Indeed, thousands of people participated in protests in the country's capital. There, they demanded that President Bakiyev act strongly to deal with the crime and corruption that was plaguing the country or resign.

In May 2006, the country had to deal with another bizarre death when former convict and public personality, Ryspek Akmatbayev, was shot dead. There was speculation that his death was connected to the violence that had wracked the country in late 2005 because the victim was the brother of one of the parliamentarians who had been killed in the prison unrest at that time.

This period was also marked by more mass protests in which demonstrators called for both constitutional reform as well as critical action by the government to resolve both corruption and crime.

Also in May 2006, violence hit the border of Kyrgyzstan with Tajikistan when gunmen opened fire on those at a border post, killing several people including several border guards and soldiers. The incident apparently began in the Batken region where the attackers seized weapons at the border post and engaged border guards. Crossing Tajik territory into Kyrgyzstan, they subsequently fought with Kyrgyz soldiers.

Batken is located in the restive Fergana Valley -- an area shared by Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Fergana Valley has been the site of regional instability for over a decade -- since the fall of the Soviet Union. It has also become notorious for Islamic fundamentalism, most notably, in the form of the Hezb-ut-Tahrir or the Party of Liberation. Founded in the Middle East in the 1950s, Hezb-ut-Tahrir seeks the establishment of an Islamic caliphate that would unite all Muslim terrain. Regarded as an extremist enclave by some, the countries bordering the Fergana Valley have placed a ban on the group while some observers, including human rights groups, have said that the group's ordinary membership tend not to be involved in violent activities. However, when authorities in these other countries detain common members, they often end up being subjected to sham trials followed by imprisonment for several years.

In the fall of 2006, Kyrgyzstan was wracked by protests with thousands of people taking to the streets in Bishkek to call for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. The mass action had been spurred by disagreement about proposed constitutional changes that would limit

presidential authority while expanding parliamentary power. Many citizens had expected that the ousting of the previous government, which ultimately brought Bakiyev to power in what was now called the "Tulip Revolution," would also bring about democratic reforms. Instead, a lack of significant progress on that front, manifest by the dispute over the constitutional reform, as well as continuing problems of corruption and poverty, had left people disillusioned, angry. That disillusionment and anger increased to an acute level, ultimately motivating people to participate in mass street protests. Faced with this public outcry, Bakiyev was forced to sign the legislation authorizing the proposed constitutional changes.

As a result of the changes, executive power was curtailed while legislative power expanded. The situation created a power struggle and made it impossible for the executive branch of government to effectively work with the legislative branch or parliament. With a looming political crisis on the horizon, in December 2006, Prime Minister Felix Kulov and his cabinet resigned from office, and asked the president to call fresh elections. President Bakiyev accepted their resignations but called on Kulov and the cabinet to remain in government in an acting capacity until a new government could be formed.

With Kulov on his way out, the close of 2006 also saw constitutional amendments passed in which some power was redistributed back to the president for a transitional period, including the right to name a head of government. Following legislative elections under the new constitutional provisions, the legislature would, in the future, propose the prime minister and the cabinet, which would be formally appointed by the president, except for ministers in charge of defense and security, who were to be appointed solely by the president.

In January 2007, the parliament refused to reinstate Kulov as prime minister, prompting President Bakiyev to name Azim Isabekov as the new head of government. The president's decree came after the parliament approved Isabekov, who had been functioning as the acting Minister of Agriculture, as the new prime minister by an overwhelmingly positive vote. For his part, Isabekov said that his government viewed raising the living standards of the Kyrgyz people as its top priority.

But just months later, Isabekov's government, which had been formed in February 2007, resigned unexpectedly. In late March President Bakiyev appointed Almaz Atambayev, the leader of the Social-Democratic Party and a co-chairman of the For Reforms opposition movement, as the acting prime minister. President Bakiyev then instructed Atambayev to form a coalition government, which would include both members of the opposition and strong opponents of his own regime, in a gesture oriented toward significant change, and to show his acknowledgement of increasing public and political antagonism. To this end, Bakiyev said, "Almaz Atambayev's nomination for prime minister is a genuine step in meeting opposition demands." By early April 2007, the country's parliament approved Atambayev as the country's prime minister.

But in April 2007, Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan saw several days of protests of more than 10,000 people. Protestors were calling for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Alternatively, they were demanding fresh elections. In response, the government said that it wanted dialogue with the opposition and other political detractors. However, those opposed to the government were not in the mood for compromise. At issue has been the promise of reform that came with the revolution that ousted Askar Akayev from power in 2005, while sweeping Bakiyev into power. Such expectations have resulted in little poverty alleviation and anemic anti-corruption progress. Former Prime Minister Felix Kulov, who had once been a close ally of Bakiyev, was thought to be responsible for the mass protests. Still, with Bakiyev commanding his own substantial support base, the foundation was set for a potentially violent confrontation.

In October 2007, Kyrgyz President Bakiyev dissolved parliament and called snap elections. His decision to chart the course of fresh elections was made in the aftermath of a referendum which resulted in the popular support for President Bakiyev's plan to change the country's constitution. In a referendum held on October 21, 2007, 75 percent of Kyrgyz voted to back Bakiyev's proposal for constitutional changes. These included the introduction of a proportional representation system of voting, which he argued would place more political power in the hands of the people, but which the opposition said would give more power to Bakiyev. While some voices accused the referendum of being fraught with irregularities, the Central Election Commission said that it was free from fraudulence. The outcome appeared to ratify the president's agenda. With the referendum now held, fresh elections were expected to be held at the close of the year.

At the close of November 2007, Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev issued his resignation, which was accepted by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. The resignation was a formal step following the government's decision to step down from power in October 2007, consistent with constitutional changes that went into effect at that time. The prime minister's resignation came ahead of parliamentary elections now scheduled to be held in December 2007. In the interim, First Vice Premier Iskenderbek Aidaraliyev was serving as acting prime minister.

Voters finally went to the polls on December 16, 2007 to vote in snap parliamentary elections, which were intended to end two years of political turmoil. For the first time, parliamentarians were being elected in accordance with party lists, and 12 political parties were competing for representation in the legislative branch of government. Turnout was reported to be around 60 percent. Results were expected to be publicized a day later, however, the ruling Ak Zhol Party anticipated claiming victory.

Before the actual results could be made known, opposition groups alleged electoral fraud. They also reiterated previous accusations that the constitutional changes would consolidate presidential power -- the very opposite of President Bakiyev's contention that a proportional system of representation would be more democratic. The president has also argued that his intent has been to establish a fairer system and greater stability in the country. To that end, after casting his own

ballot in the capital city of Bishkek, Bakiyev said, "It will be a new and productive parliament."

Unofficial results showed a resounding victory for Bakiyev's Ak Zhol party, which was reportedly poised to win the lion's share of the parliamentary seats at stake. The opposition decried the results and again accused the president and his allies of consolidating power and moving the country in a more autocratic direction. They also reiterated their accusations of electoral irregularities. In an interview with Agence France Presse, Kubatbek Baibolov, the deputy head of Ata Meken, said the government was guilty of "flagrant fraud."

Days later, the Central Elections Commission released preliminary results showing that Ak Zhol Party won 46.99 percent, Ata Meken Party won 8.29 percent, the Communist Party won 5.12 percent, the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan won 5.05 percent, the Turan Party won 2.02 percent and the Ar Namys Party won 1.6 percent.

Parties needed to cross the five percent threshold to win seats in parliament; as well, there was a requirement of acquiring 0.5 percent of the vote in each of Kyrgyzstan's seven regions and its two main cities. Parties unable to meet these criteria could not be represented in parliament. To that end, the Central Elections Commission said that Ata Meken Party failed to clear the 0.5 percent threshold in the region of Osh. As such, the Central Elections Commission said that Ak Zhol would hold 74 seats in parliament, while the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party would hold eight seats each.

In response to this news and the threat of not being represented in parliament, Ata Meken warned that it would launch mass protests.

International monitors said that the election did not meet international standards. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said in a statement, "The 16 December parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan failed to meet a number of OSCE commitments." It went on to note, "Overall the election represented a missed opportunity and fell short of public expectations." The OSCE also said that the media failed to provide sufficient balanced information to Kyrgyz voters.

In the background of these developments has been the question of whether or not the election result will bring stability to Kyrgyzstan. Without any opposition in parliament, will the government proceed easily, bolstered by its poll performance and perceptions of an overwhelming mandate, however dubious the election results might be to some? Or will the lack of opposition in parliament tap into the public's anxieties and frustrations? These answers to these questions are yet to be determined as the country moves into a post-election phase.

Late 2007 saw Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev confirm the nomination of Igor Chudinov as prime minister. A former energy and industry minister, Chudinov was nominated by the Ak-Zhol

party, which won the majority of the seats in the parliamentary elections held weeks earlier.

In late June 2009, the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan forged an agreement with the United States that would permit the transportation of American military equipment and troops to Afghanistan via an air base in the Central Asian state. The new deal reportedly came with a price tag three times greater than the previous cost.

Months earlier in February 2009, Kyrgyzstan's President Kurmanbek Bakiyev issued a decree evicting United States troops from the Manas air base, on the basis of insufficient payment. The move shocked the United States and evoked questions as to Kyrgyzstan's motives. There was some speculation that Russia, which eschews the presence of Western military powers on its borders, may have been behind the move. But Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev said his government had grown increasingly worried about the increasingly violent landscape in Afghanistan and the possible destabilization of the Central Asia region.

Regardless of actual motive, the new agreement, which was approved by a Kyrgyz parliamentary committee, would allow the Manas air base to remain open, while also permitting United States forces to transport necessary arms and ammunition to fight the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

A new political party, the Patriots of Kyrgyzstan, was established in 2009. The leader of the party, Almaz Orozbekov, said that the party positions itself as a constructive opposition group. Orozbekov added that the party considers the current Kyrgyz Parliament illegitimate, and will therefore do its best to seek the parliament's dissolution via legal means.

Note on Key Political Events:

Primer on Kyrgyzstan's election of 2009 --

On March 20, 2009, the Kyrgyz parliament agreed on to hold the presidential election on July 23, 2009. The date was decided one day after the Constitutional Court ruled that the election should be held before Oct. 25, 2009. For his part, President Kurmanbek Bakiev has maintained that he would accept any decision by the court. Bakiev, who was elected in 2005, said that he intended to seek re-election and was re-nominated on at the start of May 2009.

The United Opposition announced that its candidate - Almazbek Atambayev, the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan -- would also contest the election. Another opposition politician, former defense minister Ismail Isakov, who had previously indicated that he would contest the election, reversed this decision. He said that his withdrawal from the race would improve Atambayev's chances of victory by not splitting the opposition vote.

In addition to Bakiyev and Atambayev, three other key candidacies were expected to contest the election -- Toktaiym Umetalieva, the chairwoman of the Association of Nongovernmental and Nonprofit Organizations, physician Nazar Aliev, and Tamir Sariev.

The election was observed by more than 500 international monitors from 48 countries, mainly the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It was also witnessed by over 10,000 local observers. There were varying opinions as to the conduct of the vote. Sergei Lebedev, the head of the CIS observer mission, characterized the election as free, open and in compliance with the country's laws. On the other side of the equation, OSCE monitors, said that the vote was marred by a litany of irregularities.

With that said, the election outcome was decisive and Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev appeared to have been elected with an overwhelming 76.12 percent of the vote share. The main opposition candidate, Almazbek Atambayev, garnered only 8.41 percent of the vote.

Kyrgyz government resigns over President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's government reform plan --

On October 20, 2009, the government of Kyrgyz Prime Minister Igor Chudinov resigned after President Kurmanbek Bakiyev presented his government reform plan. To that end, Bakiyev announced the restructuring of the country's government, which he said would save the country money. The restructuring exercise forced the resignation of the Chudinov government and President Bakiyev signed a decree on the resignation, essentially formalizing the move. Bakiyev's Ak Zhol party then nominated presidential chief of staff, Daniyar Usenov, to lead a new government. The restructuring program has been criticized by the opposition, who have charged that it would serve only to consolidate presidential power.

Political opponents blame Kyrgyz president for journalist's death--

On Dec. 16, 2009, journalist Gennadi Pavlyuk was thrown from the sixth floor of a building in Kazakhstan. His body was reported to have been bound with duct tape, according to the New York Times. He died a week later. In the aftermath of his death, political opponents of Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev blamed the leader for the journalist's death. They accused the Kyrgyz leader of carrying out a harsh crackdown on political dissent, recalling the names of several other opposition activists and journalists, who were subjected to intimidation and attacks by security forces in recent times. But for his part, Bakiyev has said the Kyrgyz government played no role in the killing of Pavlyuk.

Special Report

Deposed President Bakiyev deposed; opposition forms interim "people's government"

In the first week of April 2010, angry protestors took to the streets of Kyrgyzstan to register discontent with the government. For some time, there has been a high level of public frustration due to the government's failure to stabilize the country, increase economic growth, and stave off government corruption, as promised by the ideals of the 2005 Tulip Revolution that swept the former autocratic regime of Askar Akayev from office. Former allies during the Tulip Revolution were now parting ways, as they railed against President Kurmanbek Bakiyev's appetite for augmenting political power. However, it was the plan to increase the energy prices that seemed to have served as the proverbial "final straw," sending infuriated citizens to the streets in protest.

The unrest erupted first in the provincial town of Talas on April 6, 2010, but spread to the town of Naryn, and the Kyrgyz capital city of Bishkek a day later on April 7, 2010. Meanwhile, Interior Minister Moldomusa Kongatiyev was sent to Talas to try to end the protests but was beaten by protestors.

In the capital of Bishkek, the scene on the streets turned violent as police fired live bullets, tear gas and stun grenades into a crowd of thousands of people gathering outside the presidential compound. The director of a local human rights group, Dmitri Kabak, reported to the New York Times that as he monitored the protest, riot police opened fire on the demonstrators. Kabak said: "When people started marching toward the presidential office, snipers on the roof of the office started to open fire, with live bullets," Kabak said. "I saw several people who were killed right there on the square." Scores of people (around 80 in total) were said to have been killed as a result, and at least 100 others were wounded. As well, there was widespread looting with gunfire continuing through the night in the capital city, and the Kyrgyz border control announced that the border with Kazakhstan had been closed.

Meanwhile, Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev reportedly fled Bishkek on his airplane and protestors declared they had successfully ousted him from office. In a national speech, opposition leader and former parliamentary speaker, Omurbek Tekebaev, demanded the formal resignation of Bakiyev and his government. As reported by Reuters, Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister who has been leading the coalition of opposition groups, said "We want to negotiate his resignation. His business here is over."

For his part, Bakiyev made no comment at the time. He was said to have flown to the southern part of the country, supposedly to gather forces favorable to his cause. Days later though, Bakiyev insisted that although he had fled the capital, he was not relinquishing power. In an interview with the Associated Press on April 11, 2010, Bakiyev condemned the situation unfolding in Kyrgyzstan as a "coup" and vociferously rejected the self-declared interim government's demand that he resign from office. Instead, he unambiguously asserted: "I'm the head of state."

On the issue of the live ammunition that was fired on protestors, Bakiyev said he had not ordered that action, however, he defended the military explaining that troops were responding to attacks by the protestors. He said that the first shots had actually come from the protesters, including a sniper shot that barely missed hitting him as he stood in his office. To this end, Bakiyev observed, "When a sniper intentionally fired at my window and only missed me by chance, naturally the troops returned fire." The ousted Kyrgyz leader said the country would be well-served by an inquiry into the conditions that spurred the bloodshed in Bishkek and called for an international probe into matter.

At the international level, the United States embassy in Bishkek expressed deep concern about the situation unfolding in Kyrgyzstan. The United States also condemned the violence and called for the "respect for the rule of law." Russia struck a similar tone and urged that people stay calm. The Russian Foreign Ministry released the following statement: "We believe that it is important that under the circumstances, all current issues should be resolved in a lawful manner." A spokesman for Ban Ki-moon observed that the United Nations Secretary-General was "shocked by the reported deaths and injuries that have occurred" in Kyrgyzstan. The spokesperson also said that Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon "urgently appeals for dialogue and calm to avoid further bloodshed."

By April 13, 2010, Bakiyev was offering to resign, in exchange for safety guarantees for him and his family. Speaking from Jalalabad, in the south of Kyrgyzstan, he said, "I will go into retirement if security is guaranteed for me and my relatives." Bakiyev's shift in stance presumably occurred after he failed to muster support for his claim on power in his home region of Jalalabad. His prospects were not helped by the fact that the new power base of the country revoked his immunity and threatened to force him to face trial for his role in the killing of protestors discussed above. While the interim government was, indeed, now prepared to offer security guarantees to Bakiyev and his family, it stopped short of promising him escape from prosecution. Indeed, Topchybek Turgunaliyev, a member of the interim government, said: "We do not promise Bakiyev or anybody that if he gives up power, there will not be charges brought against him. Bakiyev's crimes are simply beyond measure." Underlying the perception that the interim government would not provide an amnesty for those involved in the violence that unfolded during the protests, Kyrgyz media reported that Defense Minister Baktybek Kalyev was detained in southern Kyrgyzstan; he was accused of ordering security forces to open fire on the protestors.

On April 15, 2010, deposed Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev reportedly had left the country and flown to neighboring Kazakhstan. Russian sources as the Interfax News Agency said that Bakiyev's ultimate destination could be Turkey or Latvia, although neither option could be confirmed. Ultimately, it was determined that he was in Belarus. It was later reported that Bakiyev's departure had been negotiated jointly Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, United States President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitriy Medvedev. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and the United Nations were also

instrumental in forging the agreement paving the way for Bakiyev's departure.

From Belarus, despite his exit from the scene in Kyrgyzstan, Bakiyev continued to insist that he was still the president of the country. However, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, has made clear that the regime of the old guard was over and that her alliance was in full control of Kyrgyzstan. To this end, an interim "people's government" was being formed and would remain in place for six months. In fact, new government ministers had already been appointed to certain portfolios. After the six month long interim period, new presidential elections would be held. As well, parliament had been dissolved with a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010.

Also of note was Otunbayeva's declaration that the existing constitution would remain in effect -- with provisions -- in the immediate future, there were plans to amend it with an eye on strengthening democratic institutions. To that end, a constitutional referendum was to be held on June 27, 2010. The plan was for Kyrgyzstan to become a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person.

Meanwhile, questions were being raised about the fate of a United States air base operating in Kyrgyzstan, which has been regarded as strategically important to the NATO mission in Afghanistan to the southeast. Otunbayeva, the former foreign minister and opposition bloc leader, intimated to global media that there would be no immediate change to the existing policy, and United States officials stated that operations at the base were carrying on normally. However, in the past, the Kyrgyzstan opposition has been hostile to the notion of the United States military presence within its borders. On April 11, 2010, the United States said that, as far as it was aware, Kyrgyzstan intended to honor key security agreements, including the one allowing the United States to continue operations at the military base. By mid-April 2010, Kyrgyzstan's interim government confirmed that it would extend the United States lease on the key air base.

In other developments, the interim government of Kyrgyzstan declared that its leader, Roza Otunbayeva, would function as president until the end of 2011. This declaration was at odds with a previous announcement that presidential elections would be held sooner. Regardless, the new move would have to be ratified via referendum in June 2010 when there was a vote expected on the new draft constitution.

Special Report:

After Bakiyev, Kyrgyzstan deals with resistance and conflict

In May 2010, in the aftermath of the unrest that led to former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev being

ousted from office, his supporters took to the streets in the thousands to fight back. Pro-Bakiyev activists seized the regional government office in the southern city of Osh. Pro-Bakiyev activists also took raided and took control of buildings in Bakiyev's home city of Jalalabad. The new governor of Jalalabad, who had hoped to defuse the tensions there, was seized by the protestors, was placed in a car and taken to an undisclosed location. While protestors were able to temporarily seize interests in Batken, authorities from the interim government said that it had regained control in that city.

Observers said these were defiant acts of resistance against the country's new interim government. Indeed, allies of the deposed Kyrgyz leader said that there were 25,000 supporters in the south of the country -- called the "committee in defense of ousted Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev" - - who were prepared to march on the capital of Bishkek. These developments came a week after leaflets were reported to have been circulated in the southern part of the country calling for the formation of a "southern Kyrgyz democratic republic."

By mid-May 2010, the country was being wracked by violent clashes between pro-Bakiyev activists and supporters of Kyrgyzstan's interim government. There were reports of gunfire in Jalalabad as those allied with the interim government tried to take back control of the government office there. That standoff became violent, leaving at least one person was dead and scores others injured. Likewise, in Osh, those allied with the interim government were intent on regaining control in that southern city. For its part, the transitional authorities insisted that they wielded the power and were positioned to stabilize the situation. That situation, however, was marked by a clearly unstable political landscape and presented the first major challenge for the interim government. Meanwhile, diplomats in the capital city were recalled or advised to take precautions due to security concerns.

In the third week of May 2010, instability in Kyrgyzstan was ongoing, with the interim government declaring a state of emergency in the southern city of Jalalabad. This move came a week after the interim government asserted that it wielded control over the volatile situation, and days after two people died and more than 70 were wounded in clashes there.

Special Report

Kyrgyzstan in Crisis: Clashes between Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks break out in southern Kyrgyzstan; mass exodus of ethnic Uzbeks to refugee camps in Uzbekistan --

On June 11, 2010, violent clashes between Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks broke out in the southern city on Osh in Kyrgyzstan, leaving at least 40 people dead and about 600 others wounded. It was the worst violence in the country since former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was deposed months earlier in April 2010. Reports from the ground in Osh indicated that several buildings and cars were

on fire, while shops were vandalized. Gunfire was rampant throughout the city as gun battles ensued. The interim government reportedly deployed troops to Osh, established roadblocks, and declared a state of emergency, with an eye on restoring security and order in the city.

Two days later, the country was in a state of crisis as the clashes spread from Osh to the entire southern region of Jalalabad. Eyewitnesses on the ground said that mobs of Kyrgyz mobs attacked people of Uzbek ethnic origins in both Osh and Jalalabad. As reported by journalists in the field, Kyrgyz individuals were seen shooting ethnic Uzbeks and vandalizing their property. Uzbeks were reported as using sticks and knives to protect themselves from Kyrgyz with guns.

The death toll in mid-June rose to at least 100 with more than 1,000 injured, prompting tens of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks to flee the country. Both Uzbek authorities and the International Red Cross said that tens of thousands of people had crossed the border from Kyrgyzstan into neighboring Uzbekistan.

The interim authorities suggested that the violence stemmed from a coordinated attack on the stability of the country. They also appeared to cast blame on former President Bakiyev for stoking the fires of discontent, thus leading to catastrophic consequences. Because Osh -- home to a large ethnic Uzbek minority -- was a known stronghold of Bakiyev, some suspicion had fallen on his supporters as being the orchestrators of the chaos. However, there were alternate suggestions that the clashes were sparked by rival gangs, and as noted below, accusations would eventually arise that the Kyrgyz military had participated in the attacks. Regardless of the actual cause, there was an ethnic dimension to the dissonance as noted by interim President Roza Otunbayeva, who said: "We're clearly talking about a stand-off between two ethnicities. We need (to muster) forces and means to stop and calm these people down, and this is what we are doing right now."

Given the crisis state gripping the country, the interim authorities gave security forces "shoot-to-kill" powers and called on Russia to send military reinforcement, with an eye on stemming the violence. For its part, though, Russia said that it deployed a small battalion to safeguard some Russian facilities. Beyond that, Russia indicated it had no intention of intervening more fully into the conflict.

By mid-June 2010, the number of ethnic Uzbeks fleeing their homes in Kyrgyzstan had evolved into a mass exodus numbering in the hundreds of thousands, with around 10,000 alone (not including children) headed for refugee camps just across the border in Uzbekistan. As well, there were tens of thousands of others who had fled their homes but were unable to find shelter; they were now effectively homeless.

On June 18, 2010, the official death toll had risen to more than 200, however, Kyrgyzstan's interim leader, Roza Otunbayeva, made the disturbing suggestion at the number of people killed in clashes between Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in Osh and Jalalabad was likely to be much higher. In an interview with Russian media, Otunbayeva said that the actual death toll could be "10 times the

official figures." Otunbayeva explained that the real toll might never be revealed as a result of the tradition of burying loved ones as soon as possible. Accordingly, the actual death toll was estimated to be anything between 270 and 2000 people.

Otunbayeva herself traveled to Osh to meet with officials there and to garner a firsthand understanding of the situation on the ground. Speaking from a central square in Osh, Otunbayeva said, "I came here to see, to speak with the people and hear firsthand what happened here." She also dismissed criticism of her interim government's handling of the crisis and instead said, "We will do everything to rebuild this city."

But the specific details related to reconstruction remained murky at the time, and international aid organizations were calling for help to deal with the dire humanitarian situation. While some aid was being transported to the affected areas, refugee camps in particular were running low on basic supplies, such as food, water, shelter and medicine. In addition, the refugee camps were quickly becoming sites of rapes and severe beatings as tensions played out even within these so-called safe zones of refuge. The International Red Cross characterized the landscape in the region as an "immense crisis" while the United Nations' health agency, the World Health Organization, warned that up to a million people would likely feel the effects of the political farrago.

A United States envoy in the region of Central Asia, Robert Blake, visited refugee camps in Andijan -- an Uzbek border city, which had been the destination of many of hundreds of thousands of the ethnic Uzbeks fleeing the ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan. Faced with the stories of these refugees, Blake called for an investigation into the political chaos that led to the bloodshed. Blake was expected to press for an inquiry during impending talks with Kyrgyz authorities in the Kyrgyz capital city of Bishkek.

Such calls to probe the events leading to the unrest were likely to increase given the growing claims that government troops participated in the ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan. One eyewitness told the news agency CNN that her son was shot by Kyrgyz soldiers sitting on top of a tank. Indeed, as of June 20, 2010, the interim government was signaling its willingness to investigate allegations that the Kyrgyz military may have perpetrated the ethnic violence, although it stopped short of noting whether or not independent investigators would be part of the probe.

A day later, at least one person died as a result of clashes between Kyrgyz security forces and ethnic Uzbeks close to Osh. The man was shot as the security forces were on patrol looking for weapons. Human Rights Watch alleged that the troops used a hard line as they carried out their security duties, even beating some people in their efforts and shooting at people. On the other side of the equation, the Kyrgyz interim government defended the action, saying that soldiers were being attacked and the victim died in the crossfire of the violence.

Meanwhile, deposed former President Bakiyev was denying any involvement in the violence plaguing the country. Instead, he blamed the riots on drug dealers, criminal elements, and religious

extremists for the violence, saying, "We can talk about people involved in drug dealing, as well as about religious extremists, of which there are lots both in Kyrgyzstan's north and south." Bakiyev also foreclosed the possibility of his return to the political realm, asserting that he would not be a part of politics in Kyrgyzstan "in any way."

Recent Political Developments

In other developments, the interim government was adamant about adhering to its imposed schedule for a national referendum on constitutional reform on June 27, 2010. The Kyrgyz authorities were somewhat supported by the United States and Russia in this regard when United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and her Russian counterpart, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, held a telephone meeting to discuss the Kyrgyz situation. While the two diplomats expressed strong concerns over the crisis gripping Kyrgyzstan, they also appeared to sanction the referendum even in midst of the crisis gripping the country. A statement released by the United States Department of State read as follows: "The ministers agreed that the issue of the upcoming referendum is the sovereign decision of Kyrgyzstan to make and agreed to encourage the authorities of Kyrgyzstan to conduct it according to international standards with the monitoring support of OSCE and others."

On voting day -- June 27, 2010 -- the country's Central Election Commission said that early results indicated that the vast majority of the ballots cast was in favor of the new constitution with less than ten percent voting against it. Turnout was reported to be between 55 and 65 percent.

President Roza Otunbayeva was quick to claim success saying at a news conference, "We have passed the new constitution for our republic." She claimed that the referendum result essentially legitimized her government, saying, "It will not be an interim but a legal and legitimate government. We are leaving the word interim behind." In fact, the constitutional referendum has paved the way for fresh parliamentary elections in September or October 2010, and afforded greater political power to the legislative branch of government. Note that Otunbayeva was scheduled to be sworn in as president on July 3, 2010, given that official referendum results were now available showing over 90 percent of Kyrgyz voters cast ballots in favor of the new constitution. She was expected to serve until a presidential election could be held in 2011.

Special Election Primer for Kyrgyzstan

Background --

Kyrgyzstan's first post-Soviet ruler was Askar Akayev, who governed with a strong hand. Kyrgyzstan's autocratic rule by President Askar Akayev ended in the spring of 2005 when a mass

uprising, known as the Tulip Revolution, drove him from power.

In July 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiyev -- then Kyrgyzstan's acting president -- won a landslide victory in the presidential election. In April 2007, Bishkek (the capital city of Kyrgyzstan) saw several days of protests of more than 10,000 people. Protestors called for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and demanding fresh elections. At issue was the promise of reform that came with the revolution that ousted Askar Akayev from power in 2005, while sweeping Bakiyev into power. Such expectations have resulted in little poverty alleviation and anemic anti-corruption progress. Months later, Bakiyev dissolved parliament and called snap elections in a bid to ratify his agenda. That ratification came with the results from the election, which gave victory to Bakiyev's Ak Zhol party. The opposition said the vote was fraudulent. A new test of democracy was on the horizon in 2009 with the presidential election in July 2009 in which Bakiyev was re-elected to power amidst criticism from international monitors about irregularities.

Anxieties about a slide into autocratic rule came to the fore at the start of 2010 when opposition leader, Ismail Isakov, was jailed for eight years for corruption. That action sparked new protests and renewed outrage by the opposition and its supporters from among the Kyrgyz citizenry. Public furor gave way to the ousting of Bakiyev from office in April 2010 and the formation of an interim government, led by the former opposition. An interim "people's government" was formed and parliament was dissolved with a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010.

Before then, a constitutional referendum was held on June 27, 2010. Voters in that referendum ratified a new draft constitution in which Kyrgyzstan would become a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person.

As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, would function as president at the helm of the interim government until the end of 2011.

Unrest ahead of elections of 2010 --

Kyrgyzstan's interim government was, itself, being challenged by various opposing factions. Soon after the new interim government took power in 2010, its authority was tested by the outbreak of ethnic violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in mid-2010. These developments were illustrative of the instability and unrest that often characterizes Kyrgyzstan's political landscape.

Ahead of the anticipated parliamentary elections to be held on October 10, 2010, there was an attack on the headquarters of a leading political party. According to Radio Free Europe, members of the Martyrs of the Homeland and Generous Ala-Too Mountains political movements stormed the office of the Fatherland Party in the Kyrgyz capital city of Bishkek. Earlier, supporters of the deposed President Kurmanbek Bakiyev held a rally in Bishkek in which they demanded his return.

The uneasy political landscape has given rise to fears of another flare up of ethnic violence. To that end, Otunbayeva threatened to cancel the election if members of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz ethnic communities in the southern part of the country become embroiled in further conflict. According to the interim government in Kyrgyzstan, such ethnic tensions have been stoked by Bakiyev, whose stronghold is southern Kyrgyzstan.

Election results and government formation --

The parliamentary elections were held, as promised, on October 10, 2010. On election day, voter turnout was said to be relatively high for Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary elections -- in excess of 55 percent across the nation. Despite some reported incidences of electoral irregularities, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which had deployed election monitors to Kyrgyzstan, said that the voting had gone off in a fairly acceptable manner. According to reports on the ground, there was no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. The other three parties gaining representation were Ar-Namys with 25 seats, Respublika with 23 seats and Ata-Meken with 18 seats.

In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Respublika, and the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party. With the pro-government Social Democrats poised to play key roles, the balance of power following the ousting of Bakiyev remained in place to some degree. But with an eye on balance, Akhmatbek Keldibekov of the Ata-Zhurt was chosen as the country's next speaker of parliament. The Social Democrats were expected to nominate Almazbek Atambayev for the post of prime minister.

Update:

On Feb. 21, 2011, Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva announced that she would not run for office in forthcoming elections. Otunbayeva has stood at the helm of power since April 2010 when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from office and an interim "people's government" was formed. Soon thereafter, parliament was dissolved and a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections in October 2011. Before that date, a constitutional referendum was held in June 2010 in which voters ratified a new draft constitution making Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person. As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, was formalized in the role of president until fresh presidential elections could be held in 2011. Now, in February

2011, during an interview RIA Novosti, Otunbayeva was making it clear that she had no intention of holding onto power, even via democratic means. She said: "All of us should be equal under the law, and I'm not going to stand in the upcoming elections." Otunbayeva continued, "We need to demonstrate a peaceful transfer of power within the law, as was decided in the referendum of June 27, 2010."

In June 2011, Amnesty International warned that the climate of impunity in Kyrgyzstan would lead to further violence in that country. At issue was the spate of violent clashes between two ethnic communities -- Kyrgyz and Uzbeks -- that transpired in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan in mid-2010 and left close to 500 people dead, hundreds more injured, and thousands of homes decimated. The violence was centered in Osh and Jalalbad and came in the aftermath of the ousting of former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April 2010. Now in June 2011, in a report titled, "Still Waiting for Justice," which was released ahead of the anniversary of the June 2010 ethnic unrest, Amnesty International noted that the Kyrgyz authorities had failed to bring those responsible to justice. Amnesty International, therefore, called on the government to "establish the truth about what happened."

The vast majority of the victims of torture and rape, according to human rights groups, were Uzbeks. Yet despite this fact, Amnesty International noted that any government investigations had focused on ethnic Uzbeks -- the group disproportionately victimized in the clashes that rocked Kyrgyzstan. In fact, Kyrgyz courts apparently issued 27 convictions and life sentences -- all of which involved ethnic Uzbeks.

Speaking on behalf of Amnesty, the human rights group's Europe and Central Asia director, Nicola Duckworth, said, "The failure to bring to justice those behind the violence could provide fertile soil for the seeds of future turmoil and future human rights violations." She continued "Ethnic bias and corruption are behind the pervading impunity in Kyrgyzstan. The rule of law must be upheld in order to rebuild the trust between the ethnic groups and prevent future bloodshed. All crimes, including crimes against humanity, must be investigated and tried in fair proceedings."

It should be noted that a month earlier in May 2011, an international panel known as the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission found that the systematic nature of the attacks that transpired in June 2010 could well be classified as crimes against humanity. The government of Kyrgyzstan rejected this conclusion, dismissing it as biased, while the Kyrgyz parliament voted to prevent the head of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission, Kimo Kiljunen, from entering Kyrgyzstan.

Primer on 2011 Presidential Election in Kyrgyzstan

A presidential election was expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan on Oct. 30, 2011. A number of prospective presidential candidates were expected to be nominated by their respective parties ahead

of election day. Among the candidates were the following: Kamchibek Tashiyev, who was nominated by the ruling coalition party, Ata Zhurt; Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was nominated by his Social Democratic Party; Adakhan Madumarov, the nominee of the opposition party, Butun (United) Kyrgyzstan; Iskhak Masaliyev from the Communist Party; Erkin Bulekbayev, the nominee of the opposition Greens Party; and Arstanbek Abdyldayev, the nominee of the El Uchun party. In total, though, there were well over 80 presidential contenders, although by September 2011, only 20 were officially registered.

Note that Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva had announced earlier, on Feb. 21, 2011, that she would not run for office in these forthcoming elections. During an interview RIA Novosti, Otunbayeva made it clear that she had no intention of holding onto power, even via democratic means. She said: "All of us should be equal under the law, and I'm not going to stand in the upcoming elections." Otunbayeva continued, "We need to demonstrate a peaceful transfer of power within the law, as was decided in the referendum (referenced below).

Otunbayeva has stood at the helm of power since April 2010 when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from office and an interim "people's government" was formed. Soon thereafter, parliament was dissolved and a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections in October 2010. Before that date, a constitutional referendum was held in June 2010 in which voters ratified a new draft constitution making Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person. As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, was formalized in the role of president until fresh presidential elections could be held in 2011.

The 2011 presidential vote would come about a year after parliamentary elections, which were held in October 2010. In those elections, there was no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party, as well as a third party known as Respublika.

Going into the 2011 presidential race, current Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was viewed as the front runner, with Adakhan Madumarov of United Kyrgyzstan and Kamchibek Tashiyev of Ata-Zhurt party, as his two main challengers. On election day, voting went off generally in a free and fair manner, although there were reports of some irregularities. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) observer mission deemed the election to have been held in full compliance with the country's electoral law.

With the votes counted, the Central Elections Committee announced that, in line with expectations, Atambayev had decisively won the presidency with more than 60 percent of the vote share. Madumarov and Tashiyev followed with 14.91 percent and 14.43 percent respectively. Upon learning of his victory, Atambayev said of his rivals: "They are real politicians, but they are surrounded by people who are pushing them toward ill-considered action. I think that we will find common language with Adakhan Madumarov and Kamchibek Tashiyev for the sake of a prospering Kyrgyzstan."

Newly elected Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev was sworn into office on Dec. 1, 2011. Ahead of the inauguration ceremony, sources from the inner coterie of the new president said Atambaev insisted "on an unpretentious ceremony without splendid celebrations and extravagance."

Update:

Note that a day after President Atambayev's inauguration, Kyrgyzstan's three-party ruling coalition fractured when the Social Democratic Party decided to withdraw its support. Chynybay Tursunbekov said his party pulled out of the coalition due to disagreements within the alliance. Tursunbekov said he hoped the president would offer his party a mandate to form a new coalition. To that end, on Dec. 8, 2011, President Almazbek Atambayev asked the Social Democratic Party (SDPK) to form the country's new ruling coalition. The president called on all branches of power to "work fairly and harmoniously" on behalf of the people. By Dec. 16, 2011, a new majority coalition had been formed in the Kyrgyz parliament, composed of the Social Democratic Party, Respublika (Republic), Ata-Meken (Fatherland), and Ar-Namys (Dignity). The new coalition would hold control over 92 of the total 120 seats in the parliament.

It should be noted that in the aftermath of this news, one Ar-Namys faction member announced the decision to withdraw from the coalition, leaving them 91 pro-coalition seats. One of the names being discussed for the position of prime minister was current Acting Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov. In fact, it was Babanov who was ultimately tapped to be the new head of government on Dec. 27, 2011. Babanov secured 113 affirmative votes in an internal vote in the 120-seat parliament to secure his post.

On Aug. 22, 2012, the majority coalition in Kyrgyzstan was dissolved when the Ar-Namys and Ata-Meken parties withdrew from the government. Going forward, Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov and the cabinet would function in caretaker capacity until a new parliamentary majority could be cobbled together. Then, based on that parliamentary majority, a new coalition government would be formed. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev would formalize the process by offering one of the parliamentary factions a mandate to form a government.

Less than a week later on Aug. 27, 2012, the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK) received a mandate from the president to form a majority coalition in parliament. In September 2012, Jantoro Satybaldiev was confirmed as the country's new prime minister via a vote in Kyrgyzstan's parliament. With 113 members of parliament voting, there were 111 votes favoring Satybaldiev's candidacy and two votes against him. Satybaldiev would serve at the helm of a new coalition government, consisting of the SDPK, Ata Meken, and Ar Namis.

In the third week of March 2014, the ruling coalition of Kyrgyzstan collapsed as a result of an internal feud over corruption. At issue was the decision by the Ata Meken party to exit the ruling coalition amidst accusation that the prime minister was guilty of abuse of office and the misappropriation of state funds. A statement released by Ata Meken read as follows: "Satybaldiyev has exhausted his moral and political outfit and can no longer occupy this high political post." The result was that Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), no longer had a parliamentary majority.

In an interview with Reuters News, Felix Kulov, the leader of the majority bloc, said, "The majority coalition is now disbanded." He noted that the president and parliament had been notified of the news, and added, "The president is now to announce that the government is an acting one." The next step would be for President Almazbek Atambayev to call on a parliamentary faction to form a new majority coalition and to name a prime minister. To that end, on March 19, 2014, President Atambayev accepted the government's resignation. It was to be seen if he would go down the aforementioned route of trying to cobble together a new coalition with a different head of government at the helm, or, if he would dissolve parliament and call an early election.

As March 2014 came to a close, a new coalition was established. The new coalition reconstituted all three parties in the old coalition that collapsed the week before -- the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The next order of business was the matter of who would hold the post of prime minister. To that end, the acting head of government, Joomart Otorbaev, who replaced Satybaldiev, went onto become the official prime minister (as discussed above).

On April 23, 2015, during a speech to parliament, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev announced he was resigning from his post. Other than noting there should be no monopoly of power in a democracy, Otorbaev declined to offer an actual rationale for his decision to step down from power in Kyrgyzstan. In the backdrop of Otorbaev's resignation was a brewing controversy in Kyrgyzstan concerning the functioning of the Kumtor gold mine, as discussed below. It was not confirmed that the Kumtor gold mine led to the resignation of the prime minister.

Regardless, President Almazbek Atambaev officially accepted the resignation of Otorbaev and selected Temir Sariyev to be the new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in May 2015. As discussed here, the new government's mandate would be tested at the polls as the country headed to

parliamentary elections set for Oct. 4, 2015. It was to be seen what party, or constellation of parties, would emerge as the winners after these elections.

Primer on 2015 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan

Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan were set to be held on Oct. 4, 2015, following a decree signed by President Almazbek Atambaev. In Kyrgyzstan, the parliament is a unicameral Supreme Council or Jorgorku Kenesh, composed of 120 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

The previous elections were held in October 2010 and produced no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Kurmanbek Bakiyev Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. The other three parties gaining representation were Ar-Namys with 25 seats, Respublika with 23 seats and Ata-Meken with 18 seats.

In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Respublika, and the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party. With the pro-government Social Democrats poised to play key roles, the balance of power following the ousting of Bakiyev remained in place to some degree. But with an eye on balance, Akhmatbek Keldibekov of the Ata-Zhurt was chosen as the country's next speaker of parliament. The Social Democrats were positioned to name the post of prime minister, making Almazbek Atambayev the new head of government. His tenure was short in that post as he contested the 2011 presidential elections with an eye on moving from head of government to head of state.

In 2011, a day after Almazbek Atambayev was inaugurated into power as the country's new president, Kyrgyzstan's three-party ruling coalition fractured when the Social Democratic Party decided to withdraw its support. Chynybay Tursunbekov said his party pulled out of the coalition due to disagreements within the alliance. Tursunbekov said he hoped the president would offer his party a mandate to form a new coalition. To that end, President Almazbek Atambayev asked the Social Democratic Party (SDPK) to form the country's new ruling coalition. The president called on all branches of power to "work fairly and harmoniously" on behalf of the people. At the end of 2011, a new majority coalition had been formed in the Kyrgyz parliament, composed of the Social Democratic Party, Respublika (Republic), Ata-Meken (Fatherland), and Ar-Namys (Dignity). Omurbek Babanov was, at the time, named to be the new prime minister.

In 2012, the majority coalition in Kyrgyzstan was dissolved when the Ar-Namys and Ata-Meken

parties withdrew from the government. Going forward, Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov and the cabinet would function in caretaker capacity until a new parliamentary majority could be cobbled together. Then, based on that parliamentary majority, a new coalition government would be formed. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev formalized the process by offering the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan the mandate to form a majority coalition in parliament. Accordingly, Jantoro Satybaldiev was confirmed as the country's new prime minister.

In 2014, the ruling coalition of Kyrgyzstan collapsed as a result of an internal feud over corruption. At issue was the decision by the Ata Meken party to exit the ruling coalition amidst accusations that the prime minister was guilty of abuse of office and the misappropriation of state funds. A statement released by Ata Meken read as follows: "Satybaldiyev has exhausted his moral and political outfit and can no longer occupy this high political post." The result was that Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), no longer had a parliamentary majority.

In March 2014, a new coalition was established. The new coalition reconstituted all three parties in the old coalition that collapsed the week before -- the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The next order of business was the matter of who would hold the post of prime minister. To that end, the acting head of government, Joomart Otorbaev, who replaced Satybaldiev, went onto become the official prime minister.

Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev announced he was resigning from his post a year later in the spring of 2015. Other than noting there should be no monopoly of power in a democracy, Otorbaev declined to offer an actual rationale for his decision to step down from power in Kyrgyzstan.

In the backdrop of Otorbaev's resignation was a brewing controversy in Kyrgyzstan concerning the functioning of the Kumtor gold mine. The Kumtor Gold Company is partially owned by the Kyrgyz government via the state-owned Kyrgyzaltyn Company; however a Canadian company named Centerra Gold owned the two-thirds of the enterprise. At issue was a call from locals and opposition parties for the Kumtor gold mine to be fully nationalized. For his part, Otorbaev has been opposed to such a path. Negotiations intended to split the company more favorably in the direction of the Kyrgyz government hit a snag over how that division might be configured. It was not confirmed that the Kumtor gold mine led to the resignation of the prime minister.

Regardless, President Almazbek Atambaev officially accepted the resignation of Otorbaev and selected Temir Sariyev to be the new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in May 2015. As discussed here, the new government's mandate would be tested at the polls as the country headed to parliamentary elections set for Oct. 4, 2015. It was to be seen what party, or constellation of parties, would emerge as the winners after these elections.

On election day in Kyrgyzstan -- Oct. 4, 2015 -- voters went to the polls to cast their ballots. For the first time, biometric data was being used in the voting exercise to prevent fraud. All expectations were that the Social Democrats, who led the outgoing coalition and were allied with President Almazbek Atambayev, were most likely to win the most votes. Once the ballots were counted, it seemed that that expectations lined up with reality. Indeed, the Social Democrats won 27 percent of the vote, with the nationalist opposition Respublika winning 20 percent of the vote. Four other parties won representation in parliament.

By the start of November 2015, the Social Democrats were able to form a coalition with three other parties to lead the next government of Kyrgyzstan. Together, the coalition would control 80 seats in the 120-seat parliament and thus hold a comfortable majority. Temir Sariyev was expected to stay on at the helm as prime minister.

Kyrgyzstan's government resigns amidst accusations of graft and corruption

On April 11, 2016, the entire government of Kyrgyzstan resigned from office amidst a graft and corruption scandal. At issue were charges levied by a parliamentary commission that the government of Prime Minister Temir Sariyev manipulated a \$100 million road construction deal so it would be given to a Chinese company without the required licensing credentials. In his resignation address, the outgoing prime minister sidestepped these charges, and instead declared, "Squabbles, rumors and gossip have upset the balance within the government." He added, "The government's work has stalled at such a difficult time."

The development highlighted a rift between the ruling factions in the Kyrgyzstan government -- particularly between President Almazbek Atambayev's coalition (including Ata Meken and the Social Democratic Party) -- and Sariyev's Akshumkar Party that held no sway in parliament. That being said, the immediate task would be to select a new head of government within the required two week window. To that end, Sooronbai Zheenbekov, a stalwart of President Almazbek Atambayev, was confirmed as the country's new prime minister by the parliament. The move essentially consolidated the power of the Social Democratic party which is aligned with both the president and the new prime minister.

Editor's Note:

Located in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is known for its uncommon and rustic beauty. Landlocked and mostly mountainous, and with a small agricultural and industrial production base, Kyrgyzstan's economy is vulnerable to natural disasters and external shocks. The country remains one of the poorest in the world, with about 35 percent of its population living below the poverty line.

Kyrgyzstan was formally annexed to Russia in 1876. It became a Soviet republic in 1936 and

achieved independence in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Its first post-Soviet ruler was Askar Akayev who governed with a strong hand. Kyrgyzstan's autocratic rule by President Askar Akayev ended in the spring of 2005 when a mass uprising, known as the Tulip Revolution, drove him from power.

In July 2005, Kurmanbek Bakiyev -- then Kyrgyzstan's acting president -- won a landslide victory in the presidential election. In April 2007, Bishkek (the capital city of Kyrgyzstan) saw several days of protests of more than 10,000 people. Protestors called for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and demanding fresh elections. At issue was the promise of reform that came with the Tulip Revolution. Such expectations have resulted in little poverty alleviation and anemic anti-corruption progress. Months later, Bakiyev dissolved parliament and called snap elections in a bid to ratify his agenda. That ratification came with the results from the election, which gave victory to Bakiyev's Ak Zhol party. The opposition said the vote was fraudulent. A new test of democracy was on the horizon in 2009 with the presidential election in July 2009 in which Bakiyev was re-elected to power amidst criticism from international monitors about irregularities.

Anxieties about a slide into autocratic rule came to the fore at the start of 2010 when opposition leader, Ismail Isakov, was jailed for eight years for corruption. That action sparked new protests and renewed outrage by the opposition and its supporters from among the Kyrgyz citizenry. Public furor gave way to the ousting of Bakiyev from office in April 2010 and the formation of an interim government, led by Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of a coalition of opposition groups. As noted above, Otunbayeva's interim government has presided over a transition to constitutional government and facilitated democratic elections.

Kyrgyzstan's population, totaling over five million, consists predominantly of Kyrgyz (estimates range from 52 to 56 percent of the total population), Russians (18 percent), Uzbeks (13 percent), Ukrainians (three percent), Germans (two percent). That being said, Kyrgyzstan boasts being home to as many as 70 distinct ethnic groups.

Most of the ethnic Uzbek population of Kyrgyzstan live in the southern Ferghana Valley. The Ferghana Valley is actually divided between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, resulting in a complicated ethnic mixture of peoples living in a region that does not neatly correspond with the contemporary political borders. Indeed, the ethnic composition is not limited to Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks, but also includes Meskhetian Turks, Arabs, Uyghurs, and Slavs -- all of whom have also populated the region for centuries as well, and many of whom could be characterized as nomadic and who traditionally move freely across the area now defined by geopolitical boundary lines.

Osh -- the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan -- is home to a significant ethnic Uzbek community and the originating site of the mid-2010 ethnic violence in the country. Tensions between dominant Kyrgyz and Uzbeks have been ongoing for several years, and largely involve housing, land, and water, rights. Indeed, 1990 saw similar clashes with hundreds dead at that time. But in 2010, the ethnic dimension of that more recent conflict was baffling. It was possible that the conflict in 2010

was rooted in the same type of fight for resources experienced in 1990, and exacerbated by the political tensions surrounding Bakiyev being ousted from power. However, even though the southern part of the country has been a stronghold of former President Bakiyev, ethnic Uzbeks have not displayed any significant opposition to the interim government.

See above for details related to recent elections.

-- April 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman. Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com. General sources listed in Bibliography.

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
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*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; at 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 Kyrgyzstan

In 2005, President Akayev of the Kyrgyz Republic fled the country following widespread opposition protests. He officially resigned one month later. Though there was only one serious contender, acting President Kurman Bakiyev, the July 10, 2005 elections marked progress towards meeting international election standards. The overthrow of Akayev's regime has resulted in improvement for the respect of citizens' civil and human rights. Numerous Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) officials were dismissed and prosecuted for known human rights abuses. The government stopped restricting peaceful opposition demonstrations. Incidences of harassment of opposition groups and the independent media also dropped in number. Though steps in the right direction, problems remain. Limitations on due process, poor prison conditions, child labor, discrimination against ethnic minorities, and human are all abuses in which effective solutions are still needed. As of 2010, Bakiyev was himself deposed as a result of mass revolts. In the conflict leading up to his exit from the scene, live ammunition was used against protestors. See "Political Conditions" for details.

Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

See Social Overview in Country Review for full list.

Human Poverty Index Rank:

Not Ranked

Gini Index:

29.0

Life Expectancy at Birth (years):

68.4 years

Unemployment Rate:

18%

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

N/A

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

N/A

Note-88% of the population live on \$4 a day

Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):

40%

Internally Displaced People:

N/A

Note-6,000 refugees

Total Crime Rate (%):

27.8%

Health Expenditure (% of GDP):

Public: 2.2%

% of GDP Spent on Education:

3.1%

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
- 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

- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (Signed but not yet ratified)

*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

Under the old constitution adopted in 1993, an amendment proposed by President Askar AKAEV and passed in a national referendum in February 2003 significantly expanded the powers of the president at the expense of the legislature; during large-scale demonstrations in November 2006, President BAKIEV and the opposition negotiated a new constitution granting greater powers to the parliament and the government; amendments added in December 2006 redistributed some power back to the president, but both November and December 2006 versions were annulled in September 2007, and a new version was approved by referendum on in October 2007; the BAKIEV-initiated referendum was criticized by Western observers for voting irregularities, particularly ballot stuffing.

In April 2010, angry protestors allied with the opposition claim to have overthrown government of Kyrgyzstan. President Bakiyev fled the scene but refused to relinquish power. Nevertheless, the

opposition coalition announced that it was now in full control of the country. At the helm was Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister who has been leading the coalition of opposition groups.

On April 8, 2010, the opposition bloc said that parliament had been dissolved. The opposition bloc also announced that an interim government was being formed, which they referred to as a "people's government," and that it would remain in place for six months. A date was now set for fresh parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010. Whether or not this date would be maintained was yet to be seen. A referendum on new constitutional provisions was in the offing.

The new regime that took power in 2010, led by Roza Otunbayeva, noted that while the existing constitution would remain in effect -- with provisions -- in the immediate future, there were plans to amend it with an eye on strengthening democratic institutions. A constitutional referendum was held on June 27, 2010 ratifying the plan for Kyrgyzstan to become a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person.

Executive Authority

The president is the head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces and represents the Kyrgyz Republic nationally and internationally. The president is elected directly by the people and holds office for a five-year term, but no more than two consecutive terms. The president signs legislation and agreements, mobilizes forces, calls referenda and elections, and may also exercise legislative authority in some cases.

Executive authority in the Kyrgyz Republic is also vested in the government, headed by the prime minister. The prime minister, deputy prime minister and ministers of the various governmental ministries are appointed by the president, although the Supreme Council, called the "Jogorku Kenesh," must approve the prime minister.

Note: Constitutional changes in 2006 gave parliament the power to appoint a new government; however, after Prime Minister Kulov's resignation in late 2006, President Bakiyev called for constitutional amendments by which the president would -- for a transitional period -- have increased powers, including the right to name a head of government. Following legislative elections under the constitution, the legislature will propose and the president appoint the prime minister, and the prime minister will propose and the president will appoint members of the Cabinet, except for ministers in charge of defense and security, who will be appointed solely by the president.

Legislative Authority

The Supreme Council or "Jogorku Kenesh," the equivalent of a parliament, is the representative body holding legislative power. Until a referendum in 2003, it was bicameral in structure, consisting of upper and lower houses. The Assembly of People's Representatives had 70 seats and members were elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The Legislative Assembly had 35 seats and members were elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

In accordance with a 2003 referendum, the parliament was slated to become unicameral with 75 deputies after the February 2005 elections. The events of 2005 resulted in a dispute over which parliament was actually legitimate. Officially, though, the 2003 referendum changed the nature of the parliament to the unicameral structure. The unicameral Supreme Council or Jorgorku Kenesh, therefore, has 75 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms). The 2006 constitution, however, calls for 90 seats.

Note that as of 2010, when the elections ensued following the coup that ousted President Bakiyev from power, the Supreme Council contained 120 seats.

Judicial Authority

There is a Supreme Court and a Constitutional Court. Judges of both the Supreme and Constitutional Courts are appointed for 10-year terms by the Jorgorku Kenesh on the recommendation of the president; their age limit is 70 years. There are also the following courts: Higher Court of Arbitration and Local Courts. Judges appointed by the president on the recommendation of the National Council on Legal Affairs for a probationary period of five years, then 10 years.

Administration

Administrative provinces are headed by governors.

Editor's Note on "People's Government"

In April 2010, angry protestors allied with the opposition claim to have overthrown government of Kyrgyzstan. President Bakiyev fled the scene but refused to relinquish power. Nevertheless, the opposition coalition announced that it was now in full control of the country. At the helm was Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister who has been leading the coalition of opposition

groups.

On April 8, 2010, the opposition bloc said that parliament had been dissolved. The opposition bloc also announced that an interim government was being formed, which they referred to as a "people's government," and that it would remain in place for six months. After the six month long interim period, new presidential elections would be held. The former foreign minister and opposition coalition leader, Otunbayeva said that new government ministers had already been appointed to certain portfolios. Otunbayeva also noted that while the existing constitution would remain in effect -- with provisions -- in the immediate future, there were plans to amend it with an eye on strengthening democratic institutions.

As discussed above, the new regime that took power in 2010, led by Otunbayeva, noted that while the existing constitution would remain in effect -- with provisions -- in the immediate future, there were plans to amend it with an eye on strengthening democratic institutions. A constitutional referendum was held on June 27, 2010 ratifying the plan for Kyrgyzstan to become a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person.

Government Structure

Names:

conventional long form:

Kyrgyz Republic

conventional short form:

Kyrgyzstan

local long form:

Kyrgyz Respublikasy

local short form:

Kyrgyzstan

former:

Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic

Type:
Republic

Executive Branch:

Head of State:

President Almazbek Atambayev was elected as the president of Kyrgyzstan in 2011 as discussed in the primer below. The president is elected by popular vote for one six-year term.

Primer on 2011 Presidential Election in Kyrgyzstan

A presidential election was expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan on Oct. 30, 2011. A number of prospective presidential candidates were expected to be nominated by their respective parties ahead of election day. Among the candidates were the following: Kamchibek Tashiyev, who was nominated by the ruling coalition party, Ata Zhurt; Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was nominated by his Social Democratic Party; Adakhan Madumarov, the nominee of the opposition party, Butun (United) Kyrgyzstan; Iskhak Masaliyev from the Communist Party; Erkin Bulekbayev, the nominee of the opposition Greens Party; and Arstanbek Abdyldayev, the nominee of the El Uchun party. In total, though, there were well over 80 presidential contenders, although by September 2011, only 20 were officially registered.

Note that Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva had announced earlier, on Feb. 21, 2011, that she would not run for office in these forthcoming elections. During an interview RIA Novosti, Otunbayeva made it clear that she had no intention of holding onto power, even via democratic means. She said: "All of us should be equal under the law, and I'm not going to stand in the upcoming elections." Otunbayeva continued, "We need to demonstrate a peaceful transfer of power within the law, as was decided in the referendum (referenced below).

Otunbayeva has stood at the helm of power since April 2010 when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from office and an interim "people's government" was formed. Soon thereafter, parliament was dissolved and a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections in October 2010. Before that date, a constitutional referendum was held in June 2010 in which voters ratified a new draft constitution making Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person. As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, was formalized in the role of president until fresh presidential elections could be held in 2011.

The 2011 presidential vote would come about a year after parliamentary elections, which were held in October 2010. In those elections, there was no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek

Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party, as well as a third party known as Respublika.

Going into the 2011 presidential race, current Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was viewed as the frontrunner, with Adakhan Madumarov of United Kyrgyzstan and Kamchibek Tashiyev of Ata-Zhurt party, as his two main challengers. On election day, voting went off generally in a free and fair manner, although there were reports of some irregularities. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) observer mission deemed the election to have been held in full compliance with the country's electoral law.

With the votes counted, the Central Elections Committee announced that, in line with expectations, Atambayev had decisively won the presidency with more than 60 percent of the vote share. Madumarov and Tashiyev followed with 14.91 percent and 14.43 percent respectively. Upon learning of his victory, Atambayev said of his rivals: "They are real politicians, but they are surrounded by people who are pushing them toward ill-considered action. I think that we will find common language with Adakhan Madumarov and Kamchibek Tashiyev for the sake of a prospering Kyrgyzstan."

Newly elected Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev was sworn into office on Dec. 1, 2011. Ahead of the inauguration ceremony, sources from the inner coterie of the new president said Atambaev insisted "on an unpretentious ceremony without splendid celebrations and extravagance."

Note on Head of Government:

Prime Minister Temir Sariyev was named by the president in 2015 after the resignation of Joomart Otorbaev. Fresh parliamentary elections were held in October 2015; Sariyev staying on after the 2015 polls. In 2016, the entire government of Kyrgyzstan resigned from office amidst a graft and corruption scandal.

See entries below for details related to the country's governing landscape.

Cabinet:

Cabinet of Ministers; appointed by the president based on the recommendation of the prime minister

Note on Government:

Ruling coalition collapses and reconstituted in Kyrgyzstan --

In the third week of March 2014, the ruling coalition of Kyrgyzstan collapsed as a result of an internal feud over corruption. At issue was the decision by the Ata Meken party to exit the ruling coalition amidst accusation that the prime minister was guilty of abuse of office and the misappropriation of state funds. A statement released by Ata Meken read as follows: "Satybaldiyev has exhausted his moral and political outfit and can no longer occupy this high political post." The result was that Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), no longer had a parliamentary majority.

In an interview with Reuters News, Felix Kulov, the leader of the majority bloc, said, "The majority coalition is now disbanded." He noted that the president and parliament had been notified of the news, and added, "The president is now to announce that the government is an acting one." The next step would be for President Almazbek Atambayev to call on a parliamentary faction to form a new majority coalition and to name a prime minister. To that end, on March 19, 2014, President Atambayev accepted the government's resignation. It was to be seen if he would go down the aforementioned route of trying to cobble together a new coalition with a different head of government at the helm, or, if he would dissolve parliament and call an early election.

As March 2014 came to a close, a new coalition was established. The new coalition reconstituted all three parties in the old coalition that collapsed the week before -- the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The next order of business was the matter of who would hold the post of prime minister. To that end, the acting head of government, Joomart Otorbaev, who replaced Satybaldiev, went onto become the official prime minister (as discussed above).

Kyrgyz Prime Minister Otorbaev resigns from power --

On April 23, 2015, during a speech to parliament, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev announced he was resigning from his post. Other than noting there should be no monopoly of power in a democracy, Otorbaev declined to offer an actual rationale for his decision to step down from power in Kyrgyzstan.

In the backdrop of Otorbaev's resignation was a brewing controversy in Kyrgyzstan concerning the functioning of the Kumtor gold mine. The Kumtor Gold Company is partially owned by the Kyrgyz government via the state-owned Kyrgyzaltyn Company; however a Canadian company named Centerra Gold owned the two-thirds of the enterprise. At issue was a call from locals and opposition parties for the Kumtor gold mine to be fully nationalized. For his part, Otorbaev has been opposed to such a path. Negotiations intended to split the company more favorably in the direction of the Kyrgyz government hit a snag over how that division might be configured.

It was not confirmed that the Kumtor gold mine led to the resignation of the prime minister. Regardless, it would be up to President Almazbek Atambaev to officially accept the resignation of

Otorbaev and his cabinet. Then, the process would commence to select, nominate, and approve a new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan. The three-party majority coalition would then have 15 days to nominate a new prime minister to the legislature for approval.

New prime minister; new elections set:

President Almazbek Atambaev officially accepted the resignation of Otorbaev and selected Temir Sariyev to be the new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in May 2015. As discussed here, the new government's mandate would be tested at the polls as the country headed to parliamentary elections set for Oct. 4, 2015. It was to be seen what party, or constellation of parties, would emerge as the winners after these elections.

*** See Election Primer below for details related to the 2015 parliamentary elections. ***

Kyrgyzstan's government resigns amidst accusations of graft and corruption

On April 11, 2016, the entire government of Kyrgyzstan resigned from office amidst a graft and corruption scandal. At issue were charges levied by a parliamentary commission that the government of Prime Minister Temir Sariyev manipulated a \$100 million road construction deal so it would be given to a Chinese company without the required licensing credentials. In his resignation address, the outgoing prime minister sidestepped these charges, and instead declared, "Squabbles, rumors and gossip have upset the balance within the government." He added, "The government's work has stalled at such a difficult time."

The development highlighted a rift between the ruling factions in the Kyrgyzstan government -- particularly between President Almazbek Atambayev's coalition (including Ata Meken and the Social Democratic Party) -- and Sariyev's Akshumkar Party that held no sway in parliament. That being said, the immediate task would be to select a new head of government within the required two week window. To that end, Sooronbai Zheenbekov, a stalwart of President Almazbek Atambayev, was confirmed as the country's new prime minister by the parliament. The move essentially consolidated the power of the Social Democratic party which is aligned with both the president and the new prime minister.

Legislative Branch:

Unicameral Supreme Council or Jorgorku Kenesh:

120 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms

Primer on 2015 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan

Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan were set to be held on Oct. 4, 2015, following a decree signed by President Almazbek Atambaev. In Kyrgyzstan, the parliament is a unicameral Supreme Council or Jorgorku Kenesh, composed of 120 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms.

The previous elections were held in October 2010 and produced no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Kurmanbek Bakiyev Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. The other three parties gaining representation were Ar-Namys with 25 seats, Respublika with 23 seats and Ata-Meken with 18 seats.

In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Respublika, and the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party. With the pro-government Social Democrats poised to play key roles, the balance of power following the ousting of Bakiyev remained in place to some degree. But with an eye on balance, Akhmatbek Keldibekov of the Ata-Zhurt was chosen as the country's next speaker of parliament. The Social Democrats were positioned to name the post of prime minister, making Almazbek Atambayev the new head of government. His tenure was short in that post as he contested the 2011 presidential elections with an eye on moving from head of government to head of state.

In 2011, a day after Almazbek Atambayev was inaugurated into power as the country's new president, Kyrgyzstan's three-party ruling coalition fractured when the Social Democratic Party decided to withdraw its support. Chynybay Tursunbekov said his party pulled out of the coalition due to disagreements within the alliance. Tursunbekov said he hoped the president would offer his party a mandate to form a new coalition. To that end, President Almazbek Atambayev asked the Social Democratic Party (SDPK) to form the country's new ruling coalition. The president called on all branches of power to "work fairly and harmoniously" on behalf of the people. At the end of 2011, a new majority coalition had been formed in the Kyrgyz parliament, composed of the Social Democratic Party, Respublika (Republic), Ata-Meken (Fatherland), and Ar-Namys (Dignity). Omurbek Babanov was, at the time, named to be the new prime minister.

In 2012, the majority coalition in Kyrgyzstan was dissolved when the Ar-Namys and Ata-Meken parties withdrew from the government. Going forward, Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov and the cabinet would function in caretaker capacity until a new parliamentary majority could be cobbled together. Then, based on that parliamentary majority, a new coalition government would be formed. Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev formalized the process by offering the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan the mandate to form a majority coalition in parliament. Accordingly, Jantoro Satybaldiev was confirmed as the country's new prime minister.

In 2014, the ruling coalition of Kyrgyzstan collapsed as a result of an internal feud over corruption. At issue was the decision by the Ata Meken party to exit the ruling coalition amidst accusations that the prime minister was guilty of abuse of office and the misappropriation of state

funds. A statement released by Ata Meken read as follows: "Satybaldiyev has exhausted his moral and political outfit and can no longer occupy this high political post." The result was that Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, of the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), no longer had a parliamentary majority.

In March 2014, a new coalition was established. The new coalition reconstituted all three parties in the old coalition that collapsed the week before -- the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The next order of business was the matter of who would hold the post of prime minister. To that end, the acting head of government, Joomart Otorbaev, who replaced Satybaldiev, went onto become the official prime minister.

Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev announced he was resigning from his post a year later in the spring of 2015. Other than noting there should be no monopoly of power in a democracy, Otorbaev declined to offer an actual rationale for his decision to step down from power in Kyrgyzstan.

In the backdrop of Otorbaev's resignation was a brewing controversy in Kyrgyzstan concerning the functioning of the Kumtor gold mine. The Kumtor Gold Company is partially owned by the Kyrgyz government via the state-owned Kyrgyzaltyn Company; however a Canadian company named Centerra Gold owned the two-thirds of the enterprise. At issue was a call from locals and opposition parties for the Kumtor gold mine to be fully nationalized. For his part, Otorbaev has been opposed to such a path. Negotiations intended to split the company more favorably in the direction of the Kyrgyz government hit a snag over how that division might be configured. It was not confirmed that the Kumtor gold mine led to the resignation of the prime minister.

Regardless, President Almazbek Atambaev officially accepted the resignation of Otorbaev and selected Temir Sariyev to be the new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in May 2015. As discussed here, the new government's mandate would be tested at the polls as the country headed to parliamentary elections set for Oct. 4, 2015. It was to be seen what party, or constellation of parties, would emerge as the winners after these elections.

On election day in Kyrgyzstan -- Oct. 4, 2015 -- voters went to the polls to cast their ballots. For the first time, biometric data was being used in the voting exercise to prevent fraud. All expectations were that the Social Democrats, who led the outgoing coalition and were allied with President Almazbek Atambayev, were most likely to win the most votes. Once the ballots were counted, it seemed that that expectations lined up with reality. Indeed, the Social Democrats won 27 percent of the vote, with the nationalist opposition Respublika winning 20 percent of the vote. Four other parties won representation in parliament.

By the start of November 2015, the Social Democrats were able to form a coalition with three other parties to lead the next government of Kyrgyzstan. Together, the coalition would control 80

seats in the 120-seat parliament and thus hold a comfortable majority. Temir Sariyev was expected to stay on at the helm as prime minister.

Judicial Branch:

Supreme Court; Constitutional Court (judges of both the Supreme and Constitutional Courts are appointed for 10-year terms by the Jorgorku Kenesh on the recommendation of the president; their age limit is 70 years); Higher Court of Arbitration; Local Courts (judges appointed by the president on the recommendation of the National Council on Legal Affairs for a probationary period of five years, then 10 years)

Constitution:

Approved by referendum in November 2006

Note:

Under the old constitution adopted in 1993, an amendment proposed by President Askar AKAEV and passed in a national referendum in February 2003 significantly expanded the powers of the president at the expense of the legislature; during large-scale demonstrations in November 2006, President BAKIEV and the opposition negotiated a new constitution granting greater powers to the parliament and the government; amendments added in December 2006 redistributed some power back to the president, but both November and December 2006 versions were annulled in September 2007, and a new version was approved by referendum on in October 2007; the BAKIEV-initiated referendum was criticized by Western observers for voting irregularities, particularly ballot stuffing.

In April 2010, angry protestors allied with the opposition claim to have overthrown government of Kyrgyzstan. President Bakiyev fled the scene but refused to relinquish power. Nevertheless, the opposition coalition announced that it was now in full control of the country. At the helm was Roza Otunbayeva, a former foreign minister who has been leading the coalition of opposition groups.

On April 8, 2010, the opposition bloc said that parliament had been dissolved. The opposition bloc also announced that an interim government was being formed, which they referred to as a "people's government," and that it would remain in place for six months. A date was now set for fresh parliamentary elections on October 10, 2010. Whether or not this date would be maintained was yet to be seen. A referendum on new constitutional provisions was in the offing. That constitutional referendum was held on June 27, 2010 ratifying the plan for Kyrgyzstan to become a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person.

Legal System:

Based on civil law system

Political Parties and Leaders:

Note that this list includes available research data at the time of writing and is subject to constant change --

Ata-Jurt-Respublika (Homeland-Republic) [Omurbek BABANOV, Kamchybek TASHIEV]

Ata-Meken (Fatherland) [Omurbek TEKEBAEV]

Bir Bol (Stay United) [Altynbek SULAIMANOV]

Kyrgyzstan Party [Kanatbek ISAEV, Kanybek IMANALIEV]

Onuguu-Progress [Bakyt TOROBAEV]

Social-Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan or SDPK [Almazbek ATAMBAEV]

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Administrative Divisions:

7 provinces (oblastlar, singular - oblasty) and 1 city* (shaar); Batken Oblasty, Bishkek Shaary*, Chuy Oblasty (Bishkek), Jalal-Abad Oblasty, Naryn Oblasty, Osh Oblasty, Talas Oblasty, Ysyk-Kol Oblasty (Karakol)

Note:

Names in parentheses are administrative centers when name differs from "oblast" name.

Principal Government Officials

Leadership and Cabinet of Kyrgyzstan

Head of State:

President Almazbek Atambayev was elected as the president of Kyrgyzstan in 2011 as discussed in the primer below. The president is elected by popular vote for one six-year term.

Primer on 2011 Presidential Election in Kyrgyzstan

A presidential election was expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan on Oct. 30, 2011. A number of prospective presidential candidates were expected to be nominated by their respective parties ahead of election day. Among the candidates were the following: Kamchibek Tashiyev, who was nominated by the ruling coalition party, Ata Zhurt; Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was nominated by his Social Democratic Party; Adakhan Madumarov, the nominee of the opposition party, Butun (United) Kyrgyzstan; Iskhak Masaliyev from the Communist Party; Erkin Bulekbayev, the nominee of the opposition Greens Party; and Arstanbek Abdyldayev, the nominee of the El Uchun party. In total, though, there were well over 80 presidential contenders, although by September 2011, only 20 were officially registered.

Note that Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva had announced earlier, on Feb. 21, 2011, that she would not run for office in these forthcoming elections. During an interview RIA Novosti, Otunbayeva made it clear that she had no intention of holding onto power, even via democratic means. She said: "All of us should be equal under the law, and I'm not going to stand in the upcoming elections." Otunbayeva continued, "We need to demonstrate a peaceful transfer of power within the law, as was decided in the referendum (referenced below).

Otunbayeva has stood at the helm of power since April 2010 when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from office and an interim "people's government" was formed. Soon thereafter, parliament was dissolved and a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections in October 2010. Before that date, a constitutional referendum was held in June 2010 in which voters ratified a new draft constitution making Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person. As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, was formalized in the role of president until fresh presidential elections could be held in 2011.

The 2011 presidential vote would come about a year after parliamentary elections, which were held in October 2010. In those elections, there was no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party, as well as a third party known as Respublika.

Going into the 2011 presidential race, current Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was viewed as the frontrunner, with Adakhan Madumarov of United Kyrgyzstan and Kamchibek Tashiyev of Ata-Zhurt party, as his two main challengers. On election day, voting went off generally in a free and fair manner, although there were reports of some irregularities. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) observer mission deemed the election to have been held in full compliance with the country's electoral law.

With the votes counted, the Central Elections Committee announced that, in line with expectations, Atambayev had decisively won the presidency with more than 60 percent of the vote share. Madumarov and Tashiyev followed with 14.91 percent and 14.43 percent respectively. Upon learning of his victory, Atambayev said of his rivals: "They are real politicians, but they are surrounded by people who are pushing them toward ill-considered action. I think that we will find common language with Adakhan Madumarov and Kamchibek Tashiyev for the sake of a prospering Kyrgyzstan."

Newly elected Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev was sworn into office on Dec. 1, 2011. Ahead of the inauguration ceremony, sources from the inner coterie of the new president said Atambaev insisted "on an unpretentious ceremony without splendid celebrations and extravagance."

Note on Head of Government:

Prime Minister Temir Sariyev was named by the president in 2015 after the resignation of Joomart Otorbaev. Fresh parliamentary elections were held in October 2015; Sariyev staying on after the 2015 polls. In 2016, the entire government of Kyrgyzstan resigned from office amidst a graft and corruption scandal.

See entries below for details related to the country's governing landscape.

Cabinet:

Cabinet of Ministers; appointed by the president based on the recommendation of the prime minister

Note on Government:

Ruling coalition collapses and reconstituted in Kyrgyzstan --

In the third week of March 2014, the ruling coalition of Kyrgyzstan collapsed as a result of an internal feud over corruption. At issue was the decision by the Ata Meken party to exit the ruling coalition amidst accusation that the prime minister was guilty of abuse of office and the misappropriation of state funds. A statement released by Ata Meken read as follows: "Satybaldiyev has exhausted his moral and political outfit and can no longer occupy this high political post." The result was that Prime Minister Jantoro Satybaldiyev, of the Social Democratic

Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK), no longer had a parliamentary majority.

In an interview with Reuters News, Felix Kulov, the leader of the majority bloc, said, "The majority coalition is now disbanded." He noted that the president and parliament had been notified of the news, and added, "The president is now to announce that the government is an acting one." The next step would be for President Almazbek Atambayev to call on a parliamentary faction to form a new majority coalition and to name a prime minister. To that end, on March 19, 2014, President Atambayev accepted the government's resignation. It was to be seen if he would go down the aforementioned route of trying to cobble together a new coalition with a different head of government at the helm, or, if he would dissolve parliament and call an early election.

As March 2014 came to a close, a new coalition was established. The new coalition reconstituted all three parties in the old coalition that collapsed the week before -- the Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, Ata-Meken, and Ar-Namys. The next order of business was the matter of who would hold the post of prime minister. To that end, the acting head of government, Joomart Otorbaev, who replaced Satybaldiev, went onto become the official prime minister (as discussed above).

Kyrgyz Prime Minister Otorbaev resigns from power --

On April 23, 2015, during a speech to parliament, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev announced he was resigning from his post. Other than noting there should be no monopoly of power in a democracy, Otorbaev declined to offer an actual rationale for his decision to step down from power in Kyrgyzstan.

In the backdrop of Otorbaev's resignation was a brewing controversy in Kyrgyzstan concerning the functioning of the Kumtor gold mine. The Kumtor Gold Company is partially owned by the Kyrgyz government via the state-owned Kyrgyzaltyn Company; however a Canadian company named Centerra Gold owned the two-thirds of the enterprise. At issue was a call from locals and opposition parties for the Kumtor gold mine to be fully nationalized. For his part, Otorbaev has been opposed to such a path. Negotiations intended to split the company more favorably in the direction of the Kyrgyz government hit a snag over how that division might be configured.

It was not confirmed that the Kumtor gold mine led to the resignation of the prime minister. Regardless, it would be up to President Almazbek Atambaev to officially accept the resignation of Otorbaev and his cabinet. Then, the process would commence to select, nominate, and approve a new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan. The three-party majority coalition would then have 15 days to nominate a new prime minister to the legislature for approval.

New prime minister; new elections set:

President Almazbek Atambaev officially accepted the resignation of Otorbaev and selected Temir Sariyev to be the new prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in May 2015. As discussed here, the new government's mandate would be tested at the polls as the country headed to parliamentary elections set for Oct. 4, 2015. It was to be seen what party, or constellation of parties, would emerge as the winners after these elections.

*** See Election Primer below for details related to the 2015 parliamentary elections. ***

Kyrgyzstan's government resigns amidst accusations of graft and corruption

On April 11, 2016, the entire government of Kyrgyzstan resigned from office amidst a graft and corruption scandal. At issue were charges levied by a parliamentary commission that the government of Prime Minister Temir Sariyev manipulated a \$100 million road construction deal so it would be given to a Chinese company without the required licensing credentials. In his resignation address, the outgoing prime minister sidestepped these charges, and instead declared, "Squabbles, rumors and gossip have upset the balance within the government." He added, "The government's work has stalled at such a difficult time."

The development highlighted a rift between the ruling factions in the Kyrgyzstan government -- particularly between President Almazbek Atambayev's coalition (including Ata Meken and the Social Democratic Party) -- and Sariyev's Akshumkar Party that held no sway in parliament. That being said, the immediate task would be to select a new head of government within the required two week window. To that end, Sooronbai Zheenbekov, a stalwart of President Almazbek Atambayev, was confirmed as the country's new prime minister by the parliament. The move essentially consolidated the power of the Social Democratic party which is aligned with both the president and the new prime minister.

-- as of 2016

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

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primer below.

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A presidential election was expected to be held in Kyrgyzstan on Oct. 30, 2011. A number of prospective presidential candidates were expected to be nominated by their respective parties ahead of election day. Among the candidates were the following: Kamchibek Tashiyev, who was nominated by the ruling coalition party, Ata Zhurt; Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was nominated by his Social Democratic Party; Adakhan Madumarov, the nominee of the opposition party, Butun (United) Kyrgyzstan; Iskhak Masaliyev from the Communist Party; Erkin Bulekbayev, the nominee of the opposition Greens Party; and Arstanbek Abdyldayev, the nominee of the El Uchun party. In total, though, there were well over 80 presidential contenders, although by September 2011, only 20 were officially registered.

Note that Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva had announced earlier, on Feb. 21, 2011, that she would not run for office in these forthcoming elections. During an interview RIA Novosti, Otunbayeva made it clear that she had no intention of holding onto power, even via democratic means. She said: "All of us should be equal under the law, and I'm not going to stand in the upcoming elections." Otunbayeva continued, "We need to demonstrate a peaceful transfer of power within the law, as was decided in the referendum (referenced below).

Otunbayeva has stood at the helm of power since April 2010 when former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev was ousted from office and an interim "people's government" was formed. Soon thereafter, parliament was dissolved and a date now set for fresh parliamentary elections in October 2010. Before that date, a constitutional referendum was held in June 2010 in which voters ratified a new draft constitution making Kyrgyzstan a parliamentary republic with reduced presidential powers. The interim government said that the new draft constitution would ensure that political power could no longer be concentrated in the hands of one person. As well, Roza Otunbayeva, the leader of the coalition of opposition groups, was formalized in the role of president until fresh presidential elections could be held in 2011.

The 2011 presidential vote would come about a year after parliamentary elections, which were held in October 2010. In those elections, there was no clear winner. Still, the opposition nationalist party, Ata Zhurt, composed of allies of deposed President Bakiyev, garnered the plurality of the votes and 28 seats. The pro-government Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, led by Almazbek Atambayev, had the second highest number of votes and 26 seats. In December 2010, after months of political wrangling and negotiations, the Kyrgyzstan parliament announced that a coalition government, composed of three major parties, had been formed. That coalition consisted of the pro-government Socialist Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan, the nationalist Ata-Zhurt party, as well as a third party known as Respublika.

Going into the 2011 presidential race, current Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev was viewed as the frontrunner, with Adakhan Madumarov of United Kyrgyzstan and Kamchibek Tashiyev of Ata-Zhurt party, as his two main challengers. On election day, voting went off generally in a free and fair manner, although there were reports of some irregularities. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) observer mission deemed the election to have been held in full compliance with the country's electoral law.

With the votes counted, the Central Elections Committee announced that, in line with expectations, Atambayev had decisively won the presidency with more than 60 percent of the vote share. Madumarov and Tashiyev followed with 14.91 percent and 14.43 percent respectively. Upon learning of his victory, Atambayev said of his rivals: "They are real politicians, but they are surrounded by people who are pushing them toward ill-considered action. I think that we will find common language with Adakhan Madumarov and Kamchibek Tashiyev for the sake of a prospering Kyrgyzstan."

Newly elected Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambaev was sworn into office on Dec. 1, 2011. Ahead of the inauguration ceremony, sources from the inner coterie of the new president said Atambaev insisted "on an unpretentious ceremony without splendid celebrations and extravagance."

Foreign Relations

General Relations

Kyrgyzstan is a member of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the International Finance Corporation.

Relations with Russia and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Kyrgyzstan shares the closest geopolitical ties with other CIS countries. It has posted ambassadors in all CIS capitals and is committed to forming beneficial relations between CIS countries. It also signed a CIS charter supporting integrative implications for CIS states in 1993, especially on issues of collective security, but not in terms of joint economies. President Akayev called for unified CIS armed forces, but with national armed forces in most states already, this effort did not come to fruition. Recently, efforts to develop a Collective Security Treaty have been more promising.

While the Kyrgyz Republic initially remained in the ruble zone, stringent conditions set by the Russian Government prompted the Kyrgyz Republic to introduce its own currency, the som, in May 1993. Withdrawal from the ruble zone was done with little prior notification and initially caused tensions in the region. Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan temporarily suspended trade, and Uzbekistan even introduced restrictions tantamount to economic sanctions. Both nations feared an influx of rubles and an increase in inflation. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan's hostility toward the Kyrgyz Republic was short-lived, and the three nations signed an agreement in January 1994 creating an economic union. Economic cooperation within the region, though, is still hampered by unilateral barriers created by the Kyrgyz Republic's neighbors. The Kyrgyz Republic has been active in furthering regional cooperation, such as joint military exercises with Uzbek and Kazakh troops.

Kyrgyzstan has voluntarily moved closer and closer to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. In an interview on the eve of his visit to Moscow in July 2000, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev noted, for example, that the Russian language plays an important role in preserving inter-ethnic accord in the country and developing the country's culture and education.

Akayev also said that the number of Russian-language schools in Kyrgyzstan had not decreased over the past 10 years. In May 2000 the Kyrgyz government gave Russian official status in the country. The president noted, among other sentiments expressed, that Kyrgyzstan intended "to strengthen our friendship and to develop our all-round cooperation with Russia in a more dynamic way."

On July 27, 2000, while President Akayev was in Moscow, he and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a Declaration on Eternal Friendship, Allied Relations and Partnership between Russia and Kyrgyzstan. The declaration reiterates the invariable allegiance of the two countries to relations of cooperation and strategic partnership. The two countries will continue to closely cooperate in the sphere of foreign policy, including within the framework of the United Nations (U.N.), Organization for Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE), and other international and regional organizations and forums.

During the Moscow summit the two heads of state signed several treaties concerning political, military and economic cooperation. The economic document focused on cooperation in hydropower engineering, transport and communications and on attracting more Russian business into Kyrgyzstan. The two sides also worked on developing bilateral cooperation in combating international terrorism, religious extremism and illegal drug and arms trafficking.

Russia has signaled that it intends to place more emphasis on its role in Central Asia. A foreign policy strategy document, which was approved by President Putin in June 2000, declared that "due to Russia's direct affinity with this dynamically developing region and the need for an economic upturn in Siberia and the Far East," Moscow would put more emphasis on its participation in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Five of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

Kyrgyz Defense Minister Esen Topoyev noted in 2000 that the Russian armed forces were continuing to help Kyrgyzstan with arms, uniforms, military and technical assistance and training, and had stepped up their cooperation in order to forestall any repetition of the 1999 militant incursion into southern Kyrgyzstan. Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan operate jointly to protect the air space, and Russia provides funds and equipment to improve and maintain Kyrgyzstan's air defense forces. In addition, officers from the Kyrgyz armed forces undergo training in the Russian Federation. Topoyev said cooperation between the armed forces of Kyrgyzstan and Russia is routine and permanent. Joint command and staff and exercises have already been held and additional military and technical assistance has been received, with the aim of preventing a possible incursion by foreign bandit formations.

Foreign Minister Muratbek Imanaliyev stated at the start of 2001 that Kyrgyzstan would not make any "serious" changes in its relations with Russia, Central Asian and Western states that are its principal partners. Imanaliyev noted that his country's border talks with neighboring Uzbekistan

have showed progress. Kyrgyzstan's foreign trade grew and new opportunities emerged for the country's economic relations with other countries, he said. Imanaliyev also noted that regional security and joint actions against terrorism have brought Kyrgyzstan closer to its neighbors.

In October 2003, foreign relations took center stage when a Russian air base was established in Kant. Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the opening of the air base, which has been located in close proximity to the one used by United States forces since the launch of the war against terrorism.

Regional Relations

The principal regional international organization is the Shanghai Five, which consists of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This group has been meeting annually since 1996. The presidents of the member states signing a joint statement in July 2000 after a meeting in Dushanbe, Tajikistan agreeing to defend sovereignty under the U.N. Charter and not to interfere in others' internal affairs under the pretext of "humanitarianism" or "human rights." The statement emphasized that every state has the right to choose its own political system, economic model and path of social development, and affirmed that the five countries would support each other to safeguard their state sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and social stability. The five countries promised to abide by the principle of respecting human rights while taking into consideration historical characteristics of the member countries, underlining that other recognized international laws should not be violated when applying this principle. They expressed their support for China's pursuit of its one-China policy and for the Russian government's position on the Chechen conflict.

While noting political and other challenges that are facing the world today, the five countries pledged they would firmly promote the reinforcement of the U.N.'s role as the only general mechanism in maintaining world peace and stability. They expressed opposition to the use, or the threat, of force in international relations without the approval of the U.N. Security Council, as well as to attempts by any country or bloc to monopolize global and regional affairs for its own interests.

The foreign ministers present signed a joint communiqué, which is intended to build trust among countries that share common borders. The five countries are focusing their efforts on economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation. The session paid special attention to the problems of regional security, the struggle against terrorism, drug trafficking and separatism. The Shanghai Five is not a military alliance and other states can join.

Kyrgyzstan President Akayev specifically made reference to a border treaty that was signed by Kyrgyzstan, China and Tajikistan. "With this, we, the Kyrgyz people, are completing a genuinely

historic process - the legalization of more than 1,000 kilometers of the border with our great neighbor - the People's Republic of China." Akayev also noted the establishment of an anti-terrorist center in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. He pointed out that southern Kyrgyzstan has become one of the most vulnerable spots for the penetration of international terrorism, religious extremism and separatism. The center is designed to help the country fight against the infiltration of such trans-border threats.

On these issues of national separatism, international terrorism, and religious extremism, as well as weapon-trafficking, drug-trafficking and illegal immigration, the Shanghai Five countries are expected to draft relevant multilateral programs and hold regular meetings. Presumably such meetings would involve officers from the justice, border, customs and security departments of the five countries. They will hold anti-terrorism and anti-riot maneuvers within the five-nation framework. Every member of the Shanghai Five is expected to ban activities on its own territory that may undermine the sovereignty, security and social order of any other country of the group.

Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on setting up an interstate bank. It also supported the creation of regional common market among Central Asian states in 1993. In this regard, it was the host country for the Central Asian Economic Union summit in mid-1999. Earlier, in 1996, it proposed a Russia-Belarus-Kyrgyzstan customs union.

In recent years, there has been increasing unrest between Kyrgyz and Uzbek militants, especially in the Osh region near where the borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan meet. In 1990, a violent clash over disputed land resulted in more than 250 deaths and the area was at that time considered the most explosive region of Central Asia. There have also been border disputes with Tajiks over water resources. Today, official relations between Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors are generally cooperative, but there is a threat of further violence due to spillover fighting in the mountains along the border with Tajikistan, where Tajik and Uzbek ex-communists, oppositionists and refugees converge. Security controls have been strengthened as a result. Pursuant to the CIS Collective Security Treaty, Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have announced that they will conduct joint anti-terrorist military exercises.

International terrorism shocked the people of Kyrgyzstan in August 1999, when militants from the armed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) twice crossed into Kyrgyzstan and instigated a dramatic ten-week hostage crisis. From August 6 to August 13, IMU militants from Tajikistan held four Kyrgyzstanis hostage in southern Kyrgyzstan before they released them without incident and retreated to Tajikistan. The militants returned in a larger force on August 22 and seized 13 hostages, including four Japanese geologists, their interpreter, a Kyrgyzstani Interior Ministry general, and several Kyrgyzstani soldiers. IMU militants continued to arrive in subsequent weeks, numbering as many as 1,000 at the incursion's peak.

The IMU's implicit goal was to infiltrate Uzbekistan and destabilize the government. The militants

first demanded safe passage to Uzbekistan; additional demands called for money and a prisoner exchange. Uzbekistan refused to allow them to enter, leaving Kyrgyzstan's ill-prepared security forces to combat the terrorists with Uzbekistani military assistance, Russian logistic support, and negotiation assistance from other governments. The militants' guerrilla tactics enabled them to maintain their position in difficult mountainous terrain, frustrating the Kyrgyzstani military's attempts to dislodge them. Observers speculated that only the approach of winter forced the militants to retreat into Tajikistan, where negotiators were able to facilitate an agreement between the IMU and Kyrgyzstani representatives. On October 25 the militants finally released all hostages except a Kyrgyzstani soldier they had executed. Kyrgyzstan released an IMU prisoner, but Kyrgyzstani and Japanese officials denied Japanese press reports that they paid a monetary ransom for the hostages' release. Although an agreement stipulated that all IMU militants would leave Tajikistani territory after the hostage crisis, some IMU militants may have remained in the region.

International terrorism, militants and extremists that traverse borders with impunity are major regional concerns. Kyrgyz Defense Minister Esen Topoyev said Kyrgyzstan needed "a mechanism of counteraction" to international terrorism, which has now been put in place. This mechanism, involving comprehensive cooperation among all the authorities, is designed primarily to prevent any incursions by militants and secondarily to wipe out any such militants who may enter Kyrgyz territory. Topoyev said special task forces were keeping all 23 of Kyrgyzstan's mountain passes "fully under control." He added that between 85 and 90 percent of the staff of the Southern Grouping of Troops responsible for securing the country's southern borders were contract servicemen.

Kyrgyz and Uzbek presidents met in September 2000, and signed a joint declaration on military cooperation. Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev and Uzbek President Islam Karimov discussed a wide range of issues pertaining to bilateral relations, including delimitation of the border. Akayev was upbeat about the Kyrgyz-Uzbek joint actions in the south of Kyrgyzstan and said that the newly-signed military cooperation agreement was extremely important for Kyrgyzstan. Uzbek President Karimov observed that the military and technical cooperation between the countries was a new page in relations between them, which meant that Kyrgyzstan "would not be left alone with the aggressive forces which are attempting to disrupt peace in Kyrgyzstan, its sovereignty and territorial integrity." Karimov also said that the CIS countries should give priority to bilateral relations, which are more efficient, constructive and easier to monitor.

Their joint statement also said that Kyrgyzstan supports Uzbekistan's initiative on setting up an international anti-terrorist center within the framework of the U.N. In addition, the statement noted, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan "will view hostile actions against either state as a threat to both and will take all possible measures to oppose them effectively." Both sides consider "stepping up cooperation within the framework of the agreement between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on joint action to combat terrorism," signed in Tashkent on April 21, 2000.

Countries situated along the historic Silk Road, stretching from the western frontier of China to Eastern Europe, are hoping that a proposed regional state-of-the-art satellite communications system will bring cooperation and stability to this troubled, vast multicultural expanse. Presidents and foreign ministers of the countries attending the U.N. Millennium Summit in September 2000, placed their initials on their countries' locations on a global projection map, symbolizing their support for this bold endeavor. The countries represented at this Silk Road Cooperation Summit were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

The project was expected to build and launch a new-generation, small-sized telecommunications satellite, dedicated to the needs of the countries in the region. Among the benefits of the project would be reliable digital communications for governments, militaries and border security services. The project foresaw 48-36MHz transponders on the single satellite, with eight transponders for Ukraine, 15 for the Caucasus region (five for each of three republics) and 25 for the Central Asian region (five for each of the five republics). With the addition of Moldova and Romania, the distribution of transponders will have to be adjusted. Kazakhstan's Baikanor space station was mentioned as a possible launching point while Ukraine's Zenit and other booster rockets were cited as potential launch vehicles.

Other Significant Relations

The United States government provides humanitarian assistance, non-lethal military assistance, and assistance to support economic and political reforms. It also has supported the Kyrgyz Republic's requests for assistance from international organizations.

The United States helped the Kyrgyz Republic accede to the World Trade Organization in December 1998. United States assistance aids the Kyrgyz Republic in implementing necessary economic, health sector, and educational reforms, and supports economic development and conflict resolution in the Ferghana Valley.

Following the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, Kyrgyzstan under President Akayev became an important Central Asian ally to the United States in the war against terrorism. Indeed, the country has been host to about 1500 coalition troops at any given time.

Shortly after being elected in 2005, however, President Bakiev challenged the presence of a United States airbase in Kyrgyzstan, which has been located near the capital city of Bishkek since 2001. Around this period, the United States Pentagon was informed that it could maintain its base in Kyrgyzstan -- but only for long as it carries out military operations in Afghanistan.

In late June 2009, the former Soviet republic of Kyrgyzstan forged an agreement with the United States that would permit the transportation of American military equipment and troops to

Afghanistan via an air base in the Central Asian state. The new deal reportedly came with a price tag three times greater than the previous cost.

Months earlier in February 2009, Kyrgyzstan's President Kurmanbek Bakiyev issued a decree evicting United States troops from the Manas air base, on the basis of insufficient payment. The move shocked the United States and evoked questions as to Kyrgyzstan's motives. There was some speculation that Russia, which eschews the presence of Western military powers on its borders, may have been behind the move. But Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev said his government had grown increasingly worried about the increasingly violent landscape in Afghanistan and the possible destabilization of the Central Asia region.

Regardless of actual motive, the new agreement, which was approved by a Kyrgyz parliamentary committee, would allow the Manas air base to remain open, while also permitting United States forces to transport necessary arms and ammunition to fight the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

In 2010, given the ousting of the Bakiyev regime in Kyrgyzstan, questions were being raised about the fate of the United States air base operating in Kyrgyzstan, which has been regarded as strategically important to the NATO mission in Afghanistan to the southeast. Otunbayeva, the former foreign minister and opposition bloc leader, intimated to global media that there would be no immediate change to the existing policy, and United States officials stated that operations at the base were carrying on normally. However, in the past, the Kyrgyzstan opposition has been hostile to the notion of the United States military presence within its borders.

On April 11, 2010, the United States said that, as far as it was aware, Kyrgyzstan intended to honor key security agreements, including the one allowing the United States to continue operations at the military base. By mid-April 2010, Kyrgyzstan's interim government confirmed that it would extend the United States lease on the key air base.

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

National Security

External Threats

Today, no foreign nation poses an immediate military threat to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan's territorial dispute with Kazakhstan over its delimitation is complete. Its delimitation with Tajikistan is delayed because of disputes in the Isfara Valley. Serious disputes with Uzbekistan are hindering its delimitation as well.

In 2006, violence hit the border of Kyrgyzstan with Tajikistan when gunmen opened fire on those at a border post, killing several people including several border guards and soldiers. The incident apparently began in the Batken region where the attackers seized weapons at the border post and engaged border guards. Crossing Tajik territory into Kyrgyzstan, they subsequently fought with Kyrgyz soldiers.

Batken is located in the restive Fergana Valley -- an area shared by Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The Fergana Valley has been the site of regional instability for over a decade -- since the fall of the Soviet Union. It has also become notorious for Islamic fundamentalism, most notably, in the form of the Hezb-ut-Tahrir or the Party of Liberation. Founded in the Middle East in the 1950s, Hezb-ut-Tahrir seeks the establishment of an Islamic caliphate that would unite all Muslim terrain.

Crime

Kyrgyzstan is a regional narcotics trafficking hub. Cannabis and poppy are cultivated there. Most illicit substances produced in Kyrgyzstan are transported to neighboring countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Kyrgyzstan also serves as an interim destination for Southwest Asian heroin bound for Russia and the rest of Europe. Outside of drug trafficking and related activity, theft and violent crime are prevalent in Kyrgyzstan due to the high unemployment rate as well as organized gang violence. Kyrgyzstan's crime rate is on the rise in the 21st century.

Insurgencies

Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akayev resigned from office and fled the country following a mass assault by protestors on the presidential compound in the capital city of Bishkek on March 24, 2005. The protests followed parliamentary elections in which there were charges of violations. It should be noted that members of Akayev's regime disputed the fact that he had officially resigned and expressed the belief that he had merely fled to a safe place. Until new elections could be held, Kurmanbek Bakiev was named acting leader. Elections were eventually held on July 10, 2005, formalizing Bakiev's position.

Since 2006 to the time of writing, the president was dealing with increasing hostility and dissatisfaction from the public at large. Indeed, Kyrgyzstan was wracked by protests with

thousands of people taking to the streets in Bishkek to call for the resignation of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Many citizens had expected that the ousting of the previous government, which ultimately brought Bakiyev to power in what was now called the "Tulip Revolution," would also bring about democratic reforms. Instead, a lack of significant progress on that front, manifest by the dispute over the constitutional reform, as well as continuing problems of corruption and poverty, had left people disillusioned, angry. That disillusionment and anger increased to an acute level, ultimately motivating people to participate in mass street protests. See "Political Conditions" for more developments related to the discontent plaguing the country.

Kyrgyzstan had previously enjoyed generally stable conditions since receiving its independence from the former Soviet Union in August 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

Regionally-based Islamic militant organizations pose an ongoing threat to Kyrgyzstan's security. In addition to al-Qaida, two of its affiliated organizations 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 inside Kyrgyzstan in pursuit of a fundamentalist, Islamic 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.

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, IMU has been linked to a number of terrorist incidents in Kyrgyzstan, including the 1999 abduction of four 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. In February 2003, Kyrgyz courts sentenced Sherali Akbotoyev, a Kyrgyz member of IMU, to 25 years in prison. 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 Xinjiang. 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 (U.S.) embassy in Kyrgyzstan, and other US interests abroad. U.S. Department of State indicates that ETIM's agenda to create a pan-Asian, Turkic state does not enjoy widespread support amongst China's ethnic Uighurs. The group's total membership is unknown, but it is believed to have few operatives. Like IMU, ETIM's affiliation with the al-Qaida network and its demonstrated willingness to perpetrate attacks inside Kyrgyzstan precipitate an ongoing risk to Kyrgyz security.

The United States government has identified a fourth organization, Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami (HT), as a potential threat to the 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.

Kyrgyzstan is party to nine of the 12 international protocols and conventions pertaining to terrorism. It has also become an important Central Asian ally to the United States in the war against terrorism. It has been host to about 1500 coalition troops at any given time. A base is also being built at its main airport, which will eventually accommodate as many as 3000 troops and other necessary personnel.

Defense Forces

Military Data

Military Branches:

State Committee on Defense Affairs: Ground Forces, Air Force (includes Air Defense Forces)

Eligible age to enter service:

18 for compulsory or voluntary; women may volunteer at age 19; 16-17 years of age for military cadets, who cannot take part in military operations

Mandatory Service Terms:

1-year service obligation, with optional fee-based 3-year service in the callup mobilization reserve

Manpower in general population-fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 1,119,224

females age 16-49: 1,257,263

Manpower reaching eligible age annually:

Males: 56,606

Females: 54,056

Military Expenditures-Percent of GDP:

N/A

Was 3.74% in 2011

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked and mostly mountainous country. Its economy is dominated by agriculture, which accounts for about 35 percent of GDP and 50 percent of the labor force. Cotton, tobacco, wool and meat are the main agricultural products, with tobacco and cotton serving as major export commodities. Exports from the industrial sector include gold, mercury, natural gas and electricity. The country's agricultural and industrial production base is small, making the economy vulnerable to natural disasters and external shocks. Kyrgyzstan remains one of the poorest nations in the world; about 35 percent of its population lives below the poverty line. After coping with economic difficulties stemming from the collapse of the Soviet Union and its subsequent independence in 1991 as well as the Russian financial crisis in the late 1990s, the Kyrgyz government has maintained macroeconomic discipline in recent years and established a good track record under successive International Monetary Fund-supported PRGF (Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility) programs. Sound macroeconomic policies contributed to strong economic performance, with acceleration of GDP growth, relatively low inflation, and strengthened fiscal position.

Kyrgyzstan was hit hard by the global economic crisis, in particular by the significant economic slowdown in Russia and Kazakhstan (key trading partners of Kyrgyzstan) through falling exports, investment, remittances, and financial channels. But the government's anti-crisis response with a significant fiscal stimulus helped Kyrgyzstan weather the crisis relatively well, with the economy still fairly growing in 2009, albeit a substantial decline from the rapid expansion of the previous two years.

As Kyrgyzstan entered 2010 amidst uncertainties in the global economic situation, civil tensions came to a head in April 2010 when President Bakiyev was ousted and an interim government was set up under the leadership of Roza Otunbayeva. Soon after the new interim government took power, its authority was tested by the outbreak of ethnic violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in June 2010. These developments, which damaged the country's infrastructure, were illustrative of the instability and unrest that often characterizes Kyrgyzstan's political landscape. Shrinking trade and agricultural production, as well as the political instability, led to a contraction in GDP in 2010 and to a huge surge in prices in 2010. The fiscal deficit also widened to about \$445 million in 2010, according to government figures, as a result of significant increases in crisis-related spending, including both repair of damaged infrastructure and bank recapitalization. In February 2011, Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev said Kyrgyzstan badly needed international donor assistance to cut

its budget deficit. Inflation is still an issue for Kyrgyzstan, and the region as a whole. The economy grew and the budget deficit was reduced in 2011. In late December 2011, Kyrgyzstan's parliament elected Omurbek Babanov as the country's new prime minister. "At the first stage, we need to achieve stability, eradicate corruption and fight crime," Babanov, who previously served as deputy prime minister, told parliament before the vote, according to Reuters. "The nation wants to have more jobs, peace and stability." He went on to say that the government's main task is to build an economy that would allow the country's people to feed themselves. Added Babanov: "Our budget now hinges on foreign borrowing, but foreign loans should be channeled to develop the economy, not to support the budget." As of the end of 2011, Kyrgyzstan's foreign debt totaled about \$2.8 billion, more than half of its annual gross domestic product of around \$5 billion. Looking ahead, the country needs to focus on progress in reconstruction, fighting corruption, restructuring domestic industry, and attracting foreign aid and investment.

Kyrgyzstan's economy shrank in 2012 due to ice movement in the open-pit Kumtor mine in the Tien Shan mountains. But by early October 2013, the International Monetary Fund revealed expectations that Kyrgyzstan's economy would grow strongly in 2013 and 2014. The IMF cited rising gold output at the country's flagship venture with Canada's Centerra Gold as being behind the positive performance. In a statement, the IMF predicted growth would rebound to as much as 7.8 percent due to "the recovery in gold production and continued strong performance in the non-gold sector."

In September 2013, Centerra reached a memorandum of understanding with Kyrgyzstan that was designed to allow for joint ownership of the Kumtor mine and lead to the resolution of a long-standing dispute. The IMF did give Kyrgyzstan's government credit for fiscal consolidation in 2013 but said the shutdown of the U.S. military base in the country was "creating headwinds." The Kyrgyzstan parliament had voted in July 2013 to give the U.S. one year to close down the base, which is used to fly U.S. troops and cargo in and out of Afghanistan. The U.S. government has paid Kyrgyzstan \$60 million a year to lease the base. On top of that, the country was able to collect revenues for other associated services. In September 2013, the cabinet and Centerra had agreed that Kyrgyzstan would trade its 32.7 percent stake in Canada's Centerra Gold for 50 percent in a venture that would own Kumtor. But in late October, Kyrgyzstan's parliament voted to seek control over the proposed gold mining venture with Centerra and nix the 50-50 agreement. Instead, parliament was demanding a 67 percent stake in the new gold venture with Centerra, which currently owns 100 percent of the Kumtor gold mine. The Kumtor mine alone reportedly accounted for 12 percent of the country's GDP in 2011.

As of December 2013, Kyrgyzstan was targeting strong growth in 2014 in large part thanks to a ramp up in production from its gold mining venture with Centerra Gold. However, a disagreement between the state and the Canadian firm threatened to disrupt those plans. The government wanted more revenue from the prosperous Kumtor mine.

By June 2014, the government approved Centerra Gold's mine plan for 2014 after the company threatened to shut down operations at the Kumtor mine, the country's largest gold deposit. Under the draft agreement in December 2013, Kyrgyzstan would swap its 32.7 percent stake in Centerra for half of the Kumtor mine, the company's main asset. Kumtor's gold production was expected to be about 550,000 to 600,000 ounces in full-year 2014, according to Reuters.

In July 2014, the IMF moderated its outlook for Kyrgyzstan to around 4.1 percent for the year. Then, in August 2014, Russia pledged about \$500 million in financial aid to Kyrgyzstan to support the country's integration into the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Then in December 2014, Kyrgyzstan agreed to join the Eurasian Economic Union in early 2015.

In June 2015, Kyrgyzstan's government revised the country's budget for the year, forecasting slower economic growth and a wider fiscal gap due to Russia's recession and expected lower gold output. The budget had originally forecast GDP growth to accelerate to 6.2 percent this year from an estimated 3.6 percent rise in 2014. The cabinet was now forecasting GDP growth at 2 percent in 2015, according to documents seen by Reuters.

Money transfers by Kyrgyz workers dropped by 37.3 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of 2015 to \$199.2 million, according to central bank data cited by Reuters.

In July 2015, it was reported that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would lose its privileged status in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz Prime Minister Temir Sariyev ordered his cabinet to renounce a 1993 bilateral agreement with the United States, effective Aug. 20. The agreement was the legal framework facilitating U.S. humanitarian and technical economic assistance to Kyrgyzstan. The move was in protest of the award of a U.S. State Department human rights prize to Azimjon Askarov, a journalist and activist who was serving a life sentence on charges of inciting ethnic hatred in Kyrgyzstan.

Economic Performance

After a negative growth in 2005 because of the political upheaval of the Tulip Revolution, real GDP recovered in 2006 and accelerated in 2007 and 2008. But as a result of the deepening of the global economic crisis, real GDP growth slowed sharply in 2009 and contracted in 2010.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 6.5 percent

The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: -6.3 percent

Inflation was measured at: 6.4 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: Xinhua, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and Reuters

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	285.989	310.471	355.295	397.277	436.328
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	29.777	8.561	14.437	11.816	9.830
Consumption (LCU billions)	238.522	297.433	345.278	394.211	458.649
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	52.128	62.423	65.541	68.275	79.435
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	72.850	108.544	120.441	138.296	123.123
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	155.974	137.862	150.113	146.590	150.626
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	233.485	295.791	326.078	350.094	375.504

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population, total (million)	5.552	5.663	5.777	5.895	5.976
Population growth (%)	1.351	1.999	2.013	2.043	1.374
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	51,511.01	54,824.53	61,501.61	67,392.21	73,013.39

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	33.339	33.039	36.520	37.835	38.591
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	5.956	-0.8997	10.534	3.603	1.996
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	857.816	939.704	972.886	1,050.01	1,130.66
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	22.482	9.546	3.531	7.928	7.680

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	106.866	125.997	135.541	142.435	166.684
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	30.717	17.902	7.575	5.086	17.025
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	32.797	34.925	34.449	35.947	35.751
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	93.797	108.432	122.394	142.809	155.990
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	-13.0690	-17.5650	-13.1470	0.3740	-10.6940
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	-4.5698	-5.6575	-3.7003	0.0941	-2.4509

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	79.528	98.483	120.903	129.715	142.465
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	14.912	23.835	22.766	7.288	9.830
Lending Interest Rate (%)	25.275	23.899	21.727	22.361	15.811
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.923	7.743	7.652	7.562	7.470

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/\$US)	46.142	47.005	48.451	53.672	60.957
Trade Balance NIPA (\$US billions)	-1.6798	-3.3598	-3.6318	-3.7916	-3.6892
Trade Balance % of GDP	-27.1029	-50.8675	-49.5265	-51.2247	-51.5389
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves (\$US billions)	1.831	2.067	2.238	1.957	2.169

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Nominal GDP (\$US billions)	6.198	6.605	7.333	7.402	7.158
Exports (\$US billions)	3.380	2.933	3.098	2.731	2.471
Imports (\$US billions)	5.060	6.293	6.730	6.523	6.160

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	28.340	36.295	33.000	34.216	35.211
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	0.9551	0.9545	0.9579	0.9395	0.9573
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	-27.3845	-35.3406	-32.0421	-33.2763	-34.2534
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	14.126	14.338	14.338	14.027	15.269
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	0.3535	1.134	1.132	1.378	1.508
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	-13.7725	-13.2041	-13.2055	-12.6487	-13.7613
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	1,957.70	2,444.93	2,498.18	2,518.02	2,594.20
Coal Production	854.197	1,210.85	1,243.91	1,213.63	1,215.24

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
(1000s st)					
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	-1103.5079	-1234.0773	-1254.2660	-1304.3895	-1378.9599
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	13.998	14.037	16.958	15.410	15.911
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.0605	0.0775	0.0705	0.0731	0.0752
Petroleum Production (Quads)	0.0020	0.0021	0.0021	0.0021	0.0016
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0585	-0.0754	-0.0684	-0.0710	-0.0735
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	0.0144	0.0146	0.0146	0.0143	0.0156
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	0.0004	0.0012	0.0012	0.0014	0.0013
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0140	-0.0135	-0.0135	-0.0129	-0.0143
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.0392	0.0489	0.0500	0.0504	0.0519
Coal Production (Quads)	0.0174	0.0257	0.0262	0.0243	0.0219
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0217	-0.0232	-0.0238	-0.0261	-0.0300
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.1400	0.1404	0.1696	0.1541	0.1591
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

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)	1.352	1.731	1.574	1.632	1.680
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	0.2292	0.2326	0.2326	0.2276	0.2477
Coal Based (mm mt C)	1.122	1.401	1.432	1.443	1.487
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	2.703	3.365	3.239	3.303	3.414

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	450.876	579.944	569.311	557.730	531.046
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	445.584	576.535	565.871	564.650	526.257
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-5.2924	-3.4091	-3.4400	6.919	-4.7884
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	3.642	7.445	4.267	5.014	4.643
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0701	0.1657	0.1560	0.5952	0.5608
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-3.5719	-7.2793	-4.1110	-4.4185	-4.0818
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	19.617	23.076	27.260	28.230	26.193
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	19.445	23.069	27.208	28.219	27.794

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-0.1723	-0.0076	-0.0520	-0.0111	1.601
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	2.000	11.000	2.000	2.000	1.949
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	-2.0000	-11.0000	-2.0000	-2.0000	-1.9490
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Cocoa Beans Net Exports (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	1,089.74	980.625	1,181.08	938.685	817.289
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	798.064	543.392	818.100	574.622	478.243
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-291.6718	-437.2326	-362.9834	-364.0625	-339.0456

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)	0.4764	0.4764	0.4764	0.4764	0.4764
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	-0.4764	-0.4764	-0.4764	-0.4764	-0.4764
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	0.4970	0.0010	0.2490	0.2490	0.2490
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	-0.4970	-0.0010	-0.2490	-0.2490	-0.2490
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	45.025	25.212	1.299	23.845	23.845

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	-45.0250	-25.2120	-1.2990	-23.8453	-23.8453
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	0.1920	0.6090	0.1360	0.3123	0.3123
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	-0.1920	-0.6090	-0.1360	-0.3123	-0.3123
Gold Consumption (kg)	7,978.56	407.093	2,468.57	19,319.65	17,697.52
Gold Production (kg)	20,064.36	11,586.27	20,290.54	20,604.65	20,222.13
Gold Exports (kg)	12,085.80	11,179.17	17,821.97	1,285.00	2,524.61
Silver Consumption (mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Silver Production (mt)	470.703	493.893	501.877	519.379	477.323
Silver Exports (mt)	470.703	493.893	501.877	519.379	477.323

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

Kyrgyzstan is a poor, mountainous country with a predominantly agricultural economy. Cotton, tobacco, wool, and meat are the main agricultural products, although only tobacco and cotton are exported in any quantity. Industrial exports include gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, and electricity. Following independence, Kyrgyzstan was progressive in carrying out market reforms such as an improved regulatory system and land reform. Kyrgyzstan was the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country to be accepted into the World Trade Organization.

Foreign Investment Assessment

Openness to Foreign Investment

The government attitude toward foreign investment is generally favorable, and government officials seek to attract foreign investment. However, sanctity of contracts and other such concepts are developing and not uniformly implemented. Individual investors can become involved in disputes over licensing, registration, enforcement of contracts, and the like, particularly at the middle and lower levels of officialdom. Corruption is a serious problem.

Foreign investors must register their firm as a legal entity with the Ministry of Justice. In addition to such registration, expatriate employees must obtain permits to work in Kyrgyzstan from the Ministry of Labor. Most typically, foreign investors form a joint venture, the bi-national joint venture formula has proved the most successful to date.

Kyrgyz law on foreign investments guarantees protection for foreign investors for expropriation, nationalization and similar actions. It also protects against bureaucratic delays within the Kyrgyz government structure. However, the laws affecting business in Kyrgyzstan are not absolutely explicit and are not always implemented fairly, consistently, or in concert with their stated aims. Kyrgyz officials and agencies often have wide latitude in interpreting law.

Privatization, both of large enterprises and of land, has at times been controversial, stimulating heated debate in Parliament and other government circles. However, regulations allowing 99-year leases of property are probably adequate for most business purposes.

The structure of banking regulations tends to place a significant disadvantage on banks that do not

meet the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan's requirements for minimum capital. To date, only three foreign banks – The Demir Bank, The Bank of Asia and the National Bank of Pakistan – are registered in Bishkek. Several other banks have majority foreign ownership.

Investment is sometimes complicated when different competitors feel compelled to negotiate with one and the same parastatal monopoly, placing the monopoly in an apparent conflict of interest vis-à-vis the different external competitors. Also, when a specific privatization scheme is envisaged, such a scheme often engenders debate in the parliament and elsewhere.

Kyrgyzstan boasts a generally liberal investment regime. A broad base of effective commercial laws is now in place, although courts are only now coming to terms with this extensive new body of law and the laws are not always implemented fairly or consistently.

There is no overt evidence of discrimination against foreign investors. However, procedures for licensing, approvals, etc., are seldom fully transparent. Also, tax authorities sometimes appear to single out foreign entities, perhaps believing they are more solvent and tax-compliant than local entities.

Transparency of Regulatory System

The legal and regulatory system of the Kyrgyz Republic is still developing. Although the body of new commercial law promises to be an effective basis for commerce, implementing regulations and court procedures, in many cases, remain to be worked out and the law is not always implemented fully.

In an effort to assist foreign investors on a variety of issues, the state committee for foreign investments and economic development established an agency based on the "one-stop-shop". However, businesses report that registration with this new agency does not prevent bureaucratic holdups in other parts of the Kyrgyz government.

Budgets for printing laws and regulations are, in many cases, non-existent. NGOs working in the field of legal information compensate to some extent for this shortcoming. Also, mid and low-level officials sometimes reserve the right to reverse states policies without prior notice. Therefore, it cannot be said that bureaucratic procedures have yet been "streamlined". However, by the standards of the former Soviet Union, procedures are often smoother and more transparent than in surrounding countries.

Labor Force

Total: 2.7 million estimated

By occupation: agriculture 55%, industry 15%, services 30%

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture products: tobacco, cotton, potatoes, vegetables, grapes, fruits and berries; sheep, goats, cattle, wool

Industries: small machinery, textiles, food processing, cement, shoes, sawn logs, refrigerators, furniture, electric motors, gold, rare earth metals

Import Commodities and Partners

Commodities: oil and gas, machinery and equipment, chemicals, foodstuffs

Partners: Russia 24.7%, Kazakhstan 24%, China 10.2%, US 6.7%, Uzbekistan 5.5%, Germany 5.4%

Export Commodities and Partners

Commodities: cotton, wool, meat, tobacco; gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, hydropower; machinery; shoes

Partners: UAE 24.8%, Switzerland 20.3%, Russia 16.7%, Kazakhstan 9.8%, Canada 5.3%, China 4%

Telephone System

Telephones- main lines in use: 394,800

Telephones- mobile cellular: 53,100

General Assessment: poorly developed; about 100,000 unsatisfied applications for household telephones

Domestic: principally microwave radio relay; one cellular provider, probably limited to Bishkek region

International: country code - 996; connections with other CIS countries by landline or microwave radio relay and with other countries by leased connections with Moscow international gateway switch and by satellite; satellite earth stations - 1 Intersputnik and 1 Intelsat; connected internationally by the Trans-Asia-Europe (TAE) fiber-optic line

Internet

Internet Hosts: 12,299

Internet users: 152,000

Roads, Airports, Ports and Harbors

Railways: 470 km

Highways: 18,500 km

Ports and harbors: Balykchy

Airports: 52; w/paved runways: 16

Legal System and Considerations

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

Dispute Settlement

To date, the government of Kyrgyzstan has a mixed record on the handling of investment disputes. The government appears reluctant to discipline even its own parastatal monopolies involved in breach of contract. The courts have similarly proved reluctant to issue rulings. One dispute was passed up through the Kyrgyz court system over a period of nearly two years, while nevertheless failing to render a final verdict. However, judicial training is proceeding and legal information systems are being put in place.

To the extent that investment disputes involving foreigners reflect a pattern, it is probably due to weak institutions (including courts), poor understanding of contract law, and other such structural shortcomings. Many of these weaknesses are being addressed and the situation may improve over time.

However, one factor formerly suggested as a reason for slow court actions - incompetence of the judicial corps to deal with a wide body of new laws - is being addressed. Increasingly, judges must pass difficult examinations on current laws, and the judicial corps is becoming both more professional and more independent over time. Still, actual court procedures sometimes tend to follow whimsy or soviet practice. However, new laws on collateral and bankruptcy round out a wide body of commercial law that will, when enforced uniformly, provide a sound basis for commerce.

Binding international arbitration, even when written into contracts, is often impractical for parties, even western investors, can generally afford the trips to Western Europe and expensive legal fees that such arbitration typically entails. To the extent arbitration is employed in contracts, the specified arbiter should be a neutral entity, appointed specifically for the contract in Kyrgyzstan or

at least in a nearby location.

Former tax holidays and other incentives for foreign investors have been eliminated (in accordance with standards preferred by international financial institutions and other advising bodies). The Kyrgyz government has also reduced the tax burden on repatriation of profits by foreign investors to bring it in line with the tax rate for domestic investors.

There are seldom specific conditions for permission to invest. On the other hand, the specific nature of any potential investment project is likely to be scrutinized for its probable effect on employment, tax revenues, and so on.

Corruption Perception Ranking

See corruption index from Transparency International in this Country Review, which measures the least to most corrupt countries (1-163), for Kyrgyzstan's current ranking. Typically, this country is ranked as one of the most corrupt nations in the world (according to this index).

Cultural Considerations

In Kyrgyzstan one's self-presentation should be restrained. 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 is 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.

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

The usual corporate tax rate is 30 percent with some exemptions, but can vary widely depending on the type of income, up to 70 percent (casinos). Income from securities is taxed at 15 percent. There is also a profit tax that is averaged at about 3.6 percent for medium sized companies. There are also labor taxes and other such contributions that can amount to approximately 27 percent for medium sized companies. Former tax holidays and other incentives for foreign investors have generally been eliminated, in accordance with standards preferred by international financial institutions and other advising bodies. Free economic zones have long existed, and are likely to expand in number in the future, but they have not yet attracted significant attention from major foreign investors.

Stock Market

The Kyrgyz Stock Exchange, in Bishkek, was established in 1995 and had 68 listed companies at the end of the 1990's.

For more information about the Kyrgyz Stock Exchange, see URL: <http://www.kse.kg/en/>

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Culture and Demography

Kyrgyzstan's population, totaling over five million, consists of Kyrgyz (estimates range from 52 to 56 percent of the total population), Russians (18 percent), Uzbeks (13 percent), Ukrainians (three percent), Germans (two percent).

Many members of the German population, however, repatriated to Germany in the early years following independence from Soviet control. A significant number of Russians also left Kyrgyzstan during this period. Meanwhile, a number of Kyrgyz living outside of the country's borders returned at that time. The remainder of the country's population consists of some eighty other ethnic groups and nationalities. The most notable of these groups is the Uygurs, who are located in the northeast part of the country, and extend into the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China. The importance in distinguishing this group lies its concerted effort aimed at establishing a political party whose primary aim would be to create an independent Uygurstan that also would include the Chinese-controlled Uygur territory. Tajik refugees also are part of the minority groups in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyz and Russian are both official languages in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz is part of the Nogai-Kipchak subgroup of northeastern Turkic languages, which belong to the Uralic-Altaic language family. Although the Kyrgyz language has more Mongolian and Altaic elements than does Kazakh -- the language of neighboring Kazakhstan -- both modern forms of the two languages are very similar in structure. Unlike Kazakhstan, however, the Kyrgyz people possess an almost-universal mastery of their language. No written form of the Kyrgyz language was in existence until 1923 when an Arabic-based script was used. In 1928, a Latin-based alphabet was introduced instead of the Arabic script, and by 1940, it was replaced with a Cyrillic-based alphabet.

During the 1990s, soon after Soviet withdrawal and the acquisition of independence, a policy establishing Kyrgyz as the official language was vigorously pursued. Indeed, in 1992, a law was promulgated calling for all business to be conducted in Kyrgyz. Non-Kyrgyz members of the population resisted this process of Kyrgyzification. In March of 1996, a reversal of this process was instituted when the legislature of Kyrgyzstan amended the constitution making both Kyrgyz as well as Russian officially recognized languages in areas where Russian-speaking people were

prevalent. According to reports, the measure was motivated by a desire for rapprochement between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Nevertheless, by 1997, an aggressive attempt to make Kyrgyz the national language in all commercial and governmental enterprises had been launched. This return to increased Kyrgyzification was not well-received by either Russian-speakers or other non-Kyrgyz groups.

Most of the population of Kyrgyzstan are Sunni Muslims (about 70 percent), a significant minority are Russian Orthodox (approximately 20 percent), and there are also a variety of other religions represented among the remaining portions of the populations. Worth noting is the fact that although most of the people of Kyrgyzstan are Muslims, Islam has not been as heavy a cultural influence upon the population. Although the southern provinces tend to be more Islamic and conservative enclaves, while the northern areas tend to be more industrialized and modernized, in general, Kyrgyzstan can be considered a religiously moderate country. Tribal affiliations are at least as important as religious affiliations and lend themselves to the fascinating cultural tapestry of Kyrgyzstan.

Human Development

About 5.9 percent of GDP is spent in the country on educational expenditures. About 4.1 percent of GDP is spent on health expenditures. Access to sanitation, water, and health care is considered to be generally good.

Literacy in Kyrgyzstan, like many former Soviet republics, is highly rated at 97 percent and there has been a firm dedication to the education of all citizens. This effort, however, has been somewhat fettered by the lack of funds, a deficit of trained teachers, and insufficient text books. Nevertheless, the government of Kyrgyzstan has ambitiously attempted to deal with these challenges, while maintaining its objectives of universal education.

The health care system of Kyrgyzstan faces challenges reminiscent of the educational system in the post-Soviet era. There is a gross lack of funds, facilities, supplies, equipment, and trained professionals. Nonetheless, the government of Kyrgyzstan continues to chart the course of transition from a national health care system under the aegis of the Soviet administration, to independent public health care and insurance systems. Life expectancy remains at a respectable average rate of 68.4 years old. Meanwhile, the infant mortality rate has been decreased (now 75 deaths per 1,000 live births), but this number is still one of the highest among former Soviet republics. Unsanitary conditions and contaminated water appear to be the greatest health hazards.

One notable indicator used to measure a country's quality of life is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is 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 Kyrgyzstan in the medium human development category, at 109th place.

Editor's 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:

85th out of 140

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:

Not Ranked

Female Population:

2.7 million

Female Life Expectancy at birth:

70 years

Total Fertility Rate:

2.6

Maternal Mortality Ratio (2000):

110

Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:

290-2,200

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

11%

Mean Age at Time of Marriage:

22

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

60%

Female Adult Literacy Rate:

97%

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

83%

Female-Headed Households (%):

29%

Economically Active Females (%):

61.4%

Female Contributing Family Workers (%):

N/A

Female Estimated Earned Income:

\$1,388

Seats in Parliament held by women (%):

Lower or Single House: 3.2%

Upper House or Senate: N/A

Year Women Received the Right to Vote:

1918

Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:

1918

*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.

- 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 Kyrgyz elder enters the room. Elders always receive the utmost respect. It is important that the visitor to Kyrgyzstan show elders the same respect that their own countrymen give them.
- The traditional Kyrgyz dwelling is the yurt, an easily assembled and reassembled tent-like home, made of felt. Although the yurt is associated with nomads, in recent years, it has become popular with shepherds (called chabans) who spend their summers in the high pastures (called jailoo). In all yurts, the door faces south or southeast, and the interior is divided into various areas. The "red corner" (located opposite the door) is where trunks and chests containing the family valuables are located, along with blankets. In the middle of the yurt, the fire and a low center table are arranged. On the right of the yurt, there are household utensils and children's playthings and other items. On the left of the yurt, saddles, bridles and other male items are stored. Following this arrangement, women usually sit on the right side of the yurt and men on the left.
- Today, few Kyrgyz still use yurts as their main houses, but in most homes, there is a room referred to as "the Kyrgyz room," which is decorated with felt rugs, arranged like the traditional yurt, and is intended to honor cultural traditions. Members of the household will often sit in a circle on the floor (because there is no furniture in the yurt other than the low table), which is covered by a wool carpet. Even today, following the traditional arrangement of the room (noted above), women sit on the right side of the Kyrgyz room, while men sit on the left. Often, the Kyrgyz room is where guests are entertained.
- Hospitality is part of the Kyrgyz tradition and culture. It is a part of the nomadic legacy when hospitality was a necessity. In the days when the nomadic lifestyle was the norm, travelers relied upon the hospitality of others to provide them with temporary shelter, food and drink. Likewise, travelers passing through were relied upon for news and information, and were needed for aid, in times of trouble. Because the nomadic lifestyle was the norm, it was also customary for families to leave their yurt open with food inside available to passers by. Today, this legacy of hospitality endures and travelers are welcomed into Kyrgyz homes.
- Hospitality remains an integral part of Kyrgyz protocol and reflecting the traditions of the past, Kyrgyz people invite guests to join them for food and drink, and gracious guests are expected to partake of the offering. Failing to be a gracious guest is a good way to risk offense. Note that a meal is not something simply to be consumed in Kyrgyzstan; it is part of the tradition and culture of brotherhood, which rests upon the sharing of food and drink. Frequently, the Kyrgyz people will extend themselves by laying their table with all their food available. This generous gesture is

intended to convey the idea that the guest is someone to be honored and appreciated. Only the most discourteous of guests would ungraciously decline or rebuff such gestures.

- Alcohol is often part of the meal shared with guests. Non-locals are often surprised to find that even Muslim Kyrgyz often share drinks of alcohol (usually vodka) with their guests. Vodka aside, another commonly consumed drink is called "kumys" - a mildly alcoholic made from fermented mare's milk, which is only available in spring and summer when mares are foaling. "Bozo" -- a yeasty creation made from fermented millet, which is available throughout the year -- may also accompany the meal.
- Because Islam was introduced to the country in the 17th and 18th centuries, the religion was not fully assimilated until later. As noted above, there is less of a restriction on alcohol here than in other predominantly Muslim countries. Nevertheless, public drunkenness is not tolerated.
- Unlike other countries in the region, Kyrgyzstan'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 Muslim 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 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 Kyrgyz 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.
- In Kyrgyzstan, one should be prepared to see or hear about one of the world's most fascinating wedding customs: the kidnapping of the bride. According to tradition, a man may kidnap a woman he loves, and is usually aided and abetted by his friends and relatives in his efforts. Typically, the kidnapping is planned in advance, with relatives gathering at the man's home, busy with the preparation of a festive meal. Meanwhile, the man captures the woman and brings her back to the home with her head covered with a kerchief, as a sign of her virginity. She is then placed behind a curtain in a corner of the home (called a koshego). Following the marriage rites, the bride is initiated into the family hearth via a custom called the "otko kirgizish" where relatives invite the new couple to join them at the hearth. The wife becomes an equal member of the household when she puts grease in a pot (presumably for cooking of some sort).
- Other fascinating customs include the birth rite, which is referred to as "djengek toi" and centers around the festival celebrating the birth of a new baby. The associated custom, called "tyshoo kesuu" involves cutting the strings of a baby that has recently learned how to walk. In this custom, the baby's feet are tied with a black and white string and other children participate in a kind of race or competition. The child who wins the race is given the right to cut baby's strings. Legend suggests that after being released from the strings, the baby will live healthily and confidently.
- The spring holiday, called Nooruz, is also widely celebrated. It involves symbolic purification around a large fire and is believed to be connected with the Muslim New Year. It is followed customarily with a festive meal boasting a varied and delicious collection of dishes intended to symbolize the fertility and prosperity of the upcoming year.
- Visitors to Kyrgyzstan should expect to see roadside bushes and trees, most often located close to natural springs and ponds, covered with sections of multicolored fabrics. These trees are "prayer trees." According to Shamanistic beliefs, one should cover or adorn the trees in this way, while praying to the "powers of life" for protection against disease and for the healing of those who are sick.

• 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- If you are staying longer than a couple of weeks, or intend to go off the beaten track, register with the Embassy on arrival.
- Enter next of kin details into the back of your passport.

- Check with your embassy, consulate, or appropriate government institution related to travel before traveling.
- 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

Business customs are closely tied to social customs and it is important to allow plenty of time for meetings. Business meetings often lead to offers of meals that may be hours long, offering course after course and many toasts. Some high level businessmen and officials do not drink, but others do drink alcohol. If you are firm your hosts will allow you to toast with a non-alcohol beverage. If you start with alcohol, however, it is difficult to switch to something non-alcoholic, and you may offend the host if you try. Tours of factories and facilities may also become an obligatory part of initial meetings. Meetings are rarely held separately with different officials in a single company. Most, and often all, relevant officials will be at one large meeting, but very often only the most senior person will do most of the talking.

Small gifts with company logos, books, fruit, and alcohol or candy are often presented or exchanged.

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.smarttraveller.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/brochures/brochures_1225.html

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.smartraveller.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 Kyrgyzstan

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:

Kyrgyzstan 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

Current Issues:

- water pollution; many people get their water directly from contaminated streams and wells
- waterborne diseases
- soil salinity resulting from faulty irrigation practices

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc):

1.9

Country Rank (GHG output):

138th

Natural Hazards:

N/A

Environmental Policy

Regulation and Jurisdiction:

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

- Ministry of Environmental Protection

- Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources

Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

N/A

International Environmental Accords:

Party to:

- Air Pollution
- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol
- Desertification
- Hazardous Wastes
- Ozone Layer Protection

Signed but not ratified:

- None

Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):

2003

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 chloroflorocarbons (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 (OPS), 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 remediative 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>

U n i t e d N a t i o n s E n v i r o n m e n t a l P r o g r a m . U R L : 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/>](http://www.unep.net)

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

[<http://climatechange.unep.net/>](http://climatechange.unep.net)

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

[<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>](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 [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](#) Environmental 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 environmental 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 seal 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)

Appendices

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Methodology Note for Demographic Data:

The demographic numbers for cities and national populations listed in CountryWatch content are derived from the Geoba.se website, which analyzes data from the World Bank. The current demographic numbers displayed on the Countrywatch website are reflective of the latest available estimates.

The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

derived from a mix of sources including the Altapedia, Central Intelligence Agency Factbook, Infoplease, and State Department Background Notes.

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IFES Election Guide. URL: <http://www.electionguide.org>

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[United States](#) Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook. Washington, D.C.: Printing and Photography Group. URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

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[United States](#) Department of State, Background Notes. URL: http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

Virtual Library: International Relations Resources. URL: <http://www.etown.edu/vl/countgen.html>

World Bank: Governance Indicators. URL: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance>

-- See also list of News Wires services below, which are also used for research purposes. --

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.

Sources: [Economic Overview](#)

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URL:<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/contents.html>

United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Database

United States Geological Service, Mineral Information

United States Department of State, Country Commercial Guides. Washington, D.C. [United States of America](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/index.html). URL:http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/com_guides/index.html

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Yearbook of Tourism Statistics, World Tourism Organization. 1998 to present. Madrid: The World Tourism Organization.

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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

In these cases, other data and/or estimates by CountryWatch.com were utilized.

Investment Overview

C o r r u p t i o n a n d T r a n s p a r e n c y I n d e x . U R L :
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<<http://www.transparency.org/documents/>

Deloitte Tax Guides. URL: <http://www.deloittetaxguides.com>

Trade Policy Reviews by the World Trade Organization . URL: http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/tp_rep_e.htm#bycountry

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Ethnologue. URL: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>

Government of Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. URL: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo>

Government of Canada Foreign Affairs and International Trade. URL: http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-e.htm

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Lonely Planet. URL: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/>

Steve Kropla's Online Help For World Travelers. URL: <http://www.kropla.com/>

[United Kingdom](http://www.fco.gov.uk/) Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Office. URL: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>

United Nations Human Development Report. URL: <http://www.undp.org/hdro>

UNICEF Statistical Database Online. URL: <http://www.unicef.org/statis/atoz.html>

[United States](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html) Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook. 2001. Washington, D.C.: Printing and Photography Group. URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

United States Department of State, Background Notes. URL: http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

United States Department of State, Commercial and Business Affairs: Travel Tips. URL: http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/business/cba_travel.html

United States Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. URL: <http://travel.state.gov/>

World Health Organization. URL: <http://www.who.int/home-page/>

World News Connection, National Technical Information Service. Springfield, Virginia, USA.

Internet News Service, Xinhua News Agency (U.S.) Inc. Woodside, New York. URL: <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/>

Note on Edition Dates:

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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.

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London: Routledge.

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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.

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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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Author/editor. *Title of Print Version of Work*. Edition statement (if given). Publication information (Place of publication: publisher, date), if given. *Title of Electronic Work*. Medium. Available Protocol (if applicable):Site/Path/File. Access date.

Examples:

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.

Note:

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Author/editor. "Part title." *Title of Print Version of Work*. Edition statement (if given). Publication information (Place of publication: publisher, date), if given. *Title of Electronic Work*. Medium. AvailableProtocol (if applicable): Site/Path/File. Access date.

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.

Note:

This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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