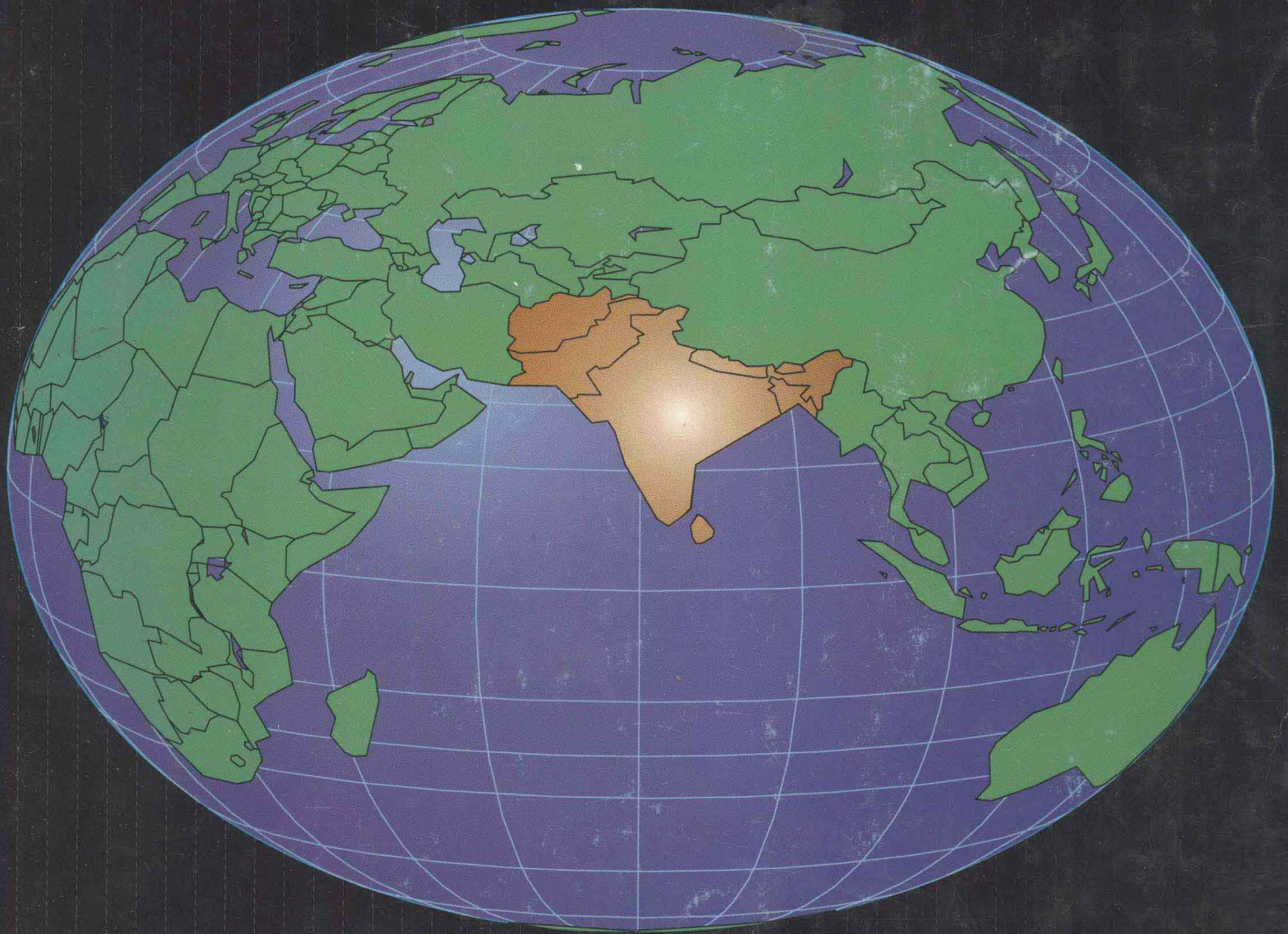


GLOBAL  STUDIES

# INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

THIRD EDITION



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**GLOBAL  STUDIES**

# **INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA**

**THIRD EDITION**

**Dr. James H. K. Norton**

**Dushkin/McGraw-Hill  
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# India and South Asia

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# India and South Asia

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The author/editor of *Global Studies: India and South Asia, Third Edition*, received a B.S. degree from Yale University; B.A. and M.A. degrees in Sanskrit from Oxford University; and a Ph.D. in Indian philosophy from the University of Madras in India. He taught for 10 years at the College of Wooster, where he was associate professor of religion and chairman of the Department of Indian Studies. While at Wooster, Dr. Norton initiated a junior-year study program for college students in Madurai University, India, now part of the University of Wisconsin College Year in India program. He has also taught at Madurai University, Boston University, and Oberlin College. He is currently farming in Massachusetts, conducting continuing-education courses, and serving on the school committee for Martha's Vineyard.

Dr. Norton spent 5 years in India as a Ford Foundation scholar while doing graduate work at the University of Madras as a teacher and as a Senior Research Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies. He is a member of the American Academy of Religion, the Association for Asian Studies, and the Conference on Religion in South India, and he has served on the executive committee of the Society for South Indian Studies. His articles on Indian philosophy and on comparisons of Eastern and Western thought appear in a number of books and journals.

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# Selected World Wide Web Sites for Global Studies: India and South Asia

(Some Web sites are continually changing their structure and content, so the information listed may not always be available.—Ed.)

## GENERAL SITES

- CNN Online Page—<http://www.cnn.com/>—U.S. 24-hour video news channel. News, updated every few hours, includes text, pictures, and film. Good external links.
- C-SPAN ONLINE—<http://www.c-span.org/>—See especially C-SPAN International on the Web for International Programming Highlights and archived C-Span programs.
- International Network Information Center at University of Texas—<http://inic.utexas.edu>—Gateway has pointers to international sites, including South Asia.
- Political Science RESOURCES—<http://www.keele.ac.uk:80/depts/po/psr.htm>—Dynamic gateway to sources available via European addresses. Listed by country name.
- ReliefWeb—<http://www.reliefweb.int>—UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs clearinghouse for international humanitarian emergencies.
- Social Science Information Gateway (SOSIG)—<http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk/>—Project of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). It catalogs 22 subjects and lists developing countries' URL addresses.
- United Nations System—<http://www.unsystem.org/>—This is the official Web site for the United Nations system of organizations. Everything is listed alphabetically. Offers: UNICC; Food and Agriculture Organization.
- UN Development Programme (UNDP)—<http://www.undp.org/>—Publications and current information on world poverty, Mission Statement, UN Development Fund for Women, and more. Be sure to see Poverty Clock.
- U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—<http://www.info.usaid.gov/>—U.S. policy toward assistance to Asian countries is available at this site.
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Home Page—<http://www.odci.gov/cia>—This site includes publications of the CIA, such as the 1996–1997 World Fact Book, 1995 Fact Book on Intelligence, Handbook of International Economic Statistics, 1996, and CIA Maps.
- U.S. Department of State Home Page—<http://www.state.gov/index.html>—Organized by categories: Hot Topics (i.e. 1996 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices), International Policy, Business Services.
- World Bank Group—[www.worldbank.org/html/Wel-come.html](http://www.worldbank.org/html/Wel-come.html)—News (i.e., press releases, summary of new projects, speeches), publications, topics in development, countries and regions. Links to other financial organizations.
- World Health Organization (WHO)—<http://www.who.ch/>—Maintained by WHO's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, uses Excite search engine to conduct key-word searches.

## GENERAL INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA SITES

- ASEAN—<http://www.asean.or.id/>—Official site of the Association of South East Asian Nations provides overview of Asian Web sources, Summits, Economic and World Affairs, Publications, Political Foundations, Regional Cooperation.
- Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library—<http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-AsianStudies.html>—Australia National University maintains these sites, which link to many other Web sources, available at each country's location.
- Asia-Yahoo—<http://www.yahoo.com/Regional/Regions/Asia/>—Specialized Yahoo search site permits key-word searches on Asian events, countries, and topics.

## COUNTRIES

- ICARP: Afghanistan WWWVL—<http://www.rockbridge.net/personal/bichel/afghan.htm>—Afghanistan information can be found by clicking on sections: e.g., Culture & Language, Policies & Economics. Under General Information & Links, many additional sites are available.
- Bangladesh Online—<http://www.bdonline.com/>—Follow the topics at this site to find a wealth of information about Bangladesh—Government, Industries, Literature & Culture, Politics, Social Welfare, to name just a few.
- Bhutan Virtual Library—<http://bhutan.org/>—Many links to other sites are available at this site. Just click on Links to Resources.
- India Index—[http://www.ubcnet.or.jp:80/jin/ind\\_gen.html](http://www.ubcnet.or.jp:80/jin/ind_gen.html)—Information about India (i.e., demographics) organized under specific categories such as Japan-Indian News, Politics, Economy.
- India News Network (India L)—<http://www.coalliance.org:80/unitrec/ej000423.html>—Web site with free daily news and discussion and links about India.
- AMAA Network Consultant Home Page: Nepal—<http://www.catmando.com/nepal.htm>—This site will lead you to limited facts about Nepal and the Himalayas and topics such as Arts, Music, Embassies, News, Financial.
- Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations—<http://www.undp.org/missions/maldives/>—When you reach this site, click on General Information on the Maldives for a bank of topics that include Economy, Environment, Women, History, and Government.
- World Wide Web Virtual Library: Asian Studies: Pakistan—<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/pak/>—This constantly updated site provides the best and newest links to useful sources.

We recommend that you visit our Web site at <http://www.dushkin.com/globalstudies/>

# Introduction

## THE GLOBAL AGE

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, it is clear that the future we face will be considerably more international in nature than was ever believed possible in the past. Each day, print and broadcast journalists make us aware that our world is becoming increasingly smaller and substantially more interdependent.

The environmental crisis, world food shortages, nuclear weaponry, and regional conflicts that threaten to involve us all—all make it clear that the distinctions between domestic and foreign problems are all too often artificial, that many seemingly domestic problems no longer stop at national boundaries. As Rene Dubos, the 1969 Pulitzer Prize recipient, stated: “[I]t becomes obvious that each [of us] has two countries, [our] own and planet Earth.” As global interdependence has become a reality, it has become vital for the citizens of this world to develop literacy in global matters.

## THE GLOBAL STUDIES SERIES

It is the aim of the Global Studies series to help readers acquire a basic knowledge and understanding of the regions and countries in the world. Each volume provides a foundation of information—geographic, cultural, economic, political, historical, artistic, and religious—which will allow readers to better understand the current and future problems within these countries and regions and to comprehend how events there might affect their own well-being. In short, these volumes attempt to provide the background information necessary to respond to the realities of our global age.

### Author/Editor

Each of the volumes in the Global Studies series is crafted under the careful direction of an author/editor—an expert in the area under study. The author/editors teach and conduct research and have traveled extensively through the regions about which they are writing.

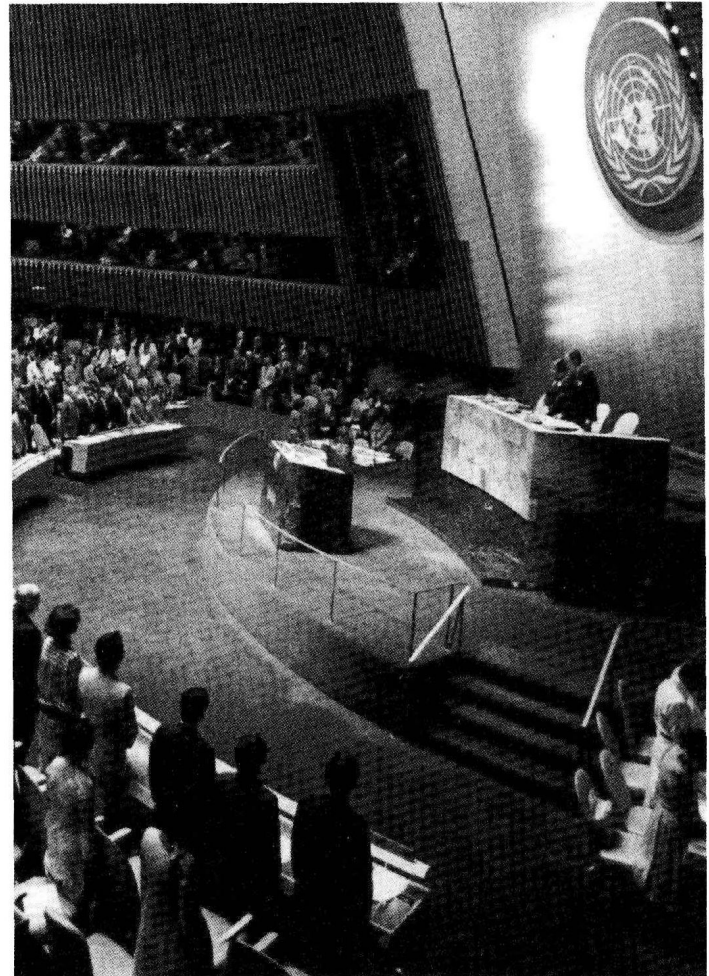
For *Global Studies: India and South Asia, Third Edition*, the author/editor has written introductory essays on the South Asia region and country reports for each of the countries included. In addition, he has been instrumental in the selection of the world press articles that appear in this volume.

### Contents and Features

The Global Studies volumes are organized to provide concise information and current world press articles on the regions and countries within those areas under study.

#### *Regional Essays*

For *Global Studies: India and South Asia, Third Edition*, the author/editor has written narrative essays focusing on the religious, cultural, sociopolitical, and economic differences and similarities of the countries and peoples in the region. The



(United Nations/Yutaka Nagata)

The global age is making all countries and all peoples more interdependent.

purpose of the regional essays is to provide readers with an effective sense of the diversity of the area as well as an understanding of its common cultural and historical backgrounds. Accompanying the essays are maps showing the boundaries of the countries within the region.

#### *Country Reports*

Concise reports are written for each of the countries within the region under study. These reports are the heart of each Global Studies volume. *Global Studies: India and South Asia, Third Edition*, contains eight country reports, including India.

The country reports are composed of five standard elements. Each report contains a small, semidetached map visually positioning the country among its neighboring states; a detailed summary of statistical information; a current essay providing important historical, geographical, political, cultural, and economic information; a historical timeline, offering a convenient visual survey of a few key historical events; and four graphic indicators, with summary statements about

the country in terms of development, freedom, health/welfare, and achievements.

#### *A Note on the Statistical Summaries*

The statistical information provided for each country has been drawn from a wide range of sources. The 10 most frequently referenced are listed on page 204. Every effort has been made to provide the most current and accurate information available. However, occasionally the information cited by these sources differs to some extent; and, all too often, the most current information available for some countries is dated. Aside from these problems, the statistical summary of each country is generally quite complete and reasonably up to date. Care should be taken, however, in using these statistics (or, for that matter, any published statistics) in making hard comparisons among countries. We have also provided comparable statistics on Canada and the United States, which follow on the next two pages.

#### *World Press Articles*

Within each Global Studies volume is reprinted a number of articles carefully selected by our editorial staff and the author/editor from a broad range of international periodicals and newspapers. The articles have been chosen for currency, interest, and their differing perspectives on the subject countries. There are 36 articles in *Global Studies: India and South Asia, Third Edition*.

The articles section is preceded by an annotated table of contents as well as a topic guide. The annotated table of contents offers a brief summary of each article, while the topic guide indicates the main theme(s) of each article. Thus, readers desiring to focus on articles dealing with a particular theme, say, religion, may refer to the topic guide to find those articles.

#### *WWW Sites, Glossary, Bibliography, Index*

An annotated list of selected World Wide Web sites can be found on page v in this edition of *Global Studies: India and South Asia*.

At the back of each Global Studies volume, readers will find a glossary of terms and abbreviations, which provides a quick reference to the specialized vocabulary of the area under study and to the standard abbreviations used throughout the volume.

Following the glossary is a bibliography, which lists general works, national histories, and current-events publications and periodicals that provide regular coverage on India and South Asia.

The index at the end of the volume is an accurate reference to the contents of the volume. Readers seeking specific information and citations should consult this standard index.



(World Bank photo)

Understanding the issues and lifestyles of other countries will help make us literate in global matters.

#### **Currency and Usefulness**

This third edition of *Global Studies: India and South Asia*, like other Global Studies volumes, is intended to provide the most current and useful information available necessary to understand the events that are shaping the cultures of the region today.

We plan to revise this volume on a regular basis. The statistics will be updated, essays rewritten, country reports revised, and articles completely replaced as new information becomes available. In order to accomplish this task we will turn to our author/editor, our advisory boards, and—hopefully—to you, the users of this volume. Your comments are more than welcome. If you have an idea that you think will make the volume more useful, an article or bit of information that will make it more current, or a general comment on its organization, content, or features that you would like to share with us, please send it in for serious consideration for the next edition.



# Canada

## GEOGRAPHY

*Area in Square Kilometers (Miles):*  
9,976,140 (3,850,790) (slightly larger  
than the United States)

*Capital (Population):* Ottawa  
(980,000)

*Climate:* from temperate in south to  
subarctic and arctic in north

## PEOPLE

### Population

*Total:* 28,820,670

*Annual Growth Rate:* 1.18%

*Rural/Urban Population Ratio:* 23/77

*Major Languages:* English; French

*Ethnic Makeup:* 40% British Isles  
origin; 27% French origin; 20% other  
European; 1.5% indigenous Indian  
and Eskimo; 11.5% mixed

### Health

*Life Expectancy at Birth:* 76 years  
(male); 83 years (female)

*Infant Mortality Rate (Ratio):* 7/1,000

*Average Caloric Intake:* 127% of  
FAO minimum

*Physicians Available (Ratio):* 1/464

### Religions

46% Roman Catholic; 16% United  
Church; 10% Anglican; 28% others

### Education

*Adult Literacy Rate:* 97%

### COMMUNICATION

*Telephones:* 18,000,000

*Newspapers:* 96 in English; 11 in  
French

### TRANSPORTATION

*Highways—Kilometers (Miles):*  
884,272 (549,133)

*Railroads—Kilometers (Miles):*  
146,444 (90,942)

*Usable Airfields:* 1,142

### GOVERNMENT

*Type:* confederation with  
parliamentary democracy

*Independence Date:* July 1, 1867

*Head of State/Government:* Queen  
Elizabeth II; Prime Minister Jean  
Chrétien

*Political Parties:* Progressive  
Conservative Party; Liberal Party;  
New Democratic Party; Reform

Party; Bloc Québécois

*Suffrage:* universal at 18

### MILITARY

*Number of Armed Forces:* 88,000

*Military Expenditures (% of Central*

*Government Expenditures):* 8.7%

*Current Hostilities:* none

### ECONOMY

*Currency (\$U.S. Equivalent):* 1.39

Canadian dollars = \$1

*Per Capita Income/GDP:*

\$22,200/\$617.7 billion

*Inflation Rate:* 1.9%

*Natural Resources:* petroleum; natural  
gas; fish; minerals; cement; forestry  
products; fur

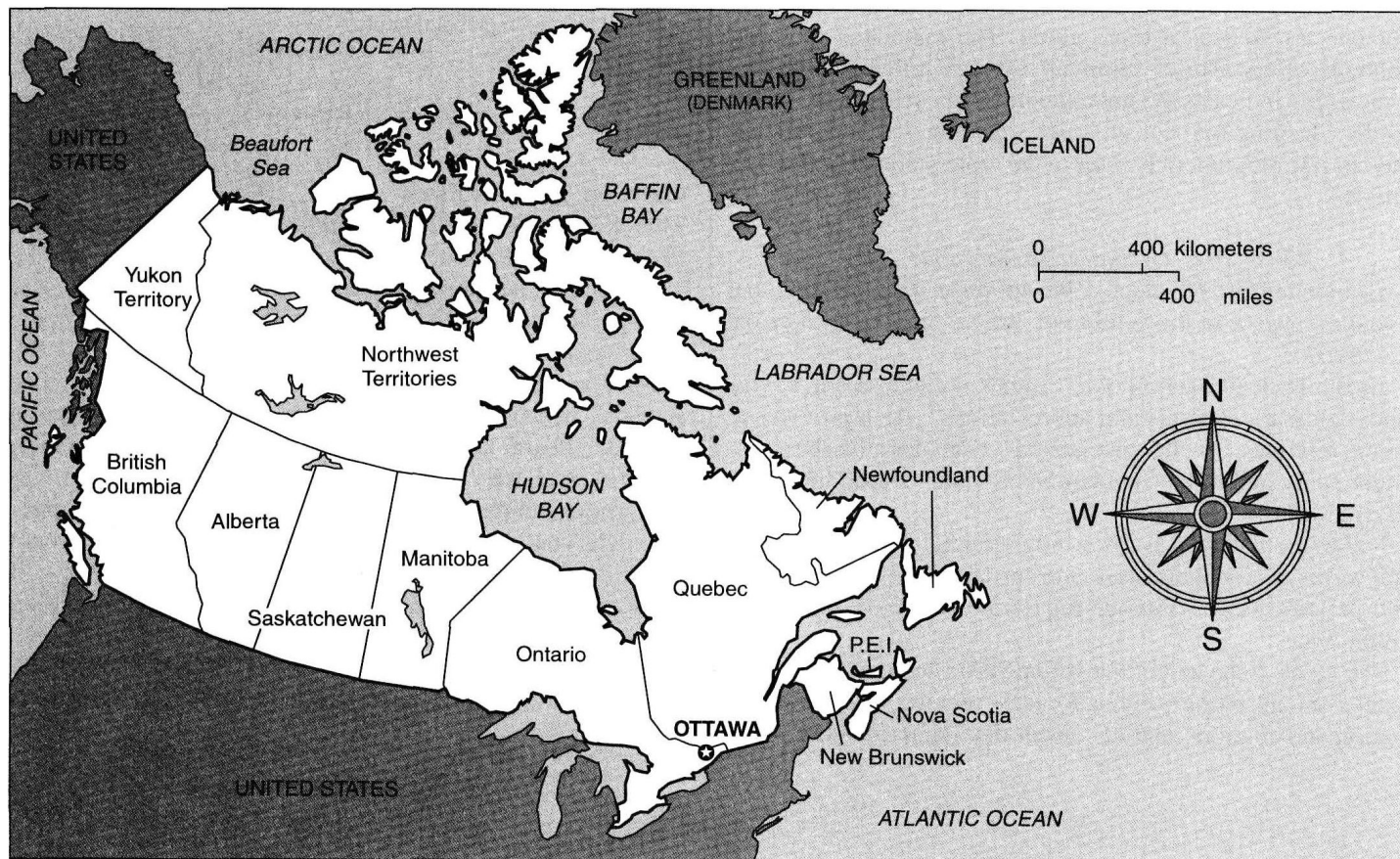
*Agriculture:* grains; livestock; dairy  
products; potatoes; hogs; poultry and  
eggs; tobacco

*Industry:* oil production and refining;  
natural-gas development; fish  
products; wood and paper products;  
chemicals; transportation equipment

### FOREIGN TRADE

*Exports:* \$134 billion

*Imports:* \$125 billion



# The United States

## GEOGRAPHY

*Area in Square Kilometers (Miles):*  
9,578,626 (3,618,770)  
*Capital (Population):* Washington,  
D.C. (567,100)  
*Climate:* temperate

## PEOPLE

### Population

*Total:* 265,562,700  
*Annual Growth Rate:* .99%  
*Rural/Urban Population Ratio:* 25/75  
*Major Languages:* English; Spanish;  
others  
*Ethnic Makeup:* 80% white; 12%  
black; 6% Hispanic; 2% Asian,  
Pacific Islander, American Indian,  
Eskimo, and Aleut

### Health

*Life Expectancy at Birth:* 73 years  
(male); 79 years (female)  
*Infant Mortality Rate (Ratio):*  
8.3/1,000  
*Average Caloric Intake:* 138% of  
FAO minimum  
*Physicians Available (Ratio):* 1/391

## Religions

55% Protestant; 36% Roman  
Catholic; 4% Jewish; 5% Muslim  
and others

## Education

*Adult Literacy Rate:* 97.9% (official)  
(estimates vary widely)

## COMMUNICATION

*Telephones:* 182,558,000  
*Newspapers:* 1,679 dailies;  
approximately 63,000,000 circulation

## TRANSPORTATION

*Highways—Kilometers (Miles):*  
7,599,250 (4,719,134)  
*Railroads—Kilometers (Miles):*  
240,000 (149,161)  
*Usable Airfields:* 12,417

## GOVERNMENT

*Type:* federal republic  
*Independence Date:* July 4, 1776  
*Head of State:* President William  
("Bill") Jefferson Clinton  
*Political Parties:* Democratic Party;

Republican Party; others of minor  
political significance  
*Suffrage:* universal at 18

## MILITARY

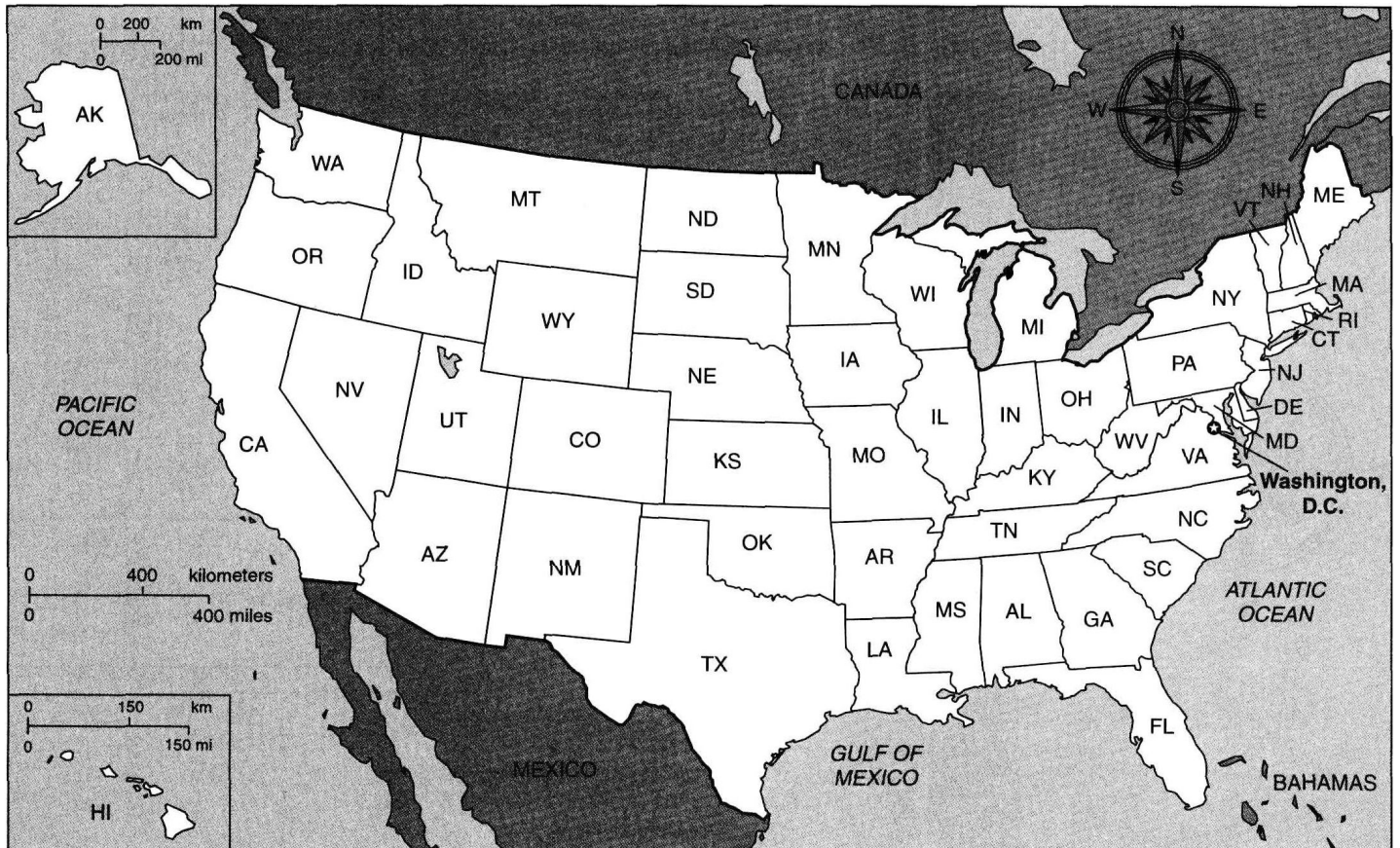
*Number of Armed Forces:* 1,807,177  
*Military Expenditures (% of Central  
Government Expenditures):* 22.6%  
*Current Hostilities:* none

## ECONOMY

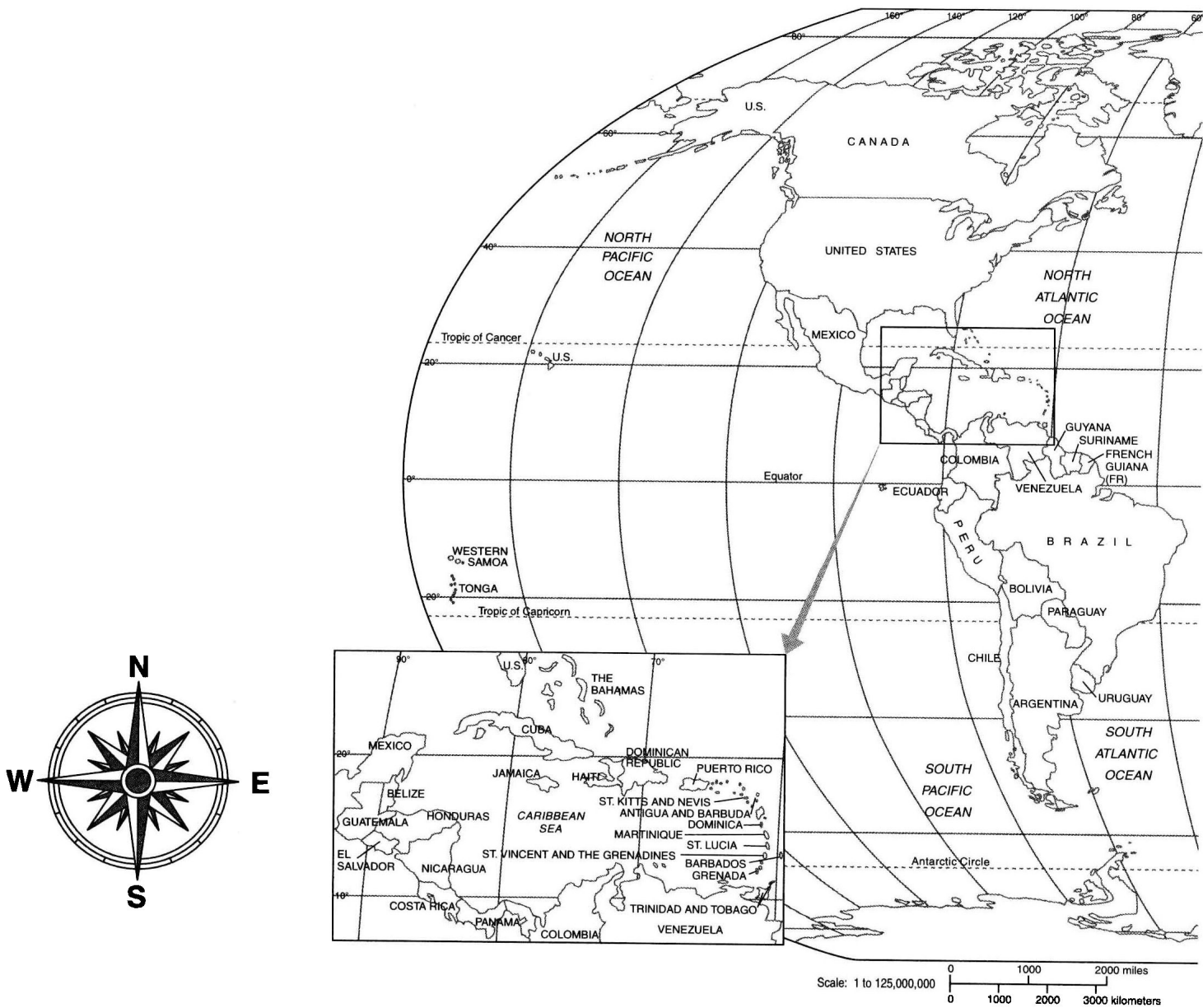
*Per Capita Income/GDP:*  
\$24,700/\$6.38 trillion  
*Inflation Rate:* 3%  
*Natural Resources:* metallic and  
nonmetallic minerals; petroleum;  
arable land  
*Agriculture:* food grains; feed crops;  
oil-bearing crops; livestock; dairy  
products  
*Industry:* diversified in both capital-  
and consumer-goods industries

## FOREIGN TRADE

*Exports:* \$449 billion  
*Imports:* \$582 billion

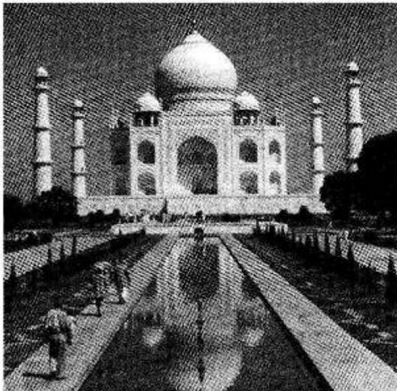


This map has been developed to provide a graphic picture of where the countries of the world are located, the relationship they have with their region and neighbors, and their positions relative to today's major power blocs. We have focused on certain areas to more clearly illustrate these crowded regions.



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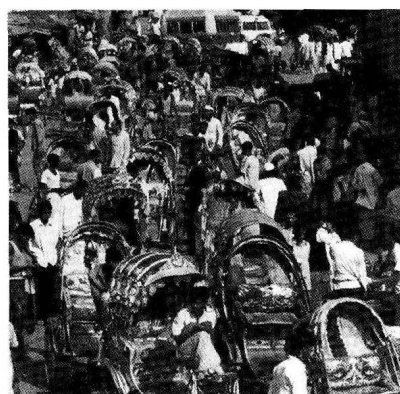


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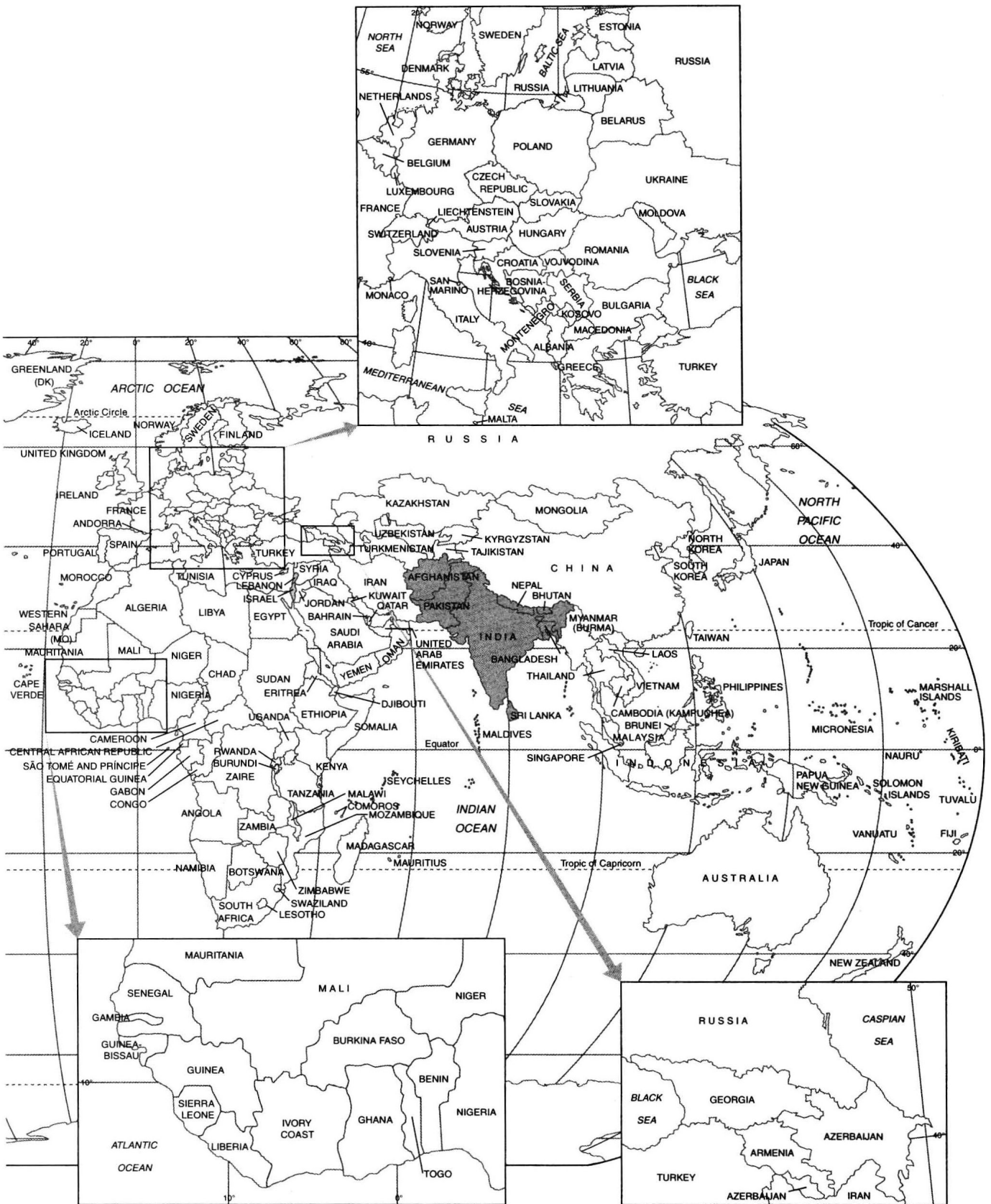


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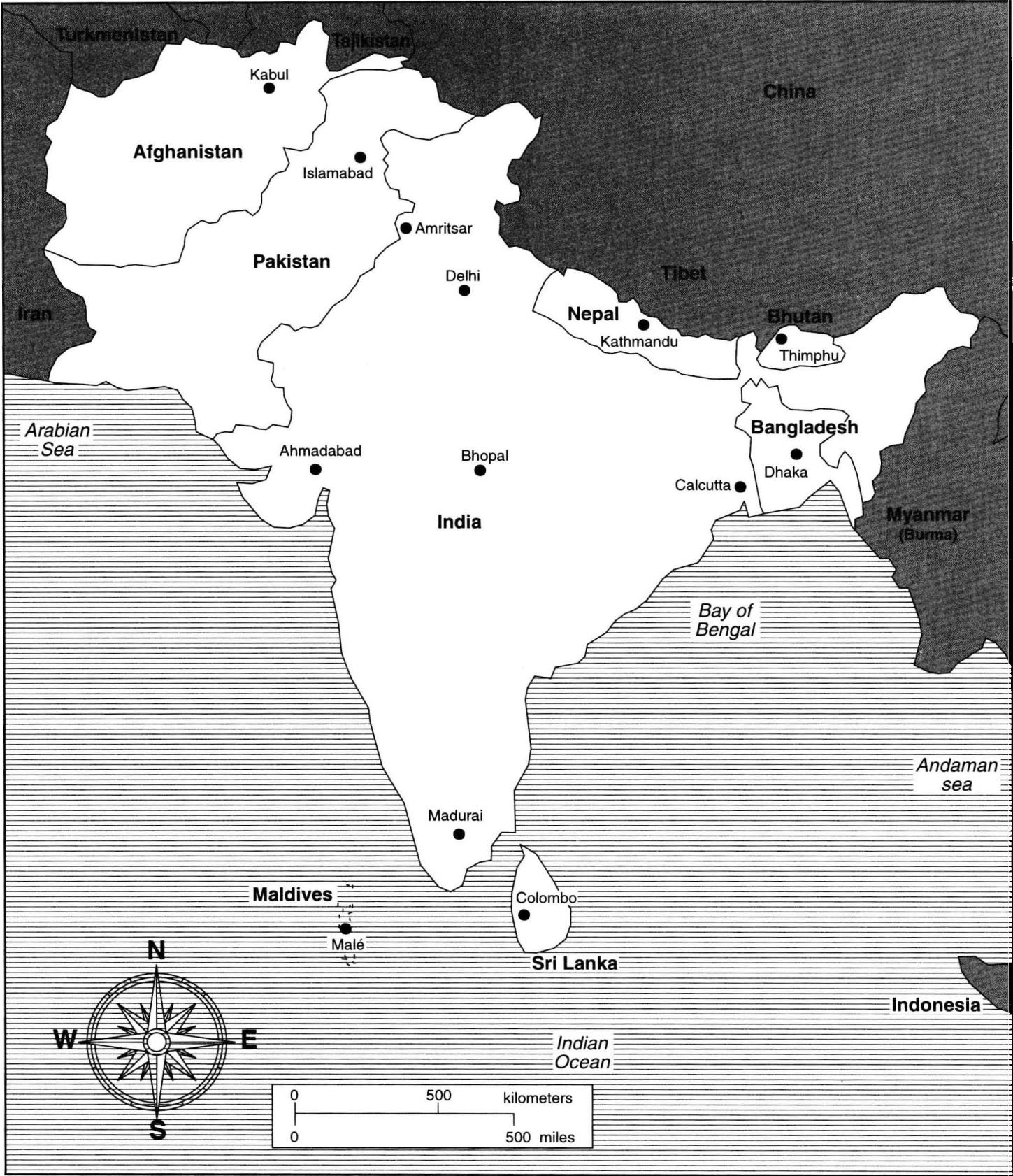


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# India and South Asia



# Images of South Asia

## IMAGES OF SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is a distinct area, set apart from the rest of the globe. We recognize women from that part of the world because they wear distinctive dress, called *saris* or *salwar-chemises*, and apply the cosmetic red mark called *bindu* on their foreheads. Men wear *dhotis*, *jodhpurs*, or sometimes trousers and notched-collar Nehru jackets, and some wrap turbans about their heads. Indian cooking, with its spicy curries, has a flavor all its own. And Indian music, played on the *sitar*, *vina*, or *sharod*, does not sound like any other. Not only are the South Asian peoples' cultures, languages, and traditions distinct, but their attitudes and assumptions about such elemental realities as truth, life, time, and life-after-death are different from those held in other parts of the world.

Some contributions that the world has received from the subcontinent identify the uniqueness of the tradition in which the South Asian people live. The number zero—the most symbolic and elusive of all numbers—was added to the number system of the West only after it had been brought from South Asia by Arab traders (which is why we call them Arabic numbers). Linguistics—the study of the structure of language—also had its origin in South Asia. *Yoga*, a very ancient approach to spiritual discipline, and *satyagraha* (nonviolent resistance), an alternative to power politics developed in this century by India's Mohandas Gandhi, indicate the extent and the variety of creative ideas that were developed in South Asia and that have benefited all of humankind.

There are also some challenges that the peoples of this region experience with greater intensity than in other parts of the world, including population density and growth, environmental degradation, national identity, economic development, social equality and women's rights, child labor, illiteracy, poverty, and disease. These are issues that affect the well-being of everyone in the world. How the peoples of South Asia respond to these challenges, then, is important to us all.

## OUT OF MANY FRAGMENTS, A PORTRAIT

In this essay, we focus on five images of South Asia. These broad images help to piece together a picture of what we can learn from this part of the world.

The first image is that South Asia is significant as a distinct geographical and cultural region. It is inhabited by almost 1.3 billion people—one fifth of Earth's total population. These people live in a clearly defined space, about a quarter of the size of North America, separated by nature from the rest of the world by high mountains and ocean waters. In this space they have experienced a unique and ancient history that has shaped their culture, their languages, social patterns, institutions, and religious traditions in ways that are quite different from those found in other parts of the world. Study of the setting of their lives and traditions provides a basis for mutual

respect and understanding, where a lack of such awareness may lead to stereotyping and mistrust. In an increasingly interconnected world, ignorance of such a significant portion of the world's population is not only deplorable, but it can also be dangerous. A recent example is the negative portrayal in the West of the Government of India's refusal to agree to the Comprehensive (Nuclear) Test Ban Treaty passed by the United Nations in September 1996. The American advocates of this treaty did not take adequate account of the security risks to India because of its hundreds of miles of unsettled border claims with China.

The second image is that South Asia is an incredibly diverse as well as crowded multicultural environment. This large population is divided among eight countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Only two of these countries—Maldives and Sri Lanka—as islands, are clearly defined by geography. But the political boundaries among them, even when natural, do not enclose peoples of common language and ethnic origin. Rather, they separate significant groupings of shared ethnicity, language, and religion into different nationalities. The Pathans, for example, were so divided by the drawing of the border between British India and Afghanistan in 1907. In 1979, at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, about 6 million Pathans—more than a third of the total population of that country—lived on the Afghan side. Another 10 million lived on the other side of the border, constituting the dominant population in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan.

The social identity of the people in South Asia does not correspond with their political identity also because, within all but the smallest of these countries, there is a tremendous diversity of social groups who speak different languages and follow distinct customs and religious traditions.

India, by far the largest country, with more than 75 percent of the total population and occupying approximately 64 percent of the land of the subcontinent, is, in social and linguistic terms, the most diverse. At least 13 major languages, each with innumerable dialects, are spoken in different regions of the country. (English, a foreign language spoken by fewer than 6 percent of the people, serves as the link language among all of the regions.) People living in the same place, who all speak the same language, are also divided into extended kinship groups called caste (*jati*) communities. These communities sustain accepted norms of behavior, dress, and diet for all their members. They are also endogamous, which means that families are expected to find marriage partners for their children among other families within this group. Many are identified by a traditional occupation, from which each derives its name, such as *gujar* (goat-herder community) and *jat* (farmer community). There are hundreds of thousands of such kinship groups throughout the country. In a normal village setting, individuals will interact on a daily basis with others from about 20 *jatis*. The locally accepted position of their *jati* in a social hierarchy, generally called the "caste



system,” determines the socially expected norms of their interactions. One’s position in the immediate family is also highly prescribed by traditional expectations, maintained in most instances by the patriarchal structure of the family.

In all of the countries of the subcontinent, there are much larger percentages of rural populations than urban. Those who live in villages contrast vividly with those who are thriving or are crowding and overburdening the available spaces and services in the cities. Striking in both the cities and villages, however, is the stark contrast between those who are very wealthy and the multitude of the poor.

That such diverse peoples live in such crowded circumstances, all drawing upon limited resources, is both a great achievement and a constant challenge. There is no shortage of causes for altercation among socially distinct groups. Extensive outbursts, rampaging, and rioting do occur among competitive factions and differing religious communities, as well as outright warfare among militant nationalist organizations and between nation-states. Yet, for most of the subcontinent, there is a heritage of accommodation and an expectation of tolerance among peoples of differing customs, languages, and faiths. To understand something of the complex patterns of social interaction that exist in that part of the world, to see how it does and doesn’t work, is helpful to those of us who are becoming more multiculturally conscious.

The next two images amplify the first two images of South Asia as a distinct, diverse, and crowded cultural region of the world. The third image looks toward the past, at the classical heritage of the peoples of the subcontinent, known as the “Great Tradition,” to see how it underlies and sustains the complex and persistent social diversity in the region. The fourth image looks at the impact of democracy in the subcontinent today, especially among peoples whose primary sense of identity is ethnic, religious, and linguistic (as sustained by one’s *jati* community) rather than political (as a nation).

The third image, the Great Tradition of South Asia, has its earliest discernible roots in two vastly different sources. The first is the Harappan city culture, of which archaeological remains reveal organizational and commercial skills developed in these Indus River Valley urban centers more than 4,500 years ago. The second is the Vedic tradition, recorded in a sacred literature that contains the religious musings of a robust, cow-herding people called Aryans, who drove their horse-drawn war chariots into the subcontinent from Central Asia a thousand years later. Over the course of many centuries, these heritages were coalesced, elaborated, appended, and refined into classical forms that became normative for the way civilized people in that region of the world should perceive and participate in life. These forms provided the structure for immense intellectual and artistic creativity, which produced many outstanding works of thought and art.

Because of the skill, discipline, and depth of insight achieved by South Asia’s classical thinkers and artisans, their accumulated works are intellectually challenging. Yet the

tradition that they created provides an enduring perspective on our world that is broadening and self-affirming for us, as well as giving some definition to the uniqueness of South Asian culture. An awareness of this Great Tradition provides a context for understanding the introduction of democracy as a political force among the nations of South Asia. It also provides alternative paths to realize the goals of democracy in a world torn by ethnic violence and warfare.

The fourth image is that the introduction of democracy into the subcontinent as a primary instrument of political modernization is having a profound impact not only on the form and goals of governments in the countries of South Asia but also on how people are interacting. Democratically elected representative government is a modern Western institution, introduced by the British colonial government during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its introduction has raised a number of far-reaching issues. All of the countries have had to deal with challenges of national identity, of the relation of religion to nationalism, of refugees, and of political stability. These issues have produced unanticipated, sometimes traumatic, consequences for many millions of people. Yet today, more people live under democratic rule in South Asia than in any other part of the world. There is much that we can learn about democracy by examining the various ways it has come to function in that very different cultural setting.

Finally, we focus attention on Mohandas Gandhi, known as the *Mahatma*, the “great-souled one.” During the early years of this century, Gandhi evolved an effective process of non-violent political resistance. He also developed a style of leadership which drew upon a unique combination of the classical norms and modern aspirations described in our previous two images of South Asia. He articulated in enviable simplicity the profound perspective of the classical tradition in committing himself not just to the removal of colonial domination, to political freedom, but to true independence for an oppressed people. He thus empowered those who today are citizens of the republics of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal to participate in the destiny of new, democratically ruled nations in the modern world.

To understand Gandhi and his leadership role is to realize how much he embodied what is unique about the peoples of South Asia whom he led. Yet it is in the particularity of his uniqueness as an individual among a specific people that he speaks to us all. No one else in the twentieth century has had so wide and positive an impact on the political awareness and empowerment of oppressed peoples all over the world.

### IMAGE 1: SOUTH ASIA, A DISTINCT LAND AND A UNIQUE CIVILIZATION

A. K. Ramanujan told the story of a Mongolian conqueror who had a certain species of nightingale brought to him from Kashmir because it had been reported to him that this bird sang the most beautiful song in the world. But, when the bird