an atlas of world affairs

**Andrew Boyd** 

tenthedition

#### An Atlas of World Affairs

An Atlas of World Affairs, revised and in print since 1957, continues to provide a valuable guide for the student, teacher, journalist and all those interested in post-war political history and current affairs.

The economic, social and environmental systems of the world remain in turmoil. Recent years have seen possibly irrevocable change in the politics of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Entirely revised and updated, An Atlas of World Affairs describes the people, factions and events that have shaped the modern world from the Second World War

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Andrew Boyd began his acquaintance with international affairs in 1946, when as a British liaison officer he attended the very first sessions of the United Nations (his other books include three about the UN). He has travelled widely and reported on international affairs while writing on world affairs for *The Economist* for 37 years.

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A most useful reference book ... a handy way to locate almost any of the world's current or potential trouble spots ... a concise factual text. Washington Post

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ANDREW BOYD



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### Foreword

The world map changed dramatically in the period 1990–96. The Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia broke up; of the 22 new sovereign states that replaced them, seven became involved in wars. The European Union expanded to include 15 nations. South Africa reshaped itself, creating new provinces and abolishing tribal 'homelands'. A new code of sea law brought a third of all the oceans under national jurisdiction. Leningrad, Gorky and part of the Aral Sea disappeared. Headlines and television screens showed bewildering appearances by Chechnya, the Taliban, Mercosur, the CFE Treaty, the Pentagonal and Visegrad groups, Gauteng, Transdniestria, EMU and Schengenland. This revised edition provides guidance through all these recent changes (and many others).

An Atlas of World Affairs was first published in 1957. The first edition's foreword included this passage:

Anyone who tries to set down some of the complexities of this changing world in simple form is indebted to the pioneer work of Mr J.F. Horrabin. The admirable simplicity of his pre-war Atlas of Current Affairs is hard to emulate nowadays ... But, like Mr Horrabin's, mine is still 'an exercise in the art of leaving out'.

Forty years on, in the face of ever-increasing complexity, the aim is still to select what is relevant, and to explain a changing world's problems with the aid of simple maps and brief notes.

#### Notes

For the sake of brevity, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is usually called Britain; the Netherlands is called Holland, and so on. The United States of America may be America, the US or the USA. The former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be the Soviet Union or the USSR.

Distances are expressed in miles. One mile is roughly 1.61 km. One nautical mile is roughly 1.85 km. To convert square miles into square

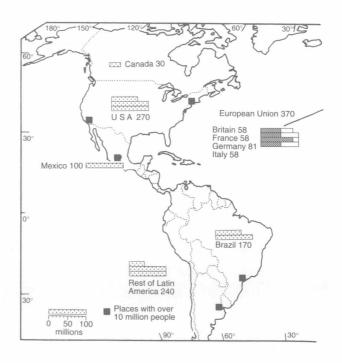
km, multiply by 2.59. The tonne and the ton are roughly equivalent.

An italic number in brackets - e.g. (44) - is a cross-reference. The number refers to a map and its accompanying note, not to a page. So do the entries in the index.

### 1 People and pressure

The human race has trebled its numbers in less than one lifetime. In 1930 there were about 2,000 million people. Now there are about 6,000 million. The annual increase is reckoned to be close to 100 million.

Today, the two most populous countries, China and India, have, between them, more inhabitants than the whole world had in 1930. Both countries are in Asia, which, for countless centuries, has always contained more than half of humanity. Together, Asia, Africa and Latin America now contain almost five-sixths; and that proportion is still rising, because many countries in those regions have relatively high rates of population growth. By contrast, rates of natural growth are generally low in European countries, and in some of them growth has



stopped, although immigration may keep the population figures

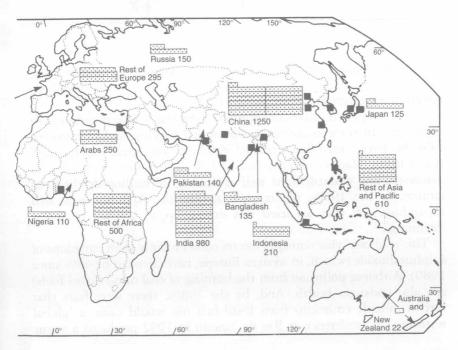
rising.

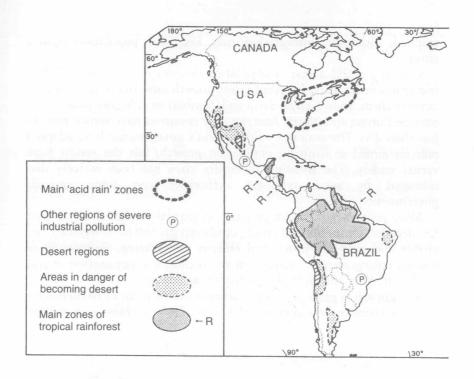
Growing at 2% a year, a population doubles in 35 years; at 3.5%, it doubles in 20 years. In recent years, growth rates in several countries (among them, Iran, Kenya, Syria and Zambia) were higher than 3.5%; outside Europe and North America, few countries have shown rates of less than 2%. The majority of the world's governments have adopted policies aimed at limiting population growth, but the results have varied widely. The limiting of family sizes has been actively discouraged by some religious authorities and some national governments.

More people means more pressure on natural resources. In the past few decades, some effects of rapid population growth have become more visible and more alarming: soil erosion, overgrazing, destruction of forests, enlargement of deserts; in the oceans, the devastation of fish

stocks; in cities, the multiplication of crowded slums.

The growth of giant cities is a feature of our time. In 1950 there were only six cities or conurbations that contained as many as 5 million

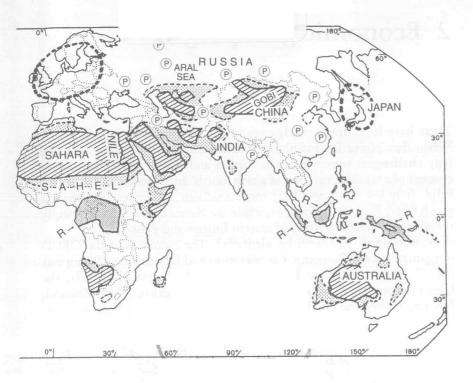




inhabitants. Now there are 20 that contain 10 million or more; and some of these include huge slums packed with people who had been forced to leave over-populated rural areas.

Ill-chosen policies have contributed to the loss of forests and growth of deserts. In some countries, uncontrolled logging and misdirected subsidies have caused disastrous deforestation. The 'great leap forward' that China's Maoists ordered from 1958–62 left vast tracts of land deforested and desertified, as well as causing 28 million deaths from famine. In the 1980s, desert areas around the Aral Sea were still expanding, and that sea itself was drying up, as a result of Soviet 'planning'.

The 'acid rain' that damages forests comes mainly from emissions of sulphur dioxide (which, in western Europe, have been cut by 40% since 1980). Airborne pollution from the burning of coal or oil (fossil fuels) can also endanger health. And, by the 1980s, there were fears that carbon dioxide emissions from fossil-fuel use would cause a 'global warming'. A conference at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 produced a vague



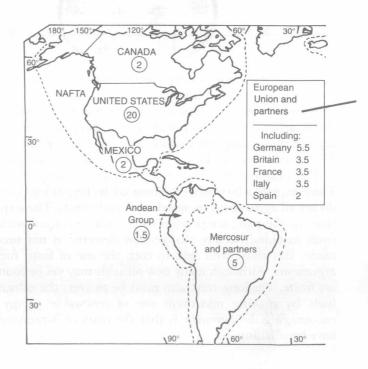
agreement about curbing those emissions, but between 1990 and 1996 they increased by 4% in the OECD member states (2). On another kind of harmful emission, however, action was taken. Man-made chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) had made a hole (over Antarctica) in the ozone layer in the stratosphere that shields the earth from ultra-violet rays. By 1996 production of CFCs in the OECD countries was phased out.

The prospect of a man-made 'global warming' is still debatable. Those experts who predict it (some say its beginnings can be discerned) do not all agree about its speed, scale and effects. The sceptics point out that, in the past, temperatures have often changed without any help from mankind, so any change now detected is not necessarily manmade. But those who seek to curb the use of fossil fuels have other arguments. Although many new oilfields may yet be found, these fuels are finite. The long-term aim must be to avert the exhaustion of finite fuels by making maximum use of renewable energy sources. An encouraging development is that the costs of harnessing wind power have been falling.

## 2 Economic groupings

There have been dramatic changes in the balance of economic power. When that power lay mainly in North America and Europe, and the only challengers were the Soviet Union and, later, Japan, the simple concept of a world consisting of a rich 'north' and a poor 'south' seemed valid. It is less valid now that some southern economies are growing much faster than northern ones, while the Soviet collapse has glaringly revealed the relative poverty of eastern Europe and Russia.

A 'rich north' may still be identified. The members of the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) comprise the 17 states of western Europe, along with Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Turkey and the United States. A few years ago, these nations,



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