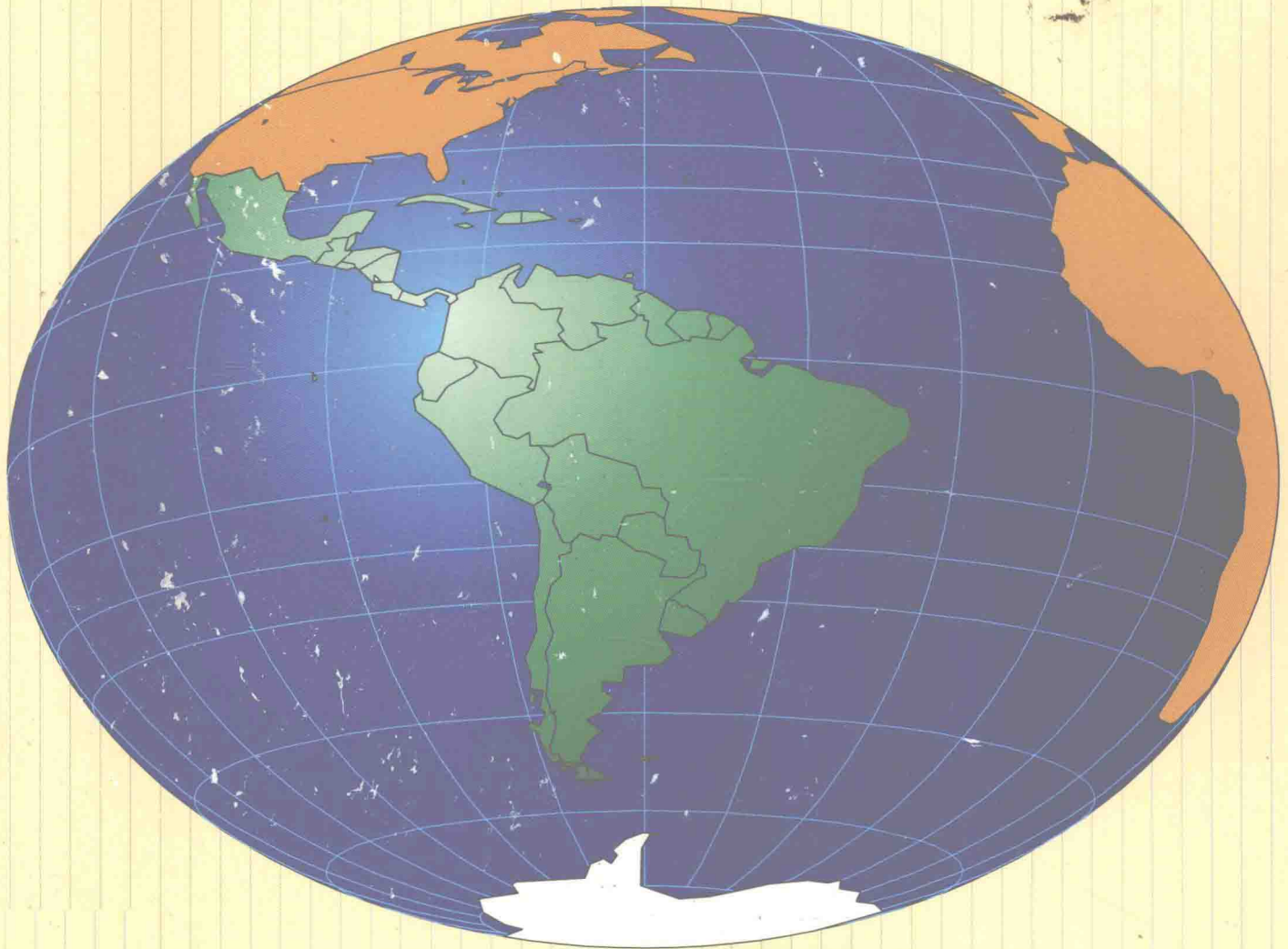


GLOBAL STUDIES

LATIN AMERICA

EIGHTH EDITION



Mexico • Central America
South America • Caribbean Region

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GLOBAL STUDIES

LATIN AMERICA

EIGHTH EDITION

Dr. Paul B. Goodwin Jr.
University of Connecticut, Storrs

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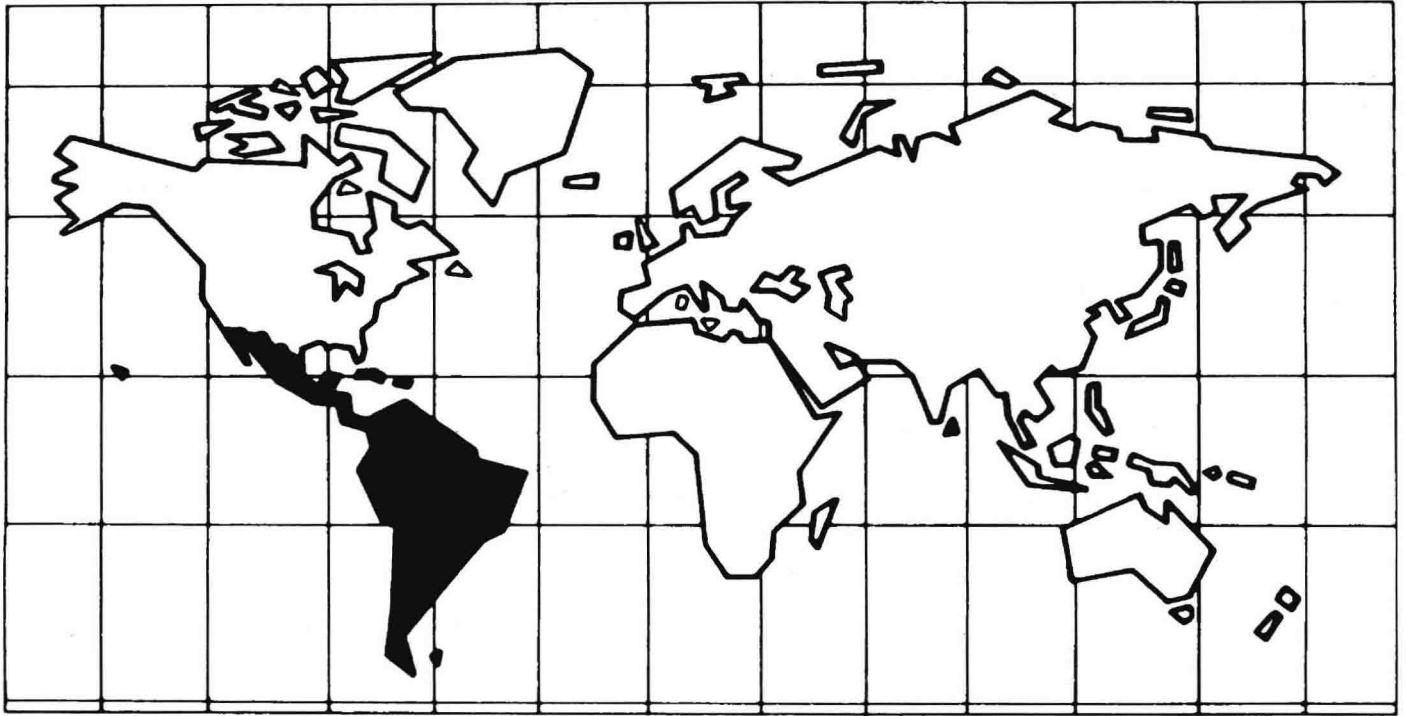
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Latin America



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<http://www.dushkin.com/globalstudies> (just click on a book).

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

General Sites

1. CNN Online Page—<http://www.cnn.com>—U.S. 24-hour video news channel. News is updated every few hours.
2. 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.
3. International Network Information Center at University of Texas—<http://inic.utexas.edu>—Gateway has pointers to international sites, including all Latin American countries.
4. I-Trade International Trade Resources & Data Exchange—<http://www.i-trade.com/>—Monthly exchange-rate data, U.S. Document Export Market Information (GEMS), U.S. Global Trade Outlook, and World Fact Book.
5. Political Science RESOURCES—<http://www.keele.ac.uk:80/depts/pol/psr.htm>—Dynamic gateway to sources available via European addresses. Listed by country name, this site includes official government pages, official documents, speeches, election information, and political events.
6. ReliefWeb—<http://www.reliefweb.int>—UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs clearinghouse for international humanitarian emergencies. It has daily updates, including Reuters, VOA, and PANA.
7. 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.
8. United Nations System—<http://www.unsystem.org/>—The official Web site for the United Nations system of organizations. Everything is listed alphabetically, and data on UNICC and Food and Agriculture Organization are available.
9. UN Development Programme (UNDP)—<http://www.undp.org/>—Publications and current information on world poverty, Mission Statement, UN Development Fund for Women, and much more. Be sure to see the Poverty Clock.
10. UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)—<http://www.unhcr.unep.org/>—Official site of UNEP with information on UN environmental programs, products, services, events, and a search engine.
11. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—<http://www.info.usaid.gov/>—Graphically presented U.S. trade statistics with Latin America and the Caribbean.
12. U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Home Page—<http://www.odci.gov/cia>—This site includes publications of the CIA, such as the 1997 World Fact Book, 1997 Fact Book on Intelligence, Handbook of International Economic Statistics, CIA maps and publications, and much more.
13. U.S. Department of State Home Page—<http://www.state.gov/index.html>—Organized by categories: Hot Topics (i.e., 1997 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices), International Policy, Business Services, and much more.
14. World Bank Group—www.worldbank.org/html/Welcom.html—News (i.e., press releases, summary of new projects, speeches), publications, topics in development, and countries and regions. Links to other financial organizations are available.
15. World Health Organization (WHO)—<http://www.who.ch/>—Maintained by WHO's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the site uses Excite search engine to conduct keyword searches.
16. World Trade Organization—<http://www.wto.org/>—Topics include foundation of world trade systems, data on textiles, intellectual property rights, legal frameworks, trade and environmental policies, and recent agreement.

Mexico

17. The Mexican Government—http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/welcome/gov_hp.htm—This site offers a brief overview of the organization of the Mexican Republic, including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government.
18. Documents on Mexican Politics—<http://daisy.uwaterloo.ca/~alopz-o/polind.html>—An archive of a large number of articles on Mexican democracy, freedom of the press, political parties, NAFTA, the economy, Chiapas, and so forth can be found on this Web site.

Central America

19. Meso-American Studies—<http://www.icubed.net/usr/bjones/default.htm>—Documentation on political, social, economic, and environmental issues in Central America and Mexico can be referenced here.

South America

20. South American Cybertour—<http://www.wp.com/virtualvoyager/>—Current South American culture is this Web site's topic. The browser can get a feel for all the countries of South America by taking a virtual voyage.

Caribbean

21. Caribbean Studies—<http://www.hist.unt.edu/09w-blk4.htm>—A complete site for information about the Caribbean. Topics include: general information, Caribbean religions, english Caribbean islands, Dutch Caribbean islands, French Caribbean islands, Hispanic Caribbean islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We highly recommend that you review our Web site for expanded information and our other product lines. We are continually updating and adding links to our Web site in order to offer you the most usable and useful information that will support and expand the value of your book. You can reach us at: <http://www.dushkin.com/>

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 energy crisis, world food shortages, nuclear proliferation, and regional conflicts in Central America, the Middle East, and other areas that threaten to involve us 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—that allows 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 provide 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 in the regions about which they are writing.

The author/editor of *Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition*, has written the umbrella regional essay introducing the area. He has also written the subregional essays and the country reports. In addition, he has been instrumental in the selection of the world press articles.

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 and Subregional Essays

Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition, covers Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. For each of these subregions, the author/editor has written an

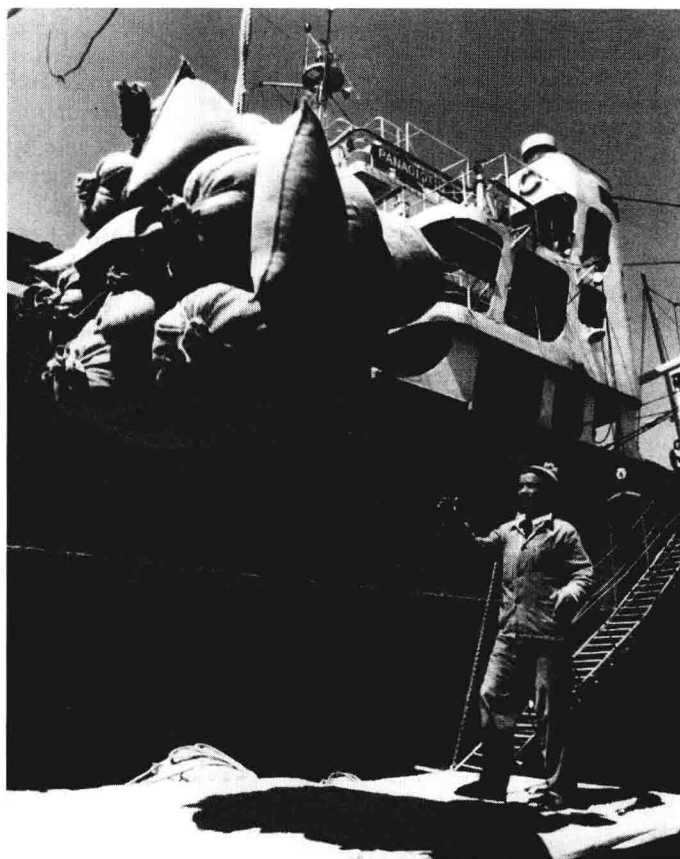
essay focusing on the geographical, cultural, sociopolitical, and economic differences and similarities of the countries and people in the region. The purpose of the *subregional essays* is to provide readers with an effective sense of the diversity of the area as well as an understanding of its common cultural and historical backgrounds. Accompanying each of the narratives is a full-page map showing the political boundaries of each of the countries within the subregion.

In addition to these subregional essays, the author provides a brief introductory narrative on Latin America. This *regional essay* examines a number of broad themes in an attempt to define what constitutes “Latin America.”

Country Reports

Concise reports on the individual countries within the region follow each of the subregional essays. These reports are the heart of each Global Studies volume. *Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition*, contains 33 *country reports*, including a Mexico report, seven reports for Central America, 12 for South America, and 13 for the Caribbean region. The reports cover each *independent country* within the Latin American area.

The country reports are comprised of six standard elements. Each report contains a small, detailed map visually



(United Nations/Yutaka Nagata)

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

positioning the country among its neighboring states; a summary of statistical information; a brief “wildcard” that describes an interesting facet of the country under study; an 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, at the end of each report.

All of these elements have been updated to reflect the most current state of affairs in today’s Latin American world. Since the first edition of *Global Studies: Latin America* was published, we have had a tremendous and positive response from both students and teachers alike. This important input is reflected in *Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition*.

A Note on the Statistical Summaries

The statistical information provided for each country has been drawn from a wide range of sources (the most frequently referenced are listed on page 220). Every effort has been made to provide the most current and accurate information available. However, occasionally the information cited by these sources differs significantly; and, all too often, the only information available for some countries is quite dated. Aside from these difficulties, the statistical summary for each country is generally quite complete and reasonably current. (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 included 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 diverse perspectives on the subject countries and regions. There are 19 articles in *Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition*—two regional articles, five articles pertaining to Mexico, five to Central America, four to South America, and three to the Caribbean.

The articles section is preceded by an *annotated table of contents* as well as a *topic guide*. The intent of the annotated table of contents is to offer a brief summary of each article, while the topic guide indicates the main theme(s) of each of the articles reprinted. Thus, readers desiring to focus on articles dealing with a particular theme, say, human rights, 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: Latin America*.



(United Nations photo)

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

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

Following the glossary is a *bibliography*, which contains specific references for most of the literary works mentioned in the body of the text. The bibliography is organized into general reference volumes, national and regional histories, novels in translation, current events publications, and periodicals that provide regular coverage on Latin America.

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.

Currency and Usefulness

Global Studies: Latin America, Eighth Edition, is intended to provide the most current and useful information available necessary to understand the events that are shaping the cultures of Latin America today.

We plan to issue 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/editors, 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 up to date; or a general comment on its organization, content, or features that you would like to share with us, please send it to us 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 (920,000)
Climate: from temperate in south to
subarctic and arctic in north

PEOPLE

Population

Total: 28,820,700
Annual Growth Rate: 1.06%
Rural/Urban Population Ratio: 23/77
Ethnic Makeup: 40% British Isles ori-
gin; 27% French origin; 20% other
European; 1.5% indigenous Indian and
Eskimo; 11.5% mixed
Major Languages: both English and
French are official

Health

Life Expectancy at Birth: 76 years
(male); 83 years (female)
Infant Mortality Rate (Ratio): 6/1,000
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):
849,404 (530,028)
Railroads—Kilometers (Miles): 70,176
(48,764)
Usable Airfields: 1,138

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 Conserva-
tive Party; Liberal Party; New Demo-
cratic Party; Reform Party; Bloc
Québécois
Suffrage: universal at 18

MILITARY

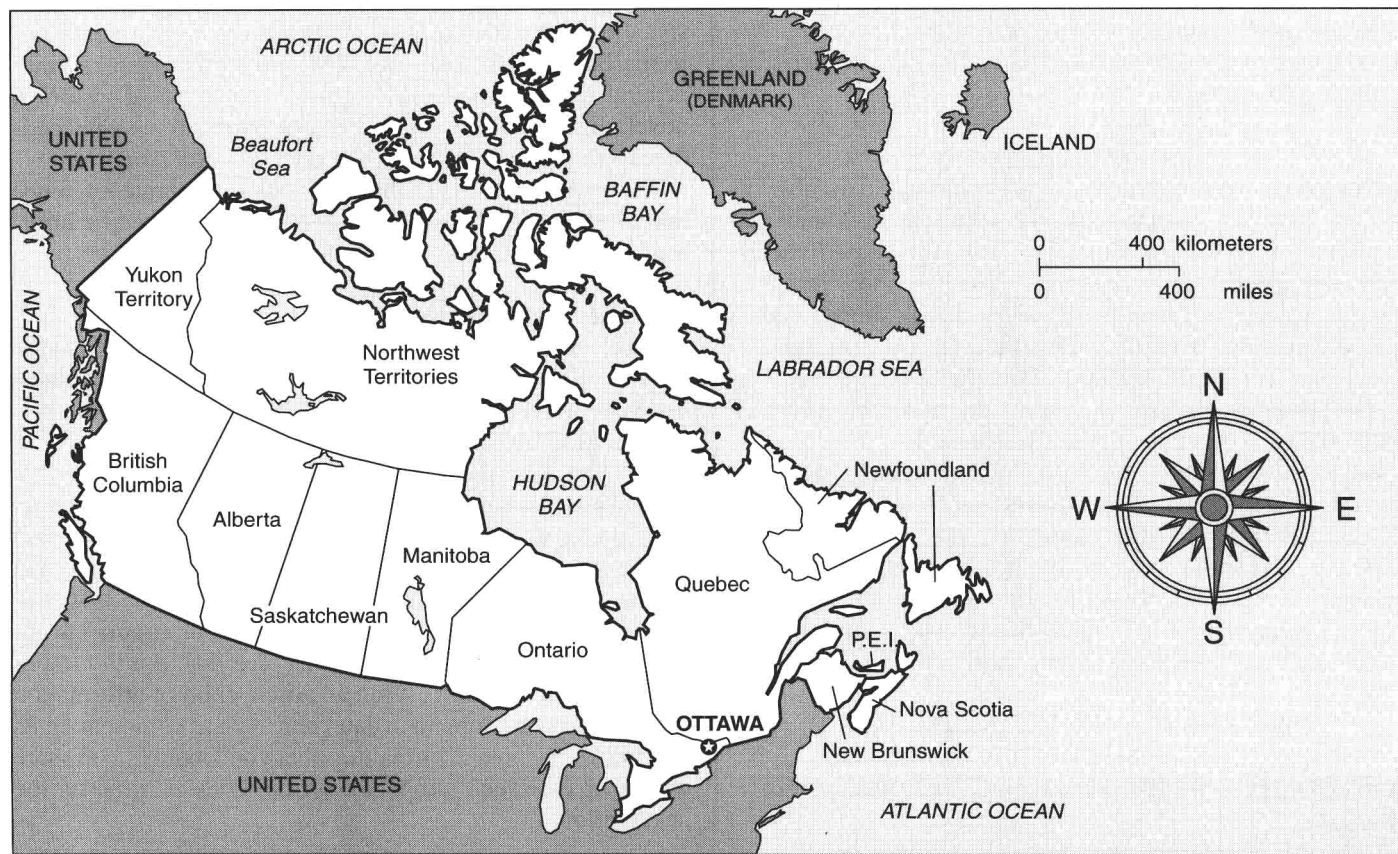
Number of Armed Forces: 88,000
*Military Expenditures (% of Central
Government Expenditures):* 1.6%
Current Hostilities: none

ECONOMY

Currency (\$U.S. Equivalent): 1.41
Canadian dollars = \$1
Per Capita Income/GDP:
\$24,400/\$694 billion
Inflation Rate: 2.4%
Total Foreign Debt: \$233 billion
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: \$185 billion
Imports: \$166.7 billion



The United States

GEOGRAPHY

Area in Square Kilometers (Miles):
9,578,626 (3,618,770)
Capital (Population): Washington, D.C.
(606,900)
Climate: temperate

PEOPLE

Population

Total: 266,476,300
Annual Growth Rate: 0.91%
Rural/Urban Population Ratio: 25/75
Ethnic Makeup: 73% white; 12% black; 10% Latino; 5% Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut
Major Languages: predominantly English; a sizable Spanish-speaking minority; many others

Health

Life Expectancy at Birth: 73 years (male); 79 years (female)
Infant Mortality Rate (Ratio): 6.7/1,000
Average Caloric Intake: 138% of FAO minimum
Physicians Available (Ratio): 1/391

Religions

56% Protestant; 28% Roman Catholic; 4% Muslim; 2% Jewish; 10% others or unaffiliated

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):
6,284,488 (3,895,733)
Railroads—Kilometers (Miles):
240,000 (149,760)
Usable Airfields: 13,387

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

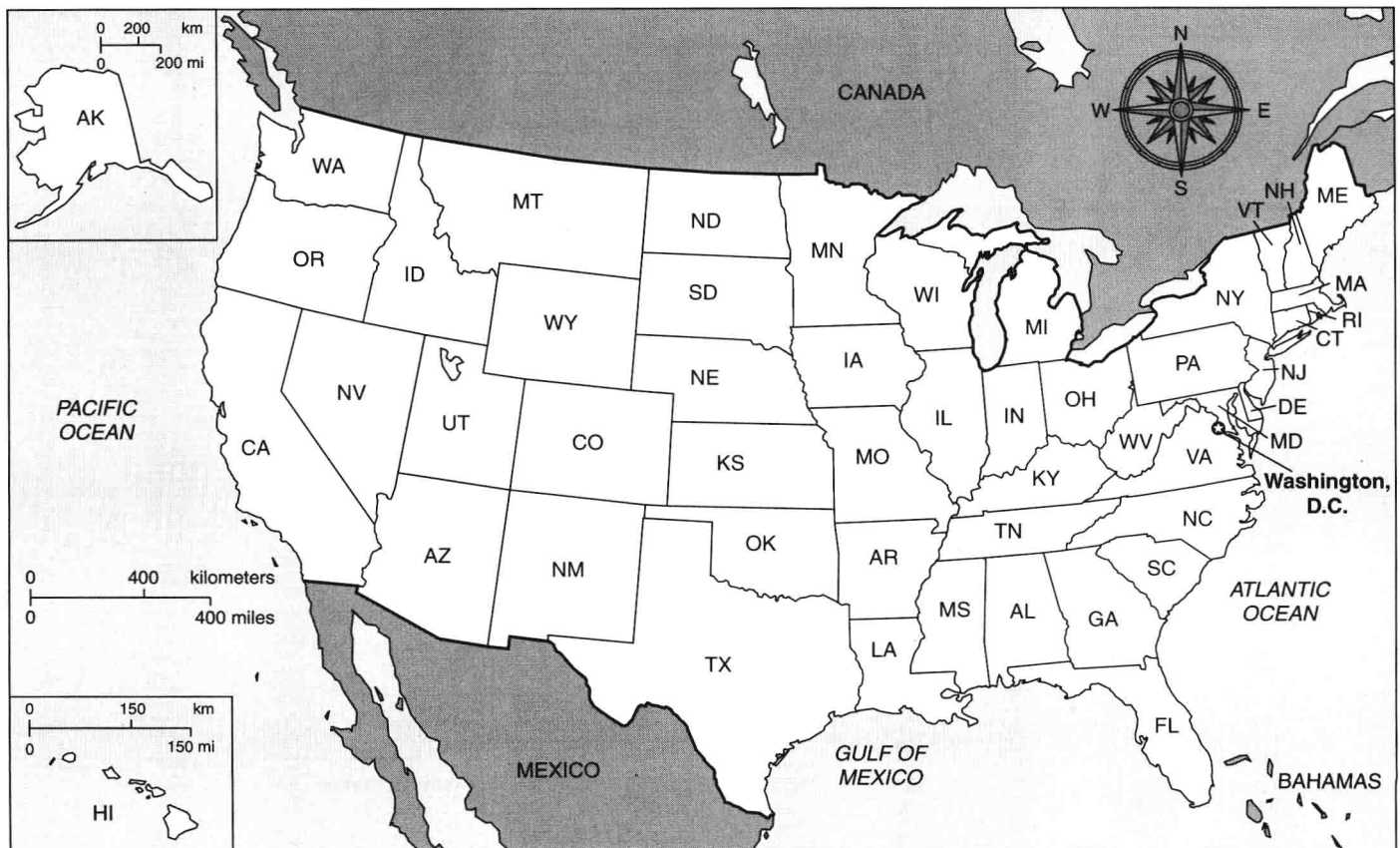
Number of Armed Forces: 1,807,177
Military Expenditures (% of Central Government Expenditures): 3.8%
Current Hostilities: none

ECONOMY

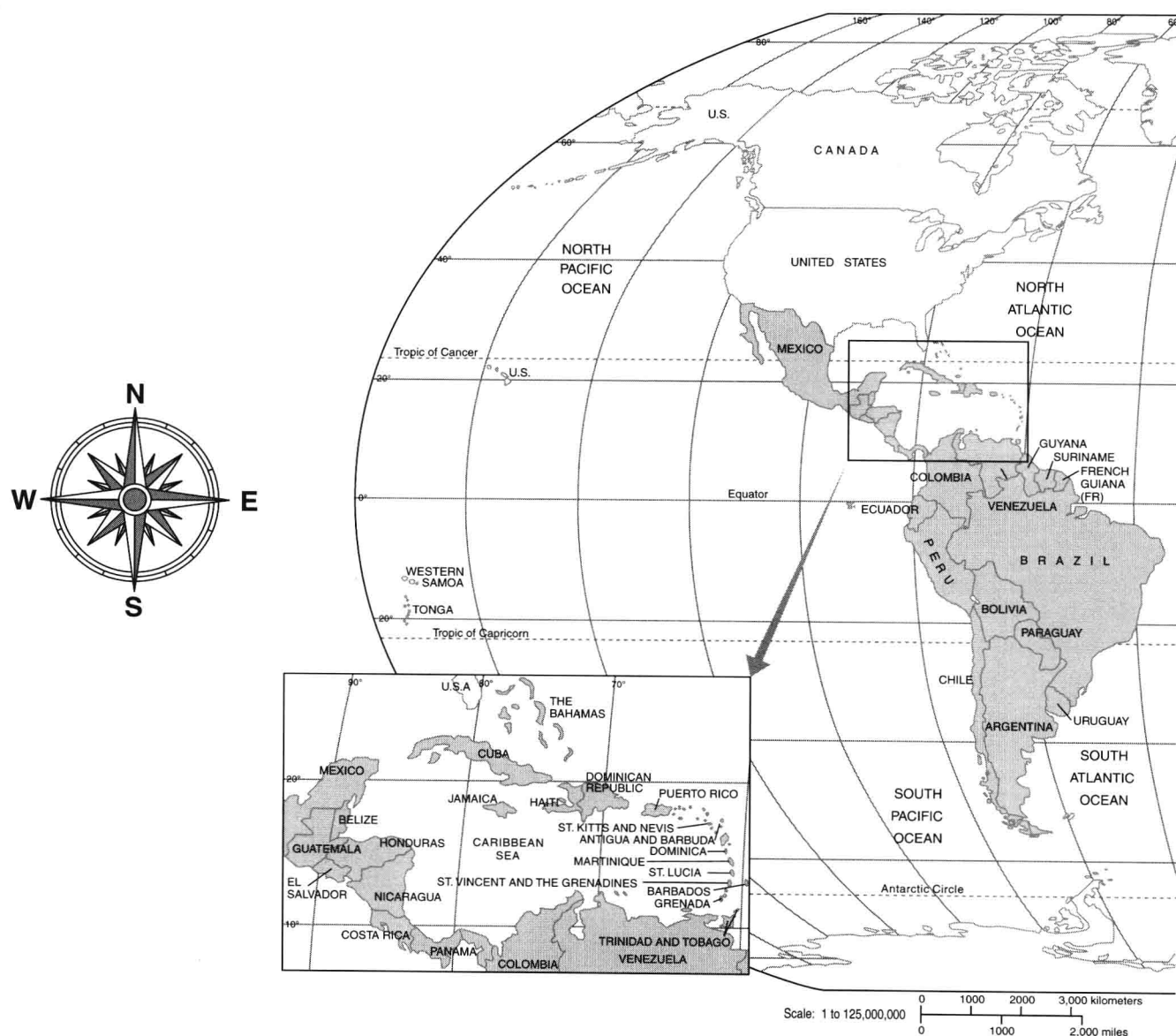
Per Capita Income/GDP:
\$27,500/\$7.25 trillion
Inflation Rate: 2.5%
Natural Resources: metallic and nonmetallic minerals; petroleum; arable land
Agriculture: food grains; feed crops; oil-bearing crops; livestock; dairy products
Industry: diversified in both capital- and consumer-goods industries

FOREIGN TRADE

Exports: \$578 billion
Imports: \$751 billion



This map of the world highlights the Latin American and Caribbean countries that are discussed in this volume. We include *only independent countries* of the Caribbean and exclude French departments, Dutch territories, British associate states, and U.S. possessions. All of the following essays are written from a cultural perspective in order to give the readers a sense of what life is like in these countries. The essays are designed to present the most current and useful information available. Other books in the Global Studies series cover different global areas and examine the current state of affairs of the countries within those regions.



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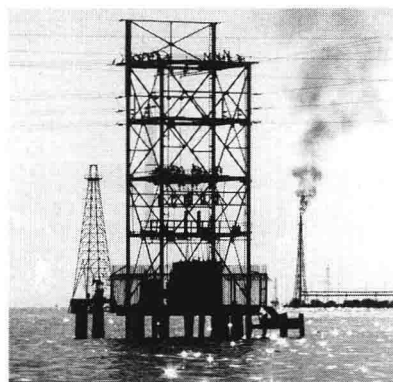
Topic Guide to Articles 138

Regional Articles

1. **Latin America Revisited**, Lorenzo Meyer, Abraham Lowenthal, and Alvaro Vargas Llosa, *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Spring 1997. 140
2. **Indigenous Cultural and Biological Diversity: Overlapping Values of Latin American Ecoregions**, Bruce A. Wilcox and Kristin N. Duin, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Winter 1995. 150



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Mexico Articles

3. **Can Democracy Finally Take Root? Dawn in Mexico,** Carlos Fuentes, *World Press Review*, September 1997. 155
4. **A Step into Unknown Political Territory,** Juan Ignacio Brito, *World Press Review*, September 1997. 156
5. **The PRI's Last Hurrah?** George W. Grayson, *The World & I*, August 1997. 158
6. **Tlatelolco, Shop Window of the Aztec Empire,** Mariá Rebeca Yoma Mendina and Luís Alberto Martos López, *The UNESCO Courier*, November 1996. 161
7. **Laughter and Tears: Mexico's Paradoxical Proverbs,** Jeff M. Sellers, *The World & I*, July 1995. 163

Central America Articles

8. **A Mighty Maya Nation,** Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase, *Archaeology*, September/October 1996. 167
9. **Deforestation from Bad to Worse?** Guillermo Escofet, *The Tico Times*, July 25, 1997. 172
10. **After a Long and Brutal Civil War, Academics in Guatemala Remain Cautious,** Colin Woodard, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 11, 1997. 174
11. **Democracy Advances in Nicaragua,** Tom Carter, *The World & I*, April 1997. 176
12. **Panama: Tailoring a New Image,** Steve C. Ropp, *Current History*, February 1997. 180

South America Articles

13. **Remapping South America: Mercosur,** Michael Reid, *The Economist*, October 12, 1996. 185
14. **Bolivia: An Example in the Andes,** *The Economist*, August 9, 1997. 196
15. **Brazil: The Meek Want the Earth Now,** Fábio L. S. Petrarolha, *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, November/December 1996. 199
16. **Conquering Peru: Newmont's Yanacocha Mine Recalls the Days of Pizarro,** Pratap Chatterjee, *Multinational Monitor*, April 1997. 205

Caribbean Articles

17. **Cuba Today: Instant Antiquity,** Tony Mendoza, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 24, 1997. 208
18. **Island of Disenchantment,** Charles Lane, *The New Republic*, September 29, 1997. 210
19. **Soaring Scales of the Silver Basin,** Celia Sankar, *Américas*, August 1997. 217

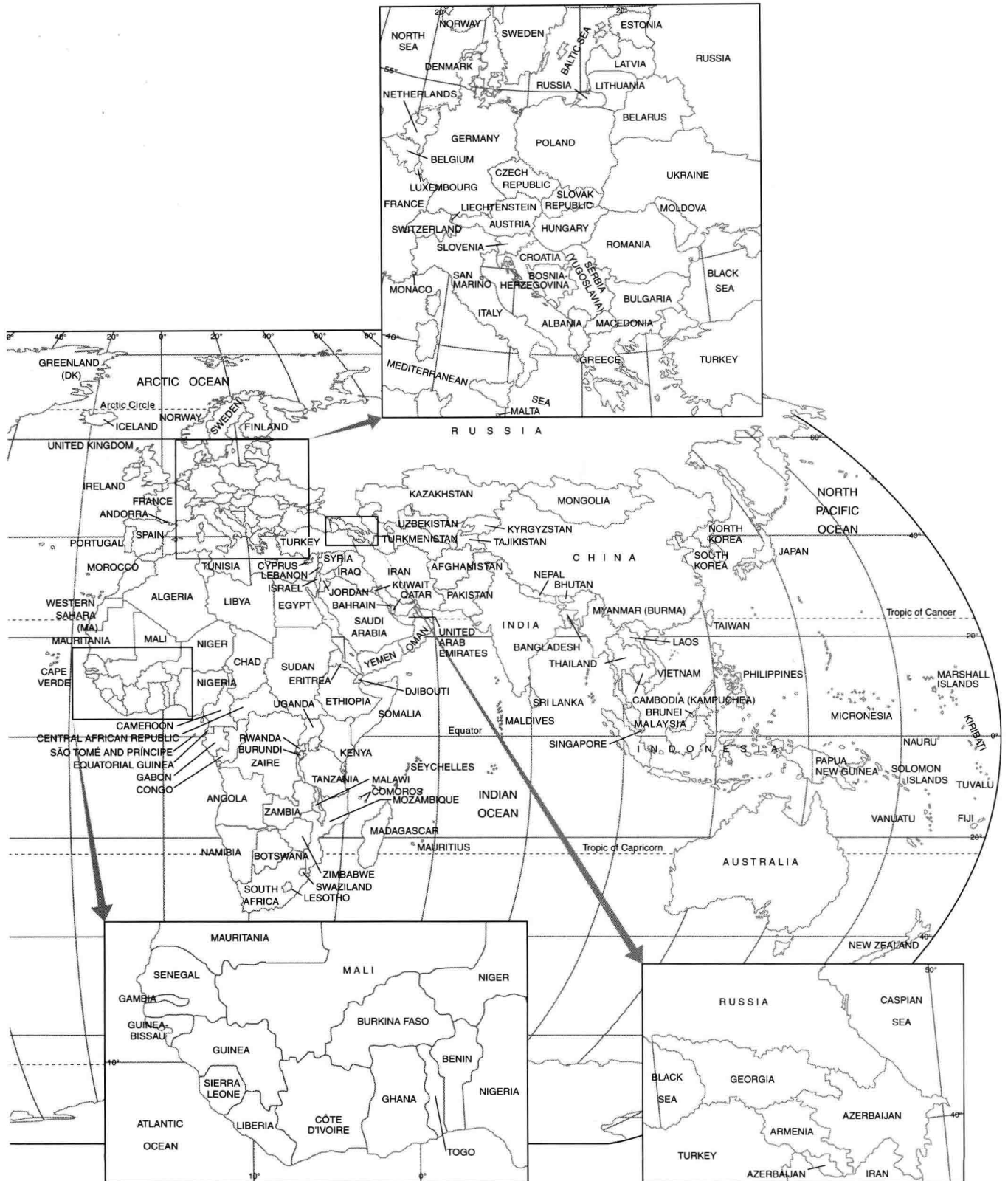
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Latin America



Latin America: Myth and Reality

Much of the world still tends to view Latin Americans in terms of stereotypes. The popular image of the mustachioed bandit wearing a large sombrero and draped with cartridge belts has been replaced by the figure of the modern-day guerrilla. But the same essential image, of lawlessness and violence, persists. Another common stereotype is that of the lazy Latin American who constantly puts things off until *mañana* ("tomorrow"). The implied message here is that Latin Americans lack industry and do not know how to make the best use of their time. A third widespread image is that of the Latin lover and the cult of machismo.

Many of those outside the culture find it difficult to conceive of Latin America as a mixture of peoples and cultures, each one distinct from the others. Indeed, it was not so long ago that then-U.S. president Ronald Reagan, after a tour of the region, remarked with some surprise that all of the countries were "different." Stereotypes spring from ignorance and bias; images are not necessarily a reflection of reality. In the words of Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset: "In politics and history, if one takes accepted statements at face value, one will be sadly misled."

THE LATIN AMERICAN REALITY

The reality of Latin America's multiplicity of cultures is, in a word, complexity. Europeans, Africans, and the indigenous people of Latin America have all contributed substantially to these cultures. If one sets aside non-Hispanic influences for a moment, is it possible to argue, as does historian Claudio Veliz, that "the Iberian [Spanish and Portuguese] inheritance is an essential part of our lives and customs; Brazil and Spanish America [i.e., Spanish-speaking] have derived their personality from Iberia"? Many scholars would disagree. For example, political scientist Lawrence S. Graham argues that "what is clear is that generalizations about Latin American cultural unity are no longer tenable." And that "one of the effects of nationalism has been to . . . lead growing numbers of individuals within the region to identify with their own nation-state before they think in terms of a more amorphous land mass called Latin America."

Granted, Argentines speak of their Argentinity and Mexicans of their *mejicanidad*. It is true that there are profound differences that separate the nations of the region. But there exists a cultural bedrock that ties Latin America to Spain and Portugal, and beyond—to the Roman Empire and the great cultures of the Mediterranean world. African influence, too, is substantial in many parts of the region. Latin America's Indians, of course, trace their roots to indigenous sources.

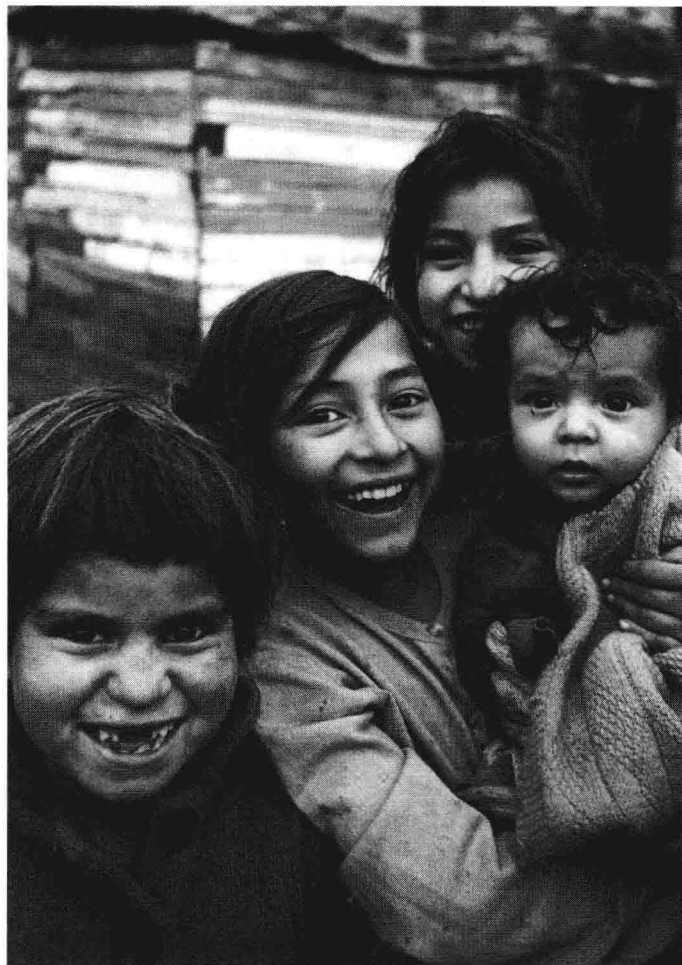
To understand the nature of Latin American culture, one must remember that there exist many exceptions to the generalizations; the cultural mold is not rigid. Much of what has happened in Latin America, including the evolution of its cultures, is the result of a fortunate—and sometimes an unfortunate—combination of various factors.

THE FAMILY

Let us first consider the Latin American family. The family unit has survived even Latin America's economic development and the pressures of modernization. Family ties are strong and dominant. These bonds are not confined to the nuclear family of father, mother, and children. The same close ties are found in the extended family (a network of second cousins, godparents, and close friends of blood relatives). In times of difficulty, the family can be counted on to help. It is a fortress against the misery of the outside world; it is the repository of dignity, honor, and respect.

AN URBAN CIVILIZATION

In a region where the interaction of networks of families is the rule and where frequent human contact is sought out, it is not surprising to find that Latin Americans are, above all, an urban people. There are more cities of more than half a million people in Latin America than in the United States.



(United Nations photo)

In Latin America, the family is an important element in the cultural context. These children, who live in a poor section of Santiago, Chile, come from caring families.

Latin America's high urban population is unusual, for urbanization is usually associated with industrialization. In Latin America, urban culture was not created by industrial growth; it actually pre-dated it. As soon as the opportunity presented itself, the Spanish conquerors of the New World, in Veliz's words, "founded cities in which to take refuge from the barbaric, harsh, uncivilized, and rural world outside. . . . For those men civilization was strictly and uniquely a function of well-ordered city life." The city, from the Spanish conquest until the present, has dominated the social and cultural horizon of Latin America. Opportunity is found in the city, not in the countryside. This cultural fact of life, in addition to economic motives, accounts for the continuing flow of population from rural to urban areas in Latin America.

A WORLD OF APPEARANCES

Because in their urban environment Latin Americans are in close contact with many people, appearances are important to them. There is a constant quest for prestige, dignity, status, and honor. People are forever trying to impress one another with their public worth. Hence, it is not unusual to see a blue-collar worker traveling to work dressed in a suit, briefcase in hand. It is not uncommon to see jungles of television antennas over shantytowns, although many are not connected to anything. It is a society that, in the opinion of writer Octavio Paz, hides behind masks. Latin Americans convey an impression of importance, no matter how menial their position. Glen Dealy, a political scientist, writes: "And those of the lower class who must wait on tables, wash cars, and do gardening for a living can help to gain back a measure of self-respect by having their shoes shined by someone else, buying a drink for a friend . . . , or concealing their occupation by wearing a tie to and from work."

MACHISMO

Closely related to appearances is *machismo*. The term is usually understood solely, and mistakenly, in terms of virility—the image of the Latin lover, for example. But machismo also connotes generosity, dignity, and honor. In many respects, macho behavior is indulged in because of social convention; it is expected of men. Machismo is also one of those cultural traits that cuts through class lines, for the macho is admired regardless of his social position.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

If the complex nature of machismo is misunderstood by those outside the culture, so too is the role of women. The commonly held stereotype is that Latin American women are submissive and that the culture is dominated by males. Again, appearances mask a far more complex reality, for Latin American cultures actually allow for strong female roles. Political scientist Evelyn Stevens, for example, has found that *marianismo*—the female counterpart of machismo—permeates all strata of Latin American society. Marianismo is the

cult of feminine spiritual superiority that "teaches that women are semi-divine, morally superior to and spiritually stronger than men."

When Mexico's war for independence broke out in 1810, a religious symbol—the Virgin of Guadalupe—was identified with the rebels and became a rallying point for the first stirrings of Mexican nationalism. Earlier in this century, it was not uncommon in Argentine textbooks to portray Eva Perón (1919–1952), the president's wife, in the image of the Virgin Mary, complete with a blue veil and halo. In less religious terms, one of Latin America's most popular novels, *Doña Barbara*, by Rómulo Gallegos, is the story of a female *caudillo* ("man on horseback") on the plains of Venezuela.

The Latin American woman dominates the family because of a deep-seated respect for motherhood. Personal identity is less of a problem for her because she retains her family name upon marriage and passes it on to her children. Women who work outside the home are also supposed to retain respect for their motherhood, which is sacred. In any conflict between a woman's job and the needs of her family, the employer, by custom, must grant her a leave to tend to the family's needs. Recent historical scholarship has also revealed that Latin American women have long enjoyed rights denied to women in other, more "advanced" parts of the world. For example, women were allowed to own property and to sign for mortgages in their own names even in colonial days. In the 1920s,



(United Nations photo/Bernard P. Wolff)

The role of the native woman in Latin America has been defined by centuries of tradition. This woman is spinning wool, in Chimburazo, Ecuador, just as her ancestors did.