



Geography In The News™

Neal G.
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YUGOSLAVIA'S DEATH THROES

The "butcher of the Balkans," Slobodan Milosevic, is dead. He was the former leader of Yugoslavia and the promoter of Serbian unity across the Balkan Peninsula. Milosevic was being tried for war crimes by a United Nation's tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, when he died in his jail cell on March 11, 2006.

The Balkan Peninsula is a geographic patchwork of significantly different cultures that formally became the Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945 under Marshall Tito.

Some areas had large numbers of a single culture, while others had several cultures commingled. The largest numbers of a single culture in Yugoslavia were Serbs, but there were also Slovenes and Croats in large numbers, as well as Albanians, Bosnians, Kosovars, Montenegrins, Macedonians and others. The Serb majority was concentrated in two Yugoslav provinces, Vojvodina and Serbia, but Serbs were also scattered in villages and settlements across the country's other provinces.

When Tito, a Croat, became head of government in 1945, he suppressed ethnic differences in the name of brotherhood and unity – a communist slogan. Following Tito's death in 1980, the majority Serbs gradually gained political control across the provinces as they linked scattered Serbian settlements with Yugoslavia's national government in Belgrade, the capital.

Milosevic (me-LOW-see-VITCH) became president of Yugoslavia in 1989. As his powers increasingly became dictatorial toward the non-Serbian cultures, two Yugoslav provinces, Croatia

and Slovenia, declared their independence from Yugoslavia. Milosevic immediately began providing arms and medical supplies through the Yugoslav army to ethnic Serbs living in Croatia. As armed conflict began with the Serbs and Yugoslav army attempting to gain control, the Croatian police tried to end the violence. More than 10,000 Croats and Serbs were killed.

In 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a predominantly Muslim province, was the third to declare its independence from Yugoslavia. This province had large numbers of ethnic Serbs. Milosevic supplied weapons to them and encouraged ethnic cleansing, the process of killing Muslim Bosnians or exiling them from Serb-dominated enclaves. The government-sanctioned bloodshed involved in the ethnic cleansing shocked the world, leading NATO and the United Nations to intervene in 1995. An estimated 200,000 people were killed.

In 1998, the province of Kosovo declared its independence. Its population was composed mainly of ethnic Albanian Muslims with only about 10 percent of the

election in 2000. Accused in the massacre of 8,000 Muslims in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, many of whom were buried in unmarked mass graves, Milosevic was arrested and flown to The Hague to face war-crimes charges in 2001. The indictment was later broadened to include genocide.

In 2002, a lengthy trial began which continued until 2005, when it was adjourned because of Milosevic's failing health. Milosevic's trial reopened in January 2006. Soon thereafter, he repeated a request for permission to be treated for heart problems in Russia where his wife and son live. The tribunal refused his request.

On March 11, Milosevic was found dead in his cell, originally believed to be of natural causes. However, blood tests revealed the presence of an unapproved drug.

Associated Press reports published March 14, 2006, indicated that drugs and alcohol regularly were smuggled into Milosevic's cell. Some believe Milosevic intentionally was trying to undermine his own health and slow his trial.

Preceding his death by almost a week was the suicide of Croatian Serb leader Milan Babic, a star witness in Milosevic's trial. Babic was serving a 13-year sentence for his role in the Yugoslav army's ethnic cleansing.

Milosevic's trial lasted four years. Many residents of the former Yugoslavia welcomed Milosevic's death, but most regret that he did not live to see the closure of a sad chapter in the history of the Balkans.

Milosevic was the first sitting head of state to be indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Now Iraq's Saddam Hussein is facing similar charges in his own country.

Perhaps a lesson drawn from such cases is that speedier trials for war crimes and genocide would help bring closure for living victims of crimes of such horrendous proportions.

And that is *Geography in the News™*, April 14, 2006. #827.

(The author is a Professor Emeritus of Geography at Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. University News Director Jane Nicholson serves as technical editor.)

Yugoslavia: Then and Now



Sources: *Geography in the News* No. 540, 476, 435, 306, 178, 66; *The Winston-Salem Journal* (AP), "Former leader dies in prison," March 12, 2006; *Associated Press*, March 14, 2006.

population being Serb. Once more Milosevic supported the Serb Kosovars in ethnic cleansing, calling Kosovo a holy ground. NATO intervened again. More than 800,000 people fled Kosovo and untold numbers were killed.

Milosevic was indicted by a U.N. war-crimes tribunal in 1999, and he was ousted as president of Yugoslavia by a popular

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KURDS IN THE MIDDLE AGAIN

Egypt's Hosni Mubarak's shuttle diplomacy efforts between Turkey and Syria recently raised many Americans' awareness of serious conflict potential between these two neighbors.

There are several root causes of tensions between Turkey and Syria, including political problems with the Kurds, the future of regional water supplies, and an Arab province located in secular Turkey. Although none of these may seem to be issues worthy of warfare to outsiders, cumulatively they are serious.

Turkey has had a long-standing conflict with the Kurds. The homeland, called Kurdistan, contains an estimated 15 million Kurds and is located mostly in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Armenia and Turkey. The greatest concentration, however, is located in eastern Turkey and northern Iraq.

The Kurdish culture is distinctive. The language derives from Farsi and Pashto, two Iranian dialects. Until the 1900s, Kurdish tribes were engaged mostly in nomadic herding in the mountains and plains of their homelands.

With the 20th century, however, came political division of traditional Kurdish lands and enforcement of national boundaries. This eliminated the Kurds' nomadic mobility and forced their culture to become more sedentary.

The Kurds rebelled against this forced cultural change. Kurdish nationalism arose, particularly against the British concept of private property and the division of Kurdish lands between the Gulf states.

A 1920 treaty provided for a separate

and autonomous Kurdistan, but the parties never ratified it.

Turkey's government tried to assimilate the Kurds by outlawing their language and culture and encouraging them to leave traditional Kurdish eastern Turkey. These actions further strengthened the culture, encouraged the more radical separatists and fostered rebellion.

Turkey periodically cracks down on Kurdish separatists, driving their leaders into Syria, where they seek unofficial asylum. Syria then uses these Turkish Kurds as political pawns against Turkey. In the past 14 years of Kurdish uprising, 37,000 people have been killed.

Syria's conflict with Turkey involves the Ataturk dam on the upper Euphrates River. The Euphrates is an essential source of water to Syria, as this exotic river flows through the eastern Syrian Desert. The river's source is high in Turkey's eastern mountains. The Turks are building

Ataturk, one of the world's largest dams within the tra-

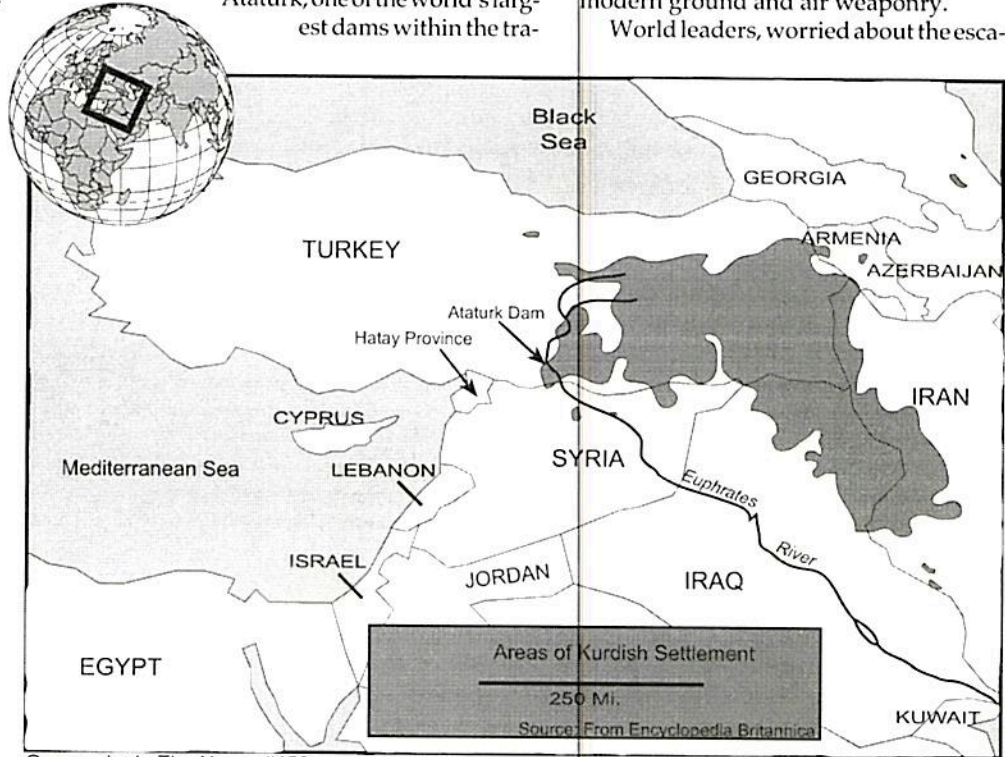
ently, Syria's northern Kurdish settlement and the Turkish Kurds who reside in Syria's sanctuaries serve this purpose.

An additional factor is stirring the conflict. One of Turkey's provinces, Hatay, located on Syria's northern border has a large Arabic speaking population. This population has close ties to Syria, and Turkey accuses Syria of "having designs" on the province, according to the Associated Press.

Radical Libyan leader Moammar Khadhafi recently entered the fray, saying, "any aggression against Syria will be considered an aggression against Libya according to the Arab joint defense pact."

Such threats between the two neighbors and their supporters may appear to be all bluster, but these are very serious issues. An invasion by Turkey of Syria's northern Kurdish territory could result in a reciprocal incursion by Syria. Both of these countries have huge armies with modern ground and air weaponry.

World leaders, worried about the esca-



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ditional Kurdish lands.

Water, of course, is a key issue throughout the Middle East, but nowhere is it more important than to eastern Syria. Syria's concern is that Ataturk will give Turkey control over Syria's downstream portion of the Euphrates.

Thus, Syria's president Assad uses the Kurds as leverage to keep Turkey from turning off the Euphrates' water. Pres-

entation of regional threats, applaud the shuttle diplomacy efforts by Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. In the Middle East, revenge is a strong tradition, worthy of worry.

And that is Geography in the News, October 20, 1998.

(The author is a Professor of Geography at Appalachian State University, Boone, NC. Dr. Roger Winsor assisted.) #453

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Neal Lineback
and Mandy Lineback Gritzner

KASHMIR ERUPTS AGAIN

As the cycle of violence continues in South Asia, Kashmir continues to be at the heart of many of the security problems. Instead of armed with guns, this time the Kashmiri rebels are young angry men throwing stones. The Kashmiri Stone Pelters, as they call themselves, want freedom from India's strict security presence in the region.

For 50 years, India and Pakistan have been fighting for control of the territory of Kashmir, which lies between the two countries in the northwestern area of the Indian subcontinent. The situation there is extremely complex. Pakistan refers to the region as Kashmir, while India and most of the world know it as Jammu and Kashmir. (For brevity sake, we will refer to it here as Kashmir.)

India and Pakistan have fought three wars over the disputed territory. Historically, the people of the region, who are mostly Muslim, wanted independence from India, followed by an opportunity to join Pakistan. Recently, however, their hostility has been fueled by the desire to oust India's military, which is accused of brutal violence against the Kashmiri Muslims.

In 1947, the British partitioned the Indian subcontinent into two separate states, India and Pakistan. While India was overwhelmingly Hindu, the British formed Pakistan to give the subcontinent's Muslims a homeland. Kashmir became part of India even though it had a Muslim majority. Since then, Pakistan has objected to India's control of the region. In 1971, the two countries

created a Line of Control through Kashmir, partitioning it into two areas of Pakistan and India control. The border itself is a source of conflict.

Although most of the people of Kashmir today are Muslim, both Buddhism and Hinduism have had strong followings throughout the region's history. In fact, Islam did not reach this mountainous region until the 14th century. In spite of the numbers of Islamic conversions, Hindu leaders and large landowners dominated much of the territory, a situation that forms the root of the present cultural conflict.

Kashmir is one of the world's most exotic lands, dotted with spectacular mountains, valleys and lakes. The economic and cultural heart of Kashmir is the Vale of Kashmir, a broad and beautiful valley. Lying between two mountain ranges of the Himalaya, a large natural lake once covered the Vale. The lacustrine (or lake) soils are loamy and easily cultivated, supporting advanced cultures for 2,000 years or more. The Vale along with the Jammu lowland are the only low areas that support large amounts of agriculture in the region.

India, which claims sovereignty over all of Kashmir, occupies roughly two-thirds of the total area, including the Vale of Kashmir. It controls much of the south and east of the region, the area with the majority of the population.

Ninety percent of Kashmir's 86,000 square miles (222,740 sq. km) is rugged, with mountains too steep, too high and too cold for agriculture. Pakistan controls the north and west sections of Kashmir, the more mountainous and sparsely populated areas, containing about 4.5 million

mostly Muslim residents. Much of northern Kashmir consists of the Karakoram Mountain Range, where China also controls a portion of Kashmir, complicating the political issues even further. India-controlled Kashmir contains approximately 9.0 million people, about 77 percent of whom are Muslim.

Cultural differences are only one aspect of the conflict over Kashmir. According to *Time* magazine (Sept. 20, 2010), Pakistan's military has long supported extremist groups in Kashmir. By focusing on the continued violence with India in Kashmir, the government has let down its guard against pro-Taliban jihadists hoping to dominate the rest of Pakistan.

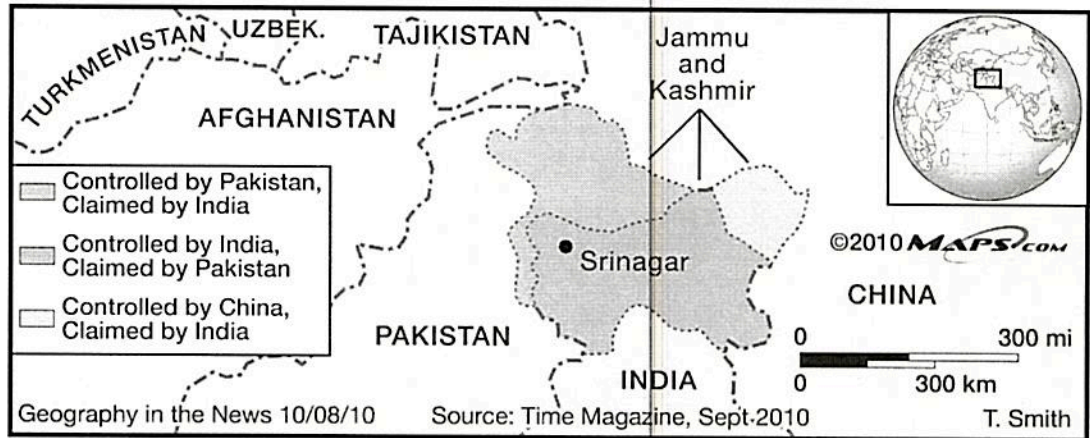
India, on the other hand, uses the conflict in Kashmir to justify a strong military presence in the region. India's military presence was supposed to be a source of stability and democratic values, however, Kashmiris see the Indians as occupying their homeland.

Kashmir has perhaps 600,000 unemployed people, many of whom are young male Stone Pelters eager to battle India's military. India keeps 30,000 troops in the region, most around Srinagar, the largest city and has no plans to draw down the number. The fact that Pakistan openly and clandestinely supports the continued uprising against India keeps the conflict boiling. There is no end in sight.

And that is *Geography in the News™*. October 8, 2010. #1062.

Co-authors are Neal Lineback, Appalachian State University Professor Emeritus of Geography, and Geographer Mandy Lineback Gritzner. University News Director Jane Nicholson serves as technical editor.

Source Of Conflict: Kashmir



Sources: Thottam, Jyoti, "Kashmir's New Warriors," *Time Magazine*, September 20, 2010, pgs. 63-67; and *GIN* #127, "Kashmir," February 7, 1990.

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SRI LANKA'S TAMIL TIGERS ON LOSING END

Rebel Tamil Tigers have been fighting the Sri Lankan military for almost 25 years in their quest for an autonomous state in the northern region of Sri Lanka. Recently, the war changed as the army-offensive pushed the Tigers into a small jungle area in the northeast where as many as 250,000 civilians live.

The government refuses to protect civilians in that area. It has instead designated a "safe zone" for civilians in a 12-square-mile (31 sq. km) area within a larger but gradually shrinking Tiger enclave of 110 square miles (236 sq. km). Aid workers in the area claim shells have fallen on the safe zone in recent days, though the military and the rebels deny the bombings.

The question now remains whether the military can finish a war that has plagued Sri Lanka for decades, causing some 70,000 deaths, displacing thousands more and preventing the island's growth and economic development.

The teardrop-shaped island of Sri Lanka is located east of the tip of India. With an area of 25,332 square miles (65,861 sq. km), the island is slightly larger than West Virginia. Located in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is 8 degrees north of the equator. While most the island is relatively flat to rolling, mountains do exist in the south-central interior.

Sri Lanka's climate is tropical monsoon, with wet and dry seasons. The northern one-third of the island is the Tamil homeland.

The estimated 2008 population for Sri Lanka was over 21 million, with the Sinhalese representing 74 percent of the population, Tamils 9 percent and Moors 7 percent. Another 10 percent are of unspecified ethnicity.

The Sinhalese majority population is a tall, light-skinned people who descended from Aryan tribes from northern India. Mostly Buddhist, their culture is dominant in the southwest portion of the country and in the capital of Colombo.

The Tamil minority descended from the smaller, dark-skinned people called the Dravidians found in the southern Indian peninsula. The Tamils are mostly Hindu. The Moors descended from Arab and Portuguese sailors and traders from before the 1600s.

In the 14th century, a south Indian dynasty established a Tamil kingdom in northern Sri Lanka. The Portuguese controlled the coastal areas of the island in the 16th century while the Dutch took over by the 17th century. The island was ceded to the British in 1796. Called Ceylon, the island received its independence from the British in 1948, changing its name to the Republic of Sri Lanka in 1972.

est paying jobs. Furthermore, Sinhala, the language of the Sinhalese, became the official Sri Lankan language. The Tamils had hoped that the island's independence would bring equality to the country, but the cultural differences were just too great.

Rioting broke out in 1958, followed by some compromises with the Tamils. The Sinhalese prime minister was assassinated 1959 and there were ultra-leftist terrorist activities. Finally, in the early 1980s, Sinhalese and Tamil separatist violence erupted.

The Tamils began calling for a separate Tamil state in northern Sri Lanka, with Jaffna as its capital. In 1983, Tamil guerrillas fought government troops across the north. In 1987 with help from Indian forces, the government secured Jaffna in a major offensive.

The Tamil Tigers evacuated to the deep tropical jungles of the hills and mountains, occasionally reclaiming lost ground. A major offensive gave them control of much of northern Sri Lanka from 1990 through 1995. However, government troops battled back.

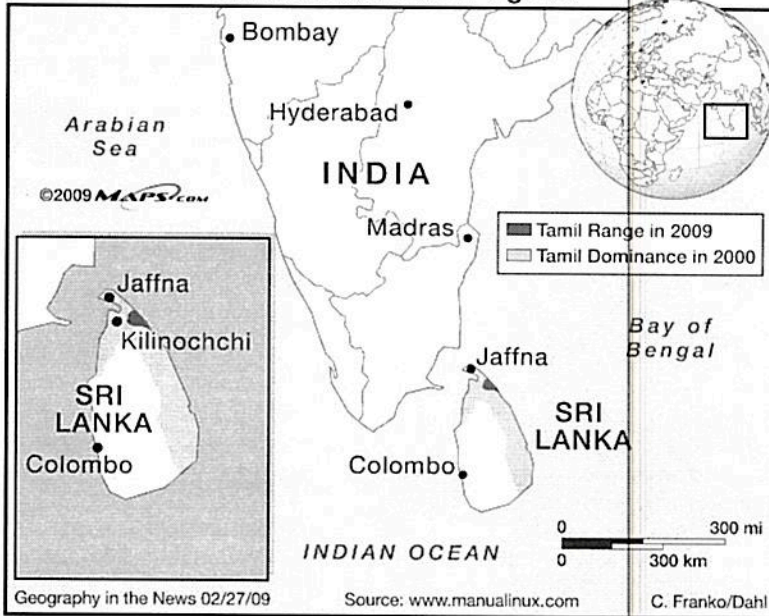
In 2002, the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers formalized a ceasefire, with Norway brokering peace negotiations. After violence again escalated in 2006, the government officially withdrew from the ceasefire in January 2008.

Now it looks like the Sri Lankan government has the Tigers exactly where it wants them—trapped in a small section in the north of the island. While the military advances, the main concern for aid workers is the survival of the innocents in the region. The international community, including U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, is urging a truce so that humanitarian aid can enter the area. The Sri Lankan government has previously ruled out any ceasefire and has vowed to crush the rebels.

And that is *Geography in the News™*. February 27, 2009. #978.

Co-authors are Neal Lineback, Appalachian State University Professor Emeritus of Geography, and Geographer Mandy Lineback Gritzner. University News Director Jane Nicholson serves as technical editor.

Where are the Tamil Tigers?



Sources: *GITN* #525 "Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers," June 23, 2000; and http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2405347.stm

The Sinhalese and Tamil cultures shared the island in relative peace from A.D. 1100 until independence, despite ethnic and religious differences. However, the Tamils represented a depressed workforce, laboring in the most demanding and low-

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Neal G. Lineback

RWANDA'S GENOCIDE: LESSONS LEARNED

The tiny east-central African country of Rwanda underwent one of history's bloodiest episodes of genocide only 10 years ago. As the world watched, nearly one million Rwandans were killed in just 100 days as ethnic violence between the Hutus and Tutsis rampaged through the country.

The Rwandan genocide of 1994 is being studied in detail, in hopes that world powers might keep such events from happening in the future. At least, using Rwanda as a case study can teach us how intervention might reduce bloodshed. Meanwhile, an International Criminal Tribunal, begun in 1996, drags on in neighboring Tanzania, so far sentencing only 21 individuals in Rwanda's genocide.

The questions are: Why was the world caught unaware while levels of ethnic tension rose between Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis? What triggers led to Rwandan societal breakdown? Was international action or inaction involved in the event? What might be done to keep such events from reoccurring?

Rwanda and its neighboring "twin" Burundi are located in east-central Africa on the east side of the Great Rift Valley. Both countries are only about the size of Maryland, at just over 10,000 square miles (25,900 sq. km.). Rwanda lies north of Burundi and borders Tanzania on the east, Uganda to the north, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire) on the west.

Only a few degrees south of the equator, Rwanda has a surprisingly moderate climate because of its elevation. Much of its landscape consists of high volcanic plateaus reaching elevations between 5,000 and 8,000 feet (1,524 and 2,682 m.). These elevations moderate the year-round tropical tempera-

ture to around 73 F. (41 C.). Annual precipitation varies considerably across the country, but generally ranges between 30 and 40 inches (76 to 102 cm.).

Rwanda's volcanic soils were once very productive, but heavy grazing pressures and over-cropping, combined with increased erosion, have reduced agricultural productivity. Ninety-three percent of Rwanda's estimated 7.3 million people are mostly subsistence farmers, struggling to make ends meet.

Rwanda's population is 80 percent Hutu and 19 percent Tutsi, two traditionally rival ethnic groups. Up until about A.D. 1600, the African region around present-day Rwanda and Burundi was occupied by Hutu tribes, consisting mostly of farmers and herds-men. Onto this scene came the tall, statuesque Watusi (Tutsi), a warrior people who quickly dominated the smaller, less aggressive Hutu. This resulted in a feudal overlord system, with the Tutsi protecting the Hutu and the Hutu serving the Tutsi.

Germany made Ruanda-Urundi (Rwanda and Burundi) part of German East Africa in 1897, but it came under League of Nations (Belgian) control after WWI and became a United Nations trust territory following World War II. A major outbreak of ethnic bloodshed occurred in 1959, when the Hutus rebelled against the ruling Tutsi, killing thousands. By 1962, both parts of the trust territory claimed their individual independence as Rwanda and Burundi.

On April 6, 1994, the Hutu presidents of both Rwanda and Burundi were killed when their plane was shot down.

Immediately, Hutus suspected the Tutsis of involvement and began a house-to-house killing of Tutsis. Within two weeks, United Nations peacekeeping troops were withdrawn in the midst of bloodshed rampaging across the countryside, killing 937,000 people and forcing 2 million to flee.

In July, a Tutsi rebel group gained control over the Hutu army and established an interim government in Rwanda's capital city of Kigali. Finally, Rwanda's terrible conflagration had come to an end, although the emotional scars remain.

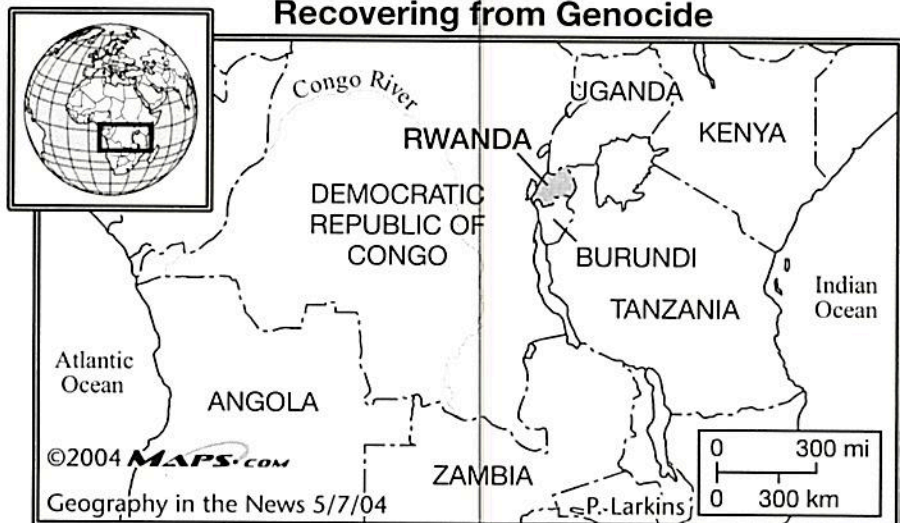
At blame for Rwanda's ethnic violence are many agencies and leaders. One of the most surprising, according to The Christian Science Monitor (April 7, 2004), was Rwandan Radio 10. The station flamed Hutus' bitter hatred toward Tutsis with statements including, "The graves are not yet full. Who will help us fill them?" Rwandan Hutus responded with machetes, knives, clubs and guns to butcher Tutsis in the streets, shops and homes.

What can be learned from Rwanda's horrific genocide? Early recognition of ethnic tensions, continued cultural education, and intervention by international quick-response teams are three possibilities. The world must recognize looming threats and be willing to get involved before such ethnic genocide events are triggered.

And that is Geography in the News™. May 7, 2004. #727.

(The author is a Geography Professor at Appalachian State University, Boone, NC.)

Recovering from Genocide



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SUDAN'S FATEFUL DIVISION

South Sudan successfully completed its referendum in mid-January 2011 to declare independence from Sudan. Because of cultural conflict between the predominantly Arab Muslim North and the black African Christian and animist South, the country has been embroiled in war for more than 30 years. The referendum was the easy part. Now comes the challenge of establishing a government, growing an economy and providing security.

Since Sudan received independence from the British in 1956, an Islamic military government has dominated the country's politics. During the second half of the 20th century, Sudan suffered two lengthy civil wars. These wars were complex and driven by the north's economic, political and social domination of the non-Muslim southern Sudanese.

More than four million refugees fled South Sudan during the wars and two million more died from famines that accompanied the conflicts. In 2005, the Sudanese government signed a final North/South Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the southern rebels, brokered by the United States and the United Nations. The CPA granted the south autonomy for six years. In January 2011, the agreement ended with the referendum for permanent southern independence.

Sudan is located in north-east Africa. It is Africa's largest country with 966,757 square miles (2.5 million sq. km), about a fourth the size of the United States. The country's northern half lies in the Sahara. South Sudan lies with-

in the Sahel, a semi-arid climate stretching from east to west across tropical Africa just south of the Sahara. The landscape is covered in a dry scrub of stunted tropical trees and short grasses, the latter used as forage for herders' cattle.

The Sahel periodically endures extended droughts leaving the landscape parched for years at a time. When those conditions occur, many domestic animals die for lack of water and forage and people often must migrate to relief camps for the duration of the drought.

Sudan's seat of government is in Khartoum. It is the largest concentration of population and the dominant Muslim culture center. The region around Khartoum contains the most productive commercial agricultural land in Sudan.

Conversely, South Sudan is one of the world's poorest regions, with a predominantly black population of small subsistence farmers and herders. Relatively little of what the South Sudanese produce can be exported, making its economy largely hand-to-mouth.

Sudan as a whole has a population of almost 44 million. Seventy percent are Sunni Muslims living mostly in the North. About 30 percent are non-Muslims living

in the South. Twenty-five percent practice indigenous beliefs (animists) and 5 percent Christianity.

A host of problems lies ahead for a newly independent South Sudan. In addition to disputed borders with North Sudan, there are huge cultural issues. Many South Sudanese are already fleeing the north. They anticipate increased animosity toward them in an already prejudiced Muslim society. Although this forces them to move their families south, there are few prospects for jobs in the new country.

With the exception of the poor city of Juba, the projected capital of South Sudan, most of the population lives in small villages of farmers and herders. Most struggle just to survive.

The only major economic resource in South Sudan is oil and 90 percent of former Sudan's oil fields are located along the border in the Abyei district. In fact, oil revenue made up 60 percent of the Sudan's GDP prior to the country's division. Control of the revenue from these wells is an open source of conflict with the North.

Because South Sudan is landlocked, its only export route is a pipeline that runs north to Port Sudan on the Red Sea. South Sudan and north Sudan will now have to negotiate the division of oil revenue, as well as any fees for use of the pipeline.

Sudan reluctantly may be willing to grant the South its independence, but the oil resources in Abyei assure at least continued northern animosity toward the South. At worst, it may lead to yet another civil war.

The South Sudanese are willing to deal with the many problems associated with independence, just to be free from domination by the Muslim North. It will take years to build a workable government and an economy to support it. In the meantime, this new country will have to depend on international assistance and guarantees of security.

And that is *Geography in the News™*. February 4, 2011. #1079.

Co-authors are Neal Lineback, Appalachian State University Professor Emeritus of Geography, and Geographer Mandy Lineback Gritzner. University News Director Jane Nicholson serves as technical editor.



Sources: GITN #595, "Troubled Sudan," Oct. 25, 2001; and GITN 1047, "South Sudan Referendum," June 25, 2010.