



# The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World

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## The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World From Oxford University Press

The world has seen dramatic changes since the publication of the first edition of *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* in 1993. In the post-Cold War world, globalization now offers wealth and opportunities on a broader scale, as well as greater international harmony, but threatens to reinforce the advantage gap between wealthy and poor regions and intensify environmental degradation. Conflict and squalor--expressed in brutal brushfire wars, epidemics, and chronic underdevelopment--vie with equally dramatic accounts of growth and democracy associated with a liberal political order and the global diffusion of trade, investment, and communications.

Drawing on the breadth of the first edition, this updated edition reflects the changing world with a reassessment of many of the core themes of the *Companion*, and new articles on the people, concepts, and events that have shaped the world since 1993. The second edition includes biographies of Kofi Annan, Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, and Gerhard Schröder; articles on events such as the Rwandan Genocide and the war in Kosovo; and coverage of international trade developments such as NAFTA and the World Trade Organization. Eighty-seven of the 672 articles in the Second Edition are completely new; most others are thoroughly revised.

This edition also features a substantial new set of articles, a dozen essays on critical issues written by influential figures. Recognizing the importance of including varying viewpoints, the editors have commissioned these essays to provide an informed and often passionate debate on controversial topics.

Discussions include Lani Guinier and Glenn Loury on Affirmative Action; Francis Fukuyama and Milton Fisk on the Limits of Liberal Democracy; and Lloyd Axworthy and John Bolton on the United Nations.

The contributors discuss nearly every nation in the world, including extensive information on institutions, political parties, leaders, and the sources of political mobilization and conflict. The volume also includes biographies of more than seventy-five political leaders and thinkers who have shaped the contemporary political world. Articles include detailed discussions of critical historical developments and events, concepts, international law, and organizations. *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World, Second Edition* is an accessible, timely, thought-provoking, and comprehensive reference that captures the

complexity and vitality of contemporary world affairs.

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## **Editorial Review**

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The second edition of this ambitious, informative, but unevenly written reference source originally published in 1993 covers people, political concepts, forms of government, organizations, events, and issues related to world politics. Some 87 new entries have been prepared for this edition, including two new features: 23 "interpretative essays" on themes like globalization and nationalism and 6 pairs of essays offering opposing viewpoints on topics such as affirmative action and sustainable development. These additions focus attention on important issues of world politics.

Most of the almost 600 remaining entries are at most only slightly revised. In many, a paragraph or two has been tacked on to the end of the original entry. And in the entry on Mexico, where more substantial revisions have been made, the subheading of the section where the revisions are located does not reflect the changes; the election of Vincente Fox last year is discussed under the subheading "The Elections of 1988, 1994 and 1997." There are also some entries where revisions are already two or three years old. The entry on Russia does not mention Vladimir Putin at all and discusses Yeltsin very generally while concentrating on events happening before 1997. (A separate entry for Yeltsin refers to Putin only briefly.)

The entries are arranged alphabetically and contain cross-references as well as a short list of sources and an author byline at the end of the entry. The main body concludes with a confusing set of maps and a very useful and complete index. The five pages of black-and-white regional maps are small, sketchy, and disorganized. Most of the maps show a broad outline of countries and identify capital cities, although the geographic placement of these cities is very approximate. In at least one instance, the map misplaces a capital city: a small insert map of the Middle East locates Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, in a shaded area labeled "West Bank--Palestinian Authority." (The book's first edition omitted Jerusalem completely, mistakenly identifying Tel Aviv as Israel's capital.)

The book is intentionally broad in scope and overlapping in structure, resulting in some inevitable inconsistencies, some missing coverage (e.g., international slavery), and some repetitive information. Despite these factors--the relatively few entries that have been updated substantially and the poorly designed maps--academic and most public libraries will continue to find this compendium useful. Libraries owning the first edition need to weigh the outdatedness of some entries in the 1993 edition against the weaknesses in the second edition. Smaller libraries (including high-school libraries) may find that current editions of general encyclopedias provide adequate and more current coverage. *RBB*

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### **Review**

"Thoughtful and well written...The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World is a scholarly, skillfully edited update of a highly useful reference. The added content is worth the price...Oxford University Press has produced another useful reference for academic and large public libraries."--Against the Grain

"Like the first edition this is an outstanding contribution. ...It provides a single source to access world politics...will embellish and deepen the growing body of works attempting to present the world scene. Highly recommended."--Choice

### **About the Author**

**Joel Krieger** (Editor in Chief) is Norma Wilentz Hess Professor of Political Science, Wellesley College. Editors are **Margaret E. Crahan** (Hunter College), **Lawrence R. Jacobs** (University of Minnesota), **William A. Joseph** (Wellesley College), **Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja** (Howard University and United Nations Development Programme), and **James A. Paul** (Global Policy Forum).

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