Background: For centuries China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the country was beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats, and foreign occupation. After World War II, the Communists under MAO Zedong established an autocratic socialist system that, while ensuring China's sovereignty, imposed strict controls over everyday life and cost the lives of tens of millions of people. After 1978, his successor DENG Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled. For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically and the room for personal choice has expanded, yet political controls remain tight.

Geography

China

Location: Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

Geographic coordinates: 35 00 N, 105 00 E

Map references: Asia

Area:
- total: 9,596,960 sq km
- land: 9,326,410 sq km
- water: 270,550 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than the US

Land boundaries:
- total: 22,117 km
- border countries: Afghanistan 76 km, Bhutan 470 km, Burma 2,185 km, India 3,380 km, Kazakhstan 1,533 km, North Korea 1,416 km, Kyrgyzstan 858 km, Laos 423 km, Mongolia 4,677 km, Nepal 1,236 km, Pakistan 523 km, Russia (northeast) 3,605 km, Russia (northwest) 40 km, Tajikistan 414 km, Vietnam 1,281 km
- regional borders: Hong Kong 30 km, Macau 0.34 km

Coastline: 14,500 km

Maritime claims:
- territorial sea: 12 nm
- contiguous zone: 24 nm
- exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
- continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin
Climate: extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

Terrain: mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

Elevation extremes:
- lowest point: Turpan Pendi -154 m
- highest point: Mount Everest 8,850 m

Natural resources: coal, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, mercury, tin, tungsten, antimony, manganese, molybdenum, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest)

Land use:
- arable land: 14.86%
- permanent crops: 1.27%
- other: 83.87% (2005)

Irrigated land: 545,960 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards: frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts; land subsidence

Environment - current issues:
- air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on coal produces acid rain; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; deforestation; estimated loss of one-fifth of agricultural land since 1949 to soil erosion and economic development; desertification; trade in endangered species

Environment - international agreements:
- signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note: world's fourth largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US); Mount Everest on the border with Nepal is the world's tallest peak

People

Population: 1,321,851,888 (July 2007 est.)
Age structure:
0-14 years: 20.4% (male 143,527,634/female 126,607,344)
15-64 years: 71.7% (male 487,079,770/female 460,596,384)
65 years and over: 7.9% (male 49,683,856/female 54,356,900) (2007 est.)

Median age:
total: 33.2 years
male: 32.7 years
female: 33.7 years (2007 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.606% (2007 est.)

Birth rate: 13.45 births/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Death rate: 7 deaths/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.11 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.134 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.057 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.914 male(s)/female
total population: 1.06 male(s)/female (2007 est.)

Infant mortality rate:
total: 22.12 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 20.01 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 24.47 deaths/1,000 live births (2007 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 72.88 years
male: 71.13 years
female: 74.82 years (2007 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.75 children born/woman (2007 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate: 0.1% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with AIDS: 840,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths: 44,000 (2003 est.)
Nationality:

noun: Chinese (singular and plural)
adjective: Chinese

Ethnic groups:

Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%

Religions:

Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Christian 3%-4%, Muslim 1%-2%

note: officially atheist (2002 est.)

Languages:

Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 90.9%
male: 95.1%
female: 86.5% (2002)

Government

Country name:

conventional long form: People's Republic of China
conventional short form: China
local long form: Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
local short form: Zhongguo
abbreviation: PRC

Government type: Communist state

Capital:

name: Beijing
gеographic coordinates: 39 56 N, 116 24 E
time difference: UTC+8 (13 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

note: despite its size, all of China falls within one time zone

Administrative divisions:

23 provinces (sheng, singular and plural), 5 autonomous regions (zizhiqu, singular and plural), and 4 municipalities (shi, singular and plural)

provinces: Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang; (see note on Taiwan)

autonomous regions: Guangxi, Nei Mongol, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Xizang (Tibet)
municipalities: Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin

note: China considers Taiwan its 23rd province; see separate entries for the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau

Independence: 221 BC (unification under the Qin or Ch'in Dynasty); 1 January 1912 (Manchu Dynasty replaced by a Republic); 1 October 1949 (People's Republic established)

National holiday: Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China, 1 October (1949)

Constitution: most recent promulgation 4 December 1982

Legal system: based on civil law system; derived from Soviet and continental civil code legal principles; legislature retains power to interpret statutes; constitution ambiguous on judicial review of legislation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch: chief of state: President HU Jintao (since 15 March 2003); Vice President ZENG Qinghong (since 15 March 2003)

head of government: Premier WEN Jiabao (since 16 March 2003); Executive Vice Premier HUANG Ju (since 17 March 2003), Vice Premiers WU Yi (17 March 2003), ZENG Peiyan (since 17 March 2003), and HUI Liangyu (since 17 March 2003)

cabinet: State Council appointed by the National People's Congress (NPC)

elections: president and vice president elected by the National People's Congress for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); elections last held 15-17 March 2003 (next to be held in mid-March 2008); premier nominated by the president, confirmed by the National People's Congress

election results: HU Jintao elected president by the 10th National People's Congress with a total of 2,937 votes (4 delegates voted against him, 4 abstained, and 38 did not vote); ZENG Qinghong elected vice president by the 10th National People's Congress with a total of 2,578 votes (177 delegates voted against him, 190 abstained, and 38 did not vote); 2 seats were vacant

Legislative branch: unicameral National People's Congress or Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (2,985 seats; members elected by municipal, regional, and provincial people's congresses to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held December 2002-February 2003 (next to be held in late 2007-February 2008)

election results: percent of vote - NA; seats - NA
Judicial branch:
Supreme People's Court (judges appointed by the National People's Congress); Local People's Courts (comprise higher, intermediate, and local courts); Special People's Courts (primarily military, maritime, and railway transport courts)

Political parties and leaders:
Chinese Communist Party or CCP [HU Jintao]; eight registered small parties controlled by CCP

Political pressure groups and leaders:
no substantial political opposition groups exist, although the government has identified the Falungong spiritual movement and the China Democracy Party as subversive groups

International organization participation:
AfDB, APEC, APT, ARF, AsDB, ASEAN (dialogue partner), BCIE, BIS, CDB, EAS, FAO, G-24 (observer), G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ISO, ITU, LAIA (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, MONUC, NAM (observer), NSG, OAS (observer), OPCW, PCA, PIF (partner), SAARC (observer), SCO, UN, UN Security Council, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNITAR, UNMEE, UNMIL, UNMIS, UNMOVIC, UNOCI, UNTSO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador ZHOU Wenzhong
chancery: 2300 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008
telephone: [1] (202) 328-2500
FAX: [1] (202) 328-2582
consulate(s) general: Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Clark T. RANDT, Jr.
embassy: Xiu Shui Bei Jie 3, 100600 Beijing
mailing address: PSC 461, Box 50, FPO AP 96521-0002
telephone: [86] (10) 6532-3831
FAX: [86] (10) 6532-3178
consulate(s) general: Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau, Shanghai, Shenyang

Flag description:
red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner

Economy

China

Economy - overview:
China's economy during the last quarter century has changed from a centrally
planned system that was largely closed to international trade to a more market-oriented economy that has a rapidly growing private sector and is a major player in the global economy. Reforms started in the late 1970s with the phasing out of collectivized agriculture, and expanded to include the gradual liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, the foundation of a diversified banking system, the development of stock markets, the rapid growth of the non-state sector, and the opening to foreign trade and investment. China has generally implemented reforms in a gradualist or piecemeal fashion, including the sale of equity in China's largest state banks to foreign investors and refinements in foreign exchange and bond markets in 2005. The restructuring of the economy and resulting efficiency gains have contributed to a more than tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. Measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis, China in 2006 stood as the second-largest economy in the world after the US, although in per capita terms the country is still lower middle-income and 130 million Chinese fall below international poverty lines. Economic development has generally been more rapid in coastal provinces than in the interior, and there are large disparities in per capita income between regions. The government has struggled to: (a) sustain adequate job growth for tens of millions of workers laid off from state-owned enterprises, migrants, and new entrants to the work force; (b) reduce corruption and other economic crimes; and (c) contain environmental damage and social strife related to the economy's rapid transformation. From 100 million to 150 million surplus rural workers are adrift between the villages and the cities, many subsisting through part-time, low-paying jobs. One demographic consequence of the "one child" policy is that China is now one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world. Another long-term threat to growth is the deterioration in the environment - notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table, especially in the north. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and economic development. China has benefited from a huge expansion in computer Internet use, with more than 100 million users at the end of 2005. Foreign investment remains a strong element in China's remarkable expansion in world trade and has been an important factor in the growth of urban jobs. In July 2005, China revalued its currency by 2.1% against the US dollar and moved to an exchange rate system that references a basket of currencies. In 2006 China had the largest current account surplus in the world - nearly $180 billion. More power generating capacity came on line in 2006 as large scale investments were completed. Thirteen years in construction at a cost of $24 billion, the immense Three Gorges Dam across the Yangtze River was essentially completed in 2006 and will revolutionize electrification and flood control in the area. The 11th Five-Year Program (2006-10), approved by the National People's Congress in March 2006, calls for a 20% reduction in energy consumption per unit of GDP by 2010 and an estimated 45% increase in GDP by 2010. The plan states that conserving resources and protecting the environment are basic goals, but it lacks details on the policies and reforms necessary to achieve these goals.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):** $10 trillion (2006 est.)
GDP (official exchange rate): $2.512 trillion (2006 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 10.5% (official data) (2006 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): $7,600 (2006 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:
- agriculture: 11.9%
- industry: 48.1%
- services: 40%

*note: industry includes construction (2006 est.)*

Labor force: 798 million (2006 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:
- agriculture: 45%
- industry: 24%
- services: 31% (2005 est.)

Unemployment rate: 4.2% official registered unemployment in urban areas in 2005; substantial unemployment and underemployment in rural areas (2005)

Population below poverty line: 10% (2004 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:
- lowest 10%: 1.8%
- highest 10%: 33.1% (2001)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 44 (2002)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 1.5% (2006 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 44.3% of GDP (2006 est.)

Budget:
- revenues: $446.6 billion
- expenditures: $489.6 billion; including capital expenditures of $NA (2006 est.)

Public debt: 22.1% of GDP (2006 est.)

Agriculture - products:
Products: rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, peanuts, tea, millet, barley, apples, cotton, oilseed; pork; fish

Industries: mining and ore processing, iron, steel, aluminum, and other metals, coal; machine building; armaments; textiles and apparel; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizers; consumer products, including footwear, toys, and electronics; food processing; transportation equipment, including automobiles, rail cars and locomotives, ships, and aircraft; telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles, satellites

Industrial production growth rate: 22.9% (2006 est.)

Electricity - production: 2.5 trillion kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption: 2.494 trillion kWh (2005)

Electricity - exports: 11.2 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - imports: 5 billion kWh (2005)

Oil - production: 3.631 million bbl/day (2005)

Oil - consumption: 6.534 million bbl/day (2005)

Oil - exports: 443,300 bbl/day (2005)

Oil - imports: 3.181 million bbl/day (2005)

Oil - proved reserves: 16.1 billion bbl (2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 52.88 billion cu m (2005)

Natural gas - consumption: 47.91 billion cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 2.79 billion cu m (2005)

Natural gas - imports: 0 cu m (2005)
Natural gas - proved reserves: 2.35 trillion cu m (2005 est.)

Current account balance: $179.1 billion (2006 est.)

Exports: $974 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)

Exports - commodities: machinery and equipment, plastics, optical and medical equipment, iron and steel

Exports - partners: US 21.4%, Hong Kong 16.3%, Japan 11%, South Korea 4.6%, Germany 4.3% (2005)

Imports: $777.9 billion f.o.b. (2006 est.)

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, oil and mineral fuels, plastics, optical and medical equipment, organic chemicals, iron and steel

Imports - partners: Japan 15.2%, South Korea 11.6%, Taiwan 11.2%, US 7.4%, Germany 4.6% (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: $1.034 trillion (2006 est.)

Debt - external: $305.6 billion (2006 est.)

Economic aid - recipient: $NA

Currency (code): yuan (CNY); note - also referred to as the Renminbi (RMB)


Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications China

Telephones - main lines in use: 350.433 million (2005)

Telephone system:

*general assessment*: domestic and international services are increasingly available for private use; unevenly distributed domestic system serves principal cities, industrial centers, and many towns; China continues to develop its telecommunications infrastructure, and is partnering with foreign providers to expand its global reach; 3 of China's 6 major telecommunications operators are part of an international consortium which, in December 2006, signed an agreement with Verizon Business to build the first next-generation optical cable system directly linking the US mainland and China

*domestic*: interprovincial fiber-optic trunk lines and cellular telephone systems have been installed; mobile cellular subscribership is increasing rapidly; a domestic satellite system with 55 earth stations is in place

*international*: country code - 86; satellite earth stations - 5 Intelsat (4 Pacific Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean), 1 Intersputnik (Indian Ocean region) and 1 Inmarsat (Pacific and Indian Ocean regions); several international fiber-optic links to Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Russia, and Germany (2000)


Television broadcast stations: 3,240 (of which 209 are operated by China Central Television, 31 are provincial TV stations, and nearly 3,000 are local city stations) (1997)

Internet country code: .cn

Internet hosts: 232,780 (2006)

Internet users: 123 million (2006)

Transportation China

Airports: 486 (2006)

Airports - with paved runways:

*total*: 403

*over 3,047 m*: 56

*2,438 to 3,047 m*: 127

*1,524 to 2,437 m*: 138

*914 to 1,523 m*: 22

*under 914 m*: 60 (2006)
unpaved runways:  
*total:* 83  
*over 3,047 m:* 4  
*2,438 to 3,047 m:* 2  
*1,524 to 2,437 m:* 13  
*914 to 1,523 m:* 25  
*under 914 m:* 39 (2006)

Heliports:  
32 (2006)

Pipelines:  
gas 22,664 km; oil 15,256 km; refined products 6,106 km (2006)

Railways:  
*total:* 74,408 km  
*standard gauge:* 74,408 km 1.435-m gauge (19,303 km electrified) (2004)

Roadways:  
*total:* 1,870,661 km  
*paved:* 1,515,797 km (with at least 34,288 km of expressways)  
*unpaved:* 354,864 km (2004)

Waterways:  
123,964 km (2003)

Merchant marine:  
*total:* 1,723 ships (1000 GRT or over) 21,405,633 GRT/32,411,260 DWT  
*by type:* barge carrier 2, bulk carrier 387, cargo 695, chemical tanker 45,  
combination ore/oil 1, container 152, liquefied gas 31, passenger 8,  
passenger/cargo 83, petroleum tanker 261, refrigerated cargo 30, roll on/roll off  
8, specialized tanker 6, vehicle carrier 14  
*foreign-owned:* 13 (Hong Kong 7, Japan 3, South Korea 2, Norway 1)  
*registered in other countries:* 1,191 (Bahamas 3, Bangladesh 1, Belize 103,  
Bolivia 1, Cambodia 128, Cyprus 11, Georgia 2, Honduras 3, Hong Kong 274,  
India 2, North Korea 1, Liberia 35, Malaysia 1, Malta 14, Mongolia 4, Norway  
3, Panama 420, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 103, Sierra Leone 2,  
Singapore 23, Thailand 1, Tuvalu 23, unknown 33) (2006)

Ports and terminals:  
Dalian, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai

Military  

China

Military branches:  
People's Liberation Army (PLA): Ground Forces, Navy (includes marines and  
naval aviation), Air Force (includes airborne forces), and Second Artillery  
Corps (strategic missile force); People's Armed Police (PAP); Reserve and  
Militia Forces (2006)

Military service  
*age and obligation:*
age and obligation:
18-22 years of age for compulsory military service, with 24-month service obligation; no minimum age for voluntary service (all officers are volunteers); 18-22 years of age for women who meet requirements for specific military jobs (2006)

Manpower available for military service:
males age 18-49: 342,956,265
females age 18-49: 324,701,244 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:
males age 18-49: 281,240,272
females age 18-49: 269,025,517 (2005 est.)

Manpower reaching military service age annually:
males age 18-49: 13,186,433
females age 18-49: 12,298,149 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:
4.3% (2006 est.)

Transnational Issues

Disputes - international:
Based on principles drafted in 2005, China and India continue discussions to resolve all aspects of their extensive boundary and territorial disputes together with a security and foreign policy dialogue to consolidate discussions related to the boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, and other matters; recent talks and confidence-building measures have begun to defuse tensions over Kashmir, site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; lacking any treaty describing the boundary, Bhutan and China continue negotiations to establish a boundary alignment to resolve substantial cartographic discrepancies, the largest of which lies in Bhutan's northwest; China asserts sovereignty over the Spratly Islands together with Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and possibly Brunei; the 2002 "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea" eased tensions in the Spratly's but is not the legally binding "code of conduct" sought by some parties; Vietnam and China continue to expand construction of facilities in the Spratly's and in March 2005, the national oil companies of China, the Philippines, and Vietnam signed a joint accord on marine seismic activities in the Spratly Islands; China occupies some of the Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan; China and Taiwan continue to reject both Japan's claims to the uninhabited islands of Senkaku-shoto (Diaoyu Tai) and Japan's unilaterally declared equidistance line in the East China Sea, the site of intensive hydrocarbon prospecting; certain islands in the Yalu and Tumen rivers are in dispute with North Korea; China seeks to stem illegal migration of North Koreans; China and Russia have demarcated the once disputed islands at the
Amur and Ussuri confluence and in the Argun River in accordance with their 2004 Agreement; in 2006, China and Tajikistan pledged to commence demarcation of the revised boundary agreed to in the delimitation of 2002; demarcation of the China-Vietnam land boundary proceeds slowly and although the maritime boundary delimitation and fisheries agreements were ratified in June 2004, implementation remains stalled; in 2004, international environmentalist and political pressure from Burma and Thailand prompted China to halt construction of 13 dams on the Salween River

Refugees and internally displaced persons:

Refugees (country of origin): 300,897 (Vietnam), estimated 30,000-50,000 (North Korea)

IDPs: 90,000 (2006)

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: China is a source, transit, and destination country for women, men, and children trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor; the majority of trafficking in China is internal, but there is also international trafficking of Chinese citizens; women are lured through false promises of legitimate employment into commercial sexual exploitation in Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan; Chinese men and women are smuggled to countries throughout the world at enormous personal expense and then forced into commercial sexual exploitation or exploitative labor to repay debts to traffickers; women and children are trafficked into China from Mongolia, Burma, North Korea, Russia, and Vietnam for forced labor, marriage, and sexual slavery; most North Koreans enter northeastern China voluntarily, but others reportedly are trafficked into China from North Korea; domestic trafficking remains the most significant problem in China, with an estimated minimum of 10,000-20,000 victims trafficked each year; the actual number of victims could be much greater; some experts believe that the serious and prolonged imbalance in the male-female birth ratio may now be contributing to Chinese and foreign girls and women being trafficked as potential brides

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - China failed to show evidence of increasing efforts to address transnational trafficking; while the government provides reasonable protection to internal victims of trafficking, protection for Chinese and foreign victims of transnational trafficking remain inadequate

Illicit drugs:

major transshipment point for heroin produced in the Golden Triangle region of Southeast Asia; growing domestic drug abuse problem; source country for chemical precursors, despite new regulations on its large chemical industry

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