



Background Note: Thailand



PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:
[Kingdom of Thailand](#)

Geography

Area: 513,115 sq. km. (198,114 sq. mi.); equivalent to the size of France, or slightly smaller than Texas.
Cities: *Capital*--Bangkok (population 9,668,854); Nakhon Ratchasima (pop. 437,386 for Muang district and 2,565,685 for the whole province), Chiang Mai (pop. 247,672 for Muang district and 1,595,855 for the whole province).

Terrain: Densely populated central plain; northeastern plateau; mountain range in the west; southern isthmus joins the land mass with Malaysia.

Climate: Tropical monsoon.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Thai.

Population (2006 est.): 64.6 million.

Labor force (2005): 36.13 million.

Annual population growth rate (2006 est.): 0.68%.

Ethnic groups: Thai 89%, other 11%.

Religions: Buddhist 94-95%, Muslim 4-5%, Christian, Hindu, Brahmin, other.

Languages: Thai (official language); English is the second language of the elite; regional dialects.

Education: *Years compulsory*--12. *Literacy*--94.9% male, 90.5% female.

Health (2006 est.): *Infant mortality rate*--19.5/1,000. *Life expectancy*--70 years male, 74.7 years female.

Government

Type: Constitutional monarchy.

Constitution: New constitution promulgated October 11, 1997.

Independence: Never colonized; traditional founding date 1238.

Branches: *Executive*--King (chief of state), Prime Minister (head of government). *Legislative*--National Assembly (bicameral). *Judicial*--composed of the Constitutional Court, the Courts of Justice, and the Administrative Courts.

Administrative subdivisions: 76 provinces, including Bangkok municipality, subdivided into 796 districts, 81 subdistricts, 7,255 tambon administration, and 74,435 villages.

Political parties: Multi-party system; Communist Party is prohibited.

Suffrage: Universal and compulsory at 18 years of age.

Economy

GDP (2005): \$176.4 billion.

Annual GDP growth rate (2005): 4.5%.

Per capita income (2004): \$2,724.

Unemployment rate (2005): 1.8% of total labor force.

Natural resources: Tin, rubber, natural gas, tungsten, tantalum, timber, lead, fish, gypsum, lignite, fluorite. Agriculture (8.8% of GDP): *Products*--rice, tapioca, rubber, corn, sugarcane, coconuts, soybeans. Industry: *Types*--tourism, textiles, garments, agricultural processing, cement, integrated circuits, jewelry, electronics, and auto assembly. Trade (2005): *Merchandise exports*--\$109.211 billion: textiles and footwear, fishery products, computers and parts, electronics, electrical appliances, jewelry, rice, tapioca products, integrated circuits, rubber, automobiles. *Major markets*--ASEAN, U.S., EU, Japan, China, and Hong Kong. *Merchandise imports*--\$117.788 billion: machinery and parts, petroleum, iron and steel, chemicals, vehicles and parts, jewelry, fish preparations, electrical appliances, fertilizers and pesticides. *Major suppliers*--Japan, ASEAN, Middle East, EU, China, and U.S.

PEOPLE

Thailand's population is relatively homogeneous. More than 85% speak a dialect of Thai and share a common culture. This core population includes the central Thai (33.7% of the population, including Bangkok), Northeastern Thai (34.2%), northern Thai (18.8%), and southern Thai (13.3%).

The language of the central Thai population is the language taught in schools and used in government. Several other small Thai-speaking groups include the Shan, Lue, and Phutai.

Up to 12% of Thai are of significant Chinese heritage, but the Sino-Thai community is the best integrated in Southeast Asia. Malay-speaking Muslims of the south comprise another significant minority group (2.3%). Other groups include the Khmer; the Mon, who are substantially assimilated with the Thai; and the Vietnamese. Smaller mountain-dwelling tribes, such as the Hmong and Mein, as well as the Karen, number about 788,024.

The population is mostly rural, concentrated in the rice-growing areas of the central, northeastern, and northern regions. However, as Thailand continues to industrialize, its urban population--31.6% of total population, principally in the Bangkok area--is growing.

Thailand's highly successful government-sponsored family planning program has resulted in a dramatic decline in population growth from 3.1% in 1960 to less than 1% today. Life expectancy also has risen, a positive reflection of Thailand's efforts at public health education. However, the AIDS epidemic has had a major impact on the Thai population. Today, over 600,000 Thais live with HIV or AIDS--approximately 1.5% of the adult population. Each year until at least 2006, 30-50,000 Thais will die from AIDS-related causes. Ninety percent of them will be aged 20-49, the most productive sector of the workforce. The situation could have been worse; an aggressive public education campaign in the early 1990s reduced the number of new HIV infections from over 100,000 annually.

The constitution mandates 12 years of free education, however, this is not provided universally. Education accounts for 16.6% of total government expenditures.

Theravada Buddhism is the official religion of Thailand and is the religion of about 95% of its people. The government permits religious diversity, and other major religions are represented. Spirit worship and animism are widely practiced.

HISTORY

Southeast Asia has been inhabited for more than half a million years. Recent archaeological studies suggest that by 4000 BC, communities in what is now Thailand had emerged as centers of early bronze metallurgy. This development, along with the cultivation of wet rice, provided the impetus for social and political organization. Research suggests that these innovations may actually have been transmitted from there to the rest of Asia, including to China.

The Thai are related linguistically to Tai groups originating in southern China. Migrations from southern China to Southeast Asia may have occurred in the 6th and 7th centuries. Malay, Mon, and Khmer civilizations flourished in the region prior to the arrival of the ethnic Tai.

Thais date the founding of their nation to the 13th century. According to tradition, in 1238, Thai chieftains overthrew their Khmer overlords at Sukhothai and established a Thai kingdom. After its decline, a new Thai kingdom emerged in 1350 on the Chao Praya River. At the same time, there was an equally important Tai

kingdom of Lanna, centered in Chiang Mai, which rivaled Sukhothai and Ayutthaya for centuries, and which defines northern Thai identity to this day.

The first ruler of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya, King Rama Thibodi, made two important contributions to Thai history: the establishment and promotion of Theravada Buddhism as the official religion--to differentiate his kingdom from the neighboring Hindu kingdom of Angkor--and the compilation of the Dharmashastra, a legal code based on Hindu sources and traditional Thai custom. The Dharmashastra remained a tool of Thai law until late in the 19th century. Beginning with the Portuguese in the 16th century, Ayutthaya had some contact with the West, but until the 1800s, its relations with neighboring kingdoms and principalities, as well as with China, were of primary importance.

After more than 400 years of power, in 1767, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya was brought down by invading Burmese armies and its capital burned. After a single-reign capital established at Thonburi by Taksin, a new capital city was founded in 1782, across the Chao Phraya at the site of present-day Bangkok, by the founder of the Chakri dynasty. The first Chakri king was crowned Rama I. Rama's heirs became increasingly concerned with the threat of European colonialism after British victories in neighboring Burma in 1826.

The first Thai recognition of Western power in the region was the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United Kingdom in 1826. In 1833, the United States began diplomatic exchanges with Siam, as Thailand was called until 1938. However, it was during the later reigns of Rama IV (or King Mongkut, 1851-68), and his son Rama V (King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), that Thailand established firm rapprochement with Western powers. The Thais believe that the diplomatic skills of these monarchs, combined with the modernizing reforms of the Thai Government, made Siam the only country in South and Southeast Asia to avoid European colonization.

In 1932, a bloodless coup transformed the Government of Thailand from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) initially accepted this change but later surrendered the kingship to his 10-year-old nephew. Upon his abdication, King Prajadhipok said that the obligation of a ruler was to reign for the good of the whole people, not for a select few. Although nominally a constitutional monarchy since 1932, Thailand was ruled by a series of military governments interspersed with brief periods of democracy. Since the 1992 elections, Thailand has been a functioning democracy with constitutional changes of government. On February 6, 2005, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party won 377 of 500 seats in the Lower House of Parliament, and on March 9, 2005, Prime Minister Thaksin was chosen to serve a second term.

As with the rest of Southeast Asia, Thailand was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War. Since Japan's defeat in 1945, Thailand has had very close relations with the United States. Threatened by communist revolutions in neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, Thailand actively sought U.S. assistance to contain communist expansion in the region. Recently, Thailand also has been an active member in multilateral organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The King has little direct power under the constitution but is a symbol of national identity and unity. King Bhumibol--who has been on the throne since 1946--commands enormous popular respect and moral authority, which he has used on occasion to resolve political crises that have threatened national stability.

Thailand's legal system blends principles of traditional Thai and Western laws. The Constitutional Court is the highest court of appeals, though its jurisdiction is limited to clearly defined constitutional issues. Its members are nominated by the Senate and appointed by the King. The Courts of Justice have jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases and are organized in three tiers: Courts of First Instance, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of Justice. Administrative courts have jurisdiction over suits between private parties and the government, and cases in which one government entity is suing another. In Thailand's southern border provinces, where Muslims constitute the majority of the population, Provincial Islamic Committees have limited jurisdiction over probate, family, marriage, and divorce cases.

The National Assembly consists of two chambers--the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate is a non-partisan body with limited legislative powers, composed of 200 directly elected members from constituent districts, with every province having at least one Senator. The House of Representatives

has 500 members, 400 of whom are directly elected from constituent districts, and the remainder drawn proportionally from party lists.

Thailand's 76 provinces include the metropolis of greater Bangkok. Bangkok's governor is popularly elected, but those of the remaining provinces are career civil servants appointed by the Ministry of Interior. Following the 1932 revolution which imposed constitutional limits on the monarchy, Thai politics was dominated for a half century by a military and bureaucratic elite. Changes of government were effected primarily by means of a long series of mostly bloodless coups.

Beginning with a brief experiment in democracy during the mid-1970s, civilian democratic political institutions slowly gained greater authority, culminating in 1988 when Chatichai Choonavan--leader of the Thai Nation Party--assumed office as the country's first democratically elected Prime Minister in more than a decade. Three years later, yet another bloodless coup ended his term.

Shortly afterward, the military appointed Anand Panyarachun, a businessman and former diplomat, to head a largely civilian interim government and promised to hold elections in the near future. However, following inconclusive elections, former army commander Suchinda Kraprayoon was appointed Prime Minister. This reacted to the appointment by demanding an end to military influence in government. Demonstrations were violently suppressed by the military; in May 1992, soldiers killed at least 50 protesters.

Domestic and international reaction to the violence forced Suchinda to resign, and the nation once again turned to Anand Panyarachun, who was named interim Prime Minister until new elections in September 1992. In those elections, the political parties that had opposed the military in May 1992 won by a narrow majority, and Chuan Leekpai, a leader of the Democratic Party, became Prime Minister. Chuan dissolved Parliament in May 1995, and the Thai Nation Party won the largest number of parliamentary seats in subsequent elections. Party leader Banharn Silpa-Archa became Prime Minister but held the office only little more than a year. Following elections held in November 1996, Chavalit Youngchaiyudh formed a coalition government and became Prime Minister. The onset of the Asian financial crisis caused a loss of confidence in the Chavalit government and forced him to hand over power to Chuan Leekpai in November 1997. Chuan formed a coalition government based on the themes of prudent economic management and institution of political reforms mandated by Thailand's 1997 constitution.

In January 2001, telecommunications multimillionaire Thaksin Shinawatra and his Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party won a decisive victory on a populist platform of economic growth and development. In the February 2005 elections, Thaksin was re-elected by an even greater majority, sweeping 377 out of 500 parliamentary seats.

Soon after Prime Minister Thaksin's second term began, allegations of corruption emerged against his government. Peaceful anti-government mass demonstrations grew, and thousands marched in the streets to demand Thaksin's resignation. Prime Minister Thaksin dissolved the Parliament in February 2006 and declared snap elections in April. The main opposition parties boycotted the polls, and the judiciary subsequently annulled the elections. New elections are expected to take place October 2006.

Principal Government Officials

Chief of State--King Bhumibol Adulyadej
Prime Minister--Thaksin Shinawatra
Minister of Foreign Affairs--Kantathi Suphamongkhon
Ambassador to the U.S.--Virasakdi Futrakul
Ambassador to the UN--Laxanachantorn Laohaphan

Thailand maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 1024 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20007 (tel. 202-944-3600). Consulates are located in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

ECONOMY

The Thai economy is export-dependent, with exports accounting for 60% of GDP. Thailand's recovery from the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis relied largely on external demand from the United States and other foreign markets. The Thaksin government took office in February 2001 with the intention of stimulating domestic demand and reducing Thailand's reliance on foreign trade and investment. Since then, the Thaksin administration has refined its economic message, embracing a "dual track" economic policy that combines domestic stimulus with Thailand's traditional promotion of open markets and foreign investment. Weak

export demand held 2001 GDP growth to 2.1%. Beginning in 2002, however, domestic stimulus and export revival fueled a better performance, with real GDP growth at 7.0% in 2003 and 6.2% in 2004. In 2005, the economy decelerated to a 4.5% annual GDP growth rate due to the tsunami catastrophe, drought, and violence in the three southernmost provinces. For the first quarter of 2006, the rebound of production in agriculture and manufacturing coupled with soaring numbers of tourists increased GDP by 6.0% (year-on-year).

Before the financial crisis, the Thai economy had years of manufacturing-led economic growth--averaging 9.4% for the decade up to 1996. Relatively abundant and inexpensive labor and natural resources, fiscal conservatism, open foreign investment policies, and encouragement of the private sector underlay the economic success in the years up to 1997. The economy is essentially a free-enterprise system. Certain services--such as power generation, transportation, and communications--are state-owned and operated, but the government is considering privatizing them in the wake of the financial crisis. The timetable for privatization of some state-owned enterprises, however, has slipped due to resistance from labor unions and parts of civil society. Despite the resistance, some firms were successfully privatized, such as Airports of Thailand (renamed from Airport Authority of Thailand) and MCOT (renamed from Mass Communication Authority of Thailand).

The Royal Thai Government welcomes foreign investment, and investors who are willing to meet certain requirements can apply for special investment privileges through the Board of Investment. To attract additional foreign investment, the government has modified its investment regulations.

The organized labor movement remains weak and divided in Thailand; less than 2% of the work force is unionized. In 2000, the State Enterprise Labor Relations Act (SELRA) was passed, giving public sector employees similar rights to those of private sector workers, including the right to unionize.

Roughly 60% of Thailand's labor force is employed in agriculture. Rice is the country's most important crop; Thailand is a major exporter in the world rice market. Other agricultural commodities produced in significant amounts include fish and fishery products, tapioca, rubber, corn, and sugar. Exports of processed foods such as canned tuna, pineapples, and frozen shrimp are on the rise.

Thailand's increasingly diversified manufacturing sector made the largest contribution to growth during the economic boom. Industries registering rapid increases in production included computers and electronics, garments and footwear, furniture, wood products, canned food, toys, plastic products, gems, and jewelry. High-technology products such as integrated circuits and parts, electrical appliances, and vehicles are now leading Thailand's strong growth in exports.

The United States is Thailand's largest export market and second-largest supplier after Japan. While Thailand's traditional major markets have been North America, Japan, and Europe, economic recovery among Thailand's regional trading partners has helped Thai export growth (21.6% in 2004, 15.0% in 2005, and 17.9% in the first quarter of 2006). Further recovery from the financial crisis depends heavily on increased exports to the rest of Asia and the United States.

Machinery and parts, vehicles, electronic integrated circuits, chemicals, crude oil and fuels, and iron and steel are among Thailand's principal imports. The recent increase in import levels (26% in 2005) reflects the need to fuel the production of high-technology items and vehicles as well as soaring oil prices.

Thailand is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters. Tourism contributes significantly to the Thai economy (about 4%), and the industry has benefited from the Thai baht's depreciation and Thailand's stability. Tourist arrivals in 2005 declined from the previous year due to the tsunami catastrophe.

Bangkok and its environs are the most prosperous part of Thailand, and the infertile northeast is the poorest. An overriding concern of successive Thai Governments, and a particularly strong focus of the current government, has been to reduce these regional income differentials, which have been exacerbated by rapid economic growth in and around Bangkok and the financial crisis. The government is trying to stimulate provincial economic growth with programs such as the Eastern Seaboard project and the development of an alternate deep-sea port on Thailand's southern peninsula. It also is conducting discussions with Malaysia to focus on economic development along the Thai-Malaysian border.

Although the economy has demonstrated moderate positive growth since 1999, future performance depends on continued reform of the financial sector, corporate debt restructuring, attracting foreign investment, and increasing exports. Telecommunications, roadways, electricity generation, and ports showed increasing strain during the period of sustained economic growth and may pose a future challenge. Thailand's growing shortage of engineers and skilled technical personnel may limit its future technological creativity and productivity.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Thailand's foreign policy includes support for ASEAN in the interest of regional stability and emphasis on a close and longstanding security relationship with the United States.

Thailand participates fully in international and regional organizations. It has developed increasingly close ties with other ASEAN members--Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, and Vietnam--whose foreign and economic ministers hold annual meetings. Regional cooperation is progressing in economic, trade, banking, political, and cultural matters.

In recent years, Thailand has taken an increasingly active role on the international stage. When East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, Thailand, for the first time in its history, contributed troops to the international peacekeeping effort. As part of its effort to increase international ties, Thailand has reached out to such regional organizations as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Thailand has contributed troops to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

U.S.-THAI RELATIONS

Since World War II, the United States and Thailand have developed close relations, as reflected in several bilateral treaties and by both countries' participation in UN multilateral activities and agreements. The principal bilateral arrangement is the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, which facilitates U.S. and Thai companies' economic access to one another's markets. Other important agreements address civil uses of atomic energy, sales of agricultural commodities, investment guarantees, and military and economic assistance. In June 2004 the United States and Thailand initiated negotiations on a free trade agreement which, when concluded, will reduce and eliminate barriers to trade and investment between the two countries. These negotiations are ongoing.

The United States and Thailand are among the signatories of the 1954 Manila pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Article IV(1) of this treaty provides that, in the event of armed attack in the treaty area (which includes Thailand), each member would "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." Despite the dissolution of the SEATO in 1977, the Manila pact remains in force and, together with the Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962, constitutes the basis of U.S. security commitments to Thailand. Thailand continues to be a key security ally in Asia, along with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. In December 2003, Thailand was designated a Major Non-NATO Ally.

Thailand's stability and independence are important to the maintenance of peace in the region. Economic assistance has been extended in various fields, including rural development, health, family planning, education, and science and technology. The formal U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) program ended in 1995. However, there are a number of targeted assistance programs which continue in areas of mutually defined importance, including: health and HIV/AIDS programming; refugee assistance; and trafficking in persons. The [U.S. Peace Corps](#) in Thailand has more than 100 volunteers, focused on primary education, with an integrated program involving teacher training, health education, and environmental education.

Thailand has received U.S. military equipment, essential supplies, training, and assistance in the construction and improvement of facilities and installations since 1950. In recent years, U.S. security assistance has included military training programs carried out in the United States and elsewhere. A small U.S. military advisory group in Thailand oversees the delivery of equipment to the Thai Armed Forces and the training of Thai military personnel in its use and maintenance. As part of their mutual defense cooperation over the last decade, Thailand and the United States have developed a vigorous joint military exercise program, which engages all the services of each nation and now averages 40 joint exercises per year.

Thailand is a route for Golden Triangle--the intersection of Burma, Laos, and Thailand--heroin trafficking to international markets. While Thailand is no longer a significant opium producer, money laundering, police and military corruption, and a continuing narcotics flow out of Burma have hindered efforts to limit its role as a transfer point. The United States and Thailand work closely together and with the United Nations on a broad range of programs to halt the flow of narcotics. A memorandum of understanding was signed in 1971 affirming U.S.-Thai cooperation, resulting in a strengthened Thai enforcement program. The U.S. has extended financial support for the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, which provides counternarcotics and anti-crime training to participants from regional countries. With U.S. support, Thailand has a good record in crop control, law enforcement, and demand reduction.

Trade and Investment

The United States is Thailand's second largest trading partner after Japan; in 2005 merchandise imports from Thailand totaled \$19.9 billion, and merchandise exports totaled \$7.3 billion. The U.S., Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, and the European Union are among Thailand's largest foreign investors. American investment, concentrated in the petroleum and chemicals, finance, consumer products, and automobile production sectors, is estimated at \$21 billion.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--[Ralph L. Boyce](#)
Deputy Chief of Mission--Alexander A. Arvizu
Political Affairs Counselor--Susan Sutton
Economic Affairs Counselor--Michael J. Delaney
Public Affairs Counselor--Anne Casper
Consul General--William Bartlett

The [U.S. Embassy](#) in Thailand is located at 120/22 Wireless Road, Bangkok (tel. 66-2-205-4000). There is a [Consulate General](#) in Chiang Mai, 387 Wichayanond Road (tel. 66-53-252-629).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program provides Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, and Public Announcements. **Consular Information Sheets** exist for all countries and include information on entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, areas of instability, crime and security, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. posts in the country. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. **Public Announcements** are issued as a means to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. Free copies of this information are available by calling the Bureau of Consular Affairs at 202-647-5225 or via the fax-on-demand system: 202-647-3000. Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings also are available on the Consular Affairs Internet home page: <http://travel.state.gov>. Consular Affairs Tips for Travelers publication series, which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are available on the Internet and hard copies can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, telephone: 202-512-1800; fax 202-512-2250.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained from the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225. For after-hours emergencies, Sundays and holidays, call 202-647-4000.

The National Passport Information Center (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778). Customer service representatives and operators for TDD/TTY are available Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 877-FYI-TRIP (877-394-8747) and a web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. A booklet entitled Health Information for International Travel (HHS publication number CDC-95-8280) is available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, tel. (202) 512-1800.

Information on travel conditions, visa requirements, currency and customs regulations, legal holidays, and other items of interest to travelers also may be obtained before your departure from a country's embassy and/or consulates in the U.S. (for this country, see "Principal Government Officials" listing in this publication).

U.S. citizens who are long-term visitors or traveling in dangerous areas are encouraged to [register](#) their travel via the State Department's travel registration web site at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> or at the Consular section of the U.S. embassy upon arrival in a country by filling out a short form and sending in a copy of their passports. This may help family members contact you in case of an emergency.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more.

[Export.gov](#) provides a portal to all export-related assistance and market information offered by the federal government and provides trade leads, free export counseling, help with the export process, and more.

[STAT-USA/Internet](#), a service of the U.S. Department of Commerce, provides authoritative economic, business, and international trade information from the Federal government. The site includes current and historical trade-related releases, international market research, trade opportunities, and country analysis and provides access to the [National Trade Data Bank](#).