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ASIA DEMOCRACY PROFILES
1992 SURVEY

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Democratic Affairs and Private Voluntary Cooperation Unit
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ASIA BUREAU
1992 COUNTRY DEMOCRACY PROFILES

As part of the Asia Democracy Program's (ADP) overall programmatic strategy to monitor democracy and human rights throughout the Asia Region, ASIA/DR/TR has produced, for the past several years, an annual country democracy profile. This year's profile is based on information gathered from three sources: Freedom House's Comparative Survey of Freedom for 1992-93, the U.S. Department of State's Country Report of Human Rights Practices for 1992, and Human Rights Watch World Report 1993.

The purpose of the Freedom House Comparative Survey of Freedom, since its inception in the 1970s, has been to provide an annual worldwide evaluation of political rights and civil liberties. The survey judges all countries by a single standard. The survey's understanding of freedom is broad and encompasses two sets of characteristics grouped under political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, i.e., the system by which the polity chooses the authoritative policy makers, while civil liberties are the freedoms to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state.

As required by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the U.S. Department of State publishes an annual report on human rights which includes reports on all countries that receive U.S. aid or are members of the United Nations. The report is based on foreign service post analyses and is referred to by Congress when foreign aid is considered. Reports describe the political system of each country and apply internationally recognized human rights standards.

Human Rights Watch monitors and promotes observance of internationally recognized human rights worldwide. It is composed of Africa Watch, Americas Watch, Asia Watch, Helsinki Watch, Middle East Watch and the Fund for Free Expression.

Individual country ratings found in this document come from Freedom House's Comparative Survey of Freedom, while the narrative comes from the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights for 1992. The Human Rights Watch World Report 1993 is used as a validating third source.

ASIA DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

1992-93 Freedom House Ratings

COUNTRY	Most Free 1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	Not Free 7
AFGHANISTAN													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties											*		
BANGLADESH													
Political Rights			X										
Civil Liberties					*								
CAMBODIA													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties											*		
INDIA													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties							*						
INDONESIA													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties									*				
LAOS													
Political Rights													X
Civil Liberties											*		
MALDIVES													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties									*				
MONGOLIA													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties			*										
NEPAL													
Political Rights			X										
Civil Liberties					*								
PAKISTAN													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties									*				
PHILIPPINES													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties					*								

COUNTRY	Most Free 1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	Not Free 7
FIJI													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties					*								
SRI LANKA													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties									*				
THAILAND													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties							*						
VIETNAM													
Political Rights													X
Civil Liberties													*

These Freedom House Ratings comes from the annual Comparative Survey of Freedom which Freedom House has been publishing since the early 1970s. The purpose of this Survey is to provide an annual evaluation of democracy and freedom everywhere in the world. Political rights and civil liberties are the two broad sets of characteristics used to determine a countries overall freedom status. These two groups of characteristics are measured on a 1 - to - 7 scale, with 1 as the most free. A country's combined rating determines its status: "Free" 1 - 2.5; "Partly Free" 3 - 5.5; "Not Free" 6 - 7.

KEY: X = Political Rights Rating
* = Civil Liberties Rating

ASIA DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

1992-93 Freedom House Ratings

COUNTRY 1992-93	Free 1 -2.5	Partly Free 3 - 5.5	Not Free 6 - 7		CHANGE FROM LAST RATING PERIOD 1991-92
AFGHANISTAN			X		NONE
BANGLADESH	X				NONE
CAMBODIA			X		NONE
INDIA		X			NONE
INDONESIA		X			NONE
LAOS			X		NONE
MALDIVES			X		NONE
MONGOLIA	X				NONE
NEPAL	X				NONE
PAKISTAN		X			NONE
PHILIPPINES		X			NONE
FIJI		X			NONE
SRI LANKA		X			NONE
THAILAND		X			NONE
VIETNAM			X		NONE

The Twelve Worst Rated Countries, according to Freedom House's list in their 1993 Freedom Review publication, include the following Asian countries:

BURMA (MYANMAR)
CHINA
NORTH KOREA
VIETNAM

AFGHANISTAN
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

The political situation changed dramatically in Afghanistan in 1992 when the 14 year rule of the Najibullah regime collapsed and Afghan resistance leaders assumed power. The resistance leaders agreed to a series of power-sharing arrangements to span 2 years with an interim government in three phases. Factional competition for power and the blood rivalries which frequently emerged between and within the resistance groups have delayed the enactment of the third phase of the interim government which calls for the drafting of a constitution, the establishment of permanent governmental institutions, and preparations for nationwide elections. In December the Grand Council met and selected Burhanuddin Rabbani to continue as interim President for two years. The legitimacy of this action has been questioned by a number of Afghan leaders. In the absence of an effective and widely accepted central authority, civil authority seems to be predominately in the hands of local councils, resistance leaders, or a combination of the two.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The absence of any effective central authority was the factor of greatest significance to human rights problems in 1992. The human rights situation changed from one marked by broad governmental oppression under the Najibullah regime to an environment in which individual rights were neither defined nor protected and were routinely violated due to the lack of a strong central Government with the ability to protect and enforce their guarantees for human rights. Observers have noted the absence of law and a clear legal system throughout much of the country, with the result that justice is administered locally without any uniform legal procedures. There have been reports of torture, extrajudicial executions, and disappearances under the interim government allegedly committed by the forces associated with the interim government.

Respect for Political Rights

Primary responsibility for governing the country is in the hands of local councils and resistance leaders. Central authority is weak and at present consists of the Grand Council. In December 1992, the Grand Council selected Rabbani as President as well as delegates for a national assembly. A number of Afghan leaders question the legitimacy of the Grand Council and the means by which its members had been selected. It is unclear what steps this new Government intends to take to ensure that the political

process is representative of the country's diverse ethnic and religious groups.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The interim government declared that Afghans have a right to free press and free speech but they do not have the ability to ensure these rights throughout the nation. At the same time the Rabbani Government has decreed that all publications, broadcasts, and academic activities must conform to Islamic norms as part of their effort to promote greater adherence to strict Islamic codes of conduct. President Rabbani has also announced a ban on all non-Islamic groups. Domestic travel remains severely constrained by wartime conditions such as mines and unexpected outbreaks of violence.

Women and Minority Rights

The participation of Afghan women in activities beyond the home and fields is limited by longstanding beliefs, customs, and religious practices. The social position of women in areas controlled by the Communist regime improved, and the role of women in some nontraditional occupations expanded. Whether the Rabbani Government will permit the continuation of such practices is unclear.

The population of Afghanistan is overwhelmingly Muslim and the interim government has sought to promote greater adherence to strict Islamic codes of conduct. President Rabbani has called for religious freedom for minority groups in Afghanistan, however, there were numerous reports of assaults against Sikhs and Hindus during the general disorder in Kabul.

BANGLADESH
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Bangladesh is a multiparty parliamentary democracy in which Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) enjoys a parliamentary majority. The party obtained its majority in the February 1991 elections. Bangladesh remains one of the world's poorest countries, with subsistence agriculture making up about half of the gross domestic product. Jute, garments, and fish are the nation's leading exports. The new Governments promises for economic reforms face resistance from those who fear losing de facto monopolies and guaranteed jobs or those who want protection from foreign competition.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The human rights situation deteriorated in 1992 compared with the previous year. The Government showed heightened sensitivity to criticism and dissent and increasingly used the Special Powers Act (SPA) to detain citizens without formal charges. The first seven months, some of the most violent in recent years, were marred by a series of attacks in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by tribal insurgents and reprisals by the security forces and Bengali settlers. On April 10, according to the official government report, 13 tribals were killed, 13 injured, and 550 huts burned down in a reprisal attack involving security forces. Human rights groups have claimed that the government report underestimates the number of tribal casualties. However, confirmation of the number of casualties is not possible. A unilateral cease-fire was proclaimed in August and was re-extended in March of 1993 while talks between the insurgents and the Government take place. Violent confrontations between rival student groups representing rival political parties plagued educational institutions and resulted in several deaths. There were no confirmed reports of disappearance resulting from official action, and the Government claims to hold no political prisoners, although human rights groups assert that some persons detained under the SPA are in fact political prisoners. Human rights groups claim that between 5 and 15 people died in police custody in 1992 due to abusive treatment. There were no reports of legal charges brought against officials for abusive treatment, but there are reports of suspensions pending official investigation.

Respect for Political Rights
Bangladesh citizens have the right to change their government democratically. Elections are held by secret ballot every five

years on the basis of universal suffrage for all citizens over 18 years of age. The 1992 Union Parishad (local council) elections were reported overall to be free and fair, with only minor irregularities. Although 20 people were reportedly killed in election-related violence, this is a marked decrease from the 1988 Union Parishad elections in which several hundred were killed.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Freedom of speech and the press are provided for in the Constitution subject only to "reasonable restrictions." Although these rights are respected to a far greater extent than they were under the previous regime, some journalists claim that self-censorship is a common practice. Additionally, the Government's control of a large advertising budget continues to fuel charges that it uses this leverage to pressure editors to moderate their criticisms. No newspapers were seized or shutdown in 1992, although four were banned on charges of pornography or for supporting the tribal insurgents' cause. A 1991 BNP election pledge to grant autonomy to the broadcast media has not been carried out, and television and radio remains under government control. The Constitution assures every citizen the right to form associations, subject to "reasonable restrictions" in the interest of public interest or morality. Permits from a local district magistrate are required for public meetings. Sit-ins, marches, and rallies are common forms of political expression in Bangladesh.

Women and Minority Rights

By custom and Islamic tradition, women occupy a subordinate place in society. The underlying attitudes and social barriers circumscribing the participation of women in activities beyond the home are strongly entrenched and show few signs of weakening. Except in the garment industry, women are virtually absent from the cash-earning work force. Women are allowed to own and enter into contracts concerning land and its uses, despite Islamic family and inheritance laws. There were hundreds of press reports of violence against women in 1992, although the vast majority of the cases are believed to go unreported and unpunished. Laws to protect women are laxly enforced.

Islam is recognized as the state religion of Bangladesh. Members of minority religious groups are disadvantaged in practice, though not in law. Their access to government jobs is limited, and some Hindus have reported difficulty in retaining their property. Tribal people in the CHT area charge that their traditional way of life and special status in the hill area is being undermined by Bengali settlers, which has resulted in a low-level conflict between tribal insurgents and the Bangladesh security forces since the 1970's. Both sides have accused the other of human rights violations. The Government is attempting to address tribal grievances by establishing and supporting elected district councils and by discouraging further settlement.

CAMBODIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

From April 1975 until January 1979 the Khmer Rouge, also called the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK), ruled Cambodia. In 1979 the Khmer Rouge were ejected from power by an invading Vietnamese army. The Vietnamese installed a regime made up largely of former PDK cadre and named it the People's Republic of Kampuchea. This was renamed the State of Cambodia (SOC) in 1989. In September 1989, the Vietnamese withdrew the bulk of their armed forces. In October 1991 the Paris Peace Accords established a national reconciliation body called the Supreme National Council (SNC) headed by Prince Sihanouk. Legally, the SNC embodies Cambodia's sovereignty during the transitional period until a new and representational government can be established. The United Nations has a broad mandate to achieve a neutral political environment for elections. Its instrument for this is the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The PDK has not gone along with UNTAC's plans for demobilization.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Where UNTAC was able to establish itself throughout much of the country, great strides were made in improving human rights. The SNC laid down rules for freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and ratified key international human rights instruments. For the first time in nearly 20 years, independent political parties were established in Phnom Penh and were able to function throughout most of Cambodia. Nearly 2,000 political prisoners and POW's held by the SOC were released, half of them under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Most of the 370,000 Cambodian refugees living mostly along the Thai-Cambodian border were voluntarily repatriated. Nevertheless, human rights abuses continued. Political parties setting up offices in Phnom Penh were subjected to harassment by the SOC security authorities. Political killings of independent political party members occurred in Cambodia and, in some cases, appear to be clearly attributable to SOC security forces. UNTAC uncovered a number of secret detention facilities, in which some political opponents of the SOC had been interrogated and beaten. Additionally, racial violence directed toward the Vietnamese minority in Cambodia was particularly egregious in 1992. The PDK continues to maintain a tight grip on the people in its areas through violence and intimidation. There was no freedom of speech, no due process, and no freedom of association in these areas.

Respect for Political Rights

Cambodians have not enjoyed the right to change their government in two decades and still did not in 1992. The Paris Accords represent an international effort to assist in restoring this right to the Cambodians. Throughout 1992, Cambodian sovereignty was vested in the SNC, a 12-man body which includes representatives of all four factions, with Prince Sihanouk as its president. The October 1991 Accords required the Cambodian parties to put down their arms, demobilize most of their forces, and commit themselves "to holding free and fair elections organized and conducted by the United Nations as the basis for forming a new and legitimate government." The elections are scheduled for May 1993. The election is to be held throughout Cambodia on a provincial basis with proportional representation drawn from lists put forward by parties. UNTAC is to register all eligible voters and political parties need to obtain at least 5,000 signatures of registered voters to be listed on the ballot. It remains to be seen if sufficient cooperation from all parties will be forthcoming to permit this plan to be implemented.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Prior to 1992, freedom of speech and press were severely restricted. However, the Paris Accords provide that "all persons in Cambodia and all Cambodian refugees and displaced persons shall enjoy the rights and freedoms embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments." On January 15, the SNC agreed that freedom of speech and press should be permitted throughout Cambodia. Self-censorship is reportedly common among individuals who fear the consequences, which in the recent past could have been dire. In January 1992, the KPNLF began publication of its Weekly Bulletin, which directly criticized the SOC regime and presented KPNLF points of view. This was followed by publications of other independent political parties.

Women and Minority Rights

The 1989 SOC Constitution and the 1989 SOC Law on the Family and Marriage contain provisions designed to protect women's rights, including a guarantee of equality before the law, provisions against forced marriage, and regulations on divorce. However, there are no effective means of implementing these regulations. Violence against women, including domestic violence and rape, is reportedly common. There does not appear to be systematic discrimination against women in such high-prestige jobs as medicine and the civil service.

Vietnamese and Chinese have long been the largest ethnic minorities in Cambodia. Popular sentiment against Vietnamese is strong throughout Cambodia, and there is a considerable threat of more extensive violence against Vietnamese. During the years of PDK rule all religions were suppressed and virtually destroyed in Cambodia. In the past 2 years a Buddhist renaissance has occurred, and the 1989 SOC Constitution identified Buddhism as the state religion. There is currently a high degree of religious tolerance in non-PDK controlled Cambodia.

FIJI
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

Fiji has been administered by an interim government since the 1987 bloodless coups and the installation of a military regime at that time. In May 1992, general elections were held and Major Sitiveni Rabuka was elected to the Parliament, later to be selected Prime Minister by the President. The President is appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), a traditional Fijian leadership body. The President, in addition to selecting the Prime Minister from the lower house based on his ability to command a majority of support from that body, also selects members of the Senate on the advice of the GCC and the provincial councils. Most of the executive authority rests with the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The principal human rights problems in 1992 included constitutionally imposed and ethnically based political discrimination, continuing restrictions on freedom of the press, continuing delays in bringing criminal and civil cases to trial, and violence and discrimination against women. There were no reports of politically motivated killings or disappearances in 1992. Reports persist of police abuse of detainees, despite a new internal affairs division of the police which has been active in taking disciplinary action against these officers. The judicial system remains similar to the British model which includes the right to a public trial, right to counsel, and the right of appeal. The right of appeal is hampered by the enormous backlog of cases in the Court of Appeals.

Respect for Political Rights

The right of citizens to change their government is abridged by the provisions of the 1990 Constitution ensuring political dominance by ethnic Fijians, primarily by establishing race-based representation in Parliament. The constitution requires the Prime Minister to be an ethnic Fijian and the selection procedures virtually ensure that the President will also be an ethnic Fijian. Elections are held by secret ballot, with voting only by communal constituencies. The Constitution calls for elections every five years, but the Government may call an election at any time. The 1992 general elections were contested by a dozen political parties and were both free and fair.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution also incorporates a bill of rights, providing for freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and other universally

accepted rights and freedoms. These rights may not be altered by Parliament except with the approval of two-thirds of the lower house. Freedom of speech has largely been restored; citizens can and do speak out against the Government. Privately owned broadcast and print media operate without prior censorship but with considerable self-censorship. Newspapers usually refrain from printing editorials severely critical of the Government and do little investigative reporting. Statements about the political situation of opposition figures and foreign governments are not reported. The Press Correction Act (PCA) gives the Minister of Information sole discretionary power to order a newspaper to publish a "correcting statement" if, in his opinion, a false or distorted article has been published. Assembly for political purposes is allowed but subject to restriction in the interest of public order. The Government did not interfere with political activities during the May general elections. Permits were routinely issued for rallies organized by political parties, religious groups, and groups opposed to the Government.

Women and Minority Rights

Although the Constitution provides specific affirmative action provisions to improve the conditions of those disadvantaged as a result of race, sex, place of origin, political opinion, color, religion, or creed, the Government practices sexual discrimination in the recognition of spousal and offspring rights. Women have functioned primarily in traditional roles, although some women rise to prominence in public service, politics, and business. Women have full rights of property ownership and inheritance, and a number have become successful entrepreneurs. Women are generally paid less than men, a discrepancy that is especially notable in the garment industry. Domestic violence is also a problem in Fiji and is the second major focus of the small but active women's movement. Authorities are generally reluctant to intervene and few cases result in prosecution.

The stated purpose of the 1987 military coups was to ensure the political supremacy of the indigenous Fijian people and to protect their traditional way of life and communal control of land. A number of measures have been taken that favor indigenous Fijians over other ethnic groups. Current promotion and hiring policies in the public sector favor ethnic Fijians. Eighty-four percent of the land in Fiji is held communally by indigenous Fijians, while most cash crop farmers are Indo-Fijians who must lease their land form the Fijian villages. Indo-Fijians are subject to occasional harassment and crime based on race, which is compounded by inadequate police protection. Chinese farmers have also reported rare occurrences of vandalism. Freedom of religion is provided for in the Constitution and honored in practice. The Constitution emphasizes the importance of Christianity, but provides for protection for all religions.

INDIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

India is a secular republic with a multiparty political structure based on Indian political traditions and aspects of the British parliamentary system. National elections held in 1991 in all states except Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab resulted in a Congress (I) party government headed by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. By-elections and party shifts gave the Congress (I) and its allies a parliamentary majority in September 1992. A Parliament sits for five years unless dissolved earlier for new elections, except under constitutionally defined emergency situations. President's Rule (direct rule from New Delhi) may be declared on the advice of the Prime Minister in the event of a collapse of a state's constitutional machinery. Jammu, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachel Pradesh, and Rajasthan are all currently under President's Rule.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Although India is a functioning democracy with strong and legally sanctioned safeguards for individuals and an independent judiciary, there continue to be significant abuses of human rights, many of which are the product of violent ethnic, religious, caste, communal, and secessionist activities and the Government's reactions to them. As in past years, the main problems continue to include: police, paramilitary, and army excesses against civilians, particularly in Punjab, Assam, and Kashmir in response to attacks by militants; political killing, kidnaping, and extortion by militants in Punjab and Kashmir; extrajudicial actions (beating, extortion, torture, rape, and fake "encounter" killings) by the police against detainees throughout India; incommunicado detention for prolonged periods without charge under national security legislation; general failure to prosecute police and security forces implicated in abuse of detainees; widespread intercaste, religious, and communal violence; inadequate implementation of laws protecting women's rights; and infrequent prosecution of "dowry deaths."

Respect for Political Rights

India has a democratic, parliamentary system of government with representatives elected under full adult suffrage for those over 18 years of age. Multiparty elections are held regularly at local, state, and national levels, except in states under President's Rule. Indigenous peoples participate actively in national and local politics.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, and they are, with some limitations, exercised in practice. A vigorous press reflects a wide variety of public, social, and economic beliefs, and regularly publishes investigative reports and allegations of government wrongdoing. The Press Council of India is an independent board of journalists designed to be a self-regulating mechanism for the press. It investigates complaints of irresponsible journalism and sets an code of conduct for publishers. Many journalists complain that the Council's actions promote self-censorship. National television and radio, which are government monopolies, are frequently accused of manipulating the news to the benefit of the Government. However, the wide distribution of satellite television in middle class neighborhoods is gradually eroding the Government's monopoly on electronic media. Indians enjoy complete academic freedom, and students and faculty espouse a wide range of view. The Constitution protects the right of peaceful assembly and the right to form associations, and these rights are generally respected in practice. At times of civil tension, local governments may ban public assemblies and impose a curfew.

Women and Minority Rights

Despite several provisions in the Constitution promising equality before the law and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, the family, marriage, and inheritance laws of several of India's religious communities manifest legally sanctioned gender discrimination. Female bondage, forced prostitution, and child marriage remain common in parts of Indian society. The unusually low ratio of females to males in parts of India is attributed to the marked disparity between male versus female infants mortality rates, the disproportionate number of abortions of female fetuses where sex-determination testing is available, and the estimated 10,000 cases of female infanticide which occur each year throughout India. According to an Indian government study violence against women, including molestation, rape, kidnaping and wife murder, has increased over the past decade. The reason for this rise is unknown. The overwhelming majority of female workers are employed in agriculture where work is not adequately regulated by labor laws and where contractors customarily pay women lower wages than those fixed by the states.

The traditional caste system as well as differences of race, religion, and language severely divide Indian society despite laws designed to prevent discrimination. Sporadic violence occurred throughout the year based on these differences, as well as longstanding Hindu-Muslim tensions. Scheduled castes and tribes remain particularly vulnerable to police violence. Despite safeguards, the rights of tribal people are often ignored which has given rise to numerous tribal movements demanding protection of land and property rights. As a secular state India provides for the freedom of worship for all faiths, however, tensions over religious differences continue to be a serious problem throughout India.

INDONESIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

Under the Constitution, the highest authority of the State is the 1,000-member people's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which meets every 5 years to elect the President and Vice President and set the broad outlines of state policy. In theory, the President is subordinate to the Assembly, in fact, President Soeharto and the armed forces (ABRI) wield predominant political power. The Parliament is constitutionally responsible for making laws but has not used its power to initiate legislation in the 27 years of Soeharto's Government. The Government requires allegiance to five broad, guiding principles of national life known as "Pancasila": belief in one supreme God, a just and civilized humanity, Indonesian national unity, democracy, and social justice. By law all political, social, and religious organizations must embrace Pancasila.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The most important human rights developments during the year concerned government efforts to cope with the aftermath of army troops' killing of unarmed demonstrators on November 12, 1991, in East Timor. At the recommendation of a military investigating body formed on President Soeharto's orders, unprecedented disciplinary action was taken against 6 senior officers and 10 officers and enlisted men involved in the incident. In addition to extrajudicial killings and unfair trials, other serious human rights problems continued. They include torture and other mistreatment of prisoners and detainees, arbitrary arrest and detention, arbitrary interference with privacy, significant restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and the ability of citizens to change their government. In other human rights areas, foreign travel requirements were eased. The Government continued its generous policy toward Indochinese refugees and its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the repatriation of Irianese who had fled to Papua New Guinea because of separatist violence.

Respect for Political Rights

Whatever their theoretical rights under the Constitution, citizens do not in fact have the ability to change their Government through democratic means. President Soeharto and a small group of active-duty and retired military officers and civilian officials exercise governmental authority. Members of the military are allotted 20 percent of the seats in national, provincial, and district parliaments, and occupy numerous key positions in the administration. The other 80 percent of

national and local parliamentary seats are filled through elections held every 5 years. All adult citizens are eligible to vote, except active-duty members of the armed forces, convicted criminals serving prison sentences, and some 36,000 former Communist Party members. Voters may choose by secret ballot between the three government-approved political organizations, which field candidate lists in each electoral district. Although numerous irregularities were reported during the June 9th polling, most observers believed they were not widespread or systematic.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Significant restrictions on freedom of speech and press exist. Public statements or publications which criticize the Government or are perceived as critical of Pancasila, top leaders, their families, or particular religious and ethnic groups are often harshly punished. The Government operates the nationwide television network. Private television companies broadcasting in Jakarta and Surabaya expanded to other areas in 1992. Some 550 private radio broadcasting companies exist in Indonesia in addition to the Government's national radio network. Private television and radio stations, which have considerable programming latitude, are nonetheless subject to official scrutiny and required to use government-provided news programs. The print media is largely private owned. Officials state that the press is "free" but also "responsible." The Government exercises strong control over the press through its control of publishing permits. Editors generally exercise considerable self-censorship in disseminating views of government critics, however, the domestic print media continued to press the limit of official tolerance in coverage of certain social and political problems in 1992.

Women and Minority Rights

Under the law women are equal to and have the same rights, obligations, and opportunities as men. Some Indonesian women occupy important mid-level positions in most occupational fields. Only a small fraction occupy top posts. Despite legal guarantees of equal treatment, women seldom receive equal pay for equal work and disproportionately experience illiteracy, poor health, and nutrition. Traditional attitudes which limit women's aspirations, activities, and status undercut state policy in some areas. There were increased reports in 1992 of violence against women.

Indonesians exhibit considerable tolerance for ethnic, racial, and major religious differences, with the important exception of official discrimination against ethnic Chinese. Ethnic Chinese have been denied the right to run businesses, operate all-Chinese schools, or form exclusively Chinese groups or associations. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and belief in one supreme God. Atheism is forbidden, but all monotheistic religions are permitted and their rights respected despite the fact that the population of Indonesia is overwhelmingly Muslim.

LAOS
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) is a Communist, one-party state. The ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) is the only party and the primary source of political authority in the country. In 1992 the Government launched a campaign to disseminate the new Constitution, which had been adopted by the National Assembly in 1991, to the Lao public. The Constitution confers substantial powers on the National Assembly and provides for the free election of National Assembly members. Elections for a new National Assembly took place in December by secret ballot and includes a number of legislators who are not members of the LPRP, though all candidates had to be approved by the party.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The people of Laos are denied many basic freedoms. Even under the new Constitution, freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly, the right of privacy, and the right of citizens to change their government are still absent. The party's leadership imposes broad controls which the Ministry of Interior (MOI) enforces through its system of informants and social monitors. A small-scale insurgency composed primarily of Hmong tribesmen continued in 1992 at a somewhat greater level than the previous year. Both sides reportedly used brutal tactics. The Lao Penal Code prohibits torture or mistreatment of prisoners, and the police do not appear to use torture or abuse during arrest and detention. However, jail conditions are harsh and prisoners are routinely denied family visitation and proper medical care. Those accused of hostility to the regime are subject to arrest and confinement for long periods. People may be arrested on unsupported accusations and without being informed of the charges or the accusers' identities. There is some provision for appeal, although there is reportedly no appeal in important political cases. The Government has relaxed some elements of state control, including police monitoring of personal and business activities and enforcement of the nighttime curfew. However, search and seizure continues to be authorized by the security bureaus themselves rather than judicial authority.

Respect for Political Rights

Citizens do not have the ability to change their government despite constitutional provisions for secret ballots and universal suffrage in the public election of National Assembly members. Under the new Constitution, citizens elect members of the Assembly, which in turn elects the President. Because the

LPRP continues to dominate government and politics, there is no structured way in which citizens could remove the LPRP from power.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Despite the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of assembly, the exercise of these freedoms is broadly controlled by the Government. The Government reacts harshly to expressions of political dissent. Newspapers and the state radio and television are instruments of the Government, reflecting its views. The Government has traditionally sought to control the flow of information from abroad, and there are limitations on the importation of foreign publications, though some Thai and Western newspapers and magazines are sold. Video rental stores operate largely without restrictions in most Laos cities, and at least one privately owned business publication in now published in Laos. Academic freedom remains tightly controlled by the Government and Lao academicians are often denied permission to travel abroad. The Government controls and organizes most large public gatherings except for religious, athletic, and communal events. The new Penal Code expressly prohibits demonstrations or protest marches aimed at causing turmoil and social instability. All associations are party controlled and disseminate official policy. Contact between Lao and foreigners is increasing as restrictions are no longer enforced.

Women and Minority Rights

Traditionally, women in Lao society have been subservient to men and have often been discouraged from obtaining and education. The Government claims a higher percentage of women are in school now than there were before 1975 and that women are being encouraged to assume a greater role in economic and political activity. Women currently occupy responsible positions in government and private business. There is no pattern of widespread domestic or culturally approved violence against women.

Approximately one-half of the population is ethnic Lao, also called "Lowland Lao," and the other half a mosaic of upland hilltribes. The Government is attempting to integrate these groups through voluntary programs and to overcome traditional antagonisms between lowland Lao and minority groups. The new Constitution specifically provides for equal rights for all, and there is no legal discrimination. However, the minority tribes have virtually no voice in government decisions affecting their lands and the allocation of natural resources. The party and the Government continue to be dominated by lowland Lao males. The Government has recognized the right to freedom of religion as well as the contributions religion can make to the development of the nation, and the Constitution contains provisions for religious freedom. However, the practice of religion remains restricted, especially for non-Buddhists.

MALDIVES
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background
The Republic of Maldives has a parliamentary form of government with a strong executive. Maldives traditionally has been governed by a limited circle of persons made up of the President and a number of powerful Cabinet ministers. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom began his third five year term in 1988 after being nominated by the Majlis and approved by ninety-five percent of those voting in a referendum. Under the Constitution, Islamic law rather than the Majlis has legal preeminence, and the President as head of the Government and State, is responsible for the protection of Islam in the Maldives.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Government continues to restrict human rights closely in several areas, including speech and press, religion, the right of citizens to change their government, and women's rights. Other problems include instances of arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention and lack of an independent judiciary. There were no reports of politically motivated killings or disappearances in 1992. The Constitution states that "no person shall be apprehended except on a verdict specified by Shari'a or (civil) law," and it is customary not to disclose to the public the details of the charges against a person until it has been established that the charges are likely to be upheld. Persons under investigation are generally free pending trial, however, depending upon the charges, a suspect may be imprisoned or placed under house arrest without trial for fifteen days while the case is being investigated. At times prisoners are held incommunicado as a way to extract confessions. Trials are usually open to the public and conducted by judges trained in Islamic law. The trails of persons charged with political crimes are not open to the public, however, and are not covered by the press. There are no reliable estimates of the number of political prisoners.

Respect for Political Rights
Maldivians have only limited and indirect influence on the selection and organization of their government. Members of the Citizens' Majlis are chosen for 5-year terms by secret ballots. All Maldivians over twenty-one years of age may vote. A single nominee for president, who constitutionally must be male and a Sunni Muslim, is chosen by secret ballot in the Majlis from as many candidates as are proposed by members. His nomination is confirmed or rejected by a nationwide referendum, also by secret ballot. Political parties are officially discouraged. In place of political parties, factions in the Majlis tend to form around

individuals or points of view. Individuals or groups are free to approach members of the Majlis with grievances or opinions on proposed legislation.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression "so long as the specific provisions of Shari'a and the law are not contravened." In practice, freedom of speech, press, and broadcast are sharply restricted. The dissident press has been effectively eliminated over the last three years as a result of government revocation of press registrations; as well as the use of detention, harassment, and threats against journalists; and a policy which holds printers responsible for the material they publish. Journalists are afraid to publish articles critical of the Government and printers are afraid to print anything even slightly controversial. The Government owns and operates the only television and radio stations. The Constitution guarantees Maldivians the right to assemble as long as they do not violate the law or the Islamic code of behavior.

Women and Minority Rights

Women traditionally have played a subordinate role in Maldivian society, although they now participate in public life in growing numbers and gradually at higher levels. Women are not eligible to become president but may hold all other government posts. For reasons of tradition and culture, however, few women seek or are selected for public office. Women who work for wages generally receive pay equal to that of men in the same positions. There is no firm data on the extent of violence against women, although Maldivian women's rights advocates agree that violence against women is not widespread. The Government has shown interest in promoting the welfare of women in both the public and private sectors, through seminars and counseling sessions to promote an awareness of women's rights and to expand opportunities for them in nontraditional occupations.

There is no identifiable indigenous ethnic group in Maldives. The Maldivian population is a complex amalgam of cultural and racial influences from South Asia, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. There are no reports of official discrimination against any specific ethnic or linguistic groups. The Constitution, however, designates Islam as the official religion and requires all citizens to be Muslims. There are no places of worship for adherents of any other religion, and the practice of any religion other than Islam is prohibited by law.

MONGOLIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 2
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Mongolia is a sovereign republic with a president, prime minister, and a popularly elected legislature. In January of 1992, the legislature approved a new Constitution which replaced the former bicameral legislature with the unicameral State Great Hural (SGH). The new Constitution also replaced the legislative election of the President by election through popular vote. The first direct Presidential election is scheduled for June of 1993. Mongolia is attempting to make the difficult transition to a market economy after seven decades of Communism and a centralized economy, and is attempting to increase its foreign trade with other countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The new Constitution establishes the basis for continued significant progress in most human rights categories. The new Constitution states that "no person shall be subject to torture; inhuman, cruel, or degrading treatment" and that "no person shall be searched, arrested, detained, or deprived of liberty except by law." Respect for these rights will depend on the SGH's enactment of a range of implementing laws. The current Legal Code and structure of the judiciary is under review in order to implement a legal system which will conform to international standards and the provisions provided for in the new Constitution. There have been no reports of political killings or politically motivated disappearances in recent years.
The Government still retains the authority to exercise control over individual activity, and the Department of State Security (DSS) reserves the right to use special surveillance methods in order "to carry out its duties."

Respect for Political Rights
The 1992 Constitution provides citizens the right to change their government through periodic, free elections with universal suffrage. In June of 1992, Mongolians elected their first SGH body in elections that were generally judged to be free and open, as minor procedural flaws did not significantly affect the outcome of the election.

Respect for Civil Liberties
The new Constitution clearly establishes freedom of speech, press, and assembly. These rights are generally respected in practice although some limits remain. Shortages of newsprint keep most newspapers from appearing regularly. Opposition

parties and other publishers continued to allege that limitations on the quantities of newsprint, which is controlled by the Government, effectively prevents them from publishing as frequently as the majority party's newspaper. Government-owned radio and television remain the only national broadcast systems. The new Constitution also provides for freedom of peaceful assembly and the right to form a political party or other public organization and to unite voluntarily in associations according to social interests or convictions. There were no reports of authorities interfering with either of these rights in 1992.

Women and Minority Rights

The new Constitution provides that "...no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, social origin, or status..and that ..men and women shall be equal in political,economic, social, cultural fields, and family affairs." There are no legal impediments to the participation of women in government and politics. Several women were elected to the SGH in the June 1992 elections. There appears to be little discrimination in education on the basis of sex, race, or religion. Women reportedly get equal pay for performing the same job as men. Little is known about the extent of violence against women.

There is no state religion and the new Constitution specifically provides for separation of church and state. There have been no reports of government interference with religious practices.

NEPAL
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Nepal is a constitutional monarch with a democratic, parliamentary form of government. Nepal was formerly an absolute monarchy, but the King in 1990 legalized political parties and invited formation of an interim government that promulgated a new Constitution. Under that Constitution the King retains important residual powers, but he has effectively disassociated himself from the exercise of power. The Parliament consists of the House of Representatives and the National Council. The majority party in the House has the right to select the Prime Minister, and in the May 1991 elections the Nepali Congress Party won a majority and chose G.P. Koirala to be Prime Minister.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The 1990 Constitution guarantees a broad range of fundamental human rights, and the Parliament has passed most of the legislation necessary to bring the law into conformity with the Constitution. The human rights situation has improved considerably since 1990, but substantial problems still remain. The principal problems concern the abuse of police powers, including arbitrary detention and beatings by a poorly trained police force, a Government that is unwilling to investigate or enforce accountability for recent and past abuses, and lingering restrictions on freedom of expression and discrimination against women and minority groups. There were a number of incidents involving political violence and killing prior to the February parliamentary by-elections and, on a wider scale, before the May local elections. On April 6, at least seven people were killed, almost one hundred injured, and over five hundred arrested after police fired on protesters demonstrating against the Government's economic policies. The Government claims that force was necessary to prevent further damage to public property, however, human rights organizations condemned the use of bullets. The Government failed to conduct an investigation of the incident or take disciplinary action against the officers involved. Over five hundred people were detained following the January 15 murder of a policeman. Most were released within two days, however, ten persons were held for nearly two months without trial. There were reliable reports that all ten were tortured. The local investigator commented that torture is necessary as a means to extract information. There are no credible reports of the Government holding any political prisoners.

Respect for Political Rights
Nepal is a Constitutional monarchy with sovereignty vested in the

people. The people, through their elected representatives, have the right to change all but the most basic aspects of the body politic. Parliamentary elections, based on universal suffrage for citizens over the age of 18 are to be held every five years by secret ballot. The King continues to exercise certain powers related to the succession of the throne, and emergency powers in the event of war, external aggression, armed revolt, or extreme economic depression. Local elections were held on May 28 and 31, 1992, for municipal and village development councils. These elections were generally considered free and fair, although scattered acts of violence and polling irregularities were reported.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution specifies that all citizens shall have freedom of thought and expression; it also provides that no news item, article, or any other reading material shall be censored. These rights are circumscribed, however, as the Constitution permits restriction of speech or press if the action would: threaten the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom; disturb the harmonious relations among people of different castes or communities; promote sedition, defamation, contempt of court, or instigation to commit crime; or contradict decent public behavior or morality. The Press and Publications Act provides for the licensing of publications, the granting of credentials to journalists, and penalties for the violation of the above stated restrictions of speech and press. Notwithstanding the law, news publications remained vigorous in their criticism of the Government and even, in a few cases, the Monarchy, without penalty. The sole radio and television stations in Nepal are government owned and controlled. Freedom of assembly is guaranteed as long as it does not undermine the "sovereignty and integrity" of Nepal or disturb "law and order."

Women and Minority Rights

Women in Nepal face gender discrimination, particularly in rural areas, where the weight of tradition, lack of education, and ignorance of the law remain severe impediments to the exercise of basic rights. Violence against women, including beatings, dowry deaths, and trafficking, is common, though its extent is difficult to measure owning to the value attached to family privacy and the Government's unwillingness to become involved.

Nepal is still largely a traditional society wedded to the caste system, and caste discrimination is common, especially in the rural areas of western Nepal. The spread of education and higher levels of prosperity, are slowly reducing caste distinctions and increasing opportunities for lower socioeconomic groups. Nepal is described in its Constitution as a Hindu Kingdom, but there is a large minority of Buddhists, a smaller number of Muslims, and a small but growing number of Christians. Non-Hindus are allowed to practice their religion and maintain places of worship but proselytizing is prohibited.

PAKISTAN
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

In the fourth year since Pakistan's return to democratic rule Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan continued to work together as the civilian leaders of Pakistan's federal parliamentary democracy. The Chief of Army Staff, General Asif Nawaz, also wields considerable influence on many major policy decisions and is the third member of the unofficial "troika" which governs the nation. The Government is pursuing an ambitious program of economic reform, emphasizing the privatization of government-owned financial institutions, industrial units, and utilities and the continued diminution of the public sector's role in the economy. The liberalization of foreign investment and exchange controls are also important priorities.

HUMAN RIGHTS

There was little change in the human rights situation in 1992, and serious problems remained in several areas. The press and political organizations continued to exercise considerable, but not unfettered, freedom of expression. The overt repression of political opponents, a particular problem in Sindh, lessened but nonetheless remained an issue of concern. Selective prosecution of opposition political leaders continued. The arbitrary detention, arrest, torture, and other abuse of prisoners and detainees also continued to be a serious problem. There were no significant efforts to reform either the police or judicial systems, and responsible authorities did little to prosecute and punish those responsible for abuses. As in past years, there continued to be persuasive evidence of misuse of police powers, and the judicial process remains heavily backlogged and impeded by bureaucratic infighting and inactivity on a considerable scale.

Respect for Political Rights

The citizens of Pakistan have the right and the ability to change their government peacefully by secret ballot in elections open to all citizens 21 years and older. Women, however, are often dissuaded from voting in elections by family, religious, and social customs in the rural and more conservative parts of Pakistan. Additionally, members of minority groups are not permitted to vote in Muslim constituencies, but instead must seek office and cast their votes in countrywide, at-large constituencies reserved for them in the national and provincial assemblies. They complain that they are unable to vote for and

influence the parties that will be able to form the Government as the President and Prime Minister must be Muslim.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Freedom of speech and the press is guaranteed in the Constitution of Pakistan and is generally respected, however, some laws serve to restrict freedom of speech. Laws against bringing Islam or the armed forces into discredit or ridicule remain in force. Death is the penalty for those who damage the Constitution by any act, which includes publishing statements against the spirit of the Constitution. Reporters and editors exercise self-censorship in these areas. A government-owned press trust still controls two newspapers, although other holdings in the trust have been privatized. The Government owns and operates radio and television stations and strictly controls the news they carry, although a semi-private television station was established in 1990 with considerable independence from government oversight. However, censorship, in the form of blackouts, have been used to block out coverage of opposition activities. In June 1992 a policy of openness in the electronic media was announced, from which came increasing television coverage of the opposition's activities, although it was still quite limited in comparison to coverage of governmental activities. The Government continues to use newspapers' dependence on advertising revenues as a way of influencing editorial policy.

Women and Minority Rights

The 1991 passage of the Shari'a bill, a law aimed at bringing all aspects of government and society in Pakistan into conformity with its views on the tenets of Islam, has created an atmosphere in which discriminatory treatment against women and non-Muslims is more readily accepted if not condoned. It remains accepted practice to assign women subordinate roles in the civil, political, and managerial hierarchies. Many Pakistanis interpret the Koran's injunctions on modesty to mean that women should remain either at home or veiled. A small number but growing number of urban women study and teach in universities. There is no reliable information on the extent of violence against women in Pakistan, although human rights activists and women's organizations agree that there is a problem. Credible reports persisted of sexual abuse of women in police custody, although this abuse often goes unreported.

There were reports of forced conversion of female members of minority groups to Islam in 1992. Employment and education discrimination among religious minority groups keeps most from rising above midlevel ranks. Heightened sectarian clashes between Sunni and Shi'a communities resulted in numerous murders. Non-Muslim minorities continued to be the subject of persecution by religious zealots.

PHILIPPINES
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
The Philippines has a republican form of government with a democratically elected president, a bicameral legislature and independent judiciary as provided for in the 1987 Constitution. In open and generally fair elections on May 11, 1992, Filipinos voted into office some 1,600 local, provincial, and national officials. Fidel V. Ramos was elected President from a field of seven candidates and was inaugurated on June 30, 1992, in the first constitutional transfer of power in almost 30 years. Economic growth has been disappointing, and significant income disparities remain due primarily to the traditional system of land ownership by the elites who continue to block the Government's reform efforts.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Although, the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the course of counterinsurgency efforts, as well as The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in insurgent actions, continued to commit human rights abuses, the total number of such incidents continued to decline due to the efforts of the Government and human rights groups to educate the security forces about basic human rights, and the general decrease in guerrilla activity during the year. Principal human rights abuses by government forces against individuals included extrajudicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary arrest, torture, and harassment of suspected insurgents and their supporters. Wide-media coverage of crimes attributed to law enforcement officials reinforced public demands for action leading President Ramos to appoint Vice President Estrada to head a new Presidential Anti-Crime Commission and directed Interior Secretary Rafael Alunan to clean up procedures and identify corrupt and criminal elements in the ranks of the PNP. Additionally, President Ramos proposed the repeal of the Anti-Subversion Act which was approved and went into effect on September 22, 1992. This resulted in the legalization of the Communist Party and led to a joint call for formal negotiations to end the 23-year old conflict.

Respect for Political Rights
Philippine citizens have the right to change their government democratically and they exercised this right in May, 1992 when more than 22 million people turned out to elect a new President as well as local, provincial, and national government officials. Filipinos are free to organize political parties as long as they

do not seek to overthrow the Government by force and democratic opposition to the Government is widely tolerated.

Respect for Civil Liberties

There are virtually no legal restrictions on freedom of expression or speech and freedom of the press is generally respected. While the Philippine courts have been consistent in their protection of the media, the press continues to face considerable hazards including threats, assaults, and murder, in carrying out their responsibilities. Academic freedom is respected in theory and in practice. Permits from local authorities are required for outdoor demonstrations in public places and are routinely issued.

Women and Minority Rights

There are no restrictions in law or practice on participation by women and minorities in politics, and women enjoy the same legal rights as men. Although criminal law prohibits violence against women, both women and girls in lower economic strata are vulnerable to exploitation. Enforcement of laws against the abuse of women remains inadequate. Many of the women who enjoy professional prominence in the Philippines come from an elite that has access to education and other opportunities. The vast majority of Philippine women do not have access to even basic elementary school education. They tend to be uninformed about their rights and bound by cultural beliefs and attitudes that promote passive acceptance of their circumstances.

Freedom of religion is fully respected under the law, although some discrimination against Muslims and other minority groups persists in practice. This is primarily due to the Philippine tradition of providing access to jobs and other resources first to those of one's own family or group. This has resulted in limited access to education and advancement in some occupations for minority groups. Additionally, minorities are not always accorded equal legal protection and land rights.

SRI LANKA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
Sri Lanka's constitutional, multiparty form of government features a strong executive presidency and a unicameral legislature elected by universal adult suffrage. President Ranasinghe Premadasa was elected to a 6-year term in 1988, and his United National Party (UNP) won a majority in Parliament in 1989. Sri Lanka has a vigorous political opposition. A total of 26 parties are recognized by the Commissioner of Elections, and members of 12 of these hold seats in Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The violent ethnic conflict which has waged for nearly 10 years between the Government and the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an organization fighting for a separate state for the Tamil minority, continued in 1992. Although the level of violence continued to decline somewhat from what it had been 2 years ago, there were still serious human rights abuses. There were an estimated 650 extrajudicial and combat-related civilian deaths, as well as some two hundred disappearances. Other problems included torture and abuse of detainees; arbitrary arrest and detention; and restrictions on freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the Emergency Regulations (ER), both of which give security forces wide powers remained in effect and were the source of many abuses. The Government does appear to be making efforts to end human rights abuses. These efforts included the continued implementation of Amnesty International and United Nations Human Rights Commission recommendations accepted by the Government in 1991; followup visits by those organizations in 1992; and permitting International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to detainees as well as ICRC human rights training for security forces.

Respect for Political Rights
Citizens have the constitutional right to change their government through periodic multiparty elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

Respect for Civil Rights
The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression but permits these rights to be restricted by law in the interests of national security. Both the ER and the 1978 Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act place clear restrictions on freedom of speech. and these laws were evoked several times in 1992 to bring charges against journalists for what they published. The

Government controls the country's largest newspaper chain, although a variety of independent newspapers and journals provide a range of viewpoints on foreign affairs and domestic issues, including human rights. Many newspapers openly criticize the ruling party and Government. The Government exerts pressure on the press by controlling permits for the import of newsprint and through placement of paid government announcements and advertising. The Government owns the radio and two of the three television networks. All local news must be approved by the Government prior to being broadcast on these networks. For its part, the LTTE tolerates no dissent. The print and broadcast media in areas under its control are tightly regulated. The LTTE has been known to execute those who criticize it or disagree with its policies. The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, but these rights are restricted under provisions of the ER and the PTA.

Women and Minority Rights

Sri Lankan women have equal rights under national civil and criminal law. However, questions related to family law are subject at the local level to the customary law of each particular ethnic or religious group. The Constitution guarantees equality in public sector employment, but women have no legal protection against discrimination in the private sector. Women's rights activists say that sexual assault and other forms of violence against women are common in Sri Lanka but that for cultural and social reasons women are unlikely to report such abuse. There are no de jure impediments of women's participation in politics or government, but the social mores of some communities have the effect of inhibiting women's participation in activities outside the home. Although they are underrepresented, women serve at senior levels in both sectors.

Tamils have long believed, with some justification, that they continue to suffer systematic discrimination in competition for university entrance, employment opportunities, and other matters under government control. However, there has been no evidence of systematic or official discrimination in university enrollment or government employment for the past 3 years, and the Government has made efforts to eliminate discrimination based on language. Still there were over 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in refugee camps in southern India at the beginning of 1992, although some 30,000 were returned to Sri Lanka throughout the course of the year. The indigenous people of Sri Lanka, known as Veddas, have resisted government attempts to integrate them into Sri Lankan society, preferring to maintain their traditional way of life. The Constitution establishes Buddhism as the official religion, which the Government must "protect and foster." It also provides for the rights of other faiths, including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, to practice their religions freely.

*** In early May 1993 both President Ranasinghe Premadasa and the leader of the opposition were assassinated in separate incidents.***

THAILAND
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with an elected, democratic government. The country's history has been marked by frequent military coups and powerful military-bureaucratic influence over political life. The King exerts strong informal influence. The year began with a caretaker Government which had been in power since the military coup of February 1991. Procedurally correct elections were held in March under a new Constitution. In May prodemocracy Thais took to the streets to protest continued military influence in the political process and the appointment of General Suchinda Khaprayun as Prime Minister. Military suppression of the demonstrations led to the death of at least 52 protesters and the injury and disappearance of hundreds more. After the intervention of the King and increasing international pressure, Suchinda stepped down on May 24 and another caretaker Government was formed. New elections, held on September 13, were hailed as the freest and fairest in Thailand's history, and gave power to an opposition coalition under civilian Prime Minister Chuan Likphai.

HUMAN RIGHTS

With the September elections and the restoration of democratic rule, Thai citizens enjoy a wide range of civil liberties under one of the most open and progressive governments in Thai history. Besides the shooting of demonstrators in May by government troops, other areas of human rights abuse in 1992 included instances of extrajudicial killing of criminal suspects and abuse of prisoners by police and government failure to prosecute offenders; legal and societal discrimination against women; violence against women and children; and some restrictions on freedom of speech and press.

Respect for Political Rights
The military, either through undue influence or outright coups, has often denied the Thai people the right to change their Government. But with the September victory of the civilian political parties representative democracy appears more secure than heretofore.

Respect for Civil Liberties
While Thai citizens generally enjoy a substantial measure of freedom of speech, such legal restrictions as the prohibition on defaming, insulting, or threatening the royal family; defaming the character of other persons; advocating a Communist system of government; and speaking in a manner likely to incite

disturbances, threaten national security, or insult religion, effectively limit this freedom. The privately owned press practices self-censorship with regards to criticism of the monarchy and, to a lesser degree, the military and the Buddhist hierarchy. Thai governments have maintained significantly tighter control over the electronic media than they have over the press. Radio stations are government licensed and operated by government, military, and private entities as commercial enterprises. They are required to broadcast government-produced newscasts four times daily and a military-produced commentary once a day, but are free to originate other news and commentary. In September the Government authorized the establishment of two new, privately owned television channels in what was seen as an important expansion of freedom of the press. While the Thai legal system generally recognizes the right to peaceful assembly, in practice government officials at times act to restrict this right. The Government has not interfered with peaceful public gatherings subsequent to the May violence.

Women and Minority Rights

Women generally have equal legal rights in Thailand, with specific guarantees of equality with men in the areas of matrimonial property, the right to choose habitation and employment, and child custody. Legal inequality remains in the area of divorce rights. Reliable data on the overall extent of abuse of women and children are not available, however, those with extensive experience in the field believe family violence is prevalent across all social classes and the number of such cases is rising. Law enforcement in this area has not been vigorous. Prostitution is acknowledged within Thailand as one of the country's most troubling social problems. Women are well represented in the labor force and are becoming increasingly so in professional positions, particularly those in the commercial sector. Women continue to be concentrated in traditionally lower paid jobs, and there is a significant gap between average salaries earned by men and women, despite government regulations requiring employers to pay equal wages for equal work.

Thailand has made considerable progress in integrating its minorities, but problems remain. Fewer than half of the members of hill tribes are believed to possess documentation of Thai citizenship, which effectively bars them from participation in the political process. Additionally, credible sources report that many hill tribe members have been subjected to deportation or resettlement efforts. Muslims are a significant minority but remain underrepresented in the political process, the professions, and in higher education. The community of Vietnamese which settled in Thailand in the 1940's and 1950's still are not eligible for Thai citizenship and live under a set of laws and regulations restricting its members' movements, residences, education, and occupations. Freedom of religion is generally practiced and protected by law and custom. The de facto state religion is Theravada Buddhism, but other faiths are not restricted.

VIETNAM
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) remains a Communist one-party state ruled by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) through a 13-member Politburo and a Communist Party Central Committee of 146 members nominally elected by a party congress held about every 5 years. Government policies, carried out under the Council of Ministers, reflect guidelines--if not specific directives--laid down by the Politburo. The new Constitution promulgated in 1992 contains a new emphasis on the rule of law.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A new amendment states that "all human rights" are to be respected. However, human rights abuses in the SRV continued. They include severe restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association, and on the right of citizens to change their government. The government crackdown on dissent begun in the spring of 1990, continued in 1992. In addition, the Government continued a program that over the years has resettled hundreds of thousands of people--some forcibly--into "new economic zones" (NEZ's). On the other hand, it remains easier to travel abroad and inside the country than was the case a few years ago. People talk much more freely with foreigners, and there is an increasing separation between the party and the State. All remaining military officers and official of the former Government of Vietnam who had been incarcerated since 1975 were released between the end of 1991 and early summer of 1992. The Government continued its efforts to implement Party Directive 135, which calls for the arrest of those who incite opposition to the Government or advocate political pluralism. Over the years people have been sentenced to long prison or reeducation camp terms for such "crimes." The Government continues to operate a nationwide system of surveillance and control through household registration and party-appointed block wardens who use informants to keep track of individual activities.

Respect for Political Rights
Citizens are not free to change their government. All authority and political power is vested in the VCP, political opposition is not tolerated, and no other political parties are tolerated. No challenge to the legitimacy of the one-party state, or even debate on this subject, is permitted. The Central Committee of the VCP is the supreme decisionmaking body in the nation; its 13-member Politburo is the locus of policymaking. Citizens elect members of the National Assembly, ostensibly the chief legislative body, but are still constrained by party guidance.

The 395 delegates were elected in the summer of 1992. Candidates for the National Assembly election were carefully screened, and credible reports indicate that many people who wished to become candidates were not permitted to run because their views were not considered reliable.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, but in practice such freedoms are severely limited. The Government owns and operates broadcast media and does not permit the airing of opposing views, although it has broadcast reports of debates during National Assembly meetings. Party organs and the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports, and Tourism control all newspapers, books, and other publications, as well as all cultural exhibitions. The party continued to tolerate criticism concerning the performance of the party or of persons deemed to be corrupt or incompetent. However, questioning the legitimacy of the VCP or its exclusive vanguard role is not tolerated. The Government does not use systematic prior censorship to control the media, but guidance from party watchdogs is pervasive, and national security legislation is sufficiently broad to encourage effective self-censorship in the media. A pervasive system of informants also chills free speech to a considerable extent. The right of assembly is restricted in law and practice. Demonstrations are discouraged; those which take place are occasionally forcibly suppressed. Nongovernmental organizations are permitted, but they may meet only for approved and narrowly defined objectives.

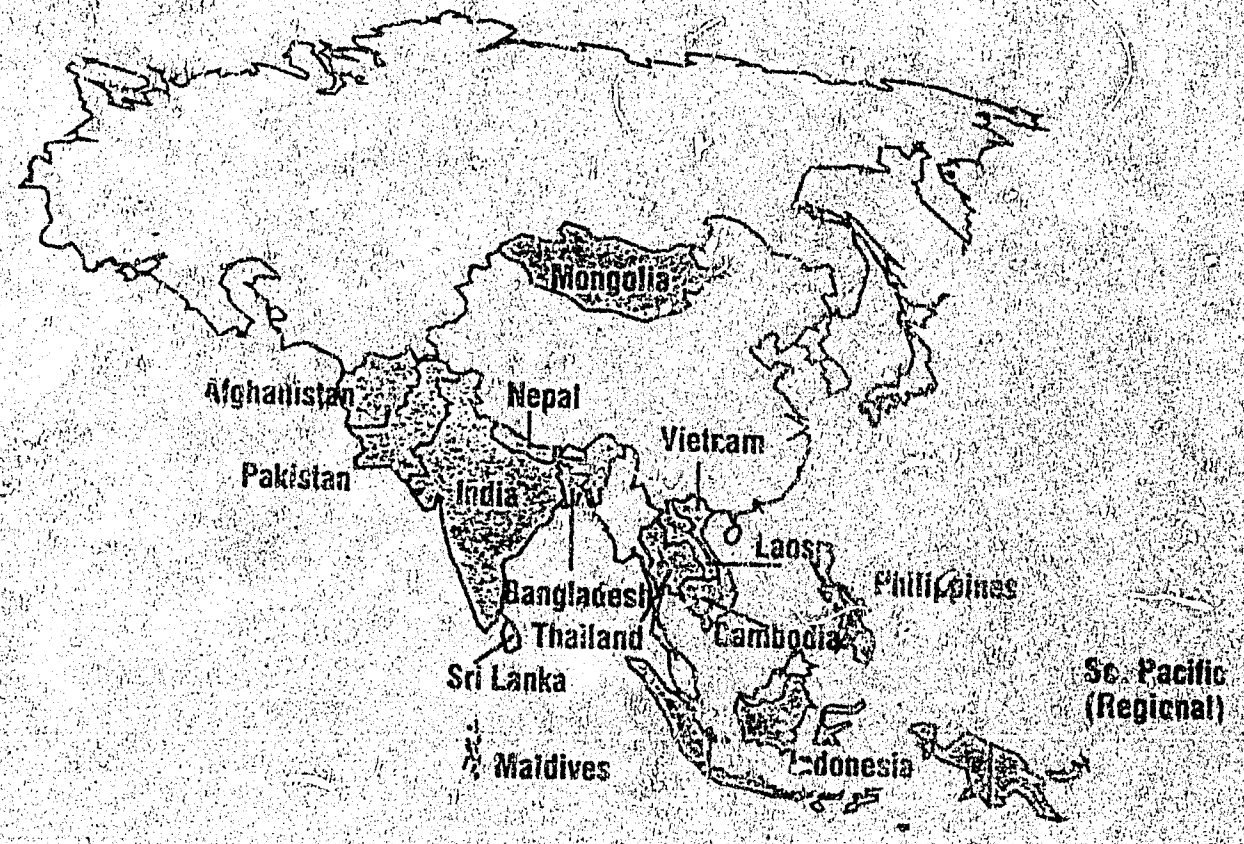
Women and Minority Rights

In general, women do not appear to face discrimination in employment. However, they face problems competing with men for higher status positions owing to attitudes deeply ingrained in traditional Vietnamese society. Such problems persist in spite of governments efforts to mold popular attitudes to conform with the Constitution, legislation, and regulations mandating equal treatment before the law in virtually all respects. There are no statistics available on the frequency of violence against women within the home.

Many citizens still face discrimination in employment, education, and social services, or are subject to relocation in NEZ's, based on family background or political views, although less than in previous years. Priority in social services is given to families of party members and families of soldiers who fought for the Government. Vietnam has no state religion and adherence to a religion is not permitted for party members. However, freedom of worship is provided for in the Constitution, along with the proviso that no one may use religious adherence or belief to violate state laws and policies. The Government has regularly detained and arrested religious figures of all faiths on political grounds and restricted their activities.

PN ABR-55

ASIA DEMOCRACY PROFILES
1992 SURVEY



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Democratic Affairs and Private Voluntary Cooperation Unit
Technical Resources Division
Office of Development Resources
Bureau for Asia
June 1993

ASIA BUREAU
1992 COUNTRY DEMOCRACY PROFILES

As part of the Asia Democracy Program's (ADP) overall programmatic strategy to monitor democracy and human rights throughout the Asia Region, ASIA/DR/TR has produced, for the past several years, an annual country democracy profile. This year's profile is based on information gathered from three sources: Freedom House's Comparative Survey of Freedom for 1992-93, the U.S. Department of State's Country Report of Human Rights Practices for 1992, and Human Rights Watch World Report 1993.

The purpose of the Freedom House Comparative Survey of Freedom, since its inception in the 1970s, has been to provide an annual worldwide evaluation of political rights and civil liberties. The survey judges all countries by a single standard. The survey's understanding of freedom is broad and encompasses two sets of characteristics grouped under political rights and civil liberties. Political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, i.e., the system by which the polity chooses the authoritative policy makers, while civil liberties are the freedoms to develop views, institutions, and personal autonomy apart from the state.

As required by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the U.S. Department of State publishes an annual report on human rights which includes reports on all countries that receive U.S. aid or are members of the United Nations. The report is based on foreign service post analyses and is referred to by Congress when foreign aid is considered. Reports describe the political system of each country and apply internationally recognized human rights standards.

Human Rights Watch monitors and promotes observance of internationally recognized human rights worldwide. It is composed of Africa Watch, Americas Watch, Asia Watch, Helsinki Watch, Middle East Watch and the Fund for Free Expression.

Individual country ratings found in this document come from Freedom House's Comparative Survey of Freedom, while the narrative comes from the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights for 1992. The Human Rights Watch World Report 1993 is used as a validating third source.

ASIA DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

1992-93 Freedom House Ratings

COUNTRY	Most Free 1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	Not Free 7
AFGHANISTAN													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties											*		
BANGLADESH													
Political Rights			X										
Civil Liberties					*								
CAMBODIA													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties											*		
INDIA													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties							*						
INDONESIA													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties									*				
LAOS													
Political Rights													X
Civil Liberties											*		
MALDIVES													
Political Rights											X		
Civil Liberties									*				
MONGOLIA													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties			*										
NEPAL													
Political Rights			X										
Civil Liberties					*								
PAKISTAN													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties									*				
PHILIPPINES													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties					*								

COUNTRY	Most Free 1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6.5	Not Free 7
FIJI													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties					*								
SRI LANKA													
Political Rights							X						
Civil Liberties									*				
THAILAND													
Political Rights					X								
Civil Liberties							*						
VIETNAM													
Political Rights													X
Civil Liberties													*

These Freedom House Ratings comes from the annual Comparative Survey of Freedom which Freedom House has been publishing since the early 1970s. The purpose of this Survey is to provide an annual evaluation of democracy and freedom everywhere in the world. Political rights and civil liberties are the two broad sets of characteristics used to determine a countries overall freedom status. These two groups of characteristics are measured on a 1 - to - 7 scale, with 1 as the most free. A country's combined rating determines its status: "Free" 1 - 2.5; "Partly Free" 3 - 5.5; "Not Free" 6 - 7.

KEY: X = Political Rights Rating
* = Civil Liberties Rating

ASIA DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

1992-93 Freedom House Ratings

COUNTRY 1992-93	Free 1 -2.5	Partly Free 3 - 5.5	Not Free 6 - 7		CHANGE FROM LAST RATING PERIOD 1991-92
AFGHANISTAN			X		NONE
BANGLADESH	X				NONE
CAMBODIA			X		NONE
INDIA		X			NONE
INDONESIA		X			NONE
LAOS			X		NONE
MALDIVES			X		NONE
MONGOLIA	X				NONE
NEPAL	X				NONE
PAKISTAN		X			NONE
PHILIPPINES		X			NONE
FIJI		X			NONE
SRI LANKA		X			NONE
THAILAND		X			NONE
VIETNAM			X		NONE

The Twelve Worst Rated Countries, according to Freedom House's list in their 1993 Freedom Review publication, include the following Asian countries:

BURMA (MYANMAR)
CHINA
NORTH KOREA
VIETNAM

AFGHANISTAN
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

The political situation changed dramatically in Afghanistan in 1992 when the 14 year rule of the Najibullah regime collapsed and Afghan resistance leaders assumed power. The resistance leaders agreed to a series of power-sharing arrangements to span 2 years with an interim government in three phases. Factional competition for power and the blood rivalries which frequently emerged between and within the resistance groups have delayed the enactment of the third phase of the interim government which calls for the drafting of a constitution, the establishment of permanent governmental institutions, and preparations for nationwide elections. In December the Grand Council met and selected Burhanuddin Rabbani to continue as interim President for two years. The legitimacy of this action has been questioned by a number of Afghan leaders. In the absence of an effective and widely accepted central authority, civil authority seems to be predominately in the hands of local councils, resistance leaders, or a combination of the two.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The absence of any effective central authority was the factor of greatest significance to human rights problems in 1992. The human rights situation changed from one marked by broad governmental oppression under the Najibullah regime to an environment in which individual rights were neither defined nor protected and were routinely violated due to the lack of a strong central Government with the ability to protect and enforce their guarantees for human rights. Observers have noted the absence of law and a clear legal system throughout much of the country, with the result that justice is administered locally without any uniform legal procedures. There have been reports of torture, extrajudicial executions, and disappearances under the interim government allegedly committed by the forces associated with the interim government.

Respect for Political Rights

Primary responsibility for governing the country is in the hands of local councils and resistance leaders. Central authority is weak and at present consists of the Grand Council. In December 1992, the Grand Council selected Rabbani as President as well as delegates for a national assembly. A number of Afghan leaders question the legitimacy of the Grand Council and the means by which its members had been selected. It is unclear what steps this new Government intends to take to ensure that the political

process is representative of the country's diverse ethnic and religious groups.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The interim government declared that Afghans have a right to free press and free speech but they do not have the ability to ensure these rights throughout the nation. At the same time the Rabbani Government has decreed that all publications, broadcasts, and academic activities must conform to Islamic norms as part of their effort to promote greater adherence to strict Islamic codes of conduct. President Rabbani has also announced a ban on all non-Islamic groups. Domestic travel remains severely constrained by wartime conditions such as mines and unexpected outbreaks of violence.

Women and Minority Rights

The participation of Afghan women in activities beyond the home and fields is limited by longstanding beliefs, customs, and religious practices. The social position of women in areas controlled by the Communist regime improved, and the role of women in some nontraditional occupations expanded. Whether the Rabbani Government will permit the continuation of such practices is unclear.

The population of Afghanistan is overwhelmingly Muslim and the interim government has sought to promote greater adherence to strict Islamic codes of conduct. President Rabbani has called for religious freedom for minority groups in Afghanistan, however, there were numerous reports of assaults against Sikhs and Hindus during the general disorder in Kabul.

BANGLADESH
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Bangladesh is a multiparty parliamentary democracy in which Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) enjoys a parliamentary majority. The party obtained its majority in the February 1991 elections. Bangladesh remains one of the world's poorest countries, with subsistence agriculture making up about half of the gross domestic product. Jute, garments, and fish are the nation's leading exports. The new Governments promises for economic reforms face resistance from those who fear losing de facto monopolies and guaranteed jobs or those who want protection from foreign competition.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The human rights situation deteriorated in 1992 compared with the previous year. The Government showed heightened sensitivity to criticism and dissent and increasingly used the Special Powers Act (SPA) to detain citizens without formal charges. The first seven months, some of the most violent in recent years, were marred by a series of attacks in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by tribal insurgents and reprisals by the security forces and Bengali settlers. On April 10, according to the official government report, 13 tribals were killed, 13 injured, and 550 huts burned down in a reprisal attack involving security forces. Human rights groups have claimed that the government report underestimates the number of tribal casualties. However, confirmation of the number of casualties is not possible. A unilateral cease-fire was proclaimed in August and was re-extended in March of 1993 while talks between the insurgents and the Government take place. Violent confrontations between rival student groups representing rival political parties plagued educational institutions and resulted in several deaths. There were no confirmed reports of disappearance resulting from official action, and the Government claims to hold no political prisoners, although human rights groups assert that some persons detained under the SPA are in fact political prisoners. Human rights groups claim that between 5 and 15 people died in police custody in 1992 due to abusive treatment. There were no reports of legal charges brought against officials for abusive treatment, but there are reports of suspensions pending official investigation.

Respect for Political Rights
Bangladesh citizens have the right to change their government democratically. Elections are held by secret ballot every five

years on the basis of universal suffrage for all citizens over 18 years of age. The 1992 Union Parishad (local council) elections were reported overall to be free and fair, with only minor irregularities. Although 20 people were reportedly killed in election-related violence, this is a marked decrease from the 1988 Union Parishad elections in which several hundred were killed.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Freedom of speech and the press are provided for in the Constitution subject only to "reasonable restrictions." Although these rights are respected to a far greater extent than they were under the previous regime, some journalists claim that self-censorship is a common practice. Additionally, the Government's control of a large advertising budget continues to fuel charges that it uses this leverage to pressure editors to moderate their criticisms. No newspapers were seized or shutdown in 1992, although four were banned on charges of pornography or for supporting the tribal insurgents' cause. A 1991 BNP election pledge to grant autonomy to the broadcast media has not been carried out, and television and radio remains under government control. The Constitution assures every citizen the right to form associations, subject to "reasonable restrictions" in the interest of public interest or morality. Permits from a local district magistrate are required for public meetings. Sit-ins, marches, and rallies are common forms of political expression in Bangladesh.

Women and Minority Rights

By custom and Islamic tradition, women occupy a subordinate place in society. The underlying attitudes and social barriers circumscribing the participation of women in activities beyond the home are strongly entrenched and show few signs of weakening. Except in the garment industry, women are virtually absent from the cash-earning work force. Women are allowed to own and enter into contracts concerning land and its uses, despite Islamic family and inheritance laws. There were hundreds of press reports of violence against women in 1992, although the vast majority of the cases are believed to go unreported and unpunished. Laws to protect women are laxly enforced.

Islam is recognized as the state religion of Bangladesh. Members of minority religious groups are disadvantaged in practice, though not in law. Their access to government jobs is limited, and some Hindus have reported difficulty in retaining their property. Tribal people in the CHT area charge that their traditional way of life and special status in the hill area is being undermined by Bengali settlers, which has resulted in a low-level conflict between tribal insurgents and the Bangladesh security forces since the 1970's. Both sides have accused the other of human rights violations. The Government is attempting to address tribal grievances by establishing and supporting elected district councils and by discouraging further settlement.

CAMBODIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

From April 1975 until January 1979 the Khmer Rouge, also called the Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK), ruled Cambodia. In 1979 the Khmer Rouge were ejected from power by an invading Vietnamese army. The Vietnamese installed a regime made up largely of former PDK cadre and named it the People's Republic of Kampuchea. This was renamed the State of Cambodia (SOC) in 1989. In September 1989, the Vietnamese withdrew the bulk of their armed forces. In October 1991 the Paris Peace Accords established a national reconciliation body called the Supreme National Council (SNC) headed by Prince Sihanouk. Legally, the SNC embodies Cambodia's sovereignty during the transitional period until a new and representational government can be established. The United Nations has a broad mandate to achieve a neutral political environment for elections. Its instrument for this is the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The PDK has not gone along with UNTAC's plans for demobilization.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Where UNTAC was able to establish itself throughout much of the country, great strides were made in improving human rights. The SNC laid down rules for freedom of speech, press, and assembly, and ratified key international human rights instruments. For the first time in nearly 20 years, independent political parties were established in Phnom Penh and were able to function throughout most of Cambodia. Nearly 2,000 political prisoners and POW's held by the SOC were released, half of them under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Most of the 370,000 Cambodian refugees living mostly along the Thai-Cambodian border were voluntarily repatriated. Nevertheless, human rights abuses continued. Political parties setting up offices in Phnom Penh were subjected to harassment by the SOC security authorities. Political killings of independent political party members occurred in Cambodia and, in some cases, appear to be clearly attributable to SOC security forces. UNTAC uncovered a number of secret detention facilities, in which some political opponents of the SOC had been interrogated and beaten. Additionally, racial violence directed toward the Vietnamese minority in Cambodia was particularly egregious in 1992. The PDK continues to maintain a tight grip on the people in its areas through violence and intimidation. There was no freedom of speech, no due process, and no freedom of association in these areas.

Respect for Political Rights

Cambodians have not enjoyed the right to change their government in two decades and still did not in 1992. The Paris Accords represent an international effort to assist in restoring this right to the Cambodians. Throughout 1992, Cambodian sovereignty was vested in the SNC, a 12-man body which includes representatives of all four factions, with Prince Sihanouk as its president. The October 1991 Accords required the Cambodian parties to put down their arms, demobilize most of their forces, and commit themselves "to holding free and fair elections organized and conducted by the United Nations as the basis for forming a new and legitimate government." The elections are scheduled for May 1993. The election is to be held throughout Cambodia on a provincial basis with proportional representation drawn from lists put forward by parties. UNTAC is to register all eligible voters and political parties need to obtain at least 5,000 signatures of registered voters to be listed on the ballot. It remains to be seen if sufficient cooperation from all parties will be forthcoming to permit this plan to be implemented.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Prior to 1992, freedom of speech and press were severely restricted. However, the Paris Accords provide that "all persons in Cambodia and all Cambodian refugees and displaced persons shall enjoy the rights and freedoms embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international human rights instruments." On January 15, the SNC agreed that freedom of speech and press should be permitted throughout Cambodia. Self-censorship is reportedly common among individuals who fear the consequences, which in the recent past could have been dire. In January 1992, the KPNLF began publication of its Weekly Bulletin, which directly criticized the SOC regime and presented KPNLF points of view. This was followed by publications of other independent political parties.

Women and Minority Rights

The 1989 SOC Constitution and the 1989 SOC Law on the Family and Marriage contain provisions designed to protect women's rights, including a guarantee of equality before the law, provisions against forced marriage, and regulations on divorce. However, there are no effective means of implementing these regulations. Violence against women, including domestic violence and rape, is reportedly common. There does not appear to be systematic discrimination against women in such high-prestige jobs as medicine and the civil service.

Vietnamese and Chinese have long been the largest ethnic minorities in Cambodia. Popular sentiment against Vietnamese is strong throughout Cambodia, and there is a considerable threat of more extensive violence against Vietnamese. During the years of PDK rule all religions were suppressed and virtually destroyed in Cambodia. In the past 2 years a Buddhist renaissance has occurred, and the 1989 SOC Constitution identified Buddhism as the state religion. There is currently a high degree of religious tolerance in non-PDK controlled Cambodia.

FIJI
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

Fiji has been administered by an interim government since the 1987 bloodless coups and the installation of a military regime at that time. In May 1992, general elections were held and Major Sitiveni Rabuka was elected to the Parliament, later to be selected Prime Minister by the President. The President is appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), a traditional Fijian leadership body. The President, in addition to selecting the Prime Minister from the lower house based on his ability to command a majority of support from that body, also selects members of the Senate on the advice of the GCC and the provincial councils. Most of the executive authority rests with the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The principal human rights problems in 1992 included constitutionally imposed and ethnically based political discrimination, continuing restrictions on freedom of the press, continuing delays in bringing criminal and civil cases to trial, and violence and discrimination against women. There were no reports of politically motivated killings or disappearances in 1992. Reports persist of police abuse of detainees, despite a new internal affairs division of the police which has been active in taking disciplinary action against these officers. The judicial system remains similar to the British model which includes the right to a public trial, right to counsel, and the right of appeal. The right of appeal is hampered by the enormous backlog of cases in the Court of Appeals.

Respect for Political Rights

The right of citizens to change their government is abridged by the provisions of the 1990 Constitution ensuring political dominance by ethnic Fijians, primarily by establishing race-based representation in Parliament. The constitution requires the Prime Minister to be an ethnic Fijian and the selection procedures virtually ensure that the President will also be an ethnic Fijian. Elections are held by secret ballot, with voting only by communal constituencies. The Constitution calls for elections every five years, but the Government may call an election at any time. The 1992 general elections were contested by a dozen political parties and were both free and fair.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution also incorporates a bill of rights, providing for freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and other universally

accepted rights and freedoms. These rights may not be altered by Parliament except with the approval of two-thirds of the lower house. Freedom of speech has largely been restored; citizens can and do speak out against the Government. Privately owned broadcast and print media operate without prior censorship but with considerable self-censorship. Newspapers usually refrain from printing editorials severely critical of the Government and do little investigative reporting. Statements about the political situation of opposition figures and foreign governments are not reported. The Press Correction Act (PCA) gives the Minister of Information sole discretionary power to order a newspaper to publish a "correcting statement" if, in his opinion, a false or distorted article has been published. Assembly for political purposes is allowed but subject to restriction in the interest of public order. The Government did not interfere with political activities during the May general elections. Permits were routinely issued for rallies organized by political parties, religious groups, and groups opposed to the Government.

Women and Minority Rights

Although the Constitution provides specific affirmative action provisions to improve the conditions of those disadvantaged as a result of race, sex, place of origin, political opinion, color, religion, or creed, the Government practices sexual discrimination in the recognition of spousal and offspring rights. Women have functioned primarily in traditional roles, although some women rise to prominence in public service, politics, and business. Women have full rights of property ownership and inheritance, and a number have become successful entrepreneurs. Women are generally paid less than men, a discrepancy that is especially notable in the garment industry. Domestic violence is also a problem in Fiji and is the second major focus of the small but active women's movement. Authorities are generally reluctant to intervene and few cases result in prosecution.

The stated purpose of the 1987 military coups was to ensure the political supremacy of the indigenous Fijian people and to protect their traditional way of life and communal control of land. A number of measures have been taken that favor indigenous Fijians over other ethnic groups. Current promotion and hiring policies in the public sector favor ethnic Fijians. Eighty-four percent of the land in Fiji is held communally by indigenous Fijians, while most cash crop farmers are Indo-Fijians who must lease their land form the Fijian villages. Indo-Fijians are subject to occasional harassment and crime based on race, which is compounded by inadequate police protection. Chinese farmers have also reported rare occurrences of vandalism. Freedom of religion is provided for in the Constitution and honored in practice. The Constitution emphasizes the importance of Christianity, but provides for protection for all religions.

INDIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

India is a secular republic with a multiparty political structure based on Indian political traditions and aspects of the British parliamentary system. National elections held in 1991 in all states except Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab resulted in a Congress (I) party government headed by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. By-elections and party shifts gave the Congress (I) and its allies a parliamentary majority in September 1992. A Parliament sits for five years unless dissolved earlier for new elections, except under constitutionally defined emergency situations. President's Rule (direct rule from New Delhi) may be declared on the advice of the Prime Minister in the event of a collapse of a state's constitutional machinery. Jammu, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachel Pradesh, and Rajasthan are all currently under President's Rule.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Although India is a functioning democracy with strong and legally sanctioned safeguards for individuals and an independent judiciary, there continue to be significant abuses of human rights, many of which are the product of violent ethnic, religious, caste, communal, and secessionist activities and the Government's reactions to them. As in past years, the main problems continue to include: police, paramilitary, and army excesses against civilians, particularly in Punjab, Assam, and Kashmir in response to attacks by militants; political killing, kidnaping, and extortion by militants in Punjab and Kashmir; extrajudicial actions (beating, extortion, torture, rape, and fake "encounter" killings) by the police against detainees throughout India; incommunicado detention for prolonged periods without charge under national security legislation; general failure to prosecute police and security forces implicated in abuse of detainees; widespread intercaste, religious, and communal violence; inadequate implementation of laws protecting women's rights; and infrequent prosecution of "dowry deaths."

Respect for Political Rights

India has a democratic, parliamentary system of government with representatives elected under full adult suffrage for those over 18 years of age. Multiparty elections are held regularly at local, state, and national levels, except in states under President's Rule. Indigenous peoples participate actively in national and local politics.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, and they are, with some limitations, exercised in practice. A vigorous press reflects a wide variety of public, social, and economic beliefs, and regularly publishes investigative reports and allegations of government wrongdoing. The Press Council of India is an independent board of journalists designed to be a self-regulating mechanism for the press. It investigates complaints of irresponsible journalism and sets an code of conduct for publishers. Many journalists complain that the Council's actions promote self-censorship. National television and radio, which are government monopolies, are frequently accused of manipulating the news to the benefit of the Government. However, the wide distribution of satellite television in middle class neighborhoods is gradually eroding the Government's monopoly on electronic media. Indians enjoy complete academic freedom, and students and faculty espouse a wide range of view. The Constitution protects the right of peaceful assembly and the right to form associations, and these rights are generally respected in practice. At times of civil tension, local governments may ban public assemblies and impose a curfew.

Women and Minority Rights

Despite several provisions in the Constitution promising equality before the law and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender, the family, marriage, and inheritance laws of several of India's religious communities manifest legally sanctioned gender discrimination. Female bondage, forced prostitution, and child marriage remain common in parts of Indian society. The unusually low ratio of females to males in parts of India is attributed to the marked disparity between male versus female infants mortality rates, the disproportionate number of abortions of female fetuses where sex-determination testing is available, and the estimated 10,000 cases of female infanticide which occur each year throughout India. According to an Indian government study violence against women, including molestation, rape, kidnaping and wife murder, has increased over the past decade. The reason for this rise is unknown. The overwhelming majority of female workers are employed in agriculture where work is not adequately regulated by labor laws and where contractors customarily pay women lower wages than those fixed by the states.

The traditional caste system as well as differences of race, religion, and language severely divide Indian society despite laws designed to prevent discrimination. Sporadic violence occurred throughout the year based on these differences, as well as longstanding Hindu-Muslim tensions. Scheduled castes and tribes remain particularly vulnerable to police violence. Despite safeguards, the rights of tribal people are often ignored which has given rise to numerous tribal movements demanding protection of land and property rights. As a secular state India provides for the freedom of worship for all faiths, however, tensions over religious differences continue to be a serious problem throughout India.

INDONESIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

Under the Constitution, the highest authority of the State is the 1,000-member people's Consultative Assembly (MPR), which meets every 5 years to elect the President and Vice President and set the broad outlines of state policy. In theory, the President is subordinate to the Assembly, in fact, President Soeharto and the armed forces (ABRI) wield predominant political power. The Parliament is constitutionally responsible for making laws but has not used its power to initiate legislation in the 27 years of Soeharto's Government. The Government requires allegiance to five broad, guiding principles of national life known as "Pancasila": belief in one supreme God, a just and civilized humanity, Indonesian national unity, democracy, and social justice. By law all political, social, and religious organizations must embrace Pancasila.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The most important human rights developments during the year concerned government efforts to cope with the aftermath of army troops' killing of unarmed demonstrators on November 12, 1991, in East Timor. At the recommendation of a military investigating body formed on President Soeharto's orders, unprecedented disciplinary action was taken against 6 senior officers and 10 officers and enlisted men involved in the incident. In addition to extrajudicial killings and unfair trials, other serious human rights problems continued. They include torture and other mistreatment of prisoners and detainees, arbitrary arrest and detention, arbitrary interference with privacy, significant restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and the ability of citizens to change their government. In other human rights areas, foreign travel requirements were eased. The Government continued its generous policy toward Indochinese refugees and its cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the repatriation of Irianese who had fled to Papua New Guinea because of separatist violence.

Respect for Political Rights

Whatever their theoretical rights under the Constitution, citizens do not in fact have the ability to change their Government through democratic means. President Soeharto and a small group of active-duty and retired military officers and civilian officials exercise governmental authority. Members of the military are allotted 20 percent of the seats in national, provincial, and district parliaments, and occupy numerous key positions in the administration. The other 80 percent of

national and local parliamentary seats are filled through elections held every 5 years. All adult citizens are eligible to vote, except active-duty members of the armed forces, convicted criminals serving prison sentences, and some 36,000 former Communist Party members. Voters may choose by secret ballot between the three government-approved political organizations, which field candidate lists in each electoral district. Although numerous irregularities were reported during the June 9th polling, most observers believed they were not widespread or systematic.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Significant restrictions on freedom of speech and press exist. Public statements or publications which criticize the Government or are perceived as critical of Pancasila, top leaders, their families, or particular religious and ethnic groups are often harshly punished. The Government operates the nationwide television network. Private television companies broadcasting in Jakarta and Surabaya expanded to other areas in 1992. Some 550 private radio broadcasting companies exist in Indonesia in addition to the Government's national radio network. Private television and radio stations, which have considerable programming latitude, are nonetheless subject to official scrutiny and required to use government-provided news programs. The print media is largely private owned. Officials state that the press is "free" but also "responsible." The Government exercises strong control over the press through its control of publishing permits. Editors generally exercise considerable self-censorship in disseminating views of government critics, however, the domestic print media continued to press the limit of official tolerance in coverage of certain social and political problems in 1992.

Women and Minority Rights

Under the law women are equal to and have the same rights, obligations, and opportunities as men. Some Indonesian women occupy important mid-level positions in most occupational fields. Only a small fraction occupy top posts. Despite legal guarantees of equal treatment, women seldom receive equal pay for equal work and disproportionately experience illiteracy, poor health, and nutrition. Traditional attitudes which limit women's aspirations, activities, and status undercut state policy in some areas. There were increased reports in 1992 of violence against women.

Indonesians exhibit considerable tolerance for ethnic, racial, and major religious differences, with the important exception of official discrimination against ethnic Chinese. Ethnic Chinese have been denied the right to run businesses, operate all-Chinese schools, or form exclusively Chinese groups or associations. The Constitution provides for freedom of religion and belief in one supreme God. Atheism is forbidden, but all monotheistic religions are permitted and their rights respected despite the fact that the population of Indonesia is overwhelmingly Muslim.

LAOS
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 6
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) is a Communist, one-party state. The ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) is the only party and the primary source of political authority in the country. In 1992 the Government launched a campaign to disseminate the new Constitution, which had been adopted by the National Assembly in 1991, to the Lao public. The Constitution confers substantial powers on the National Assembly and provides for the free election of National Assembly members. Elections for a new National Assembly took place in December by secret ballot and includes a number of legislators who are not members of the LPRP, though all candidates had to be approved by the party.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The people of Laos are denied many basic freedoms. Even under the new Constitution, freedom of speech and press, freedom of assembly, the right of privacy, and the right of citizens to change their government are still absent. The party's leadership imposes broad controls which the Ministry of Interior (MOI) enforces through its system of informants and social monitors. A small-scale insurgency composed primarily of Hmong tribesmen continued in 1992 at a somewhat greater level than the previous year. Both sides reportedly used brutal tactics. The Lao Penal Code prohibits torture or mistreatment of prisoners, and the police do not appear to use torture or abuse during arrest and detention. However, jail conditions are harsh and prisoners are routinely denied family visitation and proper medical care. Those accused of hostility to the regime are subject to arrest and confinement for long periods. People may be arrested on unsupported accusations and without being informed of the charges or the accusers' identities. There is some provision for appeal, although there is reportedly no appeal in important political cases. The Government has relaxed some elements of state control, including police monitoring of personal and business activities and enforcement of the nighttime curfew. However, search and seizure continues to be authorized by the security bureaus themselves rather than judicial authority.

Respect for Political Rights

Citizens do not have the ability to change their government despite constitutional provisions for secret ballots and universal suffrage in the public election of National Assembly members. Under the new Constitution, citizens elect members of the Assembly, which in turn elects the President. Because the

LPRP continues to dominate government and politics, there is no structured way in which citizens could remove the LPRP from power.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Despite the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of assembly, the exercise of these freedoms is broadly controlled by the Government. The Government reacts harshly to expressions of political dissent. Newspapers and the state radio and television are instruments of the Government, reflecting its views. The Government has traditionally sought to control the flow of information from abroad, and there are limitations on the importation of foreign publications, though some Thai and Western newspapers and magazines are sold. Video rental stores operate largely without restrictions in most Laos cities, and at least one privately owned business publication in now published in Laos. Academic freedom remains tightly controlled by the Government and Lao academicians are often denied permission to travel abroad. The Government controls and organizes most large public gatherings except for religious, athletic, and communal events. The new Penal Code expressly prohibits demonstrations or protest marches aimed at causing turmoil and social instability. All associations are party controlled and disseminate official policy. Contact between Lao and foreigners is increasing as restrictions are no longer enforced.

Women and Minority Rights

Traditionally, women in Lao society have been subservient to men and have often been discouraged from obtaining and education. The Government claims a higher percentage of women are in school now than there were before 1975 and that women are being encouraged to assume a greater role in economic and political activity. Women currently occupy responsible positions in government and private business. There is no pattern of widespread domestic or culturally approved violence against women.

Approximately one-half of the population is ethnic Lao, also called "Lowland Lao," and the other half a mosaic of upland hilltribes. The Government is attempting to integrate these groups through voluntary programs and to overcome traditional antagonisms between lowland Lao and minority groups. The new Constitution specifically provides for equal rights for all, and there is no legal discrimination. However, the minority tribes have virtually no voice in government decisions affecting their lands and the allocation of natural resources. The party and the Government continue to be dominated by lowland Lao males. The Government has recognized the right to freedom of religion as well as the contributions religion can make to the development of the nation, and the Constitution contains provisions for religious freedom. However, the practice of religion remains restricted, especially for non-Buddhists.

MALDIVES
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 6
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background
The Republic of Maldives has a parliamentary form of government with a strong executive. Maldives traditionally has been governed by a limited circle of persons made up of the President and a number of powerful Cabinet ministers. President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom began his third five year term in 1988 after being nominated by the Majlis and approved by ninety-five percent of those voting in a referendum. Under the Constitution, Islamic law rather than the Majlis has legal preeminence, and the President as head of the Government and State, is responsible for the protection of Islam in the Maldives.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Government continues to restrict human rights closely in several areas, including speech and press, religion, the right of citizens to change their government, and women's rights. Other problems include instances of arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention and lack of an independent judiciary. There were no reports of politically motivated killings or disappearances in 1992. The Constitution states that "no person shall be apprehended except on a verdict specified by Shari'a or (civil) law," and it is customary not to disclose to the public the details of the charges against a person until it has been established that the charges are likely to be upheld. Persons under investigation are generally free pending trial, however, depending upon the charges, a suspect may be imprisoned or placed under house arrest without trial for fifteen days while the case is being investigated. At times prisoners are held incommunicado as a way to extract confessions. Trials are usually open to the public and conducted by judges trained in Islamic law. The trails of persons charged with political crimes are not open to the public, however, and are not covered by the press. There are no reliable estimates of the number of political prisoners.

Respect for Political Rights
Maldivians have only limited and indirect influence on the selection and organization of their government. Members of the Citizens' Majlis are chosen for 5-year terms by secret ballots. All Maldivians over twenty-one years of age may vote. A single nominee for president, who constitutionally must be male and a Sunni Muslim, is chosen by secret ballot in the Majlis from as many candidates as are proposed by members. His nomination is confirmed or rejected by a nationwide referendum, also by secret ballot. Political parties are officially discouraged. In place of political parties, factions in the Majlis tend to form around

individuals or points of view. Individuals or groups are free to approach members of the Majlis with grievances or opinions on proposed legislation.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression "so long as the specific provisions of Shari'a and the law are not contravened." In practice, freedom of speech, press, and broadcast are sharply restricted. The dissident press has been effectively eliminated over the last three years as a result of government revocation of press registrations; as well as the use of detention, harassment, and threats against journalists; and a policy which holds printers responsible for the material they publish. Journalists are afraid to publish articles critical of the Government and printers are afraid to print anything even slightly controversial. The Government owns and operates the only television and radio stations. The Constitution guarantees Maldivians the right to assemble as long as they do not violate the law or the Islamic code of behavior.

Women and Minority Rights

Women traditionally have played a subordinate role in Maldivian society, although they now participate in public life in growing numbers and gradually at higher levels. Women are not eligible to become president but may hold all other government posts. For reasons of tradition and culture, however, few women seek or are selected for public office. Women who work for wages generally receive pay equal to that of men in the same positions. There is no firm data on the extent of violence against women, although Maldivian women's rights advocates agree that violence against women is not widespread. The Government has shown interest in promoting the welfare of women in both the public and private sectors, through seminars and counseling sessions to promote an awareness of women's rights and to expand opportunities for them in nontraditional occupations.

There is no identifiable indigenous ethnic group in Maldives. The Maldivian population is a complex amalgam of cultural and racial influences from South Asia, Persia, the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. There are no reports of official discrimination against any specific ethnic or linguistic groups. The Constitution, however, designates Islam as the official religion and requires all citizens to be Muslims. There are no places of worship for adherents of any other religion, and the practice of any religion other than Islam is prohibited by law.

MONGOLIA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 2
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Mongolia is a sovereign republic with a president, prime minister, and a popularly elected legislature. In January of 1992, the legislature approved a new Constitution which replaced the former bicameral legislature with the unicameral State Great Hural (SGH). The new Constitution also replaced the legislative election of the President by election through popular vote. The first direct Presidential election is scheduled for June of 1993. Mongolia is attempting to make the difficult transition to a market economy after seven decades of Communism and a centralized economy, and is attempting to increase its foreign trade with other countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The new Constitution establishes the basis for continued significant progress in most human rights categories. The new Constitution states that "no person shall be subject to torture; inhuman, cruel, or degrading treatment" and that "no person shall be searched, arrested, detained, or deprived of liberty except by law." Respect for these rights will depend on the SGH's enactment of a range of implementing laws. The current Legal Code and structure of the judiciary is under review in order to implement a legal system which will conform to international standards and the provisions provided for in the new Constitution. There have been no reports of political killings or politically motivated disappearances in recent years.
The Government still retains the authority to exercise control over individual activity, and the Department of State Security (DSS) reserves the right to use special surveillance methods in order "to carry out its duties."

Respect for Political Rights
The 1992 Constitution provides citizens the right to change their government through periodic, free elections with universal suffrage. In June of 1992, Mongolians elected their first SGH body in elections that were generally judged to be free and open, as minor procedural flaws did not significantly affect the outcome of the election.

Respect for Civil Liberties
The new Constitution clearly establishes freedom of speech, press, and assembly. These rights are generally respected in practice although some limits remain. Shortages of newsprint keep most newspapers from appearing regularly. Opposition

parties and other publishers continued to allege that limitations on the quantities of newsprint, which is controlled by the Government, effectively prevents them from publishing as frequently as the majority party's newspaper. Government-owned radio and television remain the only national broadcast systems. The new Constitution also provides for freedom of peaceful assembly and the right to form a political party or other public organization and to unite voluntarily in associations according to social interests or convictions. There were no reports of authorities interfering with either of these rights in 1992.

Women and Minority Rights

The new Constitution provides that "...no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of ethnic origin, language, race, age, sex, social origin, or status..and that ..men and women shall be equal in political,economic, social, cultural fields, and family affairs." There are no legal impediments to the participation of women in government and politics. Several women were elected to the SGH in the June 1992 elections. There appears to be little discrimination in education on the basis of sex, race, or religion. Women reportedly get equal pay for performing the same job as men. Little is known about the extent of violence against women.

There is no state religion and the new Constitution specifically provides for separation of church and state. There have been no reports of government interference with religious practices.

NEPAL
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 2
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Free

Democracy Background
Nepal is a constitutional monarch with a democratic, parliamentary form of government. Nepal was formerly an absolute monarchy, but the King in 1990 legalized political parties and invited formation of an interim government that promulgated a new Constitution. Under that Constitution the King retains important residual powers, but he has effectively disassociated himself from the exercise of power. The Parliament consists of the House of Representatives and the National Council. The majority party in the House has the right to select the Prime Minister, and in the May 1991 elections the Nepali Congress Party won a majority and chose G.P. Koirala to be Prime Minister.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The 1990 Constitution guarantees a broad range of fundamental human rights, and the Parliament has passed most of the legislation necessary to bring the law into conformity with the Constitution. The human rights situation has improved considerably since 1990, but substantial problems still remain. The principal problems concern the abuse of police powers, including arbitrary detention and beatings by a poorly trained police force, a Government that is unwilling to investigate or enforce accountability for recent and past abuses, and lingering restrictions on freedom of expression and discrimination against women and minority groups. There were a number of incidents involving political violence and killing prior to the February parliamentary by-elections and, on a wider scale, before the May local elections. On April 6, at least seven people were killed, almost one hundred injured, and over five hundred arrested after police fired on protesters demonstrating against the Government's economic policies. The Government claims that force was necessary to prevent further damage to public property, however, human rights organizations condemned the use of bullets. The Government failed to conduct an investigation of the incident or take disciplinary action against the officers involved. Over five hundred people were detained following the January 15 murder of a policeman. Most were released within two days, however, ten persons were held for nearly two months without trial. There were reliable reports that all ten were tortured. The local investigator commented that torture is necessary as a means to extract information. There are no credible reports of the Government holding any political prisoners.

Respect for Political Rights
Nepal is a Constitutional monarchy with sovereignty vested in the

people. The people, through their elected representatives, have the right to change all but the most basic aspects of the body politic. Parliamentary elections, based on universal suffrage for citizens over the age of 18 are to be held every five years by secret ballot. The King continues to exercise certain powers related to the succession of the throne, and emergency powers in the event of war, external aggression, armed revolt, or extreme economic depression. Local elections were held on May 28 and 31, 1992, for municipal and village development councils. These elections were generally considered free and fair, although scattered acts of violence and polling irregularities were reported.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution specifies that all citizens shall have freedom of thought and expression; it also provides that no news item, article, or any other reading material shall be censored. These rights are circumscribed, however, as the Constitution permits restriction of speech or press if the action would: threaten the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom; disturb the harmonious relations among people of different castes or communities; promote sedition, defamation, contempt of court, or instigation to commit crime; or contradict decent public behavior or morality. The Press and Publications Act provides for the licensing of publications, the granting of credentials to journalists, and penalties for the violation of the above stated restrictions of speech and press. Notwithstanding the law, news publications remained vigorous in their criticism of the Government and even, in a few cases, the Monarchy, without penalty. The sole radio and television stations in Nepal are government owned and controlled. Freedom of assembly is guaranteed as long as it does not undermine the "sovereignty and integrity" of Nepal or disturb "law and order."

Women and Minority Rights

Women in Nepal face gender discrimination, particularly in rural areas, where the weight of tradition, lack of education, and ignorance of the law remain severe impediments to the exercise of basic rights. Violence against women, including beatings, dowry deaths, and trafficking, is common, though its extent is difficult to measure owning to the value attached to family privacy and the Government's unwillingness to become involved.

Nepal is still largely a traditional society wedded to the caste system, and caste discrimination is common, especially in the rural areas of western Nepal. The spread of education and higher levels of prosperity, are slowly reducing caste distinctions and increasing opportunities for lower socioeconomic groups. Nepal is described in its Constitution as a Hindu Kingdom, but there is a large minority of Buddhists, a smaller number of Muslims, and a small but growing number of Christians. Non-Hindus are allowed to practice their religion and maintain places of worship but proselytizing is prohibited.

PAKISTAN
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background

In the fourth year since Pakistan's return to democratic rule Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan continued to work together as the civilian leaders of Pakistan's federal parliamentary democracy. The Chief of Army Staff, General Asif Nawaz, also wields considerable influence on many major policy decisions and is the third member of the unofficial "troika" which governs the nation. The Government is pursuing an ambitious program of economic reform, emphasizing the privatization of government-owned financial institutions, industrial units, and utilities and the continued diminution of the public sector's role in the economy. The liberalization of foreign investment and exchange controls are also important priorities.

HUMAN RIGHTS

There was little change in the human rights situation in 1992, and serious problems remained in several areas. The press and political organizations continued to exercise considerable, but not unfettered, freedom of expression. The overt repression of political opponents, a particular problem in Sindh, lessened but nonetheless remained an issue of concern. Selective prosecution of opposition political leaders continued. The arbitrary detention, arrest, torture, and other abuse of prisoners and detainees also continued to be a serious problem. There were no significant efforts to reform either the police or judicial systems, and responsible authorities did little to prosecute and punish those responsible for abuses. As in past years, there continued to be persuasive evidence of misuse of police powers, and the judicial process remains heavily backlogged and impeded by bureaucratic infighting and inactivity on a considerable scale.

Respect for Political Rights

The citizens of Pakistan have the right and the ability to change their government peacefully by secret ballot in elections open to all citizens 21 years and older. Women, however, are often dissuaded from voting in elections by family, religious, and social customs in the rural and more conservative parts of Pakistan. Additionally, members of minority groups are not permitted to vote in Muslim constituencies, but instead must seek office and cast their votes in countrywide, at-large constituencies reserved for them in the national and provincial assemblies. They complain that they are unable to vote for and

influence the parties that will be able to form the Government as the President and Prime Minister must be Muslim.

Respect for Civil Liberties

Freedom of speech and the press is guaranteed in the Constitution of Pakistan and is generally respected, however, some laws serve to restrict freedom of speech. Laws against bringing Islam or the armed forces into discredit or ridicule remain in force. Death is the penalty for those who damage the Constitution by any act, which includes publishing statements against the spirit of the Constitution. Reporters and editors exercise self-censorship in these areas. A government-owned press trust still controls two newspapers, although other holdings in the trust have been privatized. The Government owns and operates radio and television stations and strictly controls the news they carry, although a semi-private television station was established in 1990 with considerable independence from government oversight. However, censorship, in the form of blackouts, have been used to block out coverage of opposition activities. In June 1992 a policy of openness in the electronic media was announced, from which came increasing television coverage of the opposition's activities, although it was still quite limited in comparison to coverage of governmental activities. The Government continues to use newspapers' dependence on advertising revenues as a way of influencing editorial policy.

Women and Minority Rights

The 1991 passage of the Shari'a bill, a law aimed at bringing all aspects of government and society in Pakistan into conformity with its views on the tenets of Islam, has created an atmosphere in which discriminatory treatment against women and non-Muslims is more readily accepted if not condoned. It remains accepted practice to assign women subordinate roles in the civil, political, and managerial hierarchies. Many Pakistanis interpret the Koran's injunctions on modesty to mean that women should remain either at home or veiled. A small number but growing number of urban women study and teach in universities. There is no reliable information on the extent of violence against women in Pakistan, although human rights activists and women's organizations agree that there is a problem. Credible reports persisted of sexual abuse of women in police custody, although this abuse often goes unreported.

There were reports of forced conversion of female members of minority groups to Islam in 1992. Employment and education discrimination among religious minority groups keeps most from rising above midlevel ranks. Heightened sectarian clashes between Sunni and Shi'a communities resulted in numerous murders. Non-Muslim minorities continued to be the subject of persecution by religious zealots.

PHILIPPINES
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 3
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
The Philippines has a republican form of government with a democratically elected president, a bicameral legislature and independent judiciary as provided for in the 1987 Constitution. In open and generally fair elections on May 11, 1992, Filipinos voted into office some 1,600 local, provincial, and national officials. Fidel V. Ramos was elected President from a field of seven candidates and was inaugurated on June 30, 1992, in the first constitutional transfer of power in almost 30 years. Economic growth has been disappointing, and significant income disparities remain due primarily to the traditional system of land ownership by the elites who continue to block the Government's reform efforts.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Although, the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the course of counterinsurgency efforts, as well as The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in insurgent actions, continued to commit human rights abuses, the total number of such incidents continued to decline due to the efforts of the Government and human rights groups to educate the security forces about basic human rights, and the general decrease in guerrilla activity during the year. Principal human rights abuses by government forces against individuals included extrajudicial killings, disappearances, arbitrary arrest, torture, and harassment of suspected insurgents and their supporters. Wide-media coverage of crimes attributed to law enforcement officials reinforced public demands for action leading President Ramos to appoint Vice President Estrada to head a new Presidential Anti-Crime Commission and directed Interior Secretary Rafael Alunan to clean up procedures and identify corrupt and criminal elements in the ranks of the PNP. Additionally, President Ramos proposed the repeal of the Anti-Subversion Act which was approved and went into effect on September 22, 1992. This resulted in the legalization of the Communist Party and led to a joint call for formal negotiations to end the 23-year old conflict.

Respect for Political Rights
Philippine citizens have the right to change their government democratically and they exercised this right in May, 1992 when more than 22 million people turned out to elect a new President as well as local, provincial, and national government officials. Filipinos are free to organize political parties as long as they

do not seek to overthrow the Government by force and democratic opposition to the Government is widely tolerated.

Respect for Civil Liberties

There are virtually no legal restrictions on freedom of expression or speech and freedom of the press is generally respected. While the Philippine courts have been consistent in their protection of the media, the press continues to face considerable hazards including threats, assaults, and murder, in carrying out their responsibilities. Academic freedom is respected in theory and in practice. Permits from local authorities are required for outdoor demonstrations in public places and are routinely issued.

Women and Minority Rights

There are no restrictions in law or practice on participation by women and minorities in politics, and women enjoy the same legal rights as men. Although criminal law prohibits violence against women, both women and girls in lower economic strata are vulnerable to exploitation. Enforcement of laws against the abuse of women remains inadequate. Many of the women who enjoy professional prominence in the Philippines come from an elite that has access to education and other opportunities. The vast majority of Philippine women do not have access to even basic elementary school education. They tend to be uninformed about their rights and bound by cultural beliefs and attitudes that promote passive acceptance of their circumstances.

Freedom of religion is fully respected under the law, although some discrimination against Muslims and other minority groups persists in practice. This is primarily due to the Philippine tradition of providing access to jobs and other resources first to those of one's own family or group. This has resulted in limited access to education and advancement in some occupations for minority groups. Additionally, minorities are not always accorded equal legal protection and land rights.

SRI LANKA
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 4
Civil Liberties: 5
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
Sri Lanka's constitutional, multiparty form of government features a strong executive presidency and a unicameral legislature elected by universal adult suffrage. President Ranasinghe Premadasa was elected to a 6-year term in 1988, and his United National Party (UNP) won a majority in Parliament in 1989. Sri Lanka has a vigorous political opposition. A total of 26 parties are recognized by the Commissioner of Elections, and members of 12 of these hold seats in Parliament.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The violent ethnic conflict which has waged for nearly 10 years between the Government and the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an organization fighting for a separate state for the Tamil minority, continued in 1992. Although the level of violence continued to decline somewhat from what it had been 2 years ago, there were still serious human rights abuses. There were an estimated 650 extrajudicial and combat-related civilian deaths, as well as some two hundred disappearances. Other problems included torture and abuse of detainees; arbitrary arrest and detention; and restrictions on freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association. The Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and the Emergency Regulations (ER), both of which give security forces wide powers remained in effect and were the source of many abuses. The Government does appear to be making efforts to end human rights abuses. These efforts included the continued implementation of Amnesty International and United Nations Human Rights Commission recommendations accepted by the Government in 1991; followup visits by those organizations in 1992; and permitting International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to detainees as well as ICRC human rights training for security forces.

Respect for Political Rights
Citizens have the constitutional right to change their government through periodic multiparty elections on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

Respect for Civil Rights
The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and expression but permits these rights to be restricted by law in the interests of national security. Both the ER and the 1978 Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act place clear restrictions on freedom of speech. and these laws were evoked several times in 1992 to bring charges against journalists for what they published. The

Government controls the country's largest newspaper chain, although a variety of independent newspapers and journals provide a range of viewpoints on foreign affairs and domestic issues, including human rights. Many newspapers openly criticize the ruling party and Government. The Government exerts pressure on the press by controlling permits for the import of newsprint and through placement of paid government announcements and advertising. The Government owns the radio and two of the three television networks. All local news must be approved by the Government prior to being broadcast on these networks. For its part, the LTTE tolerates no dissent. The print and broadcast media in areas under its control are tightly regulated. The LTTE has been known to execute those who criticize it or disagree with its policies. The Constitution provides for freedom of assembly and association, but these rights are restricted under provisions of the ER and the PTA.

Women and Minority Rights

Sri Lankan women have equal rights under national civil and criminal law. However, questions related to family law are subject at the local level to the customary law of each particular ethnic or religious group. The Constitution guarantees equality in public sector employment, but women have no legal protection against discrimination in the private sector. Women's rights activists say that sexual assault and other forms of violence against women are common in Sri Lanka but that for cultural and social reasons women are unlikely to report such abuse. There are no de jure impediments of women's participation in politics or government, but the social mores of some communities have the effect of inhibiting women's participation in activities outside the home. Although they are underrepresented, women serve at senior levels in both sectors.

Tamils have long believed, with some justification, that they continue to suffer systematic discrimination in competition for university entrance, employment opportunities, and other matters under government control. However, there has been no evidence of systematic or official discrimination in university enrollment or government employment for the past 3 years, and the Government has made efforts to eliminate discrimination based on language. Still there were over 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in refugee camps in southern India at the beginning of 1992, although some 30,000 were returned to Sri Lanka throughout the course of the year. The indigenous people of Sri Lanka, known as Veddas, have resisted government attempts to integrate them into Sri Lankan society, preferring to maintain their traditional way of life. The Constitution establishes Buddhism as the official religion, which the Government must "protect and foster." It also provides for the rights of other faiths, including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, to practice their religions freely.

*** In early May 1993 both President Ranasinghe Premadasa and the leader of the opposition were assassinated in separate incidents.***

THAILAND
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 3
Civil Liberties: 4
Freedom Rating: Partly Free

Democracy Background
Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with an elected, democratic government. The country's history has been marked by frequent military coups and powerful military-bureaucratic influence over political life. The King exerts strong informal influence. The year began with a caretaker Government which had been in power since the military coup of February 1991. Procedurally correct elections were held in March under a new Constitution. In May prodemocracy Thais took to the streets to protest continued military influence in the political process and the appointment of General Suchinda Khaprayun as Prime Minister. Military suppression of the demonstrations led to the death of at least 52 protesters and the injury and disappearance of hundreds more. After the intervention of the King and increasing international pressure, Suchinda stepped down on May 24 and another caretaker Government was formed. New elections, held on September 13, were hailed as the freest and fairest in Thailand's history, and gave power to an opposition coalition under civilian Prime Minister Chuan Likphai.

HUMAN RIGHTS

With the September elections and the restoration of democratic rule, Thai citizens enjoy a wide range of civil liberties under one of the most open and progressive governments in Thai history. Besides the shooting of demonstrators in May by government troops, other areas of human rights abuse in 1992 included instances of extrajudicial killing of criminal suspects and abuse of prisoners by police and government failure to prosecute offenders; legal and societal discrimination against women; violence against women and children; and some restrictions on freedom of speech and press.

Respect for Political Rights
The military, either through undue influence or outright coups, has often denied the Thai people the right to change their Government. But with the September victory of the civilian political parties representative democracy appears more secure than heretofore.

Respect for Civil Liberties
While Thai citizens generally enjoy a substantial measure of freedom of speech, such legal restrictions as the prohibition on defaming, insulting, or threatening the royal family; defaming the character of other persons; advocating a Communist system of government; and speaking in a manner likely to incite

disturbances, threaten national security, or insult religion, effectively limit this freedom. The privately owned press practices self-censorship with regards to criticism of the monarchy and, to a lesser degree, the military and the Buddhist hierarchy. Thai governments have maintained significantly tighter control over the electronic media than they have over the press. Radio stations are government licensed and operated by government, military, and private entities as commercial enterprises. They are required to broadcast government-produced newscasts four times daily and a military-produced commentary once a day, but are free to originate other news and commentary. In September the Government authorized the establishment of two new, privately owned television channels in what was seen as an important expansion of freedom of the press. While the Thai legal system generally recognizes the right to peaceful assembly, in practice government officials at times act to restrict this right. The Government has not interfered with peaceful public gatherings subsequent to the May violence.

Women and Minority Rights

Women generally have equal legal rights in Thailand, with specific guarantees of equality with men in the areas of matrimonial property, the right to choose habitation and employment, and child custody. Legal inequality remains in the area of divorce rights. Reliable data on the overall extent of abuse of women and children are not available, however, those with extensive experience in the field believe family violence is prevalent across all social classes and the number of such cases is rising. Law enforcement in this area has not been vigorous. Prostitution is acknowledged within Thailand as one of the country's most troubling social problems. Women are well represented in the labor force and are becoming increasingly so in professional positions, particularly those in the commercial sector. Women continue to be concentrated in traditionally lower paid jobs, and there is a significant gap between average salaries earned by men and women, despite government regulations requiring employers to pay equal wages for equal work.

Thailand has made considerable progress in integrating its minorities, but problems remain. Fewer than half of the members of hill tribes are believed to possess documentation of Thai citizenship, which effectively bars them from participation in the political process. Additionally, credible sources report that many hill tribe members have been subjected to deportation or resettlement efforts. Muslims are a significant minority but remain underrepresented in the political process, the professions, and in higher education. The community of Vietnamese which settled in Thailand in the 1940's and 1950's still are not eligible for Thai citizenship and live under a set of laws and regulations restricting its members' movements, residences, education, and occupations. Freedom of religion is generally practiced and protected by law and custom. The de facto state religion is Theravada Buddhism, but other faiths are not restricted.

VIETNAM
1992 DEMOCRACY PROFILE

Freedom House Ratings (on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 as most free)

Political Rights: 7
Civil Liberties: 7
Freedom Rating: Not Free

Democracy Background
The Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) remains a Communist one-party state ruled by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) through a 13-member Politburo and a Communist Party Central Committee of 146 members nominally elected by a party congress held about every 5 years. Government policies, carried out under the Council of Ministers, reflect guidelines--if not specific directives--laid down by the Politburo. The new Constitution promulgated in 1992 contains a new emphasis on the rule of law.

HUMAN RIGHTS

A new amendment states that "all human rights" are to be respected. However, human rights abuses in the SRV continued. They include severe restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association, and on the right of citizens to change their government. The government crackdown on dissent begun in the spring of 1990, continued in 1992. In addition, the Government continued a program that over the years has resettled hundreds of thousands of people--some forcibly--into "new economic zones" (NEZ's). On the other hand, it remains easier to travel abroad and inside the country than was the case a few years ago. People talk much more freely with foreigners, and there is an increasing separation between the party and the State. All remaining military officers and official of the former Government of Vietnam who had been incarcerated since 1975 were released between the end of 1991 and early summer of 1992. The Government continued its efforts to implement Party Directive 135, which calls for the arrest of those who incite opposition to the Government or advocate political pluralism. Over the years people have been sentenced to long prison or reeducation camp terms for such "crimes." The Government continues to operate a nationwide system of surveillance and control through household registration and party-appointed block wardens who use informants to keep track of individual activities.

Respect for Political Rights
Citizens are not free to change their government. All authority and political power is vested in the VCP, political opposition is not tolerated, and no other political parties are tolerated. No challenge to the legitimacy of the one-party state, or even debate on this subject, is permitted. The Central Committee of the VCP is the supreme decisionmaking body in the nation; its 13-member Politburo is the locus of policymaking. Citizens elect members of the National Assembly, ostensibly the chief legislative body, but are still constrained by party guidance.

The 395 delegates were elected in the summer of 1992. Candidates for the National Assembly election were carefully screened, and credible reports indicate that many people who wished to become candidates were not permitted to run because their views were not considered reliable.

Respect for Civil Liberties

The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, but in practice such freedoms are severely limited. The Government owns and operates broadcast media and does not permit the airing of opposing views, although it has broadcast reports of debates during National Assembly meetings. Party organs and the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports, and Tourism control all newspapers, books, and other publications, as well as all cultural exhibitions. The party continued to tolerate criticism concerning the performance of the party or of persons deemed to be corrupt or incompetent. However, questioning the legitimacy of the VCP or its exclusive vanguard role is not tolerated. The Government does not use systematic prior censorship to control the media, but guidance from party watchdogs is pervasive, and national security legislation is sufficiently broad to encourage effective self-censorship in the media. A pervasive system of informants also chills free speech to a considerable extent. The right of assembly is restricted in law and practice. Demonstrations are discouraged; those which take place are occasionally forcibly suppressed. Nongovernmental organizations are permitted, but they may meet only for approved and narrowly defined objectives.

Women and Minority Rights

In general, women do not appear to face discrimination in employment. However, they face problems competing with men for higher status positions owing to attitudes deeply ingrained in traditional Vietnamese society. Such problems persist in spite of governments efforts to mold popular attitudes to conform with the Constitution, legislation, and regulations mandating equal treatment before the law in virtually all respects. There are no statistics available on the frequency of violence against women within the home.

Many citizens still face discrimination in employment, education, and social services, or are subject to relocation in NEZ's, based on family background or political views, although less than in previous years. Priority in social services is given to families of party members and families of soldiers who fought for the Government. Vietnam has no state religion and adherence to a religion is not permitted for party members. However, freedom of worship is provided for in the Constitution, along with the proviso that no one may use religious adherence or belief to violate state laws and policies. The Government has regularly detained and arrested religious figures of all faiths on political grounds and restricted their activities.