

## PREFACE

In this edition we introduce maps for each sovereign state to show its relative position and territorial extent within a continent, sub-continent or ocean. It is hoped these will greatly improve the speed and precision with which countries can be located and visualized in their geo-political context. This will be especially helpful with the 23 new states which have made their appearance since the beginning of the decade. Eritrea, having seceded peacefully from Ethiopia, is the only newcomer in this volume, but the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia now takes its place under 'M'.

Sadly, a phrase from last year's Preface, 'inter-ethnic fighting and atrocities are continuing despite the peacekeeping efforts of the international community', still applies unaltered to Bosnia-Herzegovina. And as we go to press, two presidents and a prime minister are assassinated in Africa, a reminder that there are many less-publicized conflicts still unresolved, in Afghanistan, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bougainville, Burundi, Cambodia, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan and Western Sahara. However, there has been positive progress in Israel and South Africa towards a peaceful settlement of ethnic strife, and other significant developments recorded in this edition include Russia's first post-Communist elections, Italy's restructured parliament, Belgium's movement towards full federalism and the successful conclusion of GATT's cliffhanging Uruguay Round.

Beginning with 1993, figures for UK trade with EU countries have been based on VAT returns instead of customs receipts (as is still the case with the rest of the world), and it is regretted that these figures were not available in time for inclusion.

The editor would like to express his profound gratitude to all the correspondents and colleagues who have contributed to this edition, and in particular to the typesetters for their collaboration in the production of the maps.

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