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CRIME IN INDONESIA

- Crime can be a problem in Indonesia, particularly in major urban centers like Jakarta and Surabaya, but overall is not considered a serious threat. Indonesia's murder rate of 8 homicides per 100,000, relatively low. Jakarta is a remarkably safe city. Even in the vast slums where the state is absent and the gangs rule, the atmosphere of violence is much lower than in other cities in other country.
- Typical crimes Indonesia include local thugs extorting protection money in markets and hiring out their services to corrupt businessmen; armed men robbing cars in the way to the airports; taxi drivers sometimes robbing their passengers; and poor people raiding shrimp farms and rice fields. Among the kinds of crimes that sometimes occur are carjackings, theft, kidnapping, fraud, financial crimes, cyber crimes, transportation security, religious violence, separatist violence, elections, religious terrorism, ings, drug trafficking, counterfeiting, bribery and, extortion.
- Through several sources, the Regional Security Office has gathered data and statistics for Jakarta outlining criminal activities and trends. Due to the reluctance of many expatriates and Indonesians to report criminal activity, these statistics should not be taken at face value but as a reflection of the ongoing work the Indonesian National Police (INP) are doing to safeguard those in Indonesia. Jakarta has a population of approximately 9,580,000 residents. For 2011, there were reported 54,799 violent crimes, 64 murders, 68 rapes, 1,936 aggravated assaults, 6,807 burglaries, 7,702 thefts and 5,352 vehicle thefts. The general crime rates on a per capita basis must be taken into context, as Indonesia's crime rate is lower than similar crimes reported in western hemisphere cities such as Los Angeles, New York, London, and Paris. [Source: Indonesia 2012 Crime and Safety Report U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)<>]
- Armed car-jacking, theft of vehicles and non-violent residential break-ins do occur in Indonesia. Personal and "snatch-and-grab" robberies are the most common type of crime and have occurred regularly to expatriates. There continues to be crimes committed against people taking disreputable and freelance taxis. These types of crimes usually involve the driver taking his passenger(s) -- usually women -- to a remote area where a group of armed men rob them of their jewelry, cell phones, money, and any other items of value such as ATM cards and force the victim(s) to reveal his or her PIN codes so that the assailants could obtain cash. In a few instances, the criminals drove with the victim in the taxi to an ATM machine and forced them to withdraw cash. Visitors should use only reputable taxi companies such as Blue Bird, Silver Bird, or Express and avoid public mass transit platforms such as buses and trains. <>
- Pick-pocketing is another crime that both locals and visitors fall victim to, with most pick pocketing occurring in crowded areas such as the mass transit system or in restaurants/bars. Fortunately, Indonesian criminals are normally reluctant to use force and usually do not harm their victims unless confronted with violence. Credit card and debit card crimes continue to be a concern. The bulk of this type of crime involves dishonest employees of smaller businesses, shops, and restaurants who will either copy down the details of the credit card/debit card or attempt to "swipe" it through a "skimmer" device, enabling them to make fraudulent cards using valid credit card numbers. The RSO recommends limiting credit card use to major hotel chains, high-end restaurants, and well-known businesses. Internet fraud is also on the rise, as it is in every other country in the world. <>

Moderately Rising Crime Rate in Indonesia

- Indonesia, like many nations, has experienced a rising crime rate as a by-product of increased urbanization and the social and economic dislocations associated with national development. The scope of the crime problem is difficult to gauge, but conditions such as large numbers of unemployed or underemployed people in the cities, a lack of jobs for high school and university graduates, and a breakdown in traditional systems of social control often are cited as responsible for the increase in crime. By the start of the twenty-first century, the annual increase in crime was moderate. Both the authorities and the public, however, continued to be concerned about the increasingly violent nature of Indonesian society. [Source: Library of Congress *]
- The crime rate has increased significantly in recent years, but fortunately it remains mostly non-violent and guns are rare. Robbery, theft and pickpocketing are common in Indonesia, particularly in markets, public transport and pedestrian overpasses. Avoid flashing jewelry, gold watches, MP3 players or large cameras. Thieves have been known to snatch laptops, PDAs and cellphones from Internet hotspot areas.
- Crime always increases before the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. This is due to the pressure of providing gifts for family members and obtaining money to return to their villages for the holiday Eid Al-Fitri, which is extremely important to the majority of Indonesians. Throughout Jakarta specifically and Indonesia in general, there have been several incidents in which expatriates were victims of drink-spiking and robbed as unwilling victims by either females in hotel rooms or their male companions while en route to a hotel. There were several cases of kidnapping in Jakarta that had little impact on the expatriate community. These kidnappings were primarily cases involving Indonesians only and were typically financially motivated, and the perpetrators were familiar with the victim's family. [Source: Indonesia 2012 Crime and Safety Report U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)<->]
- Indonesia has a relatively low crime rate and Indonesians are generally a very law-abiding people. Violent crime almost never occurs and petty crime is rare but occurs. Pickpockets, thieves and scam artist are sometimes active in places like Kuta in Bali where there are lots of tourists. Pickpockets are active in crowded places like markets and bus and train stations. In Kuta, gangs of children selling necklaces have a reputation for being pick pockets. On Java and Sumatra, sometimes also open the bags of tourists. There are a lot of scam artists active in Indonesia. They include shady money changers in Kuta that short-change you; aggressive batik salesmen in Yogyakarta; and girls that hang out in the Monkey Forest of Ubud and take you their home, give you a hard luck story and try to extract money.
- According to expatfocus.com: "Crime is rampant on local and long-distance public transport (bus, train, ships). Do not accept drinks from strangers, as they may be laced with drugs. Choose your taxis carefully in cities (hotel taxis are often best), lock doors when inside and avoid using cellular phones, MP3 players, PDAs or laptops at traffic lights or in traffic jams. Do not place valuable items in checked baggage, as they may be stolen by baggage handlers. Do not leave valuable items in an empty hotel rooms, and use the hotel's safe deposit box instead of the in-room safe. Do not draw large amounts of cash from banks or ATMs. Guard your belongings carefully and consider carrying a money clip instead of a wallet. [Source: expatfocus.com]

Drug Crimes and Narco-Terrorism

- According to expatfocus: "Indonesia has extremely harsh punishments for drug offenses — visitors are greeted with cheery "DEATH TO DRUG TRAFFICKERS" signs at airports and recent cases have seen long jail terms for simple possession — but drugs are still widely available. By far the most common is marijuana (known as gele or cimeng), which is not only sold to tourists but is used as food in some parts of the country, notably Aceh. Magic mushrooms are advertised openly in parts of Bali and Lombok, and hard drugs are common in the Jakarta nightlife scene. Still, it's highly advisable to steer well clear or, at very least, be very discreet as entrapment and drug busts are common and you really, really don't want to get involved with the Indonesian justice system; thanks to the anti-corruption drive, you cannot even count on being able to bribe your way out anymore." [Source: expatfocus.com]
- Due to an increase in drug trafficking activities throughout Indonesia in 2011, the INP and National Narcotics Board (BNN) continued to seize large quantities of crystal methamphetamine (known locally as shabu). In addition, authorities discovered several clandestine methamphetamine laboratories capable of producing large quantities of this dangerous drug. Indonesian Customs, INP, and BNN stationed at the air and seaports of major cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, Bali, and Medan continue to arrest drug couriers from many nations. Further investigation of many of these smuggling attempts has revealed that Indonesia has become a primary destination for drugs smuggling operations controlled by Iranian and West-African drug trafficking organizations. In addition to large volumes of methamphetamine, law enforcement officials have seen an increase in heroin seizures and also have seized large volumes of synthetic drugs including ecstasy and ketamine. The demand for illegal drugs in Indonesia, with a growing population in already-over-crowded cities, remains high. As a result, INP and BNN continue to coordinate with other foreign and domestic law enforcement agencies to stem the steady flow of illegal drugs into Indonesia. [Source: Indonesia 2012 Crime and Safety Report U.S. Department of State, Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)]

Ninjas and Mob Violence in Indonesia

- In 1998, 300 people were killed in central and eastern Java by vigilantes, some of them masked and dressed in black like ninjas, and armed with sickles, machetes, swords and metal bars. Most of the victims were accused of being sorcerers or practitioners of black magic. But some were also believed to be targets of retribution by former communists or their families for violence in the 1960s. Some of the ninja murders were carefully planned, and carried by black-clad men who first cut the electricity to the victims home and then pulled up in a truck to make the attack.
- Many of victims were killed around the East Javan town of Banyuwangi. Some victims had been cut into pieces and had their body parts hung from tree branches. Others had big "X"s slashed on their back. East Java has a long history violence and belief in sorcery. The area around Banyuwangi was also one of the first places where people lashed out against the Chinese in anti-Chinese violence around the time Suharto was ousted. It also is said to have one of the highest concentrations of *dukun santet* in Indonesia. One victim was a worker at a fish processing plant who was accused of dealing in black magic. To fend off such accusations he went as far as having an elaborate ceremony performed at a mosque to swear he had never engaged in sorcery. All was for naught. A member of vigilante group that murdered him told Time, "His head was split open with an axe. He had been stabbed with a sickle— twice in the back and once in the side. His intestines were hanging out."
- The ninja violence is believed to have been triggered by frustration over Indonesia's economic troubles around the time of Suharto's resignation. Some of the ninja vigilantes are believed to have been Suharto loyalists attempting to stir up trouble, especially against members of the New Awakening (NU) political party. A Western diplomat told Newsweek, "Some of the killings, especially those of the NU religious leaders, seems to be deliberately planned and masterminded by elements of the national political and military elite. It is not unlike a military-style psychological-warfare operation aimed at sowing confusion and terror among the enemy."

Gory Violence Against "Ninjas"

- Other victims of violence at that were people believed to be ninjas. Some said these ninjas practiced black magic and were able to conjure up disguises out of thin air and turn into cats and leap into trees to avoid capture. Others were victims of acts of retribution against the ninja-vigilante assassins. And others still were mentally retarded people or people accused of being strange.
- Describing an attack on a railway worker in the Malang district of Java with a history of depression, Ron Moreau wrote in Newsweek, "Zaenel Arifin was confronted by nervous villagers in the grip of rumors that ninjas were in the neighborhood, prepared to kill. They crowded around Zaenel and began chanting 'ninja, ninja' when he could not produce identification."
- Witness told Newsweek, "the vigilantes bound his hands and feet, and began hacking his body with curved knives and machetes used to cut sugar cane in Malang. One man chopped off Zanal's head, held in aloft and drank blood dripping from the neck to protect himself from the evil ninja spirit. 'The ninja is dead,' the crowd cried in victory. They paraded about with his head impaled on a knife, and dragged his body behind a motorcycle. for dozens of miles."

Severed Heads and Violence Against Madurese in Borneo

- In recent times, beheading by Dayak people resurfaced in Kalimantan, the Indonesian portion of Borneo, during brutal outbreaks of ethnic violence in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In 2001, over 500 Madurese immigrants were killed and tens of thousands forced to run away, with the bodies of some victims decapitated in rituals. Conversion to Islam or Christianity and anti-headhunting legislation by the colonial powers were supposed to have wiped out headhunting.
- On violence in December 1996, Sinapan Samyodorai of Human Rights Solidairty wrote: "Initially the ethnic conflict between the indigenous Dayaks and migrants from Madura Island occurred in the Sanggu-Ledo District, about 100 kilometers north of the provincial capital Pontianak, West Kalimantan. The Dayaks rioted over the failure of local police to prosecute a Maduran man accused of raping a Dayak woman. The Dayaks later killed the Maduran man, inciting violent retaliations and provincewide conflict. The Dayaks of West Kalimantan have more confidence in adat, their own traditional tribal laws, than in the national police and justice system. The Dayaks also complain that migrant workers receive preferential treatment by local officials and are rarely prosecuted for breaking the law. The attacks are being waged using traditional rules: a life for a life. An offense against an individual is an offense against the whole tribe. [Source:Sinapan Samyodorai, Human Rights Solidairty, August 14, 2001¹⁴]"
- In late January 1997, a Catholic school in In Pontianak, Kalimantan attended by Dayak children was attacked and set on fire. In retaliation, Dayak youths attacked the Madurese, leading to massive violent clashes. In early February 1997, military reinforcements landed overnight in West Kalimantan. More then 3,000 troops were flown into the region following the outbreak of riots. The Indonesian military conducted a harsh crackdown leading to scores of deaths to restore order with force. The military arrested 86 people. Of those detained, 12 were being questioned by the military while the rest were in police detention.¹⁵
- On February 6, 1997, the conflict escalated into violent, massive clashes. In Menjalin parish in Pontianak, the Catholic dormitory received 5,000 Dayak refugees from neighbouring villages. The refugees were mostly women and children scared of Madurese attacks. The Dayaks are only 2 percent of the population in Pontianak. The Dayak refugees sought protection from Madurese revenge. On February 18, clashes erupted in Sungai Kunyit about 60 kilometers northwest of the provincial capital of Pontianak. Dayak warriors looted more than 100 houses and stores belonging to the Madurese. The police estimated that 100 to 300 people may have died in the riots. ¹⁶

- Five thousand Dayak warriors rampaged through the town and attacked the villages of Merabu, Kampung Jawa and Jirak, plus four transmigration sites. These Dayak warriors from the forest hinterland killed Madurese around the area of Pontianak, one of the three regions where the killings occurred. Christian church leaders claim the number of Madurese missing or dead is in the thousands and that the Dayak casualties, shot by troops, are less than 200. More than 1,000 displaced people fled the district, and some are in refugee camps controlled by the military. The damage caused is estimated to be in the amount of US\$4 million, including the destruction of nearly 1,000 homes. ^|^
- Dayaks, armed with spears and machetes, attacked a road block in Anjungan guarded by the military, resulting in the killing of one soldier. The troops shot and killed about 20 Dayaks. Areas north of Anjungan, 55 kilometers northeast of Pontianak, and east of Mandor, 70 kilometers north of Pontianak, were still under Dayak control with minimal military presence. There were Dayak checkpoints on roads leading to Ngabang, 81 kilometers east of Mandor. About one million Dayaks in an act of solidarity may continue to attack the Madurese and even the military if they block their path. It is alleged and widely believed that the army itself has killed large numbers of Dayaks - killings it now wants to cover up. ^|^
- On February 15, 1997, Dayak and Madurese community elders declared a peace pact in Pontianak to prevent further unrest, but it failed to stop the clashes in Sungai Kunyit. The ceremony for peace involved about 1,000 people, including the Dayak and Madurese communities, local government and military leaders. A declaration was read in which community leaders from the various ethnic groups, including the Dayak and Madurese, pledged to work for peace. The ceremony had no impact on the fighting parties at the village level.

Violence and Decapitated Madurese Heads in Borneo in 1999

- In 1999, more than 3,000 people were killed and 40,000 of were displaced when Malays, Bugis and Chinese backed by Dayak tribesmen attacked Madurese immigrants in West Kalimantan. The trouble reportedly began after a dispute over a bus fare. In one incident in March 1999, more than 200 people were killed, mostly Madurese by Dayak tribesmen, in the Sambas district of Borneo. The violence began after the murder of a Dayak boy. One Madurese survivor told Asiaweek, "We were hunted like dogs." He said he and his family lived in the forest for a week, surviving off snakes and bark. He was eventually picked up by an army patrol and taken to a refugee camp.
- During one week in March 1999, 73 people were killed in rural areas around the town of Singkawang in West Kalimantan. Many of the dead were horrible mutilated and their body parts were paraded around and displayed. Witnesses reported that Dayaks and Malays decapitated three Madurese, and parading their heads through the town of Tebas. The body of one man was cooked in the marketplace and small pieces of his liver were offered to bystanders. Many people accepted. Dayaks have traditionally believed that eating one's enemy allows one to absorb their courage.
- During the wave of violence Dayak paraded through the streets carrying severed ears, arms and heads. CNN videotaped images of dismembered bodies with their hearts cut out and boys playing soccer with a decapitated head. The Independent reported a laughing man with a severed arm posing for photographs with it as if it were a trophy fish.
- Richard Lloyd Parry of the Independent wrote, "I saw my sixth and seventh heads...in a Dayak village...They were visible from a few hundred yards away, standing on oil drums, with a crowd of about 200 people milling around...In the past six days I have seen seven of them, along with a severed ear, two arms, and numerous pieces of heart and liver, and a dismembered torso cooked over a fire by the side of the road."
- "They look like all the other heads I had seen...They were a middle aged couple, a few years younger than my own parents. Their ears and lips had been shaved off with machetes, giving them a snarling sub-human look. The wife's nose had also been removed, and a cigarette had been pressed into the cavity. Her eyes were clenched tight shut, and above them an atrocious wound had been cut deep into her forehead."

Cannibalism of Madurese in Borneo

- Parry met one man with a machete with a red painted handle carved in the shape of a horse. Tied to his belt was transparent bag with some liver in it. He said the liver came from a body they cooked on the side of the road. "We killed it and we ate it," he said, "because we hate the Madurese. Mostly we shoot them first, and we chop the body. It tastes just like chicken. Especially the liver—just the same as chicken."
- The man then explained he didn't kill babies and children had to be around 13 or 15 before he would kill them. After the man left, Lloyd' driver told him, "You know I've been all over this country—to Sumatra, to Java...and these people—they're the nicest, the friendliest, the best."
- Parry wrote: "We drove back through the town market where a charred femur lay on the road among the embers of a fire. A Dayak man approached, holding a lump of what he said was human meat. He popped it into his mouth. I asked him the first thing that came into my head, and he said: 'Delicious.'"

Violence and Decapitated Madurese Heads in Borneo in 2001

- Ten days of violence in Central Kalimantan in February 2001, left at least 500 people dead, most of them Madurese migrants. Much of the violence was centered around the towns of Sampit and Palangkaraya and reportedly began after two Dayaks, who lost their jobs, paid a mob to attack Madurese family house and the Madurese retaliated, killing 15 Dayaks. Again the scenes were horrific. Victims had their hearts ripped out of

their bodies and their heads chopped off. In one incident a woman was beheaded and her baby was killed and the woman's head was kicked down the street like a soccer ball.

- Tens of thousands of Madurese were loaded onto ships and evacuated. Most fled so quickly they left their possessions behind. The Madurese claimed that the Indonesian government did not do enough to protect them. They claimed Indonesian police stood by and did nothing as Dayaks looted and set fire to Madurese homes and attacked Madurese with machetes and spears. An elite military unit sent by the Indonesian government to help evacuate the Madurese and restore order fled the area after Dayak tribesmen threatened to behead them.
- Gangs of Dayak tribesmen armed with spears, machetes and blowguns tracked down Madurese and set up roadblock to keep them from escaping. Their aim was to drive the Madurese away. A spokesman for the Dayaks said, The violence was aimed at "cleansing the Madurese...If all our Madurese brothers are evacuated then the calm will come on its own...If they ever come back they will face the same treatment."
- The effort was largely successful from the Dayaks point of view. Around 50,000 Madurese were driven from their homes. About 21,000 were evacuated to East Java and Madura. Another 30,000 were forced into refugee camps in Central Kalimantan. As of late 2001, 40,000 Madurese displaced by the violence were living in camps in West Kalimantan

Indonesian Man Kills 42 Women in Ritual Slayings

- In 2008, Indonesia executed a man convicted of killing 42 women and girls in a series of ritual slayings he believed would give him magical powers. Associated Press reported: "Ahmad Suradji, 57, was killed by firing squad in western Indonesia." "He appeared resigned to his fate," said Attorney General Office's spokesman Bonaventura Nainggolan. "His final wish was to see his wife. We fulfilled this." [Source: Associated Press, July 11, 2008 <<<]
- "Suradji was arrested in May 1997 following the discovery of a body in a field close to this house in Lubukpakan, a village in North Sumatra province. Forty-one other corpses were later found nearby. Police have said the victims came to Suradji because they believed he had supernatural powers. The victims were believed to have been seeking his help in making their husbands or boyfriends faithful, find a partner or get rich. <<<
- "He lured them to the field and buried them up to the waist, telling them it was part of the ritual. He then strangled them and buried their bodies with the heads pointing toward his house. He has told police he believed the 11-year killing spree would boost his magical powers. Suradji's wife, Tumini, was also sentenced to death for assisting with the murders, but her sentence was later reduced to life in prison. <<<
- Belief in sorcery and the supernatural is common across Indonesia, especially in poor, rural areas where education levels are low. Media reports said authorities were forced to cancel a plan to bury Suradji's body in a public cemetery because up to 100 relatives of his victims were waiting there, planning to disrupt the funeral.
- After he was convicted in 1998, the BBC reported: "Achmad Suradji was convicted at a court near the regional capital of Medan, Sumatra after several weeks of testimony from witnesses who said their relatives had disappeared after visiting him. There were cheers from a large crowd in the courtroom as the verdict was read out. More than 100 people had packed into the small courtroom while as many followed the proceedings outside on a television screen. Suradji remained impassive throughout. He was arrested in April 2007 after a woman's body was found buried in a sugar cane field. She was last seen alive at his home. Suradji allegedly told police that since 1986 he had killed 42 women as part of a ritual to improve his healing powers. Police have since unearthed all 42 bodies from the field. [Source: BBC, April 27, 1998 *-*]
- "The sorcerer said he began his killing spree after his late father contacted him in a dream and ordered him to murder 70 women in a black magic ritual. After strangling his victims, Suradji claimed he drank their saliva, believing it would improve his powers as a sorcerer. Suradji, who uses the alias Nasib Datuk Kelewang, was consulted by those seeking spiritual healing and good fortune. Many were thought to be seeking his help to make their husbands or boyfriends faithful. One of his three wives, Tumini, is charged with complicity in the crimes and is currently on trial at a separate court there. *-*
- "A graphic film about the case has already been released throughout Indonesia. Suradji's lawyers have protested that this has prevented their client from receiving a fair trial. But according to the BBC's correspondent, these gruesome killings appear to have made no impact on the appetite for mystical guidance here. Sorcerers say that since Indonesia's economic crisis began, they have never had so many customers." *-*

Japanese Murdered in Indonesia

- In December 2009, a Japanese woman was found dead on Bali with multiple stab wounds and her legs tied together. Associated Press reported: "The naked body of Hiromi Shimada, 41, was found in the house she rented near the popular tourist coastal town of Kuta, Bali provincial police spokesman Col. Gede Sugianyar said. "We found her body in bad condition with several stab wounds in her stomach," Sugianyar said. In a separate slaying case of a Japanese tourist, police have arrested a man for the death of Rika Sano, 33, who was killed in September near Bali's Kuta beach. They arrested David Goltar Wicaksono, 26, in early October and he is being held on suspicion of murder. [Source: Associated Press, December 27 2009]

- In July 2009, Indonesian police said they have arrested a man who allegedly murdered a Japanese pearl expert. Police said Suhaedi, 42, an employee of a pearl cultivation center in East Java Province where the victim Torao Inagaki worked as a consultant, has admitted he murdered the 49-year-old Japanese. "Preliminary investigation shows that revenge was the motive behind the murder," Andreas Wewengkang, head of the detective unit of local police, said. [Source: News agencies]
- In June 2010, the Jakarta Post reported: "Japanese national Yasuo Hara, 69, and his wife Mizue Hara, 67, were killed at their residence in Rawa Lele, Jombang, Tangerang, allegedly by a former domestic helper. Mizue Hara had been the chairwoman of a scholarship program called the Goodwill International foundation for the past 10 years, while Yasuo Hara was a retiree of the Jakarta. South Jakarta Police chief detective Comr. Nurdi Satriaji said they had arrested a suspect who had previously been employed by the couple as a domestic helper, and charged him with premeditated murder. [Source: Tertiani Simanjuntak and Hasyim Widhiarto, Jakarta Post, June 19 2010]
- "The police have also confiscated a knife, thought to be the murder weapon. They said the suspect claimed he felt hurt when the couple fired him after working for them for a month. However, another housekeeper, who has worked for the Haras for two years, said the couple treated people kindly.
- "Some neighbors, who recalled the couple as friendly and helpful, said they saw two men climbing over the fence of the Haras' house late Thursday. Believing the two to be thieves, the neighbors gave chase and managed to apprehend one of them, who immediately admitted he had just killed the couple. When the neighbors checked the Haras' house, they found the couple dead.

Image Sources:

Text Sources: New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Times of London, Lonely Planet Guides, Library of Congress, Compton's Encyclopedia, The Guardian, National Geographic, Smithsonian magazine, The New Yorker, Time, Newsweek, Reuters, AP, AFP, Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic Monthly, The Economist, Global Viewpoint (Christian Science Monitor), Foreign Policy, Wikipedia, BBC, CNN, and various books, websites and other publications.

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