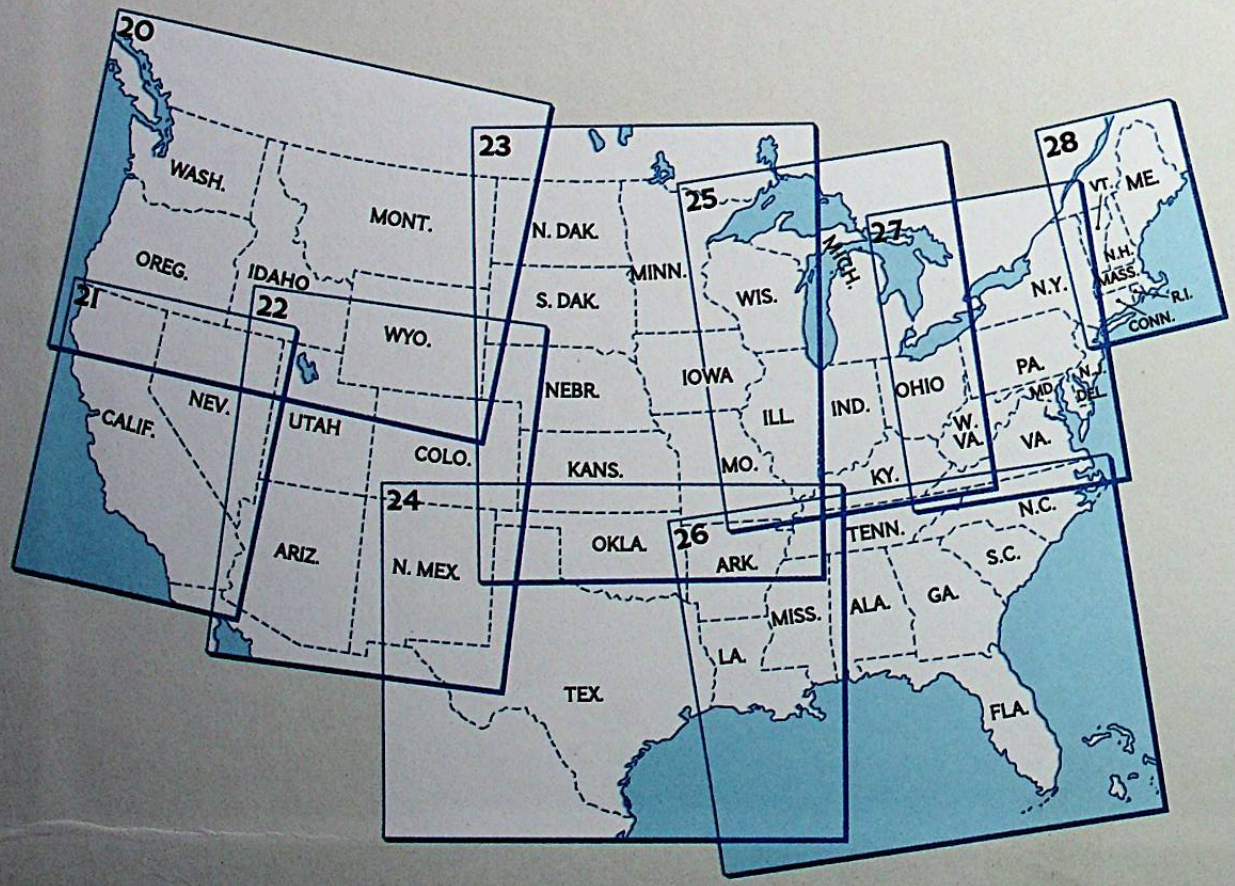

KEY TO ATLAS MAPS

WORLD AND CONTINENTAL MAPS

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FOREWORD

"A map is the greatest of all epic poems," declared the first full-time editor of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, Gilbert Hovey Grosvenor. "Its lines and colors show the realization of great dreams." That insight is proved once again in this second revision of the sixth edition of the *National Geographic Atlas of the World*. New nations, new capitals, new place-names—all reflect our turbulent recent history.

This latest atlas documents those changes up to press time. For the index alone, which contains more than 150,000 entries, nearly 3,500 place-names had to be redone. The sources of such change: the former Soviet republics, of course, but also Albania and the autonomous regions of Spain. We have made place-name revisions closer to home as well, in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Country profiles have been updated for each of the 191 nations currently recognized by our Cartographic Division. The Europe section features inset maps for the continent's newest capitals, including those of the Baltic States, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The great political strides of South Africa are made evident by what is not shown: No longer will the homelands of Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei, and Venda be depicted on atlas plates or other Society maps.

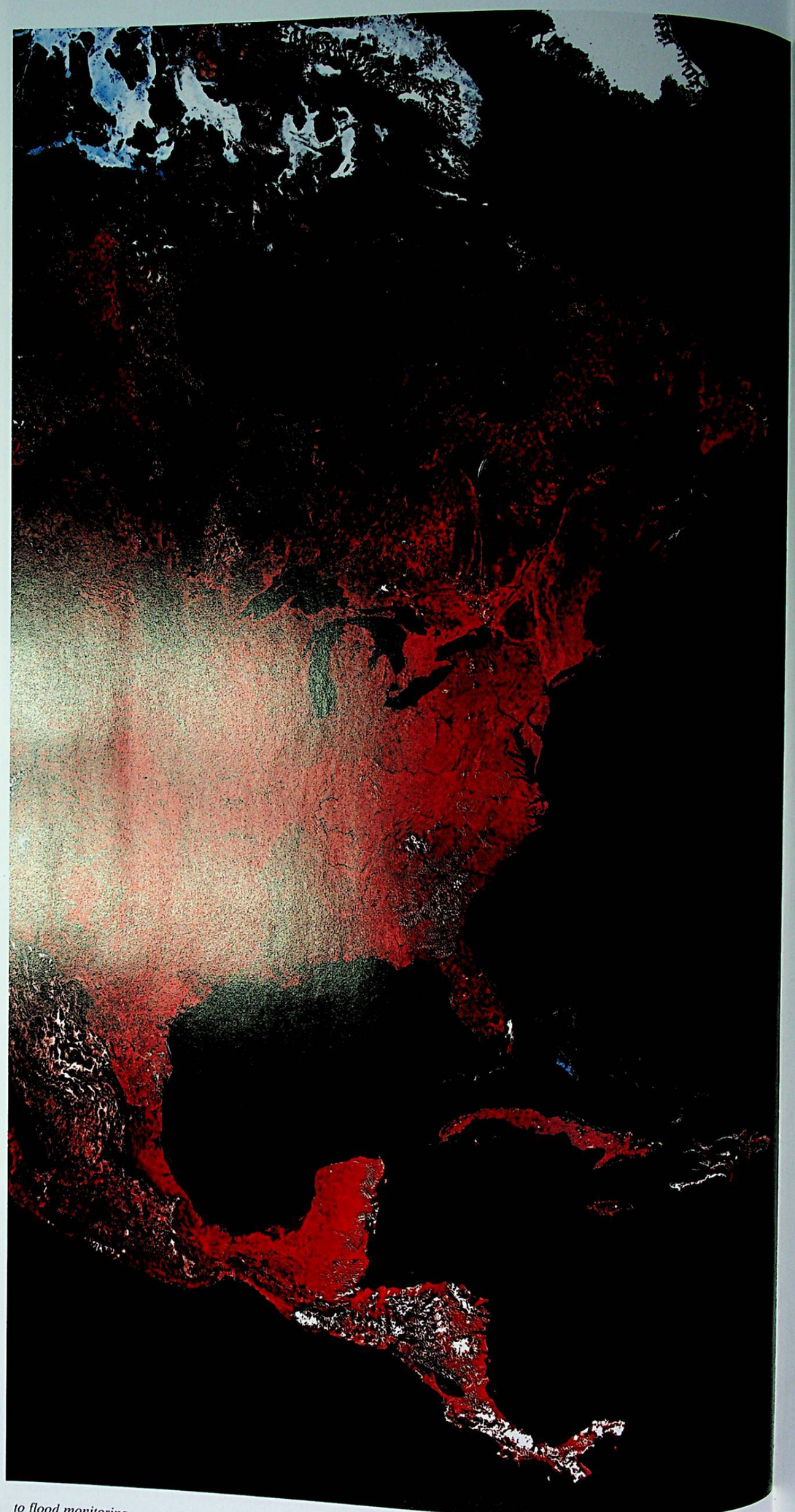
The atlas still offers unparalleled satellite images of earth, revealing the physical richness and stunning beauty of our planet. It also contains pioneering "environmental stress" maps of the continents, depicting the alarming extent of global threats such as tropical deforestation and acid rain.

In contrast to the advanced technology that produced many of the maps and images in this atlas, the volume itself was assembled in the oldest and most durable of ways—by hand. And, continuing the Society's goals of environmental preservation, none of the paper comes from virgin timber; all was supplied by commercial tree farms or by second- or third-growth forests that are privately owned and managed.

So, sit down with this comprehensive portrait of our planet earth and be prepared for an epic tale.

William L. Allen

EDITOR



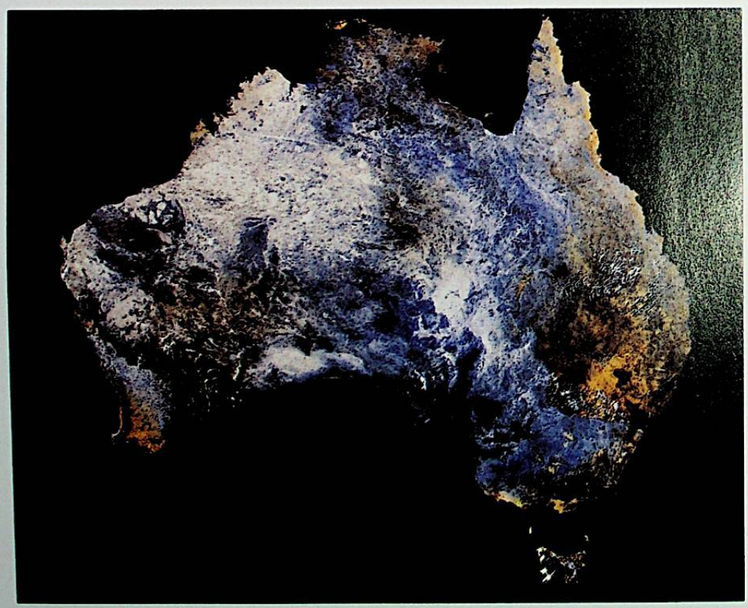
IMAGES FROM SPACE

New eyes opened on the world with the launching in 1972 of Landsat 1, the first satellite designed to observe earth's surface. Today satellite images are put to an array of uses from mineral exploration to flood monitoring.

Remote sensing is akin to reading. Skimming a page, the eye detects dark and light areas, which the brain translates into letters and words. A satellite scans radiation patterns on the globe in infrared and other wavelengths, and computers process the data into an image. Infrared light reflects strongly from vegetation, conventionally shown in red.

A continental mosaic begins with a review of hundreds of images to find 20 to 50 suitable scenes, usually from the same season and time of day. These are registered to a base map and overlap at first (left). Computer technicians adjust the data, reducing color variations for a coherent image (above).

Data for the continental mosaics in this atlas were collected in one-kilometer squares, providing outstanding high-resolution images of the world's landmasses.



PREFACE

Three years ago our cartographers revised the sixth edition of the *National Geographic Atlas of the World,* catching the winds of extraordinary change sweeping the globe. This second revision is a reminder that those winds have not calmed.

The political transformation of Europe continues, following the demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Czechoslovakia split peacefully into Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Elsewhere ethnic and religious violence persists, particularly in the nations of the former Yugoslavia. Throughout the region daunting economic challenges remain, as young nations move from state-controlled economies to free markets.

In search of economic cohesion, the European Union has made progress toward establishing a single currency and a common defense policy. A new sense of cooperation was celebrated May 6, 1994, when the United Kingdom and France opened the Channel Tunnel railway link.

New nations have appeared outside Europe as well. In Africa, Eritrea, after years of civil war and famine, declared independence from its much larger neighbor, Ethiopia. On October 1, 1994, Micronesia produced the world's newest independent nation—Palau, a small group of islands formerly administered by the United States.

In the Middle East limited Palestinian autonomy began in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho, while Israel and Jordan formally ended the 46-year state of war between them. Elsewhere, Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, ousted by the Haitian military, was restored to power with the aid of U. S. troops. Multiracial democracy took hold in South Africa, even as warfare between Rwanda's Hutu and Tutsi peoples decimated their nation and produced armies of refugees. How to keep up with it all?

We at the National Geographic Society could do only one thing: update our world atlas again. Our commitment to providing the most accurate, detailed maps and informative text possible has not wavered since we produced our first edition in 1963.

"As the interconnectedness of the world accelerates, the practical need for geographic knowledge becomes more critical. Imagine a doctor who treats diseases without understanding the environment in which the diseases thrive and spread." So declares *Geography for Life,* a publication announcing our nation's newly agreed-on standards for geographic education.

For students of every age, the *National Geographic Atlas of the World* is good medicine indeed.

Gilbert M. Grosvenor

PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN

The global portrait on the preceding pages, produced in natural-looking colors, is the first virtually cloud-free satellite image of the planet.

This portrait was created by artist Tom Van Sant and scientist Lloyd Van Warren of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory from visible and infrared data recorded between 1986 and 1989 by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellites. Orbiting at an altitude of 850 kilometers, the satellites scanned the surface in four-square-kilometer sections, or pixels.

Data from different times of the year were acquired to ensure the best lighting and maximum vegetation. A computer then converted the data into images. Van Sant reviewed the entire world and selected the best data for the final composite image, which comprises 35 million pixels. Geographic and elevation databases were used to verify and enhance drainage and relief.

Van Sant chose colors that would give a realistic view of the world. Gray-brown areas along coasts represent silt discharges of great rivers, algae blooms, or upwellings of cold, deep water.

TOM VAN SANT, SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA, AND L. VAN WARREN, NASA/JET PROPULSION LABORATORY, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA; DATA COURTESY NOAA

ATLAS OF THE WORLD

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