

## Turks & Caicos

**Overview:**

The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) is an archipelago situated southeast of the Bahamas in the Caribbean. It is an overseas dependent territory of the United Kingdom. TCI is comprised of an archipelago of two distinct island groups separated by the Turks Passage. There are eight main islands (of which 6 are inhabited) and more than 20 smaller islands, with the Turks to the southeast and the Caicos to the northwest. The TCI's economy is based primarily on tourism, fishing and offshore financial services. Most capital goods and food for domestic consumption are imported.

**Territory:**

The Turks and Caicos islands primarily consist of low, flat limestone with extensive marshes and mangrove swamps. The main islands are the 2 Turks islands to the southeast (Grand Turk and Salt Cay) and the 4 Caicos islands to the northwest (Providenciales, North Caicos, South Caicos, and Middle Caicos). East and West Caicos are uninhabited. There is also a chain of cays (keys) that run between Providenciales and North Caicos, most of which are privately owned. Land: 616.3 sq. km. Turks Main Islands: (Grand Turk: 11.2 km x 2.4 km., Salt Cay: 4 sq. km.) Caicos Main Islands: (Providenciales: 60 sq km., Middle Caicos: 76.8 sq km., North Caicos: 65.6 sq km., South Caicos: 13.6 sq km.) Highest Elevation: 49 meters. Coastline: 389 km.

**Location:**

Located in the North Atlantic Ocean 600 miles south-east of Miami, Florida and approximately 100 miles north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The islands form the south end of the Bahamas chain.

**Latitude and Longitude:**

21 22 N and 71 72 W

**Time Zone:**

GMT -5

**Total Land Area:**

616

**EEZ:**

200

**Climate:**

Tropical and dry, which is moderated by northeast trade winds. Low humidity (60%). Annual mean temperature 28 C., rainfall <26 inches (Turks), 40 inches (Caicos). Subject to frequent hurricanes.

**Natural Resources:**

Spiny lobster, conch, beaches and coral that foster tourism. White sand beaches (368 km), coral reefs and ocean walls provide some of the best diving sites in the world. Fresh water resources are limited.

**ECONOMY:**

Total GDP:	
2002	216,000,000.00 USD
2000	231,000,000.00 USD

Per Capita GDP:	
2002	11,500.00 USD

% of GDP per Sector:			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary

% of Population Employed by Sector			
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
2000	14.9%	23.3%	61.8%

**External Aid/Remittances:**

4.1 million (1997)

**Growth:**

Real growth rate: 4.9% (2000); Inflation rate: 4% (1995).

Labour Force:	
1990	4,848

Unemployment	
Year:	Unemployment Rate (% of pop.)
1997	10%

**Industry:**

Tourism, agriculture, fishing, offshore finance on the main islands as follows: 1. Grand Turk: the centre of Government and the location of the region's Financial Services Commission. It is at the forefront of a new economically prosperous era with public sector investment increasing and private sector interest on a sharp incline. Tourism remains lucrative, with deep-sea diving being the most popular tourist attraction on Grand Turk. Accommodation providers continue to prosper and major condominium development has begun to create additional capacity. International air carriers are considering non-stop flights to the new state-of-the-art airport. 2. Salt Cay: considered by UNESCO as a world heritage site largely divided into squares. There are a few small villas that accommodate tourists interested in whale watching and water sports. In order to boost the economy, the Government is currently encouraging "sensitive development," providing concessions on import duties and a land transfer rate of 2% for property valued over \$25,000 and 3% for properties valued over \$75,000. 3. Providenciales: "Provo" is the most well-known island in Turks and Caicos and is the centre of economic development that provides legal and accountancy firms, hotels and restaurants, retail outlets, golf and other sporting facilities. Residents, businesses, and investors are provided with state-of-the-art communications services as well as offshore banking services. Grace Bay is the tourist center of the region. With golf being its main attraction. The demand for additional services and industries such as light manufacturing, shipping, agriculture and fishing has increased as a direct result of tourism. Import duties and land transfer rates are significantly higher than other islands in the region. 4. North Caicos: known for its abundant woodlands, sea animals and birds. Tourism is its main industry which relies heavily on ecotour excursions from Provo. Craft cooperatives are productive on this island. Recent development includes the opening of Ministerial offices, the dredging of the Sandy Point dock, investment in the Horse Stable project and improvements to the Flamingo Pond observatory. The government is encouraging development by providing concessions on import duties and land transfer rates. 5. South Caicos: the fishing capital of the Turks and Caicos, boasting a natural harbor that successfully sustains a large population of lobster, conch and marine plants. Tourism is the island's main industry, with some of the most spectacular wall diving available. The island is also the location of the Boston University's School of Field Studies for marine biologists and underwater ecologists. There are currently two condominium projects underway on this island that will be easily accessed by its own international airport. The government is encouraging development by providing concessions on import duties and land transfer rates. 6. Middle Caicos: The main industry on Middle Caicos is tourism. An eco-haven, Middle Caicos is known for having the largest cave network in the northern Caribbean, as well as for its plantation ruins, craft cooperatives, extensive walking trail and abundant bird and marine life. Another industry that thrives on this island is agriculture. Medicinal herbs and plants, as well as fruits and vegetables thrive in this island's lush climate. There are a few small guest houses and one resort on the island, however, the Government is encouraging "sensitive development" in both agriculture and tourism ventures, providing concessions on import duties and a land transfer rate of 2% for property valued over \$25,000 and 3% for properties valued over \$75,000. 7. West Caicos: Although West Caicos is currently uninhabited, the government has invested in the development of a full service marina and a five star boutique hotel. Beach front plots will also be available for purchase, all in the near future. 8. East Caicos: Uninhabited.

**Niche Industry:**

diving, deep-sea fishing

**Tourism:**

Although the economic resources differ significantly between islands, the TCI's economy is based primarily on tourism, along with fishing and offshore financial services. The region's common natural resources include 368 km of white sand beaches, coral reefs and ocean walls which provide some of the best diving sites in the world.



<b>Imports and Exports:</b>	
External Budget: revenues: \$47 million; expenditures: \$33.6 million (1997/98); Exports: \$169.2 million (2000); Partners: US, UK; Imports: \$175.6 million (2000); Partners: US, UK; Debt - external: n/a.	
<b>Tot. Value of Imports</b>	175,600,000.00 USD (2000)
<b>From Eu:</b>	
<b>Import Partners (EU:)</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU:</b>	
<b>Import Partners:</b>	US, UK, Canada
<b>Tot. Value of Exports</b>	169200000 USD (2000)
<b>To Eu:</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	
<b>Partners Outside EU::</b>	
<b>Export Partners:</b>	US, UK, Canada
<b>Main Imports:</b>	
<b>Main Exports:</b>	

**TRANSPORTATION/ACCESS**

**External:**

**Number of Airports:**

Providenciales International Airport is the main entry point for the Turks and Caicos islands. Direct air services are provided by American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Air Canada, and British Airways from the US, Canada and Britain to the Turks and Caicos.

**Number of Main Ports:**

The territory's main international ports and harbours are on Grand Turk and Providenciales.

**Internal:**

**Air**

The islands have seven airports, located on each of the inhabited islands. Five have paved runways, three of which are around 2000 meters long and one around 1000 meters long. Two have unpaved runways, two of which are around 1000 meters long and one significantly shorter. Local airlines such as Bahamas Air, Air Jamaica Express, Sky King and Air Turks and Caicos provide scheduled as well as chartered services between islands.

**Road:**

The islands have no significant railways, and 121 kilometres of highway, 24 km paved and 97 km unpaved.

**Sea:**

Between island boat charters are available.

**Other Forms of Transportation:**

Taxis are available on all islands. Bike, scooter and car rentals are also available but there is a government tax placed on all rental vehicles which makes this mode of transportation expensive.

**Economic Zones:**

**Energy Policy:**

The islands produce and consume about 5 GWh of electricity, all from fossil fuel.

Year	Total Energy Production (Mwh)	Type			Total Energy Consumption (Mwh)	Sector					
		Thermic (Mwh)	Geothermic (Mwh)	Other (Mwh)		Domestic (Mwh)	Commercial (Mwh)	Public Service (Mwh)	Industry (Mwh)	Public Lighting (Mwh)	

**Official Currency:**

United States Dollar (USD)



**Banking and Insurance:**

Number of Banks and Credit Unions:  
 Number of Agricultural Credit Unions:  
 Number of Insurance Companies:

Retail banking services are provided by Barclays Bank, Bank of Nova Scotia, and Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. Private banking and asset management services are provided by several investment banks and trust companies. There is no restriction on the movement of funds into or out of TCI, and the fact that TCI's currency is the US dollar further facilitates money transfers. Foreign cheques and bank drafts may be deposited at banks in TCI, although clearance takes from three to six weeks. Policy instituted in 1979 aimed at minimizing the risk of money laundering means that the major banks will not accept large cash deposits and will not pay cash on large withdrawals.

**Financial Services:**

The introduction of The Companies Ordinance 1981 encouraged the development of the financial services sector in the Turks and Caicos. In 1989, the industry developed a more formal structure with the creation of the Financial Services Commission, which regulates and supervises all financial services activities. The Commission is headed up by the Financial Services Commissioner, who is appointed by and answerable to the British Governor. By 2003 the financial services industry was estimated to account for 15% of the country's 230 million dollar economy.

**Communications/E-Commerce:**

State of the art. Extensive government and private sector information available online. English.

**Public Ownership:**

There are no restrictions on the purchase of property in the Turks and Caicos. The only requirement of purchasers is that they sign a standard Offer form. The crown guarantees title, which eliminates the need for title insurance. Appropriate documents are sent to the Registrar of Lands for certification and Registry, which usually take 21 days to process. All properties must be purchased through an agency and there is a one-time stamp duty paid on all real estate transactions.

**Land Use:**

arable land (2.33%); permanent crops (0%); other (97.67%).

**Agriculture/Forestry:**

corn, beans, cassava (tapioca), fruits, medicinal herbs and plants

**Marine Activity:**

**Fishing:**

maritime claims: territorial sea: 12 nautical miles. An exclusive fishing zone: 200 nautical miles. Ports are located in Grand Turk and Providenciales.

**Marine Life:**

Limited natural fresh water resources. Citizens rely on privately owned rainwater catchments for their water supply.

**Critical Issues:**

Transshipment point for South American narcotics destined for the US and Europe. As a large offshore financial center, the region is vulnerable to money laundering.

**JURISDICTIONAL RESOURCES**

**Capital:**

Country name: Turks and Caicos Islands, previous name: Guanahani. The capital of the region is Cockburn Town, located on Grand Turk, and all Government offices, the Companies Registry and the Financial Services Commission are based here. The Turks and Caicos Islands are divided into six administrative districts (two in the Turks Islands and four in the Caicos Islands), headed by District Commissioners.

**Political System:**

Parliamentary British overseas territory with internal self-government. The Turks and Caicos Islands have a parliamentary system of government with a unicameral Legislative Council consisting of 19 seats, 13 of which are elected by popular vote and 6 are at-large members. Members serve for four years. Associated Power: overseas territory of the UK, and member of the EU. Although The Turks and Caicos Islands are self-governing, Britain remains responsible for external affairs, defense and internal security and international financial services. There are no elections since the monarch is hereditary. A governor is appointed by the monarch. Following legislative elections the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition is usually appointed premier by the governor. Queen Elizabeth II has been the head-of -state since February 6, 1952, represented by Governor Jim Poston since December 16, 2002. Chief Minister Michael Eugene Misick has been the head-of government since August 15, 2003. Legal System: English Common Law with some adoptions from Wales, Jamaica and the Bahamas. The system is administered by the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. In both criminal and civil cases, there is the right of appeal to the Court of Appeal with the ultimate right of appeal to the Privy Council in England. Judicial Branch: Supreme Court consists of the Magistrates Court and the Court of Appeal.

**Political Parties:**

People's Democratic movement (PDM), Derek H. Taylor; Progressive National Party (PNP), Michael Eugene Misick; United Democratic Party (UDP),

Wendall Swann. Currently the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) holds 5 seats on the legislative council and the Progressive National Party (PNP) holds 8 seats. Next election is to be held in 2007.

**Important Legislation:**

Constitution: 1976, suspended 1986, restored and amended 1988. The constitution includes provisions for the protection of rights and freedoms. Most of the laws derive from the Ordinances passed by the Legislative Council and, to some degree, legislation extended by Britain specifically to the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Companies Ordinance Act: enacted 1981. This ordinance provides for a basic companies form along with certain specific provisions and exemptions applicable to companies formed for particular purposes or with special characteristics. In urgent cases incorporations can be formed for short periods of time. There are two forms of companies. An Ordinary Company is one in which the main business is carried on within the jurisdiction. Exempted Companies are incorporated within the TCI but carry on business primarily outside the region. Shareholders are not required to register with the Companies registry. Limited Liability Companies are used primarily for business in the US and liability for their debt is restricted to corporate property. This type of company is taxed in the US as if it were a partnership. Guaranteed Companies guarantee that liability of any member is restricted to that members guaranteed contribution. Hybrid Companies are a combination of share capital and guarantee. Foreign Companies are established in the TCI and are registered under the Companies Ordinance. Limited Partnership Companies are based primarily in the US and are established through unified partnerships legislation. Banking Ordinance and Banking Regulations: enacted 1979, amended 2003. This legislation provides for the risk-weighting of assets and retention of minimum paid up share capital. It maintains a reserve fund and prescribed capital adequacy, and calculates capital for certain purposes. The Proceeds of Crime Ordinance 1988, The Proceeds of Money Laundering Regulation 2000. This legislation ensures that appropriate regulatory authorities have adequate access to the records of licensees, including appropriate gateway provisions providing for the sharing of information with international supervisory and law enforcement authorities. Immigration Ordinance: enacted 1992. Work permits are granted for up to 3 years at a time and are given to those who can establish that they meet the Government's good health and good character requirements, are capable of financially maintaining themselves and their dependents throughout the duration of their stay on the Islands, and who have available for their use a house or apartment. There is an annual fee of \$2,000. A Permanent Residence Certificate remains valid for the lifetime of the holder, but it can be revoked under certain circumstances. To obtain a Permanent Residence Certificate, applicants must prove that they intend to make the Turks and Caicos Islands their principal home, that they are of good character and good health and that they have invested or will invest more than \$250,000 in a business or home on Providenciales (\$125,000 on one of the other islands). A skilled worker who has held a work permit for not less than 5 years can obtain a Permanent Residence Certificate based on lower investment levels (\$100,000 and \$75,000). To apply for citizenship a person must have held a Permanent Residence Certificate for at least 12 months and have been a resident on the Islands for at least 5 years. Large numbers of people are not usually granted residency status mainly because of the very real concern of indigenous people becoming a minority in their own country.

**Principal Taxes:**

There are no principal taxes in the TCI. Although there are stamp duties on the transfer of real property, there is no income tax, inheritance tax, death duty, capital gains, capital transfer, gift tax or estate tax.

**Associated Power:**

United Kingdom (EU)

**Citizenship:**

Currently citizens of Britain's overseas territories, including The Turks and Caicos are entitled to British citizenship. The British Overseas Territories Bill, passed in February 2002, provides automatic acquisition of British citizenship, including automatic transmission of citizenship to their children; the right of abode, including the right to live and work in the U.K. and the European Union (EU); the right not to exercise or to formally renounce British citizenship; and the right to use the fast track European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) channel at the airport, free of U.K. immigration controls.

**Paradiplomacy:**

CARICOM (Caribbean Community; associate), CDP, Interpol, UPU, UNESCO.

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

32,337 (2006); 19,956 (2004). (2004) 0-14 years: 32.5% (male 3,301; female 3,384); 15-64 years: 63.8% (male 6,096; female 6,036); 65 years and over: 3.7% (male 327; female 412). Median age: total: 27.2 years; male: 27.9 years; female: 26.5 years (2004 est.)

2006			
Island	Area (km sq.)	Population	% of Total Population
Providenciales	98	22,542	%
North Caicos	116	1,895	%
Middle Caicos	144	468	%
South Caicos	21	1,579	%
Grand Turk	24	3,720	%
Salt Cay	4	186	%

Caicos Islands (26,584): Providenciales (22,542); North Caicos (1,895); Middle Caicos (468); South Caicos (1,579). Parrot Cay (100). Turks Islands (5,753): Grand Turk (5,567); Salt Cay (186).

Population:	
Year	Resident Population

Age of Population:	0-14	15-24	25-49	50-64	65 and up
2004	6685	0	0	0	739

**Migration:**

Pop. growth rate: 3.03 (2004 est.). Net migration rate: 233 (2004 est.). Note: The Turks and Caicos is a prime location for Haitians fleeing economic collapse and civil unrest. The Government is encouraging inward investment, which is reflected in its immigration policy. The immigration authorities welcome qualified persons wishing to establish business enterprises or undertake employment in the islands and make it relatively easy to obtain a work permit. However, the Government regularly publishes a list of reserved activities to ensure the employment of local islanders as much as possible. In 1994, the Government established The Turks and Caicos Investment Agency (‘TCInvest’) in order to encourage sustainable economic growth by attracting new offshore investments as well as entrepreneurial spirit among the local population. The streamlining of the business licensing system, extending a variety of duty exemptions and agreeing, in specified circumstances, to provide access to crown land under long term leases at reasonable rents have been made to support the mandate of the agency. TCInvest also provides debt financing to suitable Belonger controlled projects, identifies and promotes



investment opportunities on the Islands, provides advice and assistance to the Government on investment policies and negotiates joint ventures and agreements with investors wishing to access the Government's investment incentives. In order to encourage the development of tourist and leisure facilities the Government has the option of granting both long-term concessionary leases or conditional purchase leases on government land together with a variety of customs duty exemptions lasting 35 years.

<b>Crude Birth Rate:</b>	
2004	22.85%

**Life Expedctancy:**

total population: 74.25 years

<b>Crude Death Rate:</b>	
2004	4.26%

**Ethnicity:**

black 90%, mixed European or North American 10% (2004)

**Class Division:**

While there is no distinct division along class lines, there is a discrepancy between the rich and the poor when it comes to healthcare, education and other services.

**Languages:**

English (official)

**Religion:**

Methodist 16%, Anglican 18%, Church of God 12%, Baptist 40%, other 14% (1990).

**Literacy:**

total population: 98% (def: over 15 can read and write; 1970)

**Education System:**

The educational system is divided into primary and secondary stages. There are more than 15 public schools and several private schools that service students from kindergarten to grade 12. These schools are supervised by the Turks and Caicos Department of Education, which ensures that all island programs are standardized.

<b>Total Pre-schools:( )</b>	
<b>Total Primary Schools</b>	
<b>First Level:</b>	
<b>Second Level:</b>	
<b>Third Level:</b>	
<b>Total Secondary Schools:</b>	7
<b>Total Professional Schools</b>	2
<b>Universities:</b>	1

<b>Number of Schools per Island:</b>										
	<b>Pre-school</b>		<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-school</b>		<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>	
	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>		<b>Pub</b>	<b>Priv</b>

<b>Students Enrolled:</b>					
<b>Year:</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>High-school</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>

<b>Teachers</b>							
<b>Year</b>	<b>Pre-School</b>	<b>Elementary</b>			<b>High-School</b>	<b>Prof.</b>	<b>University</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>			

Children are required to attend school between the ages of 5 and 16. Upon completion of grade 12 students may attend The Turks and Caicos Community College or the School for Field Studies located at the South Caicos Marine and Environmental Education Centre – a program that works in conjunction with Boston University. There are also several specialty schools including Island Expeditions School at Sea, Trax Sea Adventures, Provo Marine Biology Education Centre, Provo National School of Dance, and Focus In Touch (a teen talk radio and TV program).

**Medical Services:**

The Turks and Caicos has several modern medical facilities on Grand Turk and Providenciales, including state-of-the-art government-operated hospitals on both islands. There are also several private and specialized medical facilities (including on North, South and Middle Caicos islands) such as a physiotherapy clinic, a dental clinic and an eye clinic. Patients with serious or life-threatening conditions can be transferred to the US via Medivac services. There is a

hyperbaric chamber located in the Family Medical Centre on Providenciales.

## HISTORY AND CULTURE

### History:

The Turks Islands are believed to be named after the barrel-shaped Turks Head cactus. The Spanish word "cayos" or the French word "caïques," both meaning small island or "cay" and both appearing on various historical charts are thought to have influenced the naming of the Caicos Islands. Another theory is that the name Turks originates from the French and Spanish use of the word to describe the buccaneers who in the 16th and 17th centuries used the islands as a hideout. The two groups of islands are divided by passage known as "The Columbus Passage," named after Christopher Columbus, who first set foot on these islands as early as 1492. He found the Lucayan Indians who inhabited Grand Turk, and went on to explore many of the other islands in the region. Spanish explorer Ponce de León came to the Islands in 1512, when they were inhabited by Arawak Indians. Soon the Spanish took the aboriginal population into slavery, leaving the islands unpopulated until well into the next century. In the mid 1600s, Bermudians began producing salt from brine – what was to become the region's largest industry for more than 300 years - on Grand Turk, Salt Cay and South Caicos that lasted until the mid 1900s. During this time, the American Declaration of Independence was established, which encouraged British loyalists from South Carolina and Georgia to claim British land grants in the region. The harvesting of cotton on plantation farms was quickly established and thrived for nearly 25 years until the boll weevil destroyed the majority of crops. When slavery was abolished by Britain in 1807, the Royal Navy set hundreds of slaves free on the shores of the Bahamas, which is why the region has such a close connection with the Bahamas today. Other slaves remained to work the land left to them by plantation owners. In 1799, an Act of Parliament federated the Turks and Caicos with the Bahama Islands. In 1848, the Turks and Caicos separated from the Bahamas, eventually joining Jamaica as a crown colony of Britain in 1873. They became a separate colony in 1962 upon Jamaica's independence. From 1965 to 1973 the Bahamas oversaw affairs of the region, and in 1976 the region was granted a new constitution and government with a governor appointed by the Queen of England. Although complete independence was granted in 1976, the policy was reversed in 1986, leaving the islands a British overseas territory.

### Referenda:

### Recent Significant Events:

### Music, Dance, Handicraft and Patrimony:

Local artists most often use oils and watercolors to paint incredible waterfront scenes and depictions of the unique islanders. These up-and-coming artists' works are widely displayed throughout the Turks and Caicos. A number of local crafts are extremely popular in the middle Caicos. From basket weaving, plaiting palm leaves for straw hats, and weaving fanner dishes and bowls to binding mosquito brushes and net-making, native crafts are important to the way of life of the people of the islands. Both music and dance are important throughout the Caribbean and have been most strongly influenced by African slaves on these islands. Musical and dance traditions in the Turks and Caicos have developed into very specialized and charismatic artistic forms. "Ripsaw" or "Rake'n Scrape" music is the most traditional of the islands' musical styles. This music is made with unusual instruments: saw, goatskin drum, hand accordion or "Constantina," hand-made maracas, and acoustic guitar. The saw is usually a hand saw, and a metal scraper is used for "Ripping the Saw." This process is performed by scraping the metal, often a nail, fork, knife, or screwdriver, across the teeth of the saw. Another style of music is "Combina" music. This new music combines the local Ripsaw music with international sounds like Jamaican reggae, as well as the popular calypso and soca styles. Dance is also extremely popular and, though there are several types, the most popular is known as "winin." Also referred to as "Wine-up" or "the Wine," this hip-gyrating dance is done in time to rip-saw, soca, and calypso music. This dance style was brought to widespread international attention with the soca song "Dollar Wine," and is now often taught on cruise ships to travelers visiting the Turks and Caicos. "Winin," however, is a youthful dance. Elder members of the community often prefer waltz-styled dances, such as the "Shati" and "The Heal and Toe Polka." The "Conch-Style" and "Shay-Shay" are two other popular styles.

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<http://turksandcaicos-guide.info/past.and.present/culture/>

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<http://www.tc/links.htm>

<http://www.bulter.nl/universities/university.asp?CountryID=162>

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