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**GIANT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAP OF ASIA
TOURS NATION'S SCHOOLS**

WASHINGTON (Oct. 22, 2007)—Walking from one side of Asia to the other may seem like an impossible feat, but it's all in a day's lesson for elementary and middle school students with the world's largest map of the continent. The massive map, measuring 41 feet by 31 feet, is designed by National Geographic as a geo-game board inviting students to explore and discover the diverse geography of Asia.

The Asia map is the second in National Geographic's Giant Traveling Map series — Africa, the first in the series, began touring in 2006. Approximately 50,000 students in 26 states will now have the unique experience this year of walking across two continents. The giant maps, designed for grades K-8, come with a trunk full of accessories, including geography adventures, interactive games, atlases, books, videos and music that teach students about the physical characteristics of the continents as well as the rich history and varied cultures. Safaris, scavenger hunts and competitive games help make learning about country locations, capital cities, population centers and wildlife information fun and exciting.

"Experiencing a map of this size can really awaken a student to the power of maps and the limitless depth of geography," said Dan Beaupré, National Geographic's director of education partnerships. "Whether they are using the map to learn place names, or computing population density, students are physically involved in a hands- and feet-on way that makes a lasting impression."

The Asia map is part of the National Geographic reference map series and was also featured in the "National Geographic Atlas of the World, 8th Edition." The enlarged map has a brightly colored, smooth vinyl surface that accurately illustrates the continent's oceans, seas, rivers, mountains, countries and capitals. Giant maps are planned for the other continents — a North America map is slated to roll out in 2008.

National Geographic Giant Traveling Maps are produced by *National Geographic Live!* — the live events division of the National Geographic Society, producing multimedia presentations, performances and film screenings for the general public, school audiences and sponsoring organizations around the world.

(OVER)

ASIA MAP (PAGE 2)

The huge Asia and Africa maps also help showcase My Wonderful World, a five-year National Geographic-led campaign to improve geographic literacy so students can become more informed global citizens. The campaign (mywonderfulworld.org) is designed to improve the geographic literacy of young people ages 8-17 by motivating parents and educators to make geography more available and accessible in school, at home and in the community.

Both National Geographic Giant Traveling Maps are available for loan by contacting Andrew Pudvah at (202) 429-5724 or apudvah@ngs.org. Activities and other information on the maps may be found at ngsednet.org/nglive.

The National Geographic Society is one of the world's largest nonprofit scientific and educational organizations. Founded in 1888 to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," the Society works to inspire people to care about the planet. It reaches more than 300 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, National Geographic, and other magazines; National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; music; radio; films; books; DVDs; maps; school publishing programs; interactive media; and merchandise. National Geographic has funded more than 8,000 scientific research projects and supports an education program combating geographic illiteracy. For more information, visit nationalgeographic.com.

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