Territories and regions conventionally included under the term *Far East*

**EAST ASIA**
- People’s Republic Of China
- Hong Kong
- Macau
- Taiwan
- Japan
- Mongolia
- North Korea
- South Korea

**SOUTHEAST ASIA**
- Brunei
- Cambodia
- East Timor
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Myanmar (Burma)
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Vietnam

**The Southeast Asian Realm**

**Major issues**
- A fragmented realm of numerous island countries and peninsulas.
- Physiography dominated by high relief, crustal instability, and tropical climates.
- Exhibits characteristics of a shatter belt:
  - Political instability and conflict
  - Clustered population patterns.
  - Poor intraregional communications.
  - Cultural fragmentation (complex ethnic, linguistic, and religious patterns), situated in river basins.

**A zone of interaction**
- Defined during WWII:
  - Political: definition for a theater of operation.
- Multicultural (Malay-Indonesian dominance).
- Several political, economic and cultural forces:
  - China (cultural and immigrants).
  - India (cultural and immigrants).
  - Middle-East (Islam after the 10th Century).
  - Europe (colonialism after the 16th century).
  - Japan (occupation WWII).
  - USA (since 1898).

**External influences**
- Have been stronger than internal influences.
- China brought civilization and technology (early history).
- India brought religion (Hinduism and Buddhism).
- Middle Eastern countries brought Islam and trade.
- Europe brought trade and colonialism.
- USA and Japan brought imperialism (at different levels):
  - Recently brought trade and development.

**Indochina**
- Often used to define the region.
- Hint at the strong historical Chinese and Indian influence.
- Notably refers to the former French colonies of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.
Southeast Asian Nations

- Philippines
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Burma
- Vietnam
- Cambodia
- Laos
- Thailand
- Indochina
- South China Sea
- Singapore

Colonial Territories in Pacific Asia by 1900

- Japan
- Great Britain
- France
- Portugal
- Holland (Netherlands)
- Spain (USA after 1898)

The Southeast Asian Realm

- Maritime space
  - Archipelago of about 25,000 islands.
  - Plate tectonics created north-south ridges:
    - Intense volcanism.
    - Subduction.
  - Most of the Southeast Asian part of the Eurasian plate was above water during the last Ice Age (up to 16,000 years ago).

- Huxley’s Line
  - Deep ocean trench separating Southeast Asia in two.
  - Division between the Asian and Australian ecosystems.
  - Also known as the Wallace Line.

The Southeast Asian Realm

- Shatter belt
  - Caught between stronger colliding external forces, under persistent stress, and often fragmented by aggressive rivals.
  - Historical and contemporary significance.
  - Theater of conflict during the cold war (1945-1991).
  - Vietnam Wars.
  - Cambodian Genocide.

- Variety of political, economic and cultural landscapes
  - Least advanced economies of the region:
    - Laos, Cambodia and Burma.
  - Emerging nations:
    - Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand.
  - The leader: Singapore.

Major Ethnic Groups in Southeast Asia

- Malay/Indonesian
- Papuan
- Vietnamese
- Tibetan-Burmese
- Thai
- Mon-Khmer
Ethnic Composition in Southeast Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>90%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>20%</th>
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The Southeast Asian Realm

Southeast Asian Problems
- Straining resources such as petroleum and lumber:
  - Destruction of the tropical forest.
  - Over fishing and coral reefs.
- Pursuing economic integration policy (ASEAN):
  - Founded in 1967.
  - Promote regional security issues; later concerned economic issues.
  - Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand.
  - Laos, Burma, and Cambodia joined later.
  - Common market by 2008.
  - Tariffs to be cut to 5% or less.
- Changing political regimes.
- Ethnic problems (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia).

Insular Southeast Asia: Indonesia

Regional setting
- From the Greek Indos (India) and Nesos (Island), literally the “Indian Islands.”
- 17,000 islands:
  - About 6,000 inhabited.
  - Longest coastline in the world.
  - Three time zones.
  - Coastal zones supports approximately 60% of the population.
- Controls two strategic straits:
  - Sunda and Malacca.
  - Through which much of the world’s oil traffic must pass.

Volcanism
- Intense volcanic and seismic activity.
- 300 volcanoes of which 200 have been historically active.

Demography
- Population of 214 million.
- The archipelago of diversity:
  - 87% are Muslim, Christian 9%, Hindu 2%.
  - The world’s largest Muslim population.
  - Animistic or Hindu-Buddhist beliefs.
  - More than 250 different languages and dialects.
- Population control:
  - Successful family planning strategies (50% decline in fertility between 1975 and 2000).

Plantation system and resources
- The exploitation of Indonesia accounted for about 1/3 of the Netherlands’s budget.
- Tobacco, rubber and coffee plantations:
  - The Dutch stole a coffee tree from the port of Mocha (Ethiopia) and implemented its culture on the island of Java.
  - In the 17th century, most of the coffee coming from Mocha or Java.
- Cultivation System:
  - Provided that a village set aside a fifth of its cultivable land for the production of export crops.
  - These crops were to be delivered to the government instead of taxes.
- Discovery of oil (1920s):
  - Permitted the creation of the Royal Dutch Shell multinational.
  - Was of strategic importance during WWII.

Continental Southeast Asia: Thailand

Profile
- The “Land of the free”:
  - Never colonized by European powers.
  - The core along the Chao Phraya Valley.
  - Access to the Indian (Gulf of Bengal) and Pacific (Gulf of Thailand) oceans.
- 62 million population:
  - Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11%.
  - Buddhist 94.4%, Islam 4%, Hindu 1.1%, Christian 0.5%.
  - Muslims minority in the south (along the Malaysia border).
Continental Southeast Asia: Thailand

- **History**
  - Kingdom of Siam (1782).
  - Maintained independence from colonial powers:
    - Reforms and concessions.
    - Treaty with France and Britain guaranteeing independence (1896).
    - Played the game of diplomatic relations.
    - Conceded Laos and Western Cambodia to France.
    - Conceded the northern states of Malaysia and the Shan state (Burma) to Britain.
  - Seen as a buffer state between France and Britain.
  - Treaties to guarantee boundaries signed early 20th century.
  - Specialized in rice production:
    - Feed the neighboring European colonies (plantations).
    - Was indirectly incorporated in the colonial system.
  - Trade was in the hands of foreign interests.

- **Creation of modern Thailand**
  - Constitutional monarchy:
    - Military coup (1932).
    - Establishment of a constitutional monarchy.
    - King as the head of state and symbol of unity.
    - Siam became Thailand (1939).
  - WWII:
    - Invaded by Japan and became allied.
    - Alliance shifted back to the United States against communism, thus receiving aid.
  - Vietnam War:
    - Boost for the economy:
    - R&R for US troops.
    - Refugees from Vietnam.

- **Economy**
  - Rice is a primary commodity:
    - 5th largest rice exporter in the world.
    - Subject to fluctuation in prices and weather.
  - Agricultural diversification policies:
    - Primary an agricultural nation.
    - 80% of the population living in rural areas, 66% of the workforce.
    - Growth of rural population has involved deforestation.
  - Manufacturing:
    - Accounts for more than agriculture in the GDP (30% against 12%).
    - Japan is the major investor (40% of FDI).
  - Increased urbanization:
    - Notably in Bangkok, primate city.
    - 10 million population with congestion and overcrowding problems.
    - 50 times larger than the second largest city.

- **“One night in Bangkok”**
  - Known for its sex tourism industry.
  - Thai culture liberal and tolerant.
  - Prostitution culturally accepted.
  - Subservient role of women.
  - Development of “sex districts”; Patpong.
  - Prostitutes increasingly coming from outside Thailand:
    - “Lack of supply”.
    - Each year, at least 10,000 girls and women enter Thailand from poorer neighboring countries for prostitution (Burma, Cambodia and Laos).
  - Changes:
    - Thailand is clamping down on the sex industry to change its image.
    - Curfews for bars (Midnight).

Continental Southeast Asia: Vietnam

- **Colonial history**
  - Strong Chinese influence.
  - Vietnam was a province of China.
  - Unified in the 1700s.
  - French influence from 1787:
    - Between 1884 and 1893 France captured Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.
    - Annexed Indochina.
    - "Mission civilisatrice".
    - Difficult colonial ruling because of different ethnic groups such as Thais, Laotians, Khmers and Viets.
  - Emergence of nationalism in early 20th century.
  - Japanese occupation increased nationalism.

- **Unification of Vietnam: Vietnam War**
  - Civil War (1945-1954):
    - Civil war against the French occupation.
    - Ended in 1954 with the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel.
  - Involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War:
    - Started in 1950 with military aid to the French.
    - After the French defeat, the United States backed the South Vietnam government.
    - Facing strong guerilla warfare, the United States started to send troops in 1963.
  - By 1969, 600,000 troops were involved in the Vietnam War.
  - 2 million people killed during the 1965-1975 war.
  - Conflicts with China (1979).
Continental Southeast Asia: Vietnam

- Economic recovery
  - Embargo imposed by the United States (1975-1994).
  - The first decade after the Vietnam War:
    - Very slow recovery.
    - Became a net importer of rice, instead of an exporter.
    - Communist style economic planning.
  - Liberalization of the economy (mid 1980s):
    - Introduction of market principles (Doi Moi).
    - Among the lowest labor costs in Pacific Asia:
      - Good level of education (88% literacy rate).
      - Favored foreign investments, notably (1994).
      - Differences between the north and the south, as the south was more exposed to capitalism.

- Tourism
  - High tourism potential.
  - Long coastline; beach resorts.
  - Intact coral reefs.
  - Political and social stability.
  - Sub-tropical climate.
  - Original cuisine: often adapting French cuisine.
  - Lack of development has protected Vietnam's numerous natural resources.

Continental Southeast Asia: Burma

- Overview
  - Ethnic diversity (50 million people):
    - Burmese (Tibetan and Chinese origin); 68%.
    - Chin (India), Shan (Thais) and Mon (Cambodia) minorities.
    - 70% of the population in agriculture.
  - Once the richest country in Southeast Asia.
  - Brief historical overview:
    - Became a British colony (1885).
    - Political unity.
    - Supported the Japanese invasion of 1941.
    - Independence granted (1948).
    - Burma was one of the few country refusing to become a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.
    - Promoted exclusion.

- Burmese path to socialism
  - Economic collapse:
    - Declared one of the poorest country in the world by the United Nations.
    - Foreign trade, mainly rice, handled by the government.
    - Impose quotas (15-20%) on farmers, purchased at low price.
    - Sold by the government at world price (institutionalized theft).
    - Millions of farmers put into bankruptcy.
    - 1 million Burmese working in Thailand.
    - 50% of the budget taken by the military.
  - The State Law and Order Restoration Council (1988):
    - Official name of the military governing body.
    - Burma was officially renamed Myanmar (1989).
    - Civil wars by ethnic minorities; control a third of the country.

- Narcotic economy
  - Informal economy oriented along drug production:
    - Backed by the junta (military government).
    - 50-60% of the global opium production.
    - 80% of the heroin arriving in New York is coming from northern Thailand or Myanmar.
  - Parts of the country controlled by warlords:
    - Notably the Shan state, formally part of Thailand.
    - Constant struggles to control the lucrative drug market.

- Conditions for drug production and trade
  - Poor rural population living on marginal land:
    - Limited productivity of rural land.
    - Difficult to access.
    - Often an ethnic minority.
  - Limited political control and rule of law:
    - Weak / corrupted nation state.
    - Civil unrest, especially in remote regions.
    - Lack of central government control.
    - Warlordism.
  - Porous boundaries:
    - Same ethnic groups on both sides.
    - Artificial or contested boundaries.
    - Difficult to enforce border control.
Continental Southeast Asia: Burma

The Golden Triangle
- Highlands of northern Indochina
  - Overlaps Thailand, Laos, and Burma, with parts of Vietnam and China (Yunnan province)
- Lawless segment of the region:
  - Eastern Burma controlled by the United Wa State Army
- Opium production by mountain tribes (19th century)
  - Chased from southern China
- Fast growth in the 1990s:
  - Tripling production
  - 98% of the production takes place in Burma
  - 60-70% of the world’s opium
  - 70% of the heroin in the US comes from the Golden Triangle

Methamphetamine (“Ice”) is a more recent production:
- Increase the amount of dopamine in the brain
- Instant addiction
- Severe withdrawal effect
- Known as Yaa Baa, “the drug that turns you mad”
- $35,000 to $50,000 per kilogram

Shift in role:
- Thailand now produces little opium
- Subject to intense drug trafficking along its border
- 2-3 million drug users in Thailand

More lucrative than regular crops:
- Poppy farmer earns $300 for 7 kg of raw opium
- Raw opium converted to 700 grams heroin brick in a factory worth $4,000
- Brick worth $60,000 in New York
- Turned into 28,000 doses of “cut” heroin earning $280,000

Opium Cultivation (in hectares), 1990-2003