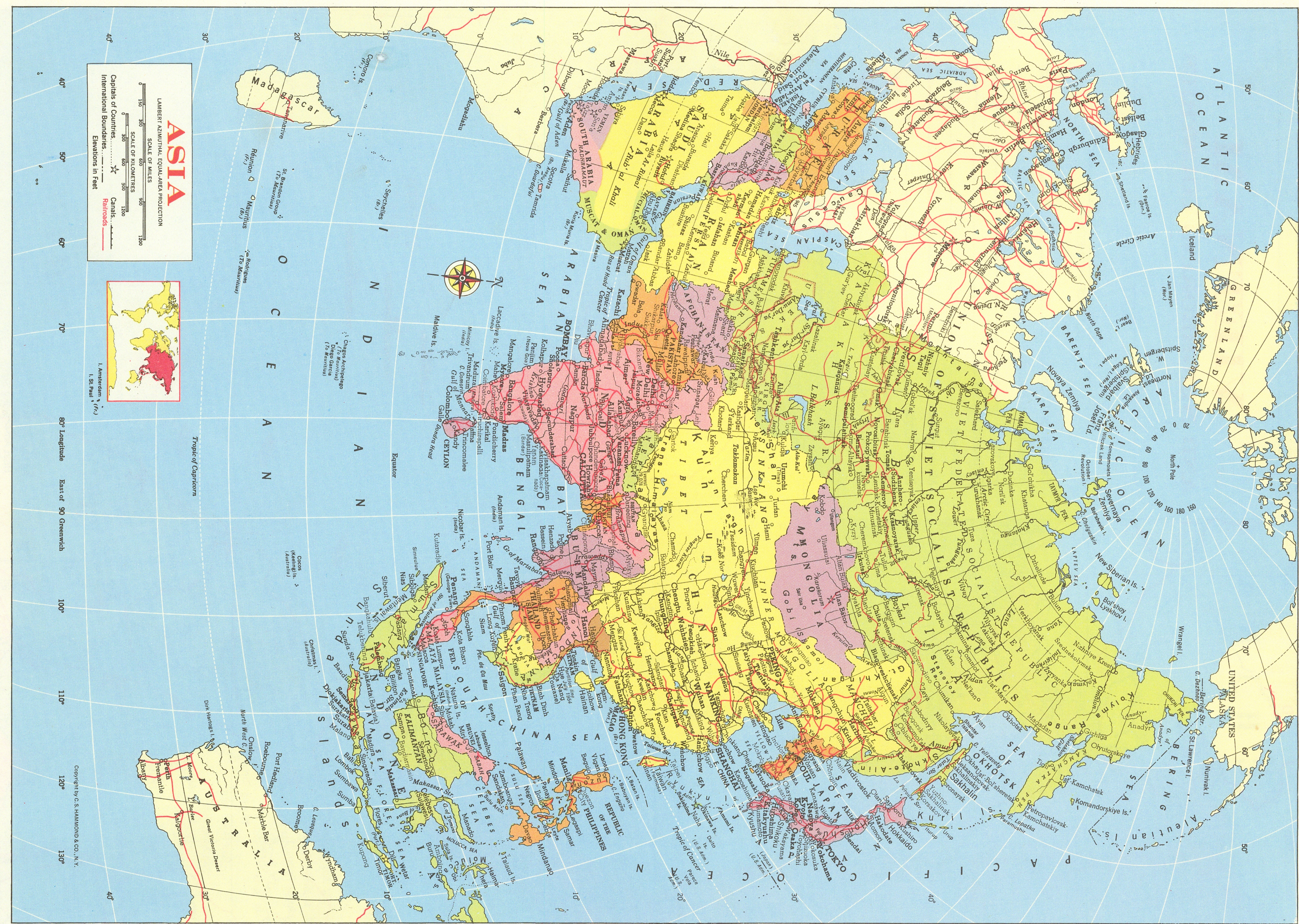




Southeast Asia has been called a tropical treasure house. In more peaceful times it has helped feed populous Asia and stocked the warehouses of the world with spices, rubber, tea, copra, hemp and important metals. The picture still applies to some degree, but two decades of war, revolution and the political instability of the new governments have wrought major changes. Agriculture continues to engage over three-quarters of the population. The rich river basins and coastal plains are rice surplus areas with plantation crops such as rubber, tea and coffee to be found on the upland plateaus. Unfortunately, yields per acre are low and production of export commodities has not been enough to pay for goods from abroad. Mineral resources are still abundant, but except for oil and tin, deposits have not been fully developed. Coal is scarce and generally of low quality. A new element in the economic picture is the attempt to develop local industry and attain some degree of self-sufficiency for the new nations. Progress has been made, notably in Singapore, the Philippines, Taiwan and North Vietnam, but it is doubtful if the industrialization of either growing Communist China or of westernized Japan can be duplicated in Southeast Asia. But the economic destiny of the area is being shaped by more than local forces. Today's evaluation is being changed by tomorrow's headlines.



EVENTS LEADING TO CRISIS A Chronology of the Vietnam Conflict Since 1945

- 1945**
 Mar. 9—Japanese occupation authorities proclaim independent Vietnam with Emperor Bao Dai as nominal ruler.
 Sept. 2—Communist led Vietminh Independence League seizes power under Ho Chi Minh; establish "Democratic Republic of Vietnam."
 Sept. 22—French troops return to Vietnam, clash with Communists and anti-French nationalists in Tonkin.
- 1946**
 Mar. 6—France recognizes Democratic Rep. of Vietnam as "free state" within Indo-Chinese Federation and French Union.
 Dec. 19—Vietminh attack on French troops in north begins eight-year Indo-China War.
- 1947**
 Sept.—French, in control of principal towns and communications, seek nationalist support through Bao Dai.
- 1949**
 Mar. 8—Independent state of Vietnam established with ties to France.
 June 14—Bao Dai assumes role as chief of state of Vietnam; nationalists withhold support.
 July 19—Laos established as independent state with ties to France.
 Nov. 8—Cambodia established as independent state with ties to France.
- 1950**
 May 8—U.S. announces military and economic aid to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.
- 1953**
 April 9—Vietminh extend war to Laos.
- 1954**
 May 7—French stronghold at Dien Bien Phu falls.
 July 21—Cease-fire signed at Geneva. Partition of Vietnam at 17th parallel into Communist north and anti-Communist south with proviso of free elections in 1956.
 Sept. 8—Southeast Asia Defense Treaty (SEATO) established to check Communist expansion.
- 1955**
 Oct. 26—Republic of Vietnam established in South Vietnam with Ngo Dinh Diem as president. U.S. promises aid.
- 1956**
 May 8—Free elections to reunify the two Vietnams postponed.
 April—Last French troops in Vietnam leave. U.S. military advisers train South Vietnamese.
- 1957**
 May 29—Crisis in Laos as pro-Communist Pathet Lao forces make bid for power.
- 1959**
 April—Increase of Communist underground (Vietcong) activity in South Vietnam, supplied and directed from North Vietnam.
- 1960**
 Nov. 11—Unsuccessful military revolt against Diem regime in South Vietnam.
- 1961**
 Jan.—North Vietnam and U.S.S.R. aid pro-Communist rebels in Laos.
 Mar.—U.S. reacts to threat of Communist takeover in Laos with increased aid and dispatch of troops to Thailand.
 May-Dec.—Conference at Geneva on ending Lao-tian crisis.
 July—U.S. steps up aid to South Vietnam; increases role of military advisers.
- 1962**
 June 11—Agreement on coalition government in Laos announced.
 Oct.—U.S. Helicopter units begin air lifts of South Vietnamese troops against Vietcong.
- 1963**
 May-Aug.—Buddhist demonstrations against Diem government in South Vietnam.
 Nov. 1—Military coup overthrows Diem regime.
 Nov. 19—Cambodia renounces U.S. economic and military aid; moves closer to Communist China.
- 1964**
 Jan. 30—Second military coup begins long series of governmental changes in South Vietnam.
 Aug.—North Vietnamese PT boats attack U.S. Destroyers in Gulf of Tonkin. U.S. retaliates with strikes against PT boats and bases in North Vietnam.
- 1965**
 Feb. 7—U.S. planes begin bombing raids north of 17th parallel in retaliation for Vietcong attack on U.S. base at Pleiku.
 Mar.—U.S. commits combat troops to active support of South Vietnamese forces.
 June 18—First of B-52 bomber raids from Guam against Vietcong concentrations.
 July 28—U.S. announces increase of American forces in South Vietnam to 125,000.
 Aug. 29—Battle at Van Tuong, first major involvement of U.S. ground troops.
 Dec. 24-25—Christmas truce lasts 30 hours. Hopes for extension end as Vietcong renew attacks.
- 1966**
 Jan.—Feb.—President Johnson begins "Peace Offensive" with cessation of bombing North Vietnam. No response from North Vietnam results in resumption of bombing in mid-February.
 Feb. 7-8—President Johnson and Premier Ky meet in Honolulu. Johnson pledges continued support of Ky's government.
 April-June—Buddhist opposition to the Ky regime gains strength in Da Nang and Hue. Premier Ky uses troops against opposition but adds civilians to ruling junta and pledges early civilian election.

VIETNAM CONFLICT MAP

including
CONTINENT AND SPECIAL MAPS - ALSO INDEXES
AND CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS SINCE WORLD WAR II

