Rebirth and Revolution: Nation-building in East Asia and the Pacific Rim

East Asia in the Postwar Settlements

- Asia was reorganized following World War II. Korea was occupied by the Soviet Union and the United States, Taiwan went back to China, and elsewhere colonial rule was restored. Changes followed quickly, including Indonesian, Malayan, and Philippine independence. China's communist regime was transformed.

- In spite of extensive destruction during the war, Japan was able to recover quickly. Occupied until 1952, the government and infrastructure was deeply reorganized by the United States. Under a new constitution, the Japanese undertook legal reforms, which nevertheless supported traditional values. The Liberal Democratic Party monopolized the Japanese government from 1955 into the 1990s. Education was made available to more Japanese. Following the end of occupation, traditional values such as respect for the elderly have been emphasized.

- Korea was divided in 1948 between the south, under U.S. domination, and the north under the Soviet Union. North Korea was governed by Kim Il-Sung until 1994. South Korea was initially governed by Syngman Rhee. In 1950, the Korean War broke out between North and South Korea. The war ended with an armistice in 1954. The country remained divided.

- The Chinese Guomindang occupied Taiwan, while the communists controlled mainland China from 1946–1948. Aid from the United States supported the Taiwanese into the 1960s. Hong Kong was returned to British control, which lasted until 1997. Singapore was also under British rule until 1965. By about 1960, many of the smaller east Asian nations had achieved stability.

Japan, Incorporated

- Japan's Liberal Democratic Party ruled the country from 1955 to 1993. Many elements of the political system date from the Meiji period. Economic development was based on cooperation between the public and private sectors. Supporting birth control and abortion, state intervention has controlled the population growth. Japanese cultural traditions have been carefully preserved and synthesized with Western borrowings. The writer Yukio Mishima, for example, initially embraced controversial new themes, but later turned to more traditional values.
Japan's economy grew remarkably, especially after the 1950s. The Japanese government played a large role in economic development, partly through educational reform. Spending little on the military, the country could afford to spend more elsewhere. Japanese labor policies included group exercise and lifetime employment guarantees. A strong sense of group loyalty kept both labor and management productive. Compared to their Western counterparts, Japanese women enjoyed more education, but spent more time on domestic duties. The Japanese suffered less from feelings of isolation, but suffered more from stress than Westerners. Relief is sought in drinking and in the company of geishas. Western influence shows in the popularity of baseball and golf. Problems of pollution and political corruption have become important issues.

The Pacific Rim: New Japans?

After World War II, South Korea was ruled by Syngman Rhee until 1960. The military leader Park Chung-hee succeeded Rhee, ruling until his assassination in 1979. The military government was removed in the late 1980s, and opposition political movements and freedom of the press were soon established. Industrialization was heavily supported from the mid-1950s. Industrial companies, for example Daewoo and Hyundai, now loom large, creating housing and schools for their employees. Growing population pressures led to state-supported birth control.

In Taiwan, developments in both agriculture and industry spurred economic growth. Private and public investment improved education and led to economic and cultural change. Hostility between China and Taiwan eased with the emergence of informal diplomatic ties. Chiang Ching-kuo replaced his father, Chiang Kai-shek, in 1978. The rule of Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, ruling from 1965, resembled the Taiwanese government. Oppression was silenced by the People's Action Party. A well-established shipping industry was joined by manufacturing and banking. Hong Kong, also a banking center, connected China with the global economy. The territory was returned to China in 1997.

Commonalities among the Pacific Rim states include cultural traits—group cohesion preferred over individualism—and political direction, including significant government intervention. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and other small nations in the region shared in the economic expansion. Growing concerns at the end of the 20th century included rising unemployment and slowing growth. Predictions that restructuring would be necessary have been contradicted by slow but definite recovery.

Mao's China and Beyond

Chiang Kai-shek's struggle against communism was halted by the Japanese invasion of the 1930s, which led Chiang to join the communists. His conventional forces were not successful against the Japanese, leading to U.S. military support. By 1945, the communists were in the ascendancy. In the civil war from 1945 to 1949, the communists defeated the nationalists. Chiang retreated to Taiwan, and Mao declared the new People's Republic of China. Mao had won support in China by defeating the Japanese, but also by land reform and by giving the peasants a central role in the movement. Strong military leadership, exemplified by Lin Biao, gave the communists the upper hand.
- The communist struggle for power provided the new government with a ready-made infrastructure, including the party cadres and the People's Liberation Army. These forces were used to block secession, and then to act aggressively in Korea and Vietnam against United States involvement. Cooperation between China and the Soviet Union diminished after the death of Stalin.

- Completing the work of the revolution in the countryside was a priority for the new government. The landowning class and large landowners were purged, with as many as 3 million executed. Industrialization was another key goal. Technocrats rose to power. From the mid-1950s, Mao undertook a new program, the Mass Line approach. Beginning in 1955, rural collectivization reversed the distribution of land that had been achieved three years earlier. In 1957, a call for comment on communist rule brought a vocal, critical response, which was harshly silenced.

- A new program launched in 1958, the Great Leap Forward, attempted to bring about industrialization at the local, rural level, supervised by peasant communes. The result was resistance and corruption, leading to massive famine. International proposals to implement family planning were dismissed. While the Chinese birth rate was not extremely high, the country already had a large population. From the 1960s, families were restricted to one or two children. By 1960, the Great Leap was abandoned, and Mao was replaced by pragmatists, including Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping.

- Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, helped her husband in reforming the place of women in China. Madam Chiang Kai-shek had stressed traditional women's roles, with the result of greater communist support for expanded women's rights. Women rose in the military, and in many other sectors, and gained legal parity with men. However, that has not always translated to equal opportunity, and higher positions are held by men.

- Mao remained head of the Communist party after his fall from power. His opposition to the new administration culminated in the Cultural Revolution. His Red Guard forces attacked Mao's rivals, who were killed, executed, or exiled. The movement achieved the overthrow of the government that Mao had hoped, but then continued, out of control. Mao ended the campaign in 1968, but political fighting continued. The Gang of Four, led by Jiang Qing, plotted to overthrow the pragmatists, but was not successful. After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping led the pragmatist majority. In spite of important failures, the Chinese have successfully redistributed wealth and improved conditions for most of their people.

- Revolution in Vietnam

- Vietnam attracted the attention of the French from the 1600s. In the 1770s, the Tayson Rebellion overthrew the Nguyen dynasty, and the Trinh dynasty was also ousted shortly after. The surviving Nguyen, Nguyen Anh was supported by the French. He ruled as emperor Gia Long. The French were rewarded with a privileged place at court. Gia Long ruled an enlarged Vietnam, including the Mekong and Red river regions. His highly traditional rule was continued by Minh Mang, who also embraced Confucianism. He persecuted the French catholic community. French adventurers undertook the conquest of Vietnam and Cambodia. All of Vietnam
was under French control by the 1890s. French attempts to maximize their profits exacerbated overcrowding and the migration of peasants to urban areas.

In the late 19th into the 20th centuries, the Vietnamese rallied around their ruler. The lack of support from the Nguyen and Confucian bureaucrats led to loss of faith in both. A Western-educated middle class emerged in the early 1900s, often adopting French ways. Rising nationalism coalesced around the secret Vietnamese Nationalist Party (the VNQDD) in the 1920s. Failed uprisings ending with a 1929 revolt weakened the party. The Communist Party of Vietnam was left to rally resistance. The future Ho Chi Minh dominated the party. Communist support helped the Communists oppose the French. Weakened by the Japanese invasion of Indochina in 1941, French rule was left vulnerable to nationalist rebellion.

The nationalist movement, the Viet Minh, liberated portions of the country during World War II. When Japanese rule ended, the Viet Minh were able to take power. Under Vo Nguyen Giap, the Vietnamese used guerilla fighting against the French and Japanese. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of Vietnam. The next year, the French, with British support, moved to retake the country. Guerilla warfare began anew. The French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Although the United States and the Viet Minh cooperated during World War II, anticommunist sentiment in the United States following the war drove the two apart. The United States supported the presidency of Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem's attack on communists in the south, called the Viet Cong, led to further communist support for the new National Liberation front. The United States sent increasing support, including nearly 500,000 troops in 1968, but was finally forced to retreat in the 1970s. Communist rule united the north and south.

Vietnam remains isolated, in part because of U.S. international pressure. Attempts to impose hard-line Marxism failed to ease poverty. From the 1980s, Vietnam has been more open to outside investors, boosting economic growth. The costs of entering the global economy include harsh conditions for workers and diminishing social services.

Multiple-Choice Questions
The End of the Cold War and the Shape of a New Era: World History 1990–2006

End of the Cold War

Decades of the Cold War were ended in the 1980s. What factors brought an end to Russian expansion? Following Khrushchev, Soviet leadership lost its dynamism, at the same time that neighbors of the Soviet Union broke away from Soviet dominance. Iran’s revolution frightened the Soviets, who invaded Afghanistan to create a buffer. The Polish Solidarity movement threatened control in eastern Europe. Even China, which remained communist, took a different course, distancing itself from the Soviet Union. The United States, under Jimmy Carter, criticized Soviet human rights violations, while negotiating arms limitations. The Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan was denounced by the United States. Under Ronald Reagan, military spending soared, while the “Reagan doctrine” promised help to any group fighting communism.

From 1985, the Soviet Union undertook reforms intended to boost its economy. While industrial production slumped, social programs suffered.

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev took charge of the Soviet Union. He demonstrated his willingness to turn toward the West. He announced his policy of glasnost, initiating a more open attitude toward political critique. Yet he did not turn from communism. The Soviet Union was opened to foreign companies. Gorbachev next began a new program, centered on perestroika, or economic restructuring. He called for lowered military spending, more foreign investment and agricultural reform. He supported the creation, in 1988, of the Congress of People’s Deputies. Gorbachev was elected president of the Soviet Union in 1990. Unrest among minority nationalities rose, partially due to economic difficulties.

Outside the Soviet Union, Gorbachev’s programs had clear results. Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland moved away from communism or abandoned it altogether. The Berlin Wall was torn down, and Germany was reunified in 1991. Some countries retained communism, but under new, more moderate regimes. Ethnic clashes occurred in many areas. Yugoslavia in particular was torn by violence among its peoples. The decade of the 1990s was a period of economic uncertainty. Gorbachev gave Soviet bloc nations the right to self-determination.

Gorbachev’s regime and his programs were threatened by an unsuccessful coup in 1991. His leadership of the Soviet Union was contested by leaders of the...
republics, especially the Russian Republic. The Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, declared that the Soviet Union was gone, calling for a commonwealth. The Commonwealth of Independent States emerged, but was threatened from the outset by challenges from the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Economic difficulties in the late 1990s challenged Yeltsin's leadership. A war with Chechnya broke out. Vladimir Putin followed Yeltsin in 1999, keeping a firm hold on the media and opposing Chechen calls for independence.

The Spread of Democracy

- Divergent forms of government—communism, fascism, democracy—were rivals for most of the 20th century. The century ended with democracy in the ascendant. Spain, Portugal, and Greece, along with all Latin American countries except Cuba, adopted democratic forms of government. South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines have also chosen democracy. In Africa, democratic regimes included those of South Africa and Nigeria. Georgia and Ukraine have also held democratic elections, as have several countries of the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia.
- China, North Korea, other Asian countries, and some in the Middle East have made other choices. In 1989, Beijing student demonstrations in support of democracy were brutally repressed. After 2000, questions arose concerning the promises of democracy. The U.S. supported non-democratic countries, while democracies in Latin America experienced problems that brought the system into question.

The Great Powers and New Disputes

- Regional rivalries became clearer with the end of the Cold War.
- When the Soviet Union was dismantled, repressed internal problems became obvious. Armenia and Azerbaijan, formerly under Soviet rule, faced ethnic hostility. Yugoslavia dissolved as rival ethnic and religious groups faced off. Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina became independent nations. Another conflict arose in Kosovo, between Albanian nationalists and Serbians.
- In some areas of the world, old rivalries continued. In the Middle East, hostility between Iran and Iraq had led to an Iraqi victory. Then Iraq invaded Kuwait, leading to the Persian Gulf War in 1991, which ended with the defeat of Iraq. Israeli-Palestinian struggles continue. India and Pakistan have engaged in disputes over their common border.
- New conflicts arose elsewhere. European countries faced separatist or nationalist movements. Immigration, especially from former colonies, caused intense problems in European countries, leading to new political movements. Violent conflicts in Africa have plagued the continent. High death tolls have added to the problems faced by African nations. The international response has often been slow.

The United States as Sole Superpower

- While Russia devoted less money to its military budget, U.S. military spending has been high. Fear of U.S. aggression has led to new partnerships among other world powers. The U.N. has the ability to counter U.S. power, but its role is not
secure. In the United States itself, there is no consensus about how to use its monopoly on power. The country has been reluctant to sign international agreements that may interfere with its sovereignty.

Terrorism aimed at the United States reached a high point with the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001. The "War on Terror" has become an important facet in U.S. international relations. The international community was supportive of the successful U.S. attack on Afghanistan, but the subsequent invasion of Iraq has been subject to widespread criticism.
Globalization and Resistance

Globalization: Causes and Process

- Globalization increased toward the end of the 20th century, partly due to the entry into world markets of such large nations as China and members of the former Soviet Union. Only a few countries declined to join the global economy. Internationalism replaced nationalism as a dominant cultural theme.

- Technological improvements increased, making it easier to maintain contact over long distances. E-mail and the development of the World Wide Web have revolutionized communications. Satellite television has made global audiences possible for any one broadcast.

- International investment has increased remarkably, comprising up to 40 percent of U.S. total investments. Multinational corporations became a new force. Corporations sought cheap labor and undemanding environmental policies. Raw materials were important, as they had been in the first phases of industrialization. In some cases, multinationals were more powerful than the countries in which they operated. They were also able to transfer their activities from one area to another. Outsourcing, the tactic of hiring outside workers, was used to hire cheap labor wherever it could be found. While industrial nations made use of cheap labor in developing countries, they generally offered higher wages than the local prevailing wages. The impact of globalization is difficult to discern.

- Unemployment rates are high in areas that have not been successful in competing globally. International demands have led to human rights issues, from the sale of body organs to increasing child labor in some areas.

- International patterns of migration established in the 1950s and 1960s continued into the new millennium. Declining birth rates in some countries necessitated immigration. Large numbers of immigrants have led to tensions. Modern travel has made it easier to migrate to and from distant countries, transforming earlier patterns of immigration.

- Cultural exchange has reached new levels in the age of globalization. Greater scientific collaboration exists, generally with English as the common language. At the same time, fast-food restaurants such as McDonald’s have covered the globe. American television shows and movies have also found world audiences. In the same way, cultures around the world either celebrate American holidays, or celebrate their own holidays with greeting cards and presents. Other nations, especially Japan, also exported their popular culture. One of the results of these developments is the great increase in obesity, especially among children. Cultural globalization has been mitigated in those areas where access to high technology is unavailable, and by adaptation of global culture to local tastes and traditions.
Resistance and Alternatives

- Criticism of globalization has increased. Large rallies began in 1999, pointing to the environmental dangers, exploitation of cheap labor, and growing gaps between rich and poor, which critics attribute to globalization. Critics have also claimed that gaps are emerging between rich and poor nations.

- Nationalism has remained a vital force in some areas, in spite of growing internationalism. Resistance to foreign cultures has included the French refusal to officially acknowledge the use of some English words. Religious movements have provided some of the most powerful resistance to globalization. Russian Orthodoxy is only one example of a religion that has gained new prominence. Fundamentalism, whether Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, or Catholic, is a powerful force, that is often in opposition to globalization. Fundamentalism generally increases intolerance and exclusivity. It has exacerbated, though it has not generally caused, hostility between or within peoples. Terrorism is increasingly motivated by religious causes.

The Global Environment

- Environmental impacts changed in degree more than in kind. Efforts at industrialization increased the scale of environmental hazards, for instance in China and the former Soviet Union. Southeast Asia is an area of increasing extraction of natural resources, causing alarm in the world community. Two other areas of concern are that the wealthiest countries consume products out of proportion to their populations, and that the same countries also contribute more pollution compared to developing nations.

- The greenhouse effect, an increase of gases that cause overheating of the earth, is now acknowledged by most scientists. Sources of the gases that cause the problem include fossil fuel combustion, rice paddies, and refrigeration. Predicted impacts include rising sea levels and dramatic changes to vegetation patterns. Greenhouse gases are not new, but are produced in much greater quantities. Rainforest destruction is also not new, but is occurring at greater rates, and causes concern because the forests are slow to grow back. International conferences, held to address environmental concerns, have lacked support from the United States and other key nations.

- Epidemics, including AIDS and SARS, have become global issues.

Toward the Future

- Forecasting the future, while universally desired, has been shown to be problematic at best.

- Trends can be studied to predict their course in the future. Yet, discerning trends can itself be difficult. The existence of contradictory trends makes it hard to predict the ascendancy of one or the other.

- One method for predicting the future exists in comparing past and present, in terms of "revolutions," to develop scenarios that describe the future.

- Predicting the future is made difficult by the profound changes of the last hundred years. For instance, women's roles have been transformed, but it is not clear what current trends will predominate.