

1-2006

Demography and Domination in Southeast Asia

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Citation

Hack, Karl and Tobias Rettig. 2006. "Demography and Domination in Southeast Asia." In *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, edited by Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig, 39-72. London: Routledge.

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2 Demography and domination in Southeast Asia

Karl Hack and Tobias Rettig

All figures are relative: none more so than those concerning imperial forces. It is useless knowing about this battle, or that colonial army, unless we know not only the numbers of Europeans and their allies on one side, but also the number and quality of their adversaries. It is equally futile playing with figures for armies, if we are not told about the populations they policed and protected. This presents a formidable challenge, one exacerbated for places and periods where numbers change at dizzying speed, such as modern Southeast Asia. How many readers know the population for Indonesia – the former Netherlands East Indies – for 1800, 1900 and 1941? How many know the population for the Philippines on these same dates?

This chapter tackles this demographic and comparative deficit by giving a broad background to Southeast Asian populations, and to colonial and imperial forces in Southeast Asia, with a focus on the period 1800–2000. No doubt the level of sophistication would scandalise a statistician. But the broad brush picture will be sound, and that is the one that interests us.

How can we go about the Herculean task of sketching in a framework for the demography of domination? One way is to take slices of history. In 1900, for instance – roughly the middle of our core date range – the population of Southeast Asia was between 80 and 85 million, with almost 30 million or one-third of that on Java. At that time, Europe's population – even taking all Europe bar Russia into account, rather than just the western portion most prone to overseas imperialism – was around 300 million. In the words of Charles Hirschman, 'Although there were a number of very large cities in the region and densely settled rice-growing areas in Java, the Red River Delta [of North Vietnam], and a few other areas, most of mainland and insular Southeast Asia remained a sparsely settled frontier region in 1900.'¹ In 1910 the large cities Hirschman alludes to – all but two of which were also coastal trading ports – included eleven over 100,000, namely: Mandalay and Rangoon in Burma; the Siamese capital of Bangkok; Hanoi and Saigon in Vietnam; Georgetown (Penang) and Singapore in the Straits Settlements, Batavia (Jakarta), Surakarta and Surabaya in the Dutch East Indies; and Manila in the Philippines.²

The most densely populated regions outside of these cities included the rich, volcanic soils of Java and the rice-producing plains of Luzon in the Philippines,



as well as the equally intense rice-cultivating river deltas of Lower Burma, and of the Mekong and Red River deltas in Vietnam. Most of maritime Southeast Asia was, by contrast, sparsely settled. It was characterised by myriad islands, creeks and mangroves, with forests, mountains and valleys making land communication laborious. Movement by sea and river was a good deal more practical than by land throughout the Malayan peninsula, Indonesia and the Philippines at least until 1900, and in many places for decades after.

For imperial powers this combination of topography and demography had a number of implications. It meant that it was relatively easy for a power with technical superiority at sea to overawe and seize key ports and cities, so establishing trading ports and nominal sovereignty over the fertile areas immediately adjacent to these. This is what the Portuguese and then Spanish and Dutch did from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The use of firearms by local rulers was always less pervasive in maritime Southeast Asia than to the north, and in this earlier period a combination of European capital, effectiveness in using their own firepower and ability in fort-building stood them in good stead. The European innovation of fixing rows of guns, later cannon, on the decks of their ships from the fifteenth century allowed them to bombard enemy ships and ports from distance. This gave them the advantage over Mediterranean and Indian Ocean opponents who operated by ramming, boarding or with no or few guns.³ They were thus able to retreat behind sea walls – the typical seventeenth-century Dutch ship outgunned its local rival by 28 cannon to two – and town walls such as those at Melaka. These towns' sturdily built walls featured bastions, which allowed their massed firepower to be brought to bear along the perimeter.⁴ As late as 1825–30, the building of a network of small fortified posts was to prove crucial to suppressing Prince Diponegoro's revolt against the Dutch – the last great revolt in Java.⁵ Local rulers may sometimes have hoped that they lost little if they retreated with their men, treasure, ships and trade contacts intact, leaving Europeans the form rather than the substance of an *entrepôt*. The decades were to prove this a fateful miscalculation.

Fuelled by increasing international trade, these bastions – Batavia in particular grew in numbers from 8000 in 1642 to 130,000 in 1670 – galloped from strength to strength. From them Europeans could use the monopoly profits from spice and other international trade to buy alliances, deploy small numbers of their own troops and auxiliaries alongside allies and play politics. For instance, when the Dutch VOC (the United East Indies Company, or *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) joined Mataram's Sultan Pakubuwono I against another Javanese potentate in 1706, the Sultan supplied 10,000 men. By contrast, the VOC supplied 930 Europeans and 2500 'Indonesians'.⁶ Despite the Dutch gradually gaining the upper hand in their relationships with such Javanese rulers, these limited numbers, both of men and of shipping relative to the Indies' vast coastline, restricted the extent of their inland dominion well into the nineteenth century.

Up to the early nineteenth century, for most Europeans, Southeast Asia thus remained a place viewed mainly from the prows of ships and the walls of



Table 2.1 Warship tonnage of select powers, 1880–1914

	1880	1900	1914
Britain	650,000	1,065,000	2,714,000
France	271,000	499,000	900,000
USA	169,000	333,000	985,000
Japan	15,000	187,000	700,000

Source: adapted from Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana, 1988), p. 261.

fortress-ports. Even their maritime power had to be concentrated against key targets. This allowed Southeast Asians to continue to contest localities and rivers, and to move freely across borders that existed more on maps than in reality, as in central Borneo.⁷

In this respect we should note that industrialisation and the advent of the steamship transformed the degree of European naval supremacy in the nineteenth century, making direct rule outside of deltas and the immediate environs of port cities more practical. This can be seen when we compare the tonnage of three of the main imperial powers with that of the most developed Asian nation: Japan (Table 2.1).

China lagged further behind, with armoured wooden junks in 1840, when Europe was introducing the first all-metal steamships. Put another way, it has been estimated that in the nineteenth century China's share of world manufacturing output slumped from nearly 33 per cent in 1800 to 6.2 per cent in 1900, while the United Kingdom's soared from 4.3 to over 20 per cent in its peak years in the early 1880s. Furthermore, the sheer pace of development meant that non-European countries were constantly playing 'catch-up' in military technology when they did pursue modernisation. Even Table 2.2 does not give a full picture. Three factors combined to intensify the effect of this European lead.

Table 2.2 Relative shares of world manufacturing output, 1750–1900

	1750	1800	1860	1900
Europe	23.2	28.1	53.2	62.0
UK	1.9	4.3	19.9	18.5
France	4.0	4.2	7.9	6.8
Russia	5.0	5.6	7.0	8.8
USA	0.1	0.8	7.2	23.6
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.6	2.4
China	32.8	33.3	19.7	6.2
India	24.5	19.7	8.6	1.7

Source: adapted from Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana, 1988), p. 190.



First, European countries' manufacturing was even more impressive on a per capita basis, and so in terms of spare capital for investment and innovation, given much smaller populations than the likes of India and China. Per capita industrialisation of the 'Third World' may have been about equal to the West in 1750, but only about one-eighteenth by 1900, and one-fiftieth of the level of the United Kingdom.⁸

Second, this fed into accelerating technical improvements. By 1870 France's share of manufacturing output was still modest, but its ships and repeating rifles were among the best. Germany, whose share of world manufacturing output was still smaller in 1860 at 4.9 per cent, already possessed excellent breech-loading rather than muzzle-loading field artillery, and one of the best drilled and technically most competent armies. In the 1890s the Europeans added the Maxim gun. Together with efficiently used artillery and the best rifles and bullets, this helped to turn the 1898 battle of Omdurman, in the Sudan, into a massacre. Thousands of Sudanese tribesmen were mown down for a total of fewer than fifty British and Egyptian deaths. Just as China struggled to chase early nineteenth-century improvements in muzzle-loading guns (trigger-firing rather than the unreliable wick-fired flintlocks still used in the Opium War of 1839–42), Europe was moving from the 1870s to 1900 to another level of mobile, breech-loading field artillery and Maxim guns.⁹

Third, technical superiority was compounded, from the eighteenth century onwards, by organisational superiority. The early corruption in overseas companies gradually gave way to bureaucratic and fiscal discipline and standardised procedures. This in turn underpinned the raising of larger forces of well and uniformly equipped, intensely drilled, standing armies, including larger 'colonial forces', whose local troops increasingly served not under their own leaders, but directly under European officers. None of this made Europeans invulnerable, but the cumulative progress did make resistance increasingly costly, and Europeans increasingly willing to intervene. The British expansion in India from the mid-eighteenth century to the 'Mutiny' of 1857–8, an expansion that included the conquest of all of Burma's coastline, was witness to this changing calculus.¹⁰

Another way of viewing this is in terms of the economic sinews of imperial power, especially the export products that were to underpin the expansion of colonial states, police forces and armies. Between the sixteenth and early eighteenth centuries this was reliant mainly on the spice trade, especially as concentrated on a few islands in the Moluccas (in modern eastern Indonesia, now known as Maluku) and a few ports spread around the region, as well as on taxes on a few key items. The latter notably featured the opium farm that provided upwards of 40 per cent of the revenue of the British-controlled Straits Settlements throughout the nineteenth century, and a not inconsiderable fraction of revenue in British India, Java, French Indochina and elsewhere.

The Spanish in the Philippines added sugar production to these economic underpinnings, and the Dutch coffee as well as sugar when they moved into inland Java. The latter expansion was achieved while keeping the native aristocracy as a ruling layer just below a very few Dutch for most of the interior, while



using this relationship to extract tribute or deliveries of Javanese sugar and coffee. But while control of international trade easily funded maritime supremacy, it still did not fund large land forces. Even the development of Java, combined with a relatively cheap style of indirect rule, was insufficient to finance itself. The Dutch United East Indies Company or VOC was bankrupted, and handed its territories over to the Dutch government in 1799.

A further illustration of the uneven nature of European dominance in the eighteenth century can be found in Dutch-VOC relations with Malay States of Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula. The Dutch seized Melaka (Malacca) from the Portuguese in 1641, and easily held this fort, as they did those around the Dutch Indies.

Melaka served as a watch-post in the Strait of Melaka as well as a collecting centre for tin, a highly valuable commodity for trade in Europe. The VOC tried to monopolise the supply of tin, to the chagrin of Malay rulers. This tension reached a climax in the 1780s, when other Europeans, notably the English country traders, tried to undermine the Dutch monopoly with the tacit understanding of some Malay rulers. Renowned Bugis warrior Raja Haji of Riau tried to form a common front against the Dutch and very nearly succeeded in 1784. His efforts were thwarted by the arrival of a naval fleet led by Admiral Peter van Braam, representing the deployment not simply of company strength, as before, but of the military might of the Netherlands fleet itself. Admiral Braam lifted Raja Haji's blockade of Melaka, expelled the Bugis from Riau and Selangor, and imposed a degree of control over both states, thus marking the beginning of the process of imperial control over the Malay Peninsula.¹¹

Events in Selangor in 1784 show that the intervention of the metropolitan fleet, while sufficient to boost maritime supremacy, still did not guarantee durability on land.¹² Working with the Siak Sultanate from Sumatra (typically, local leaders viewed the Dutch as a valuable ally in their own disputes), van Braam's fleet of six Dutch Navy warships outgunned the Selangor forces in 1784, seizing coastal Kuala Selangor. They duly installed a Siak prince there, backed by a small Dutch garrison.

But what naval power and local alliance quickly secured, minimal land power soon lost. The Dutch just did not have large enough colonial forces to garrison significant numbers of outposts strongly and consistently. Selangor's Sultan Ibrahim (reigned 1782–1826) drove out the small garrison in June 1785. The Dutch then resorted to the more subtle device of a naval blockade, which secured a July 1786 treaty. Selangor admitted vassal status and promised to sell its tin to the Dutch, but under its original sultan. For most purposes he was left independent. Indeed, he had almost as much to worry about from Thai claims to overlordship in the Malayan peninsula as from Dutch.¹³

This awkward balance of naval and logistical supremacy, but more tenuous dominance on terra firma, persisted until at least the mid-nineteenth century. As late as May 1848, a Dutch expedition could easily use naval power to land on Bali, complete with an army of 2400 (one-third of these being European). Again, naval supremacy was followed by initial defeat on land, at the hands of a local



army of 16,000 (1500 with firearms). The ratio of dead favoured the Dutch forces ten to one (200 to 2000), but to no avail. As with Selangor, though, Dutch supremacy in ships and overall resources allowed them to force a final treaty, with the Balinese recognising Dutch overlordship in external affairs, but retaining internal autonomy. Contrast this to the events of 1904, sixty years and several expeditions later: expeditions that had, as yet, failed to finalise Dutch supremacy over all of the island's disunited kingdoms.

On 14 September 1904 a Dutch force advanced on Bali's Denpasar to extract compensation for the pillage of a shipwreck. The Raja led his followers out. Soldiers, officials, wives and children, dressed in ritual white, with flowers in their hair, lined up in full view of the Dutch forces. A priest thrust his dagger into the Raja's chest, whereupon his followers turned their knives on each other. Spurred on by shots, the Dutch further raked the crowd with rifle and artillery fire, leaving a mountain of corpses. This was Balinese *puputan* (ending). Around 1100 Balinese chose death this way in 1906–8 alone. By the latter date, Dutch control was complete. Whatever mix of magic, honour and despair drove these acts – which against indigenous rivals may have constituted last efforts to wrest victory – they were powerful recognitions of a changed reality: traditional polities could no longer compete.¹⁴

Again, nineteenth-century European industrialisation was vital in effecting this change. It provided the pull of potential markets, and the push of extra European ships and traders, which were crucial to the development of a new, more pervasive imperialism. Before 1850, areas such as Sumatra, the Malay states and Indochina contributed relatively little to world trade, though much to regional. Then plantations and mines spread rapidly, with vast population movements such as that of the Chinese and Indians into Malaya underpinning this. In the Netherlands Indies alone the transformation was startling. There was a transition, from the 1860s to early 1900s, away from a 'Cultivation System' (*Kultuurstelsel*), based on the forced delivery of export commodities by peasants, to a liberal system of freer trade and production. This was accompanied by a vast expansion in infrastructure.

By 1900 revenue bases were enlarged and more varied, and mass production and export of high compass goods – tin, rubber, rice, as well as the older staples such as coffee and sugar in the Indies – were the rule. In Java, there were 35 kilometres of railway in 1869. By the 1890s most sizeable towns were connected. In the 1890s the newly formed KPM (Royal Dutch Steamship Company) massively expanded inter-island operations. The merchant fleet registered with the Netherlands East Indies multiplied sevenfold between 1870 and 1930, from 880 to 6253 vessels, while exports grew fifteenfold.¹⁵ Advances in technology, including in the field of tropical medicine, robust organisation and the financial muscle necessary to maintain and deploy larger colonial armies, including a majority of locally raised but European equipped, drilled and led forces, were to be vital to 'new imperialism'.¹⁶

Between 1850 and 1914, when the European powers expanded inland, South-east Asia underwent a transformation. By 1914 it dominated relatively new

Table 2.3 Southeast Asian primary production, 1937–1940, in metric tonnes

	<i>British Malaya and Borneo</i>	<i>British Burma</i>	<i>French Indochina</i>	<i>Netherlands East Indies</i>	<i>American Philippines</i>	<i>Thailand (independent)</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage of world production or exports</i>
Abaca	1.2	—	—	—	183	—	184.2	95.6
Cinchona	—	—	—	10.4	—	—	10.4	80
Coffee	—	—	1.5	62.4	3	—	66.9	7
Maize	—	—	565	2,037	427	7	3,036	80
Coconut products	116	—	10	506	54	—	686	73
Palm oil	46	—	—	238	—	—	238	47.6
Pepper	—	—	—	20	—	—	20	70
Petroleum	1,000	—	—	7,400	—	—	9,400	4.5
Rice	324	4,940	3,945	4,007	2,179	1,771	17,165	98
Rubber	501	8	61	432	—	8	1,040	85.2
Sugar	—	39	43	547	1,076	19	1,724	21
Teak (m ³)	—	475	—	400	—	189	1,064	95
Tin	77	2	1.6	40	—	13.4	134	65

Source: adapted from Chris Dixon, *South East Asia in the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 110.



world markets, such as those for rubber, as well as old ones it had previously had a more restricted regional impact on, such as tin.

Perhaps the best symbol of this dual acceleration in European economic penetration and related technical innovation, and the way these began to transform colonial security regimes, is the steamship. Sailing ships continued to dominate trade until the latter years of the nineteenth century, but steam power was increasingly important from its appearance in Southeast Asian waters. The spread of steamships was to play a vital role in stemming piracy from the late 1830s to the 1870s, especially with English and Spanish destruction of communities supporting piracy in the Sulu archipelago and surrounding islands between the Philippines and Borneo.

The expansion of international trade in the late eighteenth century, especially opium going to China and tea from it, had created increased opportunities for piracy. The simultaneous European undermining of strong local regimes, which formerly controlled or co-opted sea-going communities, further increased the danger. Many Bugis, following defeat by the Dutch on Sulawesi, turned to piracy. The Sulu (Jolo) Islands, which lie between the Philippines and Borneo, also found a growing China market for their jungle and maritime produce – notably sea slugs and birds' nests – and took to raiding for slaves to collect it. With the Sulu area falling on the fracture line between British, Spanish and Dutch empires, European action was limited. The 'Iranun' or Lanun pirate fleets grew. People as far apart as the Visayas in the central Philippines and Singapore feared the winds that brought annual raiding fleets.

As with the Dutch in Selangor, Europeans initially found that their naval supremacy had limitations. European navies were foiled by the local fleets' ability to row against the wind and up shallow creeks, and by the relatively small number of European ships available. But between the late 1820s and 1840s steamers began to pursue 'pirate' *perahu* – long, low-lying craft with sails, oarsmen and shallow drafts – against the wind or up shallow creeks, before blowing them out of the water with superior guns. Gradually the era of large raiding fleets of up to a hundred or more *perahu* gave way to one of smaller raiding parties. Technology and overwhelming destructive intent allowed colonial navies, and the English adventurer James Brooke in Borneo from the 1840s, to destroy boats and villages alike. For instance, Tempasuk and Maradu were devastated in 1845, and the Spanish descended upon Balangingi, in the southern Philippine Islands, the same year.¹⁷

The year 1845 was in some respects pivotal. Three Spanish war steamers or *kapal api* ('fire boats', recently purchased from the British), a coterie of smaller vessels, *Marina Sutil*,¹⁸ and locally raised Zamboangas auxiliaries, assisted by artillery, stormed the *kota* or walled fortification of Balangingi in the southwestern Sulu archipelago. Some 450 Balangingi were killed, forts were raised, seven villages and 150 vessels were destroyed, coconut trees were felled and more men were exiled over the following years. More steamers followed. Eighteen arrived in crates in 1860 alone. The imperial problem was increasingly one of British ships based at Labuan, Borneo, Dutch ships based on the East Coast of Borneo



and Spanish ships from Luzon and the Visayas countering smaller pirate attacks around Borneo's myriad creeks. By the 1870s Spanish tactics of sinking anything even vaguely classifiable as a potential pirate made even legitimate indigenous trade difficult in the seas around Sulu.

Nowhere is the impact of technology better symbolised than in the efficacy of the steamships *Diana* and *Nemesis*. The *Diana* was one of three East India Company steamships sent to Burma in the 1824–6 war. Burma's King Bagyidaw, overconfident following his kingdom's wave of expansion, had sought to solve border problems with British India's Assam by war. The Company despatched 40,000 troops to Rangoon, where 'General Disease' soon took the greater part of 15,000 casualties. It took the sending of three steamships to transform the situation. According to Headrick one of these, the *Diana*,

towed sailing ships into position, transported troops, and bombarded Burmese fortifications with her swivel guns and Congreve rockets. The most important function of the *Diana* was to capture Burmese praus, or warboats . . . By February 1826 the *Diana*, which the Burmese called the 'fire devil', had pushed with the British fleet up to Amarapura, over 400 miles upriver. The King of Burma, seeing his capital [at Ava] threatened, sued for peace.¹⁹

The King must have been very impressed indeed, since the subsequent Treaty of Yandibaw ceded Manipur, Arakan and Tenasserim, shearing off most of Burma's coastline.

While the *Diana* helped to intimidate Burma in the 1820s, the British steamship *Nemesis* made China's nineteenth-century junks look like relics when it faced them in the Opium War of 1839–42.²⁰ Built in 1839, this 700 ton, 184 foot long, 29 foot wide vessel featured all-metal design and compartments, and being flat-bottomed drew as little as four and a half feet of water. Going upriver to Guangzhou (Canton) in March 1841 'she practically slithered along the muddy river bed'. Yet despite the shallow draught, which enabled it to project oceanic power up-river, it was still twice the size of a Chinese junk. Here was a vessel that could power ahead regardless of wind, in both rough ocean and shallow river. Furthermore, the European adoption of rifled guns in the eighteenth century, with their greater accuracy and range, meant its two 32-pound guns and five 6-pounders, firing shell and grapeshot, made mincemeat of wooden Chinese forts and junks, which still featured small cannons. Worse still, the junks' guns had limited scope for aiming, short of moving the entire vessel.

Even the ordinary infantryman gained during the campaign, as flintlock muskets were replaced with percussion fired weapons, secure against the damp, while they also benefited from the support of field artillery. Though most European vessels were still sailing warships, the *Nemesis* symbolised a widening technological gap, and foreshadowed the European and American gunboats that were to support Western privileges in China's Treaty Ports up to the Second World War.²¹



More prosaically, from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, the relief of troops between Europe and Southeast Asia might have taken two years or longer for a return journey. The advent of the steamship, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and new modes of communication (notably sea-laid cable from the 1870s) changed this. Now reinforcements might be asked for and sent in months, and in increasing numbers. In the past, the Spanish or the Dutch could send but a few dozen armed men on each ship, paling to insignificance in comparison with Ming Chinese battleships of the early 1400s. By contrast the French could assemble more than 40,000 troops after news reached Paris that Captain Rivière's men in Hanoi were about to be overrun by Vietnamese soldiers and Black Flag mercenary Chinese forces in 1882–3. Reinforcements arrived too late to save Rivière's head, which was taken by the dreaded Black Flags during an imprudent sortie, but were able to relieve the citadel and use it as a launchpad for the conquest of northern Vietnam.

Nor were increased firepower, manoeuvrability, upriver penetration and speed of reinforcement the only gains from steampower. Reduced shipping times in larger vessels ensured troops would arrive in a better state of health.²² Colonial forces still had to operate in what were, to them, alien territories, battling climate and disease as well as unconventional styles of warfare and unforgiving terrain. But they stood an ever increasing chance of arriving in good shape, of adequate supply, of reinforcement and, in extremis, of evacuation.

Many Southeast Asian rulers grasped that the increasing numbers and armament of colonial forces had changed the parameters of power. Some took an interest in new technologies. Vietnam possessed at least four steamers by the 1830s and Vietnam's last independent Emperor, Tu Duc, acquired four more between 1865 and 1872.²³ However, the Vietnamese, like the Siamese, Burmese and Chinese, were not able to produce up-to-date steamships in large numbers on their own. A first Vietnamese attempt in 1838 to build a steamship based upon a purchased Western model failed when the engine exploded. A second attempt in 1840 was successful. Even then, imitation implied constantly lagging behind. No Southeast Asian court could compete with Europe's rate and scale of industrialisation, and depth of knowledge on the operation of the very latest technologies. Hence none could expect parity on the battlefield. It was to take the development of a Maoist style of guerrilla warfare, combined with modern weapons left over from the Pacific War, and afterwards supplied by the Soviet Union and China, to rebalance the scales from the 1940s.

That is getting ahead of our story, which is currently situated in the nineteenth century. At that point the advent of the steamship, new types of rifle and other armaments and improvements gave Europeans the initiative. The availability of quinine also reduced the deadliness of malaria, and the accumulation of knowledge about tropical conditions made troops more efficient. But big problems remained.

First, the sheer number of islands in maritime Southeast Asia – about 7100 for the Philippines and more than 13,000 (3000 inhabited) for Indonesia – made the development of further maritime sinews, beyond the handful of ships sufficient



for dominating key ports and islands before 1850, vital if domination was to become pervasive.²⁴ This more numerous presence had to await the late nineteenth century, following additional industrialisation in Europe, and the time required for its ripple effect to roll several thousand miles across the globe, and penetrate even to the recesses and rivers of Southeast Asia.

Second, once an imperial power moved inland it often faced the fracturing of territories into river valleys, forest and mountain. This meant there was always the potential for Southeast Asians to resort to guerrilla tactics. This remained as true in post-Second World War Vietnam as it was in the forty-year long Aceh Wars (1873–1913) and in Filipino opposition to American suppression of their independence (1898 to 1901). It was especially true in less developed regions such as the Burmese highlands and the cordillera in northern Luzon. Here imperialists sometimes resorted to separating highland from lowland rule (the Burmese highlands being a classic case, as well as the northern Luzon cordillera), and working through local rulers in the former.²⁵ Even the United States initially resorted to enlisting the help of local Muslim chiefs or *datus* in the Muslim-dominated island of Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, before gradually taking more direct control.

Postcolonial states have tended to experience problems policing these same areas, in part due to differing topographies and identities there, in part due to the legacy of their separate administration under imperial regimes, and in some cases (notably Burma) due to an additional imperial preference for recruiting these minorities as colonial forces.

Population densities hence mattered and, to return to our opening theme of demographics, Europe faced in Southeast Asia an area that was not only technically less advanced, but also relatively sparsely populated. By contrast to Southeast Asia's 80–85 million people, Europe in 1900, with its 300 million for an area not dissimilar in size, boasted three to four times the population. Britain, France and Germany all had populations of over 40 million. Ironically, however, the Netherlands – the European power overseeing Java's 1900 population of 29 million people (one of the densest in Southeast Asia) – had a population of just five million. All this is without reckoning on the United States, which in December 1898 purchased from Spain the title to the Philippines, with its 7000 plus islands supporting a meagre seven million people.

What was true of 1800 or even 1900 was, however, becoming far less true by 1941. The populations of Europe and Southeast Asia grew at very different rates. When Hirschman wrote in 1994, he could say that:

From a demographic base less than one-third that of European in 1900, Southeast Asia will have a population larger than Europe's in the year 2000. Europe's population will have expanded by about 60 per cent over the century while Southeast Asia's population has grown more than sixfold. In the year 2000, the largest European country of Germany will have about 83 million people compared to the largest Southeast Asian country of Indonesia which will have a population of almost 218 million. Vietnam, Thailand



and the Philippines will each be considerably more populous than the major European countries of France, the United Kingdom, and Italy.²⁶

Putting all this together, we can tabulate the rough populations of Southeast Asian countries for 1900, the 1940s high-water mark of European imperialism, the 1980s and today, thus giving both snapshots of the region, and a sense of the breathless rate of change. For the sake of comparison, we provide two tables, the first (Table 2.4) covering Asia, the second (Table 2.5) covering those imperial powers that had a major role in Southeast Asia. For Europe as a whole, figures corresponding to the 15 countries that made up the 1995–2003 European Union seem more relevant, if not figures for the main few colonising powers of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Portugal. Either way, these involve narrower definitions of Europe than that used by Hirschman and hence smaller figures for Europe's population.

Nevertheless, the two tables confirm the relative underpopulation of pre-nineteenth and nineteenth-century Southeast Asia. Added to that, Reid has concluded that prior to 1800 Southeast Asian population growth rates were low.²⁷ These figures also confirm that Europe leaped ahead in terms of population in the nineteenth century. Most of the rest of the world enjoyed a similar phenomenon later, in the twentieth century, just as Europe's growth slowed. The result was that the challenge of Europeans ruling Southeast Asians, and Asians in general, became greater in demographic terms as the twentieth century wore on. This challenge was further compounded by the growth of a new European-educated generation of anti-colonialists after 1914, who could voice their grievances in the language of the colonising power, and adapt modern methods of political organisation to ferment strikes, riots and coup attempts.

Another way of looking at the figures is to focus on the greatest imperial systems of power that have impacted on the region. Perhaps the greatest in overall scope and power were the Chinese (here meaning the Ming dynasty in its fifteenth-century ventures) and the modern British and Japanese. We will look at these first, and then the smaller scale French and Dutch afterwards for comparison. Portugal and Spain, among the greatest imperial powers in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, merit comparatively little mention, since by the late nineteenth century they were minor players: Portugal being reduced to the tiny possession of East Timor; Spain being replaced by the United States in the Philippines in 1898. First, it is as well to get a sense of the overall changes in the world's population so that, again, figures such as '10,000 crack troops' (the number of soldiers on a Ming Chinese fleet sailing Southeast Asian waters in 1407) make more sense (Table 2.6).

It goes without saying that China outstrips Southeast Asia in demographic terms, and that this was even more the case before 1900. In 1400, when the Ming Chinese empire was on the cusp of expanding further into Yunnan, and for a while into present-day Vietnam, the world population was between 400 and 500 million. Of these about 60 million were in Europe, and 75 million in

Table 2.4 Southeast Asia and comparative population figures for 1800–2000^a

	<i>c.1800^b</i>	<i>c.1900</i>	<i>c.1940</i>	<i>c.1980</i>	<i>2000</i>
<i>Southeast Asia</i>	33 m	80–85 m	146 m	350 m	524 m
Brunei Darussalam	–	18,000–20,000	40,657 (1947)	192,832	339,000
Burma (Myanmar)	4.6 m	10.5 m	16.12 m (1939)	29 m (1973)	48.78 m
Cambodia	< 1 m (1860s)	1.7 m (early 1900s)	See Vietnam	5.8 m (1963)	12.23 m
Indonesia	5–10 m (Java figures for 1800 and 1845) ^c	40 m (<i>c.</i> 29 m Java, 11 m Outer Islands)	69.43 m (1939)	146.93 m (1980)	212 m
Laos	1.2 m (1800 incl. northeast Thailand)	0.6–0.8 m (early 1900s estimate for just Laos)	See Vietnam	3 m (1985)	5.4 m
Malaya (1800–1963), Malaysia (1963–2004)	0.5 m (1800) to 0.75 m mid-century, Pattani included	2.4 m (1911) ^d	4.74 m (1941)	13.43 m (1980, now including Borneo States)	23.17 m
Philippines	2 m (1800) of whom 0.23 m Mindanao and Sulu	7.6 m (1903)	16.36 m (1940)	48 m (1980)	75.96 m
Singapore	<i>c.</i> 1000 (1819)	226,842 (1901)	769,216 (1941)	2.41 m (1980)	4.01 m ^e (3.26 m resident)
Thailand	2.8 m	8.3 m (1911)	14.46 m (1937)	45 m (1980)	62.32 m

Table 2.4 (cont'd)

	c.1800 ^b	c.1900	c.1940	c.1980	2000
East Timor/Timor-Leste ^f	–	–	461,000	555,350 (1980)	924,642 (2004)
Vietnam	7 m (north and centre only)	13 m (estimate for all Indochina in 1906)	23.5 m (1938, all Indochina)	53 m (1979)	79.83 m
India	73 m	238.4 m (1901)	318.6 m (1941)	675 m (1981)	1002 m
China	100 m (Ming), 360 m (1812)	368 m (1911)	582.6 m (1953)	1008 m (1981)	1275 m

^a Million indicated by 'm'. There were considerably more Southeast Asian polities in 1800 than this list of those that survived into the twenty-first century. Most 1900 figures from Charles Hirschman, 'Population and Society in Twentieth-century Southeast Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 2 (1994), pp. 381–406. Figures for Southeast Asia 2000 from UN ESCAP, *Population and Development Indicators*: www.escap.org/esid/psis/population/database/data_sheet/2000/index.asp (2000). Southeast Asia 1940 figures from Peter Duus, 'Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. xiii. World and Europe estimates (defined as the 1995–2003 EU 15, excluding Eastern Europe) 1980 from Office of National Statistics (UK), *Population Trends*, 115 (Spring 2004), p. 37, www.statistics.gov.uk. Japan, USA, China and India pre-1981 from census reports as compiled in www.geohive.com.

^b For pre-1800 Southeast Asia, mostly see Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 14.

^c Compare Reid (see note b) to Robert Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia* (London: Curzon, 2000), pp. 69–70. Reid's figures make Java's population smaller than the outer islands (3.5 million for Sumatra alone) in 1800.

^d The Malay States, sovereign though accepting British advice, totalled nearly 1.96 million in 1911, the Straits Settlements (Penang, Malacca as then spelt and Singapore) adding 714,069. Penang and Malacca only joined a Malayan Union in 1946. For the sake of comparison, 'Malaya' figures include Penang and Malacca and exclude Singapore.

^e The last Singapore figure includes 0.75 million non-residents (foreign workers and expatriates). Singapore figures are from Constance Mary Turnbull, *A History of Singapore* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 5; Saw Swee-Hock, 'Population Growth and Control', in Ernest Chew and Edwin Lee (eds), *A History of Singapore* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 219–41; Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 296; and government statistics for 2000.

^f Portuguese conquest was sixteenth century, Dutch seizure of West Timor 1613. Indonesia occupied East Timor from 1975 to a 1999 independence vote. Timor-Leste became independent 20 May 2002.

Table 2.5 Population figures for imperial powers in Southeast Asia 1800–2000^a

Country	c.1800	c.1900	c.1940–50	c.1980	2000
Europe (excluding Russia, USSR and successor states) ^b	119 m ^c (1800)	300 m, Hirschman, all Europe except Russia	–	356 m (1981)	375 m
UK, France, Netherlands and Portugal	48.3 m (Spain would add 10.5 m)	90.5 m	111 m (1950)	134.58 m	143.55 m
UK ^d	15.89 m (1801)	41.45 m	48.23 m (1940) 50.61 m (1950)	56.35 m (1981)	58.8 m
France	27.4 m	38.5 m	42.5 m (1950)	54.18 m (1981)	58.89 m
Netherlands	2.1 m	5.1 m	9.6 m (1950)	14.25 m (1981)	15.86 m
Portugal	2.9 m	5.4 m	8.4 m (1950)	9.8 m (1981)	10 m
Germany	23 m	56.4 m	69.1 m (1950)	78.4 m (1981)	82 m
Japan	24.89 m (1792) ^e	43.8 m (1898)	71 m	117.9 m (1981)	126.87 m
USA	5.3 m	76.2 m	132.16 m	228 m (1981)	275.3 m

^a Million indicated by 'm'. For sources, see also Table 2.4. Most figures for 1900 column from Charles Hirschman, 'Population and Society in Twentieth-century Southeast Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 2 (1994), pp. 381–406. Figures for Southeast Asia 2000 from UN ESCAP, Population and Development Indicators: www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/database/data_sheet/2000/index.asp (2000). Southeast Asia 1940 figures from Duus, 'Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues', p. xiii. World and Europe estimates (defined as the 1995–2003 EU 15, excluding Eastern Europe) from 1980 from Office of National Statistics (UK), *Population Trends*, 115 (Spring 2004), p. 37, www.statistics.gov.uk

^b For post-1980 Europe figures (defined as the 1995–2003 EU 15) see Office of National Statistics (UK), *Population Trends*, 115 (Spring 2004), p. 37. For pre-1980 Netherlands figures excluding Belgium, see Chris Cook and John Stevenson, *Modern European History, 1763–1985* (London: Longman, 1987), pp. 216–17.

^c Brian Graham, *Modern Europe* (London: Arnold, 2002), p. 67, for Europe excluding the centre (Poland, Slavic states), Balkans and Russia.

^d Pre-1980 UK figures from Chris Cook and Brendan Keith, *British Historical Facts, 1830–1990* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 232–3.

^e Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 53, for 'the common people'.



Table 2.6 Growth of world population

Year	Population
5000 BCE	5–20 million
0	200 million
1300 CE	400 million
1650	500 million
1700	600 million
1750	700 million
1800	900 million
1850	1.2 billion
1900	1.6 billion
1950	2.4 billion
1975	4 billion
1999	6 billion ^a

^a United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, www.un.org/esa/population/publications/sixbillion/sixbillion.htm

Source: Ralph Tomlinson, *Population Dynamics and Consequences of World Demographic Change* (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 18.

China. By comparison, Reid estimates 23 million for Southeast Asia as late as 1600, and 33 million for 1800.²⁸

Perhaps more importantly, both Europe and China were about to enjoy population growth spurts, with relatively few years of overwhelming famine, pestilence or military devastation. China's population went from about 75 to 100 million, and Europe from about 60 to 80 million, in a fifteenth century that saw about 100 million added to the world's population. At a time when many areas of Southeast Asia were very scantily populated, Ming China could field well over a million troops, albeit most scattered around China's interior, or needed to secure its borders.²⁹ This is also significant with regard to Europe. Celebrated battles such as that of Agincourt in 1415, during which 6000 English defeated 30,000 French, clearly suggest a much smaller scale of forces.

An opposite point about demographics is that, even when Europe was at its peak as a percentage of world population and its relative technological lead – in the nineteenth century – many of the European imperial powers were still tiny compared to their empires. Even the largest, such as France and Britain, possessed empires far larger than the metropolitan territories, in terms of both area and population. Britain alone, at its peak, controlled as much as a quarter of the world's surface area.

Hence several perennial dilemmas continued to haunt the management of imperial forces. There were never enough Europeans available to garrison imperial possessions. They were more susceptible to die of what were to them exotic diseases than in battle, and the maintenance of supply routes remained a significant problem. Those willing to serve were not always of the character desired either, as Meixsel's Chapter 7 notes for the United States in the Philippines. This



is all the more surprising given the small numbers needed there. In the 1920s there were about 12,000 troops in the Philippines (around 7000 Philippine Scouts and 4500 Americans). The latter figure was the United States' contribution to the entire Philippine garrison. Even then, most of these troops were concentrated on the fortress-islands strung like teeth across the entrance to Manila Bay, and two inland military camps near Manila (Fort McKinley and Camp Stotsenburg).³⁰

The British in particular mastered the art of the possible, of controlling millions with a core of only thousands of white soldiers and administrators, when conquering British India. That is, they mastered the art of ruling outlying areas lightly, with District Officers able to call mainly on a handful of native police under European officers. They also refined the techniques involved in raising and managing 'native' troops commanded by small numbers of European officers and NCOs.³¹ Even after the First World War, the British ran India, with its 300 million plus people and rising nationalism, with an army of 206,000, about a third being British (and even fewer English). More shockingly, they ran Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) backed up by just one battalion of African troops (800 men commanded by 30 British officers and NCOs). In 1914 British Malaya (roughly the size of England) and the Straits Settlements, with the combined population of the two overtaking three million around the war, were secured by just two battalions of troops (one British, one Indian), supplemented by the paramilitary Malay States Guides and volunteer forces.³²

To get a better idea of just how tight the situation could be, consider the forces available in the Dutch or Netherlands East Indies: present-day Indonesia. The Netherlands in the seventeenth century had a population of about 1.5 million, reaching 6 million in 1830, before Belgian secession in 1830 scaled it back to 2.5 million. Yet five thousand ships sailed from Holland between 1605 and 1795 carrying a million people. Of these a mere one in three returned. Consequently, other European towns and states supplied most of the soldiers on VOC ships.³³ It should be no surprise, then, that before 1799 the VOC relied heavily on alliances with local leaders to bulk out its own forces. This was sufficient to secure an essentially commercial project by a government-backed company that was largely limited to the control of trading posts, rather than the administration of an entire country. Even after the Netherlands government took over the Indies, in 1799, and after the Napoleonic Wars were out of the way, VOC forces comprised just 5500 Europeans and 5000 Indonesians in 1815.

The Java War of 1825–30 subsequently forced the Dutch to expand their meagre forces. The Netherlands Indies population was by then already larger than that of the Netherlands, and would reach 40 million by 1900. This population was secured by a colonial army (KNIL: Royal Netherlands Indies Army or *Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger*), which increased from about 29,000 in 1861 (including around 14,500 Javanese) to a peak of about 40,000 men (including 18,000 Europeans) in the mid-1890s.³⁴ By the latter date the colonial government was in the final stages of vastly increasing its territories. Forces then simmered



down to about 38,000 (including 15,000 Europeans) in 1901.³⁵ The 1901 figure included around 23,000 'Indonesians', among whom 3800 were Ambonese.

By then the Aceh War had had a major impact, at first negative and later positive, on Dutch confidence. In 1871 an Anglo-Dutch treaty had removed previous British insistence that Aceh – the northernmost state on the island of Sumatra – remain independent. Notwithstanding British preference for preserving trade links there, it was better for weak Dutch imperialism to move in, rather than risk increasingly assertive Americans or others doing so. A force of 8500 troops, half as many servants and coolies again, and 1500 reserves duly took the Acehese capital (on a second attempt) in 1874. Then it became bogged down in guerrilla-style warfare against fighters led by local chiefs, and *ulama* or religious leaders. This was a potent brew of 'nationalism' – Aceh had a proud history – and of jihad. The Dutch lost up to 150 men a month to cholera alone, disease maintaining its just reputation as the most fearsome enemy of colonial armies, and the Dutch appetite for expansion was dampened.³⁶

Then in the 1890s KNIL officer Van Heutsz (Governor of Aceh 1898–1904, Governor-General of the Indies 1904–9) mastered the art of using small forces of *Marechaussee*. These local troops were organised in groups of fifteen to eighteen, with European carbines and short native *klewang* (sword), under a European officer and two NCOs: one European and one 'Native'. *Marechaussee* units, sometimes abandoning strict drill and even shoes for a counter-insurgent style, combined disciplined firepower and flexibility and close-quarters effectiveness amidst *alang-alang* (elephant grass). Van Heutsz combined their deployment with the assuagement of local leaders or *uleebelang*. His tactics, of European-led but mainly locally raised forces, in flexible columns and backed by light artillery, was made more potent by the discovery that treating Islam favourably also undermined opposition.

The Aceh conflict simmered down, though it never died out. The Dutch went on to subdue most of the rest of the outer islands within a decade. Van Heutsz even penned a standard 'Short Declaration' for rulers to sign, replacing their former obligation merely to recognise Dutch sovereignty in general with a requirement to follow all such general orders as the colonial government should issue.³⁷ In addition, by the turn of the century improvements in army conditions – better clothing, knowledge of medicine, terrain and even how to keep water fresh longer – were having a cumulative effect.

The *Marechaussee* also paved the way for mixing Javanese and other ethnic groups in other KNIL units from 1910.³⁸ But despite their success, the Dutch continued to favour 'martial races' from minority populations. They especially favoured Christian converts such as the Timorese, Menadonese (from northern Sulawesi) and Ambonese. The latter came from islands forming part of the Moluccas in the east of the Indonesian archipelago, and in particular from the small spice island of Ambon, which had been subjugated by the East India Company in the seventeenth century. 'Ambonese' recruits in fact came not just from the island of Ambon, but from surrounding islands as well.³⁹ 'Ambonese' numbers continued to expand, from 733 in 1871 to more than 5000 in 1911,



and slightly more than 10,000 in 1918. As a percentage, 'Ambonese' were about 7 per cent of the local, non-European component of forces in 1861, 16 per cent in 1901 and nearly 30 per cent by 1918.⁴⁰ Debates raged in the 1910s and 1920s on the martial qualities of different groups, and the best way to combine them. In theory the resulting decision was to equalise pay, though in practice Ambonese maintained higher pay as 'first class' rather than 'second class' soldiers, and most officers expressed a preference for them as late as 1935.⁴¹

It becomes clear, then, that recruitment of ethnic minority soldiers intensified with the Dutch expansion of direct territorial rule in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Bali, Lombok, northern Sumatra and other areas were brought under increased Dutch control. Yet despite the wide casting of the net in favour of 'Ambonese', and of non-Javanese in general, and despite ambivalence about majority Javanese, the demands of expanding direct rule meant that the biggest manpower pool, the Javanese, could not be ignored. By 1905 Ricklefs has 'Javanese' comprising 68 per cent of the Indonesian troops. The 'Ambonese', whose Moluccan islands provided a tiny recruiting pool, had now risen to 21 per cent of the total.⁴² They continued to provide a vital source of reliable NCOs, but could never be the mainstay for colonial forces.⁴³ A more sophisticated breakdown of numbers reveals that the Dutch KNIL used several groups, in addition to Europeans and Ambonese, to continue to counterbalance the Javanese majority. By 1937 the 'Indonesian' component of the KNIL included 12,700 Javanese, 5100 Menadonese, 4000 Ambonese, 1800 Sundanese, 1100 Timorese and 400 assorted others.⁴⁴

The Dutch thus remained ambivalent towards soldiers from the nominally Muslim Javanese population. In this respect imperial preference struggled against demographic reality. Twice, in the First World War and in the 1930s, the Dutch rejected local nationalist calls for the raising of a 'native' militia force.

By the late 1930s the colonial army had expanded again, by about a third, to 60,000 and counting, but the population of the Netherlands Indies had expanded by a similar proportion. In addition, the 1920s had seen the growth of Indonesian nationalism, and an abortive communist-influenced revolt in parts of Java and Sumatra, in 1926–7. By 1939 Indonesia's total population was nearly 70 million. Put another way, even with rising nationalism, the Dutch were ruling their colony with a ratio of less than one soldier for every 1000 people. By comparison, in 1930 the United Kingdom's armed forces represented one member of the armed forces for every 100 in the population.⁴⁵

In short, a small metropolitan Dutch population was long reliant on non-Dutch Europeans – notably Germans and Belgians – to help make up the 'European' component of its forces. As it switched from indirect imperial force (alliances with local chiefs and their men together with small numbers of company troops) to direct methods, it tried to use minorities as ballast against majority Javanese. But, despite improving Ambonese service conditions from the mid-nineteenth century – with better pay, prestige and pensions – and despite increasing recruitment efforts in the outer islands, the Dutch still found they had to rely on the majority for the largest number of recruits. The limited recruiting



pool for minorities (at one point it was observed that too much recruitment endangered the Ambonese economy) and the problems of moving minority soldiers across an archipelago stretching more than 3600 kilometres from Aceh in Sumatra to the Moluccas in the east saw to that.

The Dutch did briefly experiment with using West Ashante troops from Africa in the 1840s (around 2100 being used in the period 1837–42), but ended this after mutinies, and after British complaints that the Ashante king had been selling his slaves for enlistment. There simply was not either a large metropolitan pool or any other reservoir for imperial troops that might play a similar role to British India.⁴⁶

What is notable here then is the small number of troops to population (40,000 in 1900 for 40 million colonial subjects, 60,000 in the 1930s for nearly 70 million), the relatively high ratio of Europeans to Indonesians at a third to almost a half, the gap between fact and fantasy as regards preferences for ‘martial’ races and the way ambivalence towards majority populations prevented their more effective use.

The reliance on locally recruited ethnic minorities was even less practical for the French in the early stages of their conquest of Indochina. In contrast to the Dutch situation in 1800 – when conquests from the seventeenth century had secured outposts in areas such as the Moluccas and Celebes/Sulawesi – the French had not previously controlled any part of Vietnam, despite French missionaries having converted entire villages from the seventeenth century. Perhaps more crucially, ethnic Vietnamese (or *kinh*) made up the large majority of those lowlands populations that first came under French control. The people in the periphery, in particular the mountains, would only come under direct French rule at a later stage.

The French, initially together with a Spanish force from Manila that included Filipino soldiers, occupied the main southern port of Saigon in 1859. This followed attacks on missionaries and Catholics, and was accompanied by dreams of securing a staging post for trade with China. The Vietnamese Emperor, with his capital at Hue in the country’s centre, ceded the six southern provinces around Saigon in two phases, in 1862 and 1867. These then constituted the Colony of Cochinchina, which contained fewer than three million people.⁴⁷ France also made sparsely populated Cambodia a protectorate in 1863, against a background of Siamese and Vietnamese pressure on that territory. Central Vietnam (Annam) and the more heavily populated north (Tonkin) were made into protectorates in 1883–5, though not fully pacified until 1897.⁴⁸ Together the four territories of Cochinchina, Cambodia, Annam and Tonkin were formed into the Union of Indochina in 1887 under the leadership of a governor-general. Laos was added as a new protectorate in 1893.

To help to police these territories, a 1700 strong Vietnamese regiment of *tirailleurs* (riflemen) was raised in 1879 in Cochinchina. Substantive expansion came with the conquest of Tonkin and Annam in the 1880s, a brief war with China in 1885 and the repression of a royalist guerrilla movement into the 1890s. Initially there was a complex pattern, with ‘natives’ being raised under



four headings: civil guard or militiamen paid for by the protectorate; *Tirailleurs Tonkinois* infantrymen of the first three regiments paid for by the Navy (traditionally responsible for overseas expansion); a fourth regiment of infantry paid by the Ministry of War; and the *Chasseurs Annamites* paid out of the Vietnamese royal treasury. This is excluding irregulars, such as coolies and village militia temporarily constituted in disturbed areas.

This hodgepodge of forces was much simplified between 1886 and 1891, ultimately into two main categories: colonial infantrymen and civil guards. By the 1930s the Indochinese army component could boast some 31 battalions, around 20 of them indigenous, and right up to 1939 there were just 30,000 troops (17,500 Indochinese and 12,500 Europeans), of whom nearly two-thirds were in Tonkin and nearly one-third in Cochinchina. With just 23 million people in French Indochina by 1939, this represents a higher ratio of troops to soldiers than in the Netherlands Indies, at approximately one for every 750. The proportion of European soldiers was broadly similar.

The high proportion of Europeans is partly explained by the lengthy pacification of Tonkin up to 1897. Even thereafter, the hard-won Gallic peace was occasionally disrupted by anti-French movements and agitation, including patriotic attempts to suborn garrisons, and the threat of unrest in volatile China spilling over into Tonkin. From an early plan to poison the Hanoi garrison in 1908 and several attempts during the First World War when French troop presence was at a minimum, violent Vietnamese anti-colonialism erupted again in the Yen Bay mutiny of February 1930. The latter was an unsuccessful attempt to spark a military rebellion on the model of China's 1911 revolution. If Chinese nationalists had helped to spark a revolt among the Chinese Army and end over 250 years of Manchu rule, the French had every reason to fear that Vietnamese nationalists might eventually master the same trick. The Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang (VNQDD, Vietnamese Nationalist Party), modelled on the Chinese Kuomintang, certainly tried at Yen Bay and several other garrisons. The army and the militia forces ultimately stood firm, both then and in a subsequent, harshly repressed communist-influenced peasant uprising of 1930–1 in central Vietnam. The French subsequently drove the VNQDD and communists underground, but the fears these events inspired continued to haunt the management of colonial troops.⁴⁹

It is scarcely surprising, in these circumstances, that the French concentrated their troop deployment around potentially rebellious population centres, as well as along frontiers. Around 1930, nearly two-thirds of a total of 30,000 troops were stationed in Tonkin, along its border and around its main urban centres with their larger European populations. Most of the remaining one-third were in Cochinchina, mainly concentrated around Saigon.

The French also tried to increase recruitment from non-Vietnamese groups, notably from the Highlands. But given their relatively small numbers the main emphasis was on improving surveillance and control of Vietnamese troops. The declaration of war in Europe, in 1939, then reversed French caution. A tripling of forces by 1940 – a period that saw French defeat in Europe and the establishment





there of the Vichy Republic in 1940 – saw the European component creep up to 14,500, while the Indochinese soared to 75,500.⁵⁰

Even worse, the French were forced to tolerate Japanese military bases in the country from 1940 to 1941, and were finally ousted by the Japanese *coup de force* of 9 March 1945. This set the scene for the rise, in the mountainous north of Tonkin, of the communist-led, anti-Japanese *Viet Minh* front. With a war-induced famine killing up to two million of Tonkin's eight million people in 1945, the French were soon faced with the prospect of having to mount a second colonial invasion of the country, against armed resistance, and in the face of a population that had witnessed humiliation of the French at the hands of the Japanese.⁵¹

Meanwhile, Indochina's army had been supplemented by a Civil Guard (variously called the *Garde civile* (in Cochinchina) or *Garde indigène* (in the protectorate territories). The latter originated from the *Police indigène* and 'native' guards. The *Police indigène* had been formed in 1863, under civil control, and tasked with maintaining order after the army had pacified areas. It was fixed at about 300–400 per province, as a kind of National Guard or armed police, whose members were liable mainly for local service. Their duties included manning prisons, guarding public buildings and supporting the civil power. It was rebranded subsequent to a Cambodian revolt of 1885–6 (and the conquest of Tonkin), which necessitated finding extra forces. The resulting *Garde civile* or *Garde indigène* (one each for Cochinchina, Annam, Tonkin, Cambodia and Laos) reached 4150 for Tonkin alone by 1886, and 8800 in 1891.

Thus expanded, the Civil Guard saw its duties increased to include action against banditry and regional revolts. Conscription was introduced along the lines of the pre-existing Vietnamese model, in the form of directing village heads to provide a number of men for three-year periods of service. As with the Dutch, however, the French struggled to secure the desired level of European officers, which in the 1890s was six per battalion of 345, and also faced the problem of the low pay and prestige of the *Garde* compared to its European officers.

The French also suffered from tensions over who should control military and quasi-military operations. At worst this could disintegrate into standoffs in the 1880s, as neither Civil Guard nor army were sure whose responsibility an action was. Was one dealing with mere bandits (the Civil Guard) or organised rebels (the army)? Squabbles were alleviated in Tonkin by distinguishing between border areas requiring external defence and the Red River Delta from 1886 requiring mainly civil guard. Then in 1891 *Territoires Militaires* were created in the northern highland regions bordering China, giving the military unfettered authority there. This meant the military could use its own intelligence forces, raise auxiliaries in the form of partisans and dabble in politics in these areas as required. In civilian-controlled areas, the civilians could use their Civil Guard to try their hand at war. In effect fiefs were created to be dominated by either the military or civil power. Both army and Civil Guard, meanwhile, could call upon the support of local police, and the *Linh Co*, the latter being guards charged with assisting local Mandarins and officials.⁵²



Ultimately the biggest source of military–civilian tensions, the question of authority, was resolved in 1891 by making the highest-ranking general in French Indochina subordinate to the Governor-General. The decree that appointed Jean-Louis de Lanessan as Governor-General also made him the Superior Commander of the troops. Lanessan was made the sole correspondent with France. French Indochina's generals henceforth had to direct all correspondence with the metropole through the office of the Governor-General. Ironically, during the 1939–45 period, a general and then an admiral were chosen by Paris and then Vichy respectively to direct French Indochina through the Second World War.

Indochina in turn must be seen as part of a wider French system of imperial power. In 1900, Tonkinese *tirailleurs* were deployed in the punitive expedition against the Boxers. Large-scale use abroad of Vietnamese soldiers, and labourers, started midway through the First World War, when Paris was in dire need of support. From late 1915, more than 80,000 Vietnamese were shipped to France, about half as soldiers, the others as war labourers. Some served on the Western Front, others in the Mediterranean theatre of war. After drastic postwar reductions, Vietnamese soldiers were again sent to Europe from 1922, though the number overseas appears not to have exceeded 10,000 at any one time. This was further decreased from the late 1920s, and especially in the 1930s after the Yen Bay Mutiny.

Reasons for this reverse included their misuse as 'lackeys' of the French army rather than proper training as infantry, and fear they were bringing metropolitan ideals of liberty and racial equality back to Indochina. French Indochina nevertheless remained a manpower pool. During the Second World War about 7000 Indochinese soldiers, mainly Vietnamese, served in France, despite France's rapid defeat. Vietnamese were also used in French concessions in China from about 1925. Even after French defeat at the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, which ushered in the end of French involvement in Indochina, units made up from men initially recruited there were deployed in Algeria until 1960.

The French, with fear of demographic eclipse by Germany, thus attempted to utilise Indochina as a manpower reservoir for the metropolis, as well as for its overseas interests in the Mediterranean and Asia. Again, 'Southeast Asia' has to be seen as just one component of a bigger imperial system. The use of Indochinese troops was, however, on a smaller scale than that for Africans, whose forces, such as the distinctive *Zouaves* infantry from Algeria, had been used in the conquest of Tonkin. In French West Africa, where there was a tradition of *Tirailleurs Sénégalais*, the conscription of a *Force Noire* began in 1912. In total, some 215,000 French colonial troops, mainly from North and West Africa, served in France in the First World War. After 1918, French African soldiers served in the occupation of the Rhineland, and as far away as the Levant (less so in Indochina, as it was found that the Vietnamese disliked black African soldiers).⁵³ In 1940, when France sought an armistice from Germany, there were 80,000 African troops in the French front line, and De Gaulle's 'Free French' forces also built upon an African base.⁵⁴



The British were in a still stronger position. They possessed the unique advantage of having British India pay for a combination of upwards of 60,000 British and 150,000 Indian troops during the late nineteenth century. This Indian Army had its roots in the switch of the English East India Company, from the mid-eighteenth century, from subcontracting recruitment to local Indian recruiters who provided *sepoys* (soldiers) virtually on a contract basis under their own commanders, to gradually formalising an Indian *sepoy* army directly under British officers. The latter increasingly organised Indian troops along European lines, with regular pay and training allowing better drill, loyalty and discipline. Its utility as a reserve did not derive from hugely inflated numbers; the ratio of Indian Army troops to population was not notably high. It came from its early professionalism, its mobility when combined with British maritime power and its sheer scale making the finding of forces of a few hundred or even a few thousand for individual Southeast Asian interventions manageable.

This was helped by the limited scale of Britain's Southeast Asian territories, in comparison to India with its population of 318 million in 1941. Even at their pre-1941 peak Southeast Asian territories under British protection had a combined population of fewer than 23 million. These territories included Burma and its 16 million people, the Straits Settlements Colony (Penang from 1786, Singapore from 1819 and Malacca from 1824), British Borneo territories (the Brooke dynasty in Sarawak from the 1840s, the British North Borneo Company in the 1880s and British protection over the Brunei Sultanate as well from that time) and the Malay States.

British Indian forces did not need to be stationed in Southeast Asia in very large numbers, by Indian standards, to do the job required. Admittedly, Burma was gradually conquered (in three wars from 1824 to 1885) as a border territory of India, and administered as an Indian province until 1937, with mainly Indian soldiers in its army and frontier force until after that date. But elsewhere only the tiniest garrisons of Indian and British troops were required, secure in the knowledge, not least the 'native' knowledge, that more could be rushed to the spot in a crisis. The Malay aristocracy in Perak had the unpleasant experience of confirming this in 1874–5. In 1874 some of them, by the 'Pangkor Engagement', promised to accept a British Resident to advise the Sultan, and 'accept' that advice on all matters except custom and religion. When it turned out that British 'advice' extended to issues such as freeing 'slaves', revolt raged, a Resident was murdered and Indian *sepoys* were rapidly brought to the Malay state to make British advice persuasive. Subsequent British Residents to Malay States – the last of nine states to hold out accepted an adviser in 1914 – could assume that the need to heed their advice was understood, even if the reality was that London was loath to spend money and blood without compelling reason.

It is difficult to gauge the effect, but the prestige of an imperial system of power such as the British, with its large manpower reserves, and the degree to which it could make itself seem part of the furniture of an age were arguably important weapons in themselves. While Malay Sultans and later Filipino nationalists might quickly learn that resistance, at least large-scale violent resistance by





regular forces, was largely futile, Acehnese Muslim leaders learned the opposite: that Dutch numbers were limited and Acehnese mountains and forests never-ending. Besides, if Aceh had once been Mecca's verandah in the east (as an early Southeast Asian convert to Islam), it may have drawn spiritual strength from a feeling of being part of its own bigger system, an international *ummah* or Islamic community.

At the same time, the bigger imperial systems were particularly vulnerable to signs that their prestige, and overall strength, might be declining. Hence in February 1915, when British troops were reduced almost to nothing in Singapore as part of a wartime concentration on Europe – and the German cruiser squadron *Emden* ranged the nearby seas sinking British vessels and shelling Penang – it seemed Britain's power was not so omnipotent. This was the moment the Indian Fifth Light Infantry battalion, fearing it might be sent to fight fellow Muslims in Turkey, chose to mutiny. The mutiny was put down by a mishmash of army technical arms, volunteers and even Japanese sailors. But the reverberations of Japan's rise – with its defeat first of China in 1894–5 and then of Russia in 1904–5 – were to be felt much more profoundly, symbolised by the remorseless rise of Japanese exports in the years between the world wars. Most of all, as we shall see in Chapter 9 by Abu Talib, it was the explosion of Japan's imperial system of power into Southeast Asia that was radically to reshape the contours of the region and its military forces.

This brings us to another imperial system, and another time, namely the early 1940s. As with the Ming Chinese and British expansions, Japan's forward movement into Southeast Asia came after decades of economic penetration, culminating in a wave of cheap textiles, bicycles, toys and chinaware in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as investment in mining, plantations and fishing. Some poor Malays welcomed the Japanese in 1941 and 1942, in expectation not so much of racial liberation as of a further wave of cheap goods.⁵⁵ If Japanese traders could sell undergarments at 15 cents versus competitors' 25 cents, what could Japanese imperialism do?

It is worth pausing here, in order to tabulate the dimensions of the Japanese empire at its peak, if only to remind ourselves that Japan was also very much like Britain and Ming China in another way, in that Southeast Asia was a spillover from these great imperial powers' core concerns in South and East Asia. Indeed, even use of the term 'Southeast Asia' is, to a degree, anachronistic for a region that was called other names by imperial powers for most of the time, namely: 'East of Suez' or the 'Far East' (Britain); the West or *Nanyang*, meaning 'South Seas' (China); the *Nanyo* (South Seas) component of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Order (Japan); or simply Indo-China for the lesser imperial power, France.

The paradox of the Japanese imperial system's impact upon Southeast Asia was that it was both overwhelming and underwhelming. Its initial campaign smashed Western imperialism between December 1941 and early 1942, showing up the weaknesses of the Western system of imperial defence. Although usually numerically inferior, the Japanese had a higher proportion of battle-proven troops



Table 2.7 Southeast Asia and Japan's wartime empire

	Population	Territory (km ²)
Japan	71,114,308 (1940)	
<i>Original colonies</i>		
Korea	22,899,000 (1940)	220,769
Taiwan	5,212,000 (1940)	35,961
Karafuto	332,000 (1940)	36,090
Kwantung territories	1,134,000 (1940)	3,461
Nanyō (Pacific Islands)	113,000 (1940)	2,149
Total	29,690,000	
<i>Second tier territories</i>		
Manchukuo	43,234,000 (1940)	1,303,143
Occupied China	200,000,000–250,000,000 (estimate)	?
Total	243,234,000–293,234,000	
<i>Southeast Asia</i>		
Borneo	783,000 (1939)	32,258
Dutch East Indies	69,435,000 (1939)	1,904,346
Burma	16,119,000 (1939)	605,000
Philippines	16,356,000 (1940)	296,295
French Indochina	23,500,000 (1938)	740,400
Timor	461,000	7,330
Thailand	14,464,000 (1937)	513,447
Malaya (including the Straits Settlements of Penang, Melaka and Singapore)	5,333,000	132,027
Total	146,451,000	

Source: adapted from Peter Duus, 'Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. xiii.

from earlier campaigns in China. The Western colonial troops, ethnically plural, often badly commanded and ill-prepared and ill-equipped for modern warfare as opposed to colonial policing, were no match. The metropolitan countries, moreover, were too preoccupied with their own survival – France and the Netherlands were already occupied by the Germans – to be able to support far-away dependencies adequately.

The Japanese overran all of Southeast Asia, with the exception of Thailand and French Indochina, which both obtained status as subordinate allies, in a matter of months. But then they had to wrestle with the question of how to rationalise and administer this new imperial layer. Here was a region that had, in essence, been taken for reasons of economic security, to seize critical war resources that Western embargoes were denying Japan from mid-1941, and as a matter of opportunism, as a response to Hitler's invasion of the Netherlands and France.

The previous East Asian components of Japan's empire had been relatively easy to encompass within a pan-Asian logic, of Japan helping similar Asian



societies as an older brother. Japan had announced a 'New Order in East Asia' in November 1938, based on 'mutual cooperation' between 'independent' East Asian states, which shared a writing system, physical characteristics and similarities in philosophical and religious traditions. Southeast Asia embraced greater cultural variety, and so presented a greater challenge. Fortunately, Japan was already developing an ideological basis for broader dominion.

In August 1940 Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke had expounded his vision of a new 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'. Now pan-Asian themes of cultural commonality were downgraded, in favour of an image of Asian security and especially economic cooperation under Japanese leadership. Japan's new Foreign Minister Shigemitsu further told the Diet in October 1943 that the war was 'a war of racial awakening – a war for the renaissance of East Asia . . . a war of national liberation'. The turning tide of the war from 1943, of course, sent Japanese merchant ships to the ocean floor, and turned their aspirations for an economic bloc into a hungry, poorly clad, inflation and black market-ridden shambles.⁵⁶ For many, rice substitution meant that the co-prosperity sphere soon turned into a tapioca empire.

Having swept the Western powers away in a matter of weeks, Japan thus tried to retain the area's raw materials, especially Sumatra and Burma's petroleum, with minimal garrisons. This was because Southeast Asia remained (notwithstanding its resources) essentially peripheral to Japan's metropolitan core, to its first ring of colonies in Taiwan and Korea (which together provided 200,000 troops integrated into Japanese units) and also to its second ring of expansion in Manchuria and China. Indeed, one area this book shows up as in need of serious attention is the overall Japanese approach to imperial security, with the different approaches between these three rings. There was direct Nipponisation and recruitment in the first ring, a combination of full-scale military aggression and more indirect and informal methods of imperialism and alignments with local and 'puppet' regimes in the second, and maritime empire and influence in the third.⁵⁷

As Japan's military overstretch led to a sinking maritime fleet from 1943, and an advancing American enemy into 1944, this meant two things for its third, Southeast Asian, circle of empire. First, it meant increased space for left-wing led anti-Japanese guerrilla forces to thrive, notably in Malaya and the Philippines, thus leaving a legacy of armed, pro-communist groups in the postwar era. Second, it meant Japan trained increasing numbers of Southeast Asians as auxiliary labour, irregular troops and even regular forces such as the *giyugun*.

Abu Talib's Chapter 9 in this volume how these Japanese-sponsored forces came to play a vital part in accelerating and shaping postwar independence, notably in Burma and Indonesia. In Burma this involved the Burma Defence Army (its name and form changed several times). This peaked at tens of thousands, changed sides to support the British by March 1945 and then underpinned the postwar pressure that accelerated independence to January 1948, as opposed to British visions of a period of empire-bound reconstruction. In Indonesia it involved training up to a million in youth groups, and smaller

Table 2.8 Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere structure

Region	Political and security structure	Economic structure	Ideology
<i>First circle</i> Taiwan, Korea	Direct colonial administration, direct recruitment into Japanese forces.	Economic development (foodstuffs, semi-manufactured and manufactured goods).	Assimilation
<i>Second circle</i> (Manchukuo, Nationalist Government in China)	Nominally independent, actually a mix of 'indirect' and informal imperialism, with Japanese advisers at various levels. Nominally independent security forces, as well as Japanese Army presence.	Economic development (resource extraction, semi-manufactured and manufactured goods).	Independence
<i>Third circle</i> Burma, Indonesian Outer Islands, Philippines	Military administration (<i>Gunseikambui</i>) followed by independence. Mix of small numbers of recruits to Japanese-controlled armies, and large numbers to Japanese-sponsored armies, militia and auxiliary labour organisations.	Resource extraction	Liberation
Java, Malaya	Military government, no independence.	Resource extraction	
Singapore	As above for military recruitment.		
<i>Ally</i> Thailand, French Indochina (until the March 1945 takeover) ^a General	Military government, integral to Japanese system. Independent, informal imperialism in the form of high Japanese discretion in use for military purposes. All categories except allies featured organisation down to <i>tonari gumi</i> (neighbourhood associations), whose <i>cho</i> (heads) were responsible for local behaviour.	Trade, resource extraction	Declaratory parity

^a French Indochina was, until 9 March 1945, also an ally due to the Vichy–Berlin–Tokyo axis. *Source:* adapted from Peter Duus, *Japan's Wartime Empire: Problems and Issues*, in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. xxvi–xxxii.



numbers in paramilitary organisations such as the Army of the Defenders of the Homeland (Peta, 37,000 in Java and Bali alone, distributed in battalions around these territories), *Hizbollah* (an Islamic paramilitary) and the more regular *giyutai* (volunteer militia) and *giyugun* (volunteer army).

Where these Japanese-sponsored youth groups and forces were larger, as in Indonesia and Burma, the results in terms of accelerating decolonisation seem to have been more dramatic. Where the Japanese-sponsored armies and militias were smaller in number, and nationalists given less leeway for propaganda, as in Malaya, or there was greater continuity with prewar organisations as in the case of the Philippine Constabulary, the postwar results of Japanese-sponsored forces tended to be less dramatic and durable. In these areas the anti-Japanese armies, mostly left-wing organisations relying on rural support, seem to have made a more lasting impact. This included laying the groundwork for later insurgencies in the Philippines (1946–51) and Malaya (1948–60).

Vietnam forms a separate category, in that the Japanese did not remove the French administration until March 1945, by which point Japanese fortunes were already in serious decline. Here it was as much French weakness as Japanese intervention that enabled the *Viet Minh* to consolidate in the north, and so lay the groundwork for postwar insurgency and war (1946–54 and 1959–75).

The Japanese period thus created a great variety of Japanese-sponsored and anti-Japanese forces that could not be ignored. With Japanese surrender in August 1945, the region headed towards a period of Western ‘decolonisation’. Some might argue, as Geoffrey Robinson appears to imply in Chapter 11 with regard to Indonesia and East Timor, that European decolonisation nevertheless did not mean the end of imperial situations and of ‘colonial armies’. It could be argued that imperial situations persist, and one might plot, for instance, the changing demographic balance between Java and Indonesia’s outer islands. Given the outer islands’ population growth in the twentieth century, and continuing friction between the central government and areas such as Timor until 1999, and Aceh afterwards, a case can be made for this. But that is another chapter, and for another book.⁵⁸

Much more could be said about the demographics of dominance, and about the overlap between colonial forces and low intensity warfare. It could also be argued that the colonial campaigns of the past provide a rich training manual for the small conflicts of the present and the future. This can be seen, for instance, in works on British frontier policing and on America’s small wars.⁵⁹

The outline presented here will have to suffice for now, as a sort of rough mapping of the demographic terrain with which ‘imperial systems’, from Ming China to the present day, have had to work when fashioning their military presence in the region we now call Southeast Asia. Above all, this chapter sets the scene for the rest of the book, by giving a satellite’s eye view of the geographical demography of Southeast Asia on the one hand, and the imperial systems of power that sought to dominate Southeast Asians on the other. In so doing, it makes the case for seeing not just individual pieces of the puzzle but the puzzle as a whole, not just conquerors but the dominated, not just armies but



navies and marines, and not just regulars but militias, and even the whole complex of colonial and anti-colonial forces and discourses. In short, it makes the case for contextualising the parts against wider imperial systems of power and imagination.

Notes

- 1 Charles Hirschman, 'Population and Society in Twentieth-century Southeast Asia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, 2 (1994), pp. 381–406. Hirschman gives the figure of 80 million, but see Table 2.4, where country totals suggest almost 85 million, even if we must remember censuses were often crude, with evasion, inefficiency or, in some parts, no census at all by this period.
- 2 *Ibid.* The exceptions were Mandalay, which lay on the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy River, and Surakarta.
- 3 Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns, Sails and Empires: Technological Innovation and the Early Phases of European Expansion, 1400–1700* (New York: Pantheon, 1966), pp. 137–40.
- 4 Anthony Reid, *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000), p. 10. Reid suggests that the Early Modern period was marked by 'new European ideas of defence behind low but thick walls surmounted by batteries of guns, with bastions projecting to provide a field of fire', thus making the Portuguese 'impregnable' in Melaka and the Dutch in Batavia (Jakarta) and Maluku, as opposed to the wooden palisades of many native *kota*.
- 5 Merle C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 112, for the *benteng-stelsel* system of strategic fortified posts, which allowed small mobile columns to operate independently to dominate areas and police populations during the Java War (1825–30).
- 6 Verenigde is rendered Vereenigde in older works. Jean Gelman Taylor, *Indonesia: Peoples and Histories* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 181–5; the VOC troops included Asian auxiliaries from Batavia, and mercenary squads of Javanese, Balinese, Madurese, Timorese and Ambonese. The Europeans, equipped with standard sword, smoke bombs, grenades and muskets, held the centre, firing by line.
- 7 Eric Tagliacozzo, 'Tropical Spaces, Frozen Frontiers: The Evolution of Border-Enforcement in Nineteenth-century Insular Southeast Asia', in Paul Kratoska, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt (eds), *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Space* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2005), pp. 149–74.
- 8 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 191.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 190–262.
- 10 For India and Southeast Asia see Hack's Chapter 10 in this volume. See also Byron Farwell, *Armies of the Raj: From the Mutiny to Independence, 1858–1947* (London: Viking, 1990).
- 11 For further information on these developments, see Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Yuzon Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 99–106; and Dianne Lewis, *Jan Compagnie in the Straits of Malacca* (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1995), pp. 109–10, 115. This information is courtesy of Radin Fernando.
- 12 Selangor was ruled by princes of Malay-Bugis descent, the Bugis coming from Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Dutch Indies. Menado is the Christian-influenced area in the northern part of Sulawesi.
- 13 Lee Kam Hing, 'The Indomitable Sultan Ibrahim', in *Heritage Asia* 2, 2 (December 2004–February 2005), pp. 34–7. The 1826 Anglo-Thai 'Burney' Treaty recognised





- Thai claims in northern Malaya (Perlis, Kedah, Terengganu, Kelantan), but in effect ended Thai claims to the south, including Selangor. With a previous 1824 Anglo-Dutch treaty dividing the Malay world into British and Dutch spheres, the British now had effective influence north of the Malacca Straits up to Perak and Selangor, the Dutch to the south in modern day Indonesia, with the notable exception of Aceh in northern Sumatra, which both parties promised to leave.
- 14 Robert Pringle, *A Short History of Bali: Indonesia's Hindu Realm* (New South Wales: Allen and Unwin, 2004), pp. 98–9, 104–8. The 1848 force included some of the Ashante Africans the Dutch raised in the 1840s. The Malay tradition of running amok likewise had a role as battle heroism, as well as for someone with no other avenue to avenge a wrong. See also Geoffrey Robinson's contribution to this volume (Chapter 11) on pro-Indonesian militias on East Timor who used amok-like behaviour as a technique to terrorise.
- 15 See Teitler's Chapter 6 in this volume.
- 16 Quinine (from cinchona bark) was arguably one of the most crucial medical breakthroughs, its regular use from the 1870s turning tropical service, in particular in Africa, from a sort of Russian roulette with a good lifestyle as the winning prize to a more rational career choice. See Daniel R. Headrick's *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).
- 17 Lennox Algernon Mills, *British Malaya, 1824–67* (Selangor: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Reprint No. 22, 2003), pp. 253–310 for piracy off Singapore, and James Brooke in Borneo from 1839. James Francis Warren emphasises not just piracy, but wealth- and slave-raiding as a state formation tactic: see his *The Sulu Zone, 1786–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Formation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981), and his more recent 'A Tale of Two Centuries: The Globalisation of Maritime Raiding and Piracy in Southeast Asia at the end of the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries' (Singapore: Asia Research Institute Electronic Working Paper No. 2, 2003): www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps03_002.pdf.
- 18 The *Marina Sutil*, or light navy, were an anti-pirate force. Some 50–60 *Marina Sutil* per vessel operated from half-decked, flat boats, propelled by both sails and oars. They carried a long brass cannon and smaller swivel guns. Copper bottoms protected them from coral reefs. Flotillas of the *Marina Sutil* patrolled the seas of Sulu for about a decade, before being succeeded by steam vessels from 1848.
- 19 Headrick, *Tools of Empire*, p. 21, as cited in David B. Abernethy, *Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires, 1415–1980* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 82. In the 1750s, the British ability to move large numbers of men along the coast by sailing ship had helped to win ascendancy in Bengal, but sailing ships were reliant on winds, monsoons and deep water.
- 20 The Opium War being fought over a combination of opium, free trade and the Manchu dynasty's desire to exert control over expanding trade in its south.
- 21 Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 25–6, argues it was during this war that British armament pulled ahead significantly. He takes the quotation from Gerald S. Graham, *The China Station* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 154–5. The classic work on technology is Headrick, *The Tools of Empire*.
- 22 For a similar argument for the importance of railways in the Italian Wars of 1859, see Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History* (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 188.
- 23 Nguyen The Anh, 'Traditional Vietnam's Incorporation of External Cultural and Technological Contributions: Ambivalence and Ambiguity', *JSEAS* 40, 4 (March 2003), pp. 444–58 (454). For China's failure to create an effective steamship fleet, see the books reviewed in Bruce Elleman, 'China's New "Imperial" Navy', Review Essay, in *Naval War College Review* 55, 3 (Summer 2002), pp. 143–54.





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- 24 The official 1963 tally of Indonesian islands was 13,667, the 1994 tally 17,508, with about 3000 inhabited and about 6000 officially named. Robert Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia* (London: Curzon, 2000), p. 10.
- 25 The French military territories on the border with China (see Henri Eckert's Chapter 5 in this volume) are a further variant of administering highlands, in this case strategically important ones, differently from the lowlands or less important mountain territories.
- 26 Hirschman, 'Population and Society in Twentieth-century Southeast Asia', p. 382.
- 27 Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, Vol. I, *The Lands Below the Winds* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 1988 edition), pp. 11–25.
- 28 Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce*, Vol. I, pp. 13–18. Reid makes Vietnam (4.7 million in 1600 and 7 in 1800), Java (4 and 5 million) and Burma (3.1 and 4.6 million) among the most populous areas and Malaya (500,000 for both dates, Patani included) among the least. The spice islands of Maluku, the earliest Western target, are estimated at 275,000 and 700,000 for these two dates.
- 29 Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 92–3.
- 30 See Richard Meixsel's Chapter 7 in this volume. The Scouts originated in 1901, with several thousand by 1902. Meixsel shows them as not so exceptional in some ways. Recruiting started with the town of Macabebe, which had already provided soldiers to the Spanish, and continued with a tradition of avoiding the Tagalog majority where possible, and ensuring officers were mainly seconded from the US army for two-year periods. The Filipinos were paid about half of US army levels. But preference for recruiting units by 'tribe' went out of the window as higher educational qualifications increased in importance.
- 31 For policing, David M. Anderson and David Killingray (eds), *Policing the Empire: Government, Control and Authority, 1830–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) and *Policing and Decolonisation: Nationalism, Politics and the Police, 1917–1965* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992).
- 32 Lewis Henry Gann, 'Reflections on the German and Japanese Empires', in Peter Duus, Ramon H. Meyers and Mark Peattie (eds), *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 344.
- 33 Quotation and figures from Taylor, *Indonesia*, p. 150. The Dutch contrast with France in not using Indonesians for Europe in the First World War, when they resisted 'Indonesian' calls to raise a militia, instead granting a *Volksraad* or People's Council with limited, indirect elections and powers.
- 34 Up from fewer than 8000 before the 1830s.
- 35 Approximate numbers, taken from Gerke Teitler's table in Chapter 6.
- 36 For a comparative example of such problems, see Philip Curtin, *Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 37 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, pp. 136–7. Holland itself industrialised and became more bureaucratic during the nineteenth century. See Taylor, *Indonesia*, p. 251; and Jan Aarte Scholte, 'The International Construction of Indonesian Nationhood', in Hans Antlöv and Stein Tønnesson (eds), *Imperial Policy and South East Asian Nationalism* (Richmond: Curzon, 1995), pp. 191–226.
- 38 Eric Tagliacozzo, 'Tropical Spaces, Frozen Frontiers: The Evolution of Border-enforcement in Nineteenth-century Insular Southeast Asia', p. 157.
- 39 Ambonese were recruited in larger numbers from about 1864.
- 40 See Table 6.1 below.
- 41 Why the Dutch never conclusively decided to trust the loyalty and capacity of Javanese troops more is puzzling. Religion is hardly an excuse (think of Indian Army Sikhs and Pathans). This puts the spotlight on conditions, handling and cultural issues. Jaap de Moor's superb summary describes the Dutch inventing a misleading tradition of Ambonese loyalty and martial qualities, then making it real with extra pay, pensions,





- praise and food from the 1830s, and recruitment from the 1870s. Better pay persisted even after ethnically distinct companies (battalions ideally having one European, one Christian Ambonese and one Javanese company) changed to mixed companies. The change began with the *Korps Marechaussee* in the 1890s, which found mixed companies effective, and was introduced as 'mixed companies' in 1910. Jaap de Moor, 'The Recruitment of Indonesian Soldiers for the Dutch Colonial Army', in David Killingray and David Omissi (eds), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c.1700–1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 62–4.
- 42 Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, pp. 138–9. Martin Bossenbroek, 'The Living Tools of Empire: The Recruitment of European Soldiers for the Dutch Colonial Army, 1814–1909', in *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 23, 1 (1995), pp. 26–53, p. 30, *passim*.
- 43 Clive Christie, *A Modern History of South East Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separation* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 112–15, which draws on I. O. Nanulaitta, *Timbulnya Militerisme Ambon: Sebagai Suatu Persoalan Politik Sosial-Ekonomis* (Jakarta: Bharatara, 1966), pp. 112–14.
- 44 Nicholas Tarling, *Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (London: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 292, citing H. L. Zwitzer and C. A. Heshusius, *Het Koninkrijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, 1830–1950* ('s-Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij, 1977), p. 10.
- 45 British figures from David Butler and Gareth Butler, *British Political Facts, 1900–1985* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986 edition), pp. 323, 473.
- 46 Jaap de Moor, 'The Recruitment of Indonesian Soldiers', p. 58.
- 47 Cochinchina's population was just under three million in 1901, and there are no reliable figures before then.
- 48 The French used the term 'Annam' ('Pacified South' in Chinese) not only for central Vietnam but also for Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina together, avoiding the patriotic term 'Vietnam'. An 'Annamite' or 'Annamese' could therefore be either someone from the centre or more generically a Vietnamese.
- 49 China's 1911 revolution started out as a garrison revolt by a section of the modernising Chinese army, closely aligned to nationalist reforming movements. For post-Yên Bay French policies, see Rettig, 'French Military Policies in the aftermath of Yên Bay', *South East Asia Research* 10, 3 (2002), pp. 309–32, *passim*.
- 50 Among 42,345 'Frenchmen' in Indochina in 1937, about one quarter were military personnel, and a further quarter were of mixed parentage, Indians, or foreigners. See Wolfgang Schmahl, *Indochina: Ein Kapitel französischer Kolonialherrschaft* (Hamburg: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, No. 7, 1961). By comparison, Dutch and Eurasians were a far larger category in the Netherlands Indies.
- 51 Nicholas Tarling, *Imperialism in Southeast Asia: 'A Fleeting Passing Phase'* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 198. Typically, wartime expansion meant the European component was diluted: 14,500 to 75,500 Indochinese, or from 46 to 16 per cent, at the height of mobilisation in 1940.
- 52 See Sarah Womack's Chapter 4 and Henri Eckert's Chapter 5 in this volume. Though differing on details, both agree on the *Garde civile* emerging from the mid-1880s, with about six officers to a unit.
- 53 Karl Hack, *Defence and Decolonisation in Southeast Asia: Britain, Malaya and Singapore, 1941–1968* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), p. 228.
- 54 David Killingray, 'Guardians of Empire', in Killingray and Omissi, *Guardians of Empire*, pp. 10–11.
- 55 Abu Talib bin Ahmad, *The Malay Muslim, Islam and the Rising Sun, 1941–45* (Kuala Lumpur: JMBRAS Monograph No. 34, 2003), pp. 23–36, *passim*. Those politically motivated were no doubt disappointed by the strict Japanese limits on nationalist propaganda and activity in 1942, such as the dissolving of Malaya's Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malays Association) in June that year.





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- 56 In 1945 hunger became starvation in some areas, notably with a massive famine in Tonkin, and even in less badly affected areas such as Malaya, pot-bellied, malnourished children began to appear in some rural areas.
- 57 Duus, Meyers and Peattie's *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, and their *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895–1937* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) have numerous articles on parts of the system, but other than the introductions to these books, there is little in terms of systemic and comparative analysis for the Japanese Empire.
- 58 Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia* does a good job of mapping the terrain for Indonesia across time to present, though less so for demography than political and administrative structures.
- 59 See, for instance, Max Boot, *The Savage Wars: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), for this message; Tim R. Moreman, 'The British and Indian Armies and North-West Frontier Warfare, 1894–1914', *JICH* 20, 1 (1992), pp. 35–64.

