

#1 – Kyle Love – Taiwan

Taipei is the cultural, economic and political hub of Taiwan. China claims its sovereignty although it is self-governed. 1992 agreement of peace agree on one nation two governments, which is now being strictly opposed. If 1992 would be void, the peace aspect would be void. China has economic power over them, which is the bottle neck, however Taiwan is mainly semiconductors, which is massive in the current world's exports. Family is very important in Taiwan. The US is the second biggest trade partner which is why we have an interest in their sovereignty.

#2 Hong Kong, Amy

There is a serious amount of wage inequality with the richest 0.001% making 55% of the city's income. It is similar to Taiwan with the "One country, two systems." Has a problem with underrepresenting ethnic minorities and all of the problems that ensue from this. Hong Kong is still affected by the legacy of the opium wars. Taiwan and Hong Kong are also similar with their involvement of US especially as trade partners and individual freedoms.

#3 Hardy – Japan

Japan has 125 million people but the population is aging. Shinto is important to the culture representing and dedicated to ancestors and deities with over 100,000 public shrines. Buddhism is also important with 77,000 temples. The Tokyo Trial were used to sentence the war crimes of Japan, which put the blame on them, but Japan still does not fully recognize this in their culture, saying their situation has no choice. US is the most important partner, b/c we rebuilt their economy.

#4 Singapore

British controlled Singapore until WW2 when Japan took over. They renamed it to Syonan-to which represent the assimilations to Japanese's culture. The invasion is glossed over to keep the Japanese/Singapore relations positive. The inclusion efforts had helped make Singapore the most religiously diverse place. They have acts to keep things harmonious which is contained with the Religious Harmonious Act. Cost of living is very high in Singapore. Has the same problem with an aging population as Japan.

#5 South Korea

It has a small land size with a high population, with the 15th highest density globally. Ethnically not very diverse. Japan had an aggressive take over. Japan committed a lot of war atrocities against South Korea in WW2. At the end of the war, the US and Russia could not decide how to set up a government which led to the Korean war, that ultimately did not change much. There is a lot of gender discrimination. It is the capitol of digital sex crime.

#6 North Korea

They are a very private nation. There is the illusion freedom and rights, while they have been taken away quickly with arrests and deaths for their religions. It is a dictatorship. North Korea supports Russia in the Russia Ukraine war. There is a large income and socioeconomic gap between the government officials and the others. Harsh punishments. This created strong relations between the two nations. They also have one of the worst human rights crisis in the world. Including child abuse and exploitation.

#7 Indonesia

Largest archipelago nations with over 17,000 islands and 281 million. Created due to the colonialization of the Dutch. Because of the large number of islands, there are a lot of ethnic groups. Largest economy in southeast Asia, and 10th overall and growing quickly. However, there is a large wealth gap. Fairly good religious tolerance. Only 8 presidents over 80 years, with elections every 5 years. U.S. helped in the 1965 Indonesia Coup. This was at the peak of the cold war, so turning this country democratic was important. The U.S. later released the documents of their involvement to help relations.

#8 Bali

Size of Delaware. Population is 4.4 million people, 80% practice Hinduism. Dubbed “The Island of the Gods.” The economy shifted from agriculture including rice to the tourism, nearly 7 million since 2012. This causes huge income disparity. Since this is a sub island of Indonesia, they follow their history very closely. This began with the Dutch colonization and the slave exportation. There are prevalent temples known as temples, which has become a focus of tourism as well – over 10,000. Has a good relationship with the U.S. because of its democracy and tourism.

#9 Brunei – Lynn Egan

Brunei is a small Southeast Asian nation on Borneo's northern coast - an absolute monarchy ruled by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah. Rich in oil and natural gas, it boasts one of Asia's highest per capita incomes. Islam is the state religion, and Malay is the official language. It is an absolute monarchy. Which means there is a single ruler with no elections i.e. centralized powers. The royal family boasts a lot of wealth, with cars and houses. The United States and Brunei established diplomatic relations in 1984, since Brunei's independence.

#10 Malaysia - Bryan Volk

Located in southeast Asia, strong economic and diplomatic ties with all the neighboring island and nations. There are some territorial disputes with the Philippines over Sabah. The government is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. Three major parties, UMNO, Bersatu and DAP. The United States and Malaysia have maintained diplomatic relations since 1957, fostering a diverse and expanding partnership encompassing trade, investment, security, environmental cooperation, and education. The US also maintains a navy presence surrounding Malaysia.

#11 Myanmar – Benjamin Petrihos

Located in Southeast Asia, like Nepal it is surrounded by India and China. Location good for trade routes and China. Myanmar formerly known as Burma, was a British colony until gaining independence in 1948. Followed by decades of military rule. In recent years, it has faced political turmoil, including a military coup in 2021 that overthrew a democratically elected government. Aung San Suu Kyi, was the key figure for the democracy. 54 million population, mainly mining for the economy. The Rohingya Crisis involves the persecution and mass displacement of the Rohingya Muslim minority from Myanmar, particularly following a violent military crackdown in 2017.

#12 Thailand

Also, Southeast Asia, with 70 million people. Thailand, formerly Siam, is the only Southeast Asian nation never colonized by a European power and transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. It has experienced numerous military coups and political upheavals but remains a major regional power with a strong cultural identity. The economy relies agriculture and tourism. The United States and Thailand have maintained a long-standing alliance since 1833, with strong cooperation in trade, security, and regional stability.

#13 Mongolia

It is a landlocked between China and Russia, the only countries surrounding it. Population is 3.5 million. Its economy is dependent of natural resources through mining, such as copper gold and coal. Very rural communities. 90% is Khalkha Mongol. They are currently going through a cultural re-emergence, helped through Tik Tok and social media. The U.S. relationships are good, with study abroad programs and military training. They also support the environmental missions. There are over 20,000 living in the U.S.

#14 Kazakhstan

20 Million people, with a 262 billion GDP (50th globally). Apart of Mongolian empire, USSR, before getting independence. Similar to Mongolia, it is big mining – mostly Zinc. National language is Kazakh. Weddings are a big part and symptom of their culture. No right to protest, which was a big problem. Similar, there is no religious freedom. U.S. relation is mostly economic, although Kazakhstan wants to be partners because they are scared by Russia. Essentially a Autocracy.

#15 Luke Risser – Bhutan

“Land of Happiness.” Landlocked countries - Neighbored by India and China. Three main regions – but very small country. Three major cities, Thimphu, Phuentsholing and Paro. 800,000 people with diverse ethnic groups. Along with this, the main religions are Mahayana Buddhism and Hinduism. Constitutional and Hereditary Monarchy. Agrarian Economy and Hydroelectric Power. They preach gross net happiness which is the foundation on how they run the country. Their economy is small compared to the U.S. but overall strong.

#16 – Tahiti

Tahiti's the biggest island in French Polynesia (South Pacific). France still controls stuff like defense & foreign stuff, but there's local gov too. Life there mixes Polynesian traditions w/ French vibes. Main \$ comes from tourism, black pearls, & imports. Some ppl want independence, but a lot stay w/ France because of the money & stability. U.S. doesn't do much—some tourism, cultural exchange, that's about it. Not a major player really. Pretty laid back island but complicated politics under the surface.

#17 – Samoa

Samoa used to be called Western Samoa—got independence in 1962. Was a German colony, then New Zealand ran it for a bit. It's a democracy but also runs by fa'a Samoa (chief system). Christianity's huge there, like everywhere. Economy's mainly farming, remittances, & aid. U.S. has ties but not that strong—mostly focuses more on American Samoa. Ppl there keep traditions strong even while dealing w/ modern stuff. Good place but relies a lot on outside help.

#18 – Laos

Laos is a small, landlocked country in SE Asia. Used to be French colony, got free in 1953. Now it's one-party gov run by Lao People's Revolutionary Party. Pretty poor still—lots of farms, some hydro & mining. Buddhism's big part of daily life. China has big influence now, building roads & rails as part of Belt & Road. U.S. not super involved these days. Def one of the quieter countries in the region, but still plays role in bigger picture.

#19 – Vietnam

Vietnam's in SE Asia w/ 99 mil+ ppl. Was French colony, then came Vietnam War. Country got unified in 1975 under communist gov. Still a one-party system now, but economy's gone more free market. Super fast growth lately—lots of factories & exports. Since '95, ties w/ U.S. got way better—good trade & cooperation now. Ppl still remember the war tho. Gov's strict but country's modernizing fast. Balances being communist while trying to compete globally.

#20 – Fiji

(My presentation)

#21 – Philippines

Philippines got 7,600+ islands and around 115 mil ppl. Colonized by Spain, then U.S. took over—got independence in 1946. It's a democracy now but has big American influence still—military, culture, economy. A lot of money comes from Filipinos working overseas, also farming & factories. U.S. is big ally, especially w/ defense. Tension w/ China in South China Sea is a major issue. Ppl are super friendly, mix of cultures too—Spanish, American, native. The mass amount of islands poses the biggest challenges moving forward.

#22 East Timor

Known as Timor-Leste. Island in the southern hemisphere. Has a 1.4 million population. Was a Portuguese colony for 400 years. During an Indonesia occupation nearly half a million lost their lives. Overall, the path to independence path was very ugly. Very dependent of natural resources with oil reserves making 80% of the GDP. Roman Catholicism dominates the country. The U.S. East-Timor trade has been mutually beneficial for both sides. They have initiatives to support the diaspora within the United States.

#23 Papua New Guinea

Main religion is Christianity. Brought over Chinese indentured servants during the earlier parts of the country. Their economy is about 30 billion which is about 3,546 per capita. And most of their GDP comes from mining. They have a serious problem with violence against women. There is a serious lack in police infrastructure. Most of the violence is caused by supernatural beliefs. And violence is ingrained into the culture. There is not much diaspora to the United States.

#24 Kiribati

Only 800 sq km – size of New York city. Because they don't have a lot of natural resources they rely on fishing and foreign aid mainly. Their poor economic situation leaches out into other sectors like health and education. Became independent from UK in 1979. Cultural identity founded on strong community. Climate change is the biggest issue facing the country today. Because of the small island size – sea level rise is a major problem. They also do not have resources to handle this massive problem facing their country.