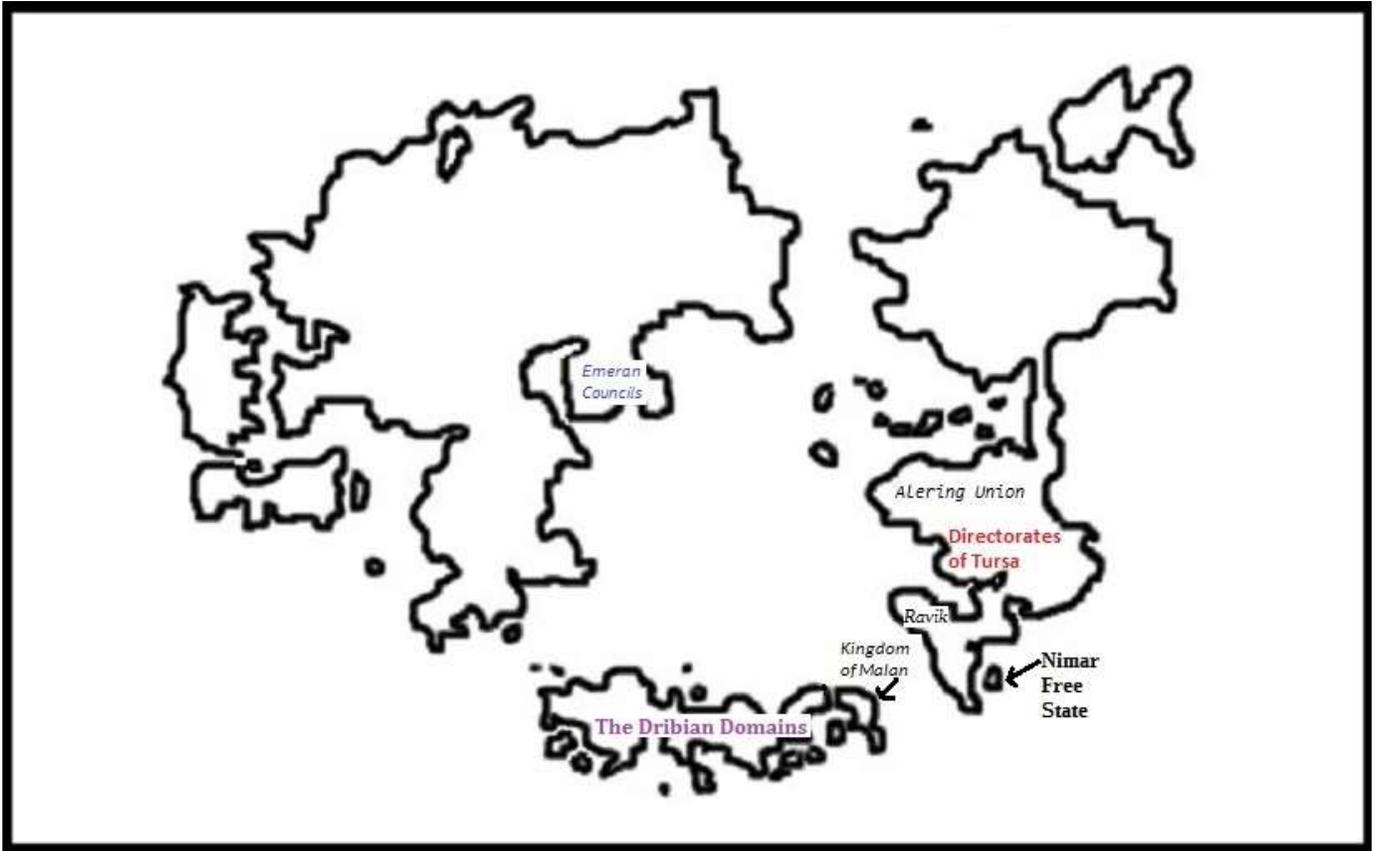


Highlights of the World



Emera is a middle-income ex-colony of **Dribia**. Its population is about 150 million people. It is democratic, but remains plagued by corruption, violence, nepotism, and inequality. It was colonized by Dribia in the 42nd and 43rd centuries, but became independent 82 years ago, in 4310, as **Dribia** let go of its colonies to concentrate on its cold war against **Tursa**. It is in that context that Dribia and Tursa funded space programs; officially they were for civilian purposes, but many suspect they were weaponizing space.

For the middle decades of the century, Emera was stuck in a middle-income trap. Its GDP per capita stayed about one-sixth that of Dribia, Tursa, and the other core developed countries. This has changed recently; with about 4% per capita annual growth since the early 4370s, Emera is now a booming emerging market. It is especially strong in industries related to science and technology, even as access to high-quality education remains unequal. Emera's economy is still a fraction of the size of the large core ones. It is still only a quarter as rich as Dribia and it is smaller (Dribia has 250 million people, Tursa 200 million). Emera does have faster population growth, and fewer, larger cities. Although the Dribian commercial capital, Onder, has by far a larger economy still, the Emeran capital, Sillbury, now has 30 million people, larger than any core city. Even the next few Emeran cities - the booming tech center of Eastshore, the manufacturing center of Cannhill, and the port city of Lionsdam - are larger than any Dribian city other than Onder.

Emera's feelings toward its former colonial master are complicated, to say the least. Its elite culture has been deeply influenced by Dribia's, and the Emeran language underwent some Dribian influence. It is proud of its independence, however, and successfully maintained its neutrality during the cold war early this century. Emera has avoided the fate of smaller ex-colonies, whose resources and industries are usually owned by foreigners. Emera's industry is owned by Emerans. Emeran businesspeople are even investing abroad. It is a point of pride to some Emerans that Blue Phoenix and many other domestic corporations are buying and indigenizing Dribian technology, picking up on projects that Dribia, Tursa, and the other core countries have long abandoned.

Dribia, Tursa (no longer much of an enemy to Dribia), and smaller countries, including **Nimar**, **Ravik**, **Alering**, and **Malan** are the main rich countries. They have extensive trade ties, dwarfing their trade with such poorer countries as Emera.

Six Tursans walked on **Bery**, the large airless moon that shines brightly in the night sky, after a series of robot landers tested the surface. The two smaller moons, **Orrill** and **Anten**, are less interesting, and have only been scouted by Tursan orbiters. Dribia's space program has only launched orbital satellites and never gotten further than that. Eventually, both countries lost interest in space. They started to spend their money on other things.

Now, fueled by national pride, the Emeran private sector has decided that it's their turn to go to the stars.