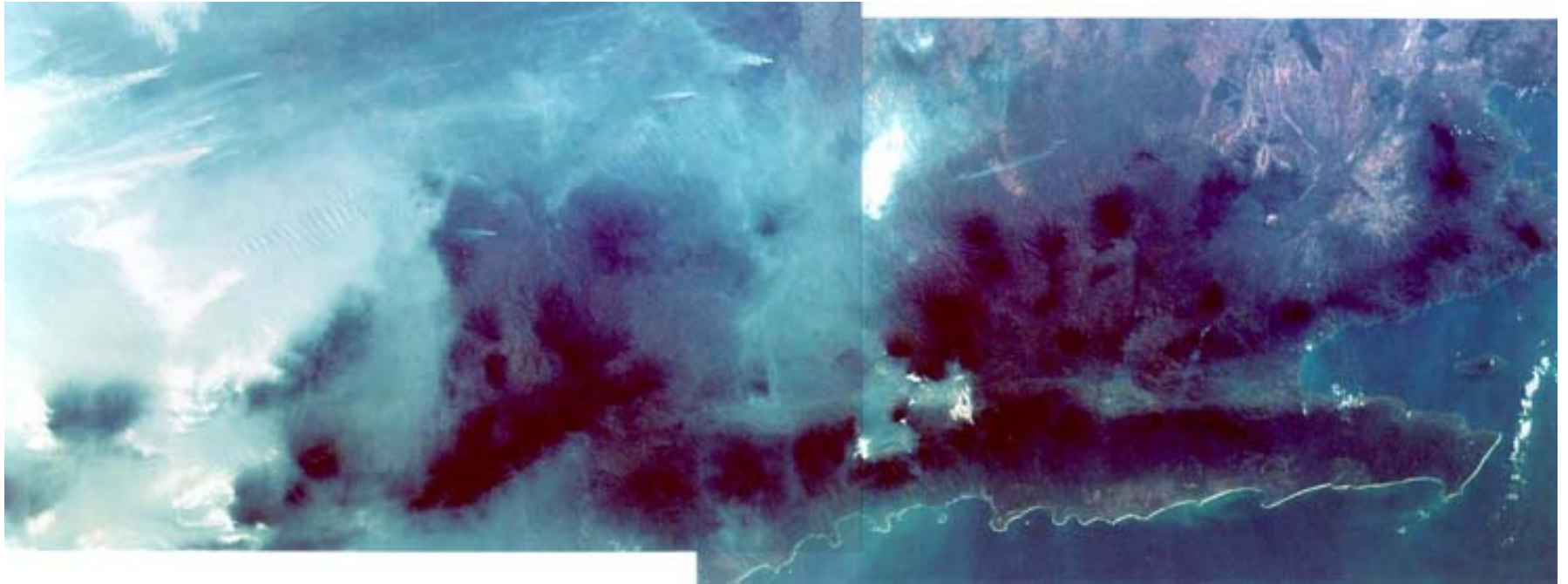


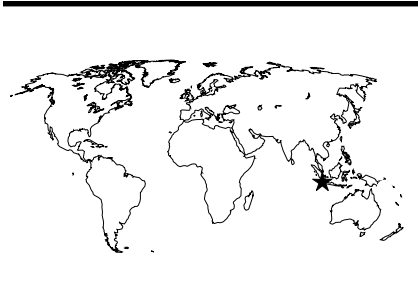
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Forest Fires in Sumatra





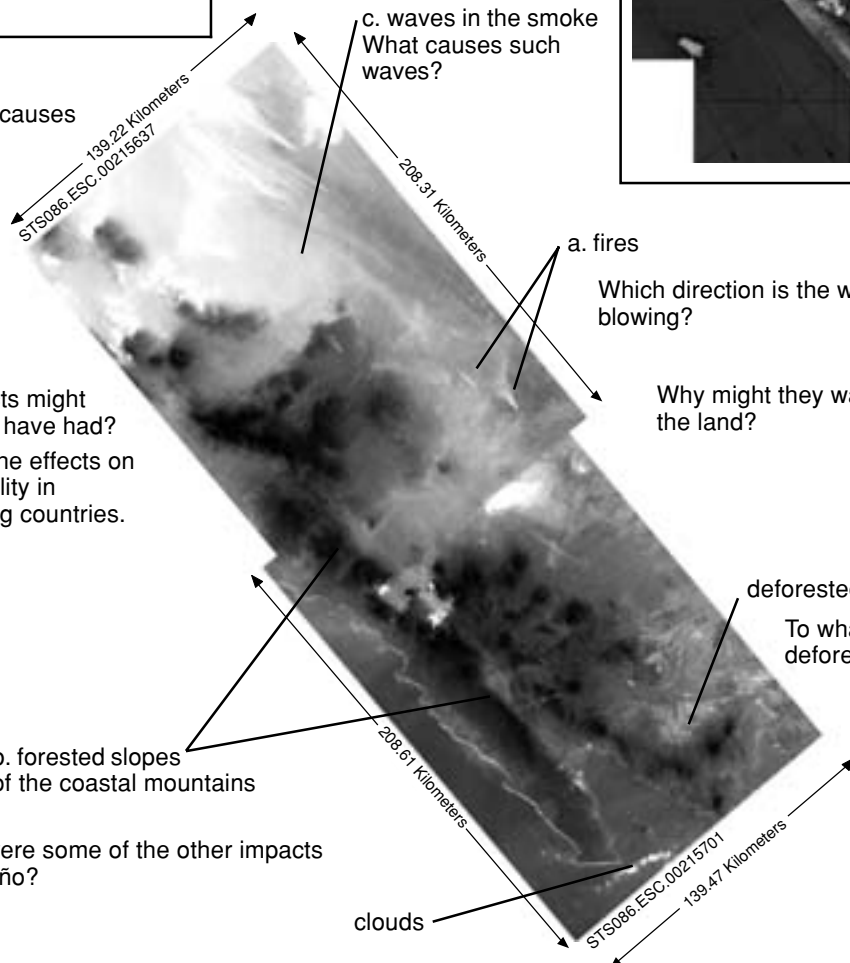
Forest Fires in Sumatra



What were the causes of these fires?

What effects might these fires have had? Consider the effects on the air quality in surrounding countries.

What were some of the other impacts of El Niño?



How far did the smoke spread?

c. waves in the smoke
What causes such waves?

a. fires

Which direction is the wind blowing?

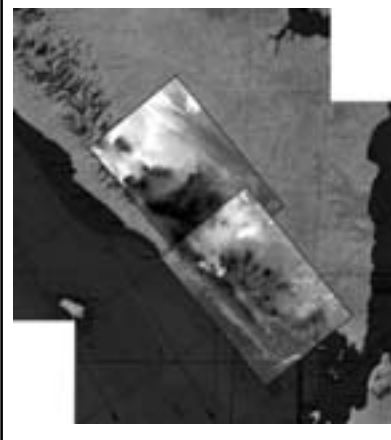
Why might they want to clear the land?

deforested area

To what use are deforested lands put?

b. forested slopes of the coastal mountains

clouds



Latitude: 4.93° S Longitude: 104.30° E
Date: September 26, 1997
Type of Image: EarthKAM
Image ID #: STS086.ESC.00215637 and STS086.ESC.00215701

One of the first well-publicized impacts of the 1997-1998 El Niño was out-of-control burning and a large smoke pall over the Indonesia region from August through October, 1997. El Niño delayed the monsoon rains, allowing the fires (many of which were probably deliberately set to clear the land) to race out of control.

This view is a photomosaic of 2 images taken in sequence over the southern tip of the island of Sumatra. Together, the images provide a sense of the regional scale of the fires and smoke.

The number of fires, the small, arrow-like plumes (a), and the thickness of the smoke pall increase from south to north. The dark regions along the coast are the forested slopes of the coastal mountains (b). The smoke drapes around the mountains and becomes thick and dense enough that it forms waves (c).

Additional images are available in the same series cutting completely across Sumatra. EarthKAM images STS086.ESC.00215343 – STS086.ESC.00215750.

Additional information:

EarthKAM images and lessons:

<http://www.earthkam.ucsd.edu>

JSC Earth From Space image database:

<http://earth.jsc.nasa.gov>

NASA Spacelink:

<http://spacelink.nasa.gov>

