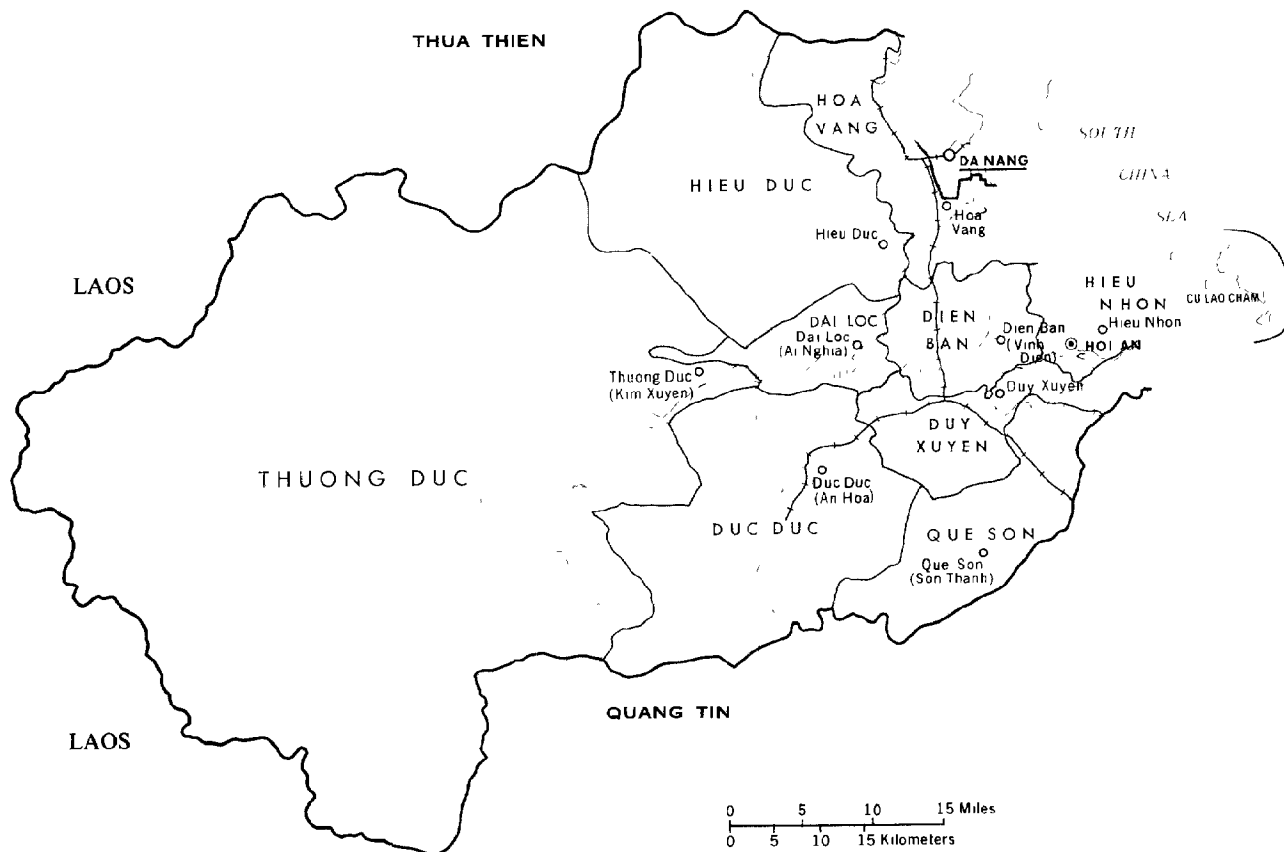
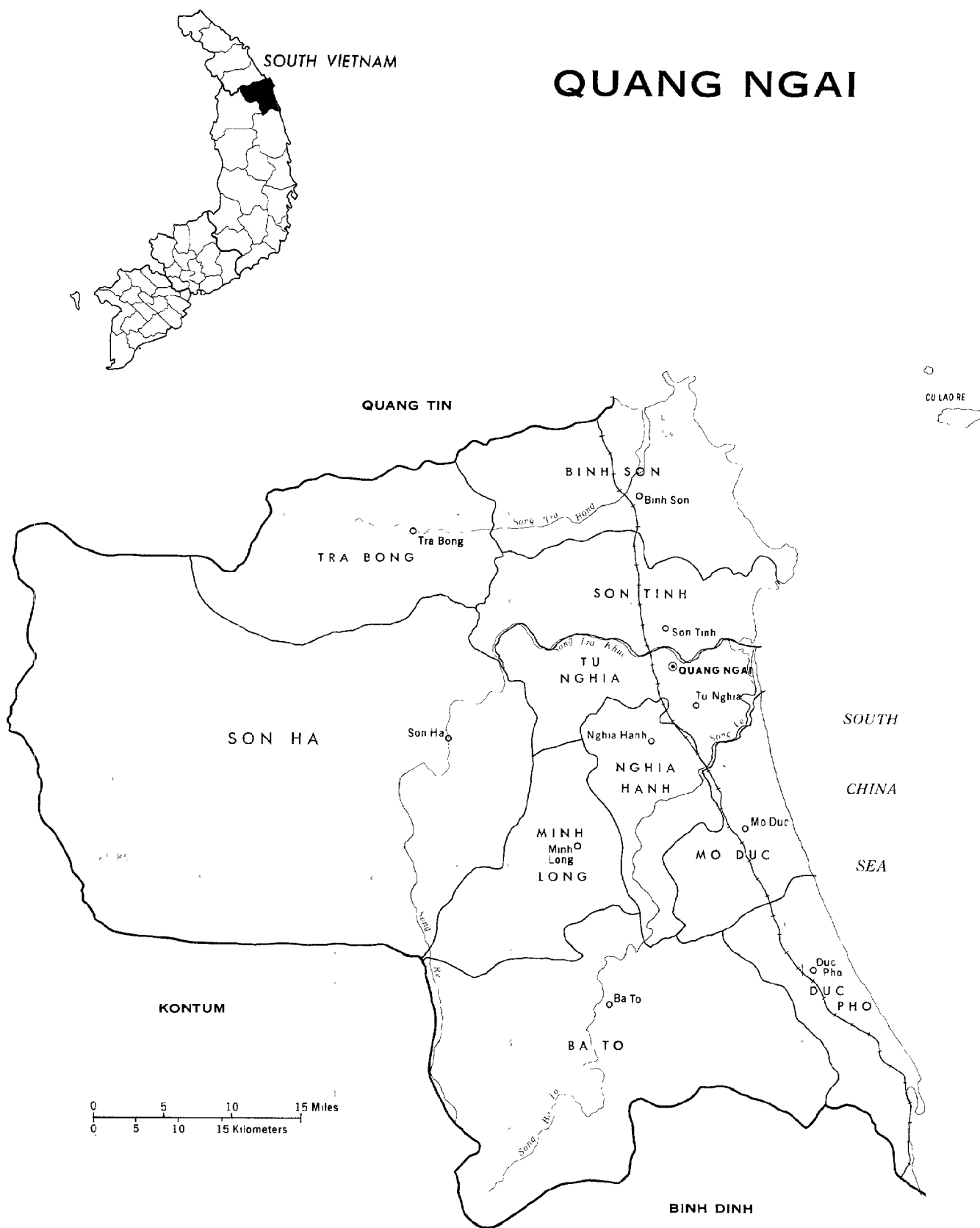


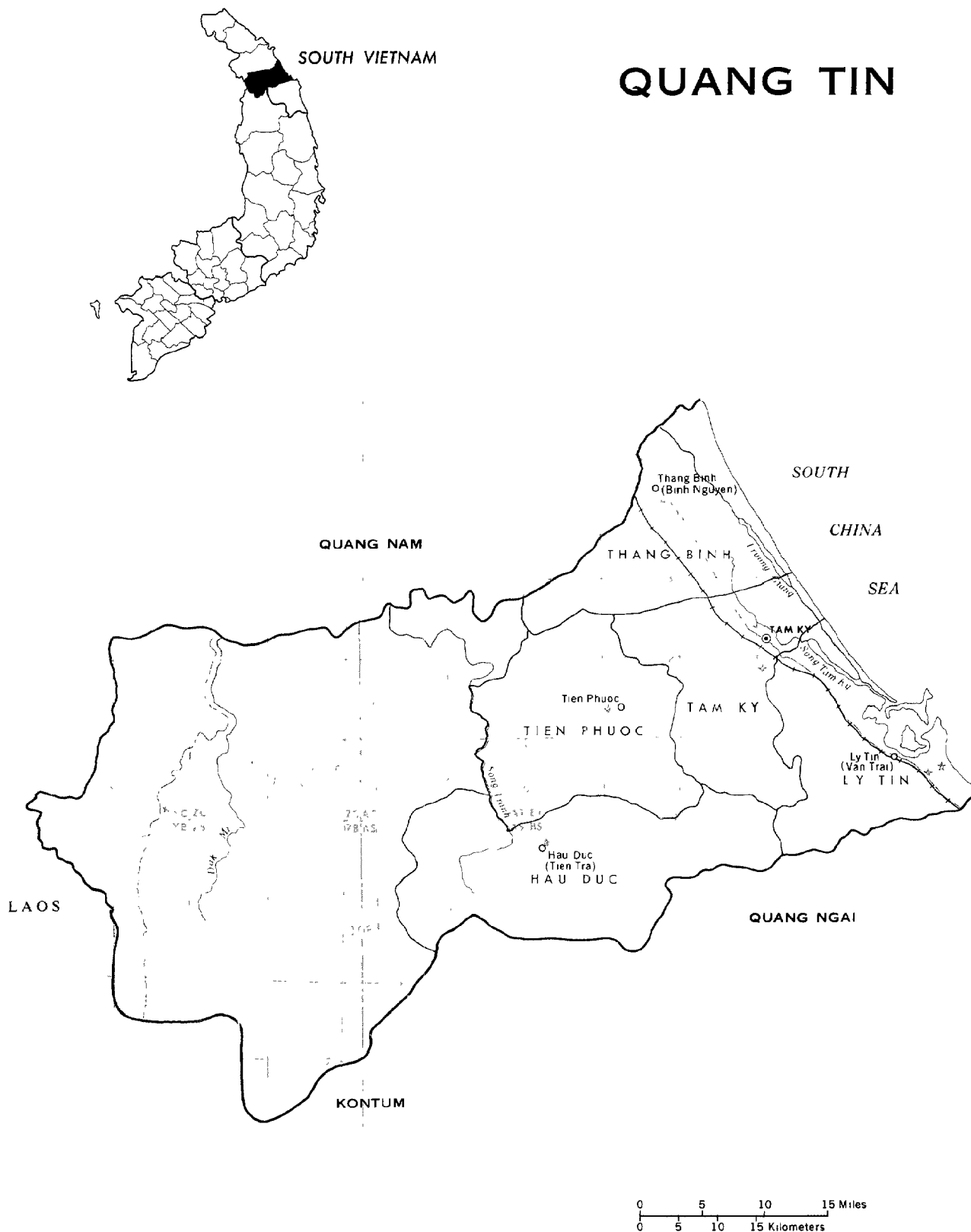
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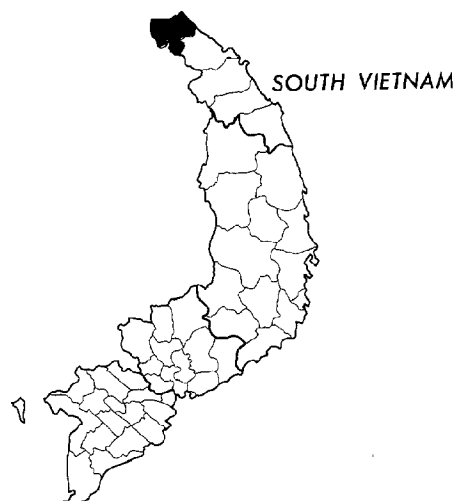
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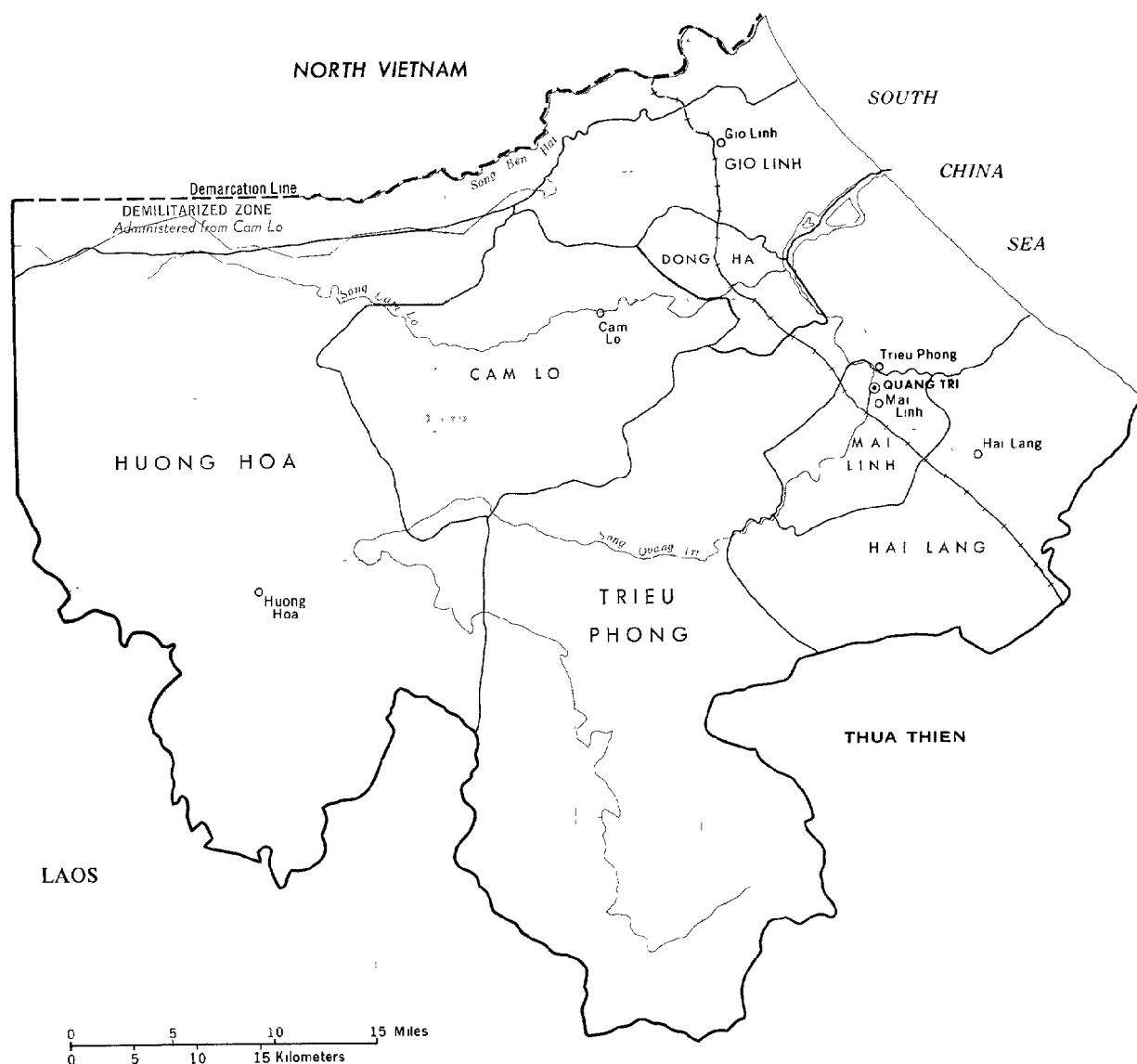


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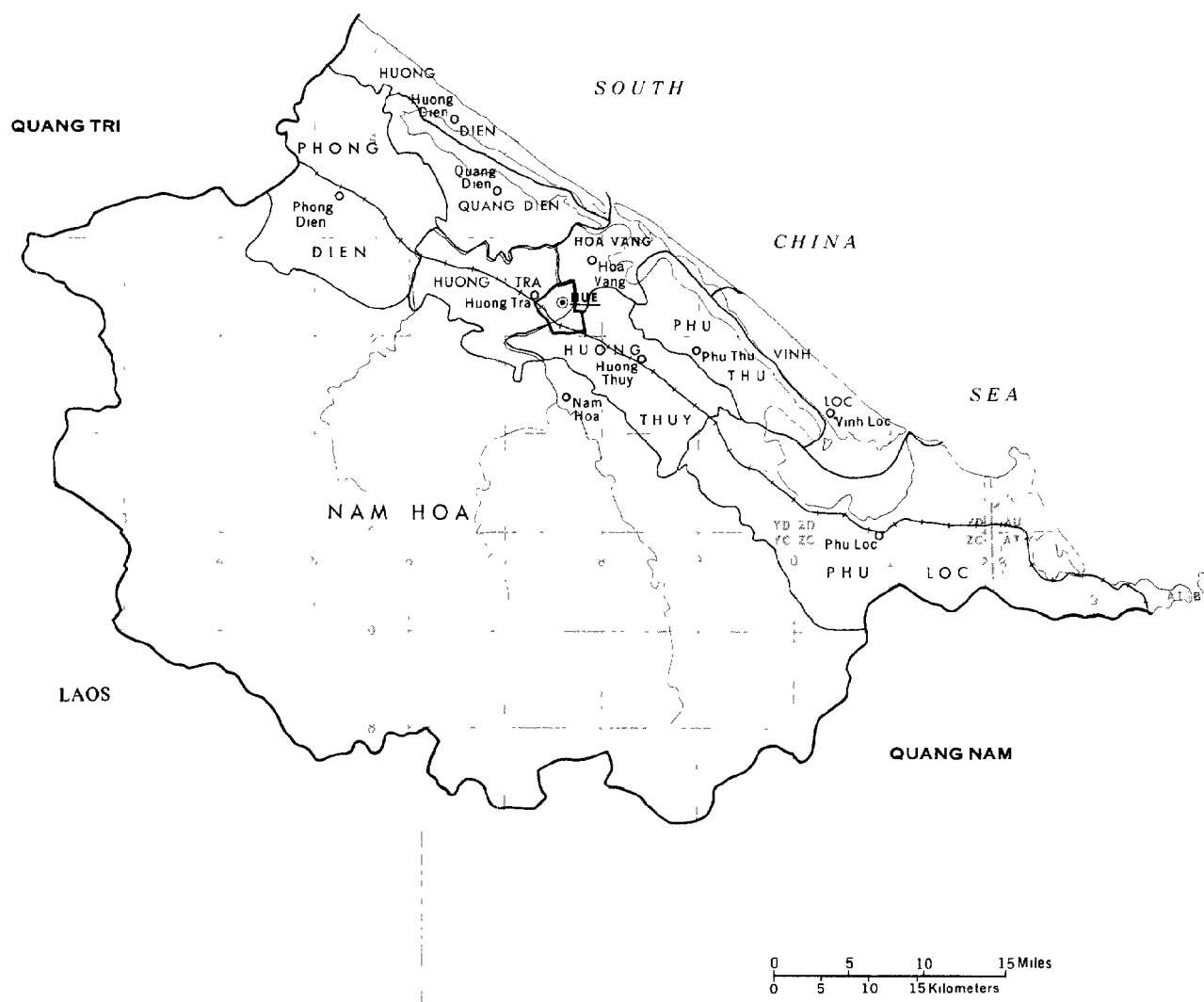
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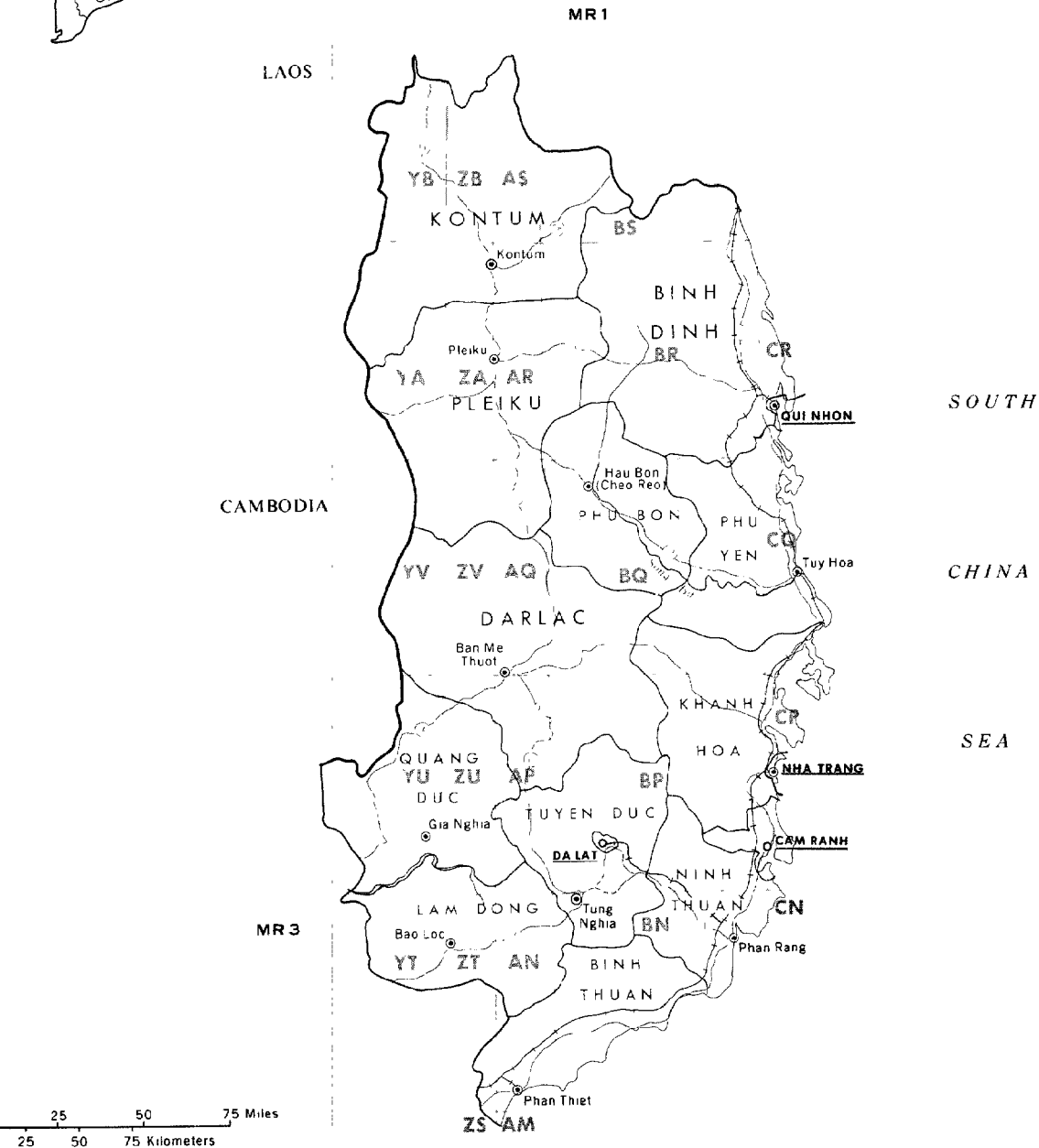
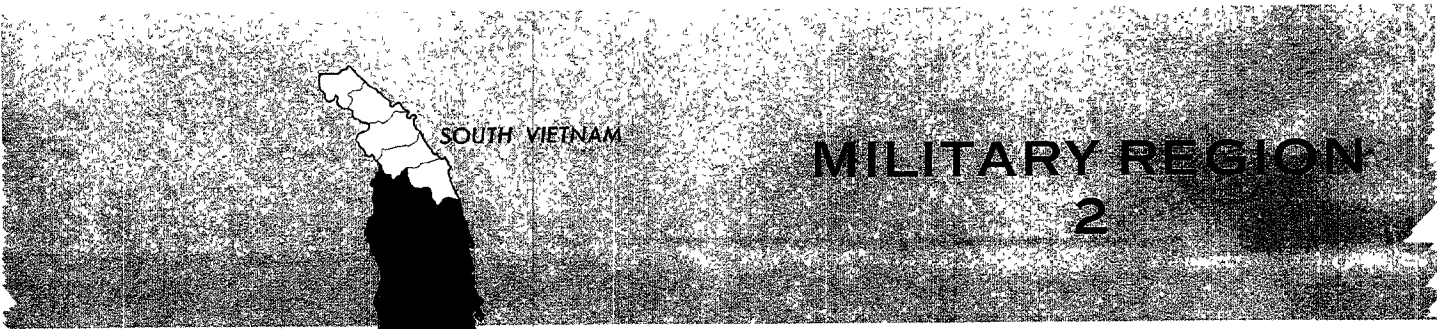




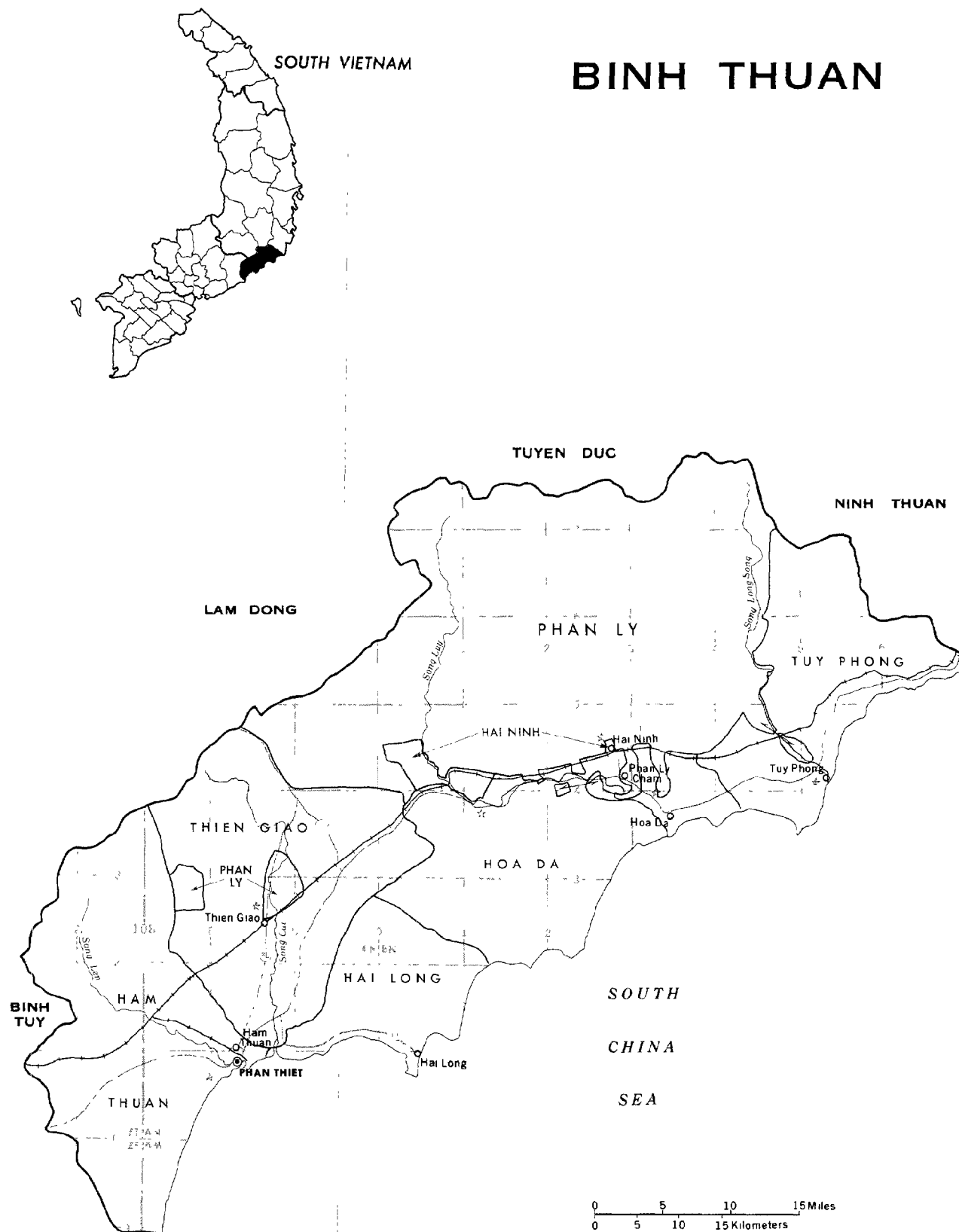
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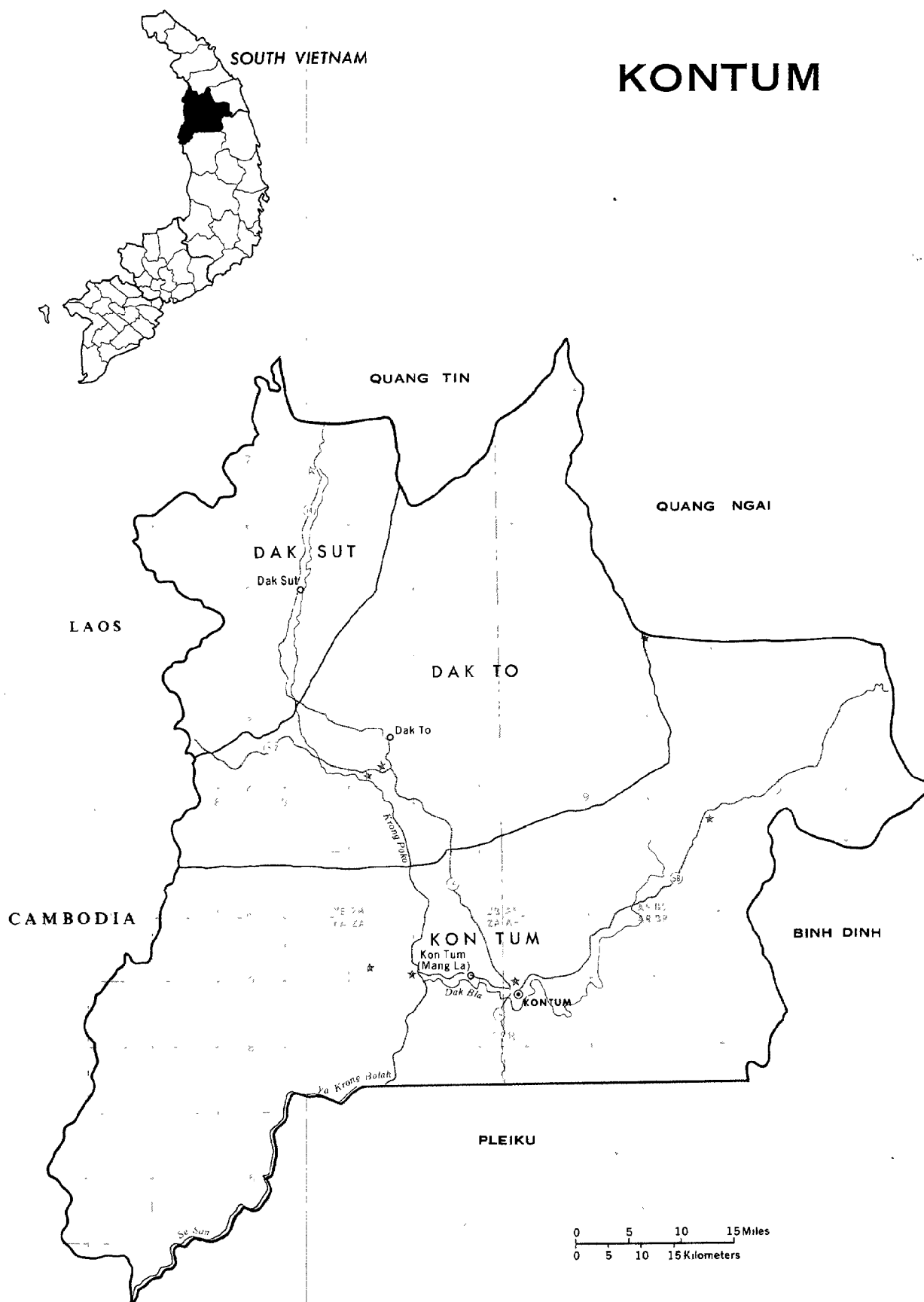
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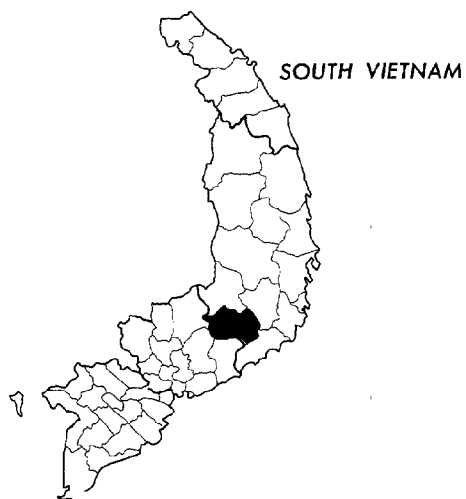


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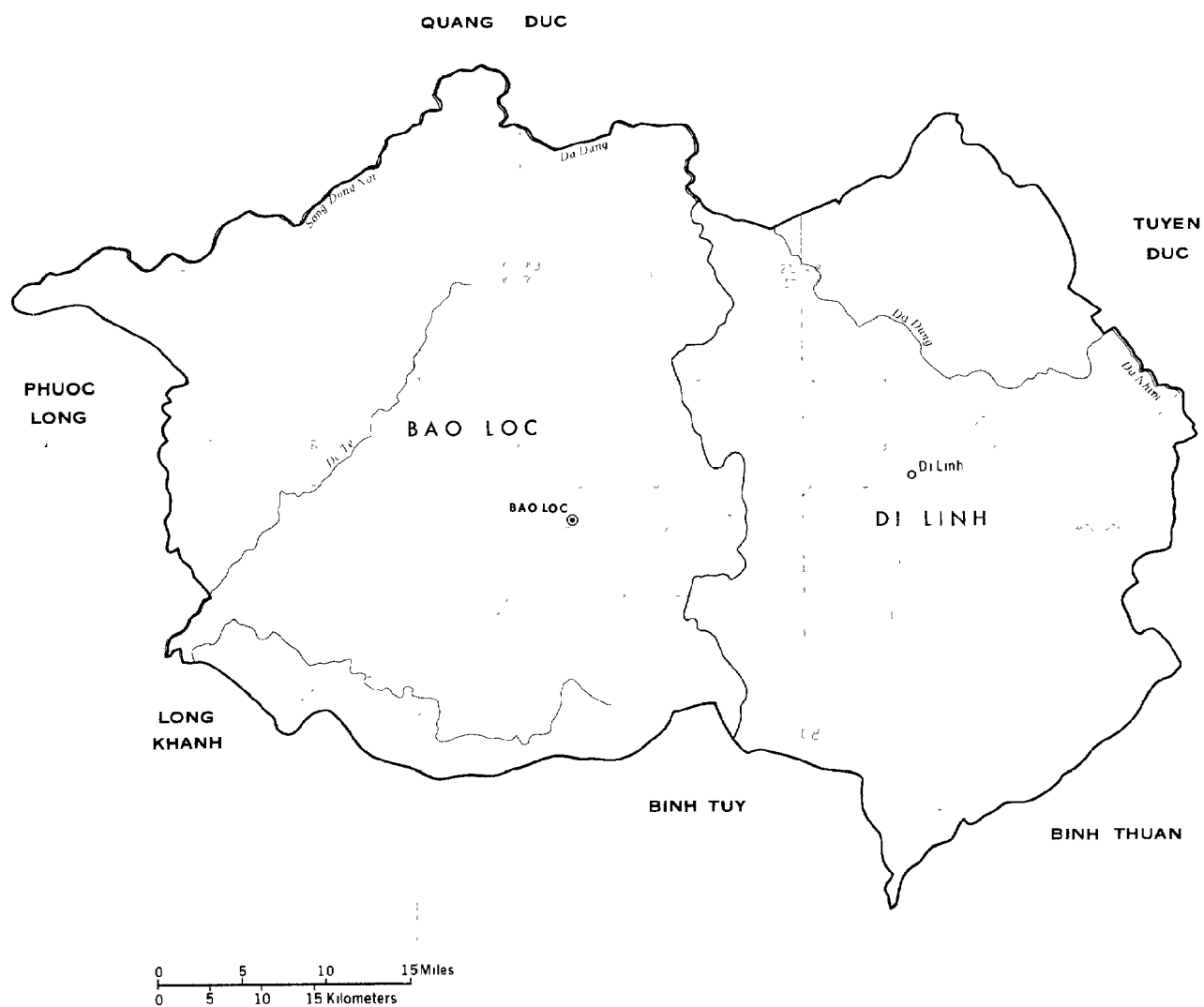


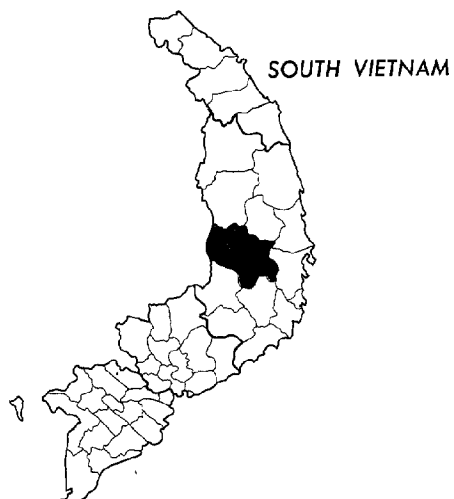


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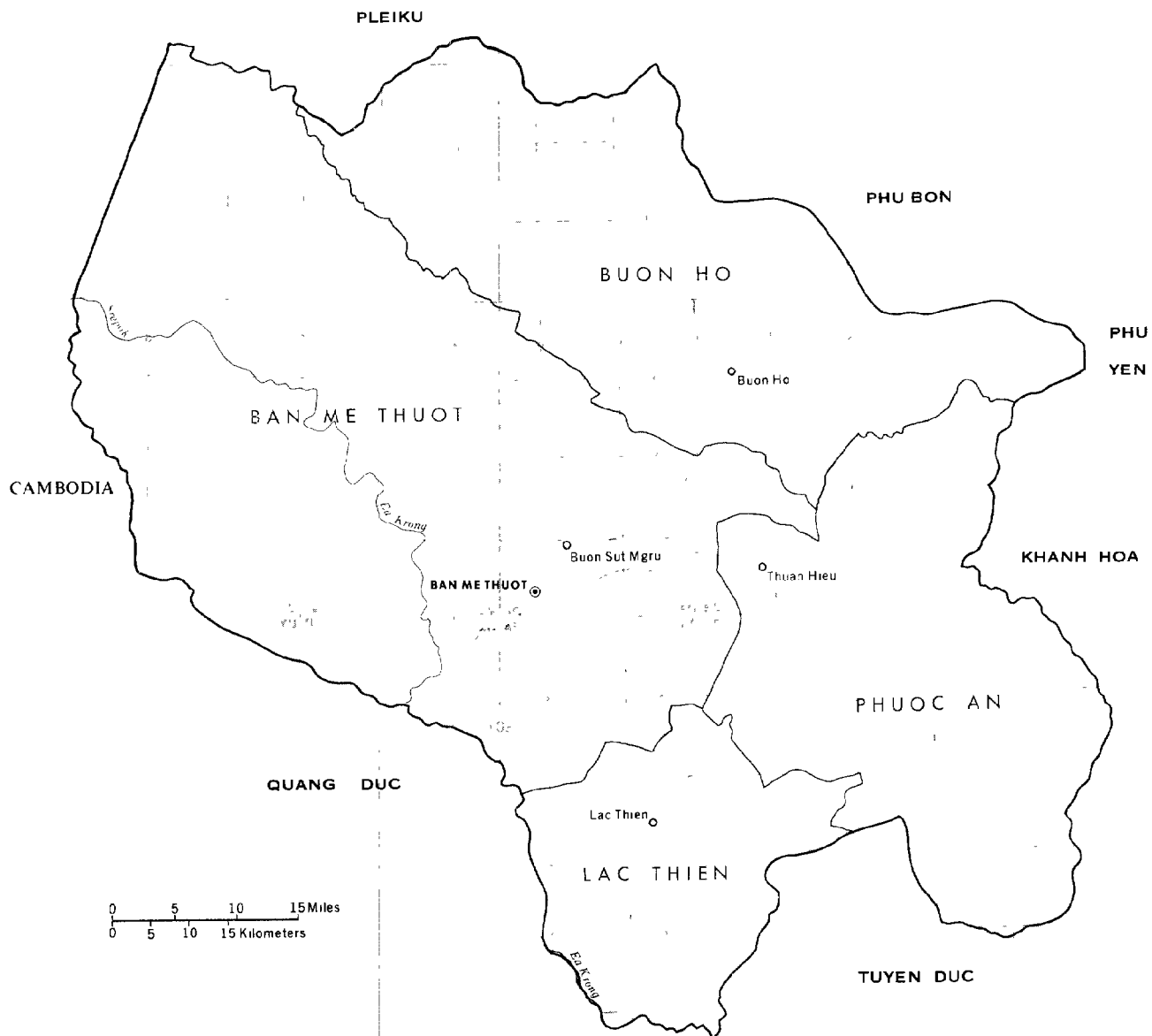


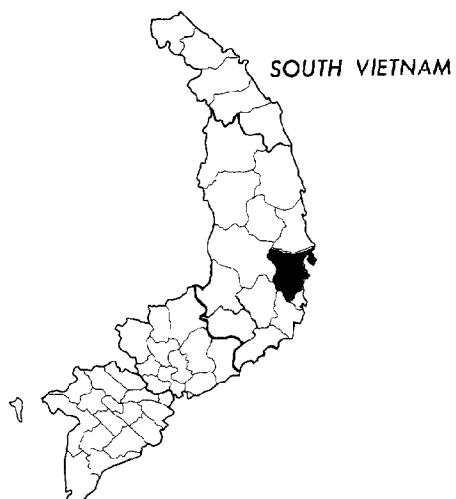
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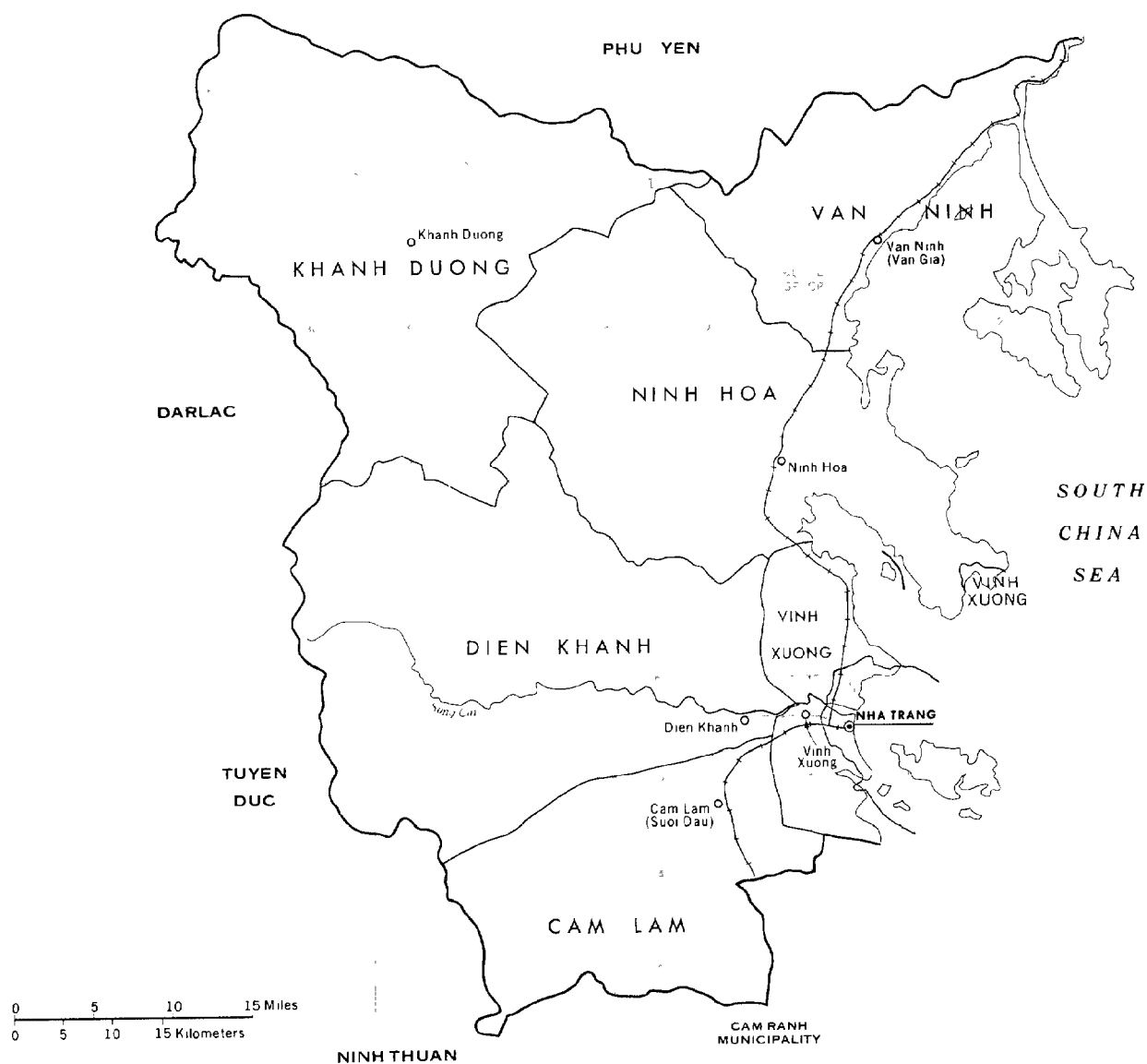
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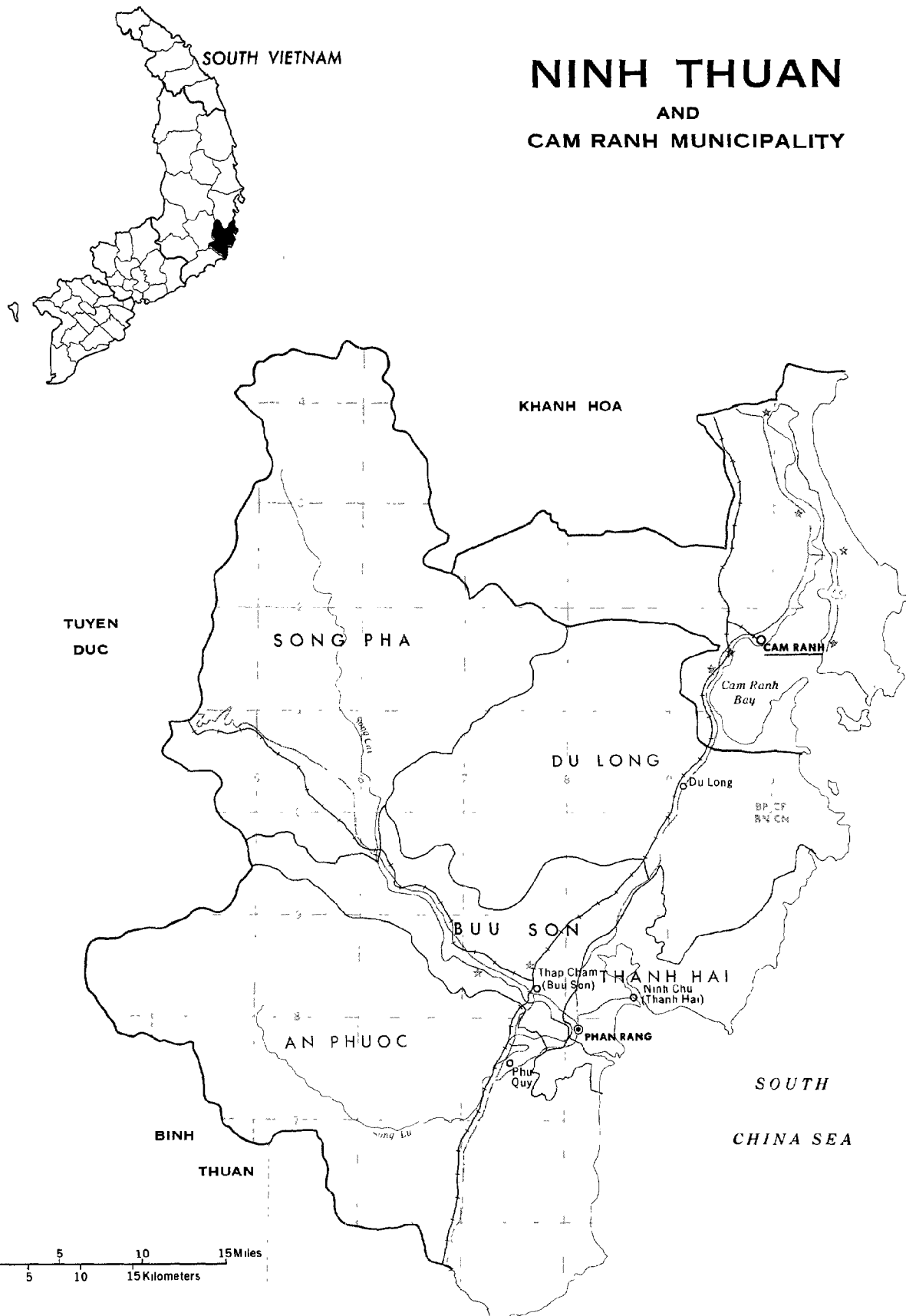




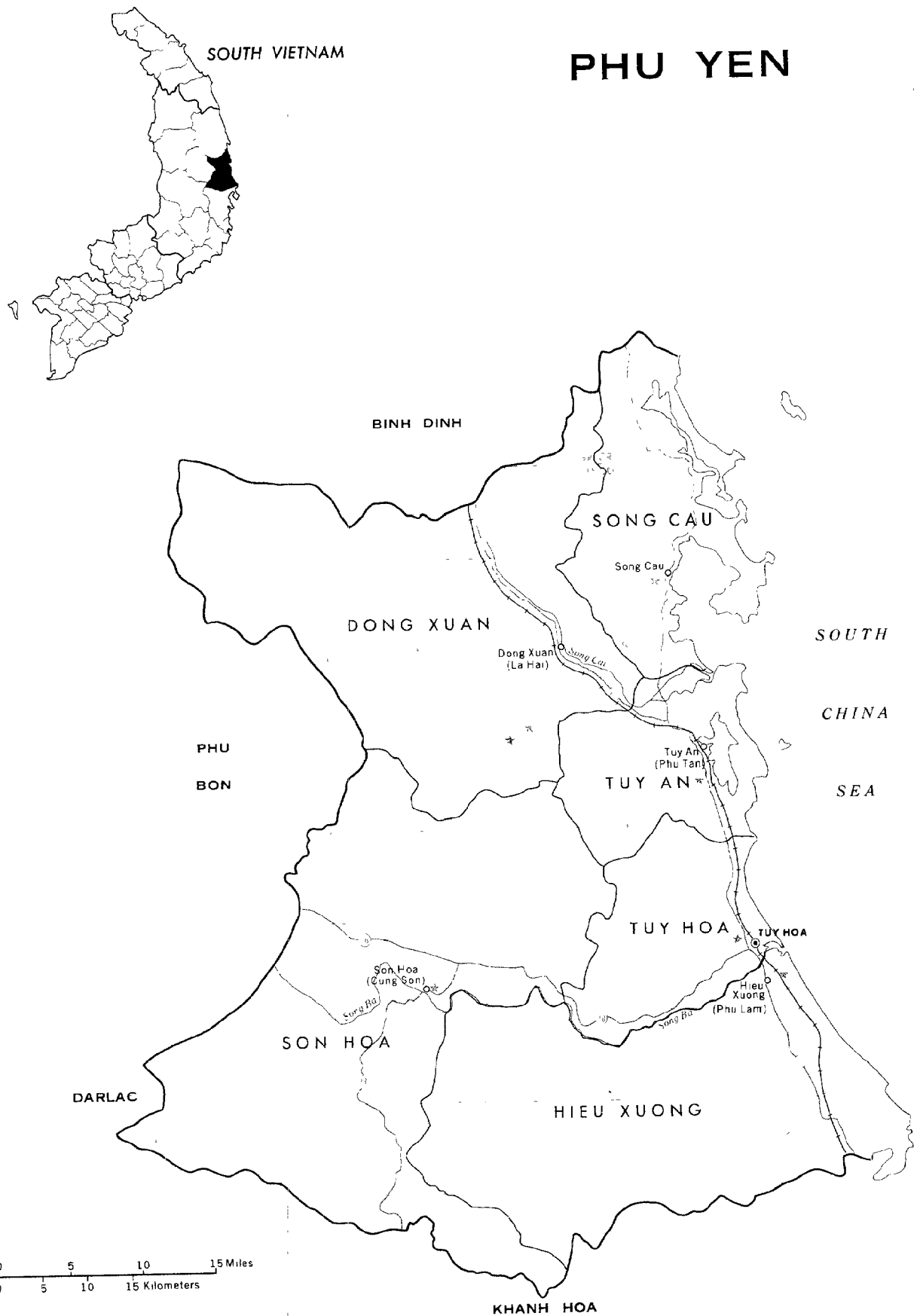
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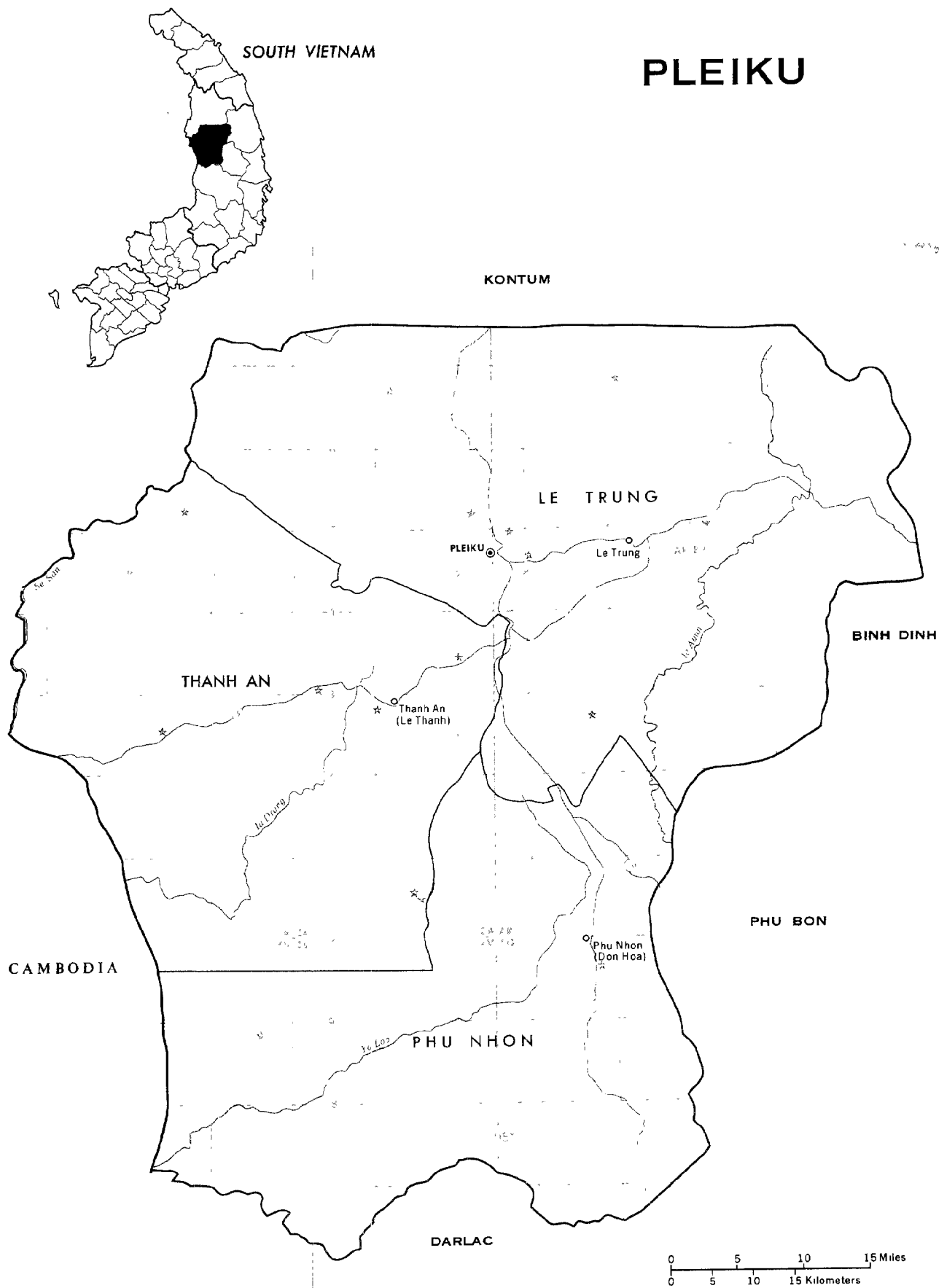




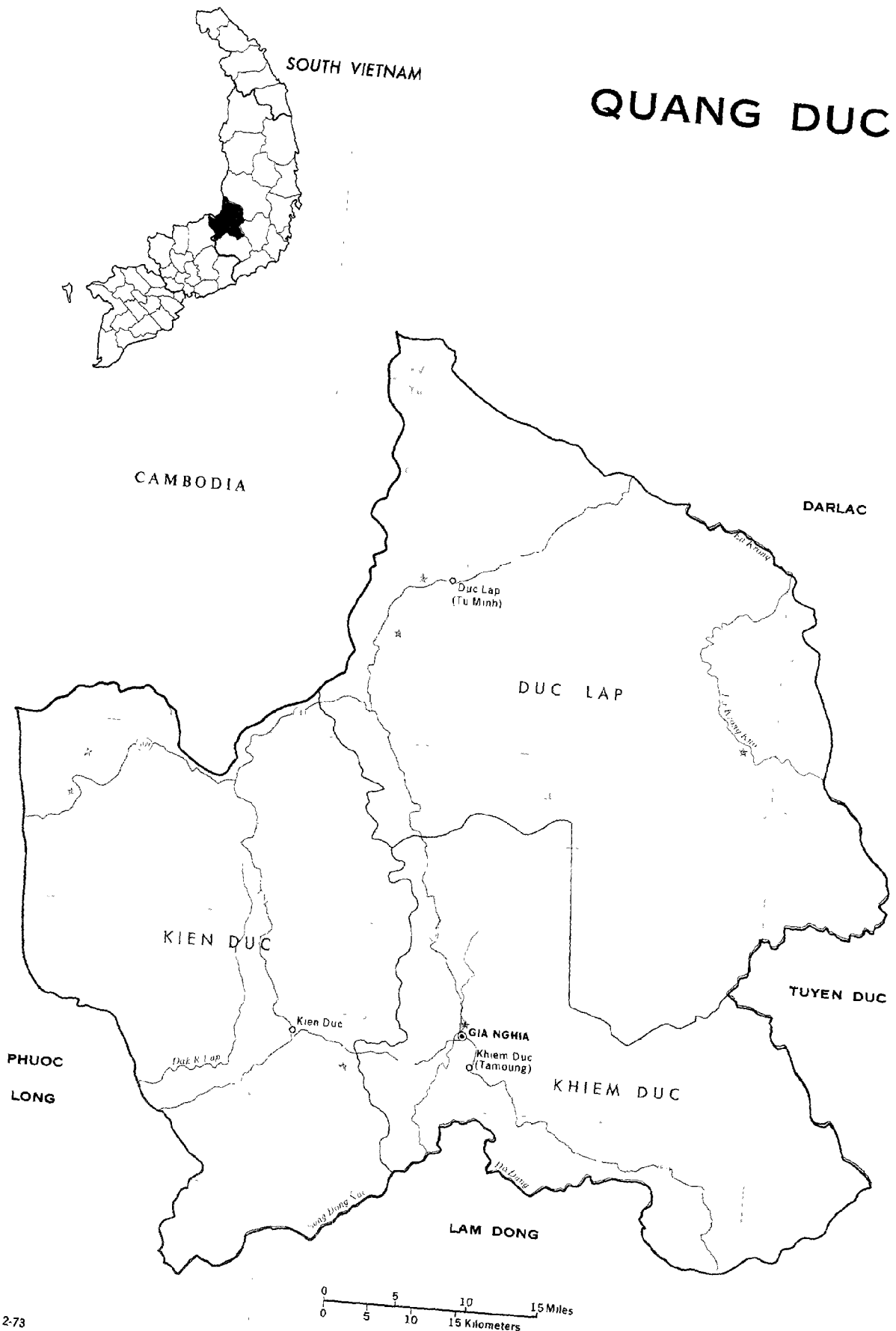
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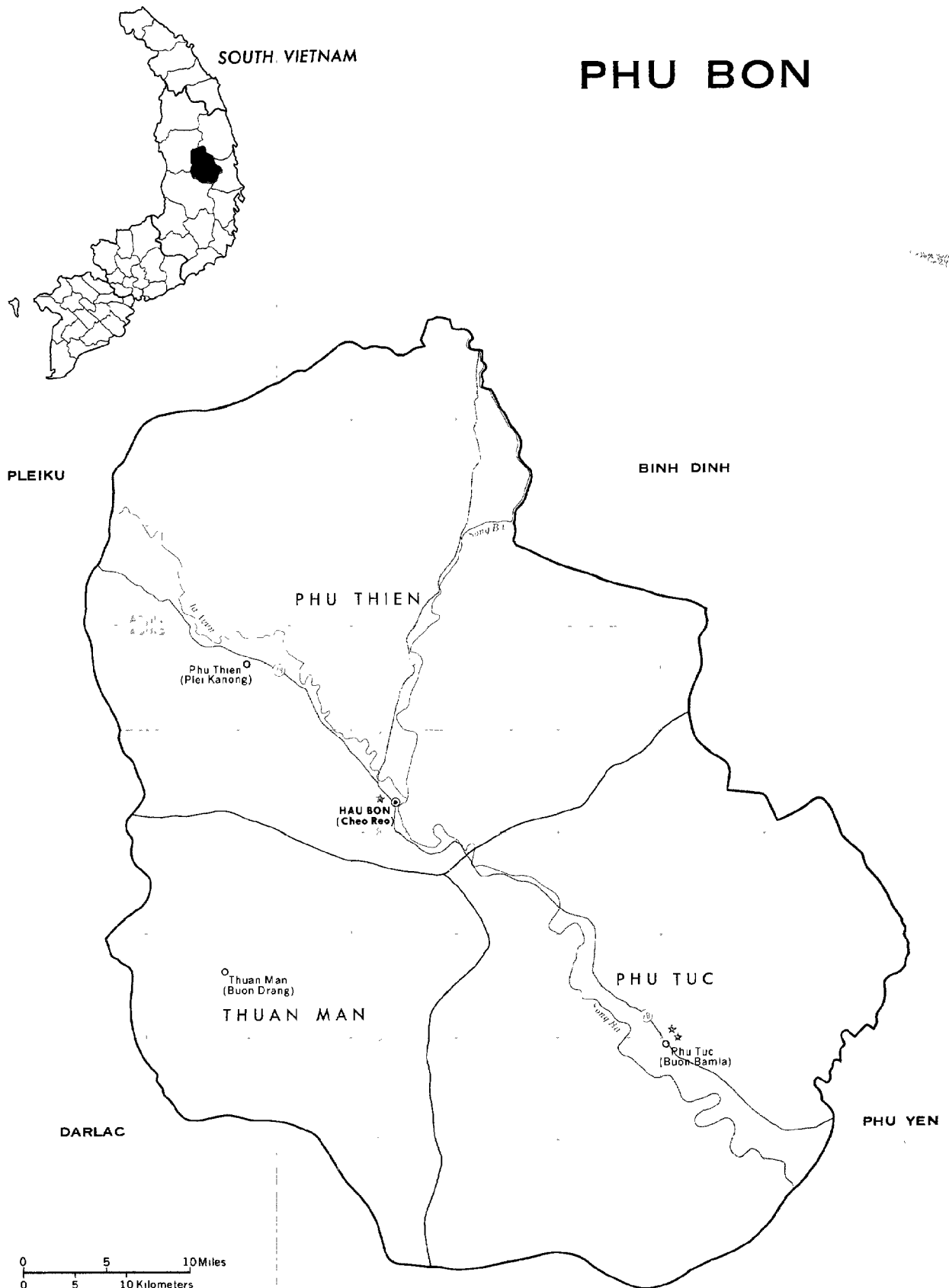
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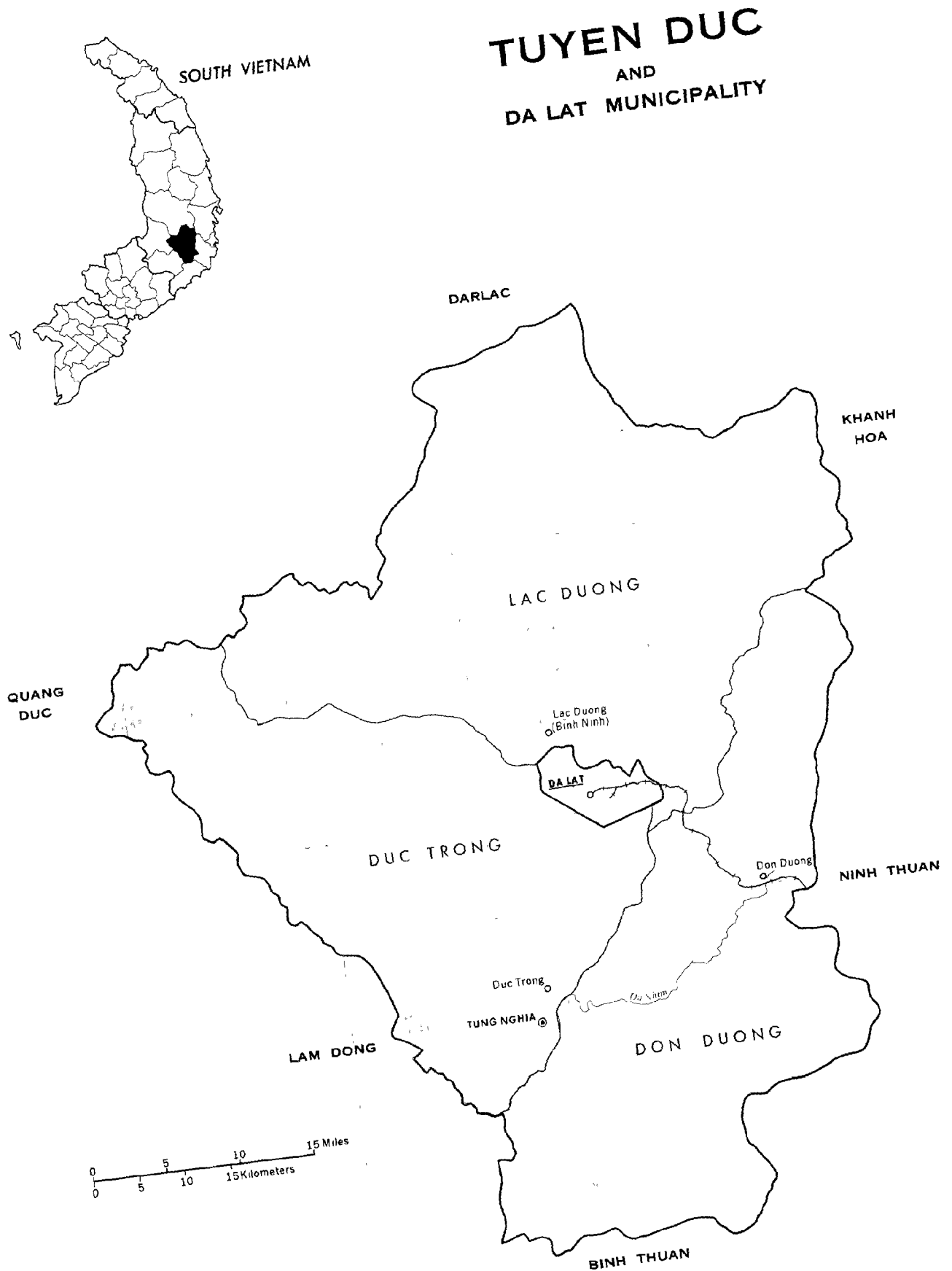
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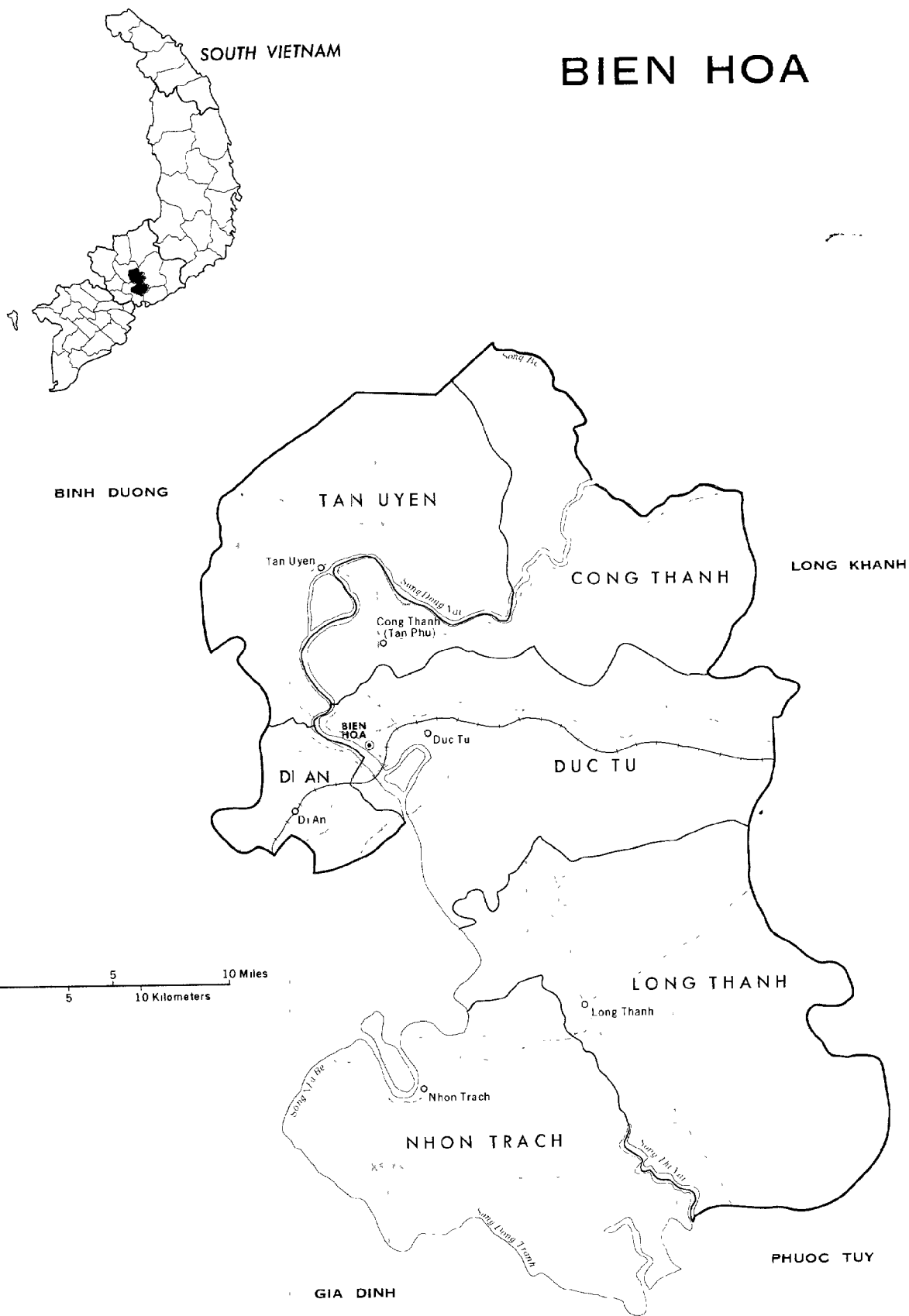


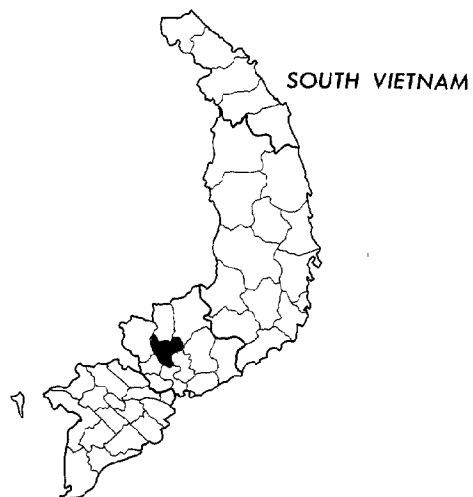
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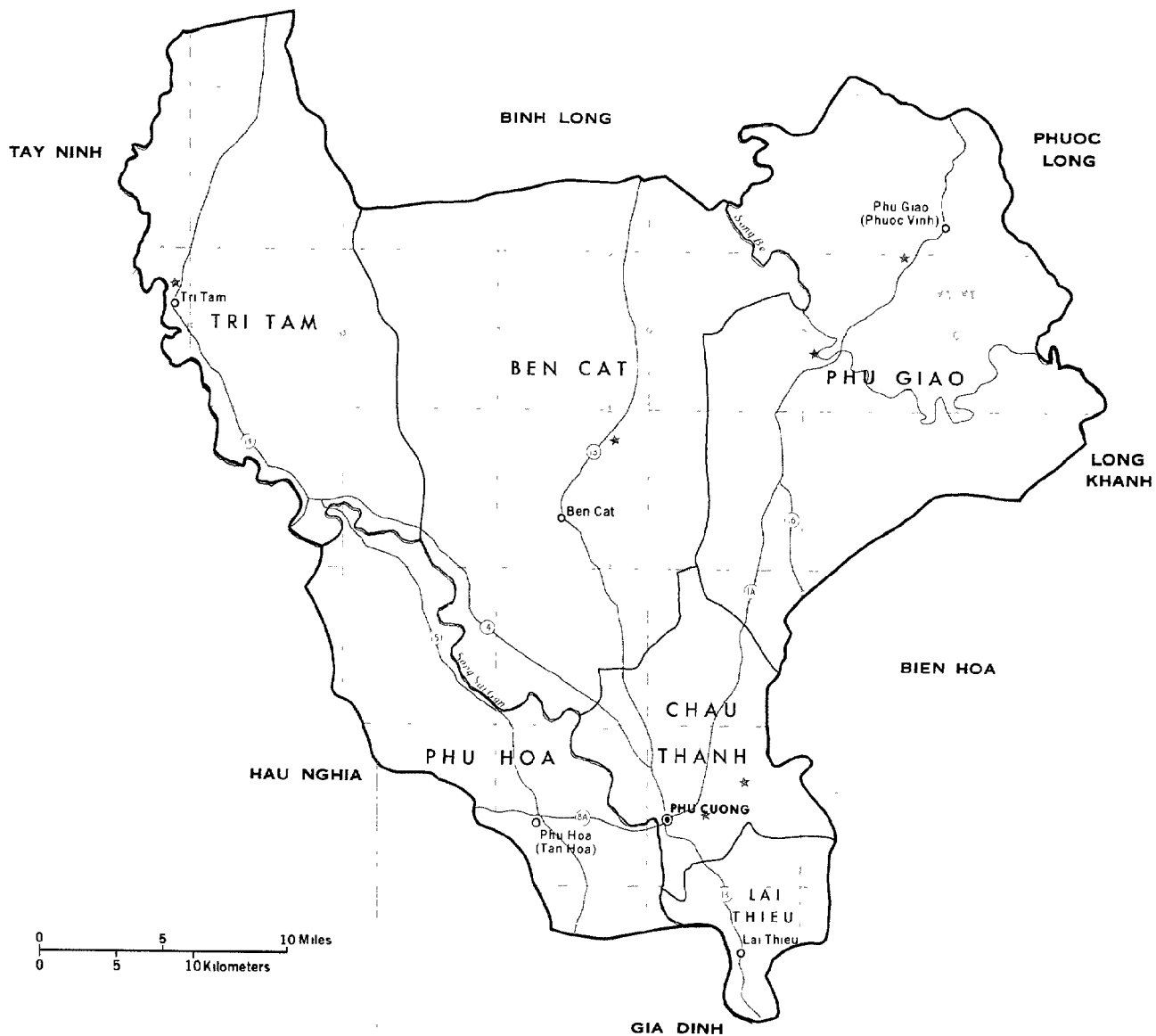
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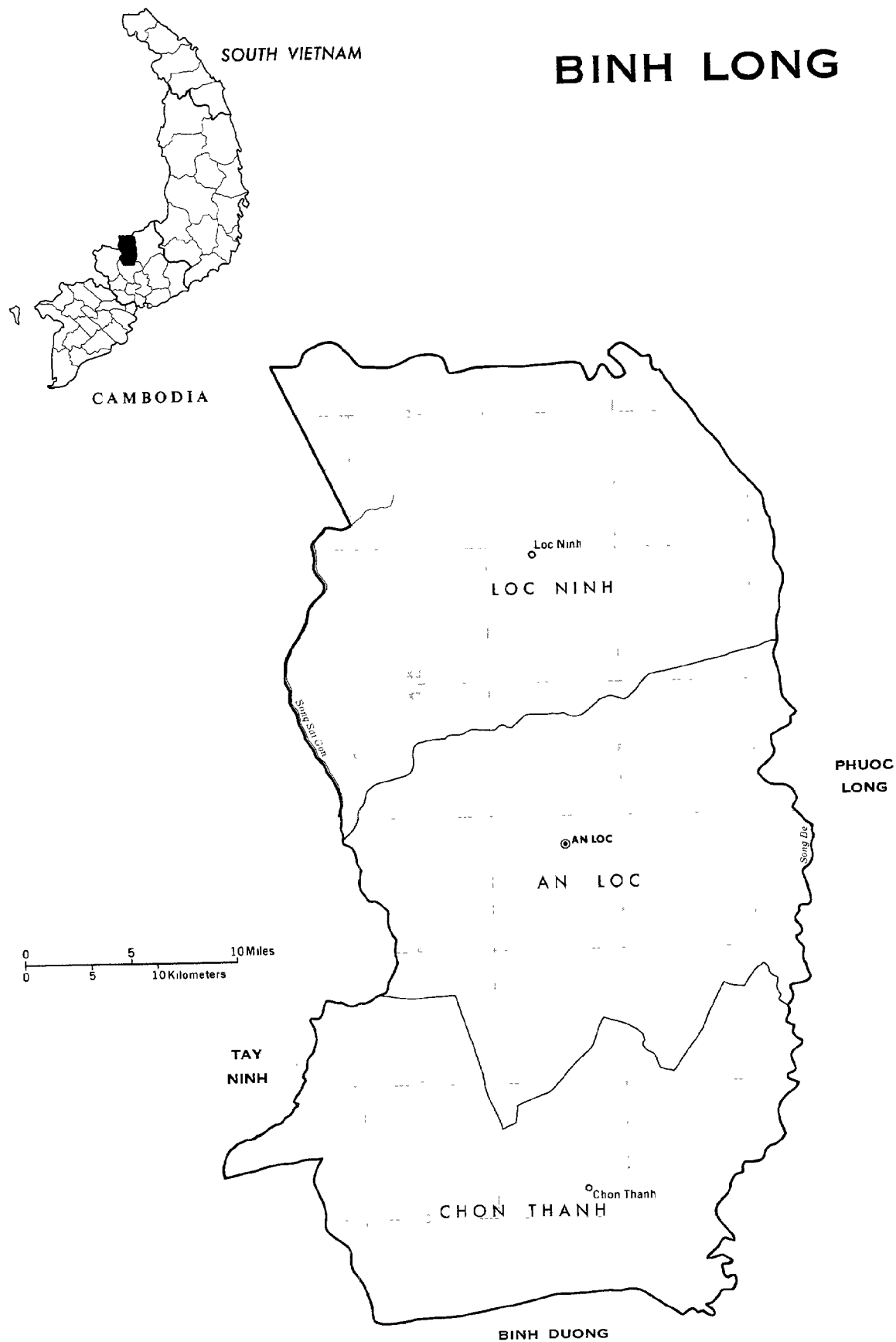


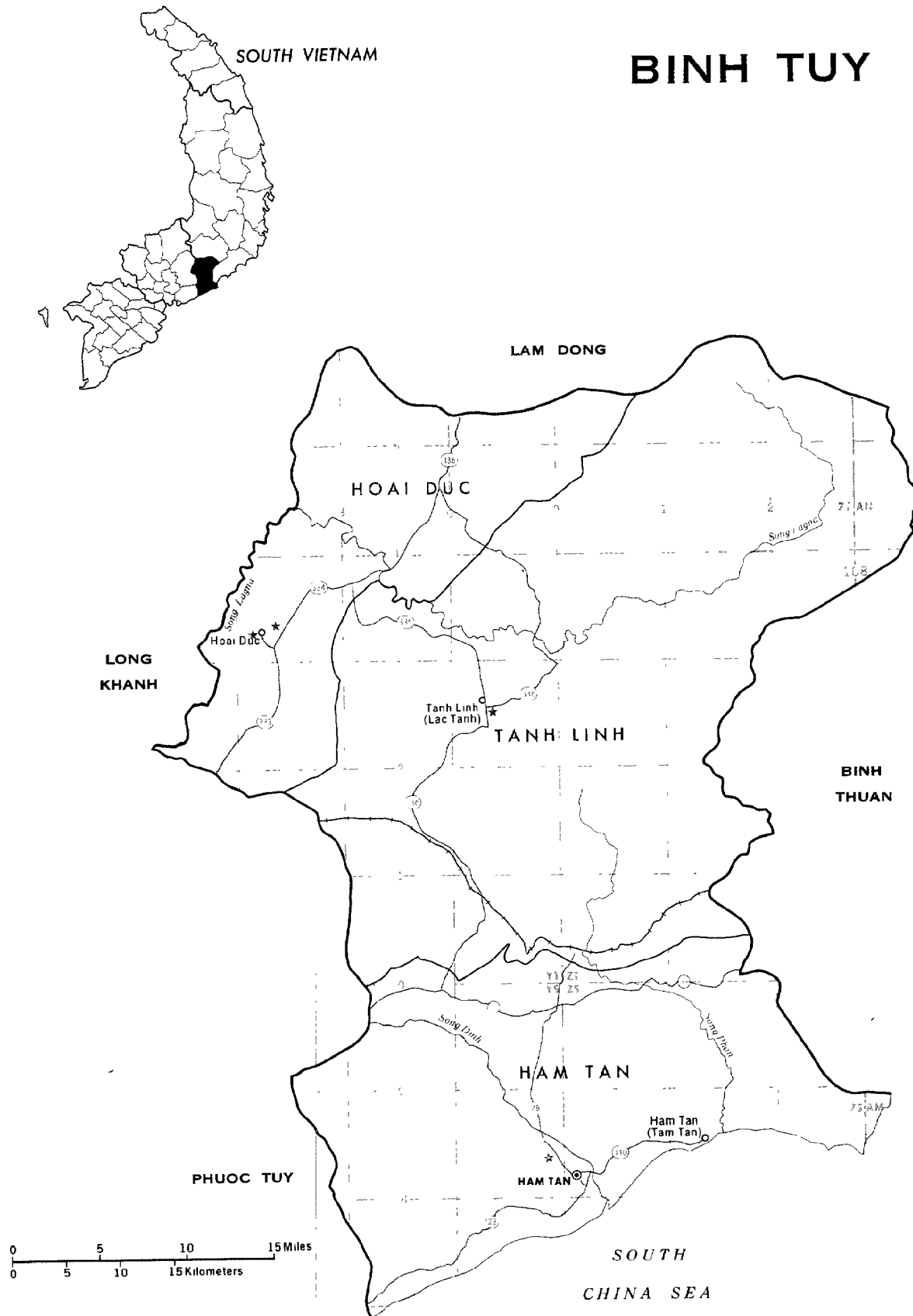


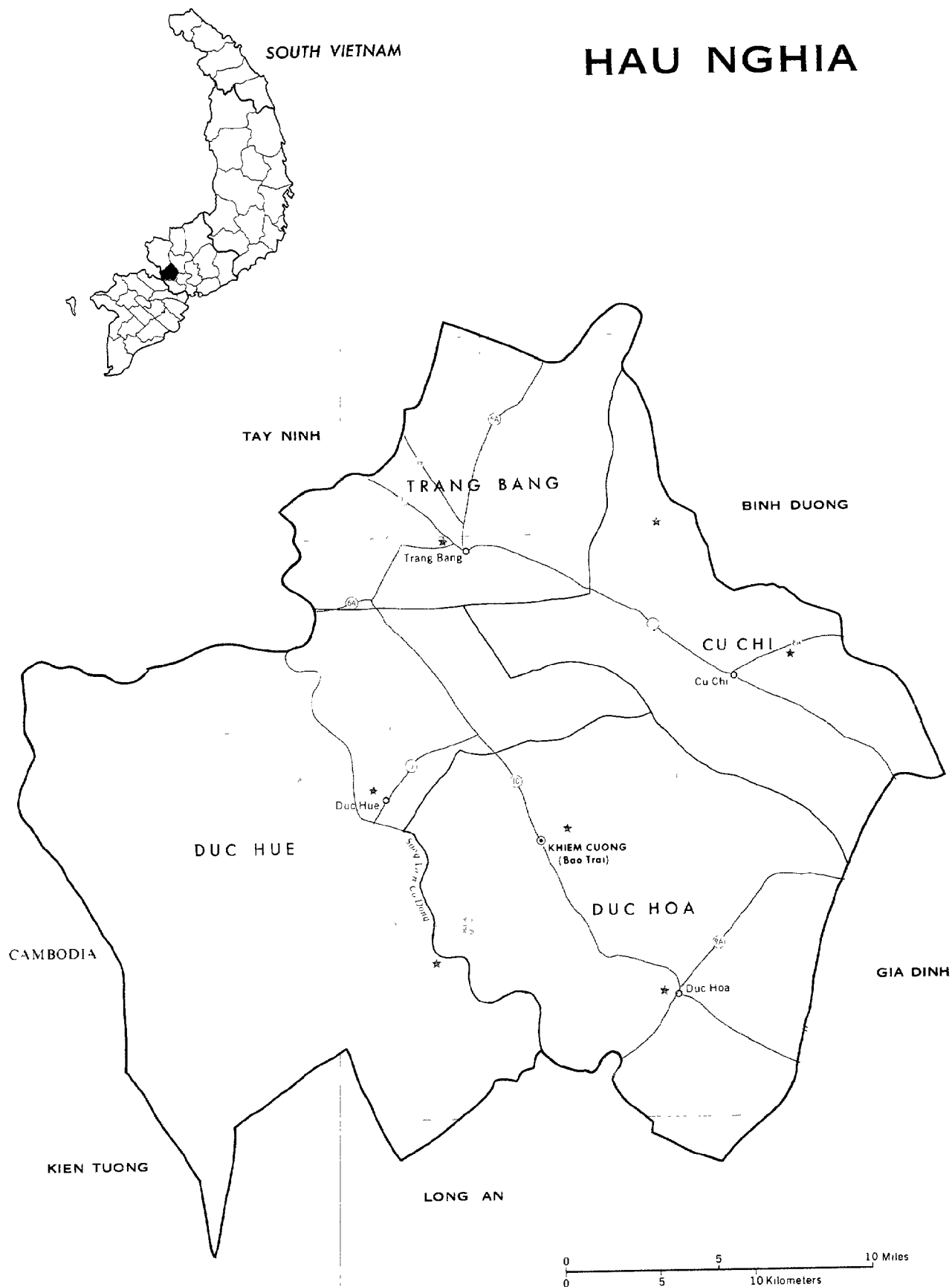


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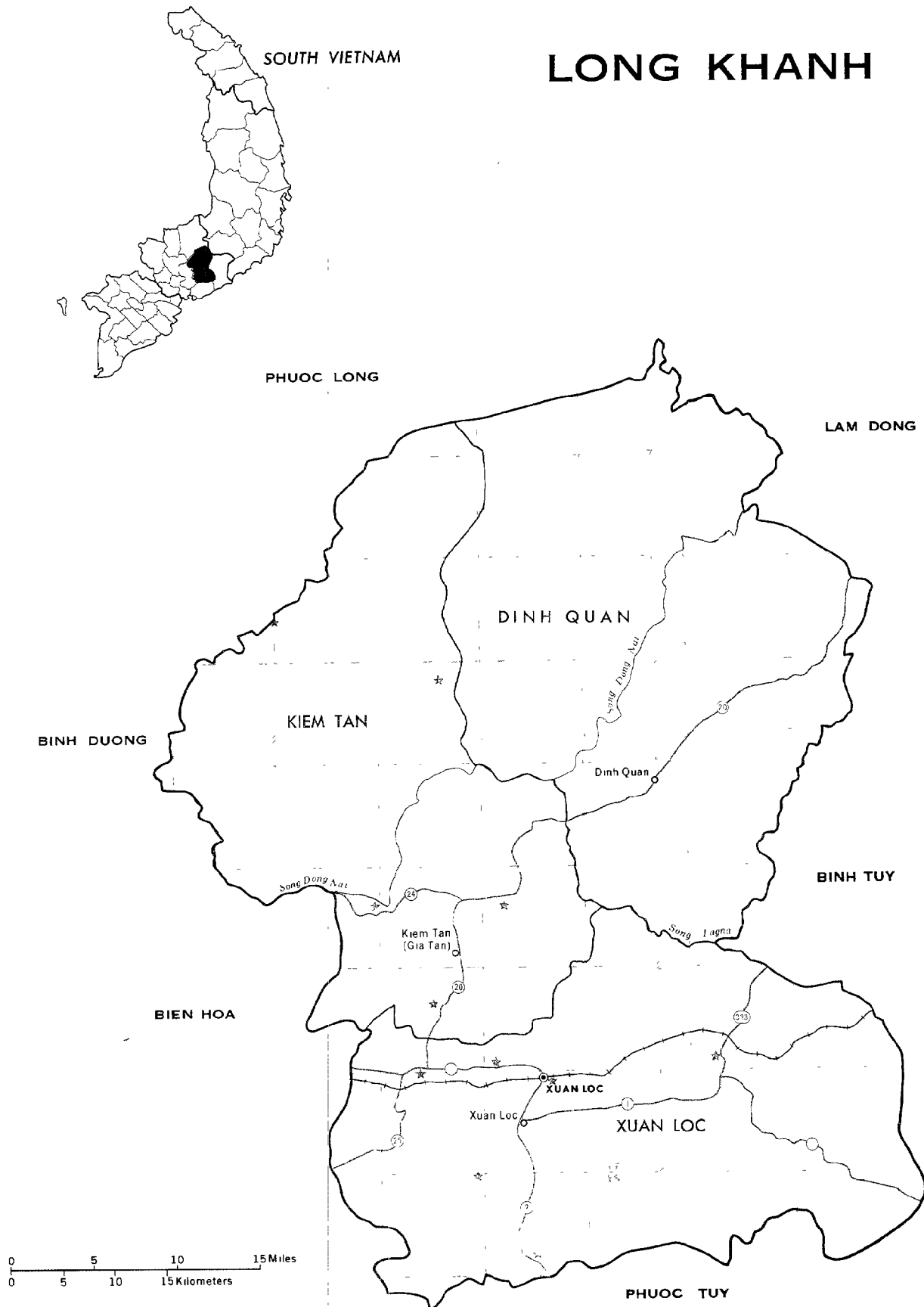




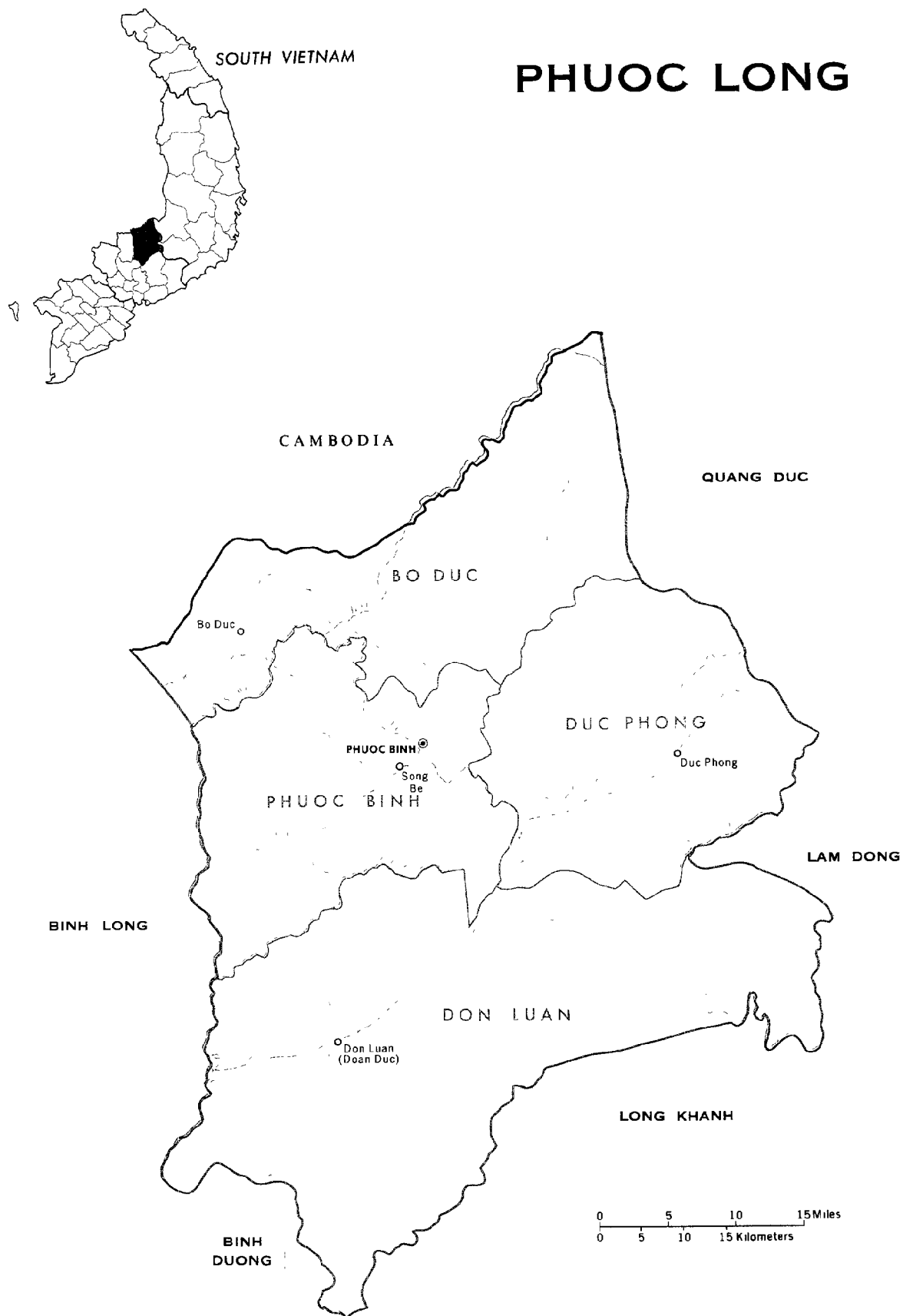
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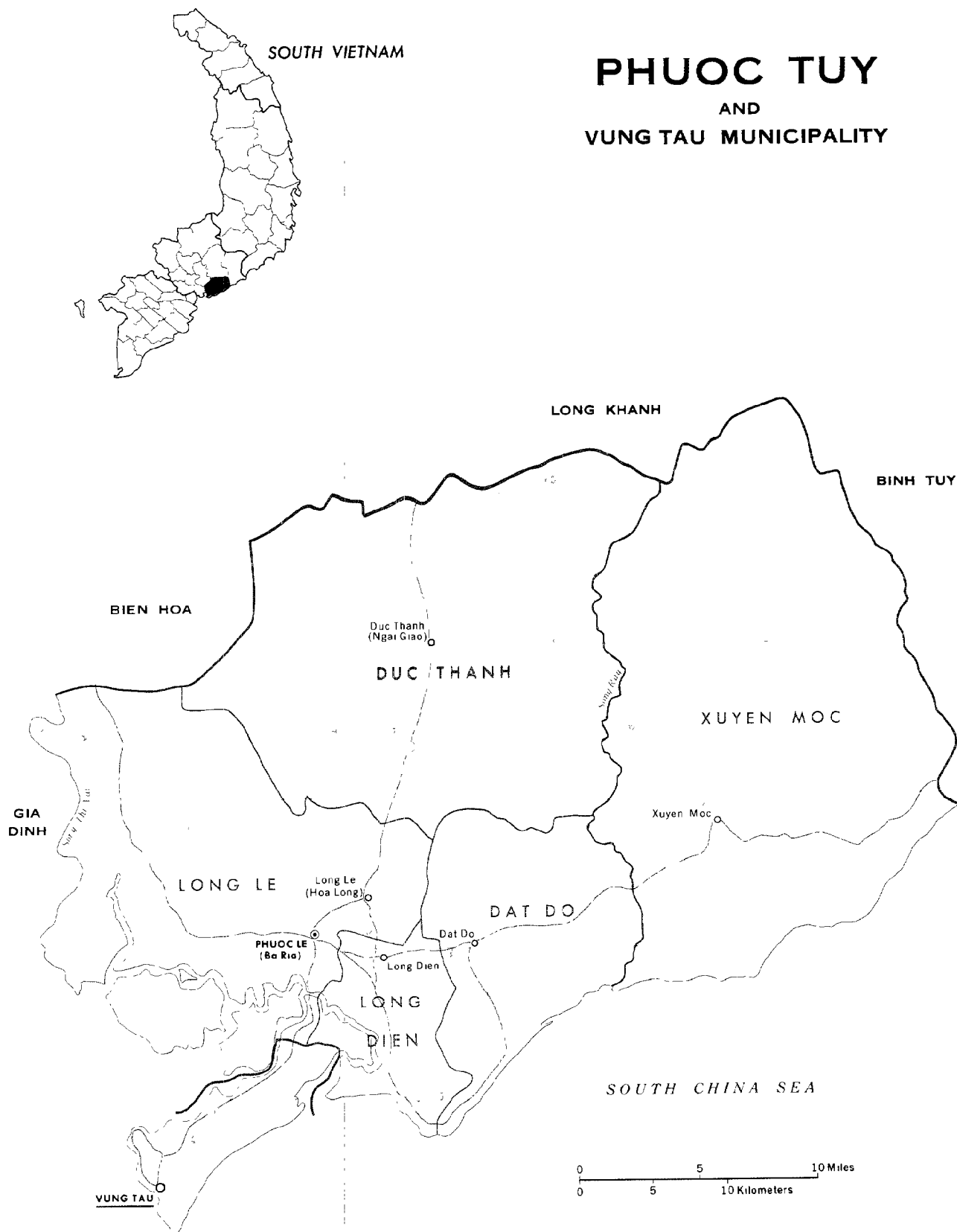
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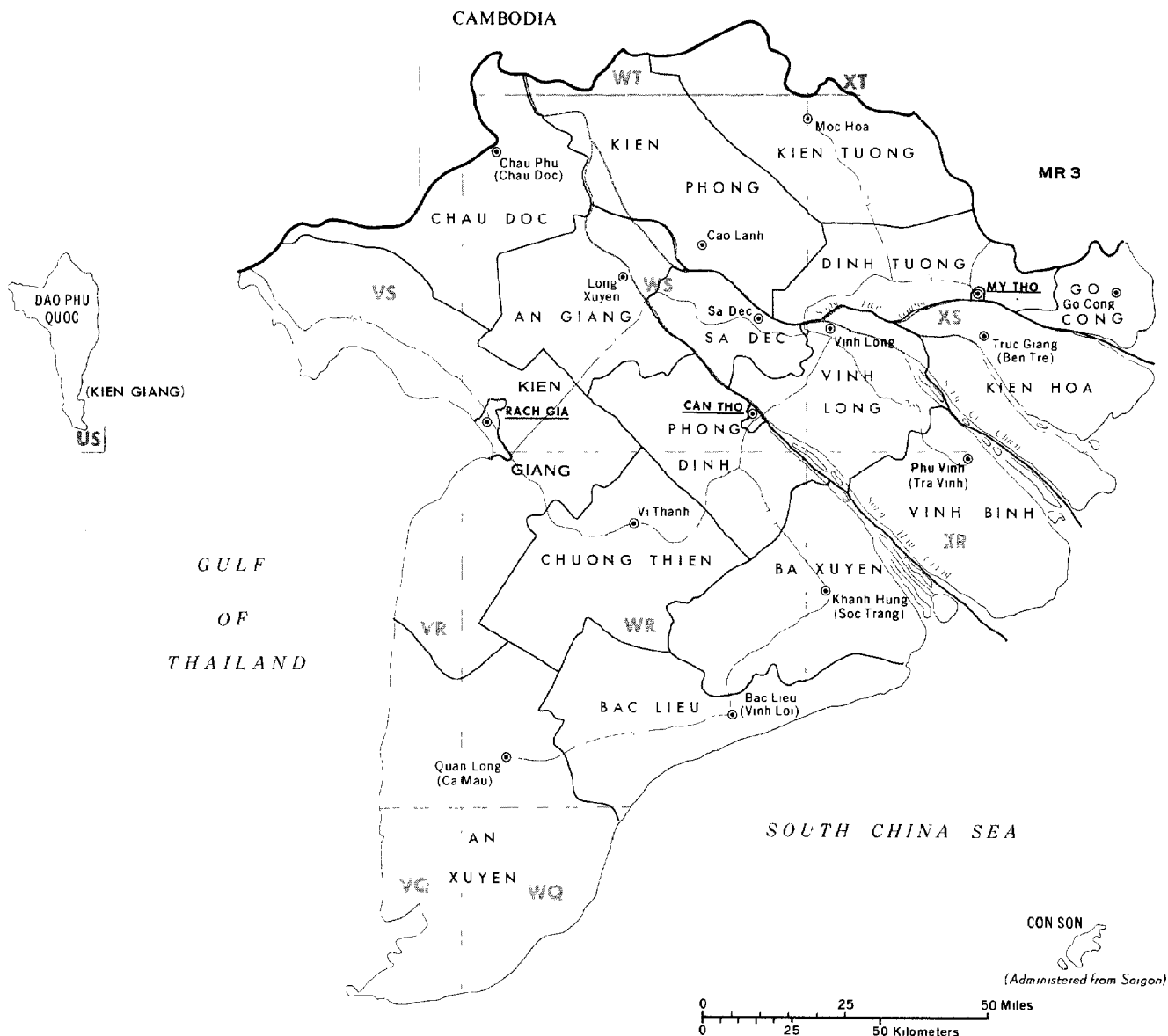
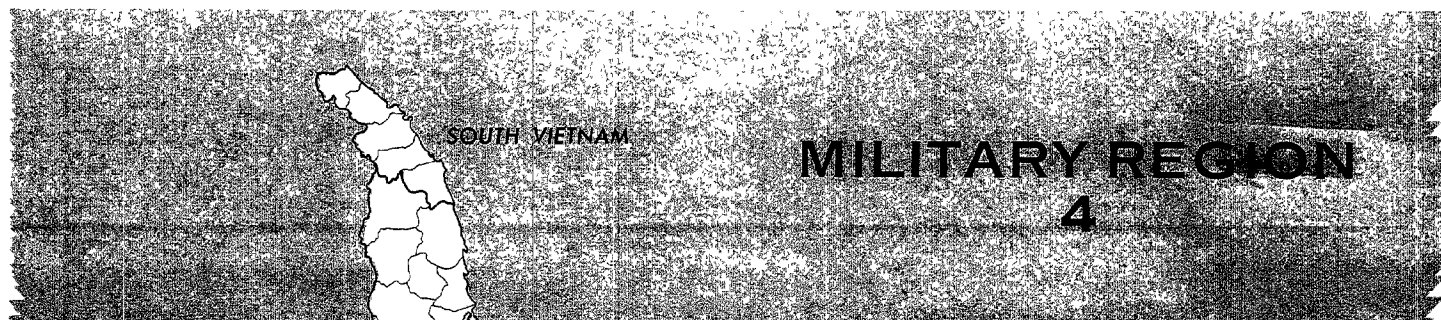
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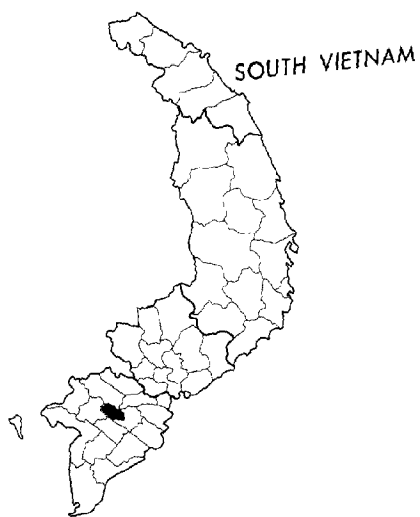
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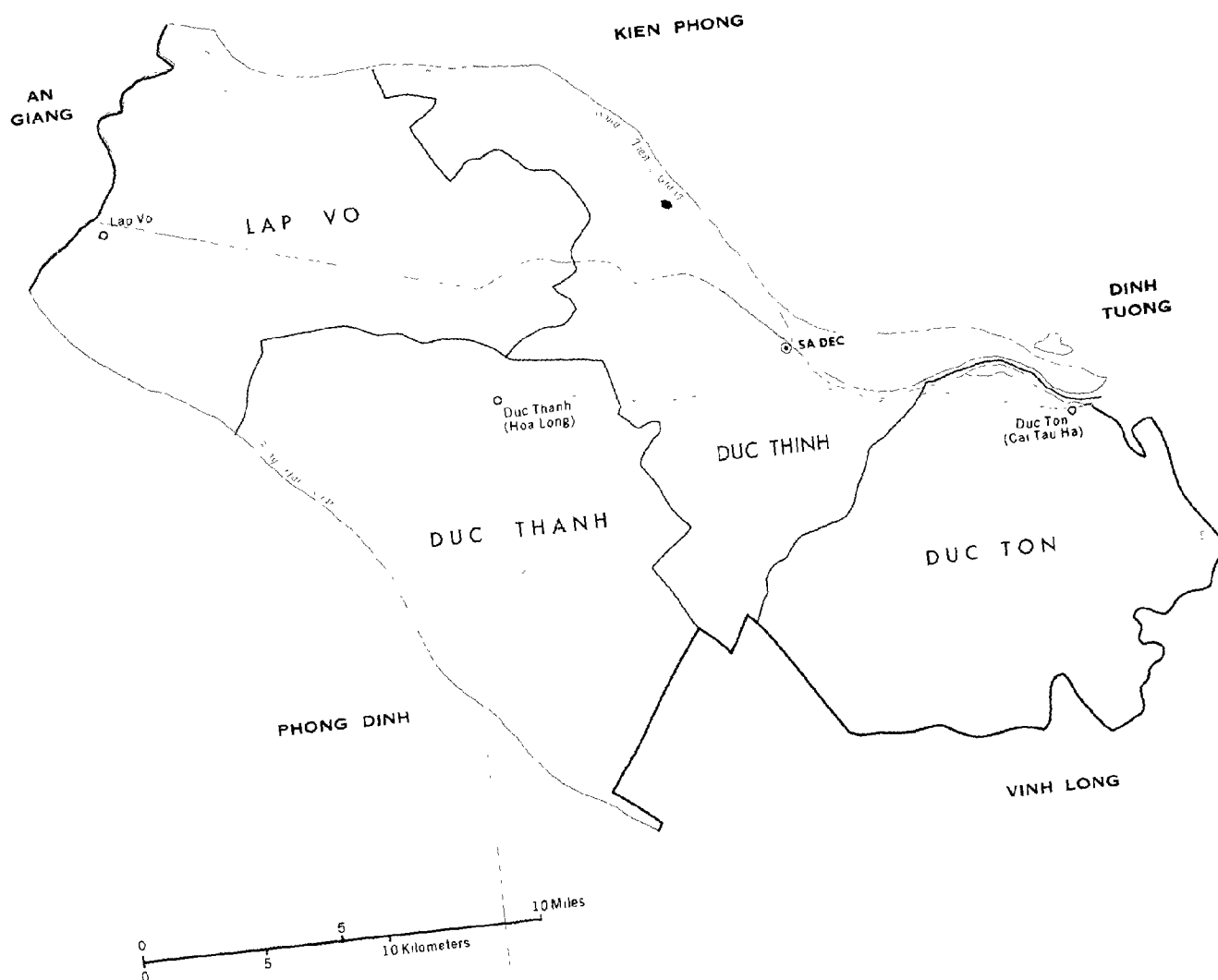




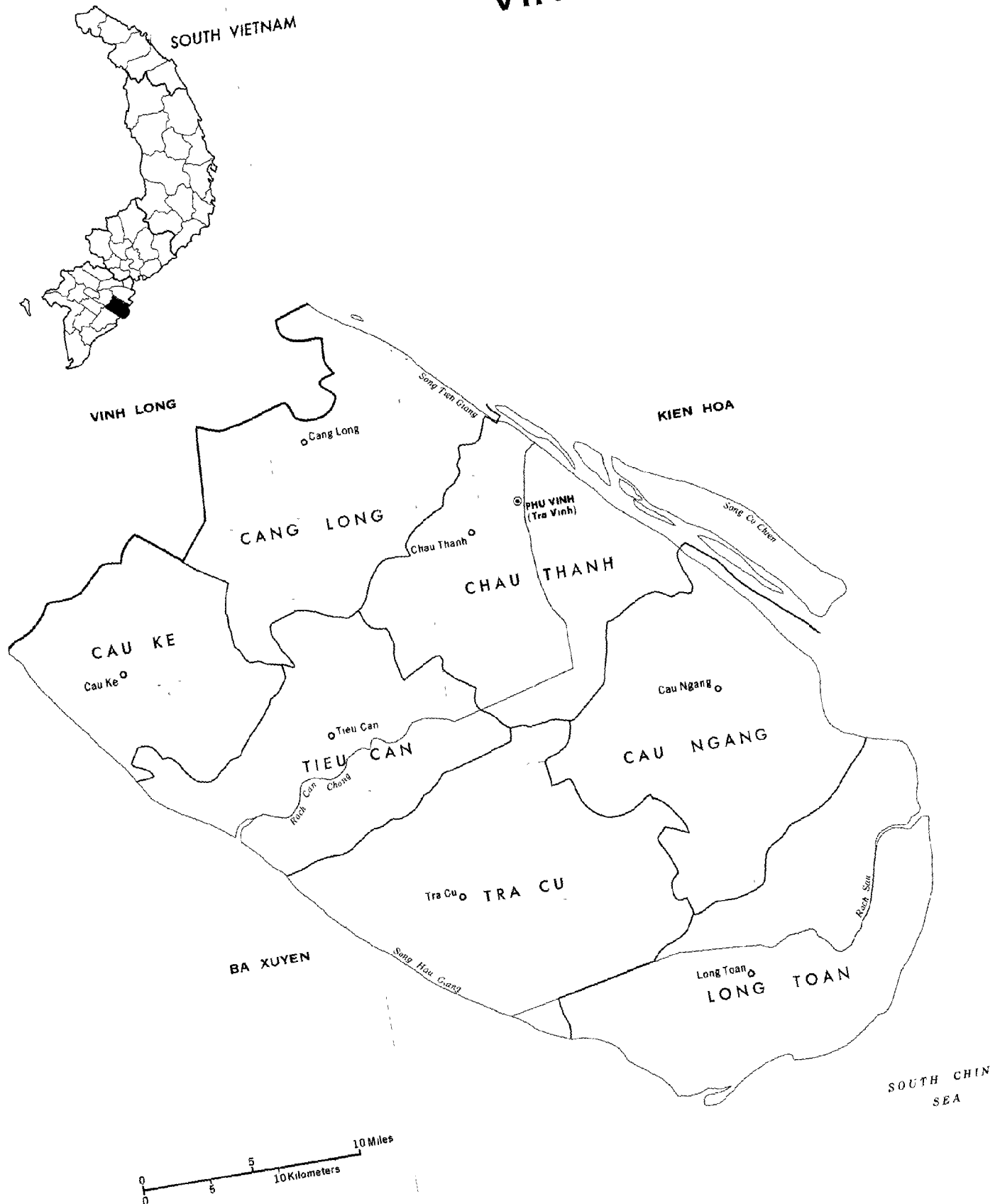


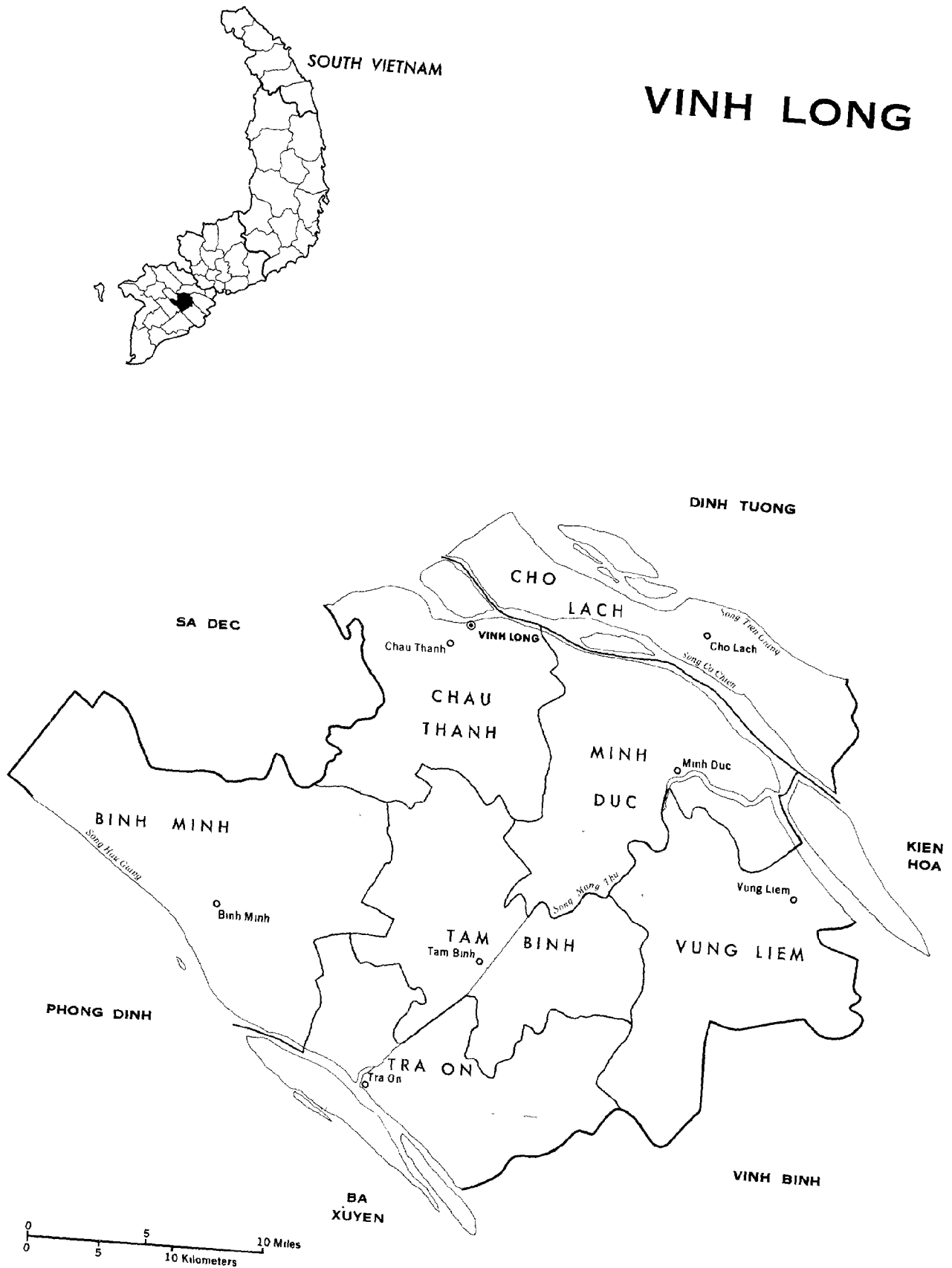


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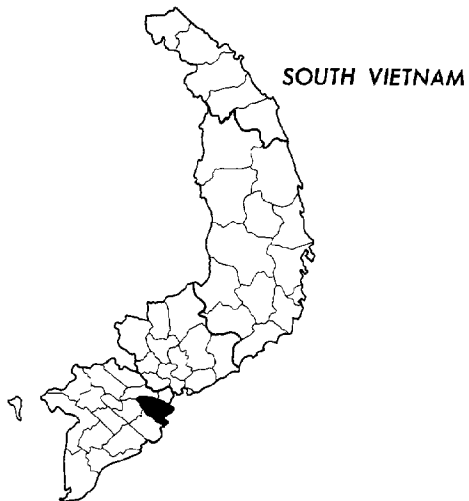


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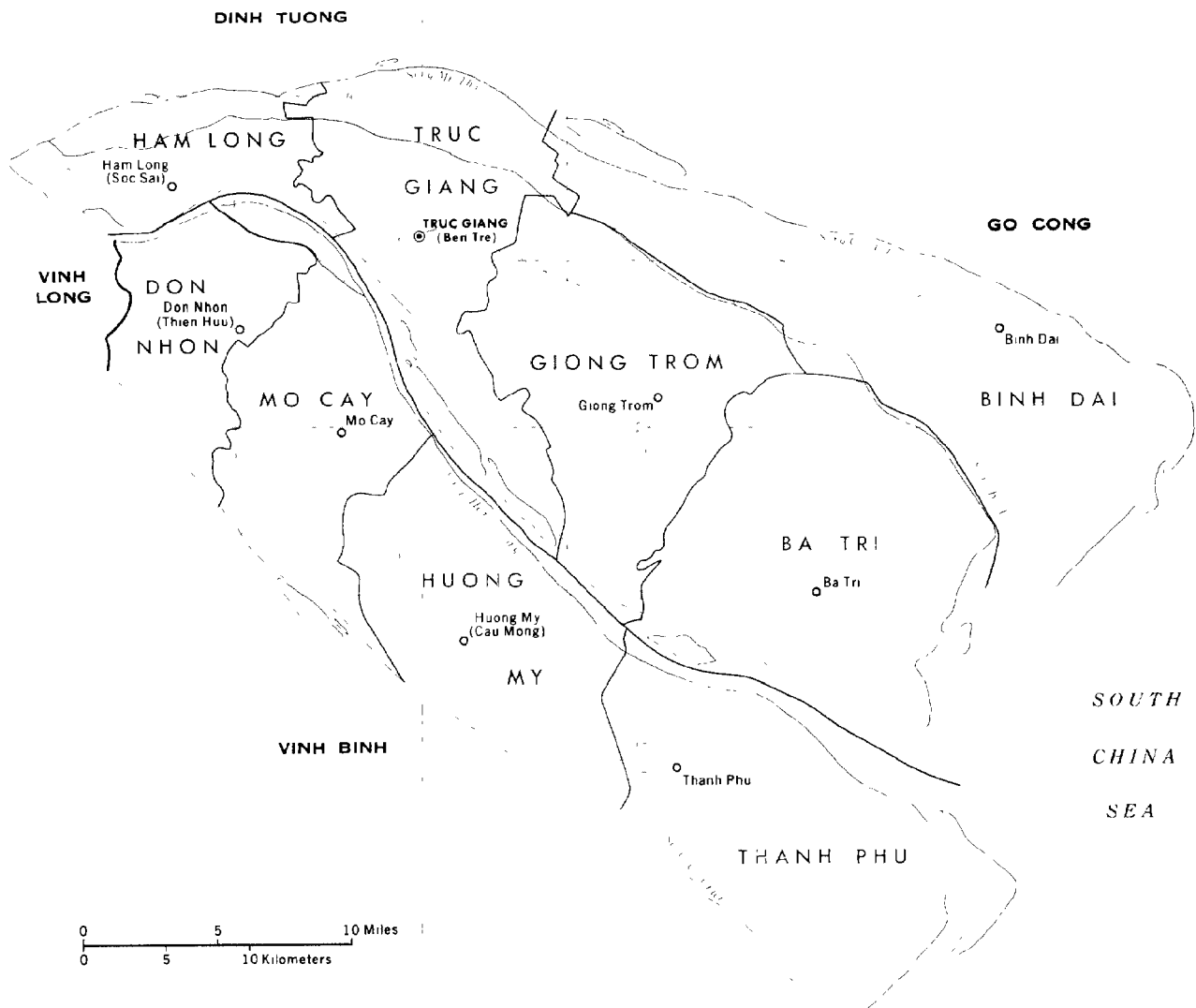




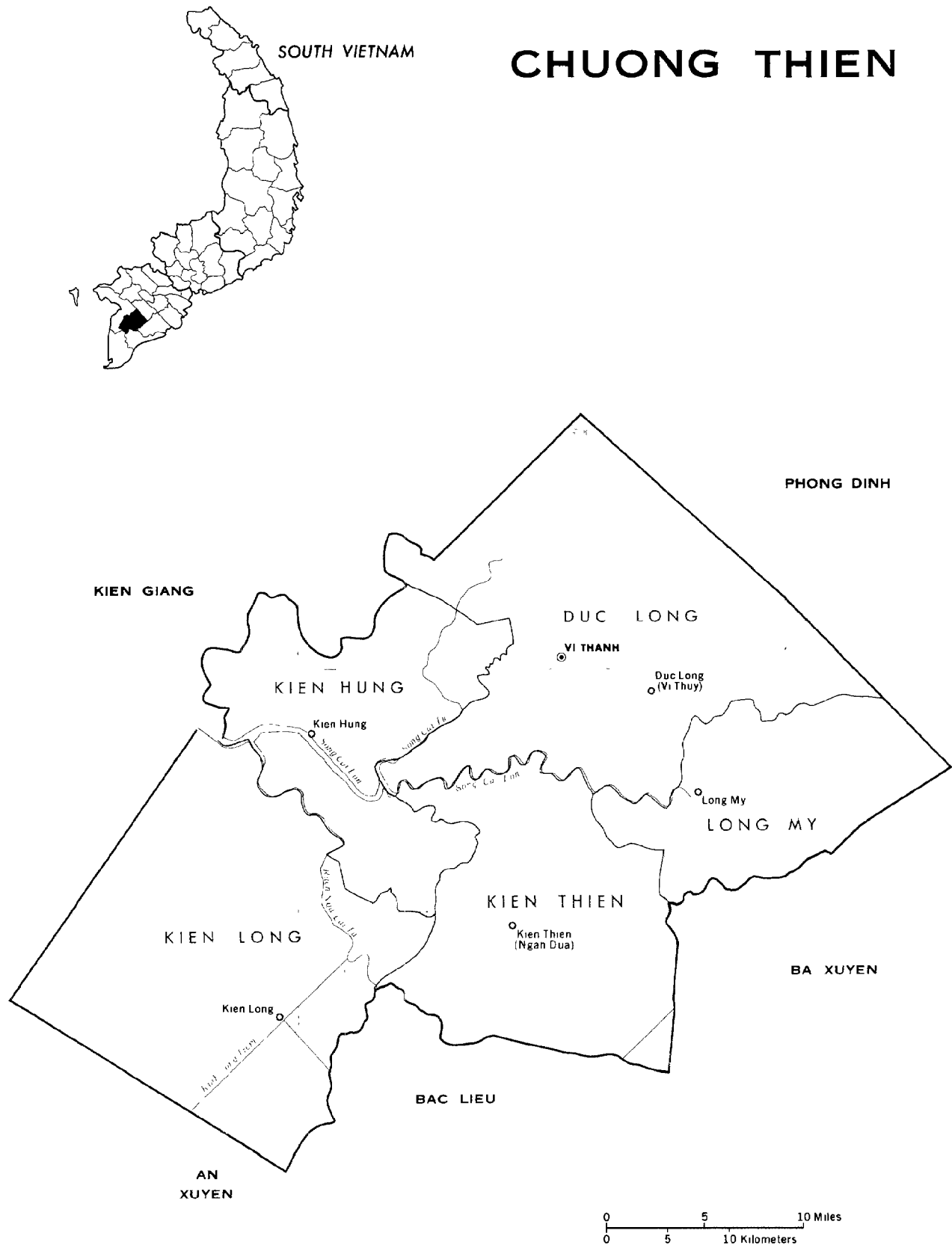
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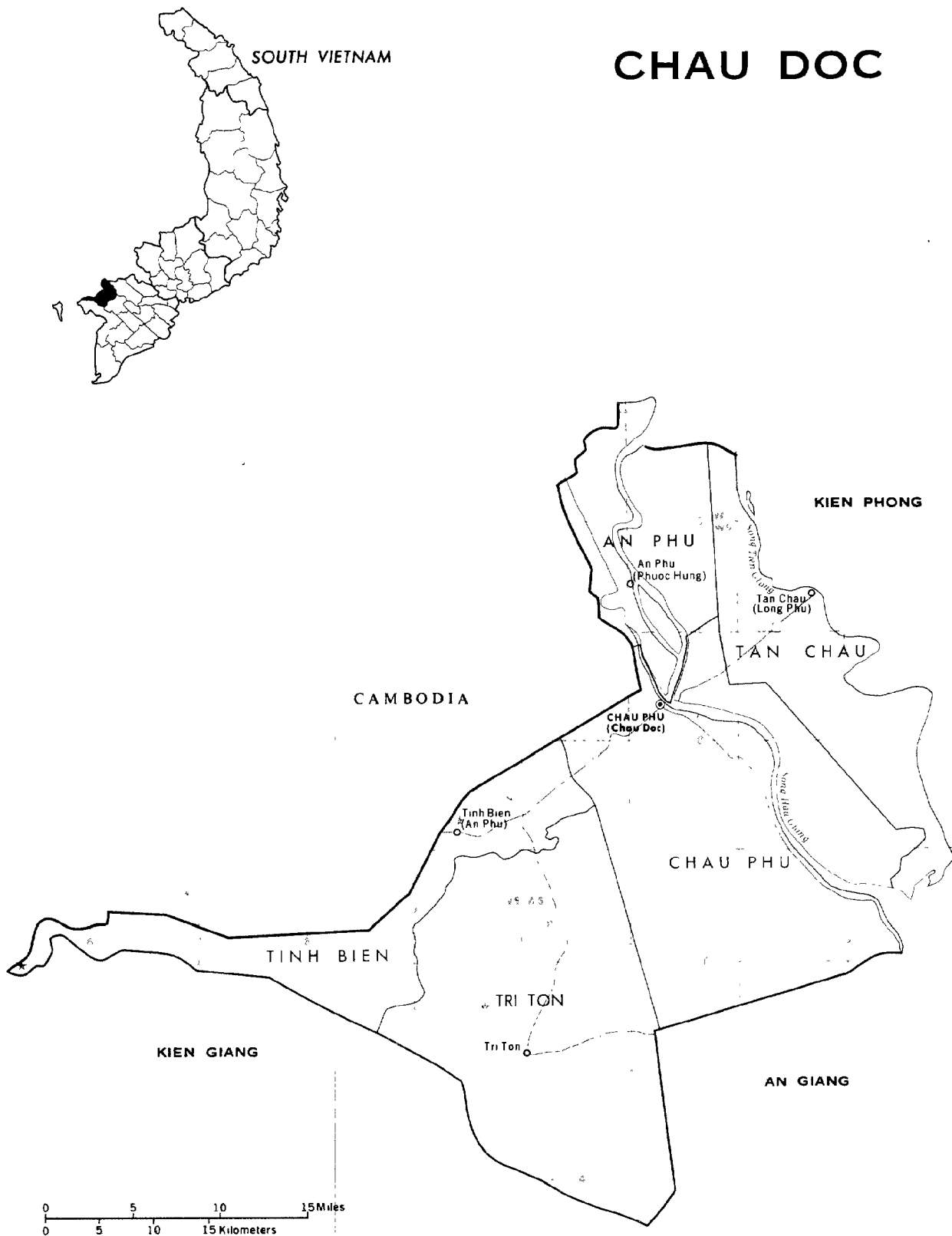


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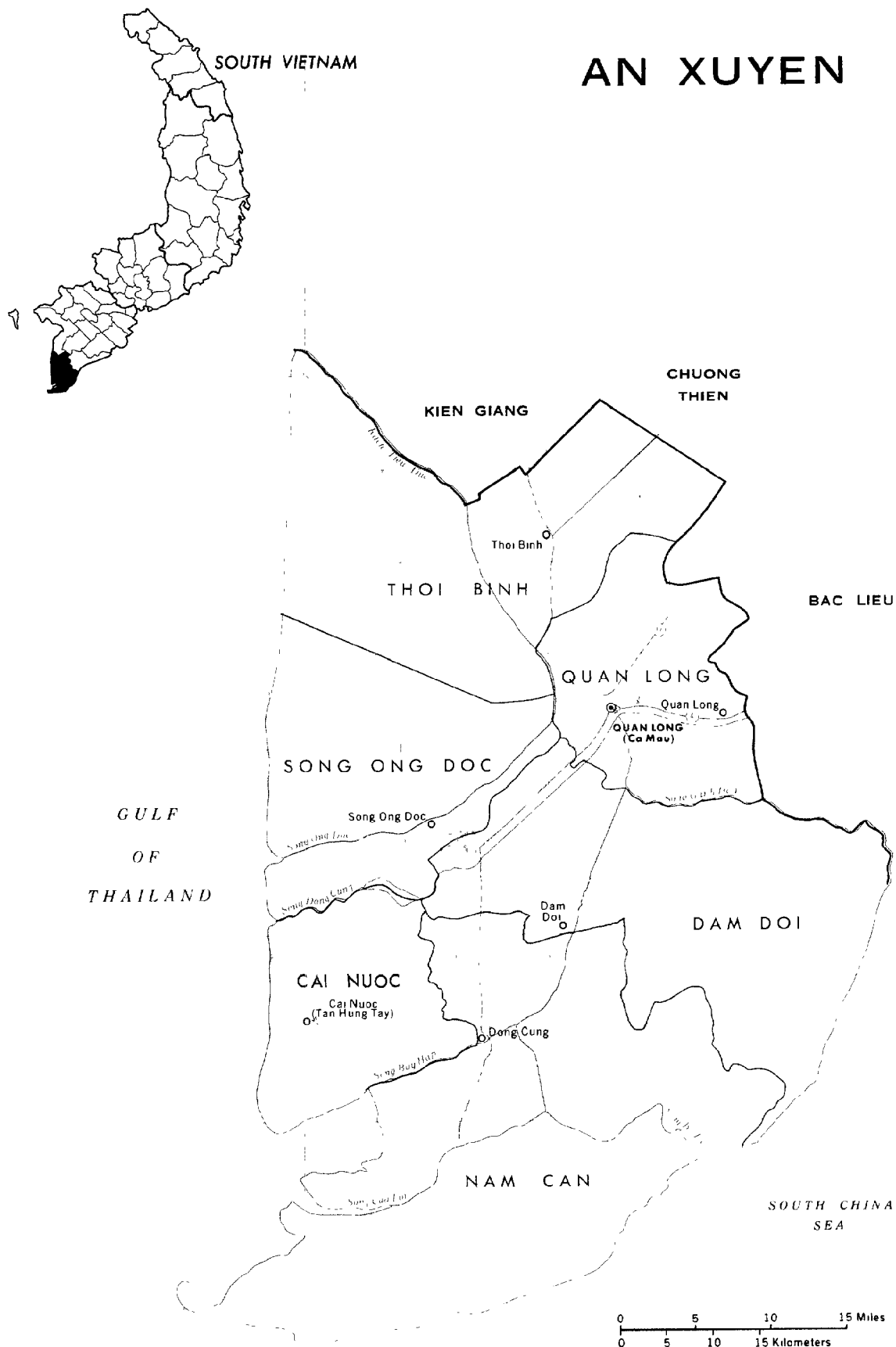


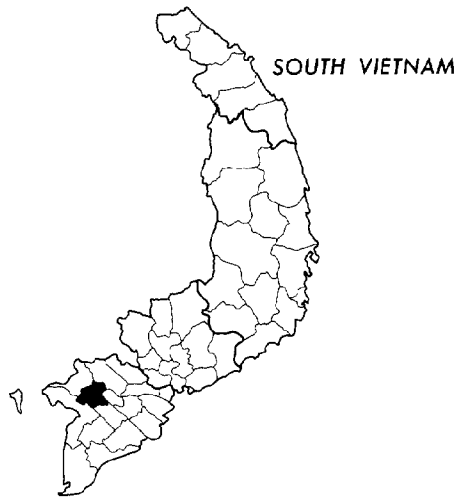
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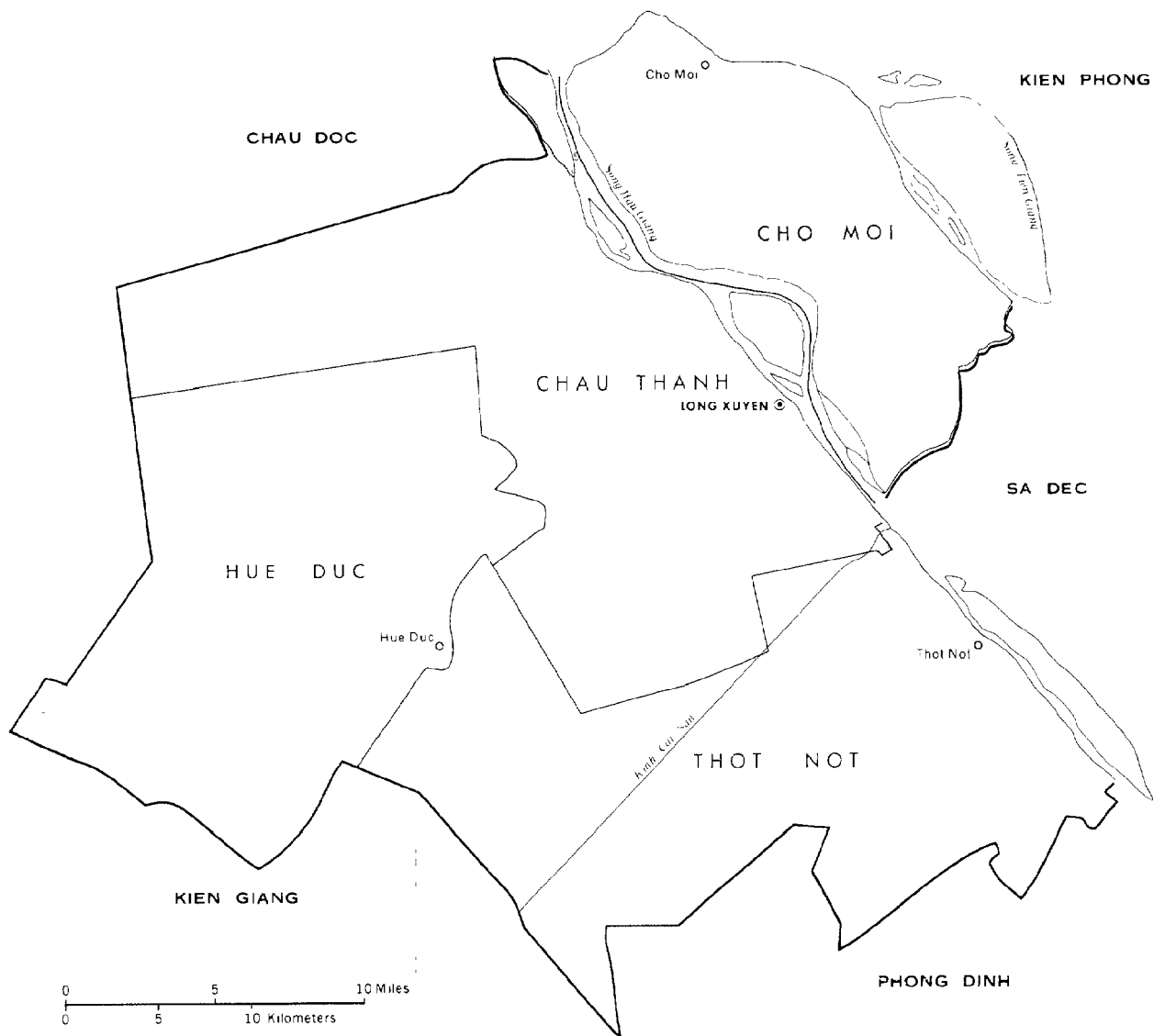


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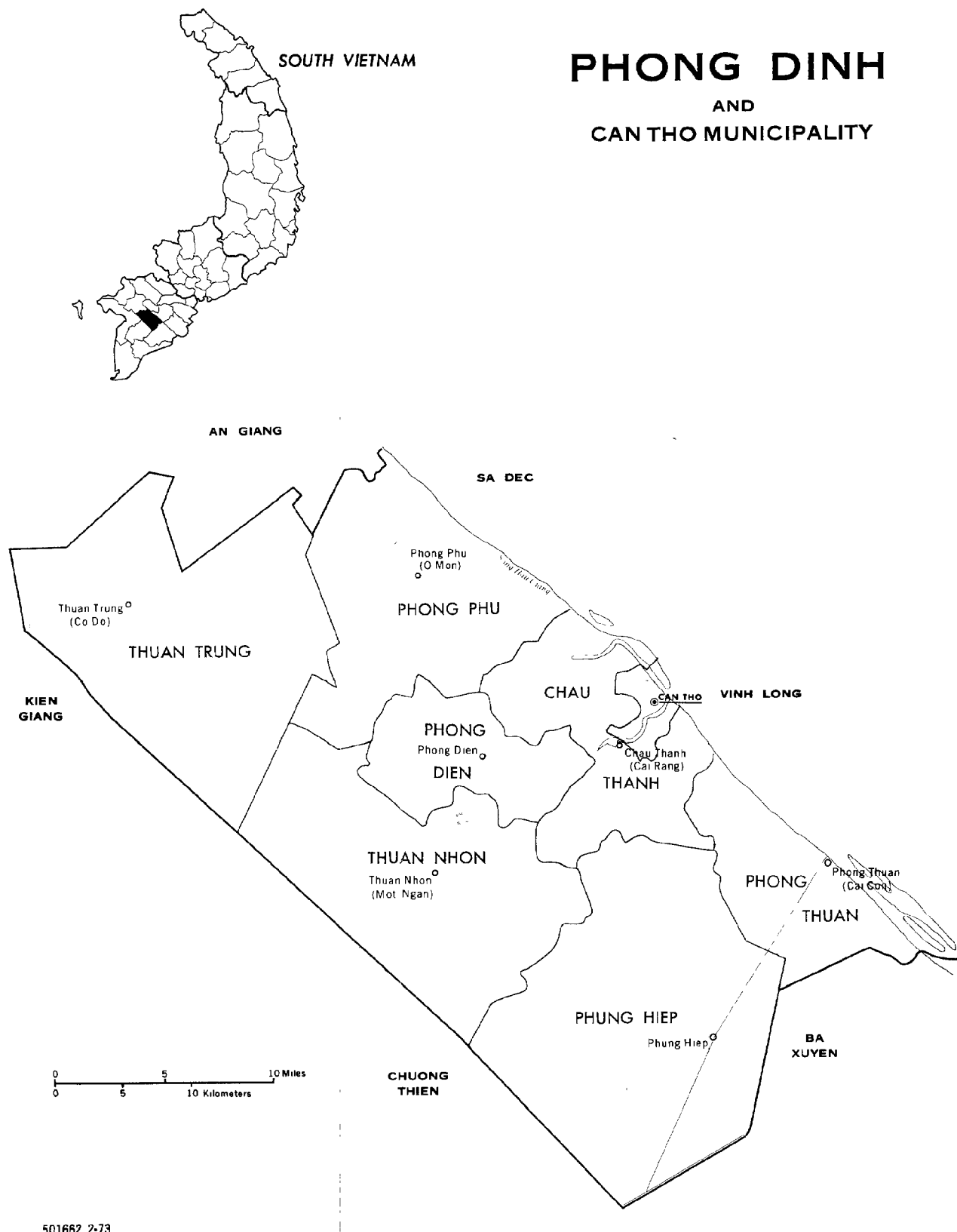




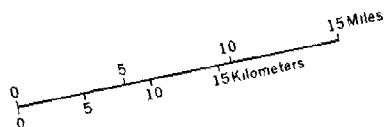
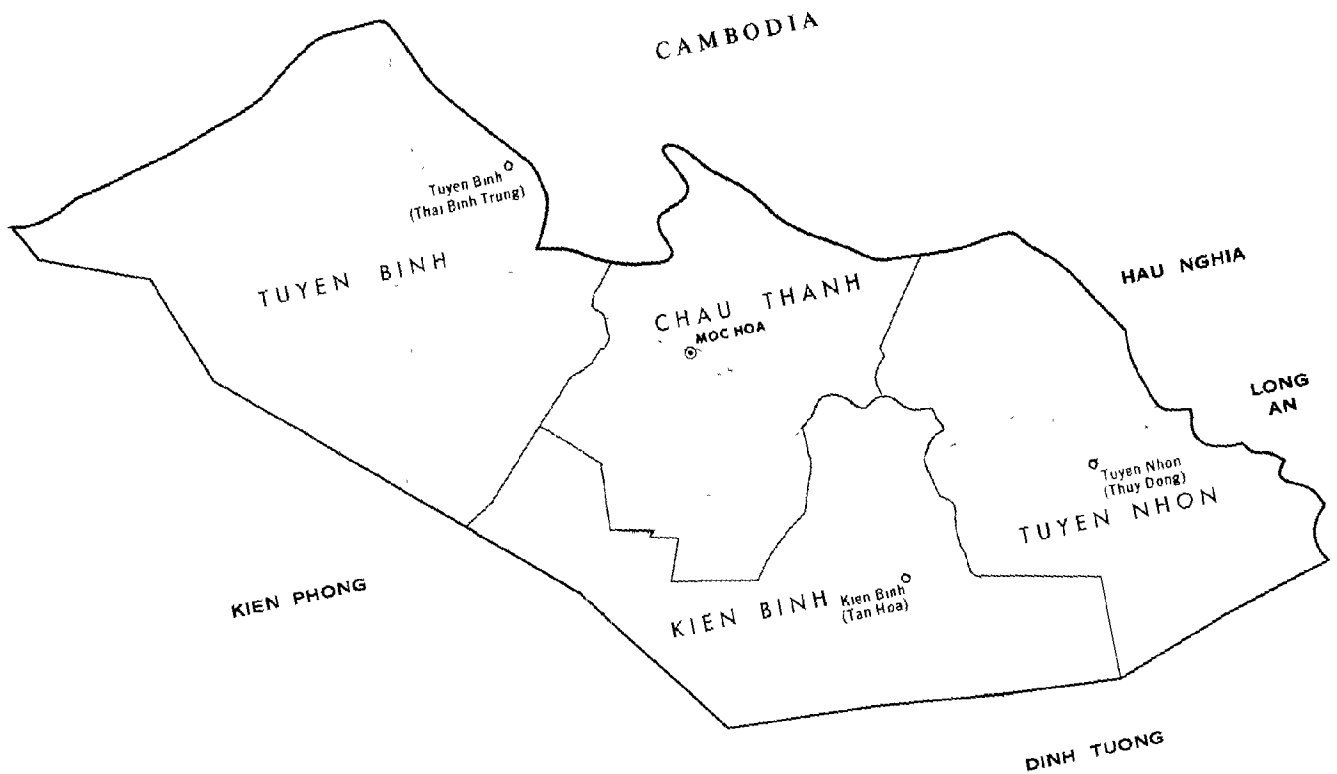
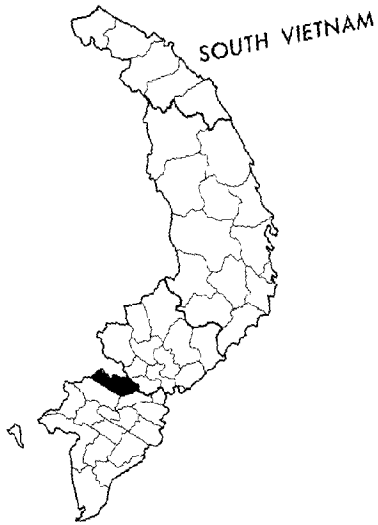
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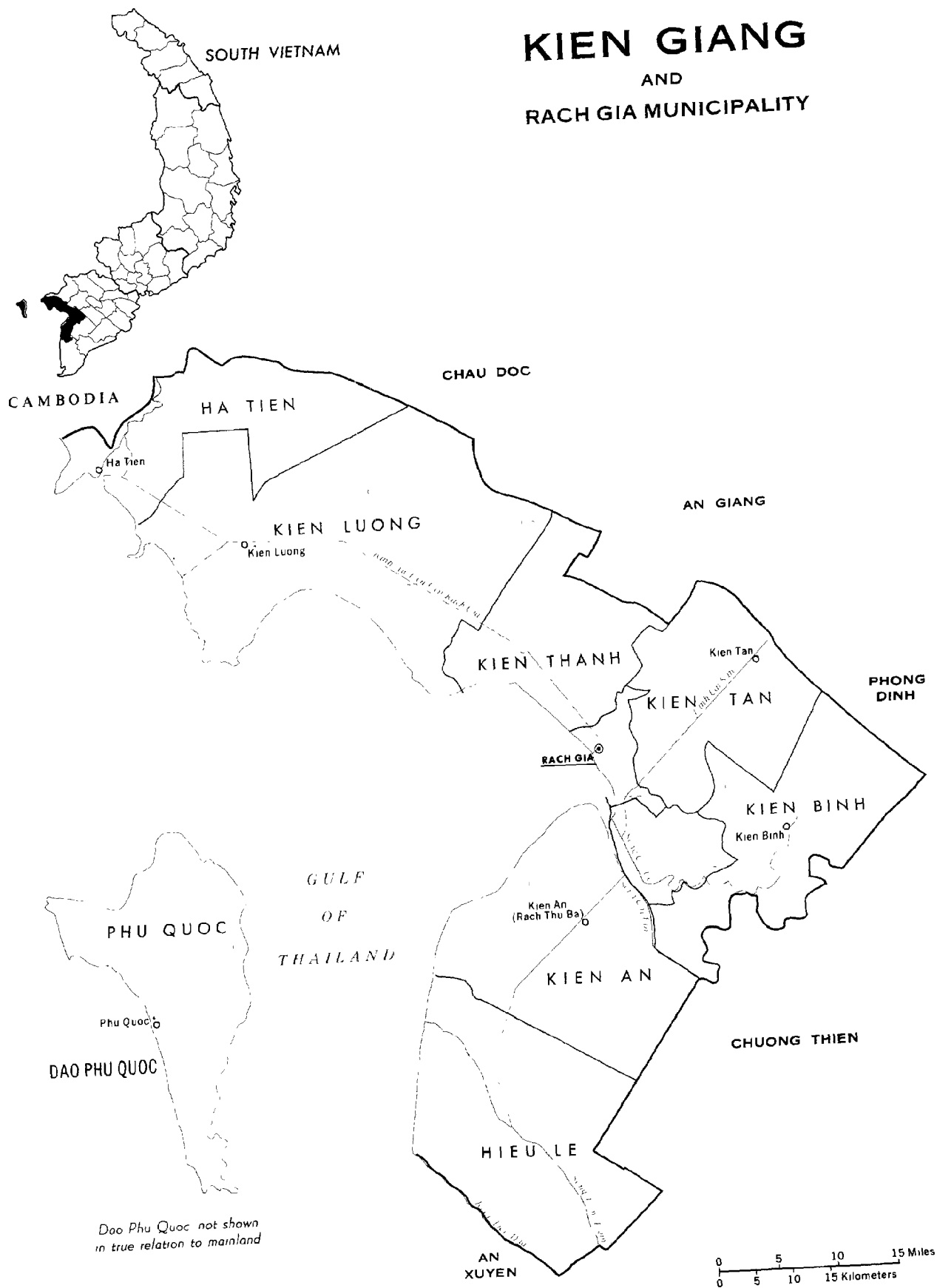


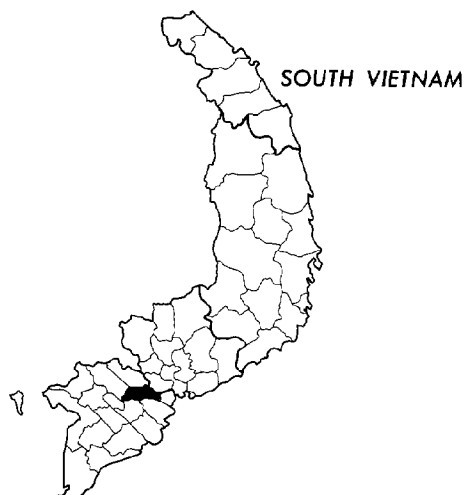
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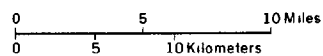
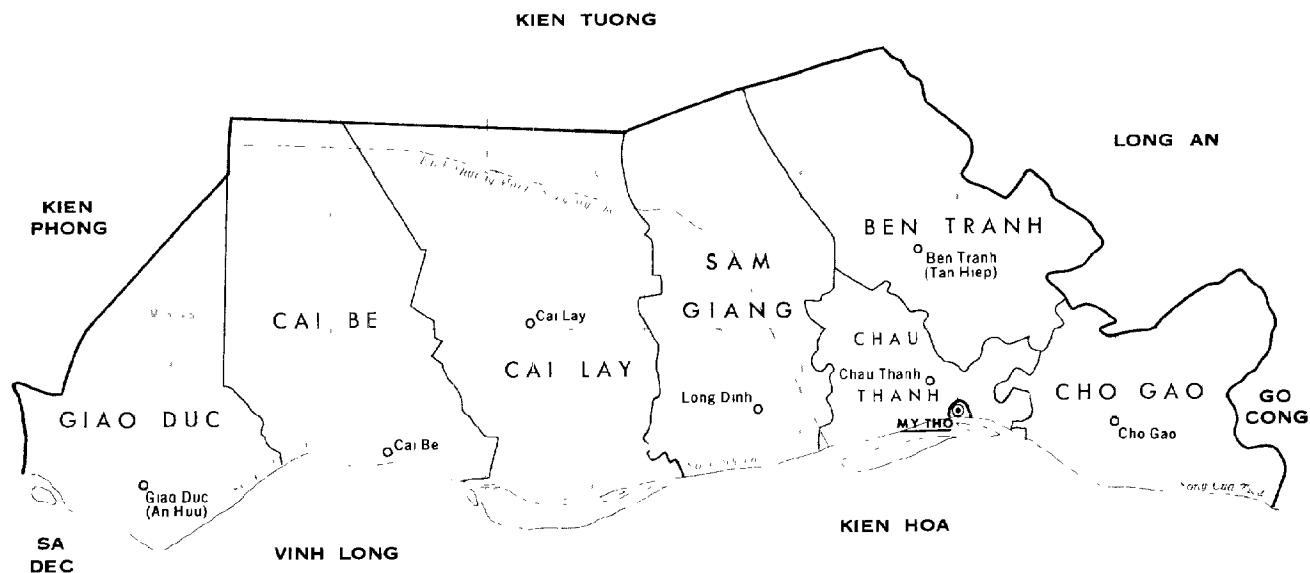




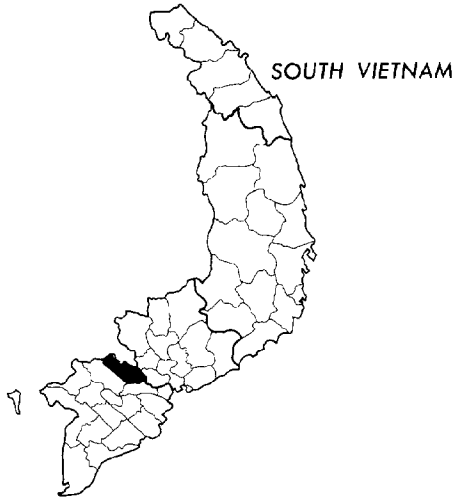


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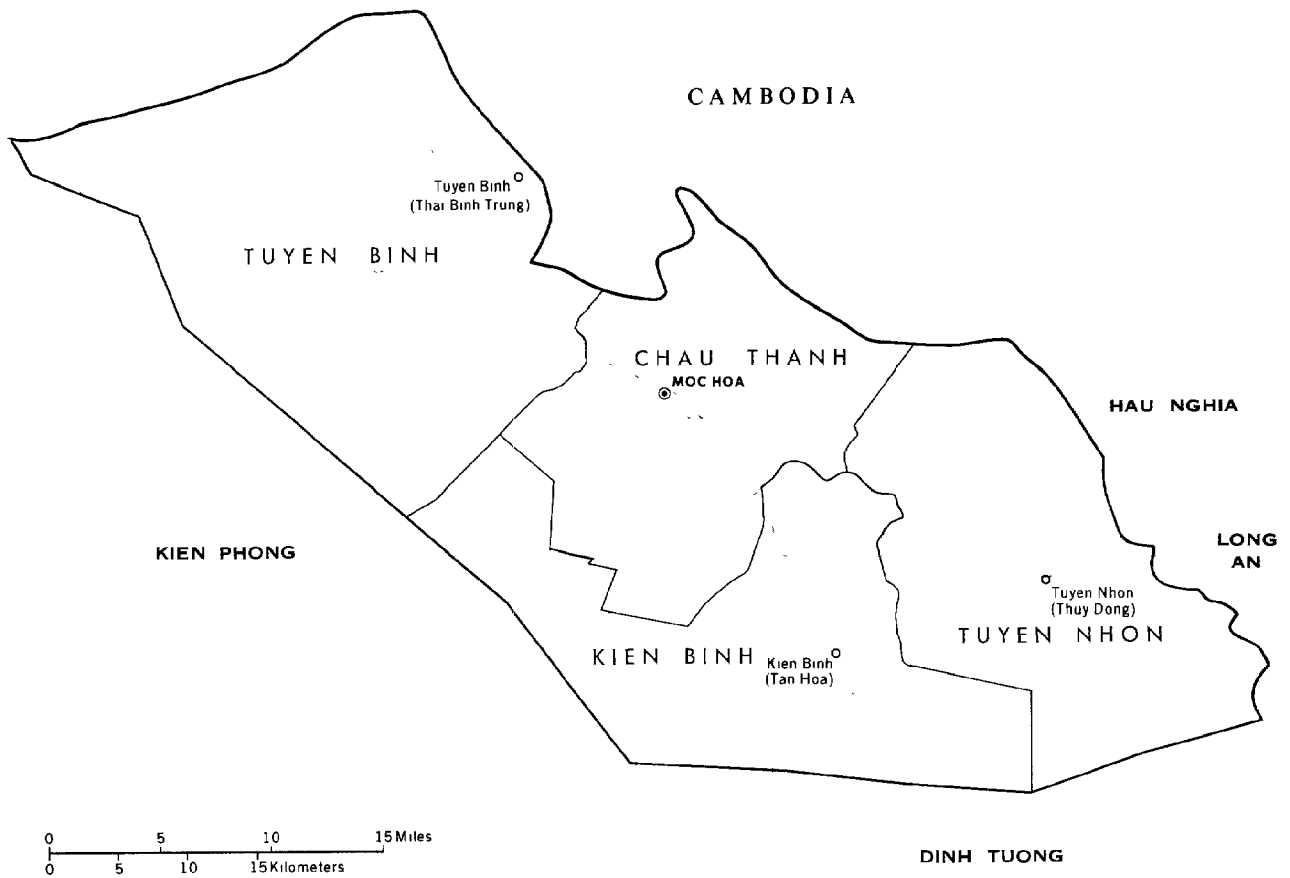
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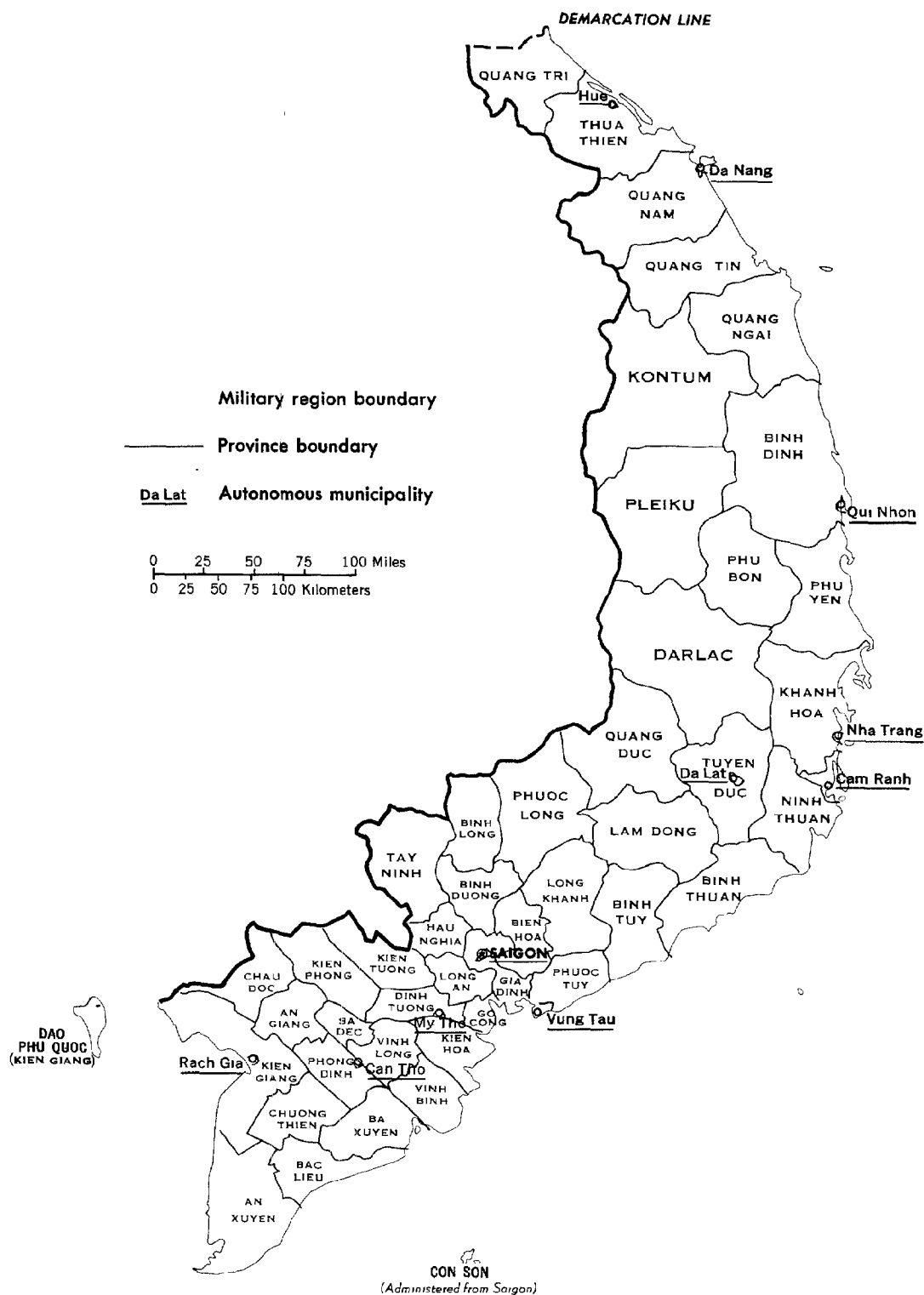
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KIEN TUONG



SOUTH VIETNAM ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MAY 1972



REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM

BACKGROUND NOTES

Population: 18 million (1971 est.)

Capital: Saigon

The Republic of Viet-Nam is a narrow strip of land curving along the southeastern tip of Asia on the South China Sea. Its territory of 65,948 square miles is slightly larger than the State of Florida. The Khmer Republic (Cambodia) and the Kingdom of Laos lie to the west. To the north, across the 17th parallel of latitude, lies the Communist-controlled zone of Viet-Nam, called the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam." South Viet-Nam's 1,650-mile coastline includes the mainland and the islands within 85 miles of the mainland.

South Viet-Nam is divided into four main topographic regions. The lower third of the country is dominated by the estuary of the Mekong River system, which gives the country a low, flat, and frequently marshy appearance. The soil in the Mekong Delta area is very rich, making this region the most productive agricultural area in the country, particularly in the production of rice. The Provinces immediately north and east of Saigon are much more varied topographically than the Mekong Delta area; they include considerable sections of low-lying tropical rain forest, upland forest, and the rugged terrain of the southern end of the Annamite Mountain chain. Central Viet-Nam is divided into a narrow coastal strip, where intensive rice farming is practiced, and a broad plateau separated from the coastal lowlands by the Annamite chain.

While Saigon and the Mekong Delta to the south experience a year-round tropical climate, the central lowlands and mountainous regions are cool from about October to March, the temperature sometimes dropping to 50°-55° F. Rainfall is heavy in the delta and highlands in the summer and in the central lowlands in the winter.

South Viet-Nam's flag consists of three narrow red stripes on a yellow background; the stripes are placed horizontally across the middle portion of the flag.

THE PEOPLE

South Viet-Nam's population in 1971 was estimated at 18 million and is increasing at the rate of approximately 3 percent annually. Population density averages 272 people per square mile. However, population density varies from 750 to 2,000 per square mile in the delta area between the Mekong River and Saigon.

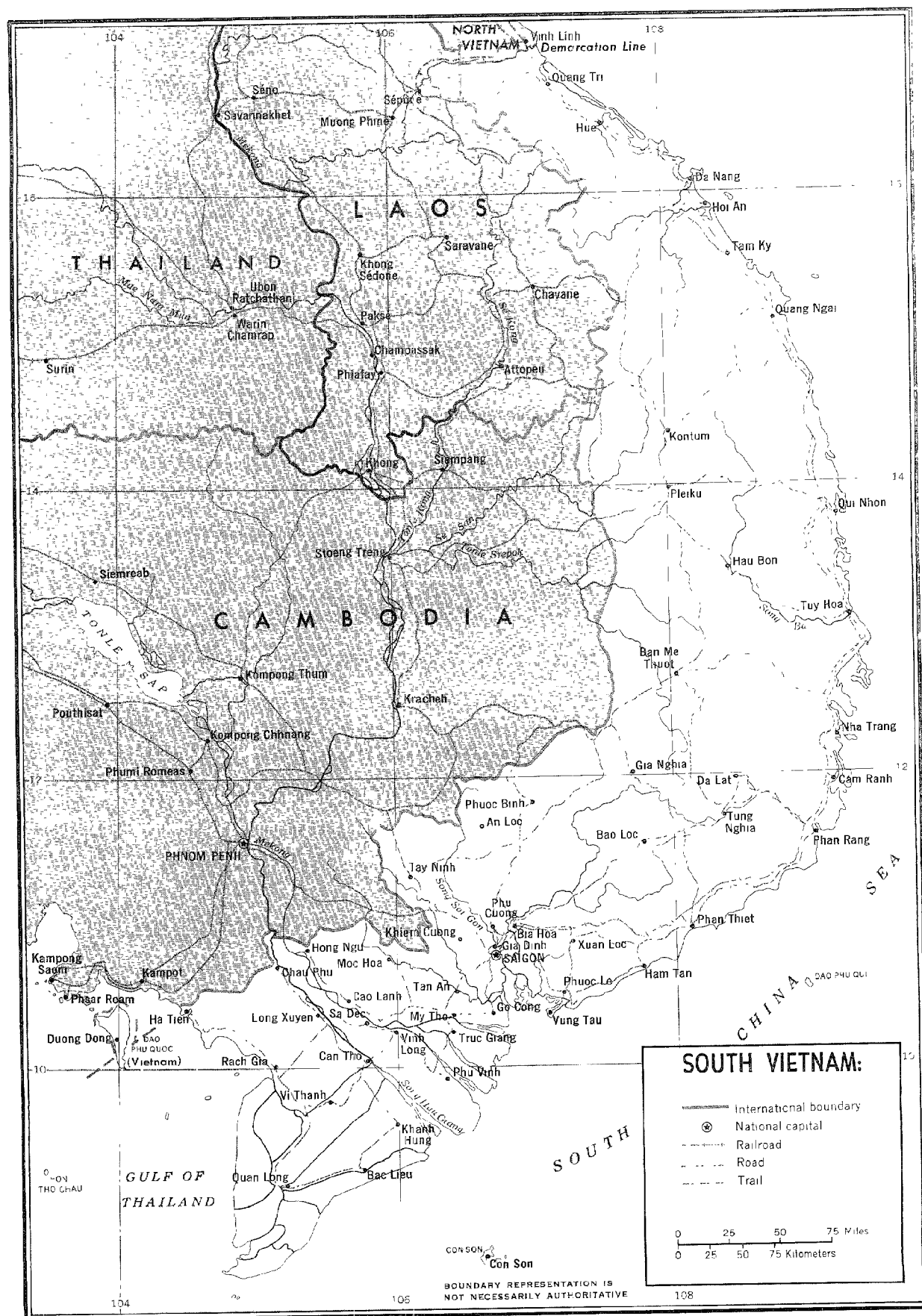
Approximately 64 percent of the people live in rural areas, but the urban population has increased rapidly in recent years, due largely to increases in the level of fighting in the countryside. With the improvement in security conditions the trend toward urbanization is now diminishing. Viet-Nam's major cities and their populations are: Saigon (2.2 million), Da Nang (430,000), Hue (200,000), Da Lat (83,000), Vung Tau (95,000), and Cam Ranh (95,000).

The ethnic Vietnamese, who constitute about 85 percent of the total population, have a recorded history of more than 2,000 years. Throughout this long span they have been among the most vigorous people in Asia, characterized by remarkable energy and a strong sense of national identity. In the past, these characteristics enabled them to survive as a nation despite hundreds of years of Chinese occupation.

Vietnamese culture is strongly influenced by classical Chinese civilization, although nearly 100 years of French rule introduced important European elements. The most pervasive cultural influence is still Chinese. In 111 B.C. the territory corresponding to what is now North Viet-Nam was incorporated as the southernmost province of the Chinese empire, and the Vietnamese remained under Chinese rule for more than a millenium. Art forms and the Vietnamese language reveal many Chinese elements. The great importance of the family and the profound respect which the Vietnamese accord to learning and age stem from the Confucian ethic. Nearly all rural people and many urban Vietnamese continue to observe traditional rites honoring their ancestors.

There are several ethnic minorities in Viet-Nam, the most important being immigrant Chinese, mountain tribesmen (Montagnards), and Khmers (Cambodians). The Chinese are the largest minority, numbering about 1.2 million, two-thirds of whom live in the Cholon area of Saigon. Active in rice trading, milling, real estate, and banking, the Chinese play a very important role in Viet-Nam's economy. Most Chinese have acquired Vietnamese citizenship.

The second largest minority, the Montagnards, constitute two main ethnolinguistic groups—Malayo-Polynesian and Mon-Khmer. There are more than 30 tribes of various cultures and dialects spread over highland territory half the size of South Viet-Nam. Approximately 700,000-1 000 000 Montagnards live as slash-and-burn



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farmers, hunters, and gatherers. Ethnic minority legislation has been enacted to provide the Montagnards with special government assistance for education and economic development.

The third largest minority are the Khmers (Cambodians) numbering about 700,000 and concentrated in Provinces near the Cambodian border and at the mouth of the Mekong River. Most are farmers. Though distinctive from the Vietnamese in language, religion, and culture, the Cambodians are very gradually assimilating with the Vietnamese.

Other minority groups include a few thousand Chams (remnants of the once mighty Kingdom of Champa, destroyed by the Vietnamese in the 16th century), Malays, Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs, and French.

The religion of most Vietnamese is a mixture of ancestor worship, Taoism, and Mahayana Buddhism (all of which derive from China) plus animistic practices, such as reverence for village guardian spirits. (The Khmer minority follow the Theravada Buddhist sect.) Most Vietnamese regard themselves as Buddhists, although only 10-20 percent of the population actively practices Buddhism in an organized sense. The Buddhist-oriented Hoa Hao sect numbers more than 1 million adherents and is concentrated in the southwest part of the Mekong Delta. The Cao Dai, believers in an eclectic combination of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Taoism, and other faiths, include about 1.5 million faithful concentrated in an area northwest of Saigon to the Cambodian border, particularly in Tay Ninh Province. Most Montagnards are animists, although many have been converted to Christianity. Approximately 10 percent of South Viet-Nam's population is Roman Catholic.

South Viet-Nam's literacy rate is estimated at 65 percent. The official language is Vietnamese.

HISTORY

Historical tradition states that the Vietnamese people originated in the valley of the Yellow River in north China and were slowly driven southward by pressure from the Han Chinese. Historical records first mention the Vietnamese as a tribal people inhabiting the Red River Delta in what is now North Viet-Nam. Today the Vietnamese occupy the entire eastern coast of the Indochinese peninsula from the Chinese border in the North to the Gulf of Thailand in the South—an area somewhat larger than New Mexico.

After gaining independence from China in 939 A.D., the Vietnamese maintained their freedom until the mid-19th century, when the French established control over all of Viet-Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, which they administered as Indochina. Nationalist activity directed against French rule began early in the 20th century, inspired in part by the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 and by the success of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek in China. By 1930 the Viet-Nam Nationalist Party (VNQDD) had staged the first

significant armed uprising against the French, and in that same year the Indochinese Communist Party was founded by the man who later took the alias of Ho Chi Minh. The French moved quickly, however, to repress nationalists and Communists. Some of them went underground and some escaped to China. Others were imprisoned, some to emerge later to play important roles in the anticolonial movement.

World War II was a major turning point in the history of Viet-Nam. In 1940 Japanese troops moved into northern Viet-Nam as their first step in the conquest of Southeast Asia; in 1941 they moved into southern Viet-Nam and remained there until their surrender to the Allied Powers in 1945.

In August 1945 a Communist-led uprising broke out and the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam" (DRV) was proclaimed at Hanoi with Ho Chi Minh as its leader. (For more information, see Background Notes on North Viet-Nam, pub. 8505.) A prolonged three-way struggle ensued among the Vietnamese Communists (led by Ho Chi Minh), the French, and the Vietnamese nationalists (nominally led by Emperor Bao Dai). The Communists sought to portray their struggle as a national uprising; the French attempted to re-establish their control; while the non-Communist nationalists, many of whom chose to fight militarily with the French against the Communists, wished neither French nor Communist domination. Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh forces fought a highly successful guerrilla campaign and eventually controlled much of rural Viet-Nam. The French military disaster at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 and the conference at Geneva, where France signed the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Viet-Nam on July 20, 1954, marked the end of the 8-year war and French colonial rule in Indochina.

Geneva Agreements

The conference at Geneva was attended by delegates from Cambodia, the "Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam," France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam (led by Bao Dai and recognized by the United States and many other countries), the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The documents known collectively as the Geneva agreements were three separate cease-fire agreements covering Cambodia, Laos, and Viet-Nam (the latter signed by representatives of the French Union Forces and the DRV) and an unsigned final declaration. The cease-fire agreement on Viet-Nam provided for provisional division of the country at approximately the 17th parallel; a 300-day period for free movement of population between the two "zones" established thereby; and the establishment of an International Control Commission (ICC)—representatives of Canada, India, and Poland—to supervise its execution. The cease-fire agreement also referred to "general elections" which would "bring about the unification" of the two zones of Viet-Nam.

Among the Viet-Nam provisions of the final declaration was one which called for "democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot" to be held in July 1956. The precise relationship between elections and unification was not made clear. All conference participants, except the United States and the State of Viet-Nam, associated themselves (by voice) with the final declaration. The United States, which had grave doubts about the fairness and workability of the vaguely outlined elections, refused to join in the final declaration; however, the U.S. delegate, Gen. W. Bedell Smith, stated that U.S. policy with regard to the Geneva agreements would be to refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb the agreements and that the United States would view any renewal of aggression in violation of the agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security. The State of Viet-Nam, objecting to the territorial division of the country and the election provisions, denounced the final declaration. The State of Viet-Nam and the United States considered that elections should be held under United Nations supervision to ensure their fairness.

Communist Aggression & U. S. Response

Following the partition of Viet-Nam under the terms of the Geneva agreements, South Viet-Nam experienced a period of considerable confusion. Although Bao Dai had appointed a well-known nationalist figure, Ngo Dinh Diem, as Prime Minister, Diem initially had to administer a country plagued by a ruined economy and a political life fragmented by rivalries of religious sects and political factions. He also had the problem of coping with 850,000 refugees from the North. The Communist leaders at Hanoi expected the South to collapse and come under their control. Nevertheless, during his early years in office Diem was able to consolidate his political position, eliminate the private armies of the religious sects, and, with substantial U.S. military and economic aid, build a national army and administration and make significant progress toward reconstructing the economy.

When the Communist leaders in North Viet-Nam realized that the South Vietnamese Government was making rapid progress, they began a deliberate campaign to overthrow the Government by force, with the aim of reuniting the country under Communist auspices. They consolidated their power in North Viet-Nam by a ruthless and thorough-going "agrarian reform" and established a police state. In the late 1950's they reactivated the network of Communists who had stayed in the South (the Viet Cong) along with hidden stocks of arms, infiltrated additional cadres of trained guerrillas into the South, and began a campaign of terror against officials and villagers who refused to support the Communist cause. (Civilian deaths from assassination and

terrorist raids have amounted to tens of thousands since the beginning of this campaign.) In their efforts the North Vietnamese Communists also exploited grievances created by mistakes of the Diem government as well as age-old shortcomings of Vietnamese society, such as poverty and land hunger.

North Vietnamese efforts against South Viet-Nam became even more pronounced during the next few years. At the Third Congress of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party in September 1960, Hanoi openly announced its intention to involve itself directly in the struggle to "liberate South Viet-Nam." A resolution passed at this congress called upon "our people" in South Viet-Nam "to bring into being a broad national united front directed against the United States-Diem clique." Shortly thereafter—in December 1960—the so-called "National Front for the Liberation of South Viet-Nam" (called National Liberation Front, or NLF) dutifully made its appearance, although Communist propaganda portrays the NLF as an independent, spontaneously created nationalist organization. In January 1962 Hanoi announced that "Marxist-Leninists" in South Viet-Nam had joined together to form a new party known as the "People's Revolutionary Party" (PRP). Captured Communist documents later confirmed, however, that the PRP was nothing more than the southern branch of the Lao Dong Party. Meanwhile, with leaders, supplies, and reinforcements from the North, the Viet Cong stepped up their attempt to destroy the social, economic, and governmental structure of the South by atrocities, terror, and guerrilla warfare. By 1963 the North Vietnamese Communists had made significant progress in building a subversive apparatus in South Viet-Nam.

In 1964 Hanoi decided the Viet Cong cadres and their supporters were not succeeding quickly enough and ordered regular units of the North Vietnamese Army into South Viet-Nam. Infiltration of regular troops into the South has continued ever since.

In December 1961 President Diem requested assistance from the United States, and U.S. military advisers were sent to South Viet-Nam to help the Government deal with aggression from the North. Under the heavy attacks launched by the Communists in 1964, South Viet-Nam again appealed for help. As a result, military units were sent by the United States, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand to assist in the country's defense. U.S. and South Vietnamese forces, beginning in 1965, conducted airstrikes against military targets in North Viet-Nam for more than 3 years. Along with 31 other nations, the United States has furnished economic, technical, and humanitarian assistance to South Viet-Nam. Today some 1.1 million South Vietnamese in uniform—excluding those in the National Police, People's Self-Defense Force, and other organizations—carry a major share of the war effort, with continuing international support.

On March 30, 1972, the North Vietnamese military effort assumed new proportions with a massive tank-led invasion of South Viet-Nam across the Demilitarized Zone, and across the borders of neutral Laos and Cambodia. Twelve of North Viet-Nam's 13 combat divisions left North Viet-Nam to attack or support the invasion of the South. This conventional invasion by North Vietnamese forces exposes the hollowness of the Communist claim that the military struggle in the South is being waged solely by indigenous South Vietnamese Communists against the central government.

South Viet-Nam faces a grave test. It is striving to develop its own democratic political institutions, modernize and expand its economy, and improve the living standards of its people, while resisting a large-scale military invasion and terrorist campaign.

U. S. -Vietnamese Agreements

U.S. military assistance to South Viet-Nam has been provided under the Pentilateral Agreement. Signed in 1950 by Viet-Nam and the United States, together with Laos, Cambodia, and France, this agreement provides the arrangements whereby direct military assistance is furnished the French Indochina successor states. The Economic Aid Agreement, signed in 1951, sets forth terms and conditions for U.S. economic and technical assistance to Viet-Nam. (Details of this assistance are given under the section entitled Economy.)

U. S. & South Vietnamese Peace Efforts

The search for peace in Viet-Nam is a matter of the highest priority to the United States and the Republic of Viet-Nam. The two countries have taken significant steps toward peace themselves and also have supported the United Nations and various third countries in their efforts to bring the war in Viet-Nam to a final and honorable settlement.

In a major step toward peace, the United States in the spring of 1968 ordered a partial cessation of the bombing of North Viet-Nam. This action led to the opening of official conversations between the United States and North Viet-Nam at Paris in May. Effective November 1, 1968, U.S. bombing of North Viet-Nam was stopped entirely. It was made clear, however, that U.S. reconnaissance flights over North Vietnamese territory would continue. It was also understood that indiscriminate Communist attacks against major South Vietnamese cities and abuse of the Demilitarized Zone were not to take place. At the same time, agreement was reached that a new series of meetings on Viet-Nam would be held, at which the Republic of Viet-Nam would join the United States in representing the parties on one side of the conflict. The North Vietnamese were left free to include on their side representatives of the NLF

(which in June 1969 proclaimed itself the "Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet-Nam"). This series of meetings began at Paris in January 1969 and continues.

The Paris Meetings

Throughout the course of the Paris talks the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Viet-Nam have set forth a coordinated and comprehensive series of proposals for a negotiated settlement.

President Nixon, in a major address on May 14, 1969, proposed the mutual withdrawal of all non-South Vietnamese military forces, with major portions of such withdrawals to take place within 12 months; the creation of an international supervisory body to verify such withdrawals and to participate in arranging supervised cease-fires; elections under the supervision of an international body; the release of prisoners of war; and agreement by all parties to observe the Geneva agreements of 1954 regarding Viet-Nam and Cambodia, and the Laos accords (Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos) of 1962.

President Nguyen Van Thieu of the Republic of Viet-Nam proposed on July 11, 1969, a plan for elections through which all South Vietnamese could determine the future of their country. He proposed participation in these elections by all political forces, including the National Liberation Front, and a joint electoral commission—also with NLF representation—to ensure the fairness of the elections. He called for an international supervisory body as well and pledged that the Government would abide by the results of such elections.

President Nixon reiterated his proposals and endorsed those of President Thieu in an address on November 3, 1969; he noted that they amounted to a "peace program... which is generous in its terms," and he restated the desire of the two Governments for serious negotiations at Paris, including discussion of the other side's proposals.

On April 6, 1970, President Thieu reiterated his government's willingness to discuss all issues, including a cease-fire. On October 7, 1970, President Nixon made a new five-point peace proposal, calling for immediate negotiations on a cease-fire to take place throughout Indochina, an Indochina peace conference, negotiation of an agreed timetable for complete troop withdrawals as part of an overall settlement, a political settlement that truly meets the aspirations of all South Vietnamese, and an immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of war held by both sides. The Communist negotiators rejected these proposals.

Demonstrating again the commitment of the United States to negotiate a settlement to the war, President Nixon on January 25, 1972, disclosed that his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry Kissinger, had undertaken 13 trips to Paris since 1969 to negotiate secretly with the North Vietnamese. The President revealed a

comprehensive new eight-point peace plan, the essentials of which had been presented to the North Vietnamese in October 1971. This proposal calls for the total withdrawal of U.S. and other Allied forces from South Viet-Nam within 6 months of an agreement, with the release of prisoners of war (military and civilian) carried out parallel with the troop withdrawals. The proposal suggested determining South Viet-Nam's political future by means of an internationally supervised presidential election within 6 months of an agreement. The election would be organized and run by an independent body representing all political forces in Viet-Nam, including the NLF. These political forces could also participate in the election and present candidates. President Thieu and his Vice President would resign their positions one month before the election, leaving the Chairman of the Senate as caretaker head of the Government, who would assume administrative responsibilities except for those pertaining to the election. Other elements of the proposal include a general cease-fire throughout Indochina under international supervision, acceptance of the principle that all armed forces of the countries of Indochina must remain within their national frontiers, and respect by both sides for the 1954 and 1962 Geneva agreements.

The Communist response to this proposal, and to the unilateral withdrawal by the United States over the past 3 years of almost half a million troops from South Viet-Nam, was the March 30 invasion of South Viet-Nam. This invasion was in clear violation of the 1954 Geneva Accords and also violated understandings between the United States and North Viet-Nam relating to the 1968 bombing halt and the establishment of the current Paris talks.

President Nixon attempted to get negotiations moving again, by dispatching Dr. Kissinger to Paris for yet another secret meeting with North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho in early May. Meanwhile, he authorized intensified use of U.S. air power to interdict supplies, including bombing of some selected military targets in North Viet-Nam.

After the negotiation efforts in both private and plenary meetings met with continued Communist intransigence and an increase in the tempo of their military assaults against South Viet-Nam, President Nixon, on May 8, announced further action to blunt the offensive and aid in South Viet-Nam's defense. The President said he was ordering that all entrances to North Vietnamese ports be mined to prevent access to these ports and North Vietnamese naval operations from these ports. (These mines were activated at 1100 GMT May 11.) U.S. forces were directed to take appropriate measures within the internal and claimed territorial waters of North Viet-Nam to interdict the delivery of supplies. The President said that rail and all other communications would be cut to the maximum extent possible, and that air and naval strikes against military targets in North Viet-Nam would continue.

At the same time, President Nixon said these actions would cease when (1) all American prisoners of war are returned and (2) there is an internationally supervised cease-fire throughout Indochina. Once prisoners of war are returned and the cease-fire has begun, the President said, the United States will stop all acts of force throughout Indochina, and will proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Viet-Nam within 4 months.

The Communists denounced this proposal and continued the military offensive against South Viet-Nam. Nonetheless, the United States remains committed to seeking a negotiated solution. The United States is prepared to resume the plenary sessions in Paris when the other side indicates it is seriously interested in the negotiation of matters of substance, or when there is reason to believe discussions would be useful. Throughout the more than 3 years of meetings, however, Hanoi has used the talks purely as a propaganda forum in the pursuit of its goal of imposing its political will over South Viet-Nam through the use of force.

Vietnamization

The United States has made clear that, much as it would prefer a negotiated settlement, it will not permit Communist intransigence at Paris to stand in the way of an orderly reduction of U.S. military involvement in Viet-Nam. President Nixon announced during 1969 that the numbers of U.S. combat forces in South Viet-Nam would be progressively reduced on the basis of one or more of three criteria: the ability of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces to assume a greater share of the military burden; the level of enemy military activity in South Viet-Nam; and progress at Paris toward a negotiated settlement.

Although thus far there has been no progress at Paris and enemy military activity in South Viet-Nam has persisted, the increases in size and effectiveness of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces have permitted President Nixon to carry out a substantial troop withdrawal program. Since the initiation of this program in 1969, the U.S. troop ceiling in Viet-Nam has been reduced in gradual stages by a total of 500,000 troops. By July 1, 1972, the troop ceiling will be 49,000. The withdrawal program has been carried out in the following increments:

Announcement of Withdrawal	Number of Troops Withdrawn	Withdrawal to be Completed
June 8, 1969	25,000	August 31, 1969
September 16, 1969	40,000	December 1, 1969
December 15, 1969	50,000	April 15, 1970
April 20, 1970	150,000	April 30, 1971
April 7, 1971	100,000	December 1, 1971
November 15, 1971	45,000	February 1, 1972
January 13, 1972	70,000	May 1, 1972
April 26, 1972	20,000	July 1, 1972
TOTAL	500,000	

Concurrent with U.S. withdrawals, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Viet-Nam (RVNAF) have assumed the major role in the defense of their country. RVNAF now bears complete responsibility for ground combat. As part of the process of "Vietnamization" Vietnamese forces have been furnished with modern weapons and equipment and have been trained in their use. The South Vietnamese Armed Forces, with some assistance from approximately 40,000 Korean troops, are currently bearing the full burden of ground combat against the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong. There are no U.S. ground combat troops engaged. Since the March 30 invasion, however, the United States has increased air and sea support to aid the South Vietnamese as they fight for the basic goal for which they have so long struggled: the right to determine their own future without interference from any outside source.

GOVERNMENT

The Constitution of April, 1967, provides for a modified presidential system. It also contains extensive civil rights and welfare provisions and provides for election of local as well as national officials.

The President (Chief of State) and Vice President are elected on the same ticket to 4-year terms. The President designates a Prime Minister and Cabinet to manage governmental business.

A bicameral National Assembly exercises legislative powers. The 60 Senators of the Upper House are elected to 6-year terms, with half elected every 3 years. Of the 159 Lower House seats, six are reserved for ethnic Cambodians, six for Montagnards native to South Viet-Nam, two for refugee Montagnards from North Viet-Nam, and two for Chams. Deputies are elected to 4-year terms approximately concurrent with the President and Vice President.

The President has no veto power over legislation, but may propose amendments to specific articles of legislation on a one-time basis. The National Assembly can override presidential amendments by an absolute majority of the total membership of both houses. In addition to its legislative authority, the National Assembly can cause the removal of any or all Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, by a two-thirds majority (three-fourths if the President disagrees).

The judiciary is headed by a Supreme Court of from nine to 15 members. The first nine Justices were elected by the National Assembly for 6-year terms in 1968 from among candidates elected by associations of judges, prosecutors, and attorneys and were then formally appointed by the President. The establishment of an independent judiciary is continuing with the creation of additional courts at lower levels.

For local levels of government the Constitution recognized and perpetuated the existing system of 44 Provinces (subdivided administratively into a total of 240 districts) and villages (subdivided administratively into hamlets). The Provinces, as well as South Viet-Nam's 11 autonomous cities, have had elected advisory councils since 1965. There are no elected deliberative bodies or officials at the district level. Provinces and districts correspond to military sectors and subsectors, respectively, and in most cases are currently administered by military officers.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

South Viet-Nam has been a Republic since 1955, when the people chose the republican form of government in a national referendum. From 1956 to 1963 the country was governed under a constitution which provided for a strong executive, a unicameral legislature, and a judicial system with safeguards for the individual.

The Diem government came under severe pressure from opposition elements following religious unrest which broke out in central Viet-Nam in May 1963. On November 1, 1963, the Government was overthrown by a military uprising, in the course of which President Diem and his brother were killed. The new provisional government was headed by Maj. Gen. Duong Van Minh as Chief of State and Nguyen Ngoc Tho as Prime Minister. They replaced the constitution with "Provisional Charter No. 1," which provided that South Viet-Nam remain a Republic and that legislative and executive powers be centralized in the Military Revolutionary Council, pending adoption of a new constitution. No constitution was written at this time, however, or during the period of governmental instability that followed.

On January 30, 1964, this Government was replaced by one led by Maj. Gen. Nguyen Khanh. The next major quasi-constitutional document was a new Provisional Charter, issued on October 20, 1964, by a military triumvirate (Generals Khanh, Duong Van Minh, and Tran Thien Khiem). It was under this charter that a civilian, Phan Khac Suu, served as Chief of State in 1964-65, and two other elder statesmen, Tran Van Huong and Dr. Phan Huy Quat, served in succession as Prime Minister. The civilian Government dissolved itself on June 11, 1965, when an impasse developed over a constitutional dispute as to the meaning of the Provisional Charter. The civilians asked the armed forces to assume power so that the constitutional problem could be resolved and there would be no delay in the prosecution of the war. On June 19 announcement was made of the formation of the Congress of the Armed Forces composed of the general officers of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. On that day the congress issued a convention which abolished the Provisional Charter of October 20, 1964, and other laws contrary to it.

Subordinate to the Congress of the Armed Forces was the National Leadership Committee,

or Directorate—composed of 10 generals, with 10 civilians subsequently added—which was entrusted with the exercise of power and the direction of the affairs of the Government. The Chairman of the Directorate, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, was in effect the Chief of State, while the Commissioner for the Executive, Nguyen Cao Ky, acted as Prime Minister.

On April 14, 1966, the South Vietnamese Government announced that constituent assembly elections would be held in the summer or fall. Despite the Communists' all-out boycott of the elections and threats and violence against the voters, about 80 percent of those who had registered went to the polls. On September 27 the Constituent Assembly convened and began drafting a constitution. This Constitution, finally approved on March 18, 1967, took effect on April 1, 1967.

Under the terms of the Constitution, some 4.8 million South Vietnamese—nearly 60 percent of the entire voting-age population and 83 percent of the registered electorate—cast ballots on September 3, 1967, to elect a President, Vice President, and Upper House of the National Assembly. The Lower House was elected on October 22, 1967, by a large vote that almost equaled the number of ballots cast in the September elections.

On October 31, 1967, successful candidates Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky were inaugurated as President and Vice President. The Upper House and Lower House convened in October and November of that year.

Viet-Nam has experienced 5 years of government under the April 1967 Constitution. An entire cycle of national-level elections called for in the Constitution have been held. In August 1970 one-half of the 60-member Upper House was elected. An opposition slate composed primarily of laymen affiliated with the An Quang Buddhists, who had boycotted the 1967 elections, took first place in that election, thus bringing into the constitutional system a significant political element which until then had declined to participate. The other two winning slates represented progovernment and independent tendencies. Thirty of the Senators elected in 1967, chosen by lot, will remain in office until the next Upper House election, scheduled for 1973.

On August 29, 1971, a new Lower House was elected to replace the body elected originally in 1967. 159 seats, apportioned among the constituencies on the basis of one for every 50,000 voters, were at stake. Approximately 53 percent of the present Deputies might be considered progovernment, 37 percent oppositionist, and 10 percent independent. The largest grouping of opposition Deputies are An Quang Buddhist adherents or supporters (approximately 25) and members of the Progressive Nationalist Movement (approximately 19), a moderate opposition party with a strong following in intellectual and civil servant circles. The Worker-Farmer Party, a generally progovernment grouping, won approximately 14 seats. Estimates of the political tendencies in the Lower House must be regarded as tentative, inasmuch

as Viet-Nam does not have a two-party system and political parties played a relatively small role in the election.

A presidential election was conducted on October 3, 1971. President Nguyen Van Thieu was reelected for a second 4-year term. Prime Minister Tran Van Huong (southern civilian and twice Prime Minister) became Vice President. Thieu and Huong ran unopposed following the withdrawal from candidacy of retired Gen. Duong Van Minh and former Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, who charged that the election would not be fairly conducted. Thieu's decision to proceed with the uncontested election aroused controversy. His opponents demanded postponement and reorganization of the election, although some Vietnamese political observers agreed that postponement would only prolong the political uncertainty to the benefit of the Communists. Voters were given the right to indicate disapproval of President Thieu's performance of his presidential duties. Opposition efforts to disrupt the election were unsuccessful. The election was conducted without major incident, and the political situation rapidly calmed. The next elections for President and Vice President are scheduled for fall 1975.

The Constitution provides for the election of Province chiefs beginning during the second presidential term, which commenced October 31, 1971. As yet no Province chief elections have been scheduled.

A program of elections for village and hamlet officials has been underway since early 1967; as of January 1972, about 2,000 of Viet-Nam's 2,200 villages had elected their own village councils, and the councils had elected village chiefs from among their members. Similarly, about 10,000 of Viet-Nam's 11,000 hamlets had elected their own hamlet chiefs. At the same time, the powers of village councils and village and hamlet officials have been substantially increased, with the result that a tradition of responsible local government dating to ancient imperial days has been largely restored.

The Republic of Viet-Nam faces all the problems of a developing country and many special ones resulting from Communist aggression. Among the latter, for example, are those involving the relief and resettlement of refugees who have fled Communist control in remote South Vietnamese rural areas or who have been displaced by military action and pacification. The term "Rural Development" is given to a complex of measures designed to eliminate Communist control, establish government presence, provide security, return or resettle refugees, restore economic activities, and reopen schools. Another South Vietnamese Government effort, known as Chieu Hoi (Open Arms), is designed to persuade South Vietnamese members and supporters of the Communist movement to return to the government side, where they are helped to make a new start in life. More than 190,000 persons have rallied to the Government since the Chieu Hoi program began in 1963.

Another government program which has been making good progress is the sweeping land-reform program initiated in 1970. Under the March 26, 1970, "Land to the Tiller" law, passed by the National Assembly, the Government is distributing, free of charge to the tenants who have been working the land, virtually all privately-owned riceland that is not cultivated by the owner. The Government is compensating the former landowners. As of March 31, 1972, approximately 360,000 titles covering approximately 1 million acres of land had been distributed by the Central Government to former tenant farmers. The program envisages transferring ownership of more than 2.25 million acres of riceland to from 600,000 to 800,000 tenant farmers over a 3-year period.

Political Parties

Overt political party activity is a relatively recent development in South Viet-Nam. Under colonial rule such activity was outlawed and thus was conducted clandestinely. This colonial experience left two distinctive marks on Vietnamese political life: diversity of parties, with many small parties and groups competing for members (as a consequence of the clandestine period when survival depended on limiting the number of party activists to a small group of trusted intimates) and opposition to the Government in power as an accepted, and almost preferred, nationalist political stance. Under colonialism the most acceptable position for a nationalist politician was one of staunch opposition to the colonial government, although there were also many nationalist politicians who fought on the side of the French against the Viet Minh, whom they regarded as the greater evil.

Since the promulgation of the 1967 Constitution, overt political activity has blossomed under the Second Republic, the present government, and, if the number of overt political parties, groups, fronts, blocs, and organizations is any indication, is thriving. The conspiratorial tradition and the tendency to organize in cliques with personalities rather than programs have, on the other hand, hampered cooperation among these elements.

The Constitution states that political parties may be organized and may operate freely and it recognizes the formalizing of political opposition. In recognition of the diversity of political groups in South Viet-Nam, however, the Constitution also includes a call for "progress toward a two-party system." The Political Parties and Opposition Law, passed by the National Assembly and promulgated by President Thieu on June 19, 1969, was intended to encourage such progress. The law specifies procedures under which a political group must qualify as a legal political organization and requires political groups to enlist a minimum number of members within a given time period in order to operate legally. By reducing the number

of parties it is intended to hasten their coalescence into larger groups. The law defines the right of political opposition and provides for the selection of a leader of the opposition to be paid by and to function as an "advisor" to the government. Communist parties may not operate legally, as Article 4 of the Constitution prohibits "every activity designed to publicize or carry out communism." Approximately 29 parties have registered under the law; so far the law does not seem to be fostering coalescence.

ECONOMY

The primary economic goal of the Viet Cong has been disruption of industrial and agricultural development by attacks on transport, key people, and productive facilities in order to promote political instability. Until the 1968 Tet offensive the cumulative degradation of the South Vietnamese economy was barely matched by reconstruction and new inputs by the Government and foreign economic assistance. Since the recovery from the effects of the Tet offensive, economic development has taken place at a rate which is continuously increasing while the destructive influence of the Viet Cong is waning. While data on gross national product (GNP) are not very reliable, current estimates place 1971 GNP at approximately U.S. \$3.1 billion, with per capita income at approximately \$175.

Agriculture, Natural Resources & Industry

The South Vietnamese economy is primarily agricultural. The fertile areas of the Mekong Delta and contiguous areas are capable of producing a food supply sufficient for internal needs as well as a surplus for export. The urban population, which increased in recent years, engages in trade, government services, and light manufacturing. The greatest potential for economic development is in agriculture, especially in the Mekong Delta and contiguous areas. Development planning is based on a strategy of comprehensive rural reconstruction, increases in agricultural productivity, and better marketing facilities.

Viet-Nam's main foreign exchange earners traditionally were rubber and rice. Floods and Communist activities disrupted production and marketing throughout the 1960's. Production of rubber declined from 78 million metric tons in 1960 to 28 million metric tons in 1970. Output is increasing with the improved security conditions and new exchange rates, but war damage and lack of planting to replace old trees have left the industry in an unfavorable position to compete with the newer plantations in Malaysia and other rubber-producing countries.

Production of rice declined to such an extent during the years of intense fighting that South Viet-Nam, historically a rice exporter, was a net importer from 1964 through 1971. The decline was largely due to a reduction in the amount of

land in rice production. The 1971-72 crop is expected to be sufficient to obviate the need for imports. The improved production is attributable to the use of improved strains of rice, which became popular in 1969 and 1970, as well as to the return of acreage to cultivation. Given reasonable security, steady increases can be expected.

Fruit and vegetable production increased steadily during the 1960's as farmers attempted to focus on quick cash crops. Sugar cane production, however, dropped from 1 million metric tons in 1960 to approximately 300,000 metric tons in 1970. Programs aimed at improving production of animal proteins have been remarkably successful. The main sources are poultry and pork, and the programs have concentrated on improving strains and disease control. The number of hatcheries, eggs sold, and broilers brought to market increased sharply in 1970 and 1971.

Commercial fishing has long produced the traditional protein supplement in the Vietnamese diet, nuoc mam, a concentrated fish sauce. However, the industry has suffered from lack of equipment, poor processing facilities, and inadequate transportation facilities. Surveys of offshore fish resources indicate that the continuing large-scale investment in the industry is likely to continue the upward trend in the catch. The 1970 catch exceeded 500,000 metric tons. Processed fish products and crustaceans are expected to be a useful source of foreign exchange in coming years. There are no known important mineral resources in South Viet-Nam.

South Viet-Nam receives most of its imports from Japan and the United States. Exports go mainly to Austria and Japan. The largest dollar value export is rubber, followed by silica sand and duck feathers.

Before Viet-Nam was divided, almost all of its industry was in the North. Industrial development in the South has been hampered by the lack of mineral resources and the war but has made steady progress. Large textile industries in the Saigon area have recovered from the damage done by the Viet Cong in the 1968 offensive. Industrial investment has grown steadily and in 1970 capital growth amounted to about \$24.4 million. Recent investment has involved reconstruction or new facilities for production of detergents, bricks, food processing, galvanizing, flour milling, pharmaceuticals, fish processing, rice production, steel rolling, and steel sheet. Forestry has long been recognized as having potential for increased output and exports but progress depends largely on improved security conditions. Timber sales in 1970 amounted to approximately \$3 million and the number of saw mills increased by an average of eight a month; the year ended with a total of about 500.

Inflation

The fundamental disequilibrium in Viet-Nam's economy is caused by security conditions which require that the armed forces be maintained at

a force level which the economy of the country cannot support. This has resulted in continued budget deficits and constant inflationary pressure. The rate of inflation from July 1969 to July 1970 was 50 percent. In 1971 the rate was reduced to 13-14 percent.

Forward Planning and Trade

The programs used to curb inflation have depended on maintaining a high level of imports to absorb excess plasters generated by the budget deficits. Merchandise exports amounted to about \$12 million in 1971 while imports were expected to reach approximately \$700 million. Various U.S. assistance programs have filled the large balance-of-payments gaps in the past. Continued high levels of foreign assistance will be required for some time.

Economic reforms promulgated in November 1971 indicate that the Government plans to emphasize programs and institutions which will lessen dependence on foreign assistance and promote development. The reforms are indicative of a change in economic philosophy. Economic control by administrative bureaucracy has been abandoned in a move toward reliance on the adjustment process implicit in the market mechanism. The overall reforms are a follow-up to the monetary reforms initiated in October 1970, which were successful in containing price instability.

International Assistance

Total U.S. economic assistance to South Viet-Nam from 1954 to 1971 amounted to more than \$3.5 billion. Economic assistance, technical support, and Public Law 480 (Food for Peace) programs amounted to about \$470 million in 1971. Twenty-one other countries and institutions contributed assistance in 1970, and the number and size of aid projects are growing. These projects touch on all walks of Vietnamese life and range from public works programs to improve the water in the city of Da Nang (aided by Australia) to a recently approved irrigation project financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The foreign policy of the Republic of Viet-Nam is concerned chiefly with supporting the national effort to frustrate Hanoi's attempt to impose its rule over South Viet-Nam and is directed toward winning the support and recognition of other nations in its struggle to defend itself. In recent years its foreign relations have been preoccupied with obtaining military and economic assistance from non-Communist countries. Viet-Nam has received extensive aid of both types from the United States, and the continuation of good bilateral relations and aid remains paramount in the conduct of its diplomacy. Other non-Communist countries which have rendered significant aid,

including the sending of troops, are the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Historically, relations with the other Indochinese countries have been most important. North Viet-Nam's use of routes through Laotian and Cambodian territory to attack South Viet-Nam has made developments in these countries a matter of keen interest to the Government. Since the establishment of the Khmer Republic in 1970 Viet-Nam has become heavily involved in helping its neighbor defend its independence, despite traditional animosities between the two peoples.

Viet-Nam's relations with France have been cooling since independence. The French proposal for the neutralization of Southeast Asia and the French pursuit of friendlier relations with the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China, the principal supporters of North Viet-Nam, were coldly received in South Viet-Nam. Former French predominance in economic and commercial spheres has diminished simultaneously. French influence remains highest in the fields of culture and education.

Eighty-two countries recognize de jure the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam, and nine recognize it de facto. South Viet-Nam does maintain relations with nations that recognize North Viet-Nam, but naturally not with those that recognize the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), which is the South Vietnamese Communist Hanoi-created rival to the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam headed by President Nguyen Van Thieu. (The formation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government was announced by the National Liberation Front's Liberation Radio in June 1969. The PRG has been recognized by Communist nations as the "government" of South Viet-Nam.)

South Viet-Nam maintains diplomatic or consular representation in all non-Communist countries of East Asia except Indonesia, where it has a special trade mission. Its ambassadors are resident in or accredited to a majority of the countries in Western Europe and North America, and some of the countries of South America and Africa.

Although South Viet-Nam is not a member of the United Nations, it keeps an observer there and is a member of about 30 other international governmental organizations (e.g., the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development—IBRD, International Development Association—IDA, International Monetary Fund—IMF, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—UNESCO, the World Health Organization—WHO) and 17 regional organizations (e.g., the Asian Parliamentary Union—APU, the Asian and Pacific Council—ASPAC, the Asian Development Bank—ADB, the Colombo Plan, and the Mekong Coordinating Committee).

PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

President—Nguyen Van Thieu
Vice President—Tran Van Huong
Prime Minister—Tran Thien Khiem
Deputy Prime Minister—Dr. Nguyen Luu Vien
Ministers of State—Mai Tho Truyen, Dr. Phan Quang Dan
Minister of Foreign Affairs—Tran Van Lam
Ambassador to the U.S.—Tran Kim Phuong

The Republic of Viet-Nam maintains an Embassy in the United States at 2251 R Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008. There are also Consulates General at San Francisco and New York.

PRINCIPAL U. S. OFFICIALS

Ambassador—Ellsworth Bunker
Deputy Ambassador—Charles S. Whitehouse
Commander, U.S. Military Assistance Command/Viet-Nam (MACV)—Gen. Creighton W. Abrams
Deputy Commander, MACV, for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support—Gen. Fred C. Weyand
Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs—Josiah W. Bennett
Minister-Counselor for Economic Affairs—Charles A. Cooper
Counselor for Administrative Affairs—Ernest J. Colantino
Consul General—Malcolm P. Hallam
Director, U.S. AID Mission—John R. Mossler
Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs—Robert A. Lincoln

The U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Viet-Nam is located at 4 Thong Nhut Blvd., Saigon.

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