

mapping:

locating a war

BECAUSE AUSTRALIA IS CLOSE to Asia we have always been sensitive to political conflict in the area. By studying maps of Asia and the Pacific it is easy to see why Australian politicians have taken such a keen interest in wars involving our northern neighbours. Many believed that if a war broke out in Asia it was wise to send Australian troops so that the war would remain 'over there' away from Australia. Australian defence planners in the early 1960s called this 'forward defence'. Some suggested that if one country fell to a communist enemy, communism would spread to its neighbours causing them to fall and so on producing a 'domino' effect. When you examine maps of Asia and list the wars occurring in the region during the 1950s and 1960s can you see how people in Australia and the US might have believed in the 'domino theory'?

PRIMARY LEVEL

- On the map of south-east Asia find Vietnam and Australia.
- Mark Australia and Vietnam with crosses. Using the scale, estimate how far apart your crosses are.
- How many countries lie between Vietnam and Australia?

SECONDARY LEVEL

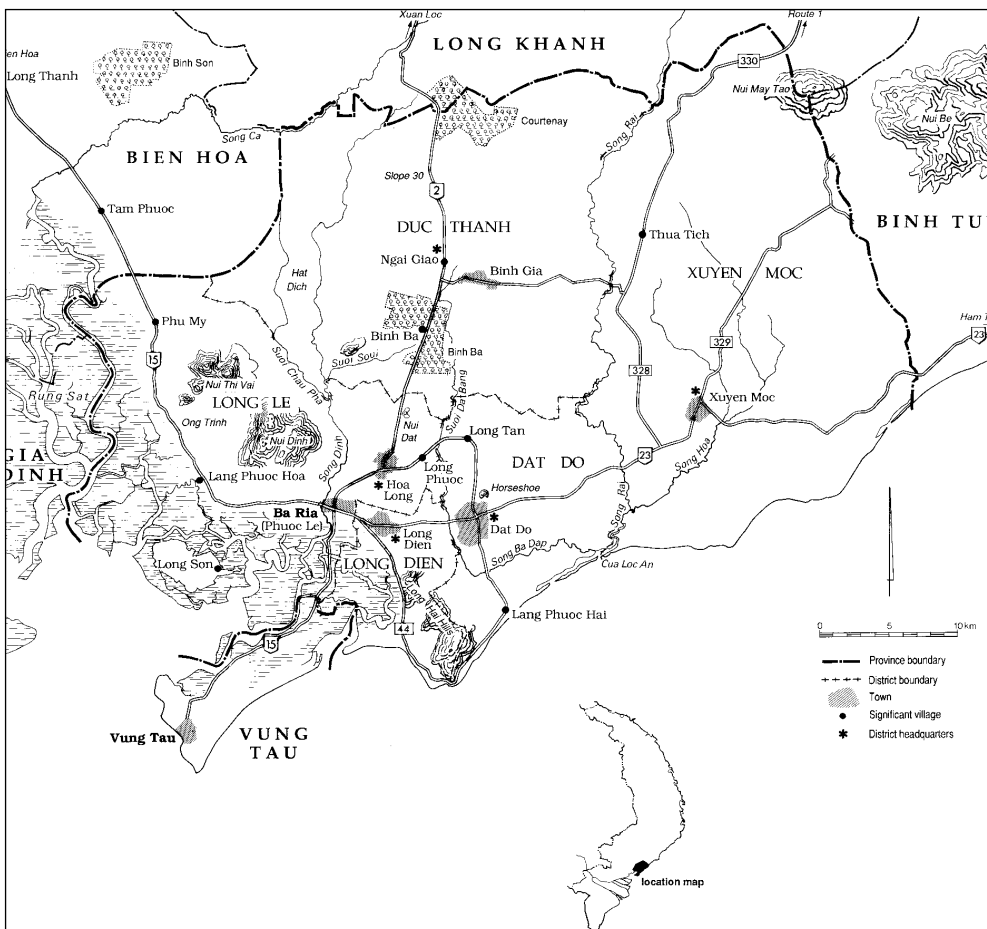
- On the map of south-east Asia find Vietnam and Cambodia. How many countries in south-east Asia once belonged to France's empire?
- How many countries lie between the People's Republic of China and Australia? Imagine you are an Australian politician of the 1960s. Write a speech to your electorate which explains the 'domino theory'.

EXTENSION QUESTIONS

- How did the communists respond to the chance to take power when the colonial administrators pulled out of south-east Asia?
- What role did the US and Australia play in south-east Asia when the imperial powers had pulled out?
- Research the changing politics of Cambodia to find out what happened when the colonial administrators left and the country was granted independence. What is happening in Cambodia today?

Reference:

Edwards, Peter, with Pemberton, Gregory, *Crises and commitments: The politics and diplomacy of Australia's involvement in South-east Asian conflicts 1948-1965*, Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1992



Phuoc Tuy province