

~~SECRET~~

TO: General Lansdale  
FROM: Rufus C. Phillips  
SUBJECT: Conversation with Col. Hoang Van Lac on 29 August  
Concerning Anti-boycott Decree

1. Col. Lac stated he had received orders from General Thang to prepare a decree against election boycott activities and had prepared such a decree. He said he had advised Thang against putting out such a decree, pointing out that there were already laws on the books covering illegal activities such as forcibly preventing citizens from voting, etc. He said he told Thang that this special decree was likely to be misinterpreted as GVN tampering with the elections, but that Thang had ordered him to prepare it.

2. Col. Lac showed me a copy of the draft decree and translated its provisions for me which are roughly as follows.

a. Anyone attempting to influence by propaganda or to otherwise motivate people not to vote is subject to arrest and imprisonment from one to five years.

b. If such activity is part of an organized campaign, the sentence can be increased up to ten years.

c. Anyone intimidating citizens not to vote, forcibly preventing them from voting, or undertaking actions at the polls to void or otherwise invalidate ballots is subject to arrest and imprisonment from five to 20 years.

There is a preamble to the decree stating that the decree is being put out in order to ensure free elections.

3. I asked Col. Lac when a final decision might be taken on whether or not to promulgate the decree. He said he would know tomorrow (30 August) and asked me to contact him before noon.

4. Col. Lac asked specifically that he be protected as the source of this sensitive information. He feels deeply that this decree is a wrong and unnecessary action.

ELD:RCP:rm  
August 29, 1968