

2 To Dr. Frischel
Bring this to Mr.
Mr. Diem
attention of Mr.
Kelly K

Thru Mr. Cameron

MEMORANDUM

To: ~~Mr. Tiddens~~ Mr. Stuen

TO: ~~Miss Anita Lawe, Political Attaché, U.S. Embassy~~

FROM: Lt. R. C. Phillips, MAAG + A. C. Lawe

SUBJECT: Conversation with Mr. Nguyen Van Hanh of the Ministry of Social Action on 1 December 1954, Saigon.

1. Mr. Hanh, who is currently in charge of the section of the Ministry of Social Action which is concerned with the operation of the social action committees, told me this morning that he was being threatened with removal from the Ministry if he did not become a Cao Dai. He also said that a Mr. Nguyen Phuc Sa, with whom STEM has been working, had already been told by the Minister of Social Action, Mr. Bao, that he was to be replaced by a Cao Dai. Mr. Hanh was told by Mr. Bao, the Minister, that he could not hope to have any position of responsibility if he did not become a Cao Dai convert. Mr. Bao told Hanh that he could possibly stay on in the Ministry as a secretary if he would not accept conversion.

2. Both Mr. Hanh and Mr. Sa held prominent positions in the Ministry of Social Action under the former Minister, Mr. Huyen, and have been in the Ministry for a long time. Evidently and unfortunately the present Minister seems bent on removing the only people in the Ministry who have had any experience in Social Action and who would be capable of carrying out any sort of a program of social action and community development in Vietnam.

3. Hanh has worked closely with Embassy + Lansdale for months on this idea of social action committees. Lansdale recently took him - with VN paper military - on observation trip to Manila. Hanh ~~has told me~~ the same story he told Phillips about 10 days ago + I suggested Phillips try to help him.