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Laos - 1959

19 - 20 Nov.

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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REMARKS AT VIENTIANE AIRPORT, 19 NOVEMBER 1959

The following is a transcription by the Lao Broadcasting Company of remarks made by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold at Vientiane Airport, just before his departure on 19 November 1959.

(Original French)

QUESTION: Monsieur le Secrétaire général, au moment où vous quittez Vientiane pour rejoindre New-York, je voudrais si possible que vous nous fassiez un bref exposé de ce que vous avez pu voir ici et nous dire si possible quelles sont vos intentions futures.

REPOSE FAITE PAR LE SECRETAIRE GENERAL: C'est un peu difficile pour moi de résumer en quelques mots toutes mes impressions. Je dois dire tout d'abord que grâce à la manière dont on a arrangé ma visite, le voyage s'est avéré, comme je l'espérais, extrêmement utile. J'ai beaucoup appris et j'ai maintenant une compréhension approfondie du problème et des questions à résoudre, pour le Gouvernement lao, pour le peuple lao, pour les Nations Unies. Vous avez vu quelle a été l'action prise; une action qui est pratique et entièrement dans l'esprit de la Charte qui veut que l'Organisation apporte toute l'assistance possible aux petits membres pour faciliter leur progrès économique et social. En dehors de ça, je ne voudrais pas, vous le comprenez bien, faire des commentaires à cet instant. Ce n'est pas au public qu'appartiennent les observations que je pourrais faire, mais je désire répéter que pour moi cela a été de nouveau une grande expérience de venir ici et je tiens à remercier tout le peuple lao représenté par son Gouvernement pour l'accueil qu'on a bien voulu m'accorder.

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(Unofficial English translation)

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary General, at the moment that you are leaving Vientiane to return to New York, I would like you, if possible, to sum up briefly what you have been able to see here and to tell us, if possible, what are your future intentions.

REPLY BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is a little difficult for me to summarize in a few words all my impressions. I must say, first of all, that thanks to the manner in which my visit was arranged, the journey has proved, as I hoped it would, extremely useful. I have learned much and I have now a deeper understanding of the problem and of the questions to be resolved, for the Laotian

(more)

Government, for the Laotian people and for the United Nations.

You have seen what has been the action taken, an action which is practical and entirely within the spirit of the Charter, which calls upon the Organization to afford every possible assistance to its smaller Members to facilitate their economic and social progress. Apart from that, I would not like, as you well understand, to comment at this time. It is not to the public that the observations which I might make belong; but I want to repeat that it has again been for me a great experience to come here and I want to thank all the Laotian people represented by their government for the welcome which has been accorded me.

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UNITED NATIONS

Press Services
Office of Public Information
United Nations, N. Y.

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Press Release SG/874
19 November 1959

SECRETARY-GENERAL DEPARTS FROM LAOS FOR NEW YORK

(The following was received from the Secretary-General's party, Vientiane, Laos.)

United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold departed from Vientiane, Laos, at 1 p.m. today (local time) by special plane for Bangkok. He was accompanied by U Nyun, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, and William Ranallo, personal aide of the Secretary-General.

From Bangkok, the Secretary-General will fly to Tokyo on Friday, where he will remain overnight, and then fly to New York on Saturday, via San Francisco. He is due to arrive in New York at 5:00 p.m. Saturday.

At the airport in Vientiane to see Mr. Hammarskjold off today were the Prime Minister of Laos, Phoui Sananikone, other members of the Government of Laos and all the members of the diplomatic corps.

Earlier, the Secretary-General and Sakari Tuomioja were received by the King of Laos, H.M. Seta Katya Savang Vatthana.

Mr. Tuomioja, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, arrived in Laos on 12 November at the request of the Secretary-General to review the economic situation of the country, particularly the role of UN economic and technical assistance for the furtherance of its economic growth and stability, and to follow up the discussions initiated by the Secretary-General.

The flight schedule of the Secretary-General for his return to New York is as follows:

Friday, 20 November	Lv. Bangkok KLM flight 863 at 0655 hours
Friday, 20 November	Arr. Tokyo at 2155 hours
Saturday, 21 November	Lv. Tokyo PAA jetflight 838 at 1300 hours
Saturday, 21 November	Arr. San Francisco, 0700 hours
Saturday, 21 November	Lv. San Francisco, TWA jetflight 42 at 0900 hours
Saturday, 21 November	Arr. New York at 1700 hours

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U N I T E D N A T I O N S

Press Services
Office of Public Information
United Nations, N.Y.

(For use of information media -- not an official record)

Press Release SG/875
EC/1969
19 November 1959

SECRETARY-GENERAL OFFICIALLY OPENS OFFICES IN BANGKOK FOR
COORDINATION COMMITTEE ON MEKONG PROJECT

(The following has been received from an Information Officer with ECAFE, Bangkok.)

At a ceremony in Bangkok today, Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold officially opened the offices of the Executive Agent of the Committee for Coordination of Investigations of the Lower Mekong River Basin.

Mr. Hammarskjold, who arrived in Bangkok today after discussions in Vientiane with representatives of the Government of Laos, cut the traditional ribbon leading to the Mekong offices which are situated on the top floor of Sala Santitham, headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East.

The coordination committee was set up in 1957 by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam to supervise a five-year program of data-collection and planning as the first step in a multi-purpose program for development of irrigation facilities, flood control, hydroelectric power and navigation for the Lower Mekong River Basin -- an area with a population of 17,000,000. The project is being aided by a number of governments, as well as by the United Nations.

During the ceremony, the offices were presented to the Committee by the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, who stated that rivers traditionally had been "a source of life" and were now becoming, as in the case of the Mekong, an example of international cooperation.

Secretary-General's Comments

In his statement at today's ceremony, Secretary-General Hammarskjold expressed gratitude to the Government of Thailand on behalf of the United Nations, and said that the present generous gesture was additional proof of Thailand's cooperation with the Organization. The Lower Mekong River Basin project, he said, had become a symbol and unifying force. It was, he felt, a magnificent effort for economic development which, he hoped, would be an example to other regions.

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Mr. Hammarskjold said that United Nations participation in the project was another example of the Organization's work in trying to accomplish what some had said could not be done. "The United Nations," he added, "has a history of doing things that just cannot be done."

The UN Charter, he continued, set down many targets; one of them was to raise the standards of living of people everywhere. It was attempting to mobilize outside help for those countries which "through the chance of history have been left behind" in the general stream of development.

The Secretary-General said he was convinced that United Nations efforts for the promotion of economic and social development were real proof of the effectiveness of the United Nations. "The real problem of our time," he said, "is basically that represented by world poverty. The great problem for the United Nations is the problem of the so-called underdeveloped countries."

He added that, in his view, there was no other effort of the Organization more likely to succeed, and that it was a basic aspect of the general effort for building the peace.

Mr. Hammarskjold declared that he was happy to be present at this unique occasion when the Thai Government was presenting the premises of the Mekong Coordination Committee. He then cut the traditional ribbon leading to the offices of the Committee.

Earlier, in presenting the premises to Dr. C. Hart Schaaf, the Executive Agent of the Coordination Committee, the Foreign Minister of Thailand said his government was pleased that Bangkok was serving as headquarters of the Committee.

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