

Trips: Trips - 41

HS L 179:68



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Sec. Gen.'s trip to India 1956

Jan. 13

Martin Hill (Acting Under-Sec. for Economic and Social Affairs)

— to Sec. Gen.

(conc. Mekong River Basin)

COPY

TO: The Secretary-General

13 January 1956

FROM: Martin Hill, Acting Under-Secretary
for Economic and Social Affairs

SUBJECT: Mekong River

CONFIDENTIAL

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I attach for your information an aide-memoire which outlines ECAFE'S proposals for the study of the development possibilities of the Lower-Mekong river basin. Phase I of the study would be a preliminary survey which would take place in 1956 undertaken jointly by TAA and ECAFE. The estimated cost would be in the region of \$67,000. It is expected that these funds would be forthcoming from the TAB Chairman's Contingency Fund. Phase II as presently conceived would be a far reaching programme of considerable dimension.

In Bangalore you will be consulted by de Seynes, Owen, Lokanathan and Goldschmidt as to which decisions should be taken.

The major complicating factor is the similar but more modest activity by ICA in the area. The preliminary ICA reconnaissance will be completed in March and Lokanathan has agreed with them on the spot that we will not proceed until they have completed their work.

A further complication is the opposition of the United States to ECAFE undertaking "operational responsibilities"

22 November 1955

CONFIDENTIAL

AIDE MEMOIRE

Reconnaissance Study of the Lower Mekong River Basin

1. As early as in 1950 the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East requested the Bureau of Flood Control and Water Resources Development of ECAFE to study as a high priority project the problems of flood control and water resources development in connection with international rivers, such as the Mekong River in Southeast Asia. Pursuant to that request the Bureau initiated studies of the Mekong River. Following some two years of exploratory work a preliminary report on the technical problems involved was issued in 1952 but further work, while programmed, had to be deferred on account of political conditions in the area. At the last meeting of the Commission in Tokyo in early 1955, the subject was again raised by several delegations.
2. The study contemplated is the interest of furthering the sound development of the rich potentialities of the Lower Mekong River Basin. It is intended that the inquiry will provide an important element essential to the planning of the economic development of the riparian States. The Mekong River is one of the great rivers of the world and has perhaps the greatest hydro-electric capabilities of any stream in Southeast Asia. This inquiry may also serve as a significant example in the formulation of plans for utilizing an international river.
3. The study is to proceed in two phases. Phase I will consist of a reconnaissance of the Lower Mekong River Basin, affecting Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and South Viet Nam, to take a year, beginning around 1 January 1956. The reconnaissance team, drawn from the specialists available in the ECAFE Secretariat and in TAA, will probably be in the field for some six months beginning early in 1956, and will prepare the reconnaissance report during the latter half of the year.
4. The purpose of the reconnaissance, Phase I, is threefold:
 - (a) to prepare a skeleton plan for water resources control and development including primarily flood control, irrigation, drainage, hydro-electric power and navigation;
 - (b) to recommend required installations of hydrologic stations and facilities, and
 - (c) to outline needed surveys involving topographic, geological, soils and other aspects, which will be essential to the detailed studies of the kind to be included in Phase II.
5. In the reconnaissance emphasis will be laid on the control and utilization of the main river and to some extent its major tributaries and on effects of any projects on the regime of the river as a whole.
6. When the reconnaissance report is completed the four governments involved will be invited to examine it, with a view to the formulation of a basis for carrying out the detailed survey of Phase II.

7. Following the successful completion of Phase I and the existence of conditions propitious for further work, it is envisaged that Phase II would consist of detailed investigations and planning of the Lower Mekong Basin. It would look toward a comprehensive scheme for utilization of the river resources in a way to benefit all the countries involved. Detailed investigations would require a large team of specialists to be provided by the United Nations and other appropriate sources.

8. In the course of 1955 the United States Missions in the four countries of the Lower Mekong Basin have expressed increasing interest in the problems of the Mekong and this has led to an exploratory mission. At the same time the ECAFE Secretariat report that they had conversations with the U.S. officials as well as with the technical experts of the U.S. reconnaissance group, and there was understanding that the exploration by the U.S. group would not prejudice ECAFE's own plans for studying of the Mekong River, and they recognized the ECAFE Secretariat's responsibilities to continue its studies as required by the Commission. In addition, the U.S. group has promised to exchange information with ECAFE.

BANGALORE

ILO Field Office

(In Bangalore the Secretary-General will be given
a list of the ECAFE officials who will be in
Bangkok when he arrives there.)

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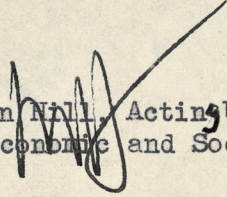
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary-General

Date: 13 January 1956

THROUGH:

FILE NO.: _____

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for Economic and Social Affairs

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Draftsman R. Townley

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