



Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama of Japan in Tokyo (Photo: Reuters)

27 October 2009 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Asia—Europe University Graduation and Diploma Conferment

It is indeed a great pleasure that I have come to the University of Asia-Europe once again to preside over the graduation and diploma presentation for 2,313 students as reported by its Rector - Duong Lieng. I would like to take this opportunity to inform all of you here and our people in the whole country that Cambodia has succeeded in its mission to get elected as a partner in the framework of World Heritage Committee (WHC).

It is a new honor for Cambodia after our country's seemingly disappearance. It has proven also that Cambodian reappearance plays active role not only within its national boundary but also in the region and the world as well. It is indeed the joy for the nation and an honor not separately for the Royal Government but also for the whole people of Cambodia.

Before talking more about this

wonderful news, I would like to give my sincere appreciation to the progress made by the University, which has started its educational activities since when it was recognized as a non-governmental organization and thereafter, developed itself into a University that has the ability to provide educational services for Bachelor's, Master's and Ph. D degrees. The rector has just mentioned that whatever the University achieved is not by chance.

They have arisen from efforts made by the management and professors who have excelled in providing education for our students. I also think that we have fulfilled this work together because as I mentioned many times elsewhere the Royal Government of Cambodia has always developed and supported a policy that provide chances for the private sector to participate in
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08 October 2009 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
30th Anniversary of National Bank of Cambodia

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, in his officiating of the 30th Anniversary of the Re-establishment of the National Bank of Cambodia, made some remarks which are being selected and translated as followed:

As I am now at page 29 of the 65 pages speech, I think it is important for me to clarify for you what I mean by "three solutions with three aspects."

At that time (of searching for a political solution for the Cambodian problem) we have studied the situation (of the State of Cambodia's strength) that the Vietnamese soldiers would be completely withdrawn from Cambodia by 1989.

I have written that clearly in my book of "Ten Years of Cambodia's March." I am so glad that HE Aun Poan Munirath, in his Ph D thesis in the former Soviet Union, has based his analysis using arguments that I have listed in my book.

In fact, I have concluded that there was going to be an entire political solution owing to the fact that taking internal and international aspects of the problem would bring about at least three solutions:

- 1) *a complete settlement of the issue in both internal and international aspects at the same time;*
- 2) *a solution in which the international aspect of the*

issue would be achieved first and then the internal aspects would be there after, and

- 3) *there would not be any political solution, about which at least there would not be any more accusations of Vietnamese troops being present in Cambodia, prompting the Cambodian issue to be resolved itself.*

Why did we come to this conclusion that the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia could be completely withdrawn?

To be exact, already in 1982, we had partially withdrawn the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia. The reason is, if I am not mistaken, the army of the State of Cambodia, formerly the People's Republic of Kampuchea, had grown stronger.

The brigades of 196 and 286 had already been founded, whereas the battalion 179 was about to be formed up. We had three brigades — each with almost 10,000 soldiers whereas its combined transport means was almost the same number of what we have for one brigade at the present. Cambodia had gradually grown up, while Vietnam was reducing its size of voluntary troops.

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human resources development.

One of the core values that concern us was how to sustain those developments. The University has proven to be not only sustainable but also expanded its role as a University with more sophisticated needs and developments in place as is described by the Rector. According to the report, there have been up to now 17,258 graduated students and 13,688 students are pursuing their studies.

What would happen to those graduates if the former Government of the State of Cambodia and the Royal Government of Cambodia were not taking and fulfilling this vision of allowing the private sectors to get involved in providing education services in place of limited educational facilities that are supposed to be provided by the state? It clearly reflects that if it were not for such a vision and policy development and implementation, thousands of students would not have had chances for continuing education.

The policy has not only a positive effect in resolving issue of providing chances for students but also increasing number of human resources for the country. Again if we were to have less educated people our society would be falling into chaotic situation. So I would place an appeal not only to this University but all, both state and private, to continue to pay attention on quality of education.

Back to the fact that Cambodia is elected member of WHC, last night I had to stay awake till 4 am for the election result. I am in Phnom Penh as a commander and HE Deputy

Prime Minister Sok An, as chief of staff, in Paris, have been in constant contact. Once it is confirmed that we are elected I signed a message that the TV stations have broadcast later in the day. It seemed quite a routine for me that many important events in my life have taken place at night.

When I started my military career I was given task as a special commando who job had been to work at night on special intelligence mission to observe and determine tracks and directions. After that we had to work out a mapping. It was so hard during those days because you had to have a piece of paper and pencil in hand and be in hiding position because a reflection from a white sheet of paper could bring intelligence mission to a failure and danger. It is much better now that this job could be done with a GPS.

In those days a directional compass was the only technology that helped us with what we were doing. Take for instance, I had to set my compass that leads our direction at 180 degree, but when we decided to turn either direction, we had to measure its steps, from which a note had to be taken down so and so steps to left or right. We had applied signs to help us with that. A plus sign has been assigned to going left, a minus sign to going right, a multiplication sign going straightforward, etc.

When it comes to working for the political settlement and the Paris Peace Agreement, negotiations have taken us sometimes to 3 am. Then came this saying that with the hungry and sleepy ones, everything would be agreed upon fast and easily. But I had been

firm in what I had to do for the country. The national interest has always been above anything else.

Maybe I should tell something about the background of the Paris Peace Agreement. It was indeed proposed by major countries. The tripartite coalition government (of Democratic Kampuchea) at that time supported the proposition unconditionally and without taking a look at the document.

The former State of Cambodia party responded that we would think about it. What happened later was the tripartite coalition parties had been disappointed. You may look at annexes of the Paris Peace Agreement once again, and you will see what I am talking about.

The tripartite coalition then relied on a point that the Supreme National Council (SNC) is the only source of power in Cambodia. But they neglected what has been bound in annexes. I brought this matter up because in a few days from now we will celebrate the Paris Peace Agreement Day. While anticipating that day it seems that so and so, who have never been a negotiator at all, are fooling our people around.

They demanded appointments four mayors – one from each party. I asked them if they understood what it means “existing administration.” I told them I had offered five ministries of my administration to be placed under UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) control – National Defense, Interior, Justice, Finance and Information. If other parties have also their ministries, please let UNTAC control too.

The argument and response put them in offside position (hors jeu). Another instance, the late HE Son San requested for SNC money printing. I asked him if he had a look at the documents. He said he depended on what has been stated that SNC is the only source of power. Well I have put my negotiation partners in offside positions on many points and occasions.

In my encounter with the UN Representative and the French representative I asked them if dissolution of armed forces would in any way affect other forces such as police. He said no and only the army would be dissolved. The police forces and militia would not be affected. I came quickly to a sense that other negotiation partners would be in deadlock position already.

In the meeting everyone supported the idea. I asked questions in order. Questions repeated. The same response I got. Then I noticed the partners in negotiation were caught by surprise. That was how negotiation had been going in those days and that made me so exhausted.

It is important that we need our human resources in place as we have had increasing role to play in regional and international arena. For instance at Hua Hin, Thailand, we have been working with 15 other nations judging by the framework of ten ASEAN nations (Cambodia is one of them) and six other powerful nations – China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand.

Cambodia sees that it is important to strengthen both capacity and quality of our human resources and partici-

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In 1985 there was a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the three countries – Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and also I maintained my position of Foreign Minister, while I already became the Prime Minister.

The Foreign Minister of Vietnam, HE Nguyen Co Thach and I announced that the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia will phase out completely between 5 to ten years. Vietnam had the need to fix its economy and Cambodia also had to build up its forces. Cambodia had achieved a remarkable force building at the time.

Our troops reached 160,000 plus 40,000 policemen, which made it 200,000. We also had at time another 240,000 strong militia. These figures brought us to a conclusion that we were able to take over the job by then. This should help us secure internal aspect of the Cambodian issue.

There had been peace talk (some times many rounds) between Sihanouk and Hun Sen at Fere-en-Tardenois, Saint-Germain-en-Laye which were followed by JIM I (Jakarta Informal Meeting) and JIM II.

I may disclosed a secret that I had made a covert contact with the former Thai Chief of General Staff – HE Chaovalit Yungchaiyuth in Vientiane, at the facilitation and organization provided by HE Sisovath Keo Bunphan, former Prime Minister of Laos.

The person initiated such a meeting was HE Kaisan Phumviham.

The meeting was so important that it opened the way for my visit to Thailand at the invitation of the late Prime Minister Char-

tichai Chunhavan – which many reporters said it was a shaking visit to Bangkok.

About 400 men were to provide me with security and there were many reporters and it was reported in the Thai media that “*the famous has come.*” I have by then enhanced a neutralization of the Thai armed forces and Government, since when I had a meeting with HE Chaovalit Yongchaiyuth in Vientiane.

As well known to everyone, no other forces except Thailand, who provided shelters, could put pressure on the Tripartite Coalition. We have made a good use of the situation.

We had taken a strong position based on our calculation that the Vietnamese troops would be completely withdrawn from Cambodia within five to ten years.

As it was announced in 1985, the timetable of ten years would have brought us to 1995. Now you see here that there is a mixture between internal and internal aspects of the issue, whereas the neutralization to a certain extent of the Thai army’s involvement and Government brought about a condition in which pulling out of the Vietnamese troops was possible and allowing me to declare in Paris whether or not there was going to be a political solution, and the Vietnamese troops would be pulled out of Cambodia by September 30, 1989.

That had brought us to comprehend another fact why I did not stay in Paris while I attended the first Paris conference, which lasted about a month. I told the French representative who posed me a question why I did not stay that “I am the incumbent Prime Minister, I could not forgo my duty for too long.”

In fact I came back in order to get ourselves prepared for the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia. I traveled around Tonle Sap (lake) to check on the armed forces and their preparedness as it would be critical for such a withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops to happen.

A common duty had been clear but there was that need to go into detail as to figure out each and everyone’s duty after the withdrawal.

In addition to my responsibility to oversee the whole situation, I was also given the task to look after military region 4 and 5, which were the frontline regions. Samdech Chea Sim and Samdech Heng Samrin took care of military region 2 and 3 respectively. Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk said on June 2 and 4, 1991, that Khieu Samphan promised that “once the Vietnamese troops are completely withdrawn, Your Excellency’s Government would fall in no time.”

Reviewing his statement at the Paris Conference, Kheiu Samphan said: “once the Vietnamese troops are out completely, the Hun Sen’s Government would be blown away like a sheet of paper.”

It was not a coincidence when my delegation traveled from Bangkok to Jakarta in a plane that was also carrying the delegations of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and of Khieu Samphan. When the plane was somewhere near Singapore, the protocol of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk approached me and told that “HM would like to invite Your Excellency for a meal.” I thanked her.

Once we arrived at Jakarta, the French and Indonesian representatives, who co-hosted the

event, asked a rhetorical question that “Have you heard there seems to be a high level dining tomorrow?”

It was in that high-level dining that Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk told me a truth that he was waiting for the Khmer Rouge’s promise of toppling the Hun Sen’s Government. He went on to say that not that they could topple the Government of Hun Sen but Excellency had fought and taken back almost all their (occupied) land.

It was at that dining event that I offered to the then Neak Mneang Monineath Sihanouk if she wished to return her mother’s remains back to Phnom Penh. Samdech Preah Norodom then said “No, I also will go with Your Excellency.” At that time we had our country name changed already from People’s Republic of Kampuchea to the State of Cambodia, so did our flag and national symbol.

On June 4, there was another round of meeting, which clarified every detail. Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk decided to walk off the tripartite coalition.

Samdech Preah Norodom decided to return and would like to keep Samdech Heng Samrin as the Head of State, Samdech Chea Sim as the President of the National Assembly and I as the Prime Minister, but also to propose an establishment of the National Presidium Committee, in which Samdech would chair the committee, whereas I am the Prime Minister and would be second in it.

The work to fix the Royal Palace was indeed so fast. The whole thing was not a secret anymore once I reached Bangkok.

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Anand Pannharachun, Suchenda Kraprayun, Kasam Kasemsri, etc. flocked to see me and probed me in their words that they heard that Samdech Sihanouk would return to the country.

I said “Yes, he would.” They seemed undecided and said “returning is good but what would happen to the groups of Khmer Rouge and Son San?” I replied “that I would not know.”

We can see that the decision made by Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk was so powerful in propelling the situation. If they (the Khmer Rouge and Son San factions) do not agree with this decision, it would be up to them, as Samdech Preah Norodom already decided to return.

When it was first launched, the Supreme National Council did not have in its list the name of Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk but his representative Chao Sen Kosal. To get out of political saga, there needs to be a change from Samdech Chao Sen Kosal back to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. By the time the State of Cambodia’s value had increased.

Prior to this the State of Cambodia proposed to establish a Council of National Reconciliation, of which Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk had been proposed to be its Head with three Deputy Heads – Hun Sen, Khieu Samphan and Son San. The proposition was dismissed.

In light of eventual withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, the tripartite seemed to have degraded the State of Cambodia’s value (strength) to nil and believed that there is no room for the State of Cambodia to bargain in political settlement.

We had then proposed to the Chairman of the meetings in Pattaya and Beijing, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, to take note of its bargaining chip – either 2+2+2 (two from State of Cambodia, two from the Khmer Rouge, and 2 from Son San faction) or 6+6 formula.

I refused the proposition to choose the thirteenth person as the President of the Supreme National Council.

As to the reason raised by Foreign Minister of Indonesia Ali Alatas of any consequences that could arise if in case Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk denies being in the composition of the Supreme National Council (SNC), we have accepted for that time being the listing of Samdech Chao Sen Kosal with a clause written that if the SNC sees the necessity for a thirteenth person to be its President ...

All happened in a meeting at Beijing before meeting with Anand Pannharachun ...

I sounded out my concern to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk at that time about the Khmer Rouge’s faction denial of a ceasefire and reception of foreign assistance.

Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk then said they must be forced to do it. In the meeting between SNC and the Thai Cabinet, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk told the Thai Cabinet that “we have agreed on a ceasefire.”

As we stepped out of the meeting, reporters threw in questions “whether the ceasefire also includes the Khmer Rouge faction.” Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk delegated the question to Khieu Samphan, who said “we follow.”

It is indeed a strong pressure on all factions to compete or else the State of Cambodia would go sky high. In his capacity as Chairman of the meeting in Pattaya and Beijing, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk allowed me on my call to see him *tete-à-tete*.

Before leaving for the closed door discussion, Samdech said “I will see HE Hun Sen because after the meeting in Beijing, he would go on to North Korea’s Pyongyang as my guest.”

Once we were in the meeting, Samdech asked me if I had any issue to discuss. I said to Samdech “I think we should go with the selection of the Head of SNC.”

Reasoning that choosing Samdech Preah Norodom as the Head of SNC, and I being the second person, would be unacceptable by the Phnom Penh’s faction which is stronger by the day, I proposed three formulas to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk:

- 1) *a co-chairmanship* between Samdech Preah Norodom and me;
- 2) *a rotating chairmanship* in which each members would take turn to chair the Council; and
- 3) *Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk would chair the Council on the condition that Samdech would stay neutral and no longer represent the tripartite coalition and President of Funcinpec.*

Samdech then said in return that “no, when I become the President I will be above everyone and am not affiliated to anyone.”

Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk then went on to instruct

me to compose a declaration. Our process to compose the declaration at that time was a painstaking one. We did not use computer but typewriter.

After the text was drafted it had been intended for delivering to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk at his residence in Beijing the following day but HE Chem Vidhya who had been assigned to deliver the letter got it to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk thereof and it was signed right on that day. That was how thing had evolved.

I also take this opportune moment to recall a mistake, a serious one that the State of Cambodia had made in the military field.

HE Ke Kim Yan and HE Pol Saroen could remember also it. It caused us a severe damage to the military forces in Pailin – Brigades 196 and 95, and we then reshuffle the military leaders in which Hul Savoan was transferred to military region 5 and Long Sopheap to military region 4.

The mistake was in fact our strategy to stand the same ground that was under the control when Vietnam was with us. Once the withdrawal was complete, it was on Projum Ben Day, the tripartite launched assault.

After being told by HE Yim Chai Ly, then Minister of Health, that the coalition forces had attacked Banteay Mean Chey, I checked the map and it was certain that Thmor Puok had gone and I lost contact with Sisophon too.

It was because the battery was flat. Once the contact restored we came to the knowledge that so and so number of coalition forces had been arrested. Sway

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Chek had gone too at a later stage.

After the loss at Pailin, all of us who had stayed to keep abreast with the situation, except Samdech Chea Sim, who had to go back for rest at night, decided to reorganize our defense strategy by which Brigade 4 in Samloat was ordered to destroy weapons and tanks and move their forces to hold on to Treng.

Brigade 6 in Malai had to do the same and moved to station in Bovel, whereas the Brigade 179 had to concentrate in defending Sisophon, while 286 at Samraong Chongkal was to stay where they were.

It was in such a fragile situation that Kheiu Samphan had the courage to affirm with Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk that once the Vietnamese are out the Phnom Penh government would be melting.

We then had changed our strategy from holding on to a vast area to incapacitating their forces by opening up for intrusion, to which forces and arms had been mobilized and concentrated for targeted intrusion.

This had us indeed regained upper hand. (Captured) senior military officers — one from of KPRLF — did not know I was present in one of their interrogations and I asked about their military tactics like if the troop was defeated, what had been the instruction to withdraw them to or through?

He told me that there no such an instruction as they were told that they would get the victory.

Then Yim Chai Ly got me on radio communication again and told me about situation in Phnom Srok, where they took a great number of hostages be-

tween 300 and 400, despite of which I found it was hard to believe.

I told Samdech Krom Preah at Pattaya that as far as the 400 troops were concerned, they would be well taken care of and they would be released.

In the event that I had to sign, with Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, the agreement to establish the Supreme National Council (SNC), from a hotel in Bangkok I radioed to our forces to get hold of Svai Chek before 15:00 hours and it was then taken by 14:00 hours.

HE Ke Kim Yan was then stationing at Banteay Mean Chey and I had come to visit from where I had a photo taken ... holding on to triggering BM 21 (a kind of Soviet-made weapon with multiple canons).

BM 21 was acquired and forces were trained to use it in Longvek, Kompong Chhnang province.

They were purchased at that time to help with our strategy to neutralize the Khmer Rouge forces. Ee Chhean (former Khmer Rouge military strategist and currently Mayor of Pailin) was clever to have his troops dispersed so that BM 21 could not cause them damages.

They instead had been used to push out the Son San's faction forces as their troops were sent in large number.

Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, having noticed the situation and its development, decided to return to the country, thereby pressuring the concerned parties, especially the Khmer Rouge, to soften their positions resulting in negotiations for a political settlement that was reached in 1991.

As we approached October 23, I raised this matter today and I would warn people not to misinterpret the history. I am the one with so many partners in this process for peace so I am the one with the most facts on Cambodian issue. My partners are Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk and the late HE Son San. I did not negotiate with the Khmer Rouge.

In 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev, then the former Soviet leader, suggested that I should. He recommended that we should establish the triangular negotiation, from which he thought the negotiation between Hun Sen and Sihanouk could be a helpful pressure (for SoC side) should there be a direct negotiation between Hun Sen and the Khmer Rouge ...

I hinted to Samdech Heng Samrin not to respond. On our way down, in the lift, I said to him that negotiation with the Khmer Rouge would be very dangerous.

Some of the historical facts have been quite mysterious. Take for instance, the Son San faction led by HE Son San himself asked me not to fight his troops.

I said that would be fine but he had to promise me not to cooperate with the Khmer Rouge and he had to give us the map of his military positions so that an eventual fighting with his troops could be averted.

I have so many negotiation partners — the US, Australia, Japan, France, Thailand, etc. which indeed resulted in I am the one who has the most facts and documents. I am waiting for the time to come so that I will compose them up. It is not the time yet.

I ask for an apology for having

to mention some of the facts that are relating to Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk in this story telling. There is no other way to do when talking about history.

Some who were secretary at the time has now claimed a founder status and some during the cause of negotiation had challenged to continue a fight. I had a good response to such a move. It is a good thing because I would be only 57 if we continue to fight for twenty more years.

The response had silenced the person. That is how to conduct and engage in the war of words. If one decides to get involved, one has to be ready not to get angry. If one knows that anger is one's weak point, one should not get to play with it.

History is history. I have my career as a soldier but turned out to be a negotiator, who in the last stage has ended the war through a concept of win-win policy.

If the country was not liberated in 1979, you may have listened to Duch's hearing, everyone was to get killed. Vorn Vet was killed and so was Sor Phim (both were senior Khmer Rouge's cadres).

Group after group would get to this fate. Look in 1997 Son Sen was slaughtered because Pol Pot suspected him to be Hun Sen's spy, who, in his interview that was broadcast in some TV stations, confirmed his thought that Son Sen was Hun Sen's spy.

How could I be so powerful that my spy was the Khmer Rouge's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defense?

There was an attempt to negoti-

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ate with the Khmer Rouge's Khieu Samphan by Samdech Krom Preah at that time. HE Nhek Bun Chai was the one to lead the negotiation with Tep Khunnal.

The agreement was signed one side by Khieu Samphan and Samdech Krom Preah on the other. Both HE Nhek Bun Chai and Tep Khunna are alive, so what had brought about armed clashes in Phnom Penh (July 1997) could be verified.

Why else do I need to fight? You could imagine that I would not choose to fight, but victory must be guaranteed if I had to.

This morning I saw in the Phnom Penh Post a plea that calls on Samdech Chea Sim, Samdech Heng Samrin, HE Keat Chhon, HE Hor Namhong, HE Sim Ka, HE Uk Bun Choen, who to my first impression, are the plaintiffs, the ones who toppled the Pol Pot regime and adopted the law to bring the Khmer Rouge to justice, to be witnesses for the defendants...

How could that be justice guaranteed? It is the court procedure, I have nothing to with it but if they, who are plaintiffs, to act as witnesses in this case, what would happen to the defendants?

That is about enough of the political speech. Having looked through the prepared speech, I could sense that most has been derived from my book "*Ten Years of Cambodia's March*", which is in fact an important base that records our way of getting the country on track.

Aside from this there is this "*Thirteen Decades of Cambodia's March*"... I have an intention to go on writing another one "*Thirty Years of Cambodia's Journey*."

I may tell you all that I had to undertake reform under three pressuring conditions.

Firstly, there was clearly a lack of internal understanding of what could be a peace negotiation, a market economy... At that very moment fingers pointed at each other between China and the former Soviet Union for being revisionist.

Secondly, the Vietnamese troops were still present in Cambodia when I started on the path of reform and while Vietnam was not yet preparing for this.

However, I would like to make clear with all foreign experts that Vietnamese experts' mission was to defend the Cambodian people from falling again into Pol Pot's hand, whereas deciding on political and economic issues is our rights.

In the present it is on the contrary, because the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and so and so country have put too much pressure on me to take their orders, more than when I was with the Vietnamese.

But we had more rights and more independence. I have mentioned a couple of times in closed door meetings but today I am taking it out in the open. Despite the Vietnamese presence in Cambodia, we were able to start reform before Vietnam.

Thirdly, foreign assistance from the former Soviet Union and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) started to dry and as you can see how the former Soviet Union had intervened in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Afghanistan...◎

(Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)

Climate Changes — Rich & Poor Share Responsibilities

Following is the selected and translated comments by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen on issues related to climate changes with insights on local and regional practices.

I would like to urge rich countries to take more responsibilities and to not to point fingers at developing countries alone as problem makers. Take for instance Cambodia is a small nation on the world map and it could not be anything but victim of the problem of climate change. It cannot be a country held responsible for that matter at all.

If they lack responsibility in anything they should not be lacking moral responsibility at all. As for Cambodia, though we are not the cause of it, but we will take full responsibility as other nations. So I would like to see that the rich nations and least developing nations are working together fully aimed at reaching our goal.

What has been the concern here is that because of development many nations have increased their emission levels and reducing it in a severe manner but keeping it that way makes their own countries and others in the world victims.

Cambodia has committed to a promise in the last ten years that we would not chop down trees to keep our planet covered with natural trees as well as replanting more. This issue has been politicized locally for sake of personal political interest. When the country was suffering from drought, the opposition claimed it was because the Royal Government chopped the trees. So now when we

have one month full of rain, what was the cause of it? In fact it is not a separated fact for Cambodia, it is a world concerned issue.

In Indonesia, how many islands have been flooded and we also have some islands that are not high above the sea level. How many countries have become victim nations. Where could they go? Some countries like the United States of America, there is this problem of wild fire every years. Look at that the US has enormous capability and technology but they still could not control that. What I have been saying is not to mean that I am taking side or opposing anyone but we are talking facts here.

I have asked a question to a letter prepared and sent to me by the Forestry Department (of Cambodia) asking for permission to charge for carbon emission. I annotated "from who do we ask to pay for that?" Anything to ask for people's pay must be based on law.

More than that this has not been implemented elsewhere yet. As far as I understood it is like a kind of tax. The issue is still a topic to seek for consensus in the forthcoming Copenhagen climate summit. We will soon have to develop a law for tax on breathing, perhaps.

Now there is an increasing trend for nuclear power generation. But nuclear can be used for both peaceful and military matter. But there needs to have a high and severe management system as there has been some examples already in the past like at Chernobyl of the former Soviet Union.

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pation in the meeting should not be for just being present but actively sharing with other partners.

Also there are many organizations working in Cambodia and I am sure they need local human resources as well. The more they could recruit and make use of our human resources they would be able to save their expense here because they do not need to bring in foreign experts here, which leads to having to pay higher salary. So going for job market is our aim and it will indeed help provide more jobs for our people.

I also like to take this opportune moment to give my appreciation and praise to graduates today. I mentioned many times before that knowledge could not be transferred by means of blood infusion but it requires absorptive capacity of individual fellow students who may have to exert more efforts. I also share this wonderful joy and moment with parents and/or guardians of our graduates today who have made efforts in any way they can to provide educational opportunity for their children and relatives.

Indeed we have been living in peace which increasingly provides more favorable environment for education. I see enormous opportunity out there and everyone has to make effort to get there and benefit from it. Unlike before when the situation had been hard and different.

There were so many school dropouts and many schools were ruined by bombardments, let alone devastation incurred under the Pol Pot genocidal regime. Where there were schools, there were

not teachers or teaching tools. Where there were both, there were fighting incidents that prevented normal educational activities from taking place.

Ketsana typhoon has put many out of schools but this is a different kind of hardship – it is not war but natural calamity. War destroys everything. As water recedes actions are taken to clean the schools and then students will be allowed back studying. This again is different from the time of war, which there is no guarantee as to when and how one will come back to study. That is why peace a prerequisite for development to take place.

Now I should go back to membership of WHC and a few other matters of concern. In the coming months of October and November, there seem to be many works relating to foreign affairs. Last week, on October 15, I went to China to participate in an exhibition but also to have a negotiation with the Prime Minister of China, HE Wen Jiabao, on many works there are to be performed. I have brought out Cambodian needs for more infrastructural developments. We have bridges and roads to build. We need a new bridge in adjacent to the current Jruoy Jangva bridge so that we will allow to-and-fro traffic on two different bridges and lanes.

Upon my return, the visit of the South Korean President, Lee Myung-bak started. First it had been earmarked to have received from South Korea 120 million US dollars but when he was actually in Cambodia, the amount has been rescheduled to 200 million. It was a good timing that after the water festival, on November 5, I have the Japan-Mekong Summit to attend in

Tokyo.

On November 8, there will be National Day and November 15, there will be a Summit between the US and ASEAN heads of states and/or Governments in Singapore. This is possible because of the new US administration policy whose President Barack Obama will be there present. Under George W Bush Jr., because of his policy of discontentment with Myanmar, such a summit was not an option.

The US has revised its policy that this kind of summit is possible. You see how thing relates to one another. Now I wish to say more about Cambodia being elected member of the WHC. The Kingdom of Cambodia knows quite well that it is inherited with numerous heritages and we also have had so many experiences in registering our heritages with WHC – both abstract and real (intangible and tangible). Angkor Wat and Preah Vihear are good tangible examples. There has been a consensus that we apply for a membership at WHC which will have four year term. I have sent letters to various heads of states/governments to seek their supports in that matter.

There were 30 country candidates for 12 seats, two of which would be given to countries without heritages and countries from East Europe. The elections had been rescheduled many times. Countries without heritages have been represented by United Arab Emirates and Russia has been elected representing eastern European countries. Only ten seats are left for actual elections. Twenty eight countries run for the ten seats. According to

information I have acquired, as time has come for the elections, some countries have withdrawn their candidacies. Cambodia was voted in right at the first round, whereby Switzerland is number one in the list, Cambodia is second, Thailand is third, South Africa is fourth, France is fifth. Each candidate has to have 50 votes + 1 and Cambodia has got more than what is required.

It is indeed a pride of our nation and has also been an achievement beyond our imagination. The fact that we came second after Switzerland has really amazed us.

There have been some interferences or oppositions from some groups, though we never have done so against anyone. However, whatever they have done against us has brought them a shame. Those who oppose our membership claimed that Cambodian election as a member of WHC would only lead to tension along the border and so on. Cambodia did not give any concern to those preaches. We have done what has been obliged to do with dignity.

Cambodia is happy but at the same time knows of its responsibility and takes its international obligation seriously according to rules and regulations set out by this organization. We also would like to express our gratitude to those friendly countries for giving us their votes that Cambodia, on the basis of their supports, has become a member nation of the WHC.

More importantly I also express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the effort and support of HM the King (of Cambodia) to all matters relating to cultural and heritage

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issues.

A crucial part of support has also come from HM the King's effort while he was Cambodian permanent representative to UNESCO. It was because of this fact that when HE Deputy Prime Minister Sok An met with other diplomatic corps, he has always been reminded of relations they had with HM.

Another token of my gratitude is for HE So An, Deputy Prime Minister and his colleagues who have been working hard on this matter. This has been a success of a long time work started last July in Paris, in London and Phnom Penh so that our support-seeking letters could be sent to right destinations and right time.

Having achieved this I must say that Cambodia has been recognized by our representative and also as a country among 28 that has been elected. In response, Cambodia is then affirmed its role as an independent state whereby our participation will be considered equal right and footing.

We have indeed achieved a number of successes. First we become a member of World Trade Organization (WTO) which is also not a simple matter too. HE Cham Prasidh, Senior Minister for Trade has led the affiliation effort and we came to a victory in July 2003. Because of a political stalemate in the country, ratification of the affiliation has been rescheduled to 2004.

The second campaign is when we apply for a registration of Preah Vihear as a world heritage in a serious competition that involved many countries.

These achievements have reflected our maturity in relationship, in national stability, capacity and efforts provided by roles of HM the King, the Royal Government and people of Cambodia. If we were to be a divided nation, we would not be able to do campaign but being rebuked as how they could support us when we were in internal conflict.

Cambodia will do its best as a member of WHC and will not be mistaken for its pride. Cambodia will go forward to contest for membership of the UN Security Council and other organizations, but for sure by 2012, Cambodia will be performing its chairing role of ASEAN.

We are putting a new building in place and hoping that the building will be ready for ACMECS meeting in 2010. I would also be able to host guests twice a day too. ACMECS is meeting of five countries – Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. The CLMV meeting of four countries - Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam will also be taking place in Cambodia also at the new Cabinet building.

By 2011, according to plan, Cambodia might be able to host a meeting of countries with issues of landmines and in 2012, to host the ASEAN and East Asia Summits.

As we are approaching the annual water festival which includes boat racing, paying respect to the moon and water, I would like to have your attention on a number of points.

Firstly, despite economic slowdown, the number of boats to take part in the water

festivities do not go down at all.

This has maintained our calculations that there would be about two million visitors to festivities in Phnom Penh. So it is important that we have to provide the best security possible in the cities because unlike other festivities, whereby our people traveled out of cities, this festival will have more people coming to Phnom Penh.

I would also appeal our people in Phnom Penh as well as who have come from provinces to take high sanitation precaution at times that we are under threat from AH1N1 flu. Masking is what I would suggest to all.

Secondly, I urge provincial authorities and sub-national authorities as well as those at various Buddhist monasteries with their boats coming to take part in the race to take serious measures in traveling to-and-fro during the festival. The water level this year is higher at this time compared to last year. There would be incidents of water twisting at some points whereby insufficient attention would bring about damages.

Another point of attention is concerning trafficking and the combat against persons with rebellious behavior, who have now been identified to be not only youngsters but also people of advanced age.

HE Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister, has led this campaign to achieve strict implementation of land traffic and preventing rebellious people from committing crimes.

I wish and make sure that we have to slash off "culture of seeking intervention" no mat-

ter from whatever level. Everyone must be equal before law and my children will be the first to get punished if they are behaving rebelliously.

From today I declare whoever defiantly use so and so powerful person for intervention will have to be brought to primary attention. Absolutely, no one could claim to be in kinship with so and so generals or powerful individuals and place themselves above the law.

Law must be applied equally for both the rich and the poor. The country would be in disarray if double standard is there where the rich would not be brought to reprimand but only the poor would.

We are now coming to a stage whereby we will have to strengthen both democracy and rule of law. We will go forward and will not back-track on this issue at all.

My instruction here is a complete halt must be put to intervention. If local authority finds case of intervention difficult to solve, please pass it to me I will see to it ...◎

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I have heard the other day about this proposition for taxing people listening to radio and watching TVs. Well I have to assure the Cambodian people that as long as I am in this position, which I have made this country coming back to life, people have radio to listen to and TV to watch, I would not accept to let that taxation happen. I also seek the parliamentary committee to cancel there off that plan before the Minister of Information asks me for instruction ...◎