

River Festival in Kompong Thom

(09 March 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)



(1) Where there is no peace, there is no talk about democracy or human rights

[...] I wanted to emphasize here that we continue to prioritize peacekeeping efforts in our country. We do not care what (might) happen. Whoever intends or acts to destroy the peace in our country, (we) will not be afraid to use all means to take action at any cost to maintain peace and ensure the development of the country. Peace must come first. Without peace, there can be no talk about de-

mocracy or human rights. We have to think about the right to life first. I hope that the Cambodian people who have gone through the hardships of war as well as the genocidal regime can understand the measures that the Royal Government had taken in the past to maintain peace [...]

(2) Weaponizing at the request of Kompong Thom's then governor Do Sohan to thwart the Khmer Rouge

Some (of the leaders from those days) are old and some are dead, such as Do Sohan and Keo Horn, then party secretary and provincial governor. I came here. I brought along four of my five children here. Maybe my eldest daughter can still remember. At that time, Manet did not come. My wife went to Laos. I stayed here for a few nights. Perhaps Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh remembers [...] when HE Do Sohan, who came to welcome me at the border between Kompong Thom and Kampong Cham, insisted on requesting weapons to equip the forces being attacked by the Khmer Rouge at that time. From National Road 7 in Baray district, I called to Samdech Pichey Sena Tea Banh, who

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Accountability Achievement of Public Financial Management Reform

(20 March 2023— excerpts and unofficial translation)

(1) Cambodia's survival is the result of reform efforts

It is true that the speech is long to go, but I should not skip some of the points that I should share with you – both Cambodian officials and development partners, as well as the people who are watching the broadcast – on this occasion, from here. I would like to thank the Ambassador of

National Institute of Business (NIB) Graduation

(30 March 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

(1) Could not make it to the National Assembly Session for prior engagement

Today is the opening day of the national assembly sessions, which includes also the King's message. I am taking this opportunity (to apologize) to the National Assembly (that because of prior engagement, I could not make it). I do not

think, however, it was my fault because the parliament sent me the program in such a short time, only a week before the actual date, while my program has been prepared for more than a month. Hopefully, the National Assembly will be able to set a time and notify us sooner. I hope the National Assembly understand the works of the

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Annual Conference on 2022 Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(24 March 2023 - excerpts and unofficial translation)

(1) Changing rice seeds strategy started in the 1980s

[...] I applaud the ongoing research associated with (rice) cultivation. Historically, starting in the 1980s, if I am not mistaken, it was a rice seed changing campaign. I remember when I was talking about changing rice varieties, my father said, "I raise

your head this big, I used only my original seed" [...] until 2004 [...] in a trip to the Mountains of Kravanh (Cardamom), I noticed that in some places in Pursat province, people are still using their own rice seeds, which at the end of the season, because of too long to be harvestable, the late flood took their rice [...] I said, "Please do not grow the hidden rice, try the elegant rice" [...]

(2) Breeding new rice variety in the strategy to strive from extensive to intensive rice farming

We wanted to reduce us of long-term rice production and come up with short-term rice that yields. This new short-term rice seed is a new achievement that I think Cambodia has taken a step forward in its own selection, breeding and ranking [...] in fact, this is a strategic implementation process [...] to achieve development between extensive and intensive rice cultivation. In the old Khmer tradition, in a family of 5 people, they had to use two hectares of land. If they had 10

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Vanda Insitute Graduation

(23 March 2023— excerpts and unofficial translation)

(1) The era of competitive economy, overthrowing partners economy

[...] How to strive to compete. This is not a race. We use the word "competition". A competitive economy is not an economy that overthrows partners. Like some banks break some banks. That was in the past. This is not the time of that because we have proper oversight [...] the stage where one bank is pushing another bank down for survival is a competitive

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was in Phnom Penh, to transport 700 pieces of weapons to Kampong Thom province immediately. At that stage, even in this city, there was no electricity. It was very difficult [...]

(3) At all cost, no hesitation to destroy forces that seek to destroy peace

Later, HE Sin Song came to rest at that same house (that I did with my children). The house where I brought my children to rest was later shelled (by the Khmer Rouge forces). Accompanied my tour then, His Excellency Cheam Yeap, who is currently the First Vice President of the National Assembly, is still alive. Others, such as HE Em Sam An and HE Chhim Seng, passed away already. War it like this. Separation occurred. Now, we no longer have fear (because of the war). In the war time, we did not have the opportunity to meet like this. If there were such a rally, the Khmer Rouge forces would have shelled into the city of Kampong Thom. In this regard, I repeatedly emphasize that, at all costs, we are not hesitant to take actions to destroy forces that seek to destroy the peace [...]

(4) Villages, communes and localities organize and maintain security to attract tourists

[...] I should say that no tourists want to visit places of insecurity/instability. Therefore, all villages, communes and localities must take responsibility if they want to have both national and international tourism (coming to their areas). Let us ensure that there are no thieves, robbers or any insecurity for tourists there. (Having done this, we will be able to develop) not only for the tourism sector (but also for) the production exhibited in the booths of the provinces and communities this evening. I am satisfied (with those achievements) and reminisce about the past (and) compared to the present [...]

(5) Imagine that Cambodia will produce the most cashews in the world

Each booth (in the water festival exhibition here in Kompong Thom) has a responsible and quality production that can supply the local market and export. I am imagining that we will become the largest cashew producer in the world. To date, our (cashew products) have surpassed that of Cote d'Ivoire – who produced 1.1 million tons. Cambodia now has 1.18 million tons. I hope that in the future, with peace, combined with the policy of safe villages and communes, Cambodia will attract

To build this road-bridge connectivity (between Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Thom), we have to have open gates for waterway traffics [...] the strength of Kampong Thom is agriculture, crop cultivation [...] cashews in this province are abundant ... Kampong Thom will have more cultivated land (for cashews) [...]

tourists, but more importantly, the production that serves the needs of the people as well as the supply of tourism [...]

(6) Less land management problems in the Tonle Sap region

At this point, I should emphasize and thank His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Chea Sophara, as well as the leaders of relevant institutions, provincial authorities, who have done a good job (in resolving land management issue in the Tonle Sap region). So far, not much problem is left. I would like to remind you to finish it completely. We have divided Tonle Sap into three zones – Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3. In the first area we allow ownership of property to the people. The second area is where people can depend on in cultivation and fishing, etc. The third area is a no-touch area. However, we also allow some villages, communes, to stay there since people have been living for 200 or 300 years already. We cannot get them out. We have to border their location and let them stay as a special case [...]

(7) Infrastructural connectivity between Kampong Thom and Kampong Chhnang provinces, and Kampong Thom and Kratie provinces

[...] As His Excellency Sun Chanthol, Minister of Trans-

ports and Public Works, traveled and confirmed, and I also confirmed it in Kampong Chhnang, we now need to build a bridge and a road from Kampong Chhnang to Kampong Thom. We have decided to apply for a loan from the People's Republic of China to implement this project [...] on the other hand, we would like to inform the people of Kampong Thom that Kampong Thom also connects by another river, the Mekong River, so that traveling to Kratie will be easy and

closer. In Kratie town, we have already launched the construction of the bridge across the Mekong River. The Tonle Sap and the Mekong, which were previously far apart, are being brought closer by connecting transport infrastructures [...]

(8) For the 58 km road, many bridges needed to facilitate water flow and traffics

To build this road-bridge connectivity (between Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Thom), we have to have open gates for waterway traffics. In the course of HE Sun Chanthol's works with the (construction) company, the project has had to within the span of only 58 kilometers so many bridges to facilitate the flow of water and traffic of people in the rainy season. I mention this point so that people understand before making any comments. Though I consider the people of Kampong Thom to be the lucky ones, there is one unfortunate thing for them. It is fortunate that Kampong Thom sits on the way to Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Preah Vihear, and Kratie, and soon Kampong Chhnang too – but travelers do not stop and stay [...]

(9) Kampong Thom should have special local products for sale to tourists/passers-by

Kampong Thom may be in a

difficult situation (in attracting tourists to stay.) Tourists go back and forth. They do not stop and stay. Building a hotel in the provincial town of Kampong Thom is difficult (for business), but if you build a restaurant, the business may be good because people will stop for food. Food could be attractive in Kampong Thom. Traveling to Siem Reap, people/tourists stop and enjoy food/lunch in Kampong Thom. Kompong Thom authority needs to find something to compensate so that the people of Kampong Thom can get benefits. One thing is they can sell things that are local and special products in the province. Tourists/passers-by can buy, and take with them as souvenirs [...]

(10) Kampong Thom's potential is agronomy/agriculture, cashew nuts in abundance

Although less favorable in the tourism sector, only the hotel sector is affected. Do not forget that tourists will come to visit Sambor Prei Kuk and other places [...] and the strength of Kampong Thom is agriculture, crop cultivation. We saw it in the booths (at the exhibition). Cashews in this province are abundant. I expect that when we have enough processing industry, Kampong Thom will have more cultivated land (for cashew nuts). Nationwide, if I am not mistaken, there are now up to 700,000 hectares. When processing is in place, we can expect a million hectares (under cashew nuts) [...]

(11) Supply for tourists' consumption or export on the spot – a priority destination

It can be said that Cambodia will become a leading country in exporting and supplying the world market for cashew nuts. Our production above does not only refer to cross-border exports. Supplying to tourists have been the goal and priority of our policy from the beginning until now, and there has been no change. It is the export on the spot. We produced and brought to tourists for consumption – both good rice, meat and other products [...]

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Royal Government. It is not to criticize the National Assembly, but to beg the National Assembly to decide on the session dates faster as the government has had a lot of works [...]

(2) Human resources training carried out since the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime

HE Ith Sam Heng recalled the background of the National Institute of Business (NIB), which, in 1979, was established as the “Central Technical School of Business” under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce. This indicates that focusing on human resources training was not just the focus of the present day. The fact that I went to teach at this school twice [...] indicates the beginning where each institution had had their training programs. In running the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I oversaw the opening of a diplomatic training school. At the Ministry of Commerce, the then Minister HE Tang Sarim, had worked hard (to get training in this field going) [...] more and more people are benefiting from the overthrow of the genocidal regime of Pol Pot, and later the ending of the war, and the making of peace that people are benefiting from the hard-won peace [...]

(3) The peacetime youth receive training for socio-economic development

In present day, youth have plenty of opportunity. In comparison, the wartime youth not only lost their opportunities, but also their lives and/or were injured and disabled. They could not get training of any skills other than fighting [...] if we look at the number of military technology Cambodia is rich with weapons from many sources [...] (we must have human resource in) the defense sector [...] we must know about how to fight, but we have made efforts to also possess skills. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, until the year 2000, civil engineering was used in conjunction with the training of our troops [...] the overall environment for our country is very

different. In the past, they practiced how to fight, kill, and destroy each other. We are now training to strengthen human resources to participate in the socio-economic development of Cambodia [...]

(4) NIB undergoes three transferences

Hopefully, what we established from 44 years ago will not be lost, especially this school, which needs to strengthen its technical base so that Cambodian youth can capture technological knowledge for their works, and participate in the development of the country [...] I am satisfied with the progress of NIB of Cambodia, which has maintained the pace and momentum of growth since its transference. NIB was transferred in three stages – from the Ministry of Commerce to the Ministry of Education, and later from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training. We need to speed up (our effort and) get ready to provide technical training to some 1.5 million people in the future. In that case, as far as the ancestral professions, maybe the Ministry of Culture needs help from the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training [...]

(5) Warning of global economic downturn causes people to withdraw money from banks

[...] The (global) economy is declared to be in a state of emergency. People should not be so nervous as to withdraw money from the bank. The IMF, as well as the World Bank, has repeatedly warned of the risk of a global economic downturn [...] it has become a psychological issue for people to withdraw money (from banks). Some US banks collapsed [...] Cambodia has not yet reached that level. Despite warnings of a global economic downturn, (I am sure) the world hopes to find a way to control the economy further [...] while the epidemic is a one matter, unilateral sanctions, combined with the war between Russia and Ukraine, has created a bad situation for

the global economy [...]

(6) Diseases, unilateral sanctions and war create a bad situation for the global economy

The plague is one thing, but the issue of unilateral sanctions, combined with the war that began with the war between Russia and Ukraine, has created a terrible situation for the global economy [...] the Russian-Ukrainian war, as we all know, will end. It is just that nobody knows when it ends. Russia cannot destroy Ukraine and Ukraine cannot destroy Russia. Finally, it is clear that there will be negotiations to find a solution to end the war [...] Even if war spreads to the whole of NATO, neither NATO nor Russia can destroy each other [...]

(7) China’s peace proposal covers a peaceful solution to the Russia-Ukraine war

[...] Sometimes there are compromises to evacuate people and provide corridors for humanitarian aid, dialogue to exchange prisoners of war, etc. However, the Chinese President Xi Jinping’s proposal has a broader scope that covers the solution to peace [...] the Russia-Ukraine war will end, we just don’t know when [...] the most dangerous thing that does not end is the climate change effects. Nobody knows when it ends. Day by day, climate change has made huge impacts [...]

(8) UN agencies – concerns about public health risks and rising elderly population

The most dangerous thing that will never end is climate change. We do not know when it will end. Day by day, the issue of climate change has made a huge impact [...] the day before, we discussed with the UN agencies [...] our partners, the UN agencies in Cambodia, mentioned their concerns about preparing in advance on two issues. The first is the public health risk and the second is the growing number of elderly populations. I replied that it is on this note that I had to build a

hospital with a capacity of up to 10,000 beds [...] we have not won the whole war of Covid-19. We have just won the battle of Alpha, Omicron, etc. we have to be prepared to respond to public health emergencies [...] even in agriculture, we are worried about the heat. When the heat rises, do our rice varieties withstand the heat or not? [...]

(9) From self-sufficiency to the commercial economy

Cambodia’s economy is not isolated. We have inter-related relationships. Let me give you an example – as far as textiles industry is concerned in Cambodia, we have imported raw materials from China, from India, from Pakistan, and the final products are in Cambodia. We then ship them from Cambodia to the United States, to Europe, to Japan. It is intertwined, which is called economic integration. Cambodia has now gone from being a self-sufficient economy to a commercial economy. We are talking about trade on everything [...] we are in a phase of a market economy where the market acts as a judge. All of you have had education (and learnt about the law of economics) would not be fooled by the unfortunate propaganda of some people who are whispering that “the government does not set the price of electricity” [...] they claimed to have hated communism but they forced the government to do economy the communist way [...]

(10) From the youngest to the longest serving Prime Minister in the world

I am just sharing (some of the thoughts with you all) as a head of state. So far, I have broken the world records for the longest serving ones. Not to mention my times as the ministers and deputy prime ministers, I have been the prime minister for over 38 years [...] no one in this world has been Prime Minister as long as Hun Sen? I broke the first record as the youngest Prime Minister in the world 38 years ago. Now I have broken

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people, they had to have four hectares of land [...] in intensive rice farming concept, through irrigation arrangements, we will increase cultivation pattern from one time to twice or thrice a year and obtain higher yields. One the same one-hectare area that used to feed five people, now we have to work harder to make that area able to feed 15 or 20 people or more [...] we have both short-term and long-term rice seed that yield [...]

(3) With water, cultivate rice twice a year, a production area of 3 million hectares will become 6 million hectares

[...] previously, one hectare of land could only be cultivated once. We have solved the water problem that people can cultivate more than once. In the past, our rice varieties were long-term. Now our rice is shorter term [...] flying by helicopter with the ADB President to Poipet [...] I pointed below and told him, "As you can see that is the remaining potential of Cambodia." He wondered [...] I explained to him, "now I only cultivate once a year. When we deal with water successfully, we will be able to cultivate twice a year." With cultivable area of 3 million hectares, Cambodia will have 6 million hectares of the same land without putting pressure on natural resources for farming" [...]

(4) Of the policy of producing and exporting 1 million tons of rice, the export part has not yet realized

The documents that we have mentioned so far, which we verify what we did at the departure stage, from the time we ran out of rice until we have the surplus of rice, should be kept. Of the agricultural policy that we set out to boost rice production and rice exports to 1 million tons, we achieved only in the production sector (which changes the situation) from lacking of rice to having surplus. However, we have not yet succeeded in exporting 1 million tons (of rice yet). In fact, it is easy to understand the reason.

The growth of our production is fast, while the need to invest in (processing) such as rice mills, warehouses, revolving capital, etc. could not go in tandem (-that) causes problems [...]

(5) No matter how the world changes, Cambodia does not lack rice

[...] It is not that Cambodia does not have the right policies for leadership in the agricultural sector [...] no matter how the world changes, Cambodia will not lack rice [...] previously, we used to lack rice. Now we are nor and will not be lacking rice, or in general, lacking food. In the past, one of the FAO experts asked us to think of corn, bananas, potatoes as staple food [...] I said, "Sorry, Excellency, do not talk about corn and bananas with me. Pol Pot had our people eaten (all that). If I talked about that, there will be problems. Please do not (count those as staple food) okay [...]"

(6) To share short-term rice seeds to friendly countries, we must have clear internal success

[...] in 2002, we were still lacking (rice). India helped us with 20,000 metric tons. Now we do not need assistance from the outside anymore. We have partnered with Cuba. To provide assistance to Cuba, we can bring the seeds we have grown, and this is a short-term variety to Cuba. It seems that Côte d'Ivoire is another country that desires the seed. We wanted to share it with friends, but we must have clear inner success. Do not take risks. This also has to do with weather factors. Rice seed variety research and development must also go hand in hand with climate change [...]

(7) The Northwest will be fourth and the Northeast will be the fifth economic poles

[...] What China does not have enough are bananas and longans with some other products that we need to find a way to meet the standard to be able to bring to the Chinese market. We can also export some products to other countries, not just to China. We have made Pursat,

Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pailin provinces the fourth economic poles. We have Phnom Penh as the first economic pole, Sihanoukville as the second economic pole, Siem Reap as the third economic pole [...] we hope to establish the fifth economic pole in the Northeast region with the agro-industrial sector as the core – Kratie, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri [...]

(8) People trust the CPP to ensure peace and development

First, I apologize to the political parties. Please do not attack me as we all know the forthcoming results (of the elections). We can also know each other's strengths, and some of them are initiating the idea of supporting Tea Seiha to be the Prime Minister candidate even. By saying so, you know that (anyone will do as long as that person will not be) Hun Sen's son, Manet. You solemnly accept that the CPP will win [...] if the CPP does not win, we will not apply this principle. I believe that the people will continue to trust the CPP to ensure peace and development [...]

(9) Recruit agricultural extension workers/experts to his/her communes/districts/provinces of birth

We have to choose the right candidates, and if they are agricultural students, agricultural experts, we can send them to their communes/districts/provinces that they are from. It will be easier. In the experience of recruiting people to go to the local level, if we take them to their geographical area, it will be easier [...] I would like to ask the provincial governor to pay attention to the agricultural officials who are sent here [...] we deploy teachers (in education) that way [...] if each agricultural official is allowed to operate in a separate commune without the cooperation of officials in the communes and provinces, it means that it is equal to "the same situation." There is no excess, there is no shortage. We have to find ways to get them share their

knowledge and inputs [...]

(10) According to figures, Cambodia has the ability to compete for the number one position on cashew exports

We do not always dream of becoming an emperor in cashew nut export, but in reality, Cambodia has the ability to compete for world number one in exporting cashews. If we look at the figures from the previous day's exhibition, we have surpassed Côte d'Ivoire's export figures. Côte d'Ivoire exported 1.1 million tons. We exported 1.1 million metric tons. Now the cultivated but not yet harvestable area is also increasing. If we can have good processing, our working capital will increase. We will have to work harder. It's not just about cultivating but it comes to processing, and to marketing. Our country will not consume all the cashews we have [...]

(11) Promote cultivation, investment, processing and packaging to become a real supplier of cashew nuts

Cashews are in demand in the world. Vietnam and India are the largest distributors of cashew nuts. But both countries are importing raw materials for processing in their own countries. Cambodia has raw materials that our farmers grow. Promote processing capacity by strengthening research and proper packaging. The concern here is capital. I hope the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the National Bank of Cambodia will look into this matter [...] if this is a capital issue, I think we will find a way to solve it. We will invest another 100 million (dollars) in the future for the rice market. Also, this cashew, how much do we have to invest? Well, we need to work together to ensure that the cashew policy we have approved in the past (will be achieved) successfully and become a real supplier [...]

(12) Implementation of the economic diplomacy strategy announced in 2021 regarding international markets

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the European Union who represents the partners for a high evaluation on our efforts. As I said, however, *we did not wait until we had complete peace to start reforms, and I can say for sure now that our survival so far is the result of that reform.*

(2) Life was in danger and fragile for political and economic reforms

I can say that in my life, I have faced with dangers all the time. It was just a matter of trading my life for the survival from the Khmer Rouge regime, or trading life for the peace that UNTAC could not achieve, but I have challenged my life for the reforms to be carried out while I became officially a Prime Minister. *My life at that time was really dangerous and fragile, especially when I laid out two reform packages to go hand in hand. Firstly, it was a political reform to resolve the Cambodian conflict through negotiations, which was a dangerous point of my life. Secondly, it was an economic reform itself.*

(3) Thanking France for peace negotiation opportunity with Prince Norodom Sihanouk

To start with, I wanted to talk about political reform. Many Cambodians only knew about fighting and they did not think of how to find a political solution? *I thank France for giving me the opportunity to negotiate for the first and second meetings with Prince Norodom Sihanouk at the time, in Fère-en-Tardenois and Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which I posted a few days ago. That created opportunities for political dialogue until the Paris Agreement and operations for a political solution to Cambodia's problems.*

(4) Economic reform started with land reform, how many understood economic problems

Economic reform started from land reform. It was not an easy task. Please note that under the Pol Pot regime, all land was confiscated as state property. After the fall of the genocidal

regime, we had no choice but to take action to save people's lives (from hunger). At that time, 20 families had a cow. What had we to do to survive? As you see, Phnom Penh today is congested with cars, but 44 years ago Phnom Penh was uninhabited. Our job then was to promote privatization (of land and properties). How many people were there to understand about economic problems, since some of the people then graduated from schools in northern Vietnam after the Geneva Conference in 1954. They returned with the idea of setting up cooperatives, where people worked together and shared what they harvested or gained.

(5) No internal unification on political and economic negotiation

Well, I can say that there were at least three pressing forces. First, what made me face with difficulty. It was the internal part (of the us that) did not understand what political reform was? What negotiation was? What was the private economy? Among our people then only talked about making war. That was on the political front. As for the economy, they hated the private economy. This was the point that I had to had to start reform from the ground up. His Excellency Pol Saroeun, former Governor of Takeo Province, was one of the leaders of the land reform. He always lied to the senior level (about what he did then) [...]

(6) Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs were against peace talks

At that time, all were state land and was not distributed to anyone. It was not stabilized in the people's mind. I have to take things from the ground up to push the upper level (political mind) to resolve. As for politics, I would inform you that I had to change the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, because the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were against the (political) negotiations. What should the Prime Minister do? Therefore, I had to

pick up the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, while transferring Samdech Pich Sena Tea Banh from the Ministry of Public Works to the Ministry of National Defense – all in the purpose to serve as a negotiator. The internal misunderstanding was very dangerous. This was not a small thing. This was the first pressing force on my political life.

(7) With less than 100,000 troops in Cambodia and they were in cooperative mode in Vietnam, Cambodia started practicing private economy already

The second point is that, in Cambodia at that time, there were no less than 100,000 Vietnamese troops, and in Vietnam, they had not yet undergone any reforms when I started the reform. Vietnam was in their co-operative mode. It was my good fortune that while in Cambodia, Vietnam not only overthrew the Pol Pot regime and prevented the return of the Pol Pot regime, but also gave us the opportunity to make own political and socio-economic affairs decisions. That is why, during one of my meetings with development partners, I said that "in the past, you used to say that I was a Vietnamese puppet, but I had more decision-making power than I do now. At that point, if I do not follow, you will cut off assistance" [...] Vietnam gave us the right to do Cambodia's own works, both politically and socio-economically. While Vietnam was still in centrally planned economy, Cambodia had already started practicing privatization [...]

(8) The Soviets did not take off the lifeline of reform efforts

What is the third point? The third point is at the time of sanction, (Cambodia received assistance) only from the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe – the so-called CMEA countries and a certain amount of assistance from the Republic of India. At the time, there was not yet Perestroika and Glasnost of (Mikhail) Gorbachev in Moscow or the for-

mer Soviet Union. On this note, it would be an easy thing (to take me off) if the Soviets were of their mind that should Cambodia let Hun Sen go on as Prime Minister; they would take off the assistance line (that could have ended everything). The Soviets, however, did not do this. That was (one of the factors) that had given me the opportunity to embark on political and economic reforms from then to now.

(9) Brining Cambodia out of deteriorating state of planning to market economy

Efforts made regarding reforms of public administration is not more difficult than the sort of political and economic reforms – that I have to sacrifice my life for in Cambodia. Decentralization and de-concentration reforms are not the sort of reforms that we should be concerned about or facing dangers as the reforms that I just mentioned, the three pressing forces on me. In the end, I have brought the country from the deteriorating state of the planning economy through the transition between planning and the market economy, and to the market economy, where we now have a financial system that has entered the fourth phase, and which we now continue to implement the policy linkage budget [...]

(10) 4th phase financial system is neither a joke, nor a political campaign

I should take this opportunity to emphasize that this is neither a joke nor is it just a political campaign on paper and bidding during the election. We have been going through this from the beginning, from the most difficult stage, and we did not wait for EU assistance. We did not wait for the World Bank or the IMF or the Asian Development Bank (to come first). We have been on the course of reform since when we were under sanctions from some countries that supported military coups, and the genocidal regime at the United Nations. I just bring up some to remind our officials to understand the issue [...] ■

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challenge to win. Our era is a time of competition for growth together [...] in the regional framework, we are not going to sabotage the growth of this or that country. It is impossible to do so because the target is a nation. It may be a miscalculation with the idea that, for instance, Vietnam must be weakened, Thailand must be weakened for Cambodia to rise. That is quite wrong [...] I am talking about competition. So do not compete to kill each other but compete to promote growth together. Nowadays, China has advanced to 5G while some countries have not yet arrived. They so try to stop China [...]

(2) The economy should function so that it does not collapse in any way, so that no country has problems

From among us here, we must strive to make our economy run together, with no part of it collapsing. All countries in the world should not let any one country have a problem. With only Sri Lanka problem, IMF and some other countries are in a lot of headaches about bankruptcy, economic collapse [...] America and Europe are our markets. If the US and Europe have economic declines, it will lead to less orders made to us. We export a lot (of items), even rice, to Europe, to the United States. Our rice enters the European market a lot, because Europe prefers Cambodian rice. Cambodian organic rice meets European standards. This is the point of competing in a win-win situation, not in a losing situation. We do not take part in any campaign to destroy any country [...] the world is competitive, but it has to be competing in a win-win situation and progress together for a prosperous world. Otherwise, it is like lifting a stone and dropping it on one's own feet [...]

(3) Internally, people did not understand the importance of ending the war through political negotiations

[...] There are three pressures on me when I put two reform packages. The first is the politi-

cal reform package. The war in Cambodia must be resolved through negotiations, not through the war. How many people thought that Cambodia was doing this right? [...] In 1987, the party cell at the Ministry of National Defense held a meeting and replied to this reform effort that the negotiations would be tantamount to eliminating the achievements we had made in the past [...] on economic issues, some came from North Vietnam, plus some people inside, did not understand what the reform was about. They do not like the private economy [...] and secondly, at that time that the Vietnamese army was still in Cambodia, Vietnam was (practicing centrally planned) cooperative economy, Cambodia already aimed to distribute land ownership to the people [...]

(4) Change from a solidarity production group to the one that helps each other

(Regarding the land and mode of production reform, in the province of) Kratie, thing was the most severe then. I went to Sambor district, accompanied by Nhem Heng (the party committee leader) and Say Chhum, then Minister of Agriculture, and the Sambor district chief solemnly declared that "I am committed to turn the third type (of the solidarity production group) into the second type, and the second type into the first type." Interruptingly, I said "and continue to starve everyone." Suddenly, their eyes widely opened. I said that I am not here to urge you to form a first or second type of solidarity group. I want you to share labors/your hands, which has been a Khmer tradition since ancient times. If one family had not yet planned for transplantation on that day, they went to help transplant others. When it was their turn to transplant their fields, the families they helped could come and do it in kind. I wanted you to do that. I wanted you to restart that to join forces. Helping each other is in tradition [...]

(5) Cut the hat to fit the head and cut the shoes to fit the feet to follow the wishes of the

people

[...] (they published articles with) big headings "sinking or floating". At the time, (well-known journalists like) Jean-Claude Pomonti and Jacques Bekaert, who wrote for the Bangkok Post, asked me, "Do you follow Gorbachev?" I said, "I do not need to cut my head to fit the hat or my feet to fit the shoes. I have to wear shoes that fit my feet and I have to wear a hat that fits my head." The Soviet situation is not the same as the situation in Cambodia. I must follow the wishes of the people [...] and be realistic. In short, at that time, if the Soviets were not happy, they could just say if Cambodia let Hun Sen to go on as the Prime Minister, the Soviets would stop providing aid, then there would just be a fight among each other. But the Soviet Union did not say anything [...]

(6) Two men detained for questioning in claims to have insults on HM the King

While we were doing this (perfect sports fire lighting ceremony) yesterday, something happened [...] we brought two young people in to ask. One of them mentioned that it was an insult to HM's power to put the image of His Majesty and His Excellency Chea Sophara to one side. Please give us your answer (as to where the) insults are? On the other hand, they talked in "cafes" about who the real king is. We have no tolerance [...] yesterday, I, Samdech Krala Hom, Samdech Pichey, Lok Chumteav Men Sam An, His Excellency Chea Sophara, His Excellency Hang Chuon Naron, Lok Chumteav Pheung Sakona got together (to check) where could that insult to HM's power that they said could be [...] I replied to the comment on Yim Sinan's page – "Only HM the King knows ..." This point can be seen in the pictures. All re-screening [...] I do not urge the court to take what I say as the weight for the charges. But I have to make an interpretation to ensure that the King is not insulted and that the Prime Minister is not despised [...] I assure you that I will not toler-

ate any of these insults [...]

(7) If Free Asia wants to enter Cambodia, all of their current announcers must be removed

One person asked if doing so (accusing of insulting) is guilty or not [...] I wrote back in comment that "if there is no guilt, then it is strange" because this is not a joke. HM the King is the institution, the head of state and the Prime Minister is the chief executive. Why are they (interpreting in a sense to cause) division? Do you want to distort (the truth) while millions of people across the country watched the event live? Last night, the clients of Free Asia and of Cambodia daily cursed His Majesty on Radio Free Asia. Let me tell the rubble group that they should not enter Cambodia. A few months ago, Free Asia wrote a letter asking to return to Cambodia. I did not say anything, but I gave them a condition – if you wanted Free Asia to come to Cambodia, you have to remove all the current announcers. If you dare to do that, I will allow your return

(8) A deliberate slander that is destructive and insulting to the King, and destroying the reputation of the Prime Minister

[...] let all TV stations replay all the live broadcasts to see where (that they say) is an insult to the royal power and/or where they say who is a real king [...] *either you take the point about the umbrella or the point about the seat arrangement [...] I think the police and the court know how to reason. This is not a right to express one's opinion, this is a deliberate slander that is destructive and insulting to the King, and destroys the reputation of the Prime Minister.* This time, (I will) hit it. Do not say that I hit the right to freedom of expression, but anyone who slanders and distorts information in events that are broadcast all over the country [...]

(9) If you want to block the path of Hun Manet towards the position of Prime Minister

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another record by being the longest-serving prime minister in the world. Some say that Hun Sen is fighting to stay in power. Okay! I accept, but I wanted to ask you, what does it mean to seize power? I am just defending the power I have (been entrusted by the people). What wrong do I do? What about you who wish to come to power as the Prime Minister? If you do not want to do it (fight for power), then do not accuse others for doing so. You are in fact the one who wish to seize power as the Prime Minister. I am a defender of the power of the Prime Minister. Why can I not do it? [...]

(11) Learning of the opposition's wish from the Malaysian Prime Minister

The Malaysian Prime Minister visited (Cambodia). They were able to twist the words of the Prime Minister of Malaysia [...] falsely suggesting that the Prime Minister of Malaysia came to (give Cambodia) guidance. You need to understand how to lead a country. They have their virtues. They have a principle of non-interference.

(Continued from page 6) ter, you have to block the Cambodian people

Lately, Manet is not aware of anything (about being promoted in rank). Suddenly, people send him messages of congratulations [...] you need to understand clearly that *Manet does not need to wear four stars, as you said it, to advance to the position of Prime Minister. It is his path. You cannot prevent that. If you want to prevent it, you have to stop the Cambodian people's (aspiration)*. Some say that (promoting Manet's rank) shows the power of the Prime Minister. In other words, if to be a prime minister is powerless, why do you need to be one? [...] holding the largest army, Manet was the three stars general. Do you understand? Why you (do not analyze) when other people get promoted? [...]

(10) Treading between hot and cold from now before his

I'm just sending you a message. When the Malaysian Prime Minister was in opposition, you could contact him – opposition to opposition. From being a former prisoner to becoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia, he has now become a partner to other rulers. I learned from him what the (Cambodian) opposition wanted to do on Malaysian soil.

I just wanted to make it clear to you [...] that the Prime Minister of Malaysia already told me (about your plan), you should have hope that you can make a presence on Malaysian soil. Please forgive me, (Prime Minister) HE Anwar Ibrahim. I did not raise any thing about that, but he affirmed to me that so and so person wanted to come (to Malaysia) but he (told) not to allow the person to come. Some of his National Assembly members asked for him to come for a meeting. (HE Anwar Ibrahim said) he told those National Assembly members not to do it. I added to his word then, "if it were done (as suggested), it would be impossible for the states to look into each other's eyes [...]"

time as Prime Minister comes

(Is it not obvious that) *your goal is to unite as a front to hit on Hun Manet? I would like to provide a forum for you to hit on Hun Manet because you would do the job on my behalf. I am quite concerned that my son is soft. Doing that, you have done so you fulfill my intention and so that Manet knows how to protect himself, and treading between hot and cold from now before his time as Prime Minister comes*. You do not know Hun Sen well. Hun Sen used to say that having a strong enemy is better than having a friend who is weak and ignorant. You should understand the language. You helped me strengthen the capacity of Hun Manet [...]

(12) Cambodia's right to strengthen its military capabilities to protect national security

Do (you see that) we need to protect (to Royals and monar-

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from former opposition youths who have joined the CPP in recent weeks. That is something to think about. (They let us know that their plan) did not need to use the government. They would use only NGOs to destroy ...

(6) Crossed the hunger field (hurdle 2)

The "first field" is the war field. We have already swum across the second field, which is the hunger fields. Remember, during the war, especially after the Pol Pot regime, famine spread across the country. Hunger in the Pol Pot era was deadly. In addition to killing, there is death by starvation. That we had no medicine is another thing. After liberating the country (from the Pol Pot regime), we started production (by) ... people have had to see the consequences from the war to the famine (which) threatened across the country, not only those in Cambodia, our brothers and sisters who fled to Thailand also suffered from hunger, (that humanitarian organizations had to provide assistance to refugee in camps in Thailand) ... famine

chy, and peace)? We all have a duty to protect the constitutional monarchy [...] *countries must be careful on matter of national security. Why other countries need to strengthen military capabilities? Cambodia has the solemn right to strengthen its military capabilities, its security, its national security and the safety of its people. Why (do you think that) Cambodia cannot, while others can*. Germany is a democratically advanced country, but there are traitors and coup plotters [...] I am sorry that I was forced to say this. It is all because some say that Cambodia needs not talk about since peace is already there [...] while at the same time they called for the armed forces to fire on the government, to dissolve the monarchy, to demand the King's stepping down from the throne. Shall we all stand still? [...] I am begging, if they are foreigners, to please consider the concerns of Cambodia [...]"

is no longer in Cambodia. We have worked hard to provide our people with enough food. We now have food for export. We have at least 6 million metric tons of rice per year, which is more than 4 million metric tons of milled rice for export [...]

(7) From hunger to ensure a full and delicious and healthy food consumption

... This famine field is no longer a problem for us. If our farmers continue to work as hard as they do today and are as peaceful as we are today, our irrigation system will be more abundant, and some places cultivate rice up to twice or even three times (with) our rice varieties ... I was told by the Ministry of Agriculture that we have a rice variety that it harvestable in 70 days, less than 3 months ... we are looking at the possibility of using these varieties to promote cultivation among our people. Previously, we were hungry, and we had to do everything to get our stomachs full. After that, we had to eat full and delicious. Now is the time to eat full, delicious and to ensure health ... consumer safety is a point to pay attention to with the production no overusing chemical fertilizers. We encourage the production of organic fertilizers as it ensures safety and health [...]

(8) Swimming across the field of disease (hurdle 3)

As for the "third field", we have been swimming and maybe this "third field" is not over. One disease is out and another is in. Old time soothsayers said so. I do not know if there are any other interpretations besides that. After the bird flu, we had this swine flu and I had it too. My wife had it from me [...] (as for crossing the hurdle 1, I have posted a number of footages) ... if there were no meeting between me and His Majesty the King Father [...] would we Cambodians be able to resolve it? What can foreigners do without the role of Khmer insiders? It is understandable this is a message to defend peace, independence and national sovereignty [...]"

River Festival in Kompong Thom

(09 March 2023 — Extensive Excerpts and Unofficial Translation)

(1) With Covid-19 under control, economic growth rose from -3.1% in 2020 to 5.2% in 2022

[...] It can be considered that Cambodia succeeded in controlling Covid-19 and reopened the country, which boosted the growth rate after declining to -3.1 (percent). We had economic recovery growth of 3% in 2021 and 5.2% in 2022. That is the result of joint efforts. We have done well (in the fight against Covid 19), and it is because Cambodia is well vaccinated [...] to ensure that our people do not face death [...]

(2) Three hurdles to overcome

Note that some countries leave people sleeping in inappropriate places and some bodies are not properly buried. For Cambodia, we do a good job. We must not forget that we are stepping away from (the valley of death), but this is not over yet. Ancient soothsayers used to tell the story of “3 fields/hurdles to overcome”. What are the “3 hurdles”? It would be a thing that the Buddhist monks here may understand already. We have already crossed two fields but the world seems to be swimming across the third field/overcome the third hurdle and I doubt if we will get out of it for good [...]

(3) Passed the war field on December 8, 1998 (Hurdle 1)

The “first field” is war. This field has been chronic in our country. We have successfully extinguished this battlefield. (We) finished it on December 29, 1998. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the end of the civil war, bringing about national/territorial unity for the first time in our history. Hopefully there will be no reactionary force to bring Cambodia back to war. We do not tolerate any action, at any cost, by those who intend to destroy the peace in Cambodia. We understand the intentions of some people through the concern that some foreigners delivered to us [...]

(4) Hope that there is no initiation of the color revolution, destruction of peace, and creation of war again

We also want to let you all know that you should understand our concerns. The Kingdom of Cambodia is a poor land where you have contributed to the destruction and war in our country in the past. “Hopefully, you will not burn the war flame by helping out to initiate the color revolution to destroy the peace in our country and recreate the war that the Buddhist prophecy has spoken so far regarding the transition of three fields,” among which war was field 1. It was difficult for us and many lives have lost to achieve this peace [...]

(5) Do not make mistake for the third time

[...] Please do not pretend to love Khmer more than the Khmers do anymore. When Cambodians die, foreigners do not come to die with Cambodians [...] when there is peace (in the country), they show concern for us on this/that issue. They are not interested or concerned about our concerns related to peace and war [...] please do not make the third mistake [...] any country that supported Lon Nol’s coup to overthrow Norodom Sihanouk in 1970 had in fact burnt the war in Cambodia. Considering themselves democracy but they supported a military coup [...] the second mistake is that you supported the Khmer Rouge at the United Nations for 12 years from 1979 to 1991 [...]

Even the Ream seaport (you have made it) your concern. (While you are) at a distance of tens of thousands of kilometers from Cambodia, you make it the concern for your security, but you did not express your concern for Cambodia’s national security for the color revolution that aims to bring down the legitimate government. I have received a lot of credible news

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I would emphasize that matters related to international markets. It is not just the Ministry of Commerce (that is carrying out this task). (We) must take the economic diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced in 2021, into actions and for it to play a role. Our ambassadors out there must not be ones for politics, but also economics. In this stage, we have less political matter to worry about. The important thing is to explain outside world about Cambodian goods. They must explain them to draw investment to Cambodia, to have tourists coming to visit Cambodia, and for them to buy goods from Cambodia. Well, not only the Ministry of Agriculture, the network of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and International Cooperation) has a lot to do regarding this [...]

(13) Provide other occupations and/or poverty cards to 1,300 fishing families to protect dolphin life

I should remind something here. First of all, I would like to ask you to send me a picture of every dolphin after receiving the news of their deaths. Must continue to pay attention to this issue. If we only think about pure administrative measures, it is not going to work. How many fishing families are there? How about we give them other jobs. In addition, we can encourage them a poverty card [...] the government is able to provide those who used to put a net in the river (where the dolphins are) – some 1,300 families of them. We can do. We gave poverty cards to tens of thousands of families who moved out of the Angkor temple area. We can give them poverty cards to make sure they don’t come to fish in the dolphin place anymore [...]

(14) Cannot rely solely on natural fish resources

Raising fish is a must. We must not over-rely on (resources) of natural fish in rivers or seas. This morning, a Minister from Dominican Republic, a country on the Pacific and Atlantic bor-

der, talked with me about fisheries cooperation. I would also say that fishing is probably more experienced in their country, in the Cambodia, however, we do not wish to promote modern fishing. As long as modern fishing is concerned, we may not be able to protect our fish resources – because modern fishing may lead to electrocuting them as well. We need to look at that. We cannot rely on purely natural fish problems. Need to practice aquaculture [...]

(15) Sometimes rice cultivation earns less income than grass cultivation

I heard that they wanted to invite me to inaugurate a dairy factory in Phnom Tamao. I will go. Now the lack of grass for cows is important for farmers. I still remember when the people of Puut Sar in Takeo in the Tonle Bati district harvested unripe rice to sell to cattle farmers. Do not forbid him. Some of his land has turned from rice to grass. There is nothing wrong. The important thing is people make more money. Some would say that it was only the Minister of Agriculture (who was crazy), now Prime Minister Hun Sen is too [...] it is a requirement. If there is a need for farmers in that area [...] let the cattle raisers cooperate with farmers (in grass growing). Sometimes rice farmers earn less than growing grass for cattle [...] do not stop them. they know more than we do. It is in their interests [...]

(16) Inspire animal feed for low raising costs in animal husbandry

People cut off rice and sell it as cow grass. In that case, cattle raisers in the area shall expand their herds and milk production. If the market expands, farmers will receive benefits [...] we must find a way to deal with animal feed. If we want to inspire animal husbandry, we need to find a way to address animal feed so that the cost of raising them is low and the market is affordable. If we do not solve that problem, we will not be able to succeed [...]