

26 October 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
The Fourth Legislature Cabinet Lime-up and First Meeting



24 September 08 — HM the King Preah Bat Samdech Preah Baromneath Norodom Sihamoni, Samdech Pothisal Chea Sim, Samdech Techo Hun Sen and Samdech Chakrei Heng Samrin posed for a photo with members of the Fourth Legislature National Assembly after its first session (Reuters)

The First Cabinet Meeting
The cabinet meets for the first time as scheduled after the general elections was conducted and the period defined by the electoral law to be the provisional electoral result announcements. We have indeed planned for the Parliament to convene on September 24 and the Royal Government to be formed on September 25, and the first Cabinet meeting will be on September 26. We have fulfilled our plan as the country's political development does not get obstructed like in 1998 and in 2003, which has showed the political maturity and righteousness of all political parties, especially the one with majority votes could get down to forming the Royal Government in accordance with the confidence entrusted by the voters. The parties with less votes could not hold the winning party as political hostage as in the previous times. I hope that from this time on,

the fifth or sixth terms to come, we will continue to be free from political deadlock situation.

It is because of this favorable condition we will be able to make a full five year commitment to implement the political platform, unlike in the previous third-term Royal Government that had only four years for their actions - it has scored remarkable two digit economic growths, though. Today I wish to unveil to all of our people the Rectangular Strategy - Phase II to be implemented in the next five years.

I also would like to ask for an understanding that a proper place for the Cabinet office has yet to be finished and thank HE Deputy Prime Minister Hor Nam Hong for making the meeting room of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs available for the Cabinet
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17 September 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Graduation Ceremony at Pannhasastra University

Thank the PU Leadership
It is indeed my pleasure to have the chance of coming to preside over the graduation ceremony of the Pannhasastra University (PU) and I would seek your understanding that my wife because of her busy schedule could not make it here today. I have had great chances to come here twice once in 2005, on July 19 and today again at the end of the third term of the Royal Government. I thank Dr. Chea San Chanthan, the University Rector, for giving us a thorough report in relation to the progress made by the PU and its training curricula. I would like to convey on this occasion my sincere thanks and appreciation for the professors and leadership of PU for their joint efforts in sharing their knowledge with our students and for the 702 students who have graduated with different degrees today.

My deep thanks also go to the graduates themselves for their own efforts in making such achievements for own and family's sake and society. Also I thank PU for its offer of 90 scholarships starting from 2006 by which I could make a good selection of those who have no financial abilities to take up further
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24 & 25 September 2008
First Session of the Fourth Legislature National Assembly

On Parliamentary First Session
It is indeed another historic event that for the first time HM the King comes to preside over the opening of the first parliamentary session since HM ascended the throne in 2004. Though we have followed different tendencies still we all have come to the parliamentary meeting. The Human Rights Party of HE Kem Sokha could not make it for the traffic jam. It is a good sign though that he also made his effort to come to the meeting. Today is the 15th anniversary of the declaration of the Constitution or which could be said to be the origins of the second Kingdom of Cambodia. It is also victorious that all political parties have

united around HM the King, who has taken the time to come to the National Assembly building to validate elected members status.

There was a deep concern yesterday that the Sam Rainsy Party and the Human Rights Party were committed to boycott the first parliamentary session. Last night HE Sam Rainsy and HE Eng Chai Ieng have come to meet with Oknha Kith Meng the President of the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce in order to
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meeting in the meantime.

Urgent Matters to Attend to

After the Prochum Ben Day (Buddhist Religious Ceremony) we will speed up and finalize the drafting of the Budget Management Bill for 2009. I am sure HE Deputy Prime Minister Keat Chhon has already led the job almost to the final stage already. But we have to pass the bill as soon as we can so as to give ample time for the National Assembly (NA) and the Senate to study the bill.

Toward the end of the year I have some foreign trips to conduct. First, in October, I will go to the People's Republic of China's Nanjing ASEAN-China Expo, and then I will go on to Beijing to participate in the Asia-Europe (ASEM 7) Summit. I also have to go for the ACMECS meeting in Hanoi in November and then the triangular meeting of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in Lao's Vientiane. All this will be followed in December by the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok. It is in this remark that it is urgent to get the bill passed in a timely manner because passing the budget bill requires the presence of the Prime Minister in the cabinet meeting.

If things go the way they are, in October there will be the visit of HE Somchai Wongsawat, the new Prime Minister of Thailand to the Kingdom of Cambodia, which is a routine visit by the Head of Government of an ASEAN country. According to the information given to me by HE Hor Nam Hong, the visit will likely be on September 13. In December, HE Lee Myung Bak, the President of the Republic of Korea, will conduct a state visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia as well, and it will be after my return from the

ASEAN Summit in Bangkok. Aside from the budget bill, what is also urgent is the fact that we have to make effort to bring the price of fuel down further in light of fuel price plunge in the world. I also wish to make an appeal to Companies involved in selling fuel to consider lowering the price a little further, especially at the time that the country is celebrating the Prochum Ben Day. I thank the Sokimex and Tela companies for lowering their fuel prices and I hope that Sokimex will continue to lead in this direction.

As far as the Cabinet is concerned, I would say it is retaining previous Government's composition while adding some new faces and hopefully this combination will become an efficient and effective force in getting the Royal Government's tasks fulfilled in the next five years.

I also wish to beg all of you to lead a life of virtue as I am fully aware that you are well-to-do already. I hope you all will truly serve the people, and as you can see spots on TV in which people telling us their expectations, requirements and demands. A taxi driver complains about off-the-record taxes which seem to have recurred. I order that the Ministers for Interior, National Defense and local authorities to fully address the issue. We have to win the trust of the people and this is the task that must be implemented as we are the ones that the people place their confidence in to serve them. People voted us - everyone and even some are the handicapped - because they trust we will listen to and help them solve their problems.

The Rectangular Strategy - Phase II (RS - Phase II)

What I would like to have your attention is the core rectangular in green color which emphasizes the good governance comprising four angles - first, the fight against corruption, second, legal and judicial reform, third, public administration reform, and four, reform of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces. If we were to fail any one of the four or the four angles of reforms, we will surely face defeat. Some people say that the previous rectangular strategy is in failure that is why the Royal Government is putting out this time another one. I would respond that as an incumbent Prime Minister, unlike those Prime Ministers in example, I know full well of the strategy and the status of its implementation. The Rectangular Strategy is a long-term platform that is to be implemented on a rolling basis of ten or even 20 years to come.

The RS - Phase II encompasses some of the works that I have put out in 1987 - 21 years ago, which has yet to be continued in its implementation. Take for instance the four priorities that I used to mention - water, road, electricity and human resources - have been the core of the policy and are still the command of the time. What I will do is to step by step implement the platform and I do not make empty promises as someone did during the electoral campaign period.

The Anti-Corruption Law

As we now have the Criminal Code at the NA and in the near future the NA will return the Code back to the Royal Government of Cambodia - a procedure to be followed since the law was not passed by the the NA in the previous term - we will then send them according to the procedure to the NA again. After the

Criminal Code is adopted, the Anti-Corruption Law, which is now waiting in the Council of Ministers, will be sent to NA. In the course of campaigning some politicians have made promise that they will get the law up and running in three months, after the elections. Look, it has taken us two months already to get the NA going, so how can they do it in the one month left? I will see to that HE Deputy Prime Minister Sok An will take this matter the soonest he can.

I think we will take it for granted that the law will be adopted by the NA after it has come through the Cabinet, which has been entrusted with the people's confidence. The law will come out no matter what comment some NGOs would make. If it is rejected by the NA, we will review it, and if it is acceptable, we will not need to revise it. What I wanted to say here is that the law alone will not be sufficient for combating the corruption. All laws have in their bindings the punishments and if everyone abides by the laws, it will be fine in preventing and curbing the corruption, at least a major part of it. Take for instance, the law on forestry resources, it has in its bindings punishments of all sorts if found to be guilty. The establishment of one-window service has also been a good example of taking out corruption in the line of administration too. However, we need to have the anti-corruption law passed to guide our action in this matter.

The Organic Law on the Administrative Management of the Capital, Province, Municipality, District and Khan

We have the Law already and what needs to be defined is

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the fact that the elections of the above councils may not be applicable in March or April next year and according to my discussion with HE Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Interior, we have agreed to aim for Sunday, May 17, 2009. We have a lot to be prepared before the elections can take place. We have to prepare decrees to change the status of the capital, for example, Siemreap from the district town of Siemreap to the Siemreap City, etc. As this is a new thing, we also have to look into the issue of establishing the tiers of public financial policy and management ...

NGO Establishment Law

We have overlooked this issue in the past terms. When we discuss this law, NGOs do not want to be under the law. They are the ones who ask every other person to abide by the laws but they cry foul when we make known that an organic law will be discussed. As a country we need to have law that governs the establishment of the non-governmental organizations. Some organizations have been registered only to disguise themselves in action they need to hide it from authorities, take for instance some have claimed land for development only for own interest; some have not been transparent as to from where their budgets are coming.

They want to know everything from the Government, but theirs are not for anyone else to know about. Some have gone on with court case of corruption within an organization. We have a concern that sometimes under so and so NGO, financial assistance has been provided for terrorist activities, take for instance the Al Um Quran

under which Ham Bali hid himself in Cambodia. We will have the Anti-Corruption Law and the Organic Law for NGOs to be passed in the NA at the same time.

Oil - A New Priority

We have increased the number of prioritized areas from four to six and then now to ten, with information technology and trade are the two last. It is also about time for us to add in the use of natural resources too. It is so annoying that some people and institutions worry about how Cambodia will spend its money, while the money is still in the ocean. I told them to stop worrying about spending the money but about making it first. Some even warn us of the Nigerian oil curse. In contrast, some companies have come to us to seek reduction of royalties for them or to accept smaller deposit on their profit. Some even asked the Royal Government to complement the loss for three years, etc. Now they have withdrawn those conditions and they all are companies with interventions from Prime Minister and/or Ministers of Foreign Affairs. I told them I would not agree with conditions to help cover their loss ... Take for instance the bidding block for oil, if one company wins the contract, those losing the contract would complain and as in the case of the US Government, with Chevron winning the contract in the block, they never complain...

Cultivation Land Tax

Some political parties have stated they do not understand why the Royal Government does not impose tax on cultivation land in Cambodia. There are not many in countries in this world that the Government does not tax people of the land on which

they till. In Cambodia not only do we not impose tax on land, but the Royal Government also makes some intervention in assistance for the farmers in the form of building major water canal and some water reservoirs. They have questioned why the country's income is only 11.7%? Our response is because we do not impose tax on people's cultivation land and if we were to tax them, we would increase about 12% more. The same is true for income from forest, which we have banned logging a long time, the loss of income from fishing lots in a size of half a million hectares that I have earmarked from the Government's list for use by the local fishermen. I have not taxed the cultivation land for the interest of the Cambodian farmers since 1979, and as long as I am here in power I will continue to impose no tax because I see that in twenty or thirty years from now it is not too late to do that. I would urge the provision of assistance to farmers so that they do not leave rice in drought while there is source of water for irrigation nearby.

Cambodia Aims for Nuclear Energy

It may sound ambitious but in the framework of ASEAN, this topic has already been discussed though Cambodia is still far from the actuality, but this is the country's vision for energy need. Before listing this in the political platform, I have already discussed with companies with interest in projecting investments in relation to nuclear power production... It has been so unbeneficial that in the field of energy production for Phnom Penh, while waiting for the decision from the World Bank consultant, we wasted two years in wiring 200 megawatt electricity from

Vietnam, which could hopefully help bring the price down. However, the electricity will arrive as scheduled in March next year to help supply areas in Phnom Penh where electricity has been insufficient. The demand for energy in term of electricity in Phnom Penh has gone beyond our expected 12% to 25% per year in face of more housing constructions, new families, new factories, etc. In November I will take time to seal dam of the Komchai valley so as to make some more hydroelectricity available. Hydropower projects and clean-coal energy production, which combine together with the purchase of low price power from outside the country, will indeed address our energy demand. I will not seek the energy production by burning fossil fuel anymore.

The CPP Election Victory - Two Messages from Voters

I would like to take this opportune moment to share with you my thought of the victory that the CPP has scored in the recent elections. I think the voters have made two clear messages for the CPP. I would like all CPP officials in the whole country to listen to it loud and clear. Whatever that would taint the Royal Government's reputation will have to be dealt with.

The *first message*, they warn us to work hard to make socio-economic progress. People in both urban and rural areas have given more than two-third support through the election to the CPP, the level of support that no political parties in the world ever garner. The UMNO of Malaysia, which leads the Barisan Nasional of many parties, has just lost its two-third majority. So to achieve positive socio-economic development, we

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have to fulfill reform to the best we can, especially the public service sector.

The *second message*, voters clearly give us a sharp majority which is tantamount to telling us that they have given CPP the full right leadership of the country and CPP could not opt to passing responsibility to its partners. It was thought before that it was difficult for CPP to fulfill the country's needs because it shared leadership with other parties. Now this is not a concern because CPP has the power even to change the Constitution or in other words, the full right power has been bestowed upon the CPP already and it is the CPP alone that has to take up the responsibility.

Labor Law and Emigrant Workers

Some people may have a question as to why we do not create jobs for people inside the country but to send them for jobs in foreign countries. In the world there are those countries with surplus labors and those with shortage of labors. In South East Asia, we have seen the trend of sending laborers to one another, take for instance the Filipinos are working in Cambodia, in Thailand, etc. Cambodia also has immigrant workers from Laos and Myanmar, whereas Thailand sends their workers to the Middle East. However, here we have to pay attention that sending laborers to foreign countries has to be done with a clear objective, which is to provide opportunity for laborers to be technically trained, etc. rather than going just to do unwanted jobs. Otherwise we should mobilize our people to work in the country.

As there is a growing demand for labor in the local labor

market, I would appeal here to our laborers to end their illegal working status in foreign countries and return to Cambodia.

The day pay has gone higher than before between three and five dollars for eight hour working day in Cambodia now. There is demand for labor in rubber sap collection industry because people are now growing own rubber, which means they have transformed from laborers to owners of rubber plantation, leaving sap collection industry in demand of laborers.

In the old days, we know that Prey Veng has more population but according to the latest statistics Battambang has taken the turn of increasing population now. The reason is Prey Veng (or long forest) province, because of the population pressure on environment, has become Veal Veng (a long field or no more forest). Increasing number of people who settled in Pailin and Battambang province are coming from Prey Veng, Kompong Cham, and Kandal provinces. If it is hard for them to claim land in one place they go in search of land in other places. Prey Veng province now has only 1.98 million people whereas Battambang before with only 700 thousands now has gone up to over one million too.

The Public Service Reform Term

I would like to stress that in this term special attention is being paid to improving public service while continuing to build roads, water canals, infrastructure, etc. What we have learned from the elections - the communal council elections and the national elections, are that what the people want the most is a better public service, and no

matter what mechanism has been established, the decisive factor lies in the working manner of our officials.

I would argue that people would be happy to left unharmed and threatened, or with equitable access to social service, one may not have to bring money to them. It is counterproductive that you bring food to the pagoda in the morning (a merit gesture in Buddhism) and on you way back you commit sin (bad deeds in Buddhism). Officials at all levels have to continue to perform good actions, as you can see no one with their bad actions, take for instance Lon Nol or Pol Pot, could stay on for long.

I may remind that you are not bringing money or properties with you when the time (of death) has come. So I would urge that what you have should be considered sufficient and you must refrain from committing harmful and bad actions on the people. If you really love me and are faithful to me, you must not do those actions. Some people said he loves or supports me but when he leaves, his convoy annoys all in the street.

We should not forget the plight of being poor as we used to be ones. Actions like these would not only shorten your work life but also being cursed by the people. I am a boy that is raised in the pagoda so I cannot stay away from the poor.

I would stress again that everyone returned (from the genocide) with empty hands so we have to think more to the poor and lead the life of virtue while refraining from committing sins and bad actions or karmas on innocent people...■

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have asked for the situation to return to before July 15, whereas subsequent troop adjustments have been done

Second, Instability in Thailand brings about the continuation of the presence of troops on Cambodian territory like in Chub Koki, Chuam Sangam, Tamuan and Ta Kobei temples. If the problem does not concern the Cambodian territory, we would not care to say about what is going on in Thailand at all. Cambodia remained silent to the coup in 2006 and I welcomed the visit of then Prime Minister HE Surayuth Chulanondh. I asked HE Hor Nam Hong if we could identify any channel on the Thai part to work with on the matter and the answer was no. I hope the election of the Prime Minister of Thailand will go smoothly.

The negotiations have come to a halt, even one month after the meeting in Hua Hin. What I am saying is not to expand the conflict but to illustrate the position in principle by the Royal Government like I said in Samraong Tong of Kompong Speu - we will work to de-escalate and not to expand the conflict. We hope the Thai Government will take similar position and attitude, and prevent any armed clashes from happening...

Many countries in the world have got border conflict with each other but they do not let conflict prevent their relations in all fields at all. They do not revenge each other by closing borders, boycotting mutual trades, chasing out each other's citizen, etc. If we could not find a solution bilaterally we would go for the third party and that includes also the international court of justice in The Hague...■

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study. In all every year I have about 400 scholarships for giving out to students from poor families in furthering their studies.

I also encourage our graduates to continue their studies to higher level and we also have the issue of job creation to be considered. I have mentioned the ten disequilibria, where jobs has been the core of our efforts. It is indeed a complicated process to get jobs created, and to promise jobs for everybody would remind us of the Pol Pot's commitment that everyone has to have a job to do - even monks had to leave monkhood to do labor in any possible forms irrespective of age or physical condition. No one was left to do anything else but laboring out. It is indeed a hollow promise by the so called Prime Minister to be (in the period of electoral campaign).

Love and Care for Family, Society and Nation

I would recommend you to take up good actions and to make positive performances in response to the efforts and sacrifices that your families have done for the sake of your study. First you have to prove your love and care to the family and then to the society and the nation. Your good actions will be a great response to your parents' consideration. We have the Prochum Ben (Buddhist ritual of offering food and utensils to passed away relatives via the Buddhist monks) coming but I urge you all to first of all pay attention to your parents and/or grandparents who are considered living Buddhas at home.

Neither Fighting nor Terrorist Activities

I am glad to see that we have here today foreign professors

who are helping Cambodia in the field of education. For them I can assure that they should not have any worry because there would neither be fighting nor terrorist activities in Cambodia. You can make a lot of money here and pay less for the cost of living. Before no one wants to come to Cambodia and some tourists were warned by their Governments not to travel to Cambodia and some have been permitted to visit only Siem Reap and Phnom Penh cities. On the contrary, now they have reached destinations that we never ever go. Take for instance, the recent US Ambassador was the most frequent traveler and his trip never had been spoiled by any incident at all.

Welcome the New UN Representative

Of course as a country we always have something here and something there but in general safety has been provided for foreigners residing and working in Cambodia. I also would like to take this time to thank Mr. Yash Ghai who has already resigned from his position because even if he stays on he has no chance of meeting me. I am ready to meet anyone to be designated by the Secretary General of the United Nations in Mr. Ghai's replacement. The situation has proven that Hun Sen is going to be here another five years and Mr. Ghai would not be accepted for the respective period. I have met with the new representative because he wanted to talk unlike the previous one who did not even meet me but rebuked us. I am glad he finally resigned.

CPP Wins - Hun Sen is Prime Minister

Now the race to become the Prime Minister of Cambodia is over and in 2013, five years

from now, we will see who will then take up the challenge to be the Prime Minister again. Some politicians have proposed limiting the term of office by the Prime Minister to not more than two times in their topic of campaign ... but the term is not determined by them but the by the people's votes. Cambodia is a Parliamentary regime and people choose parliamentarians. I did not stand to be the Prime Minister in the elections but a member of the parliament. But the Cambodian People's Party ticketed Hun Sen to be its Prime Minister if re-elected. Comparing to boxers, I would be the one who holds up the championship and those politicians are those who fight to get the record from me. What happens when they failed three or four times like this? I think they have to send in new candidates. Why should they demand so and so to go out? Whatever happens they have to wait for 2013.

The First Meeting of the Fourth Legislature National Assembly

HE Say Chhum called to me as to when we convene the first session of the National Assembly. I have chosen to meet on September 24 because it is the Constitutional day and the ten-year anniversary of the assassination attempt on my life in Siem Reap... The oppositions do not recognize the electoral results but they not only keep their seats but ask for the position of Vice President of the National Assembly and Head of a Parliamentary commission ... One of them said through an interlocutor that if Samdech could positively answer to the proposal he would not go to foreign countries, that is to say going abroad to put pressure on Hun Sen. I wish via the same channel in return that he be blessed

with successes in Europe, US and in the UN... Samdech Krom Preah (Norodom Ranaridh) said he accepted the electoral results and would like the Government to be formed as soon as possible. I would inform you all that I want Samdech Krom Preah to return to Phnom Penh during the Prochum Ben day. As he behaves himself, so do I...

Male and Female Rate in Passing the Exam and Islamic Code

Out of 78,049 students who go to the high school exam, 55,178 students passed. Among them, 30,196 female students or 70.26% made it whereas male students score a lot less in number. This suggests that male students did not pay hard attention to their studies. Female students have made a great advancement in the exam. I think we should look into this matter more seriously and parents have the responsibility in fixing up this matter. I also have instructed the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to allow female students of Islamic origin to dress the uniform in accordance with their religion or the requirement by the Ministry of Education. This will ensure that the female students of Islamic origin could go on to higher education.

Press Justification and Thai-Cambodian Border Issue

There has been some misunderstanding, not from the part of the Royal Thai Government on a commentary after my meeting with the US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte. The spokesman of the Royal Government of Cambodia already asked for justification of the article of the Bangkok Post newspaper and it was also re-printed here

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by the Cambodia Daily that I said the Thais should pass the ASEAN chairmanship back to Singapore or on to Vietnam ... The Thai Foreign Ministry also summoned our Ambassador to clarify the matter. I would urge the newspaper to be careful in using language which can be instigating conflict. We never ask to cancel the ASEAN chairmanship by Thailand and pass it back to Singapore or on to Vietnam at all. We only have expressed our concern...

In relation to the issue of border conflict, I would like to inform our people of the position that we will uphold in the course of settling this conflict because people would want to know what position their Prime Minister is taking in this matter. Even if I have said it about Thailand it would not be a mistake. Why? There are two major reasons.

First, the opposition in Thailand has used the issue of Preah Vihear temple as a pretext to oust the Government of Thailand from of power. On September 15, a group of demonstrators brought a request to the Cambodian Ambassador demanding the return of the Preah Vihear temple. As I said, Cambodia has nothing to concern about whatever happens in Thailand, but we have the right to concern when our territory has become involved.

Among the four conditions put out by the opposition, one of them was to take back the temple of Preah Vihear as a precondition in the negotiation with the Thai Government. Why should they expect the Royal Government of Cambodia to stay silent in face of such a bold threat? I would assure once again since there has been some misunder-

standing about the issue of Preah Vihear temple. No one could violate the temple which has now become the World Heritage Site already any breach in this area would be an invasion not only on Cambodia but the world. The conflict area is the part that is outside the temple zone, which is also including the Keo Sekha KiriSvarak pagoda. This spat has occurred because both sides have been using different maps.

The Cambodian side has been using the map designed by both France and Siam in 1904, 1907 and 1909 ... According to MOU 2000, Thailand recognized the five maps between 1907 and 1909 and the two sides agreed to demarcate the border area in five steps. This signifies that the temples are recognized in the MOU 2000 which was signed by the party which is now in opposition in Thailand and witnessed by then Prime Minister Chuon Leekpai.

It is important to clearly distinguish the source of the problem. As this issue is concerned, Prime Minister Samak who visited Phnom Penh and Foreign Minister Noppadon Pattama were both taken out of office with demand by the opposition to bring them to court for acts of treason which could see the death sentence.

We have reserved a certain level of understanding for the Thais who happened to be in difficult state of political tension. The issue of the Preah Vihear temple is non-negotiable. Cambodia has never used the word "invasion" so far because we understand that the issue of the buffer zone has to be discussed as a consequence of use of different maps. We

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solved by negotiation. From now to the ASEAN meeting on December 15, we have exactly three months in the line. Thailand has to have a new Government but the PPP and other parties of the ruling coalition have to come to an agreement first. This coming Wednesday the Thai parliament is to elect the new Prime Minister for the country. It is a concern still because PAD declared already that it would not accept any candidate from the PPP to be the country's next Prime Minister... Thailand has become a country in this world that the opposition occupied the Government House. This case is quite bizarre.

The political situation in Thailand has been so unpredictable that no one could say what is going to happen next. Mr. Samak said he would go to New York to give his address at the United Nations General Assembly in September but he never did. It is indeed our concern as a member of ASEAN if Thailand could not organize the forthcoming summit, where could the summit take place? Should it be passed back to Singapore or on to Vietnam? Have those countries been prepared? I also wonder that I did not hear a thing from HE Surin Pitsuwan, the General Secretary of ASEAN as to what position ASEAN should take. I heard him talk a lot when it comes to other countries like Myanmar...

On the Formation of the Royal Government

We have proceeded without any distraction. We have all been invited to convene the first parliamentary session on September 24 under the presidency of HM the King. According to the planned schedule there will be this oath-

taking ceremony at the Royal Palace in the evening of the same day. On September 25, the new Royal Government line-up is announced and in the evening of the same day the whole Government will swear in. And on September 26, here at the provisional office of the Council of Ministers, we have the first Cabinet meeting. Hence, our people will enjoy the Buddhist Prochum Ben ceremony on September 28, 29 and 30.

As for who will or will not join the above procedures I would not be able to tell. In Cambodia, the elected majority can no longer be held hostage by the elected minority. I have just discussed with the CPP General Secretary about naming all nine members of the nine parliamentary commissions from the CPP so that the Parliament will be able to proceed. If they decide to join at the later stage, this matter will be reviewed. But I doubt they could not convince the parliament's approval. It would be a wise decision to have their MPs voted in those commissions in package. Well, I should not make any further comments only because you have brought up this case, I should say a few words as I see fit.

On Outstanding Achievements of the Third Legislative Term Government

Achievements that seem to be outstanding in the past term of office are the two-digit economic growth, which indeed has contributed to bringing down the level of poverty and to improve infrastructure. We need to make more economic growth a target while deepening reforms. The forthcoming Government looks a bit bulky but will prove itself to be the Government which adheres to a profound reform principle...■

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work out an understanding. Many conditions have been relayed to me including the adoption of new internal regulations so as to save their image in addition to their desire to be offered the head or vice head of the parliamentary commissions.

I responded through HE Kit Meng that the National Assembly (NA) cannot adopt a regulation that has never yet been studied. There needs a special commission set up to study the issue and all articles related to internal regulation before sending to the commission of legal affairs and then to the permanent committee, and then to the NA session. What they wanted is "the opposition or outside-government parties recognized by the Royal Government." It was easy to explain to HE Sam Rainsy because he used to be the one who write the law, and I am grateful to the SRP members of parliament for raising hands in adoption of the new internal regulations of the NA, which I think is a show of understanding by the people's representatives.

Prior to the arrival of HM the King, the CPP permanent committee had its meeting here and decided that we would look into amending the proposed inclusion of phrase "opposition recognized by the Royal Government" ... because adding is not a problem but whether we will accept or not is another matter.

Declaration by Parties Out of the Royal Government - Audacious

There was an attempt though, after HE Sam Rainsy left, to have a declaration on that matter to be signed by all five political Parties in the parliament today. I told Oknha Kith Meng that it was a fool move

and an audacious declaration to be made. Why did I say so? What they want here is in fact the creation of a political status to be signed in the National Assembly building which, on the one hand, is contrary to the NA internal regulations, and on the other, it is to trick us into accepting that the five Parties came to the NA because of what they say " ... on the spirit of national reconciliation and will for further improvement of the multiparty democracy ..." They even said in the "audacious declaration" that the role of all parties outside the Royal Government will be respected and upheld ... etc. They indeed want the majority-winning party to be held hostage so as to empower their negotiating position. Condition as such could not be imposed on us...

The negotiation resumed at 6:30 am in which Sam Rainsy proposed to Oknha Kith Meng that he would participate in the NA session this morning but he wanted me to help adopt the proposed changes to the internal regulations. I told Oknha Kith Meng what I had told him earlier that I would see what could be done. A little after 7 a.m. it is made known that they will join the NA first session but will not take on traditional costumes because they are not prepared for that. I asked HE Sam Rainsy why HE Kem Sokha and his members were not here and HE Sam Rainsy said he also did not know.

Let's us leave this matter for the two parties to discuss because they are in a "life and death alliance." We doubt who would cheat whom here.

PM Hun Sen to New York for UN Assembly - False Report

I think that our press people

are not professionally competent and this report has indeed been released by the foreign press while it later came to Koh Sante Pheap Newspaper. Last night it did come to the Bayon TV station. They reported that Samdech Techo Hun Sen would leave for New York in this week to attend the UN assembly session ...

They all knew that the Prime Minister is busy with the first session of the National Assembly, the formation of the Cabinet and the first Cabinet meeting and because of this busy schedule, we could not even let HE Hor Nam Hong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs to go either but to send the Secretary of States instead.

Greeting New Thai Prime Minister, Border Negotiation to Resume

Because in neighboring Thailand HE Somchai Wongsawat has been elected Prime Minister of Thailand, I did call him to wish him for his work. I talked with him on the phone and the two sides have expressed the will to resolve the border disputes. As far as this matter is concerned the disputes have been yet unresolved but no armed clashes are noted. Negotiation will start and for Cambodia, I think any time will do.

I already made my appeal to Thailand that urgent negotiation is better. Prime Minister Somchai has shown how serious he is when he went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand after being elected. All mechanism to discuss the border issues will actually resume only a little more patience is needed.

Some people have suggested why we do not open attack in return for the incursion. We

never think of doing so unless they attack and infiltrate which we are forced to respond militarily.

I believe though in the 21 century our neighbors would not resort to using forces to settle problem at all. Cambodia has all documents needed that can be used to claim our position legally or if this does not work we could always go back to the International Court and the UN Security Council will be a means when there is armed conflict. So bilateral negotiation will be the way, and if it could not bring us to the settlement, then we will opt for the court and in this case the International Court in The Hague.

Taking this opportunity I would like to express my sincere appreciation to monks, people, especially the armed forces for their proven patience and also to thank those who contribute their resources for the armed forces who stand by guarding the border. I have recommended to CTN TV Station to use collected contribution resources for the construction of the road to Ta Muan temple and Bayon TV Station to build the road to Preah Vihear... ■

25 September 08

Briefing Press after the Approval by the Fourth Legislature National Assembly on the Formation of the New Royal Government



Comprehensive Reforms to Cope with Corruption

As far as political platform of the Royal Government is concerned I would recommend you look into the material at your disposal and tomorrow I will present the Rectangular Strategy - Phase II in which

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15 September 2008 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Briefing Press after the US Assistance Signing Ceremony

On US-Cambodian Relations

We have discussed a lot of issues and made special evaluation on the bilateral relations between our two countries, which have reached a stage that has never existed before. We also have searched for other forms of relations while trying to improve the existing ones. The US guest has also thanked us for being patient in face of the incursion from the Thai side and agreed that it was a way of solving the problem. We have reconfirmed to the US side about our resolve to prevent armed clashes but also reserve our rights to bring the matter to the third party or international court. We also will bring the issue to the Security Council of the United Nations, of which the US is a member, if ever the war breaks out. The US guest also made a positive comment on the recently conducted elections in Cambodia. In my response I wish the US a good election as well.

On the US Financial Contribution for the Extraordinary Chamber in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC)

I think you will hear from the US delegation or HE John Negroponte, the US Deputy Secretary of State. They will break the news by themselves. What I can say is the time has now come for the US to take part.

On the US Market Condition

The US market has allowed so far the import of about two billion US dollars from Cambodia and this is generally thought to be helpful for Cambodia to provide job to its people. As far as the working condition is concerned, all exports from Cambodia to the US have abided by the labor

condition attached, though it has now come to expiration, we will continue to observe it. I reaffirmed to the US delegation that Cambodia adopted its labor law or condition for the sake of the Cambodian workers and not under the compulsion of any particular country at all. Labor law or work condition is the matter of human rights for the Cambodian workers. It is in this prospect that whether or not we will reach an agreement, the law will continue to be upheld and replicated to other sectors in the Cambodian economy.

On the Thai-Cambodian Border Spats

It is indeed a matter that deserves an understanding but the question is how much longer we have to wait with such an understanding. When Mr. Samak was the Prime Minister we have conducted talking with him but political turmoil in Thailand brought the process of negotiation to a halt. As of now you all know that Thailand has yet to elect the new Prime Minister. It is true that the acting Premier could make further move but it is impossible to secure a viable channel for discussion to be resumed in a feasible manner.

In my talk with the US Deputy Secretary of State, I told him I doubted who sent troops to the Ta Krabei and Tamuon temples or if they were not sent by the Thai Government, as it has denied of sending them there, then they must be thieves. If they are thieves, Cambodia and Thailand have to cooperate and fight them out. Having said so, I encourage our troops to keep their patience and leave the matter be re-

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you will be shown what priorities are for the next five years...

In this world nothing is perfect and everywhere there is, more or less, injustice, corruption etc. In Cambodia some points have been subjects of deception or exaggeration. Having said so does not mean that I deny all negative aspects that have been challenging at all. It is in this meaning that we put out more comprehensive reform in good governance which is the backbone of the Rectangular Strategy. This includes the fight against corruption, legal and judicial reform, public administration reform and the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces reform, which will be the core of future development.

Food Safety Concern

Cambodia has what we called CamControl, a permanent mechanism which not only prevents what happens once in a while, take for instance the concern on melamine tainted milk powder, but also to oversee food safety in general. With CamControl we also have more institutions with permanent duties to take action in relation to food, animal health, and other communicable diseases.

What I want to elaborate here is that we do not deal with issue on an ad hoc basis but more on a permanent manner. That is why Cambodia is not being startled by what happened like the infected milk incident in China at all. In Cambodia, milk or food from whatever countries, China or other countries, will be regularly inspected by CamControl.

SRP Absent and HRP Asks for Oath-Taking Ceremony Through Oknha Kith Meng

again, after the oath-taking ceremony in the Royal Palace, HE Sam Rainsy has requested for my understanding because he has been criticized within his own party for being absent for the Cabinet approval.

I told him that as a politician I understand his difficulty and more than that together with the Parties of Funcinpec and Norodom Ranaridh we have more power than we need or even over two-third majority.

I think inner Sam Rainsy Party has got a grave concern. HE Kem Sokha also this morning proposed to me to arrange for his party's elected members to take oath since they have missed. He proposed for the ceremony to take place this morning. I contacted the NA if we could find a way for them to take oath and the NA responded there is no way to do so at this moment.

I have discussed this issue with HE Sar Kheng, the Prime Minister, and we have come to a conclusion that after the Prochum Ben, some CPP members of parliament will resign and some newly elected members will be replacing them, by which time the Kem Sokha's Human Rights Party members could join in oath-taking ceremony. We cannot make it this morning. Hopefully HE Kem Sokha understands...

It is indeed revealing that the alliance is at stake. HE Kem Sokha said already that his members could not come in time for the first National Assembly meeting because he was angry with the Sam Rainsy Party, and accused RP of acting in superior to his party and making the HRP to run along...■