

Cambodia New Vision

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24 June 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) Inaugurating Phnom Penh's First Overpass at Kbal Thnol



24 June 2010 — Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen Inaugurates the First-ever-built Overpass at Kbal Thnol with the Phnom Penh dwellers (Courtesy of Kampuchea Thmei)

... My wife and I are so happy today to be with our people who have taken time to participate in putting into official use the first ever built overpass of the Kingdom of Cambodia. I would like to take this solemn occasion to express my sincere appreciation for the Municipality of Phnom Penh as well as other sectors involved, the construction company of Oknha Pong Khieu Se also included, for the efforts they made in realizing this proud and historic result. As I could recall, a year ago, and as the Governor of Phnom Penh, HE Kep Chuktema, as is mentioned in his report just now, the construction of the overpass at Kbal Thnol started at the time that we put into official use the new Monivong Bridge at Kbal Thnol with an aim to relieve traffic congestion.

Also truly reported, HE Kep Chuktema, in his style of making use of the Capital of Phnom

Penh's income for its development, visited and proposed the idea to me at my residence at Takhmao. We may have seen already that along with the development of Koh Pich we have a new bridge Monivong Thmei, after which a remaining sum of money has been used to build this overpass. Now we have secured a sum of money that will be used to build the second overpass at the Pet Lok Sang (Hospital Lok Sang) intersection.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and my wife, I wish to express our great pleasure with this historic architecture and construction after our achievements of a new Monivong Bridge and a new detour to connect the city to the National Road 1. The problem we aimed to resolve with these projects is the everyday traffic congestion, especially at the time of festivity. Now that they are in place, overpass, bridge and detour, we hope that the traffic flow will be better. I hope that drivers will exercise care and vigilance

(Continued on page 2)

21 June 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) Closing Cambodian Veterans Association General Assembly

I have the prepared text here but because my eyes have a problem I suggest that I will go adlib and the text should be included into the proceedings of the General Assembly. Today I have a great pleasure to join with our senior officials in closing the General Assembly of the Nationwide Representatives (of the Cambodian Veterans Association - CVA) and I would like to convey my appreciation to leaders and member participants of the General Association for their hard works in the last two days

that HE Madame Men Sam An, Permanent Deputy Prime Minister, has just reported that two important works have been dealt with - 1) reform of the CVA statute and 2) electing additional members of the central committee and the permanent committee. It is equally important that the General Assembly has reviewed the work done in the last three years 2008-2010, while setting new tasks and targets for the next period.

(Continued on page 3)

09 June 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments) Norton University's Graduation and Diploma Presentation

... It is indeed a great pleasure that after meeting all of you on June 30 last year, today, June 09, I have a chance to meet once again the rector, leaders and professors of the Norton University. Last week some of the guests who were present at the graduation of the Royal School of Administration might be recalled that I had presented an important topic about sickness of being main actor. I would like to thank rector of the Norton University for giving me the honor of being present in the presentation of diploma to 1,179 graduates.

I could recall that in 1997 I was present in the inauguration of the University of Norton and after 13 years today according to the rector's report a lot of progress has been achieved. I am so happy to have noticed realistic development concerning the University, which, started from being a faculty and hired building for its operation, has now had its own building of five stories on

some four-hectare land. I am sure this will be a major material base for long-term and sustainable training of human resources.

I would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere appreciation to the Norton University as well as its management and professors for making their efforts in human resource training, which as of now some 8,413 students are taking up their studies. In the process of making progress and development, our country is noted to have a high percentage of people of young age. High figure of students taking up studies in universities prove this. It is in that sense that I give my appreciation to the participation by the private sector in human resource training, together with efforts provided by the state.

Human resources who have got later works at national or international institutions could be of
(Continued on page 4)

In This Issue

- Phnom Penh First Overpass — P 1
- Cambodian Veterans — P 1
- Norton Graduation — P 1

(Continued from page 1)
while driving here that they would not run into its columns.

My message here today for our people in the whole country is that the first Cambodian ever built overpass has now been completed and put into use officially on June 24, 2010 in between the birthday anniversary of our Heroic Queen Mother and the anniversary of the foundation of the Cambodian People's Party. Maybe I should take this opportune moment to recall some of the background information in relation to my involvements in events that contribute to the liberation of Cambodia in 1979 together with Samdech Chea Sim, Samdech Heng Samrin and other leaders of the Cambodian People's Party.

Try close our eyes and imagine of the day when we first entered Phnom Penh at the day of liberation. The city spectacle at the time would appear in our sight and we could never imagine Phnom Penh of today that has changed tremendously. At the time Phnom Penh was liberated, there were no people and for those who returned from countryside and sought for jobs, they would not dare live in the house that they were offered. In the period from 1979 through to 1981, we could recall of a situation there being what was called taxi bicycle, and there were no motor taxi or cab. What has happened so far to the city after the liberation brought us to a situation beyond expectation because of improvements, whereby increasing number of transport means beyond traffic projection and existing roads prove this fact.

It is in this development that the Royal Government has the duty to oversee the solution, while the Phnom Penh municipality is in fact in charge of taking the initiative to bring into sight concrete action to improve traffic flow and related rules. Unlike the time when we were just liberated, when everyone could just use

any means of transport they may find, no matter if their conditions were up to the standard or not, now our people have had to review their transport means condition before going into traffic. Take food for instance, after the liberation on January 7, 1979, everyone would find anything edible just to quench one's hunger. While before people tried to gain weight, the trend has now reversed because of the risk to confront with obesity related illnesses – high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke.

Situation in recent years has changed as officials of trade and health departments have taken actions to control foodstuff that are on sale throughout the country with an aim to guarantee food safety for our people. Presently, the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, of Trade and of Health have taken food safety measures for our people, which I think we should also include that among changes we have had achieved in the last 31 years. While anyone would just catch and eat just any living thing, now more people are eating in restaurants for better taste. We have in Phnom Penh up to 277 restaurants, 135 hotels and 232 guesthouses.

I am also happy to see that parks have been redeveloped or improved and our people have gone out there for exercise. Though I could not do that myself I would urge our people to benefit from the fact that parks have been improved for walking and exercise. We have replaced laterite-covered accesses in the parks with floor tiles, which would allow our people to exercise even after raining as dirt would not be sticking to their feet anymore. It is in the same intention of achieving a better quality of life that I have instructed HE Kep Chuktema to look into other issues such as maintaining all kindergartens and healthcare centers. We may not have money to redevelop or improve them now, but if we keep them, we will

have the money to do so in the future. They are good places for kids as daycare centers or playgrounds.

These achievements have been possible because of our common efforts and I would urge once again that every one abide by the traffic rules, as I noticed that high traffic accidents happen in Phnom Penh especially. When everyone respects traffic rules, which for motorcycle commuters should include also putting on helmets, etc. we may avoid lethal incident, we may also prevent traffic accident from happening. I may appeal to commuters and/or drivers of all transport means to value own lives because accident could either be lethal, liable to prison and/or fined. So we all should try and make Phnom Penh a disciplined traffic flow city.

Secondly I would urge our people to jointly practice hygiene as we are in the period of advertising our country with three lead terms – Clean City, Beautiful Site and Excellent Service. The Governor of Phnom Penh alone could not achieve this goal but it will surely be attainable with participation of all of our people. It would be meaningful and helpful for our people to place wastes in designated areas or bins. Hygiene is very important as foreign tourists would give this their first impression. I am sure if we could do that, altogether we would be proving to the world of our civilization as a nation.

I thank the Phnom Penh Municipality for taking and implementing to the full my recommendation for asphaltting, bitumenning and/or concreting roads according to the fifty-fifty formula, i.e. half of the cost covered by people living along the road, while another half of the cost would be covered by the state. I hope the Municipality of Phnom Penh will take further actions to go on with this until we achieve our goal. While tourism was hit by financial crisis and economic

downturn, in Phnom Penh we still received a large number of tourists. Aside from that up to four million Cambodians from provinces come to Phnom Penh every year during the water festival.

Having said all this, I see that it is important to recall a few points in the negotiation for political solution to the Cambodian problem. In my capacity as the Prime Minister of the State of Cambodia and with the strategy defined and obligated by the Cambodian People's Party, two key points have been guaranteed – preventing the return of the genocide of Pol Pot, and defending national achievements that have been attained with hardships. I may share a story with all of our people. In Tokyo, maybe HE Ieng Moly, who was then with the faction of Son San, could have remembered, some factions demanded elimination of existing contracts with existing investment companies.

Later in a meeting with then British Ambassador, I told him about this demand for the abolition of investment contracts with a stress on what would happen to confidence among investors, and especially in light of the fact that the British Enterprise Oil company successfully bid for exploration of oil in Cambodia, would you agree if the contract is to be terminated, after the company already paid my Government? Then I invited the Japanese companies and asked the same question and told them my option to eliminate the contracts and prepare for bidding again. Having learned of this fact, political factions concerned withdrew their positions. You may agree with me that on foundation that was built by the State of Cambodia, development of the country has been able to move fast especially in time that we have achieved full peace.

Also today, besides putting into official use of the overpass at

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Kbal Thnol, I would also share with you information that yesterday, the Japanese Government decided to offer Cambodia a 131 million dollars and a two-kilometer Bridge at Neak Loeng, on the national road 1 from Phnom Penh to the border with Vietnam. According to the Japanese Ambassador, the bridge would be ready by 2015. However, according to my calculation it should be ready by late 2014. The bridge feasibility study needs to be thorough because it has to answer to the need for traffic underneath by ships from Vietnam and Phnom Penh.

As of the moment of speaking, major connections across rivers in the country have been achieved – the Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Bridge at Steong Treng's Se San river, the Kizuna bridge at the Mekong River's Tonle Bet point in Kompong Cham, the Cambodian-Chinese Friendship bridge at Preah Tamak, and downstream of the Mekong, the Neak Loeng Bridge that is to be built with the Japanese assistance. Along the Tonle Basac River, at Takhmao, we have already the Bridge of Monivong, old and new ones, and there will be another one at Takhmao together with 20 kilometer connecting road to the National Road 1 to be built with the Chinese money. Along the river of Tonle Sap, we already have the Cambodian-Japanese Friendship Jroy Janva Bridge at Phnom Penh and another one will be built adjacent to it. Further upstream we have the bridge at Prek Phnov that is under construction by the company of Oknha Lyong Phat and the Cambodian-Chinese Friendship Bridge at Prek Kadam.

That is not all. We are seeking fund to help build a bridge to connect between Stoeng Treng and Preah Vihear provinces and also visionary study is underway to foresee as to where bridge could be built. HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Min-

ister of Economy and Finance, yesterday went into signing ceremony with JICA right after the signing ceremony at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after which bidding would be underway in Tokyo, while construction would follow thereof. It has been regrettable that a parliamentarian has said in firm belief that the Japanese would not offer assistance for the construction of the said bridge. What would the person say now as it has turned out that what s/he said is not true? Is it too much that the person could be noted for lying and discrediting the Japanese Government who has promised to build the bridge years already?

With the bridge in place, we will be able to connect Phnom Penh to Svay Rieng, Prey Veng and other provinces to the east and northeast. It also is a part of the ASEAN highway and helps integrate the economies in its role as a corridor in the Great Mekong Sub-region that connects Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and others together. All the above happened in the morning, whereas in the evening we received at the Sihanoukville province 257 military vehicles, including also the platforms for tank delivery, from China. We are not prepared for war with anyone but they are necessary for our defense capability.

Yesterday we have encouraging news from the United States of America that Chhun Yasith, chieftain of the so called CFF (Cambodian Freedom Fighter) has been sentenced to life imprisonment. This has proved that the United States of America recognizes the fact that what Chhun Yasith did in Cambodia is a terrorist act. Some members of the Sam Rainsy Party have also been involved in that too. Every time he meets me, HE Sam Rainsy seeks amnesty for them. How does he explain it? The US Government considers Chhun Yasith - the chieftain of CFF – a terrorist. So you may think how come a terrorist was accepted to

(Continued from page 1)

I would like to take this opportune moment to express my greeting and appreciation for efforts by concerned persons and bodies to achieve so much progress in the last three years. Thanks to a well-prepared mechanism at the national and sub-national levels, CVA has made notably speedy progress. The organization of CVA has been the result of congresses from sub-national to national levels and today we are in what we call the nationwide representatives Extraordinary Congress, by which CVA elected new members to its relevant committees. Despite the fact that CVA is indeed a non-governmental organization it also enjoys a partnering status with the Royal Government, whereas officials with senior positions in the Government have also taken up the positions in this cooperation too.

I thank all concerned, organizers and members, in the whole Congress for their supports for my position as President of the Cambodian Veterans Association and now I know that when I retired I may have to take up a job – President of the Cambodian Veterans Association with other jobs like writing, etc. and I am sure my books will sell well because they will carry many never-before revealed stories. I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the confidence expressed in my leadership. I wish to have your attention on one fact only that success or failure would not depend entirely on person in the presidency alone but our common efforts, ranging from members to leaders.

Let me welcome the newly elected members and leaders of

be member of a political party by its Party leader? And he always seeks for amnesty to be provided? I am not seeking any political gain in bringing this up. I have proofs...■

the Cambodian Veterans Association and I hope they will make efforts and contributions for solving problems and challenges of the Association. I wish to take this opportunity to give my high evaluation to all efforts involved, including also those of veterans themselves in the past three years, especially impact of world financial crisis and economic downturn in the last years. They have been making personal efforts resolving own difficulties. According to the report by HE Ith Sam Heng, Minister for Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, we have in all over 90,000 veterans of all uniforms who have been on the Royal Government's rations/pensions list with some 260,000 dependants, all of which requires a sum of over 6.4 billion Riles a month. In addition to that they also benefit from a twenty per cent pay rise annually is applied to incumbent officials.

However, we still have challenges to face and cope with and I have some recommendations to make so that further efforts could be made. This is not solely for the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, but all relevant institutions have to take actions in crosschecking issues of selling-buying and/or mortgaging rations and/or pensions (provided) by (the Royal Government's) policy for the veterans. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all who have purchased identities (regime log-books) from disabled veterans to return them out of charity, either for free or for a reasonable price. I have learned of this situation from a veteran and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation have confirmed this to me too.

During a short break in Sihanoukville last year, I happened to meet with Chan Aun, a disabled veteran, and in this case, the real one is alive but the fake one

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 1)

Cambodian pride. I have prioritized our policy on human resource training that is based on challenging capacity, which to me competition not only exists in the field of trade but also in human resource capability too. I just gave my speech at the World Economic Forum (held in Ho Chi Minh City, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) on Cambodia's effort in strengthening its competing capability, and institutional capacity is vital in responding to this challenge.

It is our pride that more of its nationals have taken up positions and jobs in various regional and international institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank, and various others, where more Cambodians are working. This is a realistic sign of human resource training objective. I would like to convey also my appreciation for the effort for making an investment on new premises possible on the other side of the river of Tonle Sap. It is true that traffic would be an issue but the Royal Government is working it out to build a new bridge at Jroy Jangva along with the existing Cambodian-Japanese Friendship Bridge, with the fund provided by China so as to cater to the need for traffic volume that is growing everyday.

As of now some countries could not give a proper evaluation of the Cambodian situation and offered to help us build roads with a 6 or 7 meter wide standard. It clearly proves that they had no idea how far Cambodia has gone. As of now, according to current development level, Cambodia would benefit from at least nine-meter wide and eleven-meter wide roads, while in addition to that we now also have had to build overpasses.

In relation to human resource training, the University has offered some 150 scholarships so that I could give them to students from poor families. The University also offers 50% scholarships

to students with promising capability ranking between number one and three in all generations. This should be seen as a contribution to help with relieving hardships of poor students. Let me take this opportunity to give my congratulations to the University that it has been marked to provide the best education on information technology in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

I would like to take this time to express my sincere thanks to students who excelled in their studies in this University. Human resource development is different from human life saving as blood transfusion could be performed from one person to another, while knowledge and know-how have had to be provided by professors and achieved only by students' own efforts. It is in this knowledge that I wish to give my appreciation to all graduates who have finally achieved their objectives in becoming intellectuals for the sake of families, communities and country.

I also take this solemn occasion to thank parents and/or sponsors who have made efforts together with their sons and daughters until they successfully finished their studies. However, as this stage of study comes to an end, one should not completely abandon studying. Study has no ending. No one in this world happens to know all and everything. The world is facing numerous challenges whereby both leaders and people at large have to understand their evolutions and respond to.

Knowledge and know-how have had no ending. Things evolve by the hour and changes in regional and world politics are also included. It is required that we have to keep abreast of tension in the Korean peninsula, internal issues of countries in the region, the Gaza incident between Israel and the Palestinians, the oil leakage in the United States of America, missile shield in Poland, etc. In addition to that we also have

world challenges such as climate change that requires a proper study and adaptation to the environment.

Last week the Cabinet in its meeting discussed a sub-decree in relation to bio-safety that I have instructed concerned authorities not to go to either extreme left or right. When they take a precautionary stand, the measure would go all the way to preventing inflow of seeds, but when they let it loose, influx of seed would be allowed freely. We also have not made experiment as far as food safety is concerned for our people. For instance, some seeds have been tested and verified by other countries' standard to be giving a high output but whether consumption of those products would cause any consequence has had to be studied. Climate change has indeed caused so many disastrous effects. Some seeds have had to be developed to be resilient to climate condition that is higher in temperature and also lacking of water. Climate change is indeed a challenge. This proves that we have to keep on studying and it should not be an end on the day we graduated.

You may have learned about this meeting of Cooperation Forum for the Development of Cambodia in which I gave a keynote address. Cambodia's development partners have agreed to a financing of some 1,097 million dollars for 2010 and close to three billion US dollars for three-year project, though some countries could not declare their contributions for 2011 and 2012 at this stage at all. As far as this point is concerned, in the Cabinet's meeting, I have shared it through the VDO link with provincial leaders as well as the armed forces, and urged them to speed up reform process.

Our friends have placed their trust in and supported us and it is our duty to fulfill the task not for the sake of satisfying someone's criteria but for our people in line

with that of our partners'. This is what I call we have to reciprocate in kind to friends who come to help us. I wish to note here that when I mention about some 1,100 million US dollars, all we could see is the figure. Those who doubt may have to approach relevant embassies in Phnom Penh as their questions to the Government would not be responded.

Take for instance they may ask the Japanese embassy as Japan gave the most among donors to Cambodia. We do not get hold of the money as the money has been given according to pre-selected projects. In certain cases, projects have undergone bidding process in donor countries too. It is in this pattern that questions relating to corruption, if any, should be asked to foreigners and not to Cambodians. What we did was witnessing the groundbreaking and inauguration of achievements.

One should not ask the Government as to where the money has gone for this might prove one is unintelligent. I would be shamed that being leaders either of political parties or non-governmental organizations, yet they have no knowledge of how the money is being used. I would feel ashamed for the opposition party because we all are Cambodians. They are so naïve as to say that why the Royal Government does not get the money given to distribute among the people, like elderly people, as per diem for purchasing their side meals. Well, they could not fool the people as people have failed them by their votes.

We have noted faithful acceptance among our partners and this is not because this time we have had a bigger amount of money than previously at all. In 2009 we have some nine hundred million US dollars. What I wanted to say is that though there is financial crisis and economic downturn the Cambodian development

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)
partners have indeed increased their commitment from some nine hundred million to over one billion dollars. What should be highlighted here is work result. It should be noted that the development partners and the Cambodian side have had similar appreciation and understanding of challenges for Cambodia. We have come to a point that there is a need for harmonization between Cambodia and its development partners and among partners themselves.

As mentioned earlier, while we get help from friends, it is indeed important for us to help ourselves and we should do the best we can that result would not put our friends in a difficult situation for the decision they made on behalf of their tax-payers. We need to work out on this and move forward. I have brought with me a topic here on ten disequilibria that need to be addressed in the Cambodian context to share with you all. In my book “Ten Years of Cambodia’s March,” written in 1988 and published in 1989, I mentioned about four disequilibria only – Demand versus supply, Income versus expenses, Import versus export and Money versus goods. The number of imbalances has gradually increased to six, to eight and to ten lately. Among them, as of early part of the third term legislature of the Royal Government, a new one is imbalance between need for socio-economic development and limited human resources.

In the last five years, this sort of imbalance has shrunk gradually thanks to increasingly effective efforts in strengthening institutional capacity and training of human resources. As far as import versus export is concerned, it should be noted that there are certain countries with which we have increased our exports to a volume bigger than importing from them and some are on reversal trend. It is in this sense that we have to keep on pushing for a foreign trade balance. This is not

an issue for one political party or Government but there requires efforts from all sectors of society, especially the role of private sector.

In my address to the World Economic Forum I mentioned above it is true that the state withdraws from a certain areas but that does not mean the state abandons all. In certain areas the state has to keep its necessary intervention especially in post-crisis period or at the time of a fragile upturn. With the state budget alone we could not respond to demand for growth. Therefore the private sector has been encouraged to help in driving for growth. Let’s all learn the Greek’s experience in which the country is nearly broke.

Putting the Greek’s experience in picture, I would warn people about making promises. Take HE Hatoyama, former Prime Minister of Japan, he finally accepted that his promise could not be fulfilled and he had to resign in relation to the issue of the US base in Okinawa. Some people in Cambodia recently make reckless promise that if s/he is going to be elected, s/he will get back the Kampuchea Kraom (the lower part of Cambodia, which is currently a part of Vietnam). They have gone this far. What if they could not fulfill it? In the map that he deposits at the United Nations, Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, the King Father, does not include the part of territory into Cambodian sovereignty. Also not included are provinces of Surin, Borei Riem, Sisaket, Ubun, etc. which are currently parts of Thailand.

Therefore I would warn people making promises to be careful. As far as topic of salary increment is concerned and also campaigned by the oppositions, I must say no one would want to do so more than I because this would alleviate hardships among our civil servants. The question here is where we get the money from. Increasing salary of 20%

per annum has been a difficult target to achieve. We have over-used the budget earmarked for personnel and decided to trim the priority package and bonus so as to strengthen the salary system.

What we need to do here is to take up responsibility in guaranteeing management of macro-economics and political stability while driving economic growth and speeding up reforms. I used to say and I am still saying it out loud that with reforms, it is 99% that we will survive, and without reforms, only 1% would be the rate for survival.

As of today the Football World Cup is approaching and I beg our people not to go into betting. As we have now closed down CambodiaSix a betting company I would urge local authorities to observe this regulation. I have chosen the period between June 18, the celebration of Samdech Preah Reaj Akka Mohesei Norodom Monineath Sihanouk’s birthday anniversary and the Cambodian People’s Party anniversary on June 28 for the inauguration of the first overpass. I also have instructed the Governor of Phnom Penh to pool the remaining sum to build another one at the Pet Lok Sangh intersection.

I need to take this moment to thank HE Kep Chuktema of Phnom Penh Municipality and HE Uk Rabun of the Ministry of Economy and Finance on issue of collecting daily permission fees for keeping order. In the Reasmey Kampuchea newspaper I found the article “Investment for Order Keeping is a Fireball.” I did not know it has brought about so complicated issue. I apologize to our people, especially though vendors in the markets or elsewhere for the concerns they have with regard to this fee collection system. I faithfully make an apology in my capacity as the top responsible in the Royal Government. The issue has been resolved now and this will not happen again.

However, as far as order is concerned, I would urge you all for an understanding and to refrain from placing your items on sale in the pavements or feeder roads causing traffic congestion of travelers and also to pay attention to hygienic issue too. Both sellers and customers have to take collaborative measures in keeping our city clean as it would be a good thing for all. The company in charge of fee collection for public order is Rath “Sen” Sopheap and I was surprised to see the word “Sen” in there as this would lead to a misunderstanding that the company has something to do with me.

As far as I know Rat Sopheap is the name of the company owner but the company is named with an inclusion of “Sen” there. From now on the Ministry of Economy and Finance and related sectors must be proactive and take appropriate measures. They should not wait for Hun Sen to have a say on all issues. I want the whole mechanism to function all at once without having to wait for order all the time. It has been annoying that everyone seems to have attached “recommendation of Samdech Prime Minister” to their actions. I am quite concerned with this. We have rule and law and it is your competent authority recognized by law to enact them. All I want is institutions abide by and implement law and sub-decree in relation to institutional organic establishment.

There was a reportage on Bayon TV about a sub-national level authority who said “in accordance with the recommendation of Samdech Techo (Hun Sen) to remove people’s homes...” in a case involving illegal infiltration and settlement in a protected forest. It was the sub-national level responsibility to look after the forest. However, you left the protected forest infiltrated and encroached upon. In that circumstance you resorted to “Techo’s recommendation.” This proves

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 3)
is dead. The story is when his wife fell ill he was forced to sell out his regime logbook for a million Riel in 1997-98 to a person, who could use the book for just two years before he died. In light of this Chan Aun has been taken to have died, while the regime in his logbook remains for his two children. Having learned of this situation, I have bought the logbook back for him and ordered for Chan Aun to be reinstated in the list of veterans and entitled to the regime again and to a piece of land and house at the Taken-Koh Sla Handicap Soldiers Development Zone.

With this in mind I ask for further crosschecks to be made and understandings from our people in better off position who have bought the regime logbook to kindly return them out of charity or at a reasonably recovering price to their rightful and entitled holders. I think I could make a contribution for the efforts to purchase them back. However, I warn against any actions by our disabled veterans to sell their logbooks in the knowledge that they would be purchased and then given back to them. That would not be allowed. It is an estimate of about two or three percents of the case in point and some 1.5% of the people would have the ability to return the books for free, whereas another .5% are seeking a return favor. In my capacity as the President of CVA, a token price could be set to buy them back and return them to their true holders, who could make their lives better together with land to be provided as social concession to them.

The Ministry of Rural Development under the leadership of HE Minister Chea Sophara is making efforts in carrying out integration and development to north and to north-west of the country – Preah Vihear and the border areas, Banteay Meanjei, Mealay, Pailin, where houses

and roads are built. Before long, those areas, former battlefields, will be sources of new economic growth. This is our vision – to transform battlefields into development sites. Aside from the national road to Pailin, we will soon have another road to from Thmor Kol (of Battambang province) to Komrieng, Phnom Proeuk, etc. and there will be another road from Banteay Meanjei to Pailin also. We will soon have a better infrastructural setup and I say it would be impossible for Cambodia to integrate itself with neighboring countries when it is not well integrated internally.

It would not suffice to fulfill only two elements – political and administrative - in the process of integration. The policy of speeding up development of infrastructure in the post war era to serve national unity must be a priority and fulfilled to the full. The areas are no longer war but development zones. In so far we have built homes for families of soldiers to the north of the country and the project has in fact been expanded from the province of Preah Vihear to Uddar Meanjei and on. With our better resources, we will need to pick up more speed to fulfill this task. I would ascertain that giving land as social concession to soldiers and their families should go ahead according to and within the work plan of 2010-2013. All provinces and municipalities must systematically oversee the works, while making efforts to resolve land issues with relevant institutions such as the Ministries of Rural Development, of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, of Land Management, Urbanization and Construction, to be referral with the Ministries of National Defense, of Interior, and of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation.

Who among them need to be given out land? It should not be understood and interpreted that all need to be given land. I have

instructed provincial authorities to set targets and land for giving them out to veterans and disabled veterans. Take for instance it would be irrelevant to give a plot of land up in the hill because their disabilities would not allow them to be able to work on it. They should be provided with land that is suitable for cultivation and accessibility to road, healthcare service and schooling for children. Anywhere we build villages for soldiers we also build them schools and health clinics too.

At the same time I would like to make an appeal to authorities in districts and municipalities to verify, in their areas of judicial administration, the number of veterans with a more specified and detailed indicators as to what percentage of the figure verified is defined to be poor so that a target of assistance could be proposed. Because of the fact that we have 24 provinces/municipalities, if two families could be verified and helped per annum, we could be addressing difficulties for 48 families too. In the same manner, because we have up to some 190 and 200 districts, with two families each, we could make a calculative improvement of their living conditions. As far as those in need are concerned here, let me clarify, no discrimination against anyone for his/her political past or affiliation will be allowed.

Assistance will be provided equally across the board. We have to ask question as to why we have so much disabled veterans. Why do we have so many soldiers? Trace it backward, if it were not because of the March-18 coup against then Head of State Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk by the Lon Nol, Sirik Matak, Cheng Heng and In Tam clique, the war could not have happened. Indeed the war broke out in Vietnam, whereas Cambodia did indeed suffer the impacts from the US bombardments along our border areas. The country could have been

still a small peaceful island. If the country did not suffer that ill-fate and the Head of State Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk, the Heroic King-Father, was in control, for the period of forty years, starting March 18 and the present moment, Cambodia, to my understanding, would not have been in this state.

It is important to look straight into the problem and its origin. Who was the cause of so many atrocities and killings? When one refers to Cambodian issue, I would recommend they look at the whole picture as segmenting it would be incomprehensive. Some people are afraid to talk about January 79 when they all were walking barefoot. One has to have historical perception in making evaluation of situation. The three elements of historical, dialectical and logic concepts could not be separated. They are three in one. To analyze it further, if we leave the country as a peaceful island that is making daily progress, though some people could have been unsatisfactory, all of us could have gone to school.

The March-18 coup that overthrew then lawful head of state and brought about disastrous war is a true fact in the Cambodian history. Some people (who took powers before) had been so irresponsible that we have had to pay back their debts they borrowed for bombs to drop on Cambodians. To whom do we bring this responsibility upon? Some dare not mention this. Before Cambodia is reaching this state of being, how many factional controls had it been under? Starting in 1970, Cambodia was under two controls – the National Liberation Front on one side and the Lon Nol regime on the other. Between 1975 and 1979, though Pol Pot ruled the country with genocide, they could not afford to have one nation under their rule, because otherwise there would not be any resistance forces. Be-

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)
 tween 1979 and 1993, Cambodia was under four different rules – and between 1993 and 1998, Cambodia again came to the state of two different rules.

Therefore, we have here veterans of so many factions and uniforms, take for instance after 1979, we have had four different kinds of veterans – those from former State of Cambodia, Democratic Kampuchea, Khmer People's Liberation Front, and FUNCINPEC. Therefore, when all of you go solving the problem in your duty, no matter from which side they are, you have to think of them as someone that are sharing same flesh and blood. The win-win policy has brought about peace and we all are united forces and not being marked to be different by color (or political inclination) anymore. There is only one Khmer nation. We are governed by one unified rule, King, Constitution, Royal Government and armed forces, though we have, in a democratic electoral process, more political parties.

Cambodia then faced so many challenges. Integration from all political lines brought me a comparison to a pot that we used to cook rice for one person, and we then had to serve four with the same amount of rice. Except the State of Cambodia, other political forces did not have regular flow of income. They all had to get paid in Phnom Penh on the basis of the State of Cambodia's infrastructural base. The UN envoy then came to see me at my residence at Vimean Ekareaj (the Independence Monumnet) and proposed me to slash some 30% of Government officials. I told him I agreed in principle but we could not afford to allow cut into the number of teachers and physicians, but their number need to go up instead. And the way to trim the figure down is by not recruiting new ones in lieu of retirees.

We have done the same in effort

to bring down the number of soldiers. We have demobilized some 17,000 soldiers already but more money is needed to do more. I used to say that in time of war asking someone for money for war purpose is easier than seeking someone's help in time of peace in order to demobilize soldiers. I have seen what HE Serei Kosal had said in an interview on what happened on July 5-6, 1997 but the interview would not be aired as I have instructed. As a live witness, HE Serei Kosal clarified about how the Khmer Rouge forces had been mobilized to station in Samdech Pan building and Funcinpec headquarters. The matter is over now though. If there is a need for interview with HE Serei Kosal, he may do so for another one or two hours in detail on what was the plan. He is a live witness, while some (the culprits) accused me of being the coup maker.

They fought us and upon our retaliation, they shouted out loud we conducted a coup. It seems the brief fight brought about a lasting stability, though. I have gone through 105 fights in battlefield before being promoted to the rank of commander. This is not a big figure tough because some of my soldiers have engaged in more battles/fights than I have. In the five-year war between 1970 and 1975, in average, soldiers of my ranks went to some twenty fights per year, whereas soldiers under command went for fight at the rate of one week per month, which made their fight records more than mine. I sent a message through a diplomat in Phnom Penh that before this generation of commanders retires, any military attempts should not be put to a test. They did not take it and tested our resolves. They failed but their ambition forced them to make an attempt on my life again in Siemreap province. They should not think their secret is not known.

Well, this has come into my

comments because I have to elaborate as to why Cambodia has so many veterans and some updates on our plan to reduce soldiers, but in the face of foreign aggression now, I would not give it a go yet. I just wanted to clarify to you all that we used to ask them for further demobilization of soldiers but they denied giving us money for that so we have to keep them. We do not have to station them at the border with Vietnam or Laos, so we could make full use of our forces. Again, I have clarified already that I am not prepared for war with anyone or country and I seek solution by peaceful means. I do not want a war to happen.

Because of modern telecommunication means, we now could see live or almost real time broadcast of what happened in countries at war like Iraq and Afghanistan. It has been so grisly and shocking. Let's imagine how shocking it was to see people carrying children into trenches and at our young age we had to help people put out fire from bombardments on their homes. We know full well the taste and frightfulness of war. It is in this sense that I would reiterate that whatever you do or say, war-making must not be an option because it has been hard to get this far. We all are now sitting together now. Again, in this application, to perform duty in relation to veterans and disabled soldiers, no political pasts should be a barrier, as they were not the ones to have brought about war and differences. We all are war victims but we all should take the pride of being the ones that put it to an end and make it a peaceful nation again.

There has been a contribution from the United Nations but upon its departure, Cambodia is left with a state of having two control areas and Governments. Now we have come together and united where the challenge of making a better living is the

most important factor. It is my wish that veterans without land will have got land for cultivation and as legacies for generations of their children. It is in this intention that I have decided to move disabled veterans from Kien Svay (where there is no land for giving out to them) to Taken Koh Sla. But we also have other veterans for whom we build them villages along the border, which I have see as a policy for achieving social labor redistribution in combination between national socio-economic development and defense purpose.

I would like to give my congratulations to those 37 veterans who have been presented with gold medal of honor along with a house that costs between three and five thousand dollars for each of them. For those 24 veterans to receive silver medals along with a package tour that costs around 1000 US dollars, I would suggest that the Congress offers them in cash and let them decide what to do with the money.

Today is also the third anniversary of the Cambodian Veterans Day. Thirty three years ago at this hour I was leaving a kitchen section and left my rifle there. I have told that on the night of June 20, I left at around two am, June 21, 1977 to be exact, and crossed into Vietnam at the border point between Tonle Cham and Prek Jiv. I had to stop for poor visibility from fog and lack of information as to where could be the Vietnamese military outposts. I asked my colleagues to take a rest at a termite mound. We started our journey again at night following a map that was read by flash of lightning.

Upon my return in 1977, I happened to collect a circulation that was ordering for my arrest under the signature of Mr. Soth, who happened to be regional secretary and head of the military.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

That made me think leaving for Vietnam was the correct decision to make. I had attempted to wage a revolt against the Khmer Rouge but later abandoned it because I felt it would be a dead-end to rise against the local Khmer Rouge leader at that time. I was summoned to a meeting and the commander then named Den was there. I was told to report the number of soldiers I had. I had at that time 1,776 soldiers after some had been transferred to other military units. I was forced to write a letter to summon four others - Gen. Nhek Huon was one of them. There was a sentence I wrote in the letter that they did not seem to have taken notice of and it was "please come see me before reporting yourselves." I could understand they had intention to catch us five altogether.

I then ordered my soldiers to get rice out and prepare for cooking. I had a plan in mind that if ever there needed for a fight, let it be so. If it was possible to avoid confrontation, and if one group (of soldiers) were to disagree with me, I would have had another group to join me. I took a rest and wrote a letter to my wife and I could still remember two lines that go "*once you are reading my letter, I am at a very far place that I also do not know where I am or could be,*" and "*I must say goodbye for when I were to return is not known.*" A soldier of Stieng ethnic group delivered the letter to my wife at hand. He is still alive. He does not ask to be made important person at all. I helped build him a house. Let's think if the soldier was not faithful and brought the news to the Khmer Rouge organization, my wife could have been killed before anyone knew it.

After the liberation, I returned from Vietnam and reunited with my wife and child. My son called me uncle for about two months. This is my life and it is not too much that you have

offered me the position of President of CVA because I was a real soldier. In Vietnam, we were questioned at the village of Hoa Lu Lieu, and then at Lok Ninh, and then Song Be before they decided to believe us. Here in front of us is General Ba Kung, who has been soldier who fought against the French, the Americans and Polpotists on the Cambodian soil. Here also are HE Meas Huon, Meas Kroj and Ngo Minh who are my three assistants. There were two younger soldiers at that time - Sao Sokha, who was then 16, and Tjooun Sovantha, 17, and who were responsible in providing me with protection. Mr. Keo Samuon was my secretary.

Someone has claimed on radio to be my commander. Maybe HE General Nhek Huon may have listened to it. He said that I, senior brother Heng Samrin and senior brother Chea Sim were his soldiers. No one was higher in command than me and here we have all the witnesses - both Vietnamese and Cambodian. How could the person claim himself to be father of December 2 and January 7? I was detained for twenty two days with no handcuff on.

Also I would like to take today's forum to send a message to Mr. Surya P. Subedi, the UN special Rapporteur on human rights in Cambodia, relating to my notification of ill health (that I could not meet him). He said in a press conference that he was "disappointed" (that I did not see him) which to me is meaning differently to "being sorry," which I think the term he used conveys disrespect for the host party, and no less, the disrespect for a leader of an independent and sovereign nation. This is also a disrespect shown to the people of Cambodia who have voted for the Cambodian People's Party to have a majority in the parliament, which in return elected Hun Sen as the Prime Minister. I hope he will correct the term he used. He could have

used other terms like "sorry for being unable to meet with the Prime Minister," or "hope to see him next time," and even more polite "hope his health is getting better soon".

I would base on this reason to consider how often I should meet with this envoy. As usual, I met the envoy three times a year. In fact whenever he comes I have to meet him. But now it seems there has not been a respect. So my message is that (1) I am sorry that you have used the term "disappointed" and a more polite term should be used in respect for person in sickness, (2) please do not try to push the door open when the door is already open or to tell me it is raining when in fact I am in the rain. I mean whatever you think of thinking, I am thinking on it a hundred or a thousand times more than you do. In this world no one loves a nation than its own nationals. No one loves Khmer than Khmer, (3) you need to look at the whole forest in combination with every single tree.

I also would like to send a message to those inside and outside the country about what could be called a "no-shadow organization." I thank people who hold my picture to show support for the policy on land issue and brought me information in relation to that. But how could the no-shadow organization organized action that coincided with the bringing in representatives from all 24 provinces? Is it the will of the people or is there a push by any no-shadow organization.

I also must assure Mr. Subedi that this is not the reason why I could not see him as in fact I learned about this from CTN TV after I made my decision only. So I would stress again that we are good partners and I could not accept the term you used. I did not avoid meeting with you, but it was because of my poor health ...■

(Continued from page 5)

the mechanism does not function. That I have taken matter into my own hand in some instances is because it has been necessary.

It has taken us a long time to get this far and so many attempts on my life have been made known. The last attempt was at Siemreap province on my way to see HM the King Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk. It is not a simple matter as we have gone through so many hardships. This has brought us a pride that we have reunited the country not for a short period of time but for a long time to come. I was asked in a meeting with the French Prime Minister about the Khmer Rouge and its ideology and I told him the fallout is on both organization and ideology.

I have two concerns in fact as we implemented the win-win policy. My first concern was whether or not there would be revenge. It does not happen and it so proves that the win-win policy has in fact united us thanks also to the fact that our country embraces Buddhism that revenge is not in our belief to resolve problem ...

My second concern was if the remnant forces disagreed. I could recall this fact that after gaining independence in 1953, in villages where I lived (Kompong Cham) there were armed groups and robberies. They did not join any particular group but became armed robbers. But it is a successful story that the former Khmer Rouge forces decided to return to the fold of our nation altogether ...

There was an armed clash incident at Tropeang Prasat district between the Cambodian and Thai forces ... It was noted to be an incident and still impossible to verify and not a conflict that could spill into general border war. It could have been a misunderstanding and both sides are in contact to figure it out ...■