

28 December 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Sealing Dam for Hydroelectric Power Plant at Koh Kong



28 December 10—Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen (in dark sunglasses) Presides over the River Closure Ceremony to build Russei Jrum KraomKampuchea Thmei Hydroelectric Dam (Kampuchea Thmei Photo)

Hydroelectric Dam at Koh Kong

Today I am so glad to be here with all of our people to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony to seal the dam for the hydroelectric power station at Russeik Jrum Kraom to be built by a Chinese company. I am so glad that this project finally gets started in late 2010, to be exact, it is an achievement to greet New Year 2011.

Our people may have noticed that I have made numerous trips to (the People's Republic of) China and a number of visits conducted by the Chinese leaders to the Kingdom of Cambodia. Thanks to cooperation in political and various other fields, with the supports of the two Governments, today we all are witnessing this huge hydroelectric power generation project.

'Cassava Diplomacy'

While I was in Beijing, the Financial Times ran an impressing title editorial 'Cassava Diplomacy.' Readers could have thought that

the editorial is a satire vis a vis Hun Sen's visit to the People's Republic of China. In fact, the editorial, in its depth, has claimed that the cassava diplomacy would in fact bring about progress for thousands (Cambodian) families who grow cassava. The visit is in fact designed for Cambodia to export cassava to China and as this has been the case, we are now working to get other crops on the way too, like corn, for example. The Chinese market of 1.3 billion people is the world biggest. They could be profitable for Cambodia in general, but particularly for Cambodian farmers.

The Right Man for the Job

HE Say Phuthong, the elderly member of the Cambodian People's Party and who is also here present today, has been the one to offer me support. In his position then as the Head of the Organizing Committee of the Central Committee (of the Cambodian People's Party) and one of the most influential members in those days, he told everyone around him that he was so proud that he had chosen the right man

(Continued on page 2)

29 December 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
2010 Rural Development Review

From Dirt/Laterite to Asphalted Rural Roads

At this point we all agree that we have transformed the dirt road for buffalos and oxcarts into those for human. The total rural dirt road we have built is long and it has taken us a lot of money and time to keep doing maintenance job. Being dirt/laterite roads they could not survive flooding or heavy rain. HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance,

has had good experience in his project to build an asphalted in place of dirt road from the district of Dambe (of Kompong Cham province) to the district of Tchlong (of Kratie province). Some people have chosen to go to Kratie city via that asphalted road instead of going all the way to Memot district. From Tchlong, they also have asphalted road to Poes of Kroch Tchmar district of Kompong Cham province.

(Continued on page 5)

09 December 2010 (Unofficial Translation of Selected Comments)
Inaugurating Battambang University New Buildings

Four Visits in a Row in 2010

I am so glad today to return to the province of Battambang once again after three previous visits. This fourth visit is indeed prideful as I will have to officially inaugurate buildings for the University of Battambang and some more achievements.

It is our pleasure and pride that the University of Battambang has sprung up elegantly as I saw it from a bird's eye view. It is a great wisdom of HE Sar Kheng and Lok Chumteav (Madame) to put effort in getting this university off the ground by combining separated tertiary and professional education facilities into one. Thanks to their great initiatives, new buildings have sprung up with old ones that were constructed, and now refurbished, back in 1965.

It has been noted in a report to me here that the achievements that we inaugurated today have cost some 6,815,702 USD and 495,600,000 Riel. It should be noted that the total amount of contribution from both inside and outside the country is 6,877,802

USD. This is a fairly big amount of money ever contributed. I greatly thank HE Sar Kheng and Lok Chumteav as well as contributors for their shares in making the university composed of well designed and built facilities in the province of Battambang.

There is one more building, provided by HE Dul Phok, to be completed. It will be a two story building that is going to serve as library. I also learn that there is this effort for buildings to be serviced as boarding houses for students and teachers. As male students, in the meantime, could benefit from staying in the Buddhist pagoda, by residing with monks, I assure that priority must placed on female students' facilities while building the boarding house.

As far as teaching and studying tools are concerned, I have the knowledge that you already have 430 computers in five computing classrooms. The Deputy Prime Minister HE Sar Kheng and Lok Chumteav have accepted to respond positively to the Rector's

(Continued on page 6)

In This Issue

- Russeik Jrum Kraom Hydroelectric — P1
- 2010 Rural Development Review — P1
- Battambang University Buildings — P1

(Continued from page 1)
(Hun Sen) for the job.

When I became Prime Minister, I was only 32 years old, whereas other leaders were in their 40s and 50s. His support has been going on for 26 years today since when I was Minister for Foreign Affairs at the age of 27, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs at the age of 29. Whether one's action is being addressed as cassava diplomacy or anything else, as long as the result responds to people's aspiration and need for capital and technology for national development, after a protracted war, that action will do.

Chinese Nonstop Investments, Three Types of Capitals

As the world is experiencing large scale financial crisis and economic downturn, it should be noticed that (the People's Republic of) China has continued to make nonstop investment in Cambodia. As we all know now there are in all five hydroelectric power stations under construction – Komjai, Kirirom III, Stoeung A Tai, Stoeung Ta Tai and the Russei Jum Kraom that we are here to celebrate the river closure ceremony today.

To be frank with you all, as the said crisis arise, I am so concerned many of our projects could be experiencing financial shortfall because (countries or companies who engage in the projects could have had a problem of) financial deficit. It is a good thing for Cambodia that the People's Republic of China does not suspend any projects in Cambodia at all – whether in grant, low interest loans or private investments. This has indeed enabled Cambodia to go on with its planned development.

There have been three types of capital inflow from China to Cambodia: a) grant, b) no-interest or low interest and buyer's loan/credit, and c) capital provided by the Chinese Government to reinvest in Cambodia.

Chinese Assistances To Date

During the visit to Cambodia in December 2009, HE Xia Jin

Ping, Vice President of the PRC, declared providing Cambodia with 1,200 million USD credit. The Royal Government of Cambodia got 400 million USD for the construction of new infrastructure, especially roads, irrigation system, and electric transmission lines. The Chinese Government has offered the remaining 800 million USD as capital for Chinese companies to invest in Cambodia. As I said (they have been invested in) five hydroelectric plants so far.

Through the visit to Cambodia in November 2010 of HE Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, and my visit in December the same year to the PRC, the two countries have come to signing some 30 contracts, frankly, that will be helping Cambodian in its effort to take off.

As we are in the stage of spending the 400 million USD, the Chinese Government, in the course of my visit, has offered another loan of 300 million USD, which I think will be used for building 1) a road between Koh Nhek of Mondulakiri through to Ratanakiri, 2) a road between Preah Vihear and Stoeung Treng, together with another bridge across the Mekong River, and 3) the Phase-I Vaiko River Irrigation system in Svay Rieng province, which would require further discussion.

Russei Jum Kraom – Biggest Electric Power So Far

Take for instance, as is reported by the company and HE Suy Sem, Minister of Industry, Energy and Mines, the Russei Jum Kraom hydroelectric power station will produce some 338 MW of electricity, which is so far the biggest electric station among hydropower electric stations under construction in Cambodia. The cost of building this electric dam is about 495 million USD. If it were not for the support of the Government of the People's Republic of China, I am sure the capital would not have come this fast.

There have been some remarks by so and so regarding this project. Let me clarify this. As far as the electric power project of Russei Jum Kraom, for example, is concerned, it is being built in a 35 year BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) form of investment. The state (of Cambodia) would guarantee only on purchase of electricity and other risks involved but not business corporation. In fact there was a company from a different country that came and asked for the Cambodian state to provide all sort of guarantees in exchange for investment. I told them we would only do it otherwise.

Food and Financial Contribution for WFP to Continue

If the company requires the state to provide such guarantees so that the company could go borrow money for the construction, why else the state could not do itself? You may go back and look at records of the negotiation. Take for instance, the other day, the (WFP) has written a letter to seek for an apology about a remark it has made (about Cambodia's food security status). When Cambodia is having rice surplus they have said that Cambodian is in hunger. However, because they have sent in an apology letter, I have permitted concerned Cambodian institutions to continue to provide (WFP) our contribution of close to two thousand tons of rice and a sum of almost half a million USD.

Power for Phnom Penh and Battambang, Demand always on the Rise

The power to be generated from this plant would be transmitted across the province of Pursath, a part of it of course would be given to Koh Kong province, to O Saom, Stoeung Atai, Pursath I and Pursath II before it goes on one line to Battambang and on another line to Phnom Penh. Some may ask why we are producing so much power. I may as well respond that there will not be enough as far as electric power is concerned. In 1995, during my visit to the C4 Electricity in Phnom Penh, I told then Minister

of Industry, Energy and Mines HE Pu Sothirak that demand for electricity will always be increasing.

Facing increasing demand for electricity and high price of fuel to generate electricity, we should be looking for alternative sources of energy generation. In 2008-2009, we suffered a big blow as the price of fuel in the world went up to a level that was so hard to mitigate. There was then a consideration by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in light of high fuel price, to propose consumer price of electricity. I stopped the move and the state continued with subsidy so as to prevent sure-to-be falling through for consumers of all types.

Any price increase (for electric consumption) would lead to instability and unfavorable impact on the people's livelihood, but also production lines that were in a stage of difficult competition already. In 2008, the State has subsidized some 22 million USD on electric power supply.

We need to be less dependent on fuel so that we could guarantee our energy security from volatile fuel price. It is true that coal is cheap at the moment but we have to be cautious of instable price of coal in the future. The only viable source of energy left in this situation is hydropower plant. It is indeed important to preserve our forest because in absence of forest we also do not have water for both water to run the turbine and irrigation system, but also for benefit from forest carbon purchase.

300 MW for Phnom Penh, 10,000 MW Possible

This has brought us to a conclusion that we could not go on with diesel power generation anymore. Fund seeking for electric production has commenced and there have been studies that about 10,000 MW of electricity could be generated.

As of now we have six projects undergoing and according to the report of HE Suy Sem, some 17

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

projects have been allowed for feasibility studies. We also have a project to study about power generation run by coal in the province of Preah Sihanouk too. As far as Phnom Penh electric consumption is concerned, some 120 MW has been lined from Vietnam to address its daily demand for 300 MW. Vietnam has yet to provide some 50 MW more, making it 170 MW out of the 200 MW contract, according to our contract, but it has been difficult because Vietnam is experiencing lack of water to run the turbines.

If Cambodia produces the amount of electricity as has been studied, some 10,000 MW, how does Cambodia plan to make use of it? Let me put this way if we make use only 5,000 MW, we may have extra 5,000 MW for commercial purpose to neighboring countries. As of the moment of speaking we are purchasing electricity from Laos, from Vietnam and from Thailand. With extra power and because geographical conditions of our neighboring countries, we may be able to provide them with our power in the form of two-way trade. For instance, if we could produce electricity from the Stoeung Me Toek, we do not need to line it in for internal supply but sell it to Thailand.

We are also planning to have electric power from the Kirirom II hydropower plant in 2012, from Ta Tai in 2015, from Atai in 2013, and from this Russei Jrum Kraom in 2015.

The Komjai Hydroelectric Plant – Ready by August 2011

According to the Chinese ambassador, HE Pan Guang Xue, the 193 MW Komjai hydroelectric plant will be ready to provide power five months before schedule or around August 2011. I have asked the Minister of Industry, Energy and Mines, HE Suy Sem to give me a report of his organization and management of immediate setup of 70 km long transmission lines from Kompot province to Takeo province with the credit fund from Germany. I

have instructed the Ministry to work with the private company that is winning bid of the German loan to work out a speedy construction plan, and in case of necessity, the Electricite du Cambodge (EC) could also share.

For instance the construction plan has been designed for two work groups, but we may work out with them to increase to four or five different groups, with additional cost covered of course. Though it has been contracted that the Konjai hydroelectric dam in Kompot province will provide electricity in late 2011, but if we have a chance of getting it before the stated timeframe, and we do not benefit from it because we do not have the transmission line ready for it to be wired to Takeo, it would be a big loss not only of money but also protracted lack of electricity in Phnom Penh.

It is this thought that I would order for concerned authorities and related provinces and cities of Kompot, Takeo and Kep to make active participation in the construction of the electric transmission lines. I have said in the last Cabinet meeting, in which I decided to give permission for coal-powered electric plant, that where there is car there must be road to drive it in, where there is road there must be car to drive. I mean if we produce electricity, we must have transmission line. If we do not purchase the electricity, we will have to pay for their power. Here we are talking about 338 MW of electric power.

Blueprint of Transmission Lines, Alternative Safety

We are in the process of setting up transmission lines from Russei Jrum Kraom of Koh Kong province to O Saom, and then to Pursath province. From there, one line will run through to Battambang province, to the border with Thailand, and then to the province of Siemreap. Another line will run from Pursath in opposite direction to Phnom Penh, and from this line, the power could also be transmitted to Preah Sihanouk province. We have already adopted a plan to run electric lines to Kompong Cham prov-

ince from Phnom Penh. We are seeking fund to set up power line between Kompong Cham and Kratie province. Between Kratie and Stoeng Treng, we have secured loans from India for the construction already.

We also have this segment between Siemreap province and Skun of Kompong Cham province that needs to have power line in order to effectively power the areas around Tonle Sap Lake.

However, we should anticipate cases of interruption of power supply due to force majeure where we need to have an alternate power line, which I listened to the report by HE Suy Sem yesterday already. The alternate power line is to run power which is now through O Saom/Pursath alone to run through to Kompong Speu and on to Phnom Penh. This would give us an alternate supply line in case of power out- ing in one due to all sorts of reason.

Development versus Environmental Impacts

We have reasoned that there is no development that is not having impact on environment and I would suggest any right-minded environmentalists to give us the most appropriate answer. Are there or not impacts on environment from drilling for oil under the sea bed, quarrying stone for cement making, mining ground for steel, and building electric dam? Let's take making tree-sap torch for instance, in order to make a torch they have to cut open a tree to get its sap, would this not be a harmful action on tree?

It is ridiculous that when we are trying to develop our way of life, some people came out and said that we cause environmental problem. When we leave our way of life untouched, they came out and said we do not improve people's living condition. There has to be a cost for everything. In order to get 338 MW of electric power, we need to seal the dam at Russei Jrum Kraom, whereby a part of forest will be inundated. That is the cost we pay to get 338

MW power.

As far as the Mekong River is concerned, there has been conflicting opinions and I have tasked the Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology, HE Lim Kean Hor, to work out Cambodian position and seek for a common solution in everyone's benefit. We have maintained our position to oppose any diversion of the river course for whatsoever purpose from its original stream. Country members of the Mekong basin must abide by the rule that upstream water will not be diverted out of the basin for use in other places that would lead to shallow level of water in the lower stream. We have taken absolute stand on this and have been against any move by Thailand to divert the water from the Mekong to other areas.

In Cambodia, some politicians also had a vision of digging a river that diverts water from the Mekong through Kandal to Takeo and to Kompot province which would bring about water diversion from its original course that will create problem for Vietnam. So I am sure every country members must not buy this idea of diverting the water course. It is impossible to get the water in Russei Jrum Kraom, Atai, Ta Tai, etc. to flow back into the Mekong system rather than being heading toward the sea. However, I have asked HE Lim Kean Hor to conduct a study on making use of water potential from the hydroelectric dam for irrigation, and this will be applied in all hydroelectric dams, Pursat I, Pursat II, etc.

China's Help Realize Four Priority Areas

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our Chinese friends for their help so that Cambodia could get to the objectives it has planned. Let me take this moment to inform HE Pan Guang Xue that 23 years ago, on behalf of the Party and Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, I have set a long-term policy of four priority areas for Cam-

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

bodia. They are water, road, electricity and human resources. It is still correct even 23 years after. I think this will be the areas that Cambodia will have to live with for another twenty years.

The Cambodian People's Party that is leading the Royal Government of Cambodia will continue with the four priorities whereby water irrigation for agriculture will be our primary attention. We have had assistance from China to build irrigation systems in Battambang's Konghot area, Tonle Vaiko of Prey Veng and Svay Rieng provinces, in Pursath and Stoeng Keo of Kompot. More will come. As of now Cambodia has the potential to export 2.4 million tons of milled rice, while it is operating mono-cultivation pattern. We could double the figure, when our mono cultivation pattern changes to bi-cultivation one.

As far as road is concerned, we have got so much loans from China to build many roads and we will have to celebrate ground-breakings to build some 300 km infrastructures, which includes roads, bridges, railways and ports. Thirdly, as witnessing here today, we celebrate the construction of hydropower electric plant, one among many others, which will eventually contribute betterment of power supply for national development as a whole. Last but not least, in area of human resources development, we are making steady progress in accordance with short, medium and long-term policies.

Through HE Pan Guang Xue, I would like to thank the Government of the People's Republic of China for the support they have provided Cambodia including urging investors to come do business in Cambodia. The Chinese Prime Minister, HE Wen Jiabao, the Chinese President, HE Hu Jintao, the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China, HE Wu Bangguo, have been so helpful in encouraging investors from China to Cambodia.

(Continued from page 8)

equivalent ranks of Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister, etc. That is my idea that I have proposed to HM the King.

Today, on TV, because so person has ceased to abide by the rule and gets involved in politics, I will propose to HM the King to end his position as advisor of HM the King. HM the King is neutral. When an advisor of HM the King is involved in politics, why can't it be inferred about HM's involvement? When the person

Peace and Stability Are Main Factors

The fact that we have achieved so much is not accidental. We have made great efforts while peace and stability are critical factors. Take this place for instance we could not even reach this part of the country, even prior to 1970s, especially when Cambodia was under French rule, not to mention building massive electric plant like this. If Cambodia lacks peace and stability, would anyone in his/her right mind think that China would pour out money and invest in Cambodia? Having said so and as we see importance of the project, we all must join hands in defending what we have gained.

I would also urge all provincial authorities concerned to make efforts in protecting every segment of transmission lines in their areas of responsibility. I would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere thanks for the efforts of the Ministries of Industry and Finance, the Cambodian Development Council, Electricity of Cambodia and concerned institutions, the de-mining team is also included.

Thanks to combined efforts we are in the process of putting our policy of electrifying rural areas of Cambodia into reality, which according to our plan, could take us till 2030 to provide electricity to some 98% of rural areas of Cambodia...■

lost in the political elections, would not it be a loss seen for HM the King?

I need to send out a clear message (as far as this return to politics decision is concerned). It is quite a mess because of one person has been making unreliable decision about political involvement,

I do not mean to harm anyone. My only intention is to keep the Cambodian Royal family respectable. However, they should not underestimate my (political) resolve. You are welcome (to politics again). I respect human rights but I would not bow to anyone who would want to have double status (of being politician as well as advisor of the King). S/he may have to choose one among the two: if you want to participate in politics, you have to stop being the King's advisor, and if you want to retain your advisor position, you have to abandon politics.

As far as the petition for the return to politics is concerned I also have the information. I know who is in charge of collecting signatures in Batambang, Siemreap and Kompong Cham provinces. It was a case too that the petition in Siemreap province had been advised to get more thumb prints.

There has been attempt to woo some in the current coalition government and I know who that would be. Some said they would stay on for a while. I would suggest to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Interior HE Sar Kheng to look into this matter. I would not allow for that. If they are so expressed to leave I will get them off the Government list. I would not tolerate a snake with two heads at all.

Everyone's rights have to be attached with rule of law as their conditions. Some foreign radios have been busy making interviews with so and so, but they would not go for the masses who would speak in favor of the Cambodian People's Party. If ever they interview officials or supporters of the Cambodian People's Party, it is highly possible

that those interviews would not be broadcast or not in full. That is why I do not grant any interview unless it is live. However I now have so many radios and TVs that it may not be necessary to speak on foreign radios at all.

I think I have made it clear now that I do not give green light to anyone to do anything, nor I ever grant my support to so and so to go into politics. S/he may do whatever s/he wants but s/he must not link it in any way to my name or cause harm to anyone.

The Most Rice Ever Produced in 32 Years

2010 may be the year that we have harvested the most rice in almost 32 years after the fall of Pol Pot. We have harvested and collected almost 8 million tons of paddy rice. With this amount we are expecting a surplus of about 3.7 million tons of paddy. According to some preliminary calculation, some 2.4 million tons of milled rice for export will be available.

However, maybe (Deputy Prime Minister) HE Keat Chhon could verify it with the World Food Program on an interview. Have you seen the interview (provided by the World Food Program) that Cambodia is vulnerable to being food insecure? At the same time we have a request from them for a supply of 2,000 tons plus a certain sum of money every year. I wish that this information is checked and if it is true, we should get our rice and money back. A correction need to be made.

Maybe HE Keat Chhon could summon WFP representative in Phnom Penh for clarification. In fact their task is to collect rice in the world to give to Cambodia, but they have asked from Cambodia in the past three or four years. They also do the same for this year. We could not afford to give (rice and money) to the organization that is going to give the rice back to us and discrediting us at the same time. The amount of some 2,000 tons is good for giving out to orphanages...■

(Continued from page 1)

After asphaltting the road, it has taken us less money and time in maintenance. If the roads were to be dirt/laterite covered, the cost of maintenance per annum could have summed up to almost the cost of asphaltting them. In Takeo province, HE Chan Sarun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, has built some 35 km of asphalted road. He does not have much problem with maintenance so far. In Battambang province, Oknha Sok Kong (of SOKIMEX), together with some budget from the Asian Development Bank, has already asphalted road to the water reservoir at Komping Puoy. In Siemreap province, HE Sieng Nam has also built some. Based on these experiments, we have come to a conclusion that by building asphalted road we would save our time and resources from frequent maintenance.

Challenges for Rural Roads, Two-Prong Strategy

Having come this far I would recommend that we are taking a two prong strategy. Firstly, we will go on providing fund for regular maintenance and secondly we should seek financing for transforming rural roads into asphalted ones. The Ministry of Rural Development has recently signed into agreements with the Asian Development Bank, Korea, etc. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has projected a total length of 505 km of roads in 2011 to be given as priority for seven provinces – Kompong Cham, Prey Veng, Kompong Tchnang, Pursath, Battambang, Kompong Thom and Siemreap provinces.

If we could build some 500 km of asphalted rural roads every two or three years, we would have interlaced asphalted rural roads. We could also take a frog-leap measure to build these roads like the road at Loek Dek district and Saang Troey Sla of Kandal province, where asphaltting has been done by a segment at a time every year.

We have been facing with high maintenance cost. Cars and trucks are coming and going to and from rural areas in higher number now. As far as trucks are concerned, the Korean trucks have now become the popular means of transportation and our people loaded them with rice from the field. As construction material is a great demand in rural areas, shipments of gravel or crushed rock, sand, steel, brick, cement, etc. have been serious challenges for rural roads.

I would urge HE Keat Chhon to look into this issue together with the concerned Ministries of Public Works and Rural Development, in addition to fund from external sources, to work out a plan as to which road and where internal financing is possible for asphaltting.

Gratitude of January-7 victory

We are now approaching the 32nd anniversary of the January-7 victory day. In fact January 7 victory day marks the liberation of all, the opposition and their relatives included. It should be said that this day has in fact liberated those in hell to so to speak because according to the Buddhist teaching, they would come every year to get alms offered via the Buddhist monks. If it were not because of the January-7 victory, when Buddhism and Buddhist followers were liberated, how could they expect to get alms from the monks since there were no Buddhist monks? Anyone who disrespects and shows no gratitude to the January -7 victory day, I would say, they may not be there for long.

Policy of Populism

To my value, a true democrat does not have to declare him/herself so. S/he also would not have to claim oneself to be a true patriot or a true royalist. Take for instance, in the cause of electoral campaign in 2008, some political parties dared assure that if their parties were not to be elected, royalism in Cambodia would be undermined. What happens now? The Cambodian People's

Party has up to two-third majority in the National Assembly in Cambodia. What happens to the royalism in Cambodia? It has become more revered. While this is true, those who have claimed (to be the most royalist) have not got seats. Without seats, what can they do?

We who have more seats respect and defend the throne and royalism, and have never claimed to be either of the above. (If one listens to their campaign) we do not have a place because they claimed all – patriot, royalist, Sihanoukist, democrat, human rights activist, etc. What is left for us is populist then.

In fact judging from our actions, what we have done so far has truly revealed the nature of populism, which stays as the Cambodian People's Party's true policy. It is a part of people's democracy that is inclusive in my doctoral thesis. We never self-proclaim to be so and so but our actions have clearly defined who we are. Our philosophy is clear that claiming to be so and so is not necessary. We belong to the Cambodian People's Party and have implemented successfully the policy of populism.

We devoted our attention on rural road. By end of the first decade of the twenty first century, we are thinking about making rural roads that we have built (in the past decades) asphalted. Whether the opposition is consent with this action or not it is their problem. What we are doing is true effort for advancement.

Social Labor Redistribution

I would like to thank HE Chea Sophara, Minister of Rural Development, inter-ministerial commission, and generous people who have contributed money along with the state budget to build houses at 3,700 USD each for families of our soldiers. I must reaffirm border area development is our priority and is not subjected to the relations with Thailand at all. We have neglected this job but now we are working out what

we call redistribution of social labor aimed at serving the socio-economic development and national defense sector. It is a change in behavior and strategic plan.

We have laid out social safety net for soldier families and their members through investment in infrastructures such as asphalted roads, rural roads, land distribution for soldier families and their members to build up their livelihoods. This is a social safety net because it will not be for them and their families only in the present time, but also when they retire too. We still have land that can be used for social concession for our soldier families and some poor and landless people who live along the border area. Demining, removal and destruction of unexploded ordnance is our prioritized task to evade accidents and damages.

Clarifying Positions on Thai-Cambodian Relations

Let me take this moment to clarify some points about reconciling relations with Thailand. After troop readjustment took place, it can be said that the situation at the Keo Sekhakisvarak has been resolved. However, I would like to make some clarifications on a few points.

First, I never accept that registration of Preah Vihear temple as a World Heritage leads to tension between Cambodia and Thailand at all. If anyone in Bangkok claimed so, I would say it is wrong. In my discussions with Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vijiava and other Thai leaders, I never approve that the (Preah Vihear temple) registration has led to tension between the two countries at all. I would urge UNESCO and other foreign friends not to be misled and deceived by distorting campaign from anyone. I approve that tension arises from the aggression by Thai troops on July 15, 2008. I have made it clear that though Ambassadors (between the two countries) have resumed their

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

duties, I still do not consider our relations fully normalized. Normalization in full would be only when the invading troops withdraw from the Pagoda of Keo Sekhakirisvarak. As of 10:30 am on December 1, 2010, when the troop has been readjusted from the Keo Sekhakirisvarak pagoda, I declare full normalization has been achieved.

Second, about this interpretation that Cambodia has invaded some 1.8 million Rai of (Thai) land. It is the first time in history that Cambodia has become invader on someone else's land. Usually in history one could only hear that so and so invaded Cambodia, and at some point we have been accused to be some country's puppet. However, as of this moment, the Royal Government of Thailand and the Thai army have affirmed that they have lost no land. This has affirmed that those extremists have made wrong and baseless accusation.

(I am sure) the Thai Government, Thai Prime Minister, their Defense Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, and the new Commander-in-Chief Gen. Prayuth Chan-Ochar, who visited me the other day, are all patriots (for Thailand). When the two sides claim there is no territory loss, it is even better that we have nothing else to be worried of. As far as the removal of K1 village from the temple site is concerned, the village has not been removed at the Thai demand but in response to the request of the Preah Vihear authority and UNESCO.

Today we have arrested seven yellow-shirt Thais, who trespassed in Cambodian territory. One of them is a parliamentarian and some journalists. One of them is this Veera Somkwamkid. They will be transported to Phnom Penh. There has been intervention for us to release the members of parliament. I told (the intervening party that) Thai parliamentarians would enjoy their privileges only on Thai territory. They have come into Cam-

bodian territory to measure land. Cambodia has got every right to arrest them. We will see through that they will go through the trial.

HE Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, reports to me that the procedure to handle this case will be to first place them at the immigration police upon arrival, and then they will be brought to the court. What charges to make will be up to the court. After being charged, they would be sent to prison. I hope that Prime Minister Abhisit will understand the Cambodian legal system that no one could be above it. I think that the arrest would not lead to renewal of diplomatic spat between Cambodia and Thailand at all.

CPP Parliamentarians and Their Constituency

There has been a comparison by COMFREL that parliamentarians of so and so political parties have frequently visited people in their constituencies, whereas our parliamentarians never do so. I think this is a serious mistake.

As one of the special criteria before getting promotion and/or appointments, the CPP members must serve people at their respective constituency. We even double effort in many cases. Take for instance HE Im Chhun Lim, Minister for Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, who works for the Cambodian People's Party at Kratie province, he resigns from being parliamentarian and let two other parliamentarians to work in his place. He instead oversees the job being fulfilled.

The same person also wants Hun Sen to retire soon because he once claimed that Hun Sen should not deny accepting age as a retirement condition. Maybe I should encourage him to allow me to express my opinion too. It has been the case that those of that sort always claim to have the rights to self expression but would claim being threatened when we also express ourselves. My constituency is in Kandal

(Continued from page 1)

demand for an addition of 200 PCs, 70 laptops and 2,000 chairs. In fact we have now reached an information epoch that everyone has to have a computer. I also have one that would allow me to go online and browse for information, especially when I go abroad. It is the best means for me to get information from inside Cambodia through websites.

As far as this proposal for the location for the Royal University

province and as Prime Minister I have to be a member of parliament too. It is one of the criteria. The Cambodian People's Party has got a strong and vivid mechanism and that our parliamentarians are meeting the locals in their constituencies less than those of the oppositions could not be a true statement to make.

Defining Model Villages

How do we define model villages? I used to have a spat with Peter Leuprecht, former special envoy of the Secretary General of the United Nations, about development of rubber plantation at Tumring in the district of Stomg where he claimed would eventually eliminate trades of the minority. I immediately reacted to his remarks if he would like our ethnic people to go on wearing a piece of cloth around their private parts for tourists to have a look at? So I would like to draw your attention on how to define and give criterion to model villages.

Please bear in mind that we have come to an era that our ethnic people also know how to use motorbikes, and they no longer walk on foot anymore. Female ethnic people even have their nail painted. So we must work out a clear definition for model villages. We must preserve but along with that we cannot leave them in a state they would be hundreds of years ago. Take their homes for instance, they may preserve the style but inside they could use mattress, and in presence of electricity, they could use electric fan too ...

of Agriculture of Battambang is concerned, and also a building to serve as boarding house, I am sure that HE Chan Sarun, Minister for Agriculture and whose training background is in food and agriculture, would know what is best to do with this. I accept to take care of this proposal with a down payment of 100,000 USD. Again priority must be placed on providing facility and condition for female students. We have built, for your information, in Phnom Penh a number of student hostels because Cambodia is also providing scholarships to foreign students.

Yesterday I also approved the formation of a commission under the leadership of HE Sar Kheng to see through the design and building of the Chea Sim-Konjaimie University, formerly Moha Russeivedic University in Prey Veng province. The University would be a conjoined position for students to come from the provinces of Prey Veng, Svay rieng and Kompong Cham. I would also like to declare my contribution of 100,000 USD for the construction work and another 100,000 USD for the students and/or teachers hostels.

Nuclear Engineering - a New Subject

As is reported by HE Prach Chan, the Governor of Battambang, as well as clearly stated in the report of HE Touch Visalsok, the Rector, together with new buildings, another remarkable thing is that the Battambang University is to offer a new subject course on nuclear engineering. The subject is indeed not included in curriculum of any universities in the whole country so far.

Let me clarify this point a bit as far as nuclear engineering in the curriculum of the University is concerned. This is in fact a response to the (Royal Government's) Rectangular Strategy – Phase II. I have in fact removed from the policy a phrase about electricity production to be generated by nuclear power. Finally I

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

have to put it back in because it is now a general trend in the world that everyone is looking for electricity to be generated by nuclear power.

We have had the proposal in the last months for investments in nuclear-powered electric power generation but we have not yet approved it. I hope that HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy and Finance, who has his degree in nuclear engineering in France, could look into this matter and perhaps makes contribution in developing curriculum for this subject matter.

Four Universities in Four Provinces

In the last years, I have been so proud that we have put into use five new universities in between 2006 and 2010 in four provinces. In 2006, we put in to use the University of Svay Rieng (in the province of Svay Rieng), which was built under the initiative and leadership of the late HE Hok Lundy. In 2008, at Banteay Meanjei province, we put into operation the University of Banteay Meanjei, which was built under the leadership of HE General Ke Kimyan. Two years later, 2010, today we put into use the University of Battambang. We also have another University at the province of Siemreap.

A critical issue here for us is to build more schools in rural areas. (You may have noted that a few days ago) I have mentioned about and drawn attention of my vision of achieving a goal of one junior college for each commune. It is noted with pride that this vision has almost become a reality now whereas in some communes there have been more than one junior high school.

In the district of Tramkok of Takeo province for instance there are up to seven junior high schools. This is not a surprise because as we all are witnessing here now our country has got a university at the provincial level, take for instance in the provinces of Battambang, Banteay Mean-

jei, Siemreap, Svay Rieng, etc., in addition to those that are seconded to universities in Phnom Penh.

Assistance provided by the Buddhist community, mainly from pagoda for those who have to go on in their education, is not a particular case for me but a general one. Let's take the case of Deputy Prime Minister HE Keat Chhon. The fact that he was able to continue his study in Phnom Penh and on to France is because there had been helps from the Buddhist monks and various other sources.

Equal Chance for Education

It should be understood and well appreciated that it is because of peace that prevails throughout the country that we are having an increasing chance for doing many things. In time of war, parents and teachers, as well as students themselves, would be concerned for safety while in search of education and in fulfilling mission of education. In absence of war, it is worth saying that it is now time for our compatriots to enjoy peace and equal chance for education.

It is also obviously true that addressing issue of equal chance for education would in fact help narrow the intellectual gap between rural and urban, poor and rich in terms of human resource development. It is true that we have seen more of intellectual concentration before only in Phnom Penh and around. As we have narrowed down the gap in education, it is anticipated that such action would result in eventual lessening of gap in property and other sectors. These are the significance of our effort to decentralize schools of all levels – primary to university – throughout the country.

I am sure that the university is for use not only by students who are daughters and sons of our people in Battambang, Pailin or Pursath provinces, but also those from other provinces and cities, Phnom Penh also included, who happen to have relatives in the province (of Battambang). I wish

to affirm that everyone is equal from birth (as far as physical and mental health and ability are concerned). We should be of agreement that it is not always the case that children of the rich would do better in school, while children of the poor would suffer a reversal trend. You must agree with me therefore what really concerns us here is to provide them equal chance for education.

Peace Environment – More Achievements

I would like to take this opportune moment to officially inaugurate two segments of national road with a total length of 40 kilometers. The first segment is 16 kilometers that runs from the national road 77 through to the site of Komping Puoy reservoir. We also should thank Okhna Sok Kong for his generous contribution on my behalf and that of HE Sar Kheng's in providing a transformation of the Komping Puoy reservoir into a tourist destination. The second segment is running 24 kilometers from the city of Battambang to the district of Banan, financed by the Asian Development Bank and the (Royal Government's) counterpart fund.

It should be noted also that (because of joint efforts to develop and improve tourist destination) in the last nine months there have been 195,000 tourists visiting Battambang province, that is 3.2% increase to that of 2009. I am sure the figure is also picking up further for October, November and December. It should be noted also that there has been development and vast improvement of hotels and services in Battambang province.

For people living in this part of the country, I may say that aside from the above two national roads, there will be two more roads that I will take my time to come and preside over their groundbreaking ceremonies in February next year. The first will be connecting Banteay Meanjei to Pailin via Koun Damrei, Koun Damrei, Mealay, Sampeo Loun, Komrieng and Phnom Preok.

Another road will be the one that runs from Thmor Kol district to Bovel district and from Bovel there will be a juncture of two lines – one of which will go to Sampeo Loun district, while another one will go to Phnom Preok and Komrieng districts. Also fund is sought for building another road to point 400 at the border with Thailand.

Some Reminiscences and Drastic Changes

Taking this opportune moment I would like to thank the CPP working groups for their joint efforts with the local authorities of Battambang province under the leadership of HE Sar Kheng. It should be noted that the initiative also has the supports of Samdech Chea Sim, President of the Senate and President of the Cambodian People's Party, and Samdech Heng Samrin, Honorary President of the Cambodian People's Party and President of the National Assembly, as well as various others.

Maybe it is good to recall some stories (in relation to our efforts in this part of the country) back in 1985 when we were so poor that a piece of woven mat was used as window cloth. I could remember that HE Ke Kim Yan was the governor of Battambang province. It was that year that my wife and I were here and we went to visit the Japanese-assisted rice cultivation and experiment farm project at Tuol Samraong.

Maybe HE Ke Kim Yan still remembers I asked him to place in my map Brigade 415, which, according to not-well informed sources, was established not long ago, but (Ee) Chhean (Governor of Pailin province and former Khmer Rouge commander) has confirmed to me just now that it was formed since June 1979. We learned about its existence only in 1985 as Brigade 415 stationed near Pailin, which was then a part of Battambang province.

The situation has comparatively and drastically changed. Until 1990 Ee Chhien was still making

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

war (with the Royal Government of Cambodia) from Pailin, now he is sitting here with us. How could we blame all responsibilities on him (Ee Chhean) as in fact the war was a creation by those of former generations? Thanks to the win-win solution, from which peace has been achieved and prevailed, we have now moved Brigade 196 to station at Komping Puoy, Brigade 95 has now been moved to station at the Adhibadei High. I also remember to come to Battambang province again in 1990 to review the military situation in general and around the city.

I may recall that Ee Chhean troops forced General Pol Saroeun's troops to withdraw twice, once in 1989 and again in 1994, from battles in this part of the country. Psychologically, the two Cambodian forces then fought for a position. When one side won, another side retreated. They did not worry because it would be a loss (of position or territory) to Khmer.

I am sure if it were foreign forces, like in Preah Vihear province, such a retreat would not be an option. Well, as far as this matter is concerned, use of the word invasion has come to a stop as we have achieved a complete normalization (of the situation).

I have marked that (the place) was invaded on July 15, 2008, and the withdrawal took place at 10:30 am on December 1, 2010.

We purchased a number of military tools and means for war in the past and some have been kept in good service for when they are needed. We just launched a real ammo test fire from 15 trucks to verify whether they are ready or in good condition. We have just got hundreds of new tanks and armored vehicles. They all have been placed in warehouses and only old ones are ready for service. The new ones will be kept ready for eventual need.

Responses to Ill-Willed Remarks

As of the present, situation has

improved greatly day after day. There has been some irrational observation that Cambodia is getting poorer. I wonder how could anyone is stated to be poorer than when one was in 1979 (when the country was liberated from the genocide). Let's ask those who are now in their 70s because by then they must be in their 40 years of age. Could they recall as to what they did have at the time. Some people had plates but no spoons, while some got oxen but no carts. What happened in Cambodia was not that simple.

The ICAPP (International Conference of Asian Political Parties) delegation found it hard to understand and believe as to such a thing could have happened in Cambodia, let alone the fact that Phnom Penh was starting from no-resident city.

It is normal for them to have such feelings because they have seen things these days in a normal state with skyscrapers. What has been said to the contrary of the present reality is beyond imagination. Let's ask these monks here if they could stand a chance to benter monkhood under the regime of Pol Pot. Tomorrow we will celebrate the Human Rights Day and you may agree with me that these rights are defined to be those to life, to food, to education, healthcare, etc.

Some in the opposition have even taken their vows to sue me to the international court in the case of K5 national defense plan/project (which includes clearing forest and building a levee and a canal along the border with Thailand). If it were not because of their threats, I would not choose to fulfill that option.

If ever the case is in court, I am sure the first to stand trial would be the United Nations for its recognition of the Khmer Rouge and for allowing the Khmer Rouge to occupy the Cambodian seat. Then Tripartite Coalition Government joined their forces to fight the Phnom Penh Government, where possible return, in the case they won the war, would

be the regime of Pol Pot.

Can they clarify that if they did or did not do it? Had there been or not in 1979 the Tripartite Coalition Government, in which there was also Khmer Rouge as one of its member? If there were no such threats, but then Government, that was established and led by the late Prime Minister HE Chan Si, and which I was inherited from him, had taken the initiative and action without a justified cause, I would take full responsibility and would report myself to the court in The Hague.

However, first of all, they have to answer if there were or not real threat against the Phnom Penh Government and against rebirth of the Cambodian people. Have you accepted that there was the regime of Pol Pot in between 1975-79?

As of these days the United Nations have also collaborate with the Royal Government of Cambodia to carry out the trial of former Khmer Rouge leaders. The case of 001 has been closed and the case of 002 has processed.

The situation has now changed that not only that we no longer had resistance forces in the jungle, no one has been forced to go to war, but also we have to reduce the forces and also to accept no more new recruits. (I do not know) if this is someone's trick so as to have a chance to return (from abroad) to the country. (If s/he behaved in an irresponsible manner), s/he would have to wait.

They also claimed that democracy in Cambodia is in a setback position. Has it been advancing before? So you recognized that there has been a democracy then? They have always denied it. Why do they change their remarks so instantly?

It is so surprisingly naïve that they have said using foreign radio broadcast that so and so number of population is in constant fear and because of fear they dare not cultivate and are worried that their lands would be confiscated. Battambang province is the rice bowl of the country and this year

has produced 75,000 tons of rice, which is 5,000 tons more than last year. Is it because of such fear as they said?

On Political Party Formation

So and so has claimed to be the best choice for the country and people but why has s/he got only a small number of seats? Why could you not replace the Royal Government? Why s/he recently cheated people, despite my written instruction that I have no comment, that I am offering support for so and so to set up political party.

They even said that the Funcinpec officials who want to swing side may do so as they will negotiate with the Prime Minister to keep their current positions. It was in response to this insanely distortion that I prepared a message for the people, the coalition government, CPP and Funcinpec, about my position that I would not tolerate a de facto tripartite coalition.

They have created a big mess and Deputy Prime Minister (from Funcinpec) HE Nhek Bun Chhay may have not understood me. Fundraising seems to have started now and they have fooled businessmen that the Prime Minister allows so and so to form political party. Some have disguised their activities as non-governmental organization, while some propose themselves to be fathers of democracy or Buddha, etc.

Let me assure in my statement today that no matter how many seats the (current Funcinpec coalition partner) will get, I will consider them the coalition partner because we have been working together and we have a good knowledge of each other.

Politician or King's Advisor

It does not matter whether s/he does, stays in opposition or goes along with, but there is one thing that needs to be resolved. I am the one who has proposed ranks and privileges for so and so in the royal family since members of the Royal family are not involved in politics. Some have got

(Continued on page 4)