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January 17, 2002 (Excerpts)

Rebuilding the Moatkhmung Bridge and the National Road 7 Between Tonle Bet and Thnol Totoeng in Kompong Cham



Samdech Hun Sen after giving a speech at the groundbreaking ceremony to rebuild Spien (bridge) Moatkhmung (in the background) and the National Road 7 between Tonle Bet and Thnol Totoeng, Kompong Cham, with the Japanese assistance.

... Today I have a great pleasure to join with HE Gotaro Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Cambodia and Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, our national compatriots in the groundbreaking ceremony to rebuild the National Road 7 (NR7) between Spien (bridge) Kizuna and Thnol Totoeng by using grant of Japan.

... The total length of the project is 10.204 kilometers. It is another new achievement among many that are assisted by the Government of Japan as well as the Japanese people and non-governmental organizations to the people of Cambodia. In the week to come I will participate in the inauguration of a bridge on NR 6A and preside over the groundbreaking of more bridges construction there.

... On February 7, 2002 we will inaugurate one more Japanese built road in Siemreap. So we seem to be busy in building and

inaugurating achievements that are offered by the people and Government of Japan to Cambodia.

... HE Khi Tainglim (Minister of Transports and Public Works) has made a report already about the road condition. HE Ambassador of Japan also recalled about his trip by helicopter with me to inspect the road condition before the construction began. What impressed me most is that Spien (bridge) Moatkhmung is to increase its length by the new project from 168.0 meters to 210.0 meters, and its width from 6.0 meters to 11.0 meters.

... Increment by this length and width would contribute to the prevention of flooding of the area by relieving quicker the water pressure, especially the part from Moatkhmung to Tonlebet (Kompong Cham town.) It is in fact a technology that is calculated to relieve the water
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January 22, 2002 (Excerpts)

Inaugurating Bridge 26 and Groundbreaking Bridges 24 and 25 on the National Road 6A

... Today I am very pleased to join Your Excellencies Ambassadors, Ministers, State Secretaries, Senate and National Assembly members as well as people coming from Kandal and Kompong Cham provinces to celebrate the inauguration of the bridge number 26 and the groundbreaking ceremony for the bridges 24 and 25. In just two weeks, HE Ambassador of Japan and I, together with HE Khi Tainglim, Minister of Transports and Public Works, have come to Kompong Cham twice already. First we went to the eastern side of the Mekong where we celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony to renovate the National Road 7 (the part between Tonlebet and Thnol Totoeng) at Moat Khmung bridge. And today we

have this joyous event here. ... We have been quite busy these days to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremonies and to inaugurate achievements that are born of non-interest aid given by the people and the Royal Government of Japan to the people and the Royal Government of Cambodia. Taking this opportunity, through HE Ambassador Gotaro Ogawa, I wish to express my deepest thanks to the Royal Government and people of Japan for sustaining their great supports for peace and development in the Kingdom of Cambodia. HE Governor of Kompong Cham Cheang Am, HE Minister Khi Tainglim and HE Ambassador have mentioned about the significance of the roads and
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January 15, 2002 (Excerpts)

Inaugurating Ten School Buildings in Ba Phnom, Prey Veng Province

... May I humbly express my respect and affection to grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews and our national compatriots for coming to participate in this occasion of inaugurating ten school buildings of 45 classrooms. It is an honor that today we have the presence of HE Ambassador of France, SIPAR representatives, Oknha and Lok Chumteav in this event to receive a new achievement among others realized in the recent time. The cost of building the 45 classrooms is US\$ 171,082.

... It has been ten years already that SIPAR operates in various provinces in Cambodia like Kompong Speu, Kompong Chhnang, Kandal, Prey Veng,

Svay Rieng, Kompong Cham and Phnom Penh. SIPAR has in all built schools and libraries in 54 localities. Currently SIPAR is moving a step further into
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pressure.

... The groundbreaking ceremony of the NR 7 construction happens about one month after the inauguration of the Spien Kizuna which I deemed it a great wealth of our nation. What remained a question was how we could leave such a nice bridge connected by a damaged road on its eastern side. Now the problem has been resolved as the achievement of this part of NR 7 is going to appear.

... Just now from a bird's-eye view, the main body of the road looks quite large. One may ask why in just ten kilometers, the total cost is US\$ 16 millions. Because it is the part that contains two bridges built as wide as a road and as a large water outlet to relieve constant water pressure in flood time.

... From Thnol Totoeng to Memot, the part is under construction as the company has finished bidding already and sent in their construction equipment. HE Khi Tainlim has requested for my presence in the groundbreaking ceremony and I accept it already. If the ceremony is to take place in the village of Kdol, it would even be better for me as it was where my son got born.

... HE Khi Tainglim mentioned that the part from Kratie to the border between Cambodia and Laos, a group of Chinese (engineering) team is conducting a study. Putting into a vision we would have a highway network. National roads could be compared to blood veins...

... Taking this opportunity I wish to place an appeal to the Ministries of Agriculture, Water Resources, Environment, the Mekong Committee, Public Works to cooperatively conduct a study on how we could preserve the (bamboo) forest on either side as they would serve as best protection against flood pressure. I know this place as well as my palm.

... Previously from Boeng Kom-bao to Tuol Keo, to Boeng Kansom, to NR 7, it was full of bamboo. The Lon Nol army chose either end/side of the bridge as their barracks from 1970 to 1974. But from 1974-75 the bamboo was cleared giving the flood to flow down in full sway through the weak road and bridge.

... Anyway we have to make this area a protected zone with replanting of bamboo. The fact that this road was built under the French time, they could have planted the bamboo in protection of water pressure. So please take a serious study on this matter. If some parts were cleared for the purpose of farming, we may leave it at that. But if the area is not yet cleared, please refrain it from further encroachment and deforesting the bamboo.

On the Japanese Assistance...

... There was a meeting yesterday (Government-Donor Monitoring Meeting) in which HE Ambassador of Japan spoke on good things about Cambodia. I have to let out a secret today otherwise the press will make comments based on no facts. Last January 08, 2002, I had had a chance to receive HE Minister of Finance of Japan in Phnom Penh as he was here bringing a letter of HE Prime Minister Koizumi to me.

... As a partner with Cambodia, Japan sent an envoy to consult on a number of issues before giving his final speech in Singapore after touring five ASEAN countries. It was about the issue of contribution in developing the Greater Mekong Basin, which is a priority in the Japanese policy to promote integration between old ASEAN countries and new ASEAN states that are mostly situated along the Mekong river.

... Through our discussion, I have received reply from the Japanese side that despite Japan is cutting down 10% of its overseas assistance but its assistance to Cambodia is going to be

maintained. Japan will continue to provide assistance without any reduction. But Japan is asking Cambodia one thing and that is to maintain peace and political stability. I have affirmed that if Cambodia could not sustain its peace and stability it would not be of any use to ask for the Japanese assistance. So we have to do all we can to maintain peace and security that we already have in hand.

... If the Japanese Government would retain its assistance to Cambodia at a level about US\$ 100 million a year that would be very contributive to the Cambodian development efforts.

... I have my second suggestion as follows. In every three years, Japan offers Cambodia a US\$ 40 million loan. The most recent loan has been used in the construction of the Sihanoukville seaport.

My suggestion is that Japan offers Cambodia this loan every year instead. In fact Cambodia used to owe Japan the loan, its interest and the fine for being late to pay back the debt. Now Cambodia has already cleared the debt. Through our efforts Japan should consider Cambodia's request of taking loan every year. Japan has not responded yet as this matter has to go through a long process and Cambodia from its part has to make best efforts with the Japanese grants and loans.

... The third suggestion that I have here is asking Japan for a bridge crossing the Mekong at Neakloeung that links Kandal and Prey Veng. We would suggest three options to our Japanese friend. If we were to have this bridge built, Cambodia's economy would be in an optimistic direction of growth.

... *The first option is Japan builds the bridge for Cambodia as a grant aid like Spien Kizuna.*

... *The second possibility is a split into two -- one part is grant and one part is loan. The money is still given by Japan but one part we will pay back.*

... *The third possibility would be that Japan pays 80% for the total costs and Cambodia covers the rest 20%. We dare take this position because as owner of the country we have to have initiatives.*

... We know Japan is facing many difficulties and on January 21, 2002 Japan will organize a conference on the reconstruction of Afghanistan, to where the Japanese assistance will be diverted. So for us, the first option is the best one and if the third option is proposed we would accept it anyway even we have to make the 20% share. We have to spend 20% in order to get another 80%.

On the Communal Elections...

... *I wish to take this time to place an appeal to our people to take patience, to forgive, to be understanding, to refrain from violence act, and to make all we can to have a free, fair and transparent commune election. If we love peace, democracy and development, we should refrain from acting against the law and all forms of violence.*

... *There is a murder case in the village of Sanlob, Khum Sanlob. May General Choeun Sovantha search the two suspects as HE You Hockry already passed the case (down the system) here. I gave my instruction days ago to arrest and bring these criminals to justice. Anyone committed acts of violence must be arrested no matter what political party they belong to or ranks they may have. Democracy is in action when people exercising their individual rights. Vote for whoever you may like and feel no fear of any threats.*

... *Power gained by gunpoint or from threats is not a steady one. The real power is the one that people offer and it will be steady. Though Pol Pot was cruel, he could lead the country only in three years eight months and twenty days. So I advise not to take silly method of intimidation, threats or hypocrisy. ■*

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Kratie province where it will build 15 libraries. In the name of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia who have received these donations directly from SIPAR, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the co-directors of SIPAR for their contribution into realizing this achievement. Through HE Ambassador of France I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to the people and Government of France (for their generous donation.)

... France is the second biggest donor to Cambodia after Japan, though their achievements (from its donation) have not been frequently visible on TV. They include the Paris Peace Agreement, which is a precondition leading to the win-win policy in solving the Cambodian problem. Now peace prevails throughout Cambodia. May HE Ambassador of France inform the French Government, especially HE President and Prime Minister to continue to provide assistance under whatever form, through whatever channels, to the people of Cambodia.

... I wish to see SIPAR continue its activity in rural areas. I have a feeling that if all the organizations working in Cambodia do as SIPAR has done, we would have enough schools. But most of them concentrates in Phnom Penh, provincial towns where they organize seminar after seminar till they run out of money. If after coming into being they started to address right on the root cause of poverty, like lack of schools, water for cultivation and communications, etc. we all would have solved the requirements in poverty reduction...

... The donation in form of rural roads, school buildings, water canals, wells, etc. is the best option. HE the French Ambassador said that these schools are built not for just a few months but for at least fifty years. That this or that person offers you medicines, sarongs or rice, is only provisional assistance.

January 10, 2002 (Excerpts)

Inaugurating the SOS-Children Village in Khan (District) Phnom Penh Thmei

... Last year I met with Mr. Helmut Kutin and I promised that I would come to preside over the inauguration of the SOS-Children Village. He was presenting me at that time a number of problems that needed to be addressed such as land for building schools in Siemreap. A similar project was proposed and has been looking for a place in Battambang. I may delegate the job of finding land to HE Ith Samheng and HE NimThot for the construction of children shelters similar to the one we inaugurate today. As we are lacking of financial resources, with his willingness to help, we have to provide the land as a contribution from our part...

... As for the school, we have already discussed and decided to associate it with the village itself. With resources provided by SOS, the school should be providing teaching for all classes ranging from class one (the elementary education) to class twelve (the secondary-level education.) It is a good solution because the school is

Donation in school building is long lasting development assistance. Some (politicians scoff at me) well you build schools and we will offer people medicines, and finally we will get (the people's) support. I have no concern on this respect because what is most important for me is that the Cambodian children go to well-built and protected school buildings.

... As for this building (right here) it should be pulled down and replaced with a building of five classrooms. Oknha Men Sarun and Ung Bunhov will sponsor the building construction. Through my cabinet I would offer another school building with five classrooms in the village of Prich, Speu "A" commune. The provincial authority requests for the construction of a road of 25 kilometers from Reakchey commune of Srok Baphnom to Srok Mesang. I am well aware that this

not far from the village community. Our people in this area will all benefit from the Children Village. As is seen here, some poor families already brought their children while others start to make use of the health system provided by the Village. About 2,000 children and youngsters would have a chance to get education from class one through to class twelve right in one place without having to move to other education facility (to complete their secondary education.) These are the benefits that our people in this community will certainly obtain.

... Mr. Chairman said to me that those teachers and education staff working in the Village, on top of the salary provided by the Royal Government, would be paid extra from his pouch. We should therefore speed up the construction process, as he confirms that he would take his word seriously. If the Village proves to be a success, I suggest to Mr. Helmut Kutin that it be replicated not only in Phnom Penh, Siemreap and Battam-

road is in its worst condition so I approve the request and may the Ministry of Rural Development implement the project. For the people in Speu "B" commune, I approved their request for assistance in digging a water pond of which the removed soil would be 1,750 cubic meters. I also approved the request of the Director of Prey Trang School in Speu "B" for assistance in digging a water pond, of which the removed soil would be 1,748 cubic meters. I approved the request of the people in the village of Pothi Andet, Choeng Prey commune, Srok Baphnom for assistance in restoring a water canal of four kilometers together with a pumping machine.

... I wish to thank the provincial, district authorities and others for their contribution to making a safe and positive environment for Prey Veng at the time of commune election. There have 80% of the total eligible voters

bang but to various other places in Cambodia. During our meeting, he has accepted me as the first Cambodian member of the Children Village organization. I wish to appeal to other Cambodian colleagues to file for membership as well.

... Just now I have met with those children and I have noticed that they have shown great affection on one another, lived in a good-care condition, and I hope that those working here provide them with love, sympathy and orient them to a bright future. There may be no other country in the world that has as many orphans as Cambodia does. Even after the genocide regime was brought down, there remain a large number of widows and orphans. Their number is greater than our ability to provide them with care and support. However even with empty hands, we have led the country through with a principle that not a single child left dying unattended in the street. Those children were brought up in

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registered. There have some concerns that because of living condition (that they have to make business) they skip going to vote. I wish therefore to make an appeal to our people to go to vote, exercising their obligation and rights as individual citizen in a democratic country. May all of us forgive, pursue non-violence motive and refrain from illegal actions under whatever form at all. Those committed mistakes should be brought to law without exception. The implementation of democracy should be transparent. People have their individual rights to choose the leaders and/or political parties they like. I would stay neutral before all political parties and appeal to all to refrain resolutely from acts of violence. Please follow our Buddhist teachings -- if we were to win, we should win with faith and justice. Act in a good way and you would be voted for. ■

January 09, 2002 (Excerpts)

Inaugurating Spien (Bridge) Hun Sen-Toek Voel and Hun Sen-O Smach, Romeas Hek, Svay Rieng

... May I offer my respect to grandparents, aunts and uncles, and all our compatriots who have come to celebrate the inauguration ceremony of the two bridges -- Hun Sen-Toeuk Voel and Hun Sen-O Smach bridges. I am delighted to have an opportunity to return to Romeas Hek again after my first visit in 1986 and the second one in 1989... In 1986 I was here to learn from the people of Svay Rieng about their successes in tree planting and household fish culture, which I have multiplied to other parts of Cambodia...

... Today, together with the venerable monks and our compatriots, I have come to witness new achievements -- the 84-meter Hun Sen-Toeuk Voel Bridge and the 54-meter Hun Sen-O Smach Bridge. They are presents for our people upon the arrival of the New Year, and the 23rd anniversary of the January-7 Day...

... I wish to talk a little bit about four shortages that one may encounter as a human being and a Buddhist follower. The first shortage would be that all of us were not born yet when the Buddha achieved enlightenment. Still we have to continue to abide by the Buddhist teachings. We should engage lives in saving merits with Buddha, Dhamma and Monks. The second shortage would be lack of chance to perform merit with "Living Buddha" or literally one's own parents. If they already passed away, we have to transfer merit to them according to the Buddhist instruction. Like in the event of Prochum Bend, etc. we have to practice religious ceremony in the pagodas. Shortage 3 would be lack of ability to perform merit. As today Oknha Ung Bun Hov, HE Chan Sarun and HE So Khun have proven to possess the ability to perform merit. Each classroom built would sit about 50 students. If we multiply this figure fifteen times (the total number of classrooms) we would have the round figure of

750 students. And this infrastructure is built to last at least 50 years. This is what we called performing merit. Shortage 4 is when one fails to listen to the Buddhist teaching through Dhamma discussion by the Buddhist monks. The teaching would enlighten us to assuage (anger and ambition), and to seek calmness at heart.

... Aside from this I am glad to inform all of us here that, according to HE Yim Chhay Ly, the road that links Srok Svay Rieng with Srok Romeas Hek is now under construction. It will be stretching through Srok Komchay Mea to Ponhea Krek. This road systematically links three provinces -- Kompong Cham. Prey Veng and Svay Rieng. The Kompong Trach River originates from the Toch River in Kompong Cham, and it flows via Prey Veng into Svay Rieng. I just had a chat with HE Minister Khy Taing Lim about the benefit of having this road connection as it would be the closest link to the National Road (NR) 7 at Ponhea Krek of Kompong Cham. If we were to travel on the NR 1 and then taking road 11 at Prey Veng, we would get to Kompong Cham by Road 15. As we have this road link, travelers would take a shortcut at Romeas Hek on their way to Komchay Mea, from Komchay Mea to Ponhea Krek, and take on a fast lane to Kratie.

... My first and prime thanks go to the (military) engineering team for having completed its work at Spien Hun Sen-Osmach eleven days before schedule, and Hun Sen-Toeuk Voel Bridge seven days ahead of schedule. Thanks also go to Chumteav Men Sam An, HE Hok Lunday and HE the Governor of Svay Rieng, for frequently visiting the construction site on my behalf, including their generous donations for the people to cross the gap by ferry for free while the construction was going on. The Ministry of Public Works and Transports deserve thanks for offering ex-

perts and mechanical assistance to the engineering team. The Ministry of Rural Development is seen to strive for achievement through its 2002-03 planning for so many road constructions in Svay Rieng. The Ministry of Economy and Finance also shares this success as it provided financial disbursement in a timely manner...

... I myself am a son of a farmer. I understand all too well about the difficulty of the poor or the farmers. My native village has a stream flowing in front of our house. During flood time my father got us all in a boat and took us to school on the other side of the stream. Sometimes I skipped school because of there were no bridge to cross. In my own judgment, building bridges has a direct impact on economy, social performance as well as anything related to the living condition of our people...

... Over the past 23 years, in a situation that our economy was blocked and fighting launched on us from all sides, we strove to build up the economy with one hand and defend our country with another. As we have here people who accompanied me, many of them are military leaders. Most of them originated from Svay Rieng. This month I will pay homage to the tombs of 49 fallen combatants who died and were buried in Vietnam. Among the 49, 47 were from Svay Rieng and two were from Kompong Cham. There will be a meeting this month of the Prime Ministers of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam in Vietnam. As I said earlier I am to take the opportunity to pay homage to the 49 fallen soldiers who were buried there. As peace prevails throughout the country, we have to give a justification to their cause. One should not forget from where the fruit that one eats is coming from. Those who have not recognized January-7 Day, now accept that the fight against the Khmer Rouge was a rightful act. It would not be easy and would take a long time to

make people accept the truth. But whoever is against the January-7 Day is him/herself a Pol-potist. Vice versa, one is a Pol-potist if one is against the January-7 Day. That is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

... Some people have demanded that the Royal Government cremate the remains of millions of Cambodian people who were killed by Pol Pot regime. Facing with this repeated demand I would like to reiterate I do not approve this idea but will issue a regulation to safeguard and preserve them. Why do I take up this position? In 1982 and 1983, when the Khmer Rouge were allowed to sit at the United Nations, they said those (remains) were artificial skulls, skeletons. They blamed the January 7 as the invasion by foreign country on Cambodia instead of the overthrow of the Pol Pot regime. The truth has been distorted even in the situation that we have proof everywhere. What else could they do to us if we were to have those evidences demolished? It is true that no one could be deafer than a man who does not use his ears to listen ... The January 7 belongs to no particular person, group or party. It is not even for the CPP. January-7 Day belongs to everyone and any one who accepts the fact that they survive because of January 7. As for those who were born after the period of genocide, they should at least think because of January 7, their parents survived, and they have a chance to come into lives as well.

... Just now I have a bird's eye view of the rice field. It is very well grown. I have heard that Chub Pring and Kompong Ro are facing with severe drought. May HE Chan Sarun and HE Minister of Water Resources oversee an immediate intervention without delay. Places where water sources are available, we have to supply water at all cost. As for Romeas Hek, dry season

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rice is growing remarkably well and the growing area has the potential to be expanded.

... HE Governor Hun Neng has mentioned about the fact that certain area of land has been swapped from growing rice to growing sugar cane because the latter has brought our farmer higher yield and profit. Weeks ago in a meeting of the Council for Agricultural Research and Development I had requested planting areas to be drafted so that we know where rice planting provides low yield, and whether it should be swapped for other crops, like sugar cane or bean. Let alone in Svay Rieng there has many successful experience on household tree planting, water management and fish culture.

... With regard to the development of infrastructure such as road construction, we should take into consideration the water passages. If we were to build a road crossing a water passage, a bridge must be built instead of sealing it. I have a vision to replace rotten wooden bridges in the rural areas with Bailey bridges. Through the Ministry of Public Works and Transports, with the assistance of the (People's Republic of) China, we have purchased 3,000 meters of Bailey bridges. We now have over 6,000 meters of Bailey bridges. But I think we need up to 20,000 meters of Bailey bridges... After the ceremony everyone can use the bridge freely. No one charges a dime for traveling on these bridges. There are no more illegal roadblocks. As you all have heard, you may be advised that if you know that illegal roadblocks exist in your place, the Governor of the area, no matter who he may be, will have to be removed. Every where in Cambodia, if any one learns of illegal roadblocks, would you please write me by explicitly mentioning where they are and who are behind them. Let's be clear that even if we have a good road and bridge, but if we have to go through illegal roadblocks, it is similar to having no bridges...■

January 12, 2002 (Excerpts)

Inaugurating Achievements in Serei Watanaram Pagoda in Takeo Province

... These are results of efforts made by the Venerable Ouk Chanthan who originally stayed in this pagoda and lately went to reside in the United States of America. Taking this opportunity I would like to express my gratitude, on behalf of the parishioners, the Cambodian people and the Royal Government of Cambodia, for the contributions made by His Venerable in saving from preaching sermons until he could make such achievements. They cost in all US\$ 180,3274.

... I wish also to express my deep thanks and appreciation to HE Sok An, Chan Sarun, So Khun, Mok Maret as well as others for coming to help people in Takeo province. As for myself alone, I have already contributed 178 school buildings of 892 classrooms in Takeo. If we put 50 students in one class, we would have a great number of students.

... In my trip to Kompong Trach of Kompot province, I have flown over this area of Takeo province. Travelling with me was an overseas Cambodian from the United States of America.

... From the helicopter he pondered and asked what they were when he saw roofs of corrugated sheets. I responded to him: "they are school buildings." Nowadays schools buildings are built of concrete and roofed with corrugated sheet unlike before when they were roofed with thatch. But need is growing everyday as I now have another triplet in Takeo.

... All triplets will receive support from me. That is why I say they are my children. As we know, one child delivery could be dangerous, how about three babies at a time. Triplet never gets born in rich families but usually in poor ones. As there are more children getting born, it means there needs more school buildings accordingly.

... As we all have seen here there are many children. Some of them when being asked said they finished the sixth grade or primary education. May I suggest HE Governor Kep Chutema to give more thought on the establishment of a junior secondary school right in this place so that these kids could continue their studies...

... I wish to also thank the provincial and municipal authorities for their efforts to overcome difficulties caused by floods in the last two years. In 2000 and 2001, Cambodia had encountered heavy floods that destroyed its infrastructure, rainy-season rice, dry-season rice in many places.

... Implementing the order of not letting any individual citizen die of hunger because the authority does not know or does not offer assistance, even in the case that food shortage prevails, we should not let the incident happen in Cambodia at all. Death of hunger has gone away with the fall of the genocide regime already.

... From January 07, 1979 up to the present, it is already 23 years. The quality of sharing spirit has enabled us to effectively solve many problems. I wish to see this model continue to exist in the heart of every individual monk and follower.

... In the past 23 years, the experience has given the Cambodian people not only the spirit of sharing among the people of Cambodia but also a show of assistance from abroad. They provide us with assistance because they have seen that the Cambodians love, help and have strong solidarity with each other. Therefore we should help ourselves before Devada helps us.

... Yesterday Supreme Patriarch Tep Vong opened a conference to discuss about Buddhist Children Assistance. During his 70th birthday, the Supreme Pa-

triarch mentioned about the Buddhist Children Assistance whose idea is that every pagoda has to offer help to poor children.

... If each pagoda could feed ten children, we would have saved 37,000 children as we have 3,700 pagodas. This figure should in average relieve difficulties from at least 30,000 families. This solution would provide the most appropriate shelter for poor children. But these places offer regular dwelling only to boys. What are we to do with girls? I am thinking of a center for young girls in the cities so that they could further their studies.

... The most important point here is to decentralize junior and senior secondary education close to the local community so that both boys and girls have equal opportunity of schooling. Traditionally young girls are not allowed to settle in pagoda as well as to reside far away or separately from their parents. This is one of the reasons why there could be major differences in number of girls and boys going to college between the year 2000 and 2003.

... With the solution we have suggested earlier, those students who finished their studies in the Prey Phaae junior secondary education could go on to the senior secondary education in the same place.

... Takeo has scored many successes in agriculture, except in the last two years where consecutive flooding caused heavy damages. Particularly in 2001, it was both flood and drought affected province.

... Taking a look from helicopter I have observed well-grown dry season rice. It could also be reminded of excellent dry season rice production. Especially farmers here benefit from canal 15, which has been made to cater both for water traffic and

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January 14, 2002 (Excerpts)

Launch the Information Department at the Royal University of Phnom Penh

... It is true we already have the Press Law that allows the Ministry of Information to close press organs if they do not abide by the law. As for me I think that closure of the press is not a good way. The best way for promoting democracy and expanding the role of the press is the establishment of education system and human resource development in area of professionalism. This would be a realistic and long lasting solution. This is a vision of multiparty democracy. I agree on this point with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for the program to conduct training in press professionalism (in Cambodia.) There used to be sporadic but not up-to-professional-standard training in associations like the Khmer Writer Association.

... For the time being some newspapers are too politically inclined as they could turn white to black and vice versa. But the press has an obligation to reflect the truth. As long as the press turns white into black, what one writes would not be acceptable not only to other people but firstly to oneself. One could not lie to oneself. If it is for individual and/or political party's ambition, one would do anything to falsify the truth, we could say that it is a misfortune for our country. They wanted democracy to progressively develop, but they instead destroy it by their own pens. Therefore in my mind professional journalism education is very important. Recently, the Asia Foundation has sent the Cambodian journalists/pressmen to attend professional training in the Columbia University of the United States of America. As they return, they would be professional lecturers on journalism in the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

... HE Pit Chamnan has reported that there are in all 142 registered Khmer language newspapers and 60% of them are still operative in a state of uncertainty and difficulty. One could probably say there are only two

local language newspapers that are keeping its regular operation -- Reasmey Kampuchea (Light of Cambodia) and Koh Santepheap (Island of Peace.) Talking about foreign language newspaper, the English-language 'Cambodia Daily' is a regular one. Why is it so? It is because they lack the ability to reflect the truth. No one could lie forever. Turning white into black would one day make one remorseful. The same is true for those writings that are not reflecting the truth because the writers force themselves to do so in order to respond to the feeling of their bosses who financially sponsor the publications. The best way in journalism is to say whatever one sees and to base on law, using law as a guide.

... According to the Cambodian experience if one obstructs the setup of political party, civil society, non-governmental organization and freedom of press, the remaining option would be armed struggle. This situation is a great danger to the Cambodian society. Let's take a look into our experience. Why did Cambodia have so long a war since Sdech Kan killed King Srei Sokunboth through to the end of 1998? One of the main reasons was the obstruction of the rights to set up political party, civil society, non-governmental organization, and freedom of press and of speech. The remaining option is therefore taking up an armed struggle, which will bring about secession. We have to be well prepared in this work for the sake of hundred of years of democracy in Cambodia.

... The press that takes no responsibility in its writing is not going to last long. At the moment people fully enjoy peace, if one makes use of the press as a forum for making political insult, people will see to themselves who in fact is the troublemaker. Recently, I made no response whatsoever to any provocations because if I were

to do so those provoking would gain value. On the other hand the more one makes false judgments and outcry, one will show clearly that one is distancing from reality. Let me advise that praising some one for the good thing s/he does is like praising oneself. Unreasonably scolding someone is like scolding oneself. Therefore I would like any of you who are taking this subject to make every effort in practicing analysis and writing until you attain expertise like on the issues of Indochina, Cambodia or ASEAN...■

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orphanages throughout the country. Some of them turned to between 23 and 26 years already. Some of them have no idea as to what were their family names. That is why many of them took their family names after 'Radh' (which means 'State' in English.) We could be proud that they had been taken care of by the state, including providing general education and vocational training. Now most of them completed seven or ten-year education and some have gone further to achieve a Bachelor, Master or even a Ph. D. degree. Some of our pilots have originated from the orphanages.

... What I wanted to say here is that those children from 1979 have now become adult and even parental themselves. But the Royal Government is still their parents. When they get married they ask for help from us. Those who are men move out of the orphanages to settle in with his wife after receiving assistance for their marriages. The same happens for girl married to men from outside. What concerns us here is the fact that when they get married with each other, where could they go? We have to help them find jobs. This is a heavy burden that needs to be addressed. That is why I have said earlier that it would be even better if the project could be replicated to cover other places in Cambodia.■

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water supply for dry season rice cultivation. Talking about land reform in Takeo, it would not be complicated as individual owners have receipts recognizing their land title requests already.

... As far as arts performance is concerned, Takeo is well known in preserving traditional arts, especially the Yike (a kind of theatre.)

... Just now HE Governor mentioned about the Leo theft group. We must not let them operate and they must be arrested and tried by the court. But please refrain from committing acts of violence causing death or personal injuries to any one.

... May I request our Buddhist monks to advise their Buddhist followers to refrain themselves from extreme acts (of anger and revenge.) Now I would like to say a few things on requests.

... I accept to offer according to the request a school building with six classrooms and it should be built in the Hun Sen Junior Secondary School so that the facility would become the Senior Secondary School. You are also given a rural road of 5,000 meters that links Prey Phaae to the National Road 2.

... HE Minister Ly Thuch and Secretary of State Yim Chaily of Rural Development are given the task to implement this project.

... In response to a request from the monks and parishioners of Sramaovattey pagoda of Khvao commune, Srok Teang, Takeo, I declare offering a 2,000 meters rural road. The Ministry of Rural Development is the project-implementing agency. 12,000 liters of diesel is also provided for the renovation of National Road 2 and HE So Khun (Minister of Posts and Telecommunications) and Chan Sarun (Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery) would finance this demand.■

January 04, 2002 (Excerpts)

Addressing the Closing Session of the Ministry of Interior's Annual Meeting

Written Address...

Comment (1) ... I should elaborate a little more on this point. I am begging all of you to pay attention on issues of illegal roadblocks. Before I decide to relieve you of positions and duties, I am going to give you all this piece of my last warning.

... Our people have gone through so much suffering due to wars, genocide and the natural calamity like flooding that have created them further suffering already. It is true that we could not control the natural disasters, but we should not let the man-made disasters to impose such unbearable impacts on the livelihood of our people.

... Political mistakes conducted by previous politicians have brought about destructive wars that were passing from generation to generation. We have made tremendous efforts to put an end to this crisis (and we have been successful.) I therefore do not believe that we could not put an end to the issue of illegal roadblocks. We have scored a number of successes like we have collaborated to eliminate the Khmer Rouge, the terrorist acts, and the kidnaping for ransom, etc.

... The so-called CFF (Cambodian Freedom Fighters) have been almost completely incapacitated. Its leaders would be brought to stand trial in the US. Talking about forest crimes, we also have success.

... But why are the illegal roadblocks an uncompleted issue? What has obstructed the efforts to resolve this matter? On the other hand the issue has spread widely as cancer does.

... Our beloved Cambodian population is worthy of sympathy (because of the condition in which they are.) The fact that they have become so is because we neglect our responsibilities. May I address this matter straightforwardly with you and

ask all of you a question. Should or should not we do something (to change the situation)? Should we leave the situation to evolve the way it does? I am not at all convinced that you as the local authorities could not fulfill this duty.

... The local authorities -- both at provincial and municipal levels -- could not stay ignorant to what has happened in one's own area of jurisdiction. (If it happened) it must be because you paid no attention to doing so.

... In whatever responsibility you may have, you should compare yourself to our poor people. When they travel, on top of no money to pay for transport, they sometimes have to travel on the roof of the vehicle.

... Let's imagine if they were your fathers, mothers, grandparents and they have to stay in those conditions just because the vehicle is stopped for illegal checking for bribes?

... You could also imagine of women with small babies, and think if they are your wives, sisters or daughters and they have to stay waiting in such weather condition for hours? Within a road length that they could travel about two hours, they have to spend up to three or four hours. Could all this be considered as impacts (from those illegal roadblocks)? We should think about this problem.

... Today I am very pleased to confer higher ranks to you with my own hands. But please do not be mistaken, or forget that these ranks could be withdrawn when you do not take responsibility (in your jobs.) Today we have dismissed one more senator.

... Weeks ago we have dismissed three senators already. As for this latest one, I have approved this morning. If you do not obey the rule, you stand to be removed. If the senators

could be removed, why is it difficult to act on those who are given positions within my level of decision (sub-decree.) Sometimes HE (Deputy Prime Minister and Co-Minister) Sar Kheng and Co-Minister You Hockry would not know in advance. One might ask why they are being removed so easily. It would not be difficult at all (for me to do so) when you did not care about the hardship of our people. It would not be appropriate at all to let you stay on in the position.

... Previously we have put into operation the contest in city/provincial development. At this moment I request all of the leaders, by the organization and coordination of the Ministry of Interior, to launch another contest in doing away with the illegal roadblocks. Do you all agree with me? (Applaud.) Now in each provincial leadership there are at least four persons (a Governor and three Deputies.)

... For some municipal jurisdiction there are up to six or seven of them, like in Siemreap. Let me warn you all that if anything peculiar happens, they would be removed en mass. Let's be clear that even if you put lot of energy in building nice cities, but if traveling from and to by our people encounters to roadblocks and illegal money collectors, they would not be happy with you at all.

... I would therefore request that (our officials at) all levels take this policy into a serious implementation. Sometimes this situation takes place at the corner in front of the residence of the Governor or so and so. What would they say when people see this action?

... Let me warn you of the fact about "the small fish is feeding the bigger ones." Why this issue is unfinished? How many people would have believed that Cambodia could collect thousands of weapons and demolished them? We have actually

done so. Who would believe that we could put an end to the issue of illegal roadblocks, while we are able were able to close down Karaoke, discotheque, etc.

... We were able to do so because we committed to do it. Why would you not act on the issue of illegal roadblocks? This time I am asking for your understanding and we should no longer talk on this topic.

... Let's all mobilize a movement for putting an end to the illegal roadblocks. Once we succeed in doing so the suffering and hardship of our people would be reduced greatly and the socio-economic activity would also advance. As you are conferred with new ranks, we would like to see you act in your area of responsibility upon your return (to work.)

... May I also appeal to all officials to take the people's well being seriously. You could compare yourself with the poor. Please do not compare yourself to the millionaires. We were born into the families of no air-conditioned rooms. We are the children of the farmers. Some of us may have forgotten this matter.

... Of course (such roadblocks that charge our people) Riels 1,000 at a time is not a big sum of money. But it is a big problem for those whose income is between Riels 1,000 and 2,000 a day. I hope this issue will not be an issue for discussion anymore by mid 2002.

Written Address...

Comment (2) ... Please listen to this point. I have read it slowly. The big brother and the gangster issues must be dealt to the root. Whether they are the children of whoever they may be, they must be arrested and jailed.

... If we were to let the big brother situation to go on our
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bridges...

... The National Road 7 between Tonlebet and Thnol Totoeng is now under construction. It is another development that takes place in midst of the country and has interactions with development in various parts of the country, not only to Kompong Cham or Kandal...

... Just now we have heard HE Ambassador of Japan made his speech in Khmer. In a period of one year of his mission in Cambodia, HE Ambassador has toured the whole country. He visited all Cambodia's provinces and cities. After completing one-year study (of Cambodia) he requested for meetings with me to discuss and consult on a number of issues related to the bilateral relations between Cambodia and Japan and in which areas should Cambodia want Japan to provide its assistance...

... Yesterday (21 January 2002) Japan hosted a meeting in Tokyo to discuss about the reconstruction of Afghanistan, in which Japan pledged to contribute an amount that is more than anyone else. (As in the case of Cambodia,) ICORC-I and ICORC-II were started and held in Tokyo, before the rest of the meetings alternated between Tokyo and Paris. This year the meeting will take place in Cambodia and as I have said once already that though aid is cut for some countries, it would remain uncut for Cambodia. Once again through HE Ambassador of Japan, I would convey my gratitude to the Royal Government and people of Japan for the uncountable contributions for the future of Cambodia.

... At present we have suspended the forest concession so that we could start renegotiating terms and conditions for better a management of forest concession in search of a sustainable exploitation. I wish to suggest a discussion between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, the Forest Concession Companies and the Donor Countries on my recom-

mendation to attach conditions in roads and bridges maintenance with terms for forest concession exploitation. Practically, it means if any companies overload trucks with logs and transport them on the roads and bridges, they will be accountable for violating the forest concession norm. Measures to be taken could range from stripping off one's license (of logging) to placing them a heavy charge.

... This bridge (Number 26) costs four million US dollars, and the two others (24 and 25) cost six million US dollars. We look at and see them as cement, but gold they are. That is why the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery has to ponder and to attach conditions to (future) forest concession. If because of this, those companies withdraw, I think we better keep our forest for another 500 years. They would not get rotten. On the other hand, we have forest kept as heritage for generations to come, and it is in fact an investment for a sustainable environment and a balanced ecosystem. Logging is allowed as it would contribute to the national income, but if the national income is not corresponding to the damages (caused by the forest concession companies) we have to take defensive measures.

... I traveled here on the National Road 6A from Phnom Penh. I have noticed damages on certain parts and places. As HE Khi Tainglim replied to me that MAEDA (contracted company) is no longer responsible in maintenance according to the contract, we should start the maintenance before these potholes become bigger. As for this year we have reserved a larger amount of budget for the maintenance of roads. Japan has already built us the roads. If we were to leave maintenance to them still, we would be ashamed... In between November 2001 and January 2002 and up to February, we would have inaugurated and celebrated the groundbreaking ceremonies of not less than US\$ 100 million

projects.

... Up to now the Royal Government imposes no land tax on the farmers. In the world, there are not many countries that take no tax on land. Because of the difficult living condition of the Cambodian farmers, the Government of the former 'State of Cambodia' through to the current Royal Government impose no tax on farming land. Aside from these, various school buildings, hospitals, water canals, roads and other infrastructure have been built in their interests and benefits as well.

... From January 18, 2002 up to today, the commune election campaign has entered its fifth day already. Despite some reports of abuses and violations that were resolved by the National Election Committee, the overall environment is fine. It is regretful that there was a car accident the other day. I wish to express my deep condolence over the death and share the grief with the bereaved family. I wish again to appeal to our compatriots to enhance their spirit of understanding, patience, and forgiveness till the voting day. After voting, we should join those elected to get on with development and peace of our country. I am appealing to all eligible voters of Cambodia to go to vote on February 3 as you go to celebrate a ceremony or event. As we are Buddhists, I would expect that we all go to vote like we are going to the Buddhist pagodas, to the mosques (for the Muslims,) and to the churches (for the Christians.)

... We all go to vote in a state of mind that will be violence-free and revenge-free. If we all love peace, democracy, and development, please go to vote in a democratic way, in a free and fair manner without any acts of violence. Please vote for whom-ever you trust and like. Please refrain from illegal acts. That is all I am requesting for. I am standing ready to offer my appreciation to whoever gets elected.■

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children would not have a good education at school. Please pay attention and make great efforts in dealing with this issue.

... We may note that some of the members are from powerful and/or wealthy families. Those children of the poor were just followers, and sometimes being used by the former. So I am requesting a plan of action be organized.

... If you all deal successfully with these two issues 1) illegal roadblocks and 2) the big brother and the gangster issues, by the end of 2002 I will present those with remarkable achievements with medals. Some gangster groups also possess gun leading to acts of killings. There was a murder case recently. People have gathered in front of my residence to demand justice. (I have ordered that) whoever the criminals would be, they must be discovered.

... If their high-ranking parents hide them, they would be relieved of their positions so that their children would dare not commit any further crimes by taking advantage of their parents' ranks.

... If their parents have not yet been sacked (from their position) and the arrest of their children may lead to an armed clash, we have to face that also in order to enact the law. They must be brought to trial in court regardless of position.

... Having done so, our society would be equitable. What is more important is that we can make a success on various tasks.

... Similarly those (of you) who do not implement (this order), let me make clear, will be subject to removal of ranks. The explanation is if you do not abide by the law, why should you be holding on to the position that protect and reinforce the law?...■