



28 October 2019 - Samdech Techo Hun Sen Welcomes Visiting President of Hungary, HE Janos Ader, in the Peace Palace

On Income Tax, Waste/Trash Collections/Management, and Waste-to-Energy Plants

(25 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Prior to commencing the Cabinet meeting on 28 October 2019, Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen made the following statement on income tax, salary, waste/trash collections/management, waste-to-energy plant, with following unofficial selection and translation:

Today, I have the necessity to deliver this statement to the Cabinet, provinces, armed forces as well as the people in the whole country in the presence of media here and is in live broadcast. Prior to the Cabinet's discussion on public financial management draft for 2020, I am taking this opportune moment to [...] share with our compatriots two major and unchanged points in policies delivered and led by the CPP-led Royal Government.

Firstly, continue to impose no tax on agricultural land. As long as the Cambodian People's Party continues to rule in the Royal Government, the Party will not impose tax on rice field and agricultural farmlands of the people.

Secondly, uplifting the tax ceiling above minimum salary level. It is not time for us to

readjust the ceiling at which tax shall be levying on minimum salary. We have done this since the fifth legislative term Royal Government aimed at helping improve living condition of civil servants, teachers, medical staff, police and soldiers, as well as workers and employees.

The Royal Government has been making efforts regularly to focus attention on increasing minimum salary and wages while guaranteeing that increases are not subjects to income tax obligation. In reality, we have adjusted minimum salary obliged to pay income tax three times already through the public financial management law. Firstly, in 2015, we have moved the ceiling up from minimum salary of 500,000 Riel to 800,000 Riel. Secondly, we moved the minimum salary obliged to pay tax from 800,000 Riel to one million Riel. Thirdly, the minimum salary level readjusted to 1.2 million Riel.

Along with increases of minimum salary and wages, to ameliorate living standard of civil servants, teachers, medical staff, workers and employees with children and spouse in their

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40 Years of NBC's Re-establishment

(10 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

[...] (the prepared text) the central bank has again taken its original name "the National Bank of Cambodia" playing an arbitrary role in managing banking sector; ... and the treasury has been separated from the National Bank of Cambodia too.

[Start of Comments]

In late 20th Century, No Country Abolished Currency as Cambodia Did

The prepared written speech could not cover events evolved (in relation to Cambodia's political and banking sector) in the beginning period. In this world, no country would by late 20th century abolish currency as what happened in Cambodia. It is already in the later part of the 20th century, (Cambodia had

had) no cities, markets, schools, or literally speaking nothing. Looking back on the path we traversed after forty years, we could be proud with what we have achieved for national revival. I did not take my diary today to show you my notes and draft of Cambodia's banknotes. There four dignitaries then – Samdech Heng Samrin, Samdech Chea Sim, Pen Sovann, and I – in August or September that we discussed about the new banknote. After our discussion, HE Cha Rieng (then National Bank Director) was briefed the concept [...]

The Riel Banknote Printed in 1955 and Destroyed Completely under Pol Pot

[...] no country in the world that suffered the fate that Cam-

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BBU Graduation and Diploma Presenting

(22 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Previous Generation Lost Chance for Education

I am so happy to join BBU's ceremony to present diplomas for 4,038 graduates – another achievement for our nation and society [...] I could remind how difficult it was for youth of the previous (regimes to seek for chance for education). They lost chance completely or almost completely because of war and/or the regime of genocide. With the genocidal regime gone, we called on those who had their education and survived the killing to help each other to get the country moving. We started with what they called "those who know much teach those who know little, and those who know little teach those who do not know" in a situation where

peace and war existed together. Peace prevailed in many parts of the country and war scattered in sporadic locations and at a few times [...] against all odds, we were able to restart school year in 1979-1980 and it has been 40 years now that we came across such difficulties [...]

No Health Screening for Exams Taking Candidates

As of now, I am seeking understanding from youth who would like to get jobs in the government

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(Continued from P 1 ... Tax) burdens, the Royal Government decided to set tax on their salaries in 2017 from 75,000 riel/month to 150,000 riel/month or two folds. The readjustment reduces the taxing base on salary to allow exemption of income taxes.

The Royal Government also provide more tax favors on additional advantages and do not include in taxing base on salary on subsidy that workers/employees received for travel, food, pregnancy allowances, ending-contract remuneration, or payment for end of service [...] on which at a certain level, other country would impose taxes.

For 2020, starting from April, minimum monthly salaries for civil servant will reach 1,172,500 Riel, for teachers and medical staff 1,272,500 riel, for police forces (sergeant) 1,256,977 Riel, and for soldiers (sergeant) 1,181,977 including rice or 1,23,500 including no rice. These minimum salaries would reach the income tax ceiling according to the new Article 47(2) of fiscal policy. In this development, the Royal Government has had the necessity to make amendment to the new Article 47(2) aimed at lifting the income tax ceiling by incorporating it into the public financial management bill for 2020 [...] and will continue to do so along with increase of minimum salary and wages in the following years.

In order for amendment to take place in a flexible and timely manner in conformity with socio-economic development, I have instructed the Ministry of Economy and Finance to get the amendment bill ready on the new Article 47(2) of the fiscal policy, which do not bring to sight monthly taxed salary and tax rates by class as before. The bill has opened way for the Royal Government to decide by sub-decree on salary subjected to tax and tax rates proposed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Projected tax ceiling for minimum salary has gone up from 1.2 million Riel to 1.3 million Riel for 2020 [...]

I am reaffirming that the Royal Government led by the Cambodian People's Party will continue to work on tax ceiling to allow minimum salary to enjoy tax exemption along with policy to levy no tax on household agricultural land set out and implement ever since the beginning through to the present [...]

[Start of Elaboration - 1]

In this meaning, let me clarify that the minimum salary for teachers now has reached about 300 USD per month. Even the minimum salary will reach 1,000 USD/month we will continue to work on tax favor for them. I mean, those with basic minimum salary will not face with income tax [...] a subject matter relating with salary adjustment in the public financial management bill in 2020.

[End of Elaboration - 1]

I still have the need to talk about waste collection and electric bill that I already had the public attention this week. Stemming from difficulties faced by people in Phnom Penh and those who come from provinces to stay in Phnom Penh with regard to waste collection mandate of CINTRI as well as our determination to improve public service, the Royal Government of Cambodia of this legislative term, I have decided on 22 October 2019 to:

Firstly, work towards stripping rights from CINTRI from being the sole company to collect waste/trash since, from the day it entered into contract with the Royal Government, the company failed to implement obligation expected in face of growth of Phnom Penh and demand of the people. Stripped of the rights, CINTRI will receive appropriate and fair compensations. Current physical and human resources of the company will come under provisional supervision and management of an autonomous unit to guarantee sustainability of waste collection for the people of Phnom Penh.

[Start of Elaboration - 2]

Let me clarify this point. We

cannot keep talking about CINTRI (failing to do and/or to do that) endlessly [...] I have no other choices and I cannot allow it to go on and on. I have in the past made decision to allocate four areas for wastes to gather. However, in nearly one full year, there has not seem to be a place chosen. It is necessary therefore for the company to end its service and transfer temporarily its means to the state entity. We must take action as matter of urgency to ensure control and management of human resource (in the company) to respond to people's demand in this task.

[End of Elaboration - 2]

Once the autonomous unit stabilizes the job, the Royal Government will allow for auction in transparent competition to choose at least four companies to carry out the job of collecting waste/trash in the city with quality and quantity acceptable to people's demand. The Royal Government expects the new mechanism will also create more jobs for our people.

[Start of Elaboration - 3]

On this point, let me assert that we will assume management of the whole company and once it achieves stable function, we will bring in our plan to have four divisions (of waste collections). One company would not be able to the job of (collecting wastes) in Phnom Penh, which was before only 300 square Kilometers. As of now, Phnom Penh has enlarged in size to over 600 square Kilometers – larger than Prague, Budapest or Sofia in that matter [...] CINTRI alone would not be able to carry out the task. We must allow companies to bid for the job, while CINTRI also can join auctioning for right only that it cannot bid for the task alone. We may have more number of workers. The move will also contribute to job creation for non-registered workers. We can also allow job sub-contractions, where those who work more will earn more and work less will earn less [...]

Removing Waste Collection Charge from Electric Bill

On another front, we must take it seriously. It is about removing charge of waste collections from the electric bill of the Electricite du Cambodge from 1 January 2020. We will replace it with a new mechanism. This would not only respond to people's aspiration but also be necessary to allow waste collection charge blocking progress in reform on electricity front, while it has reduced price of electricity gradually. My decision on 22 October 2019 is in fact a surgery into a protracted disease that I have order to resolve through the decision letter issued on 10 February 2015, and relevant stakeholders failed to implement it.

In 2015, I may remind, there had been decision in principle to remove waste collection charge from the electric bill. I have waited for four years and it never happens. I do not leave it for discussion anymore [...] four years is a long time. You may ask people in Phnom Penh and count how many would say charging for waste collection printed in electric bill was not the right thing to do. I know that business people and even diplomats have protested about why the charge for waste collection enclosed in the electric bill.

The unjust point has been that some people never have waste collected from their houses but they have to pay for the service too (because the charge attached in the electric bill). More so, people could not see how low has the electric price gone because while the amount still includes waste collection [...] let me stress that the same will apply to provinces where similar practice is observed. I am calling on HE Keo Ratanak (of Electricite du Cambodge to work on this decision) that provinces where charge of waste collection is included in the electric bill will see that it removed [...]

Some have commented in social media why we have to wait until 1 January 2020, let me take this chance to inform you that it is not an easy matter. We must

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(Continued from P 1 ... BBU) ment and they do not have every required qualifications. The state and/or private sector have required people who would like to have a job to sit for exam in addition to their age requirement. In certain field they have even required candidates to have certain height too [...] so far I disagreed with the Ministry of Health's proposal to have health screening on candidates who wish to take exams to get a government job. I rejected the proposal on this public health requirement in fear of exam taking candidates were contaminated with any kind of contagious diseases [...] what is more fearful to us is not that but the sickness of corruption [...] as of now, those staff in state institutions who have not got their tertiary education remains less in number and they are in preparation for retirement [...] in 1980s there could be some recruited without strict educational level requirement [...] as of present, Samdech Krola Ham Sar Kheng made a report to me that municipal and provincial level administrators have 100% completed their tertiary and post-graduate education [...]

No Taxation of Agricultural Land, Readjusting Tax Ceiling on Minimum Salary

On this forthcoming 25 October, the Cabinet will sit to study the draft law on financial management. I must have your attention on two things. As long as I am or the Cambodian People's Party is in power, [...] *firstly, no tax imposed on agricultural land. Since 1979, since when the country observed collective land (for cultivation) to the time when we distributed land to people, the government imposes no tax on our people. We will continue to allow that. We have done this forty years already. However, we charge tax on land sold in the city [...]* *secondly, we have been readjusting ceiling of tax on salary. Initially, civil servant earning 500,000 Riel (about 125 USD) would have to pay income tax. We move the ceiling to 800,000 Riel to help people with minimum level of in-*

come [...] when minimum salary level reaches one million per month, we move the ceiling to 1.2 million Riel. Literally speaking, soldiers, police and primary level teachers and/or nurse with low salary would be paying no taxes on their incomes [...] we will discuss this in the Cabinet meeting. I just wanted to share with you that monthly salary will continue to go up [...] aimed at improving living condition of teachers, medical staff, civil servants, and the armed forces. Some have boasted should they get power, they would pay ten times higher. Where would he take the money from? No country or financial institutions in this world give loans for salary [...]

Purchasing More L39 Reconnaissance Aircrafts for Czech

Relating to my visits to countries in Europe, some have said that I am gathering supports from (countries in Eastern Europe) to help prevent (removal of) EBA. No matter what they would say, between countries, there are numerous cooperation to do – in military, security, education, culture, tourism, and most importantly in economic cooperation. We are in preparation to purchase reconnaissance aircrafts from Czech. We already bought six L39 (Aero L-39 Albatros) aircrafts and there is now a new model. We need them not to fly into any other countries' airspace. We may need them for our efforts to check on and intervene in forest fire and/or flood situation that land access would be difficult. We can also use them to provide training for pilots. Why would there be Eastern and Western Europe since they are in European Community altogether [...] next year, European leaders will come to Cambodia as we will be hosting Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) [...] we will need to purchase 455 cars to serve in the event [...]

Left or Right I Would Go, It Would Serve/Protect National Interests

Western countries like Germany and France told us they are working and doing business with us. The European institu-

tions and European Banks are working and doing business with us. We do not have bad relations with any one country or with Europe. Tomorrow I will receive three Ambassadors – Japan, Germany and the US [...] they are working with a state that represent the Cambodian nation. Next week, I will deliver my speech in equal right and footing in the ASEAN Summit. ASEAN is working in consensus mode, please do not forget that [...] today, I am taking my posture as a trap. Trap does not speak (or make sound). However, the trap never forget egret. Egret only forgets the trap. Egrets fly wherever they wish to. Those working with/for me, they are concerned when I am not talking [...] they knew right away that when I am not talking, things go unpredictable. They would not know which direction – right or left that I am going. No matter what direction it may be, I will ensure it serves national interest [...]

Paris Peace Agreement Does Not Require Trial of the Khmer Rouge Leaders

Tomorrow will be the 23 October Paris Peace Agreement anniversary and I do not wish to talk about it. I would leave it to many who claimed themselves analysts to brag about [...] UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) finished up its mission when the Constitutional Assembly became National Assembly and the establishment of the Government [...] Head of UNTAC – Yasushi Akashi and his Commander Jon Sanderson left Cambodia on the night of 24 (October) while we were having banquet in the Royal Palace. The agreement requires for us to keep UN rapporteur, whom we observed and continue [...] if they are seeking to reapply the Paris Peace Agreement, we may have to set Khieu Samphan free. The Agreement does not require us to try the Khmer Rouge leaders [...] nothing was said about dissolving the Khmer Rouge politically or militarily, make no mistake about it [...] the Agreement does not require Cambodia to have HM the King or Head of State. Cambo-

dia has the Supreme National Council (SNC) albeit HM the King would be only head of the Supreme National Council [...]

Head of SNC to Hold Decision Making Authority

In Pattaya (Thailand), there were disagreements on two points [...] firstly, right to give final decision stipulated in the Agreement. The draft agreement stipulated that SNC must base its decision making on principle of consensus. In case of no consensus reached, Head of UNTAC will do so. The State of Cambodia proposed an amendment to offer decision making authority to Head of SNC or HM the King Father. At the UNSC, HM the King Father wrote a letter to UN Secretary General HE Pérez de Cuéllar (that) on topic relating to decision making right of SNC would depend on HE Hun Sen [...] having breakfast with me, (Michael) Costello, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia said to me that the US (represented by Richard H) Solomon would like to know if I have full authority in my power to conduct negotiation. I told him whatever I decided was applicable [...]

Proportional Electoral System Proposed by the State of Cambodia

According to the Paris Peace Agreement, the electoral process would be national proportional system. The State of Cambodia was aiming for first-past-the-post electoral system. We did not have agreement on that. While back in the country, we had a thorough discussion. Our goal was to eliminate the political and military organizations of the Khmer Rouge to stop forever threat of its return [...] the national proportional system would lead to the Khmer Rouge having voice in the National Assembly. We decided to opt for provincial proportional system to slash their voices to prevent them from adding up their vote altogether. In this remark, you may see that the provincial proportional electoral system proposed by the State of Cambodia, while

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leave ample time to organize mechanism waste collection charge or we may face with turmoil because of disruption in management. From today through to 31 December 2020, people will pay for electric bill attached with waste collection charge. From 1 January 2020, we will implement new payment mechanism. I have seen draft of new bill form but I have not yet disclose it in public [...]

[End of Elaboration - 3]

I have delegated task to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance HE Aun Pommoniroth to lead a coordinating meeting with related parties to realize the above goals of organizing mechanisms for waste collection management and for waste collection charge, as well as matters concerned. I task the Ministry of Mines and Energy to conduct study to set required conditions for bidding by private sector partners to build and operate waste-to-energy plants to combust waste to produce electricity while prohibiting import of waste from foreign countries. This is one of the measures to take to ensure our country is clean and people live in better environment.

[Start of Elaboration 4]

There have been many companies expressing interests in (waste-to-energy) projects but there has been hesitation about costs. As I said earlier, we would try to find a way to reach acceptable operating costs. We could step into taking profit earned from electricity to help cover as subsidiary payments to sustain waste collection for the sake of improving our environment. We must prevent our country from having wastes buried everywhere in the future. One thing we must prohibit is any waste-to-energy investment projects must not entail "importing wastes from other countries" to meet requirement. Cambodia must not be a dumping ground of waste or a storage of other countries' wastes to combust for electricity.

Continued Reinvestment of

Five-Year Dividend on Electric Transmission Lines

In another development, I have decided to expedite plan to provide electricity from national gridlines to every villages. Through fundamental reforms in energy front, over the past ten years, 92% of the 14,168 villages in the whole country have access to affordable electric price from national transmission lines. To speed things up, I decided on 22 October 2019 for the Royal Government to continue to take out no dividend from profit made by the *Electricite du Cambodge* for another five years 2020 through to 2025. It is another form of state investment to expand access to national transmission lines for the remaining areas. We have seen that decision to take no dividend from profit made by *Electricite du Cambodge* for the first five years fruitfully contributed to augment its investment fund to expand electric transmission lines to people in rural areas.

We have been "using electricity to expand its service coverage areas." We did not take dividend from electricity and put it in national budget. However, *Electricite du Cambodge* is obliged to observe taxes and other matters concerned. With dividend reinvested, we have brought the national electric lines to 92% of villages in the country. I have decided to continue it for another five years to ensure that electricity from national lines reaches every village. That would help ensure roughly similar prices people will pay for cost of electricity used since people in the remaining 8% of villages still pay high price to private electric supplier. This is what I wish to set light on efforts made for expedition for people to benefit from reforms [...] Let me finish my statement here. I hope that people will carefully learn my message. Tonight TV stations may broadcast this after we have live coverage now on Fresh News and social media [...] it is about the right time to resolve problems concerning waste collection and management. We must double our efforts to work on

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SNC and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – then there were not yet UNAMIC or UNTAC – agreed to it. We are still using it today [...] let me remind them that no one has the power and authority to interpret laws [...] only the Constitutional Council does [...]

Ambok for National, Religion and King

Though the water level of the Mekong River in Phnom Penh has lowered, we are going to celebrate our water festival that include boats racing event. I already declared that we will make 9 November – which is our National Independence Day and the Establishment of the Army – our Ambok (crushed newly harvested rice) eating day to keep our tradition, to take care of our nation, religion, and King. We must prepare well [...] beside this eating Ambok would help us to appreciate Cambodian agriculture and its produces [...] I am calling on provinces that possess racing boats [...] to find ways to help pagodas and community bring their boats to the event [...] we must do a good job preparing for this water festival activities [...]

CINTRI Cannot Do Waste Collecting Alone, Underground Parking Space

The Capital of Phnom Penh will host many people from provinces, while some city dwellers would go to provinces. It is a once in a year event. I urge the Phnom Penh mayor, HE Khuong Sreng, to look into issue of wastes and there will be help from about 1,000 youth from the Ministry of Environment, the UYFC, etc. after the three days event [...] CINTRI (waste collection company) alone would not be able to do the job [...] CINTRI entered agreement with the Municipali-

ty of Phnom Penh at the time when waste was somewhere 300 to 500 tons per day. As the city has grown in size and population, the waste has gone up to over 3,000 tons a day [...] we should divide the city into four zones and there must be at least four companies to bid for the job [...] one company will be allowed to do only in one sector [...]

[End of Elaboration 4]

(Continued from P 1 ... NBC) bodia did – no currency, no bartering of goods, no markets, etc. Looking back on those, every Cambodians would be even prouder for their contributions to have brought Cambodia this far from no foundations left from the past regimes. It was different from when Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod received the country from the French though we had the conversion of currency used for the three countries in Indochina to the Khmer Riel in 1955. The banknote printed under the Popular Socialist regime continued to circulate in the country's economy.

Lon Nol printed new banknotes but people were able to change from old ones to the others. Under Pol Pot, the Khmer Riel was totally destroyed. In those days, in the country there was no printing capacity of banknotes. We had to have them printed in Moscow, in the former Soviet Union time, then have them air-shipped to Phnom Penh [...]

Prime Minister Lacking Cash for Civil Servants Salary

By early 1990, we were able to put a printing capacity into operation for small banknotes. It was a very difficult time. I served the longest in the Royal Government from 8 January 1979 up to the present [...] it was very difficult in becoming a Prime Minister of a country in which there were not sufficient cash for civil servants salary. Even after the first, the second and the third legislative term Royal Governments, we still did not have sufficient cash flow to ensure payrolls of civil servants and the armed forces [...] we started by dissolving the slavery production mode and our people were just waiting for the time to arrive. Pol Pot gathered every kitchen utensils to the cooperatives. People work and eat collectively. Once the regime fell, people did not wait but took back what were theirs [...]

Then, Bartering Came

People then started old form of trading – bartering. People ex-

change what they had with each other. Someone who had fish exchanged them for rice, cloth, etc. We later noted exchanges of gold and gold, while along the border, we also observed exchanges of foreign currencies such as Vietnamese Dong, USD, French Franc, and other foreign currencies. People accepted and used all. As we had the Khmer Riel printed and circulated, I wrote about how did we print and circulate it in the Cambodia's Ten Years March book [...] there had been instances that people did not recognize banknotes as they never saw it under Pol Pot, especially in area liberated (by the Khmer Rouge) [...] that had not been easy for an economic structure.

Political and Economic Reforms in 1980s

We were not able to jump off from centrally planned to market economy right away. I faced with dangers on this effort. Leading reform was not an easy job [...] as I think about political and economic reforms in 1980s, it always gives me goosebumps. Why? How many people then could have understood about the need for negotiation except fighting? I started reforms on both fronts.

The first front was political reform, which means we had to seek negotiation for peace for Cambodia [...] according to surveys from the National Defense of Cambodia then, Minister of Defense Koy Buntha did not agree to political negotiation and thought doing so would abandon revolutionary or social achievements. I had to appoint Samdech Tia Banh, then in the Ministry of Public Works, as Minister of National Defense. He was a deputy chief of general staff before he was appointed Minister of Transport and Public Works [...]

I was then Minister of Foreign Affairs for a while before I gave the Foreign Affairs post to a dignitary who then was not optimistic about the negotiation. I then had to take up foreign affairs under my wing again. How many, that is why I am asking, would understand about

negotiation? They thought negotiation means accepting defeat. Negotiation was in fact for us to end war and to seek for a political solution for the country. We did not wait. We embarked on preparation for entering market economy. Even on this point, how many would understand about market economy? Many of our leaders had their education then in North Vietnam after the Geneva conference in 1954. They knew more about cooperatives. As you could see that there had to be a transition and we could not jump off the centrally plan directly to market economy [...]

Faced with Three Challenges

I have said this once and I think I should bring it up again. There had been three pressuring challenges on me (while conducting political and economic reforms in Cambodia):

Firstly – there were insufficient internal understanding.

I could have lost support from within and it would be the biggest danger. How could I go about negotiating for political settlement and economic reforms? We talked about role of private sector and our rank talked about strengthening state role. Quite contradictory [...] it was not fun for someone to be Prime Minister in such circumstance. I was fortunate though that top leaders such as Samdech Chea Sim, Samdech Heng Samrin, the late HE Say Phuthong, and other leaders offered me supports.

I worked from bottom up. I travelled to provinces and learnt about land reform in Takeo, where Pol Saroeun was then its governor [...] in contrast, Kratie was very conservative on the same topic (compared to Takeo). That was one of the possible danger out of the three I would list on me.

Secondly – as I started reform, there were about ten thousands Vietnamese troop in Cambodia and Vietnam itself was not yet on its path of Doi Moi (or reform).

Should Vietnam then disagreed and decided to interfere in Cam-

bodia's political principles, it could have been a real danger. I always avail my respect to the Vietnamese troop and to the late HE Le Duc Anh for that position they took. Leading (Vietnamese) experts working in Cambodia, he made it clear that task of the Vietnamese troop was to help Cambodia prevent the return of Pol Pot. Cambodia would lead its political and economic matters [...] in that case, Vietnam was not obstacle to my political and economic reforms endeavors. It was because of this that I could succeed in the reform while Vietnamese troops were in Cambodia [...]

Thirdly – (the reforms were carried out) while the former Soviet Union – who provided us main assistance – was using term like revisionism.”

Should they judge Hun Sen as one of the revisionists, I could be in danger too [...] while I started the process of reforms in Cambodia, there were no Perestroika and glasnost yet. What if the Soviet Union told Samdech Heng Samrin or Samdech Chea Sim to take me out or they would cut off assistance [...] that would be the end too.

Party and Country Were With Me for Political Settlement

It was fortunate that I could bring the Cambodian People's Party and the country on board together for political settlement [...] we conducted amendment to the Constitution in just one day [...] I gave a roughly two hour lecture to the National Assembly and I pinpointed the need to offer people ownerships to their houses or cities would face housing collapses. People would not pay to refurbish houses as they believed them to be provisional residences. People would not bolster levees in rice fields as they were not sure where they would be going next and who would work the land instead [...]

I am so glad that our achievements came from hardworking and we would work hard to protect them. I thank the leader-

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tween keeping peace and delivering development and the state's endeavors for socio-economic development. Should there be no peace and development, let me emphasize this point, religions – Buddhism, Muslim, or Christianity – would be facing with impacts.

With poverty, people would not be able to practice religions. They would first think of how to fill their stomachs first. It is so simple to remember that only with endured peace and development that religions can have advantages. We have seen here that everyone is in their best clothes and happy. I am so happy to see that [...]

State Progresses, Religion Benefits

I must share with you that the state has received so much from religions. It was one of my political science thesis that I defended successfully in 1991 on role of religions (in national development). We must see here that every religions teach human beings to fulfil good deeds.

The issue here is how the state can see the benefits of religious harmonization and complementary roles through which citizens are law abiding and staying away from committing crimes. Good human resource acquires not only knowledge but virtue and morality. Religions educate people to achieve all those.

That is why I am saying there is a complementary role between religion and state. Positive leadership by the state would give benefit of religious progress and the religions would help people to be law abiding [...]

Six Recommendations

I think I have some suggestions for us to keep on doing altogether. *Firstly, we must join hands to safeguard peace, security, and social order [...]* without which we cannot ensure religious progresses [...] you may look at what happened in Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Mali, etc. [...] were there peace? Were there rights and

freedom of religions? They may have them in their hearts but their religious shrines were not there. Destroyed (by war and hatred). It is on this note that we must not allow peace held hostage and threatened by bad people.

The Royal Government would not let them have chance to achieve that. It is the role of the Royal Government, the authorities at every levels, and each and every citizen in safeguarding peace [...]

I think Mr. Nayan Chanda has so many questions to ask me but I will leave tomorrow (on state visits to Europe) and he will leave (Cambodia) too [...] he surely would come back, I am sure [...]

Secondly, fulfil safe village and commune policy. I think priest and pastors, and leaders of Christianity can do their parts in churches instructing followers in Christian events to exercise safe village/commune policy to stay away from theft/robberies, drugs, etc. [...] *thirdly, Churches and Christian followers join in campaign to eliminate or reduce drug addictions.* It is a concerning issue in the world, and in Cambodia, among citizens, especially youth [...] *fourthly, paying heed to ensuring respect of traffic rules.* Traffic accidents took lives more than war in Cambodia [...] in average, six or seven people died of traffic accidents a day, and that does not include those who maimed [...] everyone should exercise this slogan of today and tomorrow there must be no traffic accident [...] *fifthly, every religion ensure internal harmonization and with/among others.* We all are aware that there are sects in Christianity [...] and in Buddhism, we also have Theravada and Mahayana [...] where it is required for every sects in each religion to ensure internal harmonization, and thus with/among other religions [...] *sixthly, training of human resource is important.* To achieve goal of ensuring further progress in religions, training of priests, pastors, etc. is a matter of importance [...] the same is

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ship of the Cambodian People's Party for their supports to my initiative from one phase to another and today, after forty years, we are standing firm on this land of ours. I would need more times to talk about all this. One day I would have them recorded on footage for record keeping [...]

Hun Sen Government Stands after Vietnam Left

I may elaborate some more on what has been written in the prepared text. We may compare Cambodia to Vietnam, and Laos, and some countries going through regime changes. What happened was that they only changed the leadership but not the system. Take for instance, in the presence of the Vietnamese Ambassador here, after the lib-

true in other religions [...] not only knowledge about religions per se but other streams as well to make sure they can contribute to social and national development, as well as those for their families [...], Amen.

Pride to Take in Forty Years of Racial and Religious Harmonization

Once again, I thank you all for coming to this annual event. Next year we will find a way and time to get together again. I have had to wait until today to get this meeting fulfilled (because of my busy schedules). I will be leaving for state visits to Czech, Hungary and Bulgaria – and they are countries that people largely observe Christianity [...]

I have no problem going and working with any country in this world because though Buddhism is the state's religion, we have ensured peaceful coexistence with other religions. It is in this statement that the Cambodian People's Party can take pride that in the past forty years the country has had no racial and/or religious conflicts [...] let us take this moment to pray together for Christ to bless you all and for us to protect the country's peace and development, Amen./.

eration of former South Vietnam, leaders of the regime left but they kept the Vietnamese banknotes. People later changed from banknotes of former regime to new ones [...] it was not the case of Cambodia [...]

In another bizarre development, were there any regimes in this world and in Asia, for instance, stay on after withdrawal of foreign troops? Cambodia could. Lon Nol's regime fell after the US withdrew. South Vietnamese fell after the US withdrew. Afghanistan fell, after the Soviet Union withdrew. As for the Hun Sen's government, it stands firm after Vietnam left. Although there had been compromises afterwards, they were all based on mechanisms of the Hun Sen's government [...]

In 1998, Vietnam withdrew from Cambodia. The external aspect of the Cambodian problem was solved. The remaining issue to solve was internal aspect of Cambodia, which was to obliterate the regime of Pol Pot's genocide [...] External aspect of the Cambodian problem included the Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, use of foreign sanctuaries and foreign assistances to the forces against Cambodia. Internal aspect of the Cambodian people was division of the four Khmer factions.

There were three factions in the tripartite coalition government and the Phnom Penh government. We needed to find a way to bring them together. We did it. Cambodia ended war on 29 December 1998 – the day when the Khmer Rouge leaders surrendered to the Prime Minister's house. That story was unique in the world [...] the Khmer Rouge's President and Prime Minister Khieu Samphan, President of the National Assembly Nunon Chea and their cabinet members came. Ieng Sary came first. All of them passed away already. Only Khieu Samphan is alive. It has been a journey of so much difficulties. We needed to maintain (what we have achieved) and keep going. Yes, that is about all I needed to say in addition to the prepared text [...]/.

Annual Solidarity Dining with Christians

(12 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Thanks for Voting Cambodian People's Party

First of all, allow me to welcome you all – priests, pastors, leaders and all Christian followers/parishioners for taking their times to attend this event and I wish Christ blesses them all. It is another meeting that we have scheduled to meet annually. In the passing year, we have carried out so many tasks for the construction of our country. I wish to take this chance to deliver my sincere appreciation and thanks to Christian parishioners in the Kingdom of Cambodia for contributions they have made for keeping peace and development. I thank them for voting the Cambodian People's Party. As I have said on numerous occasions, as long as I am elected as Prime Minister, we will have this meeting on a yearly basis. Last year, you all went to vote and voted for the Cambodian People's Party. Your actions helped me continue to work as Prime Minister and here we are today, Amen [...]

CPP Ensures Respect of Freedom of Religions

One of the main things that the Cambodian People's Party hold in its hand firmly since the liberation of 7 January 1979 is to ensure harmonization of races and religions. We have done everything to ensure that believers (religious persons) and non-religious persons coexist with one another in peace. In this hall, I meet Christian followers but also persons of other religions every year. We will have such meetings until 2023. Should the Cambodian People's Party win election in 2023, I would continue to be Prime Minister and we would continue our meeting until 2028. Under the leadership of the Cambodian People's Party, people are free to choose religions they believe in and they also can choose to be non-religious too. We have got here Buddhists, Muslims and Christians. Counting in my friend here Nayan Chanda, an old friend, used to

write for the Far Eastern Economic Review, whom I met in Colombo, and (probably) a Hindu followers, we could say there are four religious entities in this hall.

Difference of Religions Should Not Be Obstacle to Peace and Development

We must ensure provision of rights and freedom on religions to every citizen. We have seen clearly that difference of religions (in Cambodia) has not been obstacles to peace keeping and development. As every religions coexist peacefully together, keeping harmonization with one another, nothing is in the way to prevent us from making advancement. We can work together in a room, in a construction site, in the rice field, or a factory despite differences in our faiths. We may have different faiths or religions but we all have the same goals to live in freedom and to have what every human being needs – independence, freedom, food, clothes, education, decent housing, etc. and important of all in Cambodia – peace and development. I am so joyful to have contributed in the past 40 years to make Cambodia moving from the time when no religions allowed to their revivals (and developments) after the liberation of 7 January 1979 [...] in Cambodia, one Muslim responded to a question which religion is the oldest that none is older or younger, he said, because they all have been revived on 7 January 1979. That is true. Every religions have their long histories in Cambodia but they died under the regime of Pol Pot and they came back to lives since 1979.

No Peace and Development, Religions Suffers Impacts

We have observed developments in every religions now – Buddhism, Muslims, Christianity, all of which clearly explain close relations between socio-economic development and religious progresses. We must see complementary roles be-

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Press Briefings in Czech & Bulgaria

(14 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Czech – an Old and Close Friend Who Continues Supporting Cambodia on Its Path of Democracy, Peace and Sustainable Development

First of all please allow me to express my profoundly sincere appreciation to the Czech government and HE (Andrej) Babis for warmly welcoming me and the Cambodian delegation during our stay in the beautiful capital of Prague. This is my fourth time to visit Prague. I conducted visit to Prague in between 1979 and 1984 before I became the Cambodian Prime Minister in 1985. This is a remarkable and memorable visit. I wish to take this opportune moment to express with unforgettable memories and gratitude to the valuable assistance provided by the former Czechoslovakia to the Cambodian people in time of hardships after Cambodia was liberated from the regime of the Khmer Rouge.

I thank the Czech government for clearing debt that Cambodia owed in the 1980s and converted the remaining part to development assistance to support development projects in Cambodia. I thank Czech for providing 1.5 million USD a year for a period of six years from 2018 through to 2023 [inaudible] to continue bilateral relations development.

I wholeheartedly thank the Czech government for choosing Cambodia as a country of priority for Czech to continue development cooperation programs for 2018 through to 2023. I thank the Czech Republic for providing scholarships for the Cambodian students. From 1981 through to 2019, 362 Cambodian students had had their training/studies in Czech. A number of them have been holding important roles in various state institutions of Cambodia.

Czech, to my admiration, is a country with advanced economic progress with low unemployment rate in European Union and has become the sixth safest country in the world.

My visit to Czech this time is to energize further long-standing friendship between our two countries, to strengthen political trust and to raise higher bilateral relations in a new context. The fact that HM the King Samdech Preah Borom Neat Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia visited and stayed in Czech has had an important contribution to strengthening long-term friendship between the two countries. On this point, it has clearly indicated that provision of scholarship to Cambodia is not a new thing for Czech since HM the King of Cambodia studied in Czech since 1960s. Providing human resource development assistance has been a long-term relations (that Czech has committed in the relation with Cambodia).

A while ago, HE (Andrej) Babis and I met and discussed bilateral relations in a pleasant and friendly atmosphere. The two sides exchanged views on issues of bilateral and multilateral interests to the two countries.

Overall, the two sides expressed satisfactions to gradual progress made in the two countries' cooperation as reflected through exchange of high-ranking visits, growing volume of bilateral trade, and signing of various agreements and memorandums.

This morning, the two parties signed three more papers – (1) A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministries of Health and VAMED of Czech; (2) A Memorandum of Understanding between the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce and the Czech Chamber of Commerce; and (3) A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between National Diplomatic Institute and International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and the Academy of Diplomacy of the Czech Republic.

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To further cooperation in health, investment, and diplomacy, the two parties agreed to organize a number of activities to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Czech and Cambodia in 2021. I am pleased to note growing trade volume between the two countries in the past three years. HE Prime Minister (Andrej) Babis and I have underlined importance of efforts to increase bilateral trade volumes based on potentials of the two countries.

On this occasion, the two countries discussed new projects relating to health, agriculture, environment, and aviation. I wish to take this opportune moment to recall Cambodia's purchase of six L39 reconnaissance aircrafts from Czech and they have arrived in Cambodia already. This morning, I have tabled discussion on possibility that Cambodia can purchase three to four more new version L39 reconnaissance aircrafts. We will discuss this matter more. Cambodia can consider purchasing light weapons in our relations on national security and defense.

In the Cambodian and European context, I hope that Czech – which is an old and close friend of Cambodia will continue to support Cambodia and guarantee that the Cambodian embarks on without hindrance democracy, peace and sustainable development. I thank Czech once again for reaffirming its supporting position to Cambodia in the framework of European Union [...]./.

Results of Bilateral Meeting with Prime Minister Boyko Borissov of Bulgaria

Let me thank Prime Minister of Bulgaria for extending a warm welcome to the Cambodian delegation on its official visit to the country. This is my fifth time visiting Bulgaria after the first four visits in the 1980s. Since then the two countries had gone through internal political changes on their own. However, as old friends, we always call on each other. The Cambo-

dian-Bulgarian relation has a history of over 60 years already and Cambodia thanks Bulgaria for providing it with assistance at the time when Cambodia was in its hardest time after the fall of the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime.

HE Prime Minister and I met in New York last year at the headquarters of the United Nations. Today, we have had a chance to meet and talk frankly on existing bilateral relations. I think that my visit this time will generate fruitful results and serve as a roadmap for efforts towards strengthening bilateral relations between our two countries.

Taking this opportune moment, on behalf of the Cambodian people who survived deaths (under the Khmer Rouge regime of the genocide), I thank the government and people of Bulgaria for provision of assistance to Cambodia in the past. We are expressing again today our condolences over the death of three Bulgarian soldiers who died in their peacekeeping operation in Cambodia in 1990s.

In the course of our discussion, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and I have covered important issues focusing on bilateral relations, mainly making further efforts to promote cooperation and relations in economics, trade, investments, education, etc. [...] I thank HE Prime Minister very much for his positive response on my request for assistance on human resource training for Cambodia.

We have discussed possibility of establishing mechanisms necessary for promotion of relations between the two countries and you may have seen that we have just signed a number of documents [...] We discussed aspects in the ASEAN-Europe relations [...]

Once again, I thank HE Prime Minister, (the government and people of Bulgaria) for such a wonderful hospitality and a frank discussion while treating one another as long-timer partners, old friends, and adding new force to our two countries' cooperation./.

2018-19 Mention-A High School Graduates

(09 October 2019 — Unofficial Selection and Translation)

Raising Armed Forces, a Reason for Action

Last night they declared again raising money to feed an army. That is the reason for us to take action. I am making clear that once they have arms, I will take action wherever they would be. There would need to have no court order for an arrest. I will allow military to take actions. The army must know their roles. In normal circumstances, troops would not take parts. Only police and military police will. As they declared setting up army as such, we have reasons to mobilize troops and use whatever weapons the situation requires. It is no longer a demonstration or protest but an armed struggle. Let their supporters remember that we have leave this matter in the hand of law already [...] should we neglect defending peace we could not expect any further development.

On 9 November, the national independence day and the foundation of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, they should not make that day their time to overthrow the legal government and to arrest Prime Minister. They have said that according to census, they have 65% support in the armed forces [...] they may want to come early [...] they said they would come in millions from Korea and Thailand. How would they get them in? [...] about 500 airplanes perhaps [...] the other day he said about him holding French passport. He just had made known that he is not a Cambodian but a French [...] as far as the guerrilla leader is concerned, [...] Samdech Tia Banh knows what action to take. He stepped over the red line [...]

A "Regime Change" to End Constitutional Monarchy?

Insult on HM the King was not a simple matter. He named HM the King with derogative term and compared him to be King in theatre, while calling on him to abdicate the throne [...] and they would choose another one. The Constitution clearly stipulates that the period in which the country could go without a King would be for seven days. Based on this reason, (we could understand that) their real goal was not to remove Hun Sen but to have a regime change to put an end to the Constitutional monarchy. The country will no longer have King. It is a coup d'Etat and we will not forgive it. Those of you who may have involved yourselves in that campaign of nine fingers may not judge the government as infringing upon your rights [...]

let us now make 9 November – the national independence and the army foundation day a day when we all will eat Ambok (flattened newly harvested rice) for the sake of defending our nation, religion and King [...] their supporters inside and foreign circles must understand this is nothing but a plan to launch a coup. Such a plan to bring about state collapse through means of arms will not allow. Posting messages in Facebook joining the campaign would also face arrests. It would not be a freedom of expression but participation in treason to overthrow by means of arms [...] they have insulted HM the King that we in the whole country placed high in our respect [...] they said they have raised lots of money to raise an army. I would just ask in this epoch which country would assist someone to build an army [...]

Students and teachers could take their times to see the building and even to have a look at the Prime Minister's office. Make no mistake about it this place has the power to make people living in peace or to cause heinous destruction. It is a place where the executive power makes decisions. A slight mistake would cause crumbling in policies. A wrong decision made in a family level would cause disaster only to one family. In the Peace Palace, one wrong decision made would cause destruction to the whole country. I have doubt what mistake would so and so who dreamed to be Prime Minister make since s/he already did a tremendous one by declaring to the world s/he is going to arrest Hun Sen and bring to trial [...]