



26 September 2013 — Samdech Techo Hun Sen hands over stamp to new Minister of Economy and Finance Dr. Aun Porn Moniroth (Kampuchea Thmey)

Presenting Rectangular Strategy III

(25 September 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Comments)

In the course of presenting the Rectangular Strategy Phase III to the first Cabinet meeting, Samdech Techo Hun Sen made elaborations on various urgent matters that CNV made some selections and provided herewith its unofficial translation.

Beware of Flood Threat and Impacts

First if all I would like to welcome members of the new Cabinet that came to existence yesterday on September 24, which is the day that we celebrate the Constitutional Day of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The first Cabinet meeting as well as the formation of the Royal Government itself fell on the time when the flood threatens many provinces of Cambodia, mainly the three along the Mekong river – Stoeng Treng, Kratie and Kompong Cham. There has been flood from rain on the

Thai side that spills into the provinces of Preah Vihear, Uddar Meanjei and Banteay Meanjei.

The Governor of Stoeng Treng SMS me that though the water level in his province is going down somehow, the level of water further up the stream surges again.

We should note that once the provinces of Stoeng Treng, Kratie and Kompong Cham run out of flood absorption capacity, the water would then spill into the provinces of Kandal and Prey Veng that are bordering with Vietnam, where the sea lies not far from it. It is always the case that this has kept the lower part of Cambodia flooded for a prolonged period.

In this note, I would seek all level authorities – national and subnational – to be vigi-

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First Session of the National Assembly

(24 September 2013 — Unofficial Translation, Selected Comments and Briefing)

Here followed is the compiled and translated introductory statement of Samdech Techo Hun Sen to the first session of the fifth legislative term of the National Assembly and the press briefing thereafter.

National Assembly's First Session Always Meets in September

Before I start reading for you (the Political Platform of the Royal Government of Cambodia of the Fifth Legislature of the National Assembly), please allow me to make some comments in the presence of everyone here.

We are not hostages to any group. We have fulfilled our tasks and role in conformity with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

The Constitution defines that the first session of the National Assembly must convene within 60 days at the latest.

That has become by law and a habit.

In general, the National Assembly (of the Kingdom of Cambodia) never opens its first session in November as some people said.

We have maintained the routine (of convening the National Assembly first session in September) since after the Constitutional Assembly.

In 1998 (when there was a political stalemate), the first

National Assembly session also convened its session on 24 September in Siem Reap under the presidency of then HM the King Father, dues to unfavorable situation in Phnom Penh.

In 2003, the first session of the National Assembly also met on 24 September.

For the fourth legislative term, in 2008, the first session of the National Assembly also met on September 24.

For this fifth legislature, the first National Assembly session met yesterday – 23 September.

As you can see, according to this chronology, the National Assembly (of the Kingdom of Cambodia) always convenes its first session in September.

It has been according to the law and become a habit. Interpretations that the National Assembly's first session could hold in November are illegal and not according to the habit.

National Assembly's Doors Are Open

Secondly, they have made foul cry about what they called one-party session (of the National Assembly) and the first session was therefore illegal.

How could they said that when we are meeting under this very roof of the National

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lant and ready to help people deal with all sorts of impact from flood in affected areas.

This should include also moving them from flooded to highground areas and provide them with food, medicine and sanitation services. Medical staff should have permanent presence in these areas.

Impacts on infrastructures such as broken roads or bridges will also require our attentions. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries must keep attentive monitoring and inspecting impacts on crops, especially rice.

In case of severe damage of rice, the Ministry should take every urgent measure possible so that our people are able to resume recultivation and production. Normally, being under water for a week or so, unless it is in the fruiting stage, some rice would survive in still water.

I would urge all national forces, the local authorities, the National Committee for Disaster Management and the Cambodian Red Cross to pay attention on these issues.

Finally, on this issue, I am appealing to our people in the affected areas to raise high consideration for safety of their family.

People who reside along eroded river shores must move out provisionally for your family safety reason. You may need to keep children away from flood.

I learnt that there have been lethal incidents in Kompong Cham province. There have also been cases that people with overdose of alcohol are facing with drowning problem. Please be cautious to

your family and your own safety.

Ensuring Sustainable Workflow

As we are meeting for the first Cabinet I would like to take this opportune moment to express my sincere thank to the colleagues – those who have and have not been reappointed - in the fourth legislature.

We have here some new members and some are formers. We cannot either keep all from former Cabinet or bring in new ones without taking into consideration the potential of work efficiency.

We cannot have completely new members without some old ones from the previous Cabinet. We also have to have a balanced mixture of young age and old age ministers. We have also many Undersecretaries of State that are in their thirties. Many of Secretaries of State are under their forties and they are reserved ones too.

In order to ensure sustainable workflow, we have made a thorough review of the Cabinet members as some of the former members are either in ailments or too old to go on.

Some in the rank of Undersecretary of State would eventually be promoted to Secretary of State, and those in the rank of Secretary of State would become Ministers when their capacity reaches maturity.

As for today our meeting will deal with the most important agenda relating to the launch of the Rectangular Strategy Phase III. I am sure that our meeting today will require a lot of time. I will try to be brief but it will still be a lot of works ...

On Good Governance

As it comes to issue of good governance, I would like to elaborate a bit on this issue for our people and everyone in this meeting room to understand that we are focusing on good governance as the backbone of our reform.

I have four important steps to talk about – (Cabinet members must) 1) reflect themselves in the mirror, 2) take a bath, 3) rub off dirt from body if there are any and 4) take treatment. I would not anticipate repetitive incident in the fifth term.

Reflecting oneself in the mirror – I would urge all Cabinet members to look into the mirror to see what you have done right and/or wrong. Mirror is a good thing that when use appropriately we will see the truth.

Take for instance the public forum with the people. It is something to do regularly to get to know what do the people want or need. We also will learn of what we need to do to answer to those needs. Take for instance this issue of illegal checkpoints. I have made it an issue for many years but it still goes on.

The best way to deal with this perhaps is through the organization of public forum as these days people are not afraid to raise their finger in the face of officials. We must take action so to avoid case of repetition.

HE Sar Kheng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, is in charge of putting together concepts and mechanism in relation to this matter. Please make it a mechanism of the Royal Government and not the Party.

If there is any thing to pay attention to, related institutions of the Royal Government will all listen to the people and look for appropriate solution. We could not afford to leave it all to commune or village heads.

For instance, should there be any corruption issue concerning the local authority – police, military police, district or provincial governors - people could just bring it out on them.

With reflection of the truth, we must deliver timely and correct response to the wish of the people. The people are our masters. We must listen to them and make things better for them.

Of course, we cannot answer to wishes of everyone as some would want to have water canals and some would see that roads are more important for them. However, we can concentrate on what the majority need.

Issues like illegal checkpoints and taking bribe are ones that we do not tolerate repetition. Regular public forum with the people will help straighten up the matter.

At the senior level, we also have to review our policy framework. What improvement should we make? We will not buy the pattern of thought that whatever we put into the policy are correct.

There are times that we need to improve the policy framework or other judicial papers to deliver appropriate response to the people.

Let me be clear on this public forum. I would also recommend the forum take place in every national institutions and ministries. Some senior officials have been too arro-

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giant among their juniors and that had led to disappointment.

I would urge that leadership of all national institutions meet for internal review and instruct similar review mechanism to junior departments. Doing that would allow every national institution to convene a review meeting altogether.

Let me bring up an issue here about what people call “**the Family Ministry.**” There have been cases that (some Ministers) use their staff for their family matters. Some of the issues that people post on facebook are true.

As of now and thereafter, I would not allow repetition that spouses of portfolio persons to exercise control and are interfering (in his/her affairs) or I will seek a reshuffle of the Royal Government. ***I would not wait to face failure with you.*** This is a serious matter.

Why are they allowing their spouses to control the national institutions? (It would be a different thing if they are there for humanitarian reasons.

Here I am calling for change of your attitudes. New or old members of the Cabinet must change their mindset. I would urge that ***new members should not behave the old ways and old members of the Cabinet should have new thinking and change their attitudes.***

There is this issue of birthday party (of the leaders of ministry). In some cases, they organize birthday parties for themselves but also for their spouses and children.

They invite staff of the respected ministries to attend

those parties. Anyone does not show up with a present would have his/her name in a list. If it is that you have to have such a party, can you not just have a meal together with your family.

I must bring this matter to the public now. I must warn you so when I launch a surgery you should not be angry or reproach my action.

That is why I am saying that you must reflect yourself in the mirror. ***This reflection also includes rational criticism from other sources like non-governmental organizations or opposition party in the National Assembly.***

I told HE Sam Rainsy and HE Koem Sokha that in this term they could invite ministers for questioning or place motion of reproach or no-confidence motion in the parliament.

So far, mostly I allowed myself to be an armor for all of the Cabinet members. This time around, you Ministers will take the responsibility before Prime Minister and the National Assembly. As Prime Minister, I also take my responsibility before the National Assembly.

After reflecting yourself in the mirror, you need to ***take a bath and rub off the dirt*** on your bodies. As far as rubbing off the dirt is concerned we have many ways to do it.

One way of doing it is you do it yourself and another is someone will do it for you. We also have one other mean to deal with it – ***to launch a surgery and provide medical treatment.***

What ever they are I would urge that you rub off the dirt yourself before coming to the surgery stage as sometimes to prevent cancer from roaming

the body, we may have to resort to amputation.

Along with this, the fact that our people are still poor, you may notice that some parents have their children driving luxurious sport cars and racing around.

As parents, you should know better what is or is not appropriate to them. If you fail to manage them, how could you do for ministries, provinces or districts?

Again, I see that public forum is a good way to deal with this. People from every political tendency can attend because the forum is the mechanism of the Royal Government. We invite them to exercise their rights to reflect the truth in our society.

We must change or we will fail. We must change our attitude, way of thinking and action in delivering to the people.

I am saying all this at the start of the term or, at a later stage, should you fail to comply, I would have a reshuffle, and you should not complaint or reproach me. I wish spouses and children (of the above cases) will listen and comply to this or you would fail your spouse in portfolio.

I would not tolerate anymore in this term. We all will look at ourselves in the mirror. Everyone in political function from Undersecretary of State would review my action and we will change the judicial norm of our policy framework from meeting with pre-determined agendas to reviewing the working process.

I would bestow upon HE Keat Chhon, Deputy Prime Minister in permanency, to take responsibility for the Cabinet meeting.

We also will have other forum like the Royal Government and private-sector meeting that covers anything to do with economics, the Royal Government and non-governmental organization, etc.

Only with regular monitoring that we can improve the way things are. Just now I hit the main core of the Rectangular Strategy – Good Governance. I am talking the truth. I am begging you.

Legal and Judicial Reform

... based on interconnectedness between the legal and judicial reform and the public administration reform, I proclaim herewith to the Cabinet that the Supreme Council of State Reforms, which was established since the Royal Government of the Second Legislative Term, will be dissolved.

All works related to the two bodies will incorporate into the relevant Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Functions. There are three draft laws - (1) the Law on Statute of Judges and Prosecutioners, (2) the Law on the Organization and Function of Courts and Prosecutions, (3) Amendment to the Law on the Organization and Function of the Supreme Council of Magistracy - to adopt at the end of the first six month or early second six month of this year.

We must admit that it is our mistake that in the whole fourth legislative term of the National Assembly we fail to get the three laws going.

The best way to deal with this matter is to dissolve the Supreme Council of State Reform so to give the works of legal and judicial reform to the full competency of Public

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Functions and administration reform to the Ministry of Justice.

We have already done that with the Armed Forces Reform and will look into more institutions and commissions to dissolve.

Take for instance, the Accreditation Committee for Education should go to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Having done so, now if the National Assembly convenes HE Ang Vong Vadhana, Minister of Justice, on this (draft laws) issue, he could notify the National Assembly that the laws are now in the hands of the Council of Ministers. If they failed to do it, they would have to answer to the National Assembly.

We have learned these experiences. Should we continue to stay idle, we are foolish. We change so that to expedite our mechanism.

The four mottos of the Rectangular Strategy have been Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency and we are working towards the last one – Efficiency. The term is the most important of all since voters are calling for efficient service, not careless one.

No Stop to Facebook

... (I urge that you all) read newspapers and watch TVs to acquire information from that the feedback mechanism, facebook also included, as it is not that everything in there is wrong. If we know how to use it, facebook can be an effective means to help us deal with the problems.

The Royal Government does not have principle to block facebook but appeal to facebook users not to become

tools that damages social stability and spreads immoral items and speeches.

The Royal Government, though, encourages the youth who know how to operate in facebook to go on working with it to share information and screen for ones that are serving the people's interests.

I read news everyday and a lot. In my life, without news and information, it is like I do not have my food. The Royal Government will not block facebook.

Salary System Reform for 2014 and Medium Term

... It means that the armed forces – military and police, whose per diem for food was 1,500 Riel a day, will have their per diem of 4000 Riel (per day) or 120,000 Riel a month. It will be incorporated into their monthly salary...

This does not yet apply with those staff in the National Assembly, the Senate, the Constitutional Council, the National Auditing Committee, the Anti-Corruption Unit, which are independent institutions. I seek their understanding that they do not increase their pay for 2014.

... We will make 25% increase of salary for those staffs in the D class, 20% for those staffs in C class, 15% in B class and 5% for A class. This is to address discrepancy among the classes. We have registered so far 34,873 staff of class A, 60,359 of class B, 81,442 of class C and 10,775 of class D.

What we are doing is increasing the monthly salary of the lowest level (class D) in the forthcoming year to 424,000 Riel, while those in the class C will also see their increase. In 2014, we will be using 45% of our current expense

for salary increment, while in general practice, to guarantee macro-economic management it should be within 40% of the current expense ...

We are not doing the way some politicians say. Otherwise, even if we sell the whole country to pay for salary we would not be able to fulfill it.

Some came to me and suggested I should promise (the salary increase of) one million Riel (about 250 USD) to the voters. They said, once we win the elections we can borrow money (from some countries) to pay for the salary we promised.

Another group of people said we have mineral resources such as oil. We should promise the people and borrow money from some countries. We then repay them with those mineral resources. ***I do not agree with those who would like to mortgage Cambodia to pay for salary.***

I would ensure the Royal Government's officials and staffs, and the armed forces that ***those who make those promises would not be able to deliver.***

(If ever they get power) I would guarantee that (with what they promised they would do) they would last about three months at the longest. They promise to pay elderly people from 65 years up and a minimum of one million Riel for the armed forces and civil servants.

You may understand that if the Royal Government has the money, it has nothing better than giving them to you. In case that we do not have it, it is not the right way to do to borrow money elsewhere for salary ... Please do not recruit new staffs at this point.

As far as staff rank review for civil servants is concerned, I would urge more attention on that. Take for instance, there are fourteen grades for staff class D and class C.

There is an issue that we review a worker every two years to change their status/grade. I heard people complained about the fact that the system failed to promote their status. You have to check now how many of them have to go to the next grade.

They have failed to be promoted for some years now. In that case, they should have their terms recalled without having to take the exam. Example, the workers of grade 2 (in a six grades system) failed to have their grades adjusted in the last five years, (since the grade review is for two years per term) give them grade 4 right away.

I suggest that HE Pich Bunthin will take this issue up right away after we have this new Ministry of Public Functions established. Other state institutions also have to look into this development.

We give them their ranks but they should not ask for refund or we would have problem. For senior officials, this may be a small issue but for some it is a big one.

The fact that they are angry with us is not wrong. We promote the Public Functions Secretariat to Ministry to do this job and transfer the current Public Administration Reform to work under this Ministry.

... I have the sad news over the past period that some institutions, military and police units held back parts of their staff or soldier's salary on pretext they use it for so

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and so matter. It is a sad news for me.

I am instructing my absolute order that no one is to do like that on the salary of soldier, police staff and civil servant. Well any way, once everyone cashes salary from the Bank, this incident will no longer exist.

Computer Literate and Netizen

... Let me warn you that you have to be computer literate and/or netizen because they will provide a laptop computer for you to go online and check for whatever you may want to consult. I would urge to have a laptop for everyone in the Cabinet meeting.

This should now become a habit. Yesterday I check for the Constitution and I found it right away. Everyone must be computer literate. Let get those laptops installed and we will see how many of us know how to use it.

More Women in Royal Government and Rejuvenation

... In this term, each institution has at least two female leaders and we have in all three lady Ministers. Deputy Prime Minister Men Sam An is in charge of one Ministry, HE Ung Kuntha Phavi continues to be Minister for Women's Affairs and HE Phoeung Sakona is now the Minister for Culture and Fine Arts.

We also have more women who are now in the youth who will take over at the later stage. Down the line, at the district or Khan level, we have many promising women in the youth.

I think this is very important as among us around this table, how many is under the

age of 60? I hope they will go into the leadership one after the other to ensure smooth and sustainable development of the country.

As far as rejuvenation is concerned, I think there are two aspects of it. You may propose younger candidates but we also should think of some old people who have rejuvenated their minds.

We cannot afford to stay the way we were. Youth has acquired more knowledge and we need to readjust the system to allow them in and let them involve in development.

Monarchy Is Forever

... Before ending this presentation and launch of the Rectangular Strategy Phase III, I must have your attention that for every part written therein requires participation and implementation from all concerned institutions.

The paper itself and my presentation is not the success in itself. We need the implementation by all national institutions and relevant actors both at national and sub-national level.

As we make a new departure, I hope that we will try to fulfill the tasks that we have put out... the private sector, civil society and political parties have parts and parcels in transforming this land for development, security and political stability.

I urge that we all remember the word that we are the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, a Constitutional monarchy country.

Without the decree signed by HM the King appointing the Prime Minister and ordering for the formation of the Royal Government to seek approval from the National Assembly,

I would not have the chance to see this Royal Government formed as well.

HM the King also signed the proposed appointments of members of the Royal Government ... HM the King adhered strictly to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, article 82, which he convened the first session of the fifth legislature of the National Assembly, and article 9, which he acts as arbitrator to guarantee the function of public power.

We have the duty to defend our nation, religion and King. We must defend HM the King. In recent notes, there have been attacks through the press, especially social media like facebook, on HM the King.

We are so sorry that things have happened that way but we are not surprised to note that there are remnants from the March 18, 1970 coup (against the former Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod).

Nevertheless, the people of Cambodia in the whole country are respectful to their King. In this note, I would appeal to the Royal Government, colleagues in the Royal Government, national institutions, civil and armed forces, and relevant institutions to provide protection for HM the King. With people's participation, no one could change this country into Republic as they did in 1970.

Yesterday was the 20th anniversary of the Constitution Day of the Kingdom of Cambodia. That means that the Kingdom of Cambodia is now 20 years old.

We will defend the monarchy not for another ten or 20 years but forever for coming generations of Cambodia. In this remark,

any attacks staged by ill-willed opposition (on the royal institution) will not be welcome by the people of Cambodia, who indeed support HM the King.

October 15 – One-Year Anniversary of Mourning for Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod

Cambodia is a country reigned by the King as Head of State as stipulated in article 7 of the Constitution. HM the King is the Head of State for life. HM the King is subjected to no abuse. In some countries, any abuse would be responded with punishment.

That is not only the practice of neighboring countries but also those in Europe. In Thailand, abuse of the royal person or institution would result in serious punishment.

Yesterday I signed an instruction in relation to the celebration of the one-year anniversary of our mourning on October 15.

We will need to finish the construction of the statue of Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod by October 10 so that the statue will be ready for the ceremony on October 15. I would be in Brunei by then.

However, we can invite Samdech Kong Sam Ol for consultation about how to organize the inauguration ceremony in time for our people to pay their respects to Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod.

We have all accompanied Samdech Preah Borom Ratanak Kaod until we now have his son becoming His Majesty the King. There is no other way or time for us to

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back away from the steadfast work for HM the King.

We all have the bestowment of HM the King. Any action that is in disrespect of HM the King, for example the one organized in 1970 that removed the former HM the King from the throne, would not be tolerated.

Legitimacy of the Royal Government

Some said that the Royal Government does not enjoy the recognition from so and so. For us, the legitimacy of the Royal Government should not come from the Secretary General of the United Nations, or any other ones.

The only person to say so is HM the King. The first session of the National Assembly too was not to be convened by the United Nations or any foreign nation (as some proposed).

According to the Constitution, article 82, HM the King is the only power to do so. Please be careful with your interpretation. This is the first important point that the Cambodian nation must clearly understand.

In fact, we took oath twice since we are members of the National Assembly and the Royal Government. We are the Royal Government of His Majesty.

In relation to this issue, I would also need to emphasize that the Paris Peace Agreement has dissolved its elements into the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

This means that we do not need to resort to the Paris Peace Agreement as we already have the Constitution. In fact the Royal Government

also have the well wishing of Sultan of Brunei Darussalam, Prime Ministers of Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, China and Singapore as of yesterday.

However, wishing or no wishing is just a courtesy matter.

National Assembly, Royal Government—Illegitimate?

In the meeting, HE Sam Rainsy and HE Koem Sokha said to me that ‘I boycott but I do not abandon my seats.’ I responded to them ‘you are right, if you do not abandon them, I would not get them from you too.’ Please quote me full and right.

Boycotting is in fact different from abandoning the seats. That was what was said on the first day (of the CPP-CNRP meeting). I said there was no such thing as impasse as the Constitutional Council already interpreted on this since 2003.

I am so sorry that some, while instating themselves as independent analysts, said with lack of knowledge that the National Assembly used to postpone their first session to a later date, to a year at least. They did not distinguish between the formation of the National Assembly and the Royal Government.

In 1993, it was the Constitutional Assembly, which, if I am not mistaken, after the elections on 23 May 1993, convened its session on 14 June 1993, less than a month, to write a Constitution.

The Constitutional Assembly continued preparing the Constitution and convened the meeting to adopt it on 24 September, which was its anniversary yesterday.

After proclaiming the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Constitutional

Assembly became the National Assembly. The formation of the Royal Government followed.

We have some witnesses here – HE Bin Chhin, Ieng Mouly, Keat Chhon, Tia Banh, Sok An, etc. How could they interpret that there was a time that the first session of the National Assembly used to be prolonged.

In 1993, Samdech Son San was the President of the Constitutional Assembly and Samdech Chea Sim was later the President of the National Assembly.

In 1998, there was no prolongation. The elections was on 26 July 1998 and the first session of the National Assembly was on 24 September.

The National Assembly members took their oaths at the temple of Angkor but the Royal Government was established at the later part of November and the first Cabinet meeting was on 2 December 1998, when I put out the triangular strategy.

As I said in the National Assembly the other day, it is not only by law but also habitual that the first session of the National Assembly convened 60 days from the elections day.

Some even wrote to HM the King and make their interpretation in the press that the first session of the National Assembly should convene 60 days after the day of declaring the elections results, which would reschedule the meeting to November.

If it is so, are you inferring that the former King and the current HM the King are doing thing wrong? They should make interpretation based on the Constitution.

As of now, they are talking about illegitimate or not-fully-legitimate Royal Government and National Assembly.

Whether or not the National Assembly and the Royal Government is illegitimate, I would say to them that they could not hold us hostage. We are starting the engine now.

As for why there were only members of the CPP in the first session of the National Assembly? I would stress that it was because members from the opposition party were not coming.

Even if they were coming, they would not vote for my team anyway ...

68 CPP Seats—Not a Compromise, but the People’s Decision

They said of staging demonstration to demand the setting up of (independent) commission (to address) irregularities.

I wish to recall that during our negotiation, HM Sam Rainsy said (I would have a copy of minutes ready for him should he need one) “Samdech, **my side has made so much compromise.**” I would give one for HE Koem Sokha should he need one.

I am sure they have their ways of getting the negotiation recorded for documentation too.

Firstly, I stop demanding the setting up of irregularities investigation commission, Sam Rainsy said on the second day of the negotiation.

Secondly, I accept the 68 seats of the National Assembly for CPP and 55 seats for CNRP, he repeated this a few times. That means he ac-

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 knowledgeable the 68-55 seats formula already.

Thirdly, my side will support Samdech as Prime Minister.

I asked him to correct what he said. The 68 seats that the CPP has won is not a compromise but the votes given by the people.

I also would not need their supports to be Prime Minister as this is the people's decision.

However, he continued, I would ask for a compromise from your side for people from my side will become the President of the National Assembly and chair six of the twelve commissions of the National Assembly.

I asked him right after he finished – are you interested in position or balance (of power)? That is how the negotiation could not move anywhere.

I would leave this to our people to judge if they should join these opposition leaders for a demonstration. Why should they when their leaders already recognized the elections results?

The problem then was the Cambodian People's Party does not agree to offer them the position of the President and half of the commissions of the National Assembly.

We cannot afford their demand because that would tie our hands when we need to pass important law, for example the budget law every year. I briefly remember what I said then that 'it is the first time in history that I heard and saw a political party with minority support demanded to have the post of President of the National Assembly.

You may tell me if there are any in this world.'

In the world, the practice has been that whichever party wins the elections, it will take the posts of President of the National Assembly and Prime Minister.

It is a strange practice in Cambodia, they do not join the first parliamentary session not because of their disagreement to the elections results but because they cannot have the post of President of the National Assembly.

The doors of the National Assembly remain open and they said they boycott the first National Assembly session but they do not abandon their seats.

While they do not attend the meeting on their own choosing, they call the National Assembly and the Royal Government illegitimate.

I told them this Royal Government does not need recognition from outside like Kosovo or Ethiopia. The legitimacy here in establishing the Royal Government is through the National Assembly with the presence of HM the King.

We would be unlawful to sit here if there was no appointment from HM the King. Let us see if any countries pull out their diplomatic missions from Cambodia ...

Finally, I wish all the bests and four Buddhist blessings to our colleagues and their successes in fulfilling their tasks for the motherland.

The people of Cambodia are waiting for our action. The time has come for us and I am declaring the launch of the implementation of the Rectangular Strategy Phase III from this time on ... ■

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 Assembly?

Yesterday, no one locked up the building to prevent any elected members from other Party to join in the session.

What are we to make of accusations that infringed upon HM the King, members of the National Assembly from the elected Party with the majority of support and presence of related national institutions – who, according to the Constitution, were there?

We all sat under this roof yesterday and went to take our oaths at the Royal Palace.

Today, we also have one more session of taking-oath for members of the Cabinet. Are we illegal? Is HM the King wrong? Is the National Assembly wrong?

They talked of one-party in the National Assembly but they themselves walked away from it.

Should we comply going to Siem Reap to take oath with them or should we go by the Constitution to do everything under this roof?

The Constitution clearly stipulates that the National Assembly's first session is to hold under the presidency of HM the King, in Phnom Penh, except only on special case.

It is also one issue to figure out in term of legality as no one has barred anyone from entering and taking part in the National Assembly's first session.

Diplomatic officials and representatives in Phnom Penh were also present. Have they all become wrong and illegal too?

So, in short, no one obstruct anyone from joining the National Assembly's session

and no one is to be hostage of anyone.

We have done everything in accordance with the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

After the presentation of the Political Platform of the Royal Government of Cambodia of the Fifth Legislature of the National Assembly, Samdech Techo made selected press briefing in front of the National Assembly building.

55 CNRP Elected Members Invited

Where have these 63 members (of the CNRP) come from? It is a legal question. The National Election Committee (NEC) announced that there are 55 elected members for CNRP and HM the king invited all 55 of them.

The number of 63 (elected deputies) does not exist. Did they think of setting up another government? They should not go beyond the legal boundary. How could they make up and declared elsewhere another eight elected members?

This is just a message. On this issue, anything they would do should be within the law.

Responding to the press about whether the Cambodian People's Party would share leadership with the opposition party, should the latter put off their boycotts, or is the door closed, Samdech Techo went on:

Negotiations After CNRP Elected Members Take Oaths

I think we have not closed the doors. I must say though whatever they wanted to say they should take their oaths

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first.

No more negotiation with the Cambodian People's Party is possible until they take their oaths.

They also should not bargain with us that their taking-oaths must be an exchange for them taking the position of President of the National Assembly. Some people are bragging about stalemate. I wish to clarify that it is not an impasse but we could not move on.

Conclusively, before getting back to negotiation, they should take their oaths in order to have fulfilled conditions, as today is not like on September 15 and 16.

I am sure the doors of the Royal Palace are open for them to come take their oaths – all 55 of them and not 63.

Minority Wants NA President

I would urge you to look around in the world if any country would have a party of minority votes to take the post of President of the National Assembly.

On the second day of our meeting, the opposition leaders did not come for a fact-finding independent commission. They made it clear that they accepted the 68-55 election results and Samdech Hun Sen as Prime Minister. **They called it their huge compromise.**

I said to them “**please do not use the term ‘compromise’ as I do not need anymore than the votes of the people.** People already elected me as Prime Minister. We had better use the term reconciliation.

They demanded a power sharing in which they asked for the post of President of

the National Assembly and six out of twelve committees of the National Assembly.

Posts or Balance of Power

It was certain that if we were to agree to their demand, they would have participated in the meeting. I also probed them **what exactly they are asking for – posts or balance of power.**

Again, you may think or search if there is any country in this world that party with minority votes would take the post of President of the Na-



tional Assembly.

I made it clear to them that for this very case, **they cannot link it to the reconciliation deal (reached between CPP) with (then Funcinpec's President) Samdech Krom Preah (Norodom Ranaridh).**

As far as the case of (then President of Funcinpec) Samdech Krom Preah is concerned there were two major aspects for consideration.

Firstly, the country then was in two-third majority parliamentary system and both the Cambodian People's Party and Funcinpec did not win the two-third majority outright.

Secondly, the Cambodian People's Party and Funcinpec were allies in both the National Assembly and the Royal Government.

The two aspects are different

from the case of today. **At the present, Cambodia is applying the absolute majority system or 50% + 1 and the Cambodian People's Party achieves more than 50% + 1** (seats in the National Assembly).

Furthermore, the two political parties (CPP and CNRP) are not political allies. CNRP is the opposition party.

If we allow them to have the post of President of the National Assembly, there will certainly be a chance that the National Assembly is

blocked. When the National Assembly is blocked, so will be the Royal Government.

It is to everyone's knowledge that whatever the Royal Government proposes will have to go through the President of the National Assembly.

Should the President of the National Assembly not call for a meeting or list it in their agenda, the proposed law would not be approved. Again, in this instance, I would make it clear again that the doors of the National Assembly stay open.

They cannot say it is a one-party parliament as there had been eight political parties contesting in the elections.

Comfrel Should Take Certain Responsibilities

There was even this issue of indelible ink just a few hours prior to the elections. They

said it is not indelible. Now look at my finger, I still have the ink here. It is almost two months now.

I think Comfrel should note that. Has any of you still have your finger inked? There you see. In that case, what should those who brought this issue up a few hours prior to the election do? What sort of responsibility should they take before the public?

They call themselves non-governmental organization and in charge of elections. Should they not ask for forgiveness from the whole country for what they did?

I think the least they should do is to take morale responsibility because what they had done about indelible ink was a huge thing. Well, what was their intention behind the indelible ink issue?

Positions Maintained

Secondly we continue to maintain our position to provide to the (opposition) party with positions in the National Assembly – a) one Vice President, first or second to their choosing.

I am sure they would take the first deputy, though they in fact want the post of President; and b) positions of four heads of four commissions and five deputy head of five commissions.

I maintain my position.

What concerns me though is about the fact that it will now be going through separate voting and a package vote as we did this morning. However, we are looking for compromises. We want them to get to the session. HM the King, the Senate, the National Assembly and related institutions are not hostages of the Party of minority votes...■