

# Cambodia's Hun Sen exposes Khmer Rouge backers in the West

The successful formation of a coalition government in Cambodia, and the defection of two of the last three primary leaders of the Khmer Rouge, have finally brought peace to this war-weary nation. And yet, the Republican extremists in the U.S. Congress, led by Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), with support from anti-Clinton elements in the Democratic Party, have continued their vendetta against Cambodia and its recently re-elected Prime Minister, Hun Sen, aimed at disrupting the growing unity of the Southeast Asian nations, and their resistance to the colonial-style dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the global speculators. Rohrabacher succeeded last October in sneaking a resolution (HR 533) through the Congress, when only a handful of members were on the floor, accusing Hun Sen of crimes against humanity and calling for an international trial. A similar resolution is tentatively set to be introduced by North Carolina's Jesse Helms in the Senate, in the midst of the coup d'état against our own President, who has consistently supported the peace process in Cambodia. Additionally, the lie is now being circulated that Hun Sen is preventing the Khmer Rouge defectors from being brought to justice, implying that he is protecting "old friends" and covering up his own crimes.

A most eloquent exposure of the hypocrisy and immorality of this campaign against Cambodia was issued by Prime Minister Hun Sen himself on Jan. 1, in the form of a Declaration. Typically, this Declaration, which reviews the role of these same anti-Cambodia forces in *supporting the genocidal Khmer Rouge* for the past two decades, has gone unreported in the Western press.

EIR here reproduces most of the Declaration. Minor editorial changes have been made for clarity.

## The Prime Minister's Declaration

*Declaration of Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia and Commander-in-Chief of the Cambodian National Armed Forces, concerning the defection of Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea.*

Phnom Penh, Jan. 1, 1999

Over the past few days, following the defection of Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, former top leaders of the Khmer Rouge, to the fold of the nation, there have been various and mixed reactions: on the one side, joy and peace resulting from the fact that they have ceased to wage war against the Royal Government of Cambodia (R.G.C.); and, on the other, dissatisfaction over the impunity of action of Khmer Rouge leaders

who have been responsible for the death of millions of Cambodians while they were in power from 1975 to 1979.

Faced with the implication in some of these reactions that I have changed my position concerning the problem of a potential trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders, I wish to clarify the situation as follows:

1. There has never been a time in which I spared any efforts to: eradicate Pol Pot's genocidal regime; prevent its return to power for a second time; demand a trial of specified leaders of the regime; demand the inclusion in the Paris Peace Agreement [of 1991] of a direct reference to the genocide of the regime; use win-win solutions for the pacification of the Khmer Rouge-controlled areas for the sake of peace throughout Cambodia—all of which have been fulfilled in the aim of dismantling the political and military organization of the Khmer Rouge. Now, one can say that this terrorist organization has been eradicated in a real sense, ending the threat of a possible return of the genocide. For the first time since World War II, peace prevails throughout the country, since the Khmer Rouge no longer exists.

2. It is unfortunate that some individuals have forgotten the past. In 1979, the People's Court of the then People's Republic of Cambodia, did put Pol Pot and Ieng Sary on trial. In my capacity as Foreign Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and then Prime Minister, I, together with other leaders of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), consistently proposed time and again to dismantle the political and military organization of the Khmer Rouge, and to bring them to trial. But, they instead were given the right to the seat at the United Nations, to represent millions of Cambodians who survived the killing fields, and the souls of the more than 2 million dead. In 1990-91, I recall with suffering that in the debates on the Paris Peace Agreement, I was attacked and accused of lacking the will to end the war, just for my suggestion to include in the Agreement the word "genocide." I was unfairly placed under pressure, and forced to sign the Agreement with the Khmer Rouge leaders, other Cambodian parties, and foreign signatories. At that time, Khieu Samphan, who is now the subject of a demand for a trial, and Son Sen, who is now dead, were granted the privileges of the Supreme National Council (SNC) of Cambodia. Was this, then, an artificial morality of the era of Cold War and ideological confrontation? Allow me to recall that it was in fact the ill fate of the Khmer Rouge to have decided to boycott the elections in 1993. If they had participated, whether or not they had won any seats in the Parliament, they would have become a legal political party in Cambodia. The army

and the administrative officials of the Khmer Rouge could have participated on an equal basis in the political life of the country, because the Paris Peace Agreement required an integration of former political parties involved in the conflict, both in the army and in the civil administration. If the situation had evolved in such a way, how many individuals of fake morality would there have been to demand the trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders, as they do now?

After the 1993 elections, the elected Royal Government of Cambodia tried its best to eradicate the Khmer Rouge by peaceful means, which included the amnesty granted to Ieng Sary, under the power of the court verdict of 1979, in exchange for peace and national reconciliation.

After the rebellion in Anlong Veng and the death of Pol Pot [in 1997], the war was not yet completely over. We have tried to encourage the rank and file of the Khmer Rouge to continue to defect. . . . At last, Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea [have defected to the government]. . . .

A few years ago, the game of war and peace was played out noisily in Cambodia, in the United Nations, in the Paris Peace Conference, and in other forums of negotiation, without taking into consideration either the morality, or the legal process, or the conventions in force in regard to the prevention and condemnation of genocide.

Today, Hun Sen suffers another blow for his success in dismantling the military and political organization of Pol Pot, creating a complete peace, and mobilizing a movement of national reconciliation, while forgetting about the trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders. It is not that I have forgotten. But I have yet to say anything about it because I am now having to talk about peace before anything else, in accordance with the need of the nation and the people for peace.

It is quite ironic that it is not so hard for those people who are lacking a spirit of responsibility to be fake moralists or political opportunists. A Khmer saying goes: "I would not dare to scare the buffaloes away while they are eating rice in the paddy field, but I would do so once they walk away. I would not dare to catch the crocodile in the water, but I would do so once it is dead." While the Khmer Rouge was strong politically and militarily, and was a real threat, everyone bowed their heads to accept the Khmer Rouge, and refrained themselves from using even the word "genocide." When we mobilized our forces to fight the Khmer Rouge, we were condemned, and pressured to negotiate to bring the Khmer Rouge into the elections under the form of the National Solidarity Party of Khieu Samphan, in addition to providing amnesty to the Khmer Rouge leaders. But it is this same group of people who have now condemned us for receiving Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea back into the fold of the nation, while the latter do not bring with them the organization of the Khmer Rouge at all, but wish to live as ordinary citizens. Precisely speaking, these groups of people are disappointed in facing the collapse of the Khmer Rouge organization, because they can no longer use them for political balance against the Government.

My position is that the trial of the Khmer Rouge is a *fait accompli*, and that the process should proceed. By a *fait accompli*, I mean that the verdict of the People's Court in 1979 is still valid, and recognized by the royal decree, which provided amnesty for Ieng Sary in 1996. For the process to proceed, I mean by a court that is to be set up at the recommendation of the national and foreign jurists who are actually doing the job. I am one of the people who support the investigation of the crimes of the Pol Pot genocide, and that it definitely be punished. But I am not acting as a plaintiff to accuse this or that person on behalf of the prosecutor seconded to the court. . . . As politicians, we should exercise our activities within the given limit. . . .

In my welcoming letter, as well as my letter to H.M. the King, to Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh, and to Samdech Heng Samrin, I mention only about peace and national reconciliation, and did not mention anything about the court process. I have provided no guarantee to any particular person to be free of charges of the court. . . .

In connection with the amnesty and the arrest of Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, I wish to clarify this as follows:

a) There have been no court verdicts issued for either of them. This means that it is not at all necessary to propose an amnesty prior to their return.

b) There do not yet exist arrest warrants for either of them.

c) They both volunteered to return to the fold of the nation, and abandoned their fight against the R.G.C. They have not been arrested in battle, so they are not prisoners of war.

If we were to arrest them the R.G.C. would be acting cowardly and without discipline for the arrest of military officials who had surrendered from the fight and asked for a peaceful life. It would be seen as the morality of the strong against the weak. Otherwise, it would be a warning signal to other soldiers not to defect to the Government anymore, because we have not kept to our promise — a promise that we made without violating the power of the court, but with respect toward it.

A real victory of peace does not mean killing all the enemy, but to do everything possible so that the enemy stop fighting in a peaceful way. The real victory of the Government is not to hold all opponents as prisoners, but to find the best means for them to contribute to the national construction for the sake of alleviating poverty. The absence of the sound of fighting is not sufficient to constitute peace, but we must also make everyone free from fear.

As to morality and legality, they should not fluctuate in accordance with the political circumstances of the Khmer Rouge. The best chess player knows how to move a large number of pawns in support of each other from point to point to secure victory, but the morality of the best chess player should not vary, since it is the instinctive nature of the human being.

I sincerely hope that my clarification is sufficient for an understanding of the past, the present, and the future.