

# F.A.S. *PUBLIC INTEREST REPORT*

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## Post-Coup Cambodia: Relaxation or Further Repression?

Since the dawn of civilization, Cambodia has been ruled by God Kings, each of whom took any dissent to be treason. Education was rare and no democratic traditions whatsoever existed even in villages. In 1975-1978 the Khmer Rouge further reduced the chances for Cambodian democracy dramatically by killing virtually all educated persons and more than 1,000,000 others.

While the Vietnamese invasion of 1979 saved Cambodia from the Khmer Rouge, it led to an undemocratic Communist government. Still worse, the U.S., China and Thailand, among others, resurrected the Khmer Rouge and backed it for a decade, so that the Vietnamese-installed regime was forced to continue to fight, further suppressing its democratic instincts.

Worst of all, it is hard to find Cambodian cultural characteristics that lend themselves to democracy (see pages 12-13).

Encouraged by Asian neighbors who also run controlled Governments, and informed by his own self-interest, Prime Minister Hun Sen appears headed for some kind of Asian authoritarianism with distinctly Cambodian characteristics.

Because he is unusually talented and hard-working and has done much to develop Cambodia, most Western ambassadors prefer him to ousted Prince Ranariddh, opting for stability rather than human rights and democracy (see box on page 5).

There is little question that Hun Sen's coup against the prince was prepared for a long time and awaited its opportunity, with Hun Sen urging it upon, or bypassing, more reluctant fellow-members of the Politburo. Prince Ranariddh's proposed political union with a renamed Khmer Rouge provided the final justification for the coup.

But the prince's generals had their own contingency war plans and were making efforts to achieve military equality by the next election. With the Khmer Rouge added to their team, they could, Hun Sen may have feared, threaten their own coup (see pages 5-11).

If Parkinsonian rules mean anything, the dynamic of Hun Sen's rule will lead to increasing personal power and more and more repression to sustain it. And the rising power of Hun Sen inside his party may lead to some kind of purge of its leadership. Power corrupts.

But there is another possibility. Freed of a civil war that has been going on since 1979, Hun Sen may turn his energies to relaxation of societal constraints.

Still, cleaning up the act of his government could be hard, since it seems to have been capable of so

### A Search for Cambodia's Future

FAS President Jeremy J. Stone visited Cambodia August 8-14 for the first time since 1991 to review the situation following the Hun Sen coup. A wide range of interviews resulted, including two-hour meetings with each of the two prime ministers on the very evening before they flew to Beijing to present the new First Prime Minister (Ung Huot) to the King. And a two-hour meeting with the Interior Minister Sar Kheng was held.

Stone traveled to and from Cambodia with John McAuliff, President of the US-IndoChina Reconciliation Center. Many, but not all, of the meetings held were attended by both.

During the years 1989-1991, Stone worked intensely on issues of war and peace in Cambodia. In particular, in an effort to end the civil war, he was instrumental in revealing the role of the CIA in organizing covertly military resistance against the Hun Sen government, resistance that was in coalition with the Khmer Rouge. In 1992, in a successful effort to help promote the Paris Peace Accords, FAS hosted the first visit of Prime Minister Hun Sen to America.

many ugly acts, such as the attack this year on politician Sam Rainsy (see pages 14-15). Opening up the society might be more than Hun Sen would undertake. And his own attitudes may be changing for the worse (see pages 3-4).

It is worth considering the unlikely possibility that at least some "two-party balance" could be established by reinvigorating Funcinpec, the Royalist party, now broke, separated from its royal head, and feeling hopeless about winning a new election (see page 16).

But realistically, even enormous economic pressures seem unlikely to change a completely undemocratic situation.

The radical view on Cambodia is just to let it alone, accepting the coup as a way to end an unworkable coalition arising from an election designed to overthrow a Vietnamese-installed regime that could not be defeated militarily. The conservative view on Cambodia is to back a small party organized by Sam Rainsy with ideas for moving Cambodia very quickly indeed from here to Western ways.

### The Obligation to Visit Cambodia

The gulf in perspective between those who have experienced Cambodia and those who have not is widening steadily. Congressmen, editorial writers and others who want to expound on U.S. policy toward this tortured country have an obligation to confront its realities personally for more than a day or two.

The result will be a starker view of what is possible, a greater sense of compassion for all Cambodians and a deeper sense of American responsibility. Congress is now concluding that free and fair elections alone cannot fix what ails the District of Columbia. In Cambodia also, we have to get beyond a fixation on one-time "free and fair" elections and think more deeply about what is really needed that we can provide and/or insist upon.

—Jeremy J. Stone

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## Who Is Hun Sen and What Does He Believe?

At the age of about 17, on the public call of Prince Sihanouk to join the Khmer Rouge and oppose the usurper Lon Nol, Hun Sen joined the Khmer Rouge. He lost an eye due to American bombing right before the Khmer Rouge capture of Phnom Penh. Two years later, Hun Sen was a Khmer Rouge regimental commander in charge of a border region near Vietnam when orders were received to attack a Vietnamese village. He saw several regimental and battalion commanders executed for refusing to follow orders and, rather than be executed himself, decided to defect. This was June 20, 1977.

He warned the Vietnamese about the upcoming attack, and when it occurred, they gained confidence in him; in the end, after the Vietnamese invasion, he was made Foreign Minister in 1980 and Prime Minister by 1985. He is now only 45 years old.

### What is Hun Sen Like?

A Western observer who believes Hun Sen was justified in the coup describes him this way: "He has been the strongman for a long time but is now surrounded by thugs who are spoiling for a fight. Hun Sen is bright, calculating, knows how to use power, and is not impressed by democratic values. He believes in strong leadership and favors Singapore's methods. He has a strong temper and flies off the handle but is a soft touch when asked for help. People see Hun Sen as a tough guy who made good."

A source quoted in the July 11 *Cambodia Daily* describes Hun Sen as "gregarious, fits of rage, quick draw temper and a disposition toward revenge."

A Cambodian source said Hun Sen "likes challenges, writes things down, wants to learn and is flexible."

Another says, "Hun Sen always thinks he knows what is best and in particular, he thinks his Cambodian People's Party (CPP) is too Marxist-Leninist. It appears that the base of party decision-making is shrinking and that there is a trend to absolute power."

Another says "Chea Sim [Party President] and Hun Sen are almost the same in popularity; but, Chea Sim reflects a lot and Hun Sen acts quickly."

An American says the Politburo is afraid of Hun Sen; "don't cross Hun Sen" is the message.

There is concern among people who watch him that

he is losing touch with the people. A Cambodian said he had the "interests of people at heart, I felt, in the past." An NGO foreigner said: "Hun Sen was really a good guy until the 1993 election process; he is tired of being criticized and lacks a fundamental sense of checks and balances—as most Cambodians do."

A long-time foreign observer said: "Hun Sen has changed and not clearly for the better. He is the best in the country in ability and intelligence. He has become shrewder and more sophisticated and is much more experienced in international affairs than before. But money and power can corrupt everyone.

"I do think he cares. He was poor. And his heart is in the right place, as shown by his building schools everywhere. He has strength but is too spontaneous. He is a passionate man and gets excited. He is not revengeful, but if one wants to criticize him, one must be diplomatic. I don't think that he always realizes the impact of what he does. If he knows something, he just says it; he doesn't hold back. I think he is sincere.

"But I am debating myself whether he is redeemable or not to the spirit he had before. He was then really concerned for the country. The basis is still there. But he has discovered the power and the money. The key question is the people around him. They are no good, and Hun Sen is no longer in direct touch with things. He must rely upon his advisers, and it is hard for others to get through. And others often don't dare to speak directly to him."

### Capable of Revenge?

There is another case, besides the attack on Sam Rainsy, in which it is possible that the Second Prime Minister gave in to revenge against a political opponent. An editor of a Khmer language newspaper, whose columns were vitriolic and highly offensive, was shot and killed two weeks after publishing a piece that pilloried Hun Sen's wife. But three other Khmer-language newspaper editors had been warned their lives were in danger in the weeks before the May 18 assassination of Bun Ly, and this editor had other enemies and was being sued for kidnaping and raping a 15-year-old girl. Still someone seems to have thought Hun Sen was responsible because on May 21, Hun Sen said that this assassination had led to a plot to kill his children in France and America and he

sought help from American and French authorities.

Hun Sen's speaking style can be incendiary. The Second Prime Minister was criticized at a Party Congress by a general who commented on his verbal style by saying metaphorically that he should stop "launching big cannons." Hun Sen denied that he was engaging in "demagogy." But these revealing quotes in an adjoining box give some support to the general's complaint.

Hun Sen is quite conscious that Cambodia is not European. Once he said: "We in reality run only one

### Hun Sen in a Private Speech

"But up to now, we see that we cannot be honest with this tricky bunch, we can be honest only with anyone who is straight with us.

"One Royal has been got already, two Royals in fact, '94 one, '95 one. If another one is needed in '96 that can be done too. Oh, you lot, what princes you are. Commoners and Royals, they have equal rights. The King is the only one who's above, who can't be touched but can't be touched only so long as the King abides by the Constitution too.

"Other people, they curse me at will, they say I'm vicious. Well, vicious when necessary and gentle when necessary. We have to be straight with those who are straight with us.

"If you [Ranariddh] are not happy, you can get out. I want you to withdraw from the Government. Because you promised that if you couldn't achieve anything, you'll withdraw. So, why up to this hour have you not withdrawn? Remember, Samdech Krom Preah [viz. Ranariddh] declared they 'wouldn't be puppet Deputy Prime Ministers anymore, won't be puppet ministers . . .' So! Now, get out. I'm just waiting for you to get out. Why don't you get out?

"And '98, we'll win, we'll definitely win, there's no letting a-UNTAC, a-foreigners to hold the ballot boxes this time. If you don't agree, I won't vote. I vote only within the sovereignty of our Cambodia. But if you create any crisis, time is on our side because I'm just 44 years old and will not die that soon. Whereas some are old and have prepared passports already."

*A speech to 900 party workers, June 29, 1996*

CPP. No one can understand the CPP with a European way of thinking."

Asked by a German reporter on September 27, 1996 whether he was not running a "very authoritarian system," he said:

". . . I feel that you have to stay another two years in Cambodia to say whether it is totalitarian or it is the Cambodian way of democracy."

Asked about Sam Rainsy's party, Hun Sen said: "I feel that there is no justice in this world, especially no justice for Cambodia from the western world. [He goes on to argue that Rainsy's party is not considered illegal.]

### Hun Sen Favors a Malaysian Approach

Later he said, "Political stability is the most important thing for Cambodia . . . we have been talking already within our party that Cambodia needs a coalition government at least for another 10 to 15 years . . . Coalition government is the future for Cambodia.

"In Cambodia, there are three trends. The first trend is to integrate all parties into only one, and this trend seemed to be strong in the years of 1993/1994. I call this trend a long-way retreat, because we are now applying pluralism. Why is there some thinking of forming only one party? I feel this is a type of retreat which is also impossible. The second trend is that you have many parties but they cooperate with each other in the Malaysian way. The third trend is to have many parties but opposing each other. I prefer the second trend and to a certain extent the third trend."

On August 19, 1997, in a radio address after the coup, Hun Sen warned the party that:

"I will walk away from the party if all of you don't follow me, and if I walk out from the Cambodian People's Party, you will fall backwards because you need support from Hun Sen."

It was considered a warning to moderate elements. And indeed a collapse of the CPP would cause turmoil throughout the country. Hun Sen has previously talked of starting a new party—so walking away does not necessarily mean leaving the country.

One resident observer suggests that Hun Sen needed more Western advisers on everything from public relations to law and policy generally, organized perhaps as a Committee under some trusted Cambodian. They at least would not be afraid to talk to him frankly—something he badly needs.

—JJS

## How the Coup Found its Cause

In mid-April 1996, the King's speculations about running for the presidency alarmed Hun Sen. On April 27, in a speech to a medical training school, Hun Sen said this would be unconstitutional and that he would defend the constitution, by force if need be. He said also: "I've prepared everything. I'm telling you for your own sake. Now is the fifth time I'm declaring [I will] use force in case of a coup to dissolve the Constitution." Rumors in Phnom Penh suggested that Hun Sen had polled leading generals and discovered that two senior generals, one from his Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the other from the Royalist Funcinpec, would not support a coup at that time.

Whatever happened then, if anything, fourteen months later, Hun Sen treated a proposed alliance between Ranariddh and the Khmer Rouge as a "political coup"—much like the King abdicating—and did exactly what he had threatened at the medical training school.

The opposing party was already relatively captive at that time. In May 1996, in a private speech to Party workers, the transcript of which surfaced in the press, he said that if Ranariddh walked out on the Government, "there will be a group of Funcinpec remaining with me. If five [Funcinpec ministers] leave the government, 15 others will not because they have houses. If three leave the Parliament, 50 others will not."

### Brothers-in-law Try to Cool Things

Chea Sim, President of CPP, and Sar Kheng, CPP Minister of the Interior, who are brothers-in-law, were clearly trying to cool things down. In June, Chea Sim called for an end to the war of words between Funcinpec and CPP. And Sar Kheng warned that if the distrust between Funcinpec and CPP "continues to intensify toward the use of military force," Cambodia would be set back to before the 1993 elections.

On April 19, 1997, exactly a year after the earlier coup possibility, Serei Kosal, a former first deputy governor of Battambang, made a fiery speech accusing Second Prime Minister Hun Sen of plotting, but not following through with, a military coup four days earlier, on April 15. He claimed that Hun Sen had ordered, in conjunction with the coup, the assassinations of First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Nhiek

### Interview with an Anonymous Journalist

"Everything started to go downhill with the sharing of power. The coup was very well planned for months in advance and awaited the right legal justification. Hun Sen was advised by South East Asians from Indonesia and Malaysia to 'just make it look legal.'

"The ambassadors think Ranariddh is worse than Hun Sen and these include French, American, British, Canadian and Australian. But they think there would be less human rights under Hun Sen. They prefer him because they think there would be more stability. They are betting on democracy over 20 years based on stability. The US is the most outraged by the coup. For most people, CPP is the face of local oppression. Pressures to join CPP, through house-to-house inquiries, etc., are nothing new.

"Hun Sen doesn't have real control over the abuses. Cambodians tend to blame others; they don't say 'next time, I'll do better.' I am not sure how Hun Sen will turn out. The hope, of course, is that with the military coup over, things will improve."

Bun Chhay and Secretary of State for the Interior Ho Sok. See the *Cambodia Daily* of May 6. (When the coup did come, 14 months later, Ho Sok was, indeed, assassinated but Nhiek Bun Chhay escaped arrest.)

What was the coup cause this time, if indeed, there was one? The *Phnom Penh Post* said Funcinpec officials privately alleged that Hun Sen had engineered a defection of Funcinpec Minister Ung Phan to use as a pretext for a coup that would go forward "without support from the Chea Sim faction of CPP."

Tension was such that Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Ke Kim Yan sent down orders that anyone who even caused "noise or explosions" should be detained. (Evidently, he feared an inadvertent coup or a coup deliberately triggered by a catalytic act.)

That April Hun Sen organized a *political* coup—acting on his private declarations of a year before about the weak ties of Funcinpec members to the Prince—by backing an internal revolt within

Ranariddh's Funcinpec party. Three steering-committee members along with a small number of members of parliament publicly abandoned Ranariddh.

According to the *Phnom Penh Post*, "Hun Sen himself is said to be buoyant about the Funcinpec rupture. In a recent meeting with CPP chiefs, he declared that "the final phase" of winning power was at hand. The King seemed to agree when he wrote in the margin of an April 19 *Agence France-Presse* article on the split that: "Samdech Prince Ranariddh is finished" and "Great 'historic' victory for Samdech Hun Sen." He wrote that "this coalition is already in pieces and . . . dead."

### The Coup Arrives

By July 1, there were rumors of troop movements and diplomats were telling the *Cambodia Daily* that the odds of a military clash in the near future appeared high. On July 3 and 4, according to a CPP spokesman, Hun Sen began disarming Funcinpec. On July 3, CPP soldiers actually stopped First Prime Minister Ranariddh's motorcade and disarmed its bodyguards, although Interior Minister Sar Kheng, in charge of police activities, said no order had been given to do so. Thus, as some see it, Hun Sen was able to issue orders to the troops directly, bypassing the normal chain of command. (Ranariddh was, in fact, traveling by helicopter and so was not in the motorcade.)

The coup occurred on July 5. As the *Phnom Penh Post* described it, from the moment the bullets began to fly, CPP swung into action with diplomatic damage control. Hun Sen delivered a lengthy noontime address



Hun Sen after interview; in background is Cham Prasidh, Minister of Commerce

that the military action was necessary to "defend social order, people's safety and national security." Senior CPP officials called almost daily briefings for the diplomatic corps.

A CPP White Paper, released on July 9—but which some well placed observers believed had been prepared in advance—said the events of July 4-5 were a "predictable culmination of more than a year-long buildup of tensions" and a "natural result" of a Funcinpec strategy of "a campaign of provocation" looking toward a "fatal mistake" by Hun Sen.

The illegal purchase of weapons by Funcinpec and the movement of Khmer Rouge forces into the capital was denounced. But the "unseemly action" of the Prince in "trying [sic] to forge a military and political alliance" with the last Khmer Rouge holdouts was a "virtual" declaration of war on the CPP. (Interestingly, this White Paper does *not* accuse the Prince of *succeeding* in reaching agreement with the Khmer Rouge—although he had by the time the paper was released.) In any case, this White Paper clearly implied that political decisions by Funcinpec and military preparations had induced CPP to launch an attack on Funcinpec—not that Funcinpec had attacked CPP.

### Hun Sen Gives His Coup Version

Nevertheless, in a two-hour interview with FAS on August 11, the night before he flew off to present the new First Prime Minister Ung Huot to the King, Second Prime Minister Hun Sen tried to make this case. Asked by FAS whether he was "on a path toward freedom or toward dictatorship," he said "I don't know why they talk about a dictator" and began giving his version of the fighting, suggesting that Funcinpec had struck first and put CPP on the defensive.

He said he was on vacation in Vietnam when Ranariddh accused him of launching a coup and that he did not know whether to stay abroad or come back. He had thought it was a "minor clash." Only after the 10<sup>th</sup> of July—this would be one day after the release of the White Paper discussed above—did they realize "what had happened." He showed letters of agreement signed by Ranariddh and Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan, signed on July 3, which he said he had captured only later. (In this agreement, Khieu Samphan agrees to bring the Khmer Rouge sans Pol Pot into political alliance with Funcinpec, to respect the Constitution and to work for reconciliation—but also to join Ranariddh in a political alliance.)

Hun Sen also showed allegedly captured maps that reflected plans by Funcinpec to attack—they include diagrams showing plans to attack his residence and show places where weapons were stockpiled. And his staff provided a captured tape in which a would-be Funcinpec historian filmed a Funcinpec official spreading the rumor, during the fighting, that Hun Sen was dead.

Asked by FAS whether he was, therefore, based on these revelations, planning to have the impending warrant for the arrest of Ranariddh include launching a “coup”—and not just illegal weapon purchases and negotiating with the Khmer Rouge—he said, in an affirmative tone, that the “same law does cover this crime.” But no such charge has been trumpeted from the rooftops and newspaper reports do not list launching a coup among the charges in this warrant.

After the interview with Second Prime Minister Hun Sen from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., FAS had an interview with First Prime Minister Ung Huot from 7:45 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. In this interview, Madame Ung Huot was brought in to substantiate the charges made by the Second Prime Minister that the fighting had been started by Funcinpec.

### The Story of the Cambodian First Lady

Her story was this. The Funcinpec generals had invited some Funcinpec political officials, and their wives, to join them in their military base near the airport in the expectation that fighting would break out. The wife of Funcinpec’s acting President, Loy Sim Chheng, had invited Madame Ung Huot to join her in light of the fact that Ung Huot himself was in Paris. Madame Ung Huot had heard the generals saying on Saturday, July 5 at 1:00 p.m.: “We must do it. We’ll start at 2:00.” And, indeed, she heard firing start at 2:10. She also heard Funcinpec Party President and Acting Chief of State Chea Sim reach Loy at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday and heard the generals say: “Tell them we cannot find Nhiek Bun Chhay; we have the upper hand; they are weak, don’t negotiate.”

In fact, from her position in the Tang Krasang military base, she failed to see a great deal. Both the *Phnom Penh Post* and the *Cambodia Daily* report Hun Sen’s men along the road to Pochentong Airport in the early morning of Saturday, July 5, ready to fight. They surrounded a small Funcinpec base (at Wat Phnead) and arrested 140 men. Around 10:30, they were firing heavy artillery for an hour at Tang Krasang. At

midday, Hun Sen gave a speech saying he had launched an offensive against the rebels and the “irregular forces.” So the notion that she heard the opening of the fighting was in error.

According to the *Phnom Penh Post*, observers said Hun

Sen thought he would have to fight sooner or later and having it as long as possible before the May 1998 election would be better. CPP sources said that Hun Sen considered, by late in the previous week, that he had to take action within a few days because of intelligence reports of weapons stockpiles and troop movements. This could be termed a preemptive counter to a potential coup. And some sources cited a Funcinpec-Khmer Rouge meeting on July 4—the day before the CPP launched its Phnom Penh attack—as a key factor in Hun Sen’s timing.



Madame Ung Huot, wife of First Prime Minister Ung Huot

### Funcinpec Atrocity

Madame Ung Huot does appear to have witnessed a Funcinpec atrocity in which 15 persons were killed for no reason. Human rights authorities are investigating.

On July 10, four days after the fighting, in a press conference, no charge was made that Ranariddh started the fighting; on the contrary, Hun Sen said: “This is not a coup d’etat; what we have been solving is the anarchy problem . . .”

By August 2, a CPP aide memoire said: “The morning of July the fifth, Norodom Ranariddh ordered the armed forces to fight, and at 15:15 the forces that are close to Ranariddh started to shell artillery rounds onto Phnom Penh. The Government forces were thrown onto a defensive and started their counterattack at 5:30 in the morning of July the sixth and the fighting came to the end after 18:00 in the same day.”

In fact, even if this were so, it only means that the Ranariddh forces decided to fight rather than be surrounded and disarmed by CPP forces that had been in the field since early on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Indeed, according to the *Cambodia Daily*, by 9:00 p.m. on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup>, Funcinpec General Nhiek Bun Chhay phoned CPP



Sar Kheng, Minister of the Interior

Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng said, according to Kheng, that he was “being surrounded by troops supported by tanks, and that if I did not do something, he would counterattack in 10 minutes.” Sar Kheng said that “I did not know what I could do, so I just let it be.” He responded in the same passive way when Chao Sambath phoned and told him that “fighting would erupt in two minutes if there was no intervention by me.” In this case, Chao Sambath said he would be willing to surrender! But, Sar Kheng said, “I did not know what to do in only two minutes.”

Sar Kheng told FAS, in a two-hour interview, that “I personally tried to prevent [the fighting].” According to three different sources, Sar Kheng and Chea Sim were both bypassed in the Hun Sen decision to take action. One source said: “Chea Sim would have waited longer,” i.e., would not have been so easily provoked to the Hun Sen action. Chea Sim, a Buddhist, was for patience and tolerance.

Others said that the Chief of the Staff of the Army had refused to participate in the fighting. Hun Sen had the power to order the fighting by himself directly. In some stories, these three high officials, Chea Sim, Sar Kheng and the Chief of Staff of the Army, were not told of the decision; in others, they were told that, under the circumstances, Hun Sen was going ahead without their agreement—the impending deal between Ranariddh and the Khmer Rouge being the last straw. In sum, it looks as if the internal CPP forces that were sufficient to prevent coups in mid-April failed in July.

### Was it Reciprocal Fear of Surprise Attack?

A senior diplomatic observer took the view that the fighting was similar to that described by nuclear war experts when they speak of “reciprocal fear of surprise attack” escalating, in a crisis, into an otherwise

avoidable conflict. But, tactically speaking, it appears that Hun Sen set out to preempt and began by a program of disarming and deploying, well knowing what would result. The fact that key politburo figures did not agree to this course, or were bypassed, undermines substantially the case that the preemptive action by Hun Sen was necessary. And this fact may explain the extent to which Hun Sen’s men are at pains to emphasize that the fighting, though short in duration, was “close.” One Cambodian source said: “From the very beginning, it was a competition for Khmer Rouge and who could get them to surrender. In the beginning, it was an election thing. Later it was a military threat.”

### CPP More Brutal than Funcinpec

A source at the United Nations Center for Human Rights (UNHCR) said that Funcinpec as well as CPP did engage in torture, but that there was a difference in the brutality on the two sides—“brutality has led us every time to CPP.” “Few if any” atrocities were those of Funcinpec. The CPP had targeted high-ranking military officials in the post-coup activities. The majority of Funcinpec officials who had been low-key on both sides did not flee; those Funcinpec officials who fled had been the most outspoken.

They had 40 cases of summary execution: 15-20 confirmed; 15 presumed and 5 to 10 alleged in Phnom Penh alone. “We have not found any top CPP officials executed.”

As for UNHCR’s education and training, “CPP was not very interested in our human rights training. Funcinpec and allied parties were more interested.”

Before the coup, the administration was dominated by CPP; it could get weapons by administrative means; Funcinpec felt weaker and smuggled in the weapons.

The Cambodian people are “living in fear” with house-to-house searches for firearms and people invited to join CPP. CPP is consolidating its control. Funcinpec signs are not permitted anywhere in the provinces. Funcinpec headquarters were burned and looted and provincial headquarters are gone.

Human rights NGOs are being visited and told to quiet down. It was intimidation and harassment.



## How Competition for Khmer Rouge Support Broke Up the Coalition

The above shows that the Government coalition broke up over the issue of the remaining Khmer Rouge (KR) minus Pol Pot forming a coalition with Funcinpec. How did the competition over winning KR support get so out of hand? In particular, since the conventional wisdom in the Western press is that *both* sides, CPP and Funcinpec, were cultivating the Khmer Rouge and were, in fact, engaged in a race to win the allegiance of the Khmer Rouge, how does CPP justify its claim that Ranariddh acted illegally in his negotiations with the Khmer Rouge?

In August of 1996, the former foreign minister and number two person of the Khmer Rouge, Ieng Sary, was suddenly labeled a traitor by his party. At that time, Hun Sen announced that 3,000 troops and 30,000 Khmer Rouge civilians had changed sides following two months of negotiations supervised by his Defense Minister, Tea Banh, and himself.

According to a *Phnom Penh Post* staff writer, Funcinpec officials had been negotiating with the Khmer Rouge for some time. CPP was not sure whether Funcinpec was trying to encourage defections or, on the other hand, reach an alliance with the KR against the CPP. This spurred Hun Sen to instruct senior CPP military to make contact with KR groups. A race was on for KR support.

In a painful choice for all Cambodians, both Prime Ministers agreed to give Ieng Sary amnesty, and the King reluctantly signed the pardon.

First Ranariddh and then Hun Sen went to Pailin to meet with Ieng Sary, wooing him, with Hun Sen offering schools and aid and such. Ieng Sary was seeking "union" rather than "integration" with the Government; there were varying ideas about autonomy at issue. Hun Sen orchestrated pressures on Ieng Sary

by cultivating direct defections, and by November, Ieng Sary had permitted the integration of his 4,400 fighters with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF). But, it was becoming obvious that breaking up the Khmer Rouge was one thing and integrating it into the Government was another.

From CPP's point of view, everything was going according to Hoyle, with the "Government", i.e., both coalition partners, working together in agreeing to give Ieng Sary amnesty and trying to get his forces integrated. By contrast, again from CPP's point of view, Ranariddh was thought to be moving forward to capture Khmer Forces politically in an alliance with his coalition against the interests of CPP.

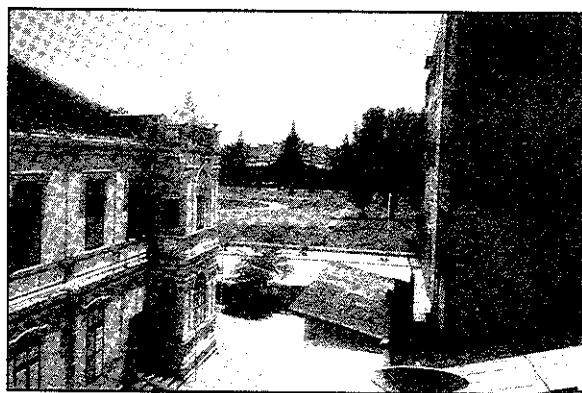
### What is a Government Negotiation?

This can best be understood by examining Nate Thayer's *Washington Post* article of August 17, in which a piece entitled "Cambodian Peace Was Just a Day Away" repeatedly refers to "Government" negotiators dealing with the Khmer Rouge. In Phnom Penh, these negotiators, backed by Prince Ranariddh, were seen as negotiating on behalf of only one part of the Government coalition, i.e., Ranariddh's Funcinpec.

FAS is well familiar with the written terms agreed upon, since the documents referred to in Thayer's article, as "secured" by the *Post* were directed to the *Post*, by FAS when they first arrived in Washington. The letter to be signed by Norodom Ranariddh and Khieu Samphan started by saying that Pol Pot was no longer leader and that the new Khmer Rouge "National Solidarity Party" would support the Constitution. But then it said:

"3. Samdech Krom Preah Norodom Ranariddh and his Excellency Khieu Samphan agreed to unite together around the national United Front [i.e., the coalition of Ranariddh's party, Rainsy's party and others opposed to CPP] on the basis of its 14-point-policy."

So when Nate Thayer says that, as part of the deal, Khieu Samphan's party was "permitted" to join the National United Front, CPP would say that, in fact, this permission was the guiding theme of Ranariddh's and Khieu Samphan's joining together. And where sources from both parties say that part of the deal was "in principle" integrating Khmer Rouge forces into the Government's forces, there is, in fact, no mention of



View from Phnom Penh Foreign Correspondent's Club

this in the signed agreement secured by the *Post*. On the contrary, it shows that earlier drafts, only five days before the agreement of July 3, of what Khieu Samphan wanted to announce was:

“Continue to unite with all forces of the nation against the Vietnamese aggressive war and their puppets in order to salvage the nation.”

Funcinpec’s General Nhiek Bun Chhay and his colleagues told Nate Thayer that Hun Sen was “kept informed of daily developments by a committee of senior military and political officials formed earlier this year to ease tensions between the two government camps headed by Ranariddh and Hun Sen.” Was this true?

The Funcinpec team told the Khmer Rouge that Hun Sen would have no problem “provided that [they] abandon Pol Pot, accept the constitution, and integrate their army.” And an agreement was worked out that they would be allowed to keep the same military arrangement given to Ieng Sary in the Anlong Veng region, wherein the military units “changed into government uniforms and pledged allegiance to the king, government and constitution, but were not forced to disperse from their territory.”

### Was the Full Government Kept Informed?

So, was Ranariddh negotiating illegally for Funcinpec, or was he negotiating for the Government and keeping it informed? Since this is a key charge in the warrant for his arrest, we should review this carefully. What follows is the run-up to this charge, based on facts printed in the *Cambodia Daily*.

On May 20, the Prince said he had heard Khieu Samphan wanted to join Funcinpec’s new National United Front (NUF). Alarmed, Hun Sen was warning villagers that the Khmer Rouge regime threatened to make a comeback “not through military means, but political means” and that the rehabilitation of the Khmer Rouge would spell “disaster for the nation.”

On June 3, Funcinpec General Nhiek Bun Chhay briefed the Prince on an apparent agreement he had reached with senior Khmer Rouge leaders to leave Cambodia and allow the rest to defect, but the Chief of General Staff, General Ke Kim Yan, a CPP person, said he had not yet been briefed.

On June 9, an adviser to Hun Sen said Hun Sen was against granting amnesty to Khieu Samphan because, unlike the case of Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan did not have “anything in exchange. There aren’t that



Uch Kim An, Deputy Foreign Minister

many forces left in Anlong Veng.” A Western expert on the Khmer Rouge told the *Cambodia Daily* that this debate was “primarily political” and aimed at preventing Khieu Samphan from aligning with the rival Funcinpec.

### Hun Sen Calls Talks Illegal

It appears to be only on June 16 that Hun Sen gave a speech rejecting Funcinpec’s claims that the negotiations were going forward in the name of the Government. He called the talks illegal and said “someone is colluding with the Khmer Rouge in order to [undermine] the government.” In response, the Prince said Hun Sen had been in touch with Son Sen, the former Khmer Rouge defense minister, even before. And he said that Hun Sen had negotiated with Ieng Sary before that person’s amnesty was accepted by the King, i.e., negotiations have to start somewhere and the result become acceptable later. Meanwhile, the *Cambodia Daily* shows that General Nhiek Bun Chhay did report to the bipartisan Joint Commission for Conflict Resolution at least on June 16 about his negotiations.

On June 25, the Prince told the *Cambodia Daily* that he was not planning to bring Khieu Samphan to Phnom Penh or to let him “have any role in the government”; he was just asking Khieu Samphan to cut himself off from Pol Pot and to dissolve his so-called provisional government. Ranariddh said he had chosen Hun Sen and the CPP to work with, and not Khieu Samphan, and he just wanted Khieu Samphan to surrender to the government.

On June 29, Hun Sen said he had heard that Khieu Samphan would announce his split with Pol Pot and

that the Khmer Rouge now supported a unified Cambodia, the Constitution and the King. But he said, "I still cannot accept [these three statements]" and added "We will welcome those who dismantle everything [in Anlong Veng] and agree to unconditionally defect to the government and deliver Pol Pot to us." The *Cambodia Daily* reported: "Hun Sen told listeners that he and the Prince have agreed that the Khmer Rouge must surrender unconditionally, hand over Pol Pot and disband their provisional government." But they disagreed on whether Khieu Samphan could form a political party; Hun Sen was advocating the total dissolution of the rebels' political structure. This was the sticking point.

On June 30, a Western diplomat was quoted as saying an armed clash was coming unless there was a successful resolution to the dispute over conditions for Khieu Samphan's efforts to defect.

On July 2, the Khmer Rouge radio acknowledged, for the first time, that the KR was negotiating a peace agreement with representatives of the Cambodian Government in order "to unite all national forces and achieve national reconciliation and real peace." What it meant by that was made clear when it went on to say that "The puppet Hun Sen does not want to reconcile the nation, does not want peace and does not want to end the war."

### CPP Begins Disarming Funcinpec

On July 3, the CPP had begun unusual disarming measures, including stopping the motorcade of the Prince and taking the weapons of the Prince's bodyguards. The coup occurred on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

In sum, the above Western diplomat was right. The Prince's temerity in moving to complete an agreement with the Khmer Rouge without resolving a dispute over its terms with his coalition partner triggered the coup. Very likely, based on the previous coup alarms, it gave Hun Sen the excuse he had long been looking for to overcome internal CPP resistance.

The resistance could be cowed or bypassed in part because the danger of a political, and hence military, alliance between the Prince and the Khmer Rouge could have had dangerous consequences down the road.

Hun Sen believes in careful preparations to maintain political control, as he made clear in a secret speech of June 29, 1996 to party workers, later printed in the *Phnom Penh Post*. When he taunted Ranariddh



Khieu Khanarith, CPP spokesman and wife Tep Rainsy

to withdraw from the coalition and said he was ready for that contingency, he said, "I've prepared everything already, prepared three statements. One statement will come out half an hour after Ranariddh's announcement. Hun Sen will declare that he 'will carry on the continuity of the Royal Government'. A half hour after that, there'll be a statement by the neutral forces of Funcinpec, who will join with the CPP in carrying on the continuity of the Royal Government. A half hour later, I will rise again to declare an assurance for the continuity of the neutral forces, guarantee protection for the neutral forces. After that, a number of parties [will do the same]. All the statements are already in my hand, to be broadcast on radio and TV. You go ahead and walk out. Go on!"

### Coup was Wholly Prepared

Accordingly, based on the chronology, the results, the contradictions in CPP explanations, and the attitudes expressed by the Second Prime Minister, it can be concluded that this was a wholly prepared coup that sought, and found, its moment. On Hun Sen's behalf, it should be noted that this is a society run on a theme of "kill or be killed." Indeed, the Prince once told Ung Huot that the struggle between Hun Sen and himself would go on "until one of us is dead." Leading CPP officials believed that their lives were on the line in the coup and that if the other side had won, they might have been eliminated by the Funcinpec military.

But the Second Prime Minister seems not to have emphasized in public that the alliance between the Prince and Khieu Samphan would importantly or fatally weaken the CPP, either in the next election or militarily. Instead, he called it illegal, while complaining also of illegal weapon sales and the alleged importation of Khmer Rouge into the city. —JJS

## Cambodia: Lacking Democratic Preconditions

The 1830s are, in cultural terms, not so long ago. It was then that Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his classic *Democracy in America*, describing the American character, and its relation to the existence of our democracy, in a fashion that is still illuminating today.

At that same time, his contemporary, Nicholas de Custine, captured the Russian character, and its relation to authoritarian practices, in his classic *Journey for Our Time*, still valuable today in assessing the prospects for Russian democracy.

At the same time as de Tocqueville and de Custine, in 1830, the Vietnamese Emperor Minh Mang had put a puppet queen on the Cambodian throne and had caused a rebellion. The Vietnamese were trying to lead the Cambodians to what they considered civilization by forcing Vietnamization. A mandarin at that time recognized the impossibility of their effort by saying:

"In principle, our intention is not to take possession of this country: we wish, following heaven's example, to allow the population to live and exist in peace. We do not wish the loss of this little kingdom as do some others [he meant the Thais] whose hearts are full of malice.

"[But] the Cambodians are savages whose nature is bad and vicious. As often as they submit so often do they rebel and they constantly forget the rule and the law."

Still today, Cambodians often readily admit this anarchistic tendency, so at odds with that readiness to compromise and phlegmatic nature which helps democracy progress. One Cambodian source on this trip said: "In this country, people assume that words may not be backed up by actions and there is no sense

of order and no rule."

A well-known political analyst, Raoul Marc Jennar, agrees, writing: "To me, in Cambodia, there is a tradition that when a rule constrains anyone, the custom is to prevent this constraint by any means. To get around the rules is the most common way to respect those rules. At all levels of society, cheating is a way of life. This is probably the greatest weakness in a society which is undergoing a long and difficult process of reconstruction."

Finally, a Western NGO leader told FAS: "In Cambodia, no one knows what democracy and human rights mean. But there is a big love of money."

Another said: "I don't have much confidence in astute voting by Cambodians. The best ones are 'easily bought' and very vulnerable to charismatic speakers. Whoever speaks best and last is the one they vote for in NGOs. It will be a long time before there is an informed electorate."

A Cambodian-American said: "Cambodians exaggerate more and bluff more than any people on earth."

The infertility of Cambodian soil for the flowering of democracy is painfully evident in a book, recommended warmly by a foreigner living in Cambodia, entitled *The Warrior Heritage: A Psychological Perspective of Cambodian Trauma*, by Seanglim Bit, self-published, 1991. What follows in italics is drawn from this work, with some editorial comments in brackets.

*Leadership in Cambodia emphasizes "supreme authority and unquestioning obedience." Local leaders had the attributes of "small independent warlords with the areas they controlled." Cambodians have inherited a warrior mentality. A people trained to passivity and humility were nevertheless made fierce by the need to survive under cruel and oppressive regimes.*

*Cambodia does not have a tradition of associations, volunteer groups, trade unions, or other networks composed of people who come together for a common purpose. As cities grew, they came to be increasingly dominated by the presence of foreign technicians and advisors, bringing with them their own cultural traditions. Vietnamese were brought into Cambodia to staff Cambodian institutions because they were thought to be more able and clever but this*



Cambodian children at play

*deeply wounded Cambodian national pride.*

*Political and personal disputes result in deeper-seated and very personalized conflicts for which there is little hope of a negotiated reconciliation. The avoidance of undue risk is a constant consideration in the Cambodian mind. The legal code lacked specificity and precision and often resulted in harsh judgements. There was never an effective system of civil rights. Even the present Constitution requires that rights of speech, press and assembly are qualified with the requirement that they not offend the honor of others, social customs or disrupt public order or national security (article 37). Traditionally, dissent was tantamount to treason.*

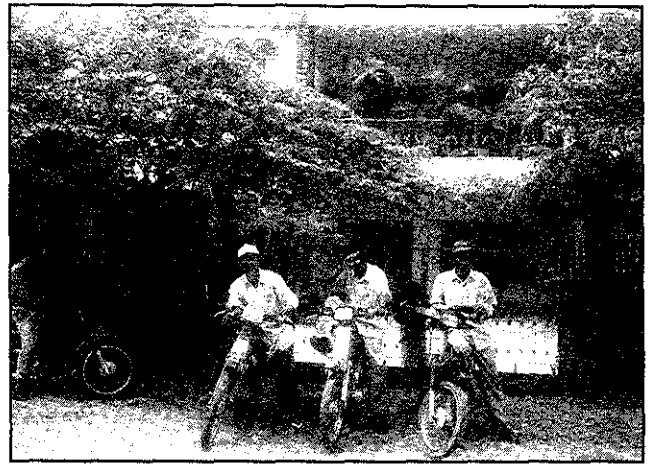
*An individual who has even passive association with a class of people that have been labeled as an "enemy" may receive the most extreme form of personal violence. [This certainly was shown during the Pol Pot period and may explain why the guards surrounding the Rainsy demonstration showed such indifference to the suffering of the demonstrators who had been hit by the grenades—perhaps they were all "enemies," as was Rainsy.]*

*Destructiveness and cynicism serve to rationalize and justify aggression. If the intended victim is perceived as "without merit," generalized hostility is acceptable and the perpetrators are exonerated from public disapproval. In Cambodia, anger or individual dissatisfaction with one's lot is prohibited by the belief system. These emotions, having no acceptable outlet, can erupt in a volcano of pogroms against minorities and those out of power. Meanwhile skills in negotiation, compromise and achieving consensus receive little encouragement.*

### **Power Based on Personality**

*Leaders achieve power through their personality, rather than their office. And leaders are expected to "take care" of their followers. Cambodians have a sense of superiority about their culture. [In the Pol Pot period, cadres boasted of Cambodian superiority while wearing stolen wristwatches which they could not, in fact, read!]. Cambodians appreciate a good speech for its almost theatrical effect rather than for its content.*

*Gossip and rumor are used at a social level as an effective and sometimes very destructive means of indicating displeasure. [This is certainly seen in the Khmer language press.] Traditionally, manipulation and deceit were used to survive. Cambodians feel*



Moped taxis waiting for customers

*strongly about protecting "face" and will not unduly risk honor or suffer an irreparable insult. [As in Latin America, then, leaders will try to assassinate reporters who they feel have desecrated their honor.]*

*[And the press does not hesitate! The Khmer press is extreme, vile and slanderous, one observer noted, with titles like: "Hok Lundy licks Vietnamese ass" or "Ranariddh likes pussy better than the nation." ]*

*Individuals in Cambodia are left on their own to protect their interests and they do so by not engaging in behavior which challenge the entrenched prevailing view.*

\* \* \*

Americans have a well-known, long-standing, messianic belief that democracy can be spread everywhere and easily. We quickly forget how many advantages America had in this connection: people arriving who wanted to be free; small townships that practiced democracy; a wealthy country with space for everyone; a relatively educated and untraumatized population.

Even in Taiwan where democratization has been a success, it was started in villages, then carefully moved along to regions and, only later, extended to elections on a national basis. No serious observer of Cambodia can do other than come away thinking that the West is kidding itself if it thinks an election or two will produce a democratic Cambodia.

Cambodia, like other developing countries, needs order and an absence of anarchy. Literacy, which is now only 35% has to be expanded and justice provided through strengthened institutions. Building a base for democracy takes time.

—JJS

## Who Tried to Kill Sam Rainsy with Grenades?

Like a lightning bolt in a dark night, the ferocity of the political terrain in Cambodia was dramatically revealed by the grenade attack on Sam Rainsy, a democratic activist trying to fill the void between a royalist party and a decaying political-bureaucratic structure of the Communist era. Rainsy survived but many of the demonstrators with him at the time did not. Who did it?

Rainsy had formed the Khmer Nation Party (KNP). More than a year before the attack, on January 16, 1996, he implicated everyone in sight in advance by telling a press conference: "If I am killed, I can tell you now that it is Hun Sen who ordered my killing, with the backing and complicity of Prince Ranariddh and with [multi-millionaire] Theng Boonma providing the financing of the assassination." His party, at that time, was in some disarray, with many steering-committee members resigning; he alluded to the fact that the Government would find it "normal" to infiltrate people into the party to divide it.

The Government was certainly stalling in recognizing the KNP as a political party, and Rainsy went to court; meanwhile, he charged that it was using the time to promote a dissident group within the KNP with "political, financial and logistical support from the Government." (This is plausible.)

By March, he was warming up to Prince Ranariddh, saying he would support the Prince rather than Hun Sen; a Funcinpec leader responded revealingly: "But his political line is different from ours. He is very extreme. The democratic regime and the democratic law is very difficult. It means we have to go step by step and Rainsy, he likes to go fast."

By April, he had tried to gain a license for his party by capturing a small, recognized party—the Liberal

Reconciliation Party (LRP), getting himself elected leader, and changing the name of the party to KNP. He continued to side with Ranariddh, saying: "Blood spilled is worse than the money. Funcinpec has very little blood on its hands . . . one can forgive many things." By May, he urged a union of "non-Communist" political forces to oppose Hun Sen and seek "drastic change in Cambodian politics."

By November, Rainsy was being accused, at a press conference held at Hun Sen's house, of taking \$2,000,000 from the Khmer Rouge to start his party; this improbable story was put forward by 10 persons called "self-proclaimed urban Khmer Rouge agents", by the *Phnom Penh Post*. This would be illegal, and Rainsy, on completing a three-week period as a monk, said he was "looking forward to defending myself at court."

By March of 1997, Funcinpec and the Khmer Nation Party had joined together in a National United Front (NUF), with Ranariddh—who had thrown Rainsy out of his party two years before—calling him "respected" and "beloved" where, before, he had said he was "sorry that he is a Khmer." Even observers of Cambodian politics were startled at the turnabout.

### The Demonstration and the Grenade Attack

Rainsy was holding a protest outside the National Assembly, for which he had a license, when four grenades were thrown at the 170 demonstrators. About 20 policemen—less than normal for previous Rainsy protests—were standing around but not close to the demonstration. Two men who threw the first grenades ran off and no effort was made by the soldiers to stop them. On the contrary, they pointed their guns at the crowd and stopped some of them from continuing to pursue the grenade throwers. The two men then disappeared near a CPP residential compound. The policemen were dressed in uniforms of Hun Sen's Pretorian Guard. All in all, a damning situation.

Hun Sen's reaction, after expressing condolences and condemning the perpetrators, was to ask the Minister of Interior to consider whether they should "drag the demonstration's mastermind by the neck to court" and call its organizers "responsible for the deaths because they are the ones who caused it." He said that if the demonstration was "not legally permit-



Flowers commemorating demonstrators' deaths in Rainsy attack

ted [the organizers] must be immediately arrested.” Certainly this was a series of inappropriate responses.

Rainsy said: “Hun Sen is behind this. He is a bloody man. He will be arrested and sentenced one day.”

The police had made no effort to help the wounded during the first 20 minutes. It was only after seven weeks that Hun Sen was confirming that the soldiers involved were loyal to him and that they were around the park for “observation” reasons; so who was protecting the demonstration?

From the beginning, and still today, the main defense against the counter charge that CPP did it was the charge of “set-up”—a response based on the fact that it would have been so easy to kill Rainsy in a fashion that was less traceable to CPP. But still, the fact remained that the behavior of CPP forces in the park could not be otherwise explained than as protecting the perpetrators. How could this be set up?

### Minister of Interior Leaks Report

Under the coalition structure, there are two Ministers of the Interior and the Funcinpec Minister, You Hockry, apparently shared a confidential report on the investigation with his Funcinpec leader, Prince Ranariddh, who, according to Rainsy, let Rainsy look at it. Rainsy said that Teng Savong, the CPP general in charge of the investigation, had admitted that: “He knew who gave the order to attack the protestors” but it was “too dangerous” to say who. Other witnesses had pointed their fingers at the Second Prime Minister, Hun Sen.

The FBI sent a sketch artist to sketch the man who ordered the attack, and one of the sketches resembled a man with a nickname “Brazil” who opposition newspapers said was a bodyguard of Hun Sen—with CPP controlled newspapers saying he had been a bodyguard for a Funcinpec military official.

The chief of Hun Sen’s security force, General Hing Bun Hieng, responded to these charges in an intimidating fashion that only compounded the suspicion that the bodyguard did it:

“I am preparing documents for a complaint against [the people making these charges] ... but I still want to shoot and kill them. Publish this, tell them that I wanted to kill them ... publish it, say that I, chief of the bodyguards, have said this. I want to kill ... I am so angry.”

In considering whether Hun Sen himself—as

opposed to CPP—is personally responsible, one cannot be certain yet that he is. One Cambodian source said: “In this country when leaders point at enemies, their followers anticipate and do bad things.”

### Rainsy Returns

On May 25, Interior Co-Minister You Hockry said: “When we asked ... the commander if he received any order to move into the area or he initiated it himself, he responded that he received the order from the top ... he received the order from the Second Prime Minister’s cabinet.”

On May 27, Rainsy said he would fly to the U.S. to circulate excerpts from a preliminary report that allegedly implicated Hun Sen and even stated that witnesses saw a suspect run toward Hun Sen’s house. He said: “If the FBI made their finding public it could create intense political turmoil that could lead the US to suspending aid to Cambodia.” On June 29, the *Washington Post* reported that the FBI is tentatively blaming the personal bodyguard force of Hun Sen for the crime. On July 1, the *Cambodia Daily* reported that You Hockry said “Brazil” was being interrogated and had admitted that “He tried on two separate occasions—but could not [kill Sam Rainsy] during factory protests ....” If so, it would seem that someone wanted a double-header—to squelch freedom of demonstration, while killing Rainsy. —JJS

### Protect Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the press is the heart and soul of preventing a society from going awry—even more important than elections which presuppose a free press. America could—and it should—give high priority to defending freedom of the press in Cambodia.

In February 1996, the Government decided, for the first time, to sue a paper under a new press law against publishing a story that could affect “political stability or national security.” To make the first case stick, it chose a test case in which the press organ wrote articles against the King. Meanwhile, a newly formed Government “media group” is prepared to ask foreign journalists “to identify sources used to write critical news reports.”

There have been more than five journalists murdered recently.

## Can Funcinpec Return to Being More Than a Captive Party?

Funcinpec is in trouble. As one well-informed source put it, "Before the coup, we still thought we could win the election despite our lack of organization. Now it is too ambitious to think we could win. Before the last election, Funcinpec was very strong; since that time, Funcinpec has been in decline. We did not reinforce ourselves. But, although militarily defeated, Funcinpec is politically stronger and more popular with the public. And CPP now needs us more than before."

### Funcinpec Needs a Royal

Funcinpec is a royalist party and needs a Royal at its helm. If Ranariddh cannot return to Cambodia or if he becomes King, some other Royal will have to take the lead. Indeed, in March 1996, King Sihanouk revealed that he supported Ranariddh as his heir but was worried that this might lead to the end of Funcinpec. According to the King, Hun Sen has told Ranariddh that he wants Ranariddh to be King—no doubt for that very reason, to weaken Funcinpec. And the King has been quoted as saying that he thinks Ranariddh would be happier as King than he is now.

The King, himself, is clearly the choice to lead Funcinpec that worries Hun Sen most. His presence would invigorate Funcinpec enormously, and, without much grass-roots activity, the King's party, led by the King, would attract many Cambodian votes. But who would be King in his place?

One possibility is, of course, Prince Ranariddh.

Thus a switch of positions might occur, with the Prince returning to Cambodia in a position to which Hun Sen might not object. Is there any other possibility?

Another possibility is the Queen. On January 2, 1996, she was elevated from "Royal Wife" to "Royal Supreme Wife." She could be "adopted" by King Sihanouk and the Constitution could be amended to permit "adopted" descendants. Alternatively, it could be amended to permit "Supreme Wife" as qualified.

On February 14, the King gave an interview saying he was "seriously contemplating abdicating, without, however wishing to go and live abroad."

He mentioned as possibilities for dealing with succession these: Norodom Ranariddh, Norodom Sihamoni (who, he said, considered the job "frightening") or Chea Sim could be made Regent until some Prince was found acceptable, or Hun Sen, should he "obtain a total success" in the 1998 election, could become "Head of State" by a unanimous vote of Parliament, as Sihanouk himself had been in 1960-1969.

Meanwhile, in two speeches given on March 14-15, Hun Sen said that he would urge the King to propose a Constitutional amendment banishing members of the Royal family from the political arena—something he described as a "democratic reform revolution." But this would, of course, decapitate Funcinpec permanently. And, in particular, Hun Sen said he would scrap elections if the King gave up the throne.

—JJS

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