



# HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

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GRADUATE DIVISION

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing this letter to unconditionally endorse the Phnom Penh Post and the unparalleled and critical role that it has played in providing reliable and independent news and information on Cambodia to the rest of the world. I spent more than four years in Cambodia with the UN Centre for Human Rights as a senior officer before coming to Harvard University. Based on that experience, it is my firm belief that the Post has become an institution that is vital to the survival of what is left of Cambodian democracy. It is all the more important now because of the central role that the Post will play in providing information and analysis on the political and security developments leading up to the forthcoming election in 1998.

When I started work with UNTAC in 1992, there were initially no independent media outlets in Cambodia, as the government controlled every newspaper and electronic media. Using the political space that the UN peace operation (UNTAC) had created, the Post was the first newspaper to begin publishing independent and reliable news and analysis. Within a short period of time, it had established an enviable reputation for its fiercely independent but careful presentation of political and other matters. During the subsequent years, the Post continued to maintain its legendary reputation as perhaps the most independent newspaper published in Cambodia, foreign and local included.

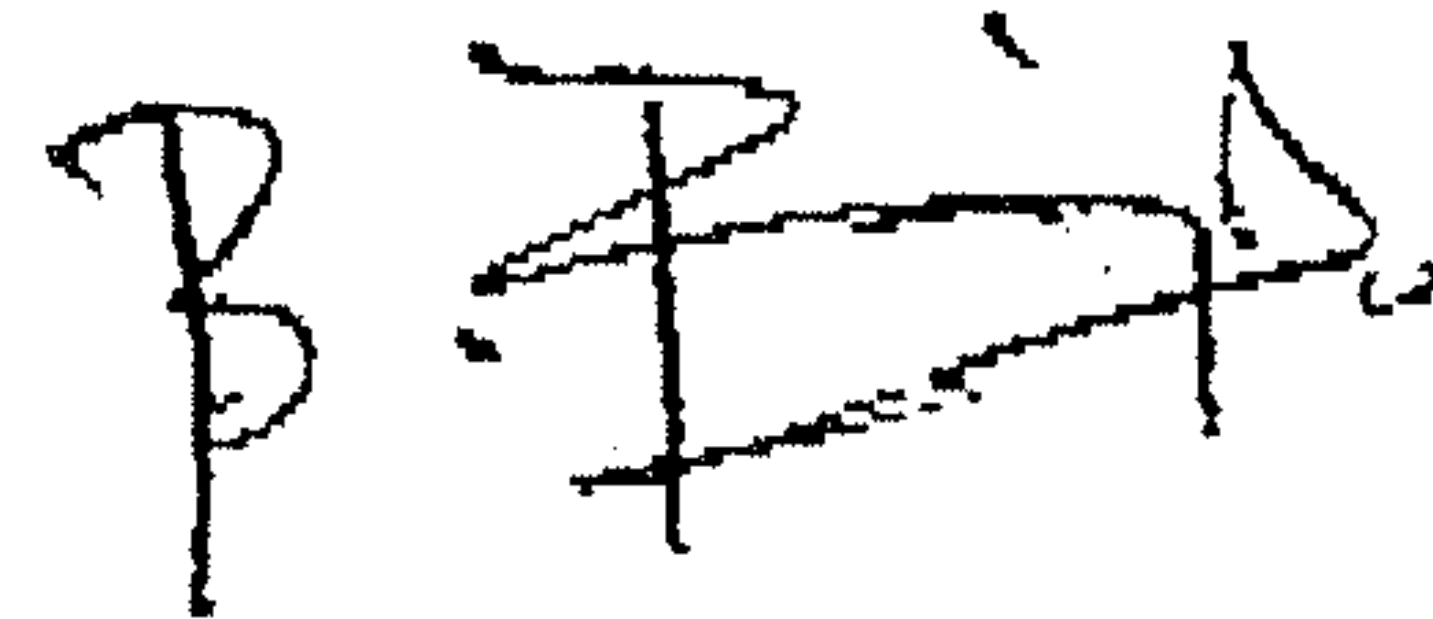
To us in the human rights and diplomatic community, the Post was not merely the most reliable source of news and analysis on Cambodia: it was also the paradigm of free and responsible press that we were advocating in post-1993 Cambodia. In a country where freedom of expression is a dangerous idea that can get people killed, and where local journalism is a raucous mixture of a verbal political-free-for-all and unprofessional sleaze, the Post was a model that we strove to have accepted in Cambodia by both the Cambodian political class and the local media. Therefore, the importance of the continued existence of the Post goes beyond its own survival as a newspaper: it is central to the fledgling and stuttering democratic process in Cambodia.

The lead-up to the election in 1998 has witnessed a grenade attack in March 1997, a coup in July 1997 and continued political and military tension. In these circumstances, the Post has performed an extraordinary job by bringing accurate and detailed news and analysis to the rest of the world. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to

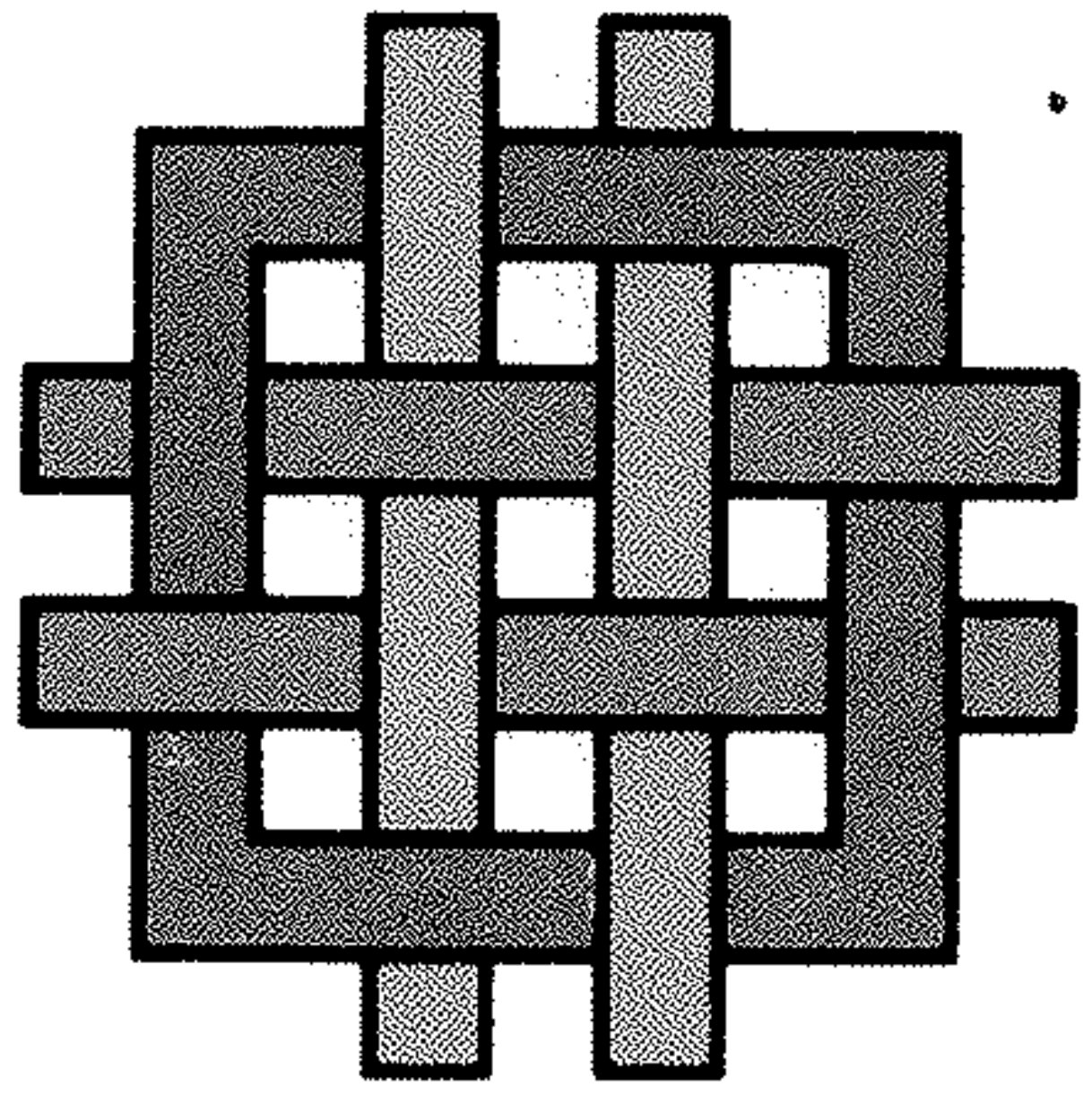
say that, but for the reporting by the Post, we might not have known the full facts behind some of those incidents such as the March 1997 grenade attack. It is my firm conviction that without the Post the world's - and Cambodia's - ability to monitor the political and security developments leading upto the election will be severely hampered. That would be nothing short of a disaster for the Cambodian peace process which is already completely off the track.

I have personally known the brilliant and brave staff of the Post - both foreign and Cambodian - since 1992. They are known around Phnom Penh and abroad for their commitment, integrity, professionalism and responsibility. Many of them have been working for basic room and board and the Post itself has managed to survive on a shoestring budget under very difficult and challenging circumstances. I have no reason to doubt that any financial support extended to the Post would not be used in a responsible manner.

I strongly urge you to support the Post in whatever way you can so that it can continue to perform the vital and critical role that it has played so far in promoting democracy and protecting human rights in Cambodia.



Balakrishnan Rajagopal  
Former Officer at the UN Centre for Human Rights, Cambodia  
Currently Senior Fellow and Soros Justice Fellow,  
Harvard University Law School  
Graduate program, Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02143



WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

1709 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, Telephone: 202-638-6300  
Facsimile: 202-638-0036 Telex: 64414 WRIWASH Direct Dial: (202) 662-

Michael Hayes  
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief  
Phnom Penh Post  
c/o Indoswiss, G.P.O. 2420  
10120 Bangkok, Thailand  
Fax: 855-23-26568  
Local Fax in PP: 855-23-26568

14 July 1993

Dear Mr. Hayes:

The purpose of this unsolicited letter is to express our opinion that the Phnom Penh Post is an excellent, in fact unparalleled, source of information on Cambodia. As a policy research institute interested in working in the region, the Phnom Penh Post has already proven to be an invaluable resource for keeping up to date with the latest developments there.

Our subscription to the Post has kept us informed of the critical political, economic, and security related issues facing the country. The paper is also rich with news concerning the development, social, and environmental challenges Cambodia faces. We can recommend without reservation the paper to anyone or any organization interested in constructively contributing to Cambodia's future during these exciting times.

Congratulations to you and your staff for maintaining such high professional standards and for providing such an important service to the local and international community interested in Cambodia. Keep it up and keep our subscription coming!

Sincerely

Kirk Talbott  
Center for International  
Development and Environment

Chip Barber  
Biological Resources  
and Institutions Program

## Chicago Tribune

APT. 802 MARBELLA II  
ROXAS BLDVD. 2071  
METRO MANILA  
PHILIPPINES

ULI SCHMETZER  
MANILA BUREAU CHIEF  
SENIOR ASIA CORRESPONDENT

TELEPHONE  
632-5210471  
FAX: 632-6210471

November 30, 1997

Attn

Michael Hayes

Publisher, Phnom Penh Post.

I have heard with great concern that your paper may be forced to close down due to financial problems.

The demise of the Post would be a tragic event since it has been the only reliable and independent publication which provided news and analysis that kept all of us abreast with events in Cambodia.

With the roll-back of political and democratic liberties in Cambodia there is an even greater need today for an independent and critical voice like the Post which can serve not only as a monitor for human rights and democratic liberties but as an example and a school for a Cambodian media which is still learning about freedom of expression and the importance of an autonomous press.

I hope you can manage to rescue the Post so it may continue its vital role in Cambodia. If there is anything I can do to help, please let me know.

Hope to see you soon,

  
Uli Schmetzer

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**cc:Mail for: Phnom Penh Post**

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**Subject:** For Michael - Fundraising Endorsement Letter

**From:** Craig Etcheson <craig.etcheson@yale.edu> 11/19/97 4:32 PM

**To:** Phnom Penh Post at CM17

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Here you go, Michael. Hard copy to follow by mail. And send me your fax number.

November 19, 1997

Michael Hayes, Publisher  
Phnom Penh Post  
Phnom Penh  
Kingdom of Cambodia

Dear Michael,

I am writing to you today to add my voice to those who are supporting your efforts to raise funds to maintain the existence of the Phnom Penh Post. I understand that your ad revenues have crashed dramatically amidst the business recession in Cambodia in the wake of the July fighting. Those of us who are familiar with the Post know that it has survived solely on ad income, given the impossibility of generating adequate subscription revenues from an English-language publication in Cambodia. The Post is far too valuable a property for those of us who care about Cambodia, whether for personal or professional reasons, to allow it to succumb to this unfortunate situation.

Cambodia has never had a strong tradition of independent journalism, and after the chaos of the last quarter century, scarcely any trained journalists existed in Cambodian society. Perhaps one of the most valuable things the Phnom Penh Post has done over the last four years has been to provide aspiring Cambodian journalists with an example of the best professional journalistic ethics. By working on your paper, or even by being exposed to the standards you maintain in journalism, young Cambodian reporters have been able to learn what it means in most of the world to be a real journalist. Under your guidance, several Cambodian journalists have come a long way, and at least one, Ker Munthit, has developed into a world-class reporter. If only for reasons of the Post's value as a journalistic exemplar, we need for the Post to survive.

But the reasons why we need the Post go far beyond journalistic training. Simply put, the Post is the best single source -- and sometimes the only open source -- of news and investigative journalism about the thickets of Cambodian politics and society. With the current political and military crisis, the upcoming elections, and the continuing violence against human rights and the environment, the outside world -- including policy makers, analysts, and the donor community -- needs the Post's crucial window on Cambodia. The Post's track record of integrity, and the self-sacrifice of its staff (they all work for the glory of reporting on a hot spot, rather than for their meager rations), ensure that any contribution to sustaining this important publication will be money well-spent toward helping Cambodia to recover from the tragedy of its recent history.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Craig Etcheson, Acting Director  
Cambodian Genocide Program

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INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
2223 Fulton Street #2318  
Telephone: (510) 642-2809  
FAX: (510) 643-7062


BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-2318

November 12, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

At this critical juncture in Cambodia, it is imperative that a journal exists which can convey information about the complex, ever changing scene in a manner both comprehensive and objective. The Phnom Penh Post fulfills that function in excellent fashion. With elections forthcoming, its role becomes even more vital. Thus, support for it constitutes support for human rights and democracy, causes which many Cambodian citizens champion but which require the type of open courage that the Post displays.

Sincerely,

  
Robert A. Scalapino  
Robson Research Professor  
of Government Emeritus

# The New York Times

BANGKAPI MANSION APT. 19A  
89 SOI 12, SUKHUMVIT ROAD  
BANGKOK 10110 THAILAND  
TEL : (66-2) 254-3722  
FAX : (66-2) 254-3198

SETH MYDANS  
BUREAU CHIEF

Oct. 27, 1997

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is a letter of endorsement from a devoted and admiring reader of the Phnom Penh Post. The newspaper is one of the most courageous — even miraculous — publishing ventures I know: an honest, thorough, high-quality paper produced with obvious devotion both to high journalistic principles and to the suffering country it covers.

Like other journalists, analysts and outside observers, I have relied shamelessly on the Phnom Penh Post since I began to cover Cambodia for The New York Times almost two years ago. It is an indispensable window into a country where the real story rarely lies on the surface. There is no other publication in Cambodia that provides the independent, responsible and in-depth coverage of the country's democratic development, human rights and politics.

This need is all the more critical now as the country passes through a perilous time leading up to next year's election. The paper's accurate, intimately knowledgeable reporting is crucial as foreign governments and donor groups seek to monitor events.

I have particularly admired the paper as a labor of love, created and shepherded by Michael and Kathleen Hayes along with a corps of idealistic young reporters who seem to work for virtually subsistence pay. Though the newspaper is run as a business it is clearly not a big money-maker; any of its talented staff could surely earn more elsewhere.

The paper's plan to bring in Cambodian journalists for training seems to be one of the few bright spots today in a country where progress toward openness and freedom and the creation of a new professional class have been set back by the recent turmoil.

Sincerely yours,



Seth Mydans  
Southeast Asia Bureau Chief  
The New York Times  
mydans@nytimes.com

# Newsweek

68 Charoen Krung, Soi 42/1, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500

Ron Moreau  
Southeast Asia Correspondent  
phone: (66-2) 2373463  
fax: (66-2) 2373562  
e-mail: RMoreau@compuserve.com

December 22, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

As Newsweek Magazine's Southeast Asia correspondent, I have been covering Cambodia regularly for the past decade. During most of that time I found that reliable information on Cambodian current events and even general background materials were almost impossible to come by, that is, until The Phnom Penh Post came along..

Now when I travel to Cambodia from my Bangkok base, I don't arrive without a clue as I did before. Rather, I come armed with a fat folder of Post clippings, ranging from its factual news reporting to its equally helpful and insightful analytical pieces. As a result, I'm able to hit the ground running without feeling lost or out of touch.

The Post covers Cambodia with a breadth and professionalism that is unmatched. There are reports on political, economic and cultural events as well as on important social and environmental issues. The Post also runs its share of scoops; it has broken stories on the political, military and economic fronts, on drug trafficking and counterfeiting as well as carrying exclusive interviews with government, military and guerrilla leaders. Most recently, it exposed the egregious practice of trafficking in Cambodian children to Thailand.

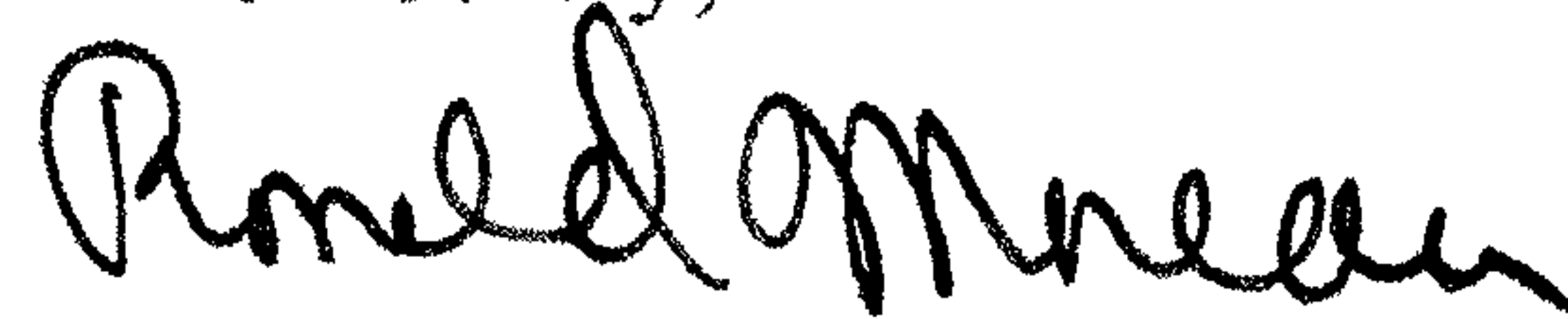
Not only does the paper cover Cambodian affairs better than any other publication, it has become a valuable journalism school for young Cambodian and foreign reporters. At the Post young reporters learn and progress quickly, thanks to editor Michael Hayes' steady, professional hand. If I were about 30 years younger and just starting out in the profession, I couldn't think of a better place than the Post to go for training and for a journalist's baptism by fire.

And there's more. The Post's columns have also become a sounding board for Cambodian experts and dilettantes alike. Weighty topics from the Khmer Rouge holocaust to the quality of democracy and the level of corruption are regularly debated there.

As the next round of Cambodian elections approaches—the first since the 1993 United Nations-organized polls—it is crucial that objective, professional publications like the Post are healthy and on-the-scene to provide insightful coverage of this watershed event. Without the Post's critical eye on the campaign, the voting and its aftermath, I'm afraid the world's knowledge of Cambodian events would be the less. That would be a shame. For Cambodia can only regain its rightful place among nations if the world receives a free and unbiased flow of information on Cambodian events.

For the sake of Cambodia, the dissemination of objective information, and for journalism—as well as for my own selfish reason—I would encourage everyone to assist the Post by whatever means necessary so that this unique paper can continue to carry out its important task of informing the world about what is happening in one of the most beautiful, culturally-alive and star-crossed countries in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald Moreau". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Moreau



December 13, 1997

To Whom It May Concern

Since 1992, when the Phnom Penh Post was first published, the newspaper has been a vital source of information for all those interested in Cambodian politics and society. Throughout the last five years, consistently high quality reporting and analysis have been the newspaper's hallmark, and readers across the world have benefited from this.

Amnesty International has noted in particular the excellent coverage of human rights issues. The editorial team have always published the facts on high profile political cases, at a time when journalists and editors in Cambodia have been threatened, attacked and even killed for daring to speak out on political issues. No other newspaper in Cambodia compares to the Phnom Penh Post in terms of human rights reporting. As the country approaches an election year, the need for this newspaper is ever more apparent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Demelza Stubbings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Demelza Stubbings  
Cambodia Researcher

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL  
INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom

Tel: Int. Code: (44) (171) 413 5500. UK Code: (0171) 413 5500. Fax: Int. Code: (44) (171) 956 1157. UK Code: (0171) 956 1157.

E-Mail: [amnestyis@amnesty.org](mailto:amnestyis@amnesty.org)

Web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

Telegrams: Amnesty London WC1 Telex: 28502 AMNSTY G



5 November 1997

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I wish to add my voice to the many who have a high regard for the *Phnom Penh Post* and who want to ensure its continuation into the future.

I have been an avid reader of the *Post* ever since the first issue came onto the streets in July 1992 and I have not missed an issue since then. I look forward each fortnight to its appearance (when I am in Phnom Penh and even moreso when I am in Sydney) and I regard it as my most reliable and regular source of news, opinion, analysis, comment and ancillary information in advertisements, notices etc. The *Post* is my chief source to keep abreast with political developments in Cambodia and also with news on publishing and other cultural developments -- absolutely necessary for my research and writing on the Cambodian genocide and also on Cambodia's information infrastructure.

I may not always agree with the positions taken in news articles and features but I believe that Michael Hayes has always kept the pages of the *Post* open for debate and comment from a variety of viewpoints and I think this is one of the paper's greatest strengths, indicating a vigorous and engaged readership. It would be a great loss for those of us that know and love Cambodia if the *Phnom Penh Post* were to close so soon after celebrating its fifth anniversary.

Dr Helen Jarvis  
Head of School

**AP** **Associated Press**  
Denis D. Gray  
Chief of Bureau

October 30, 1997

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

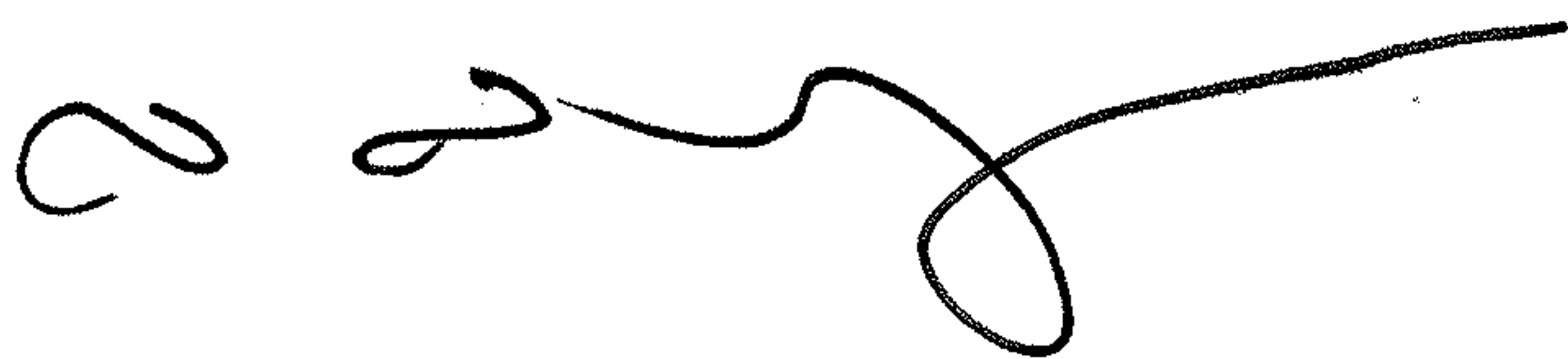
From day one, the Phnom Penh Post has been an invaluable source of information and insight to us at the Associated Press and I know to every one of my colleagues who covers Cambodia.

Our office in Phnom Penh and our regional editing bureau in Bangkok await each issue eagerly -- and save each and every one for our files.

I do not exaggerate when I say that the demise of the Post would be a journalistic tragedy. I have been in this business for 25 years and I can truly say I have rarely seen a publication that reports with such honesty, depth and seriousness as the Post. And this in a country we all know is rife with political violence, economic uncertainty and a host of other problems.

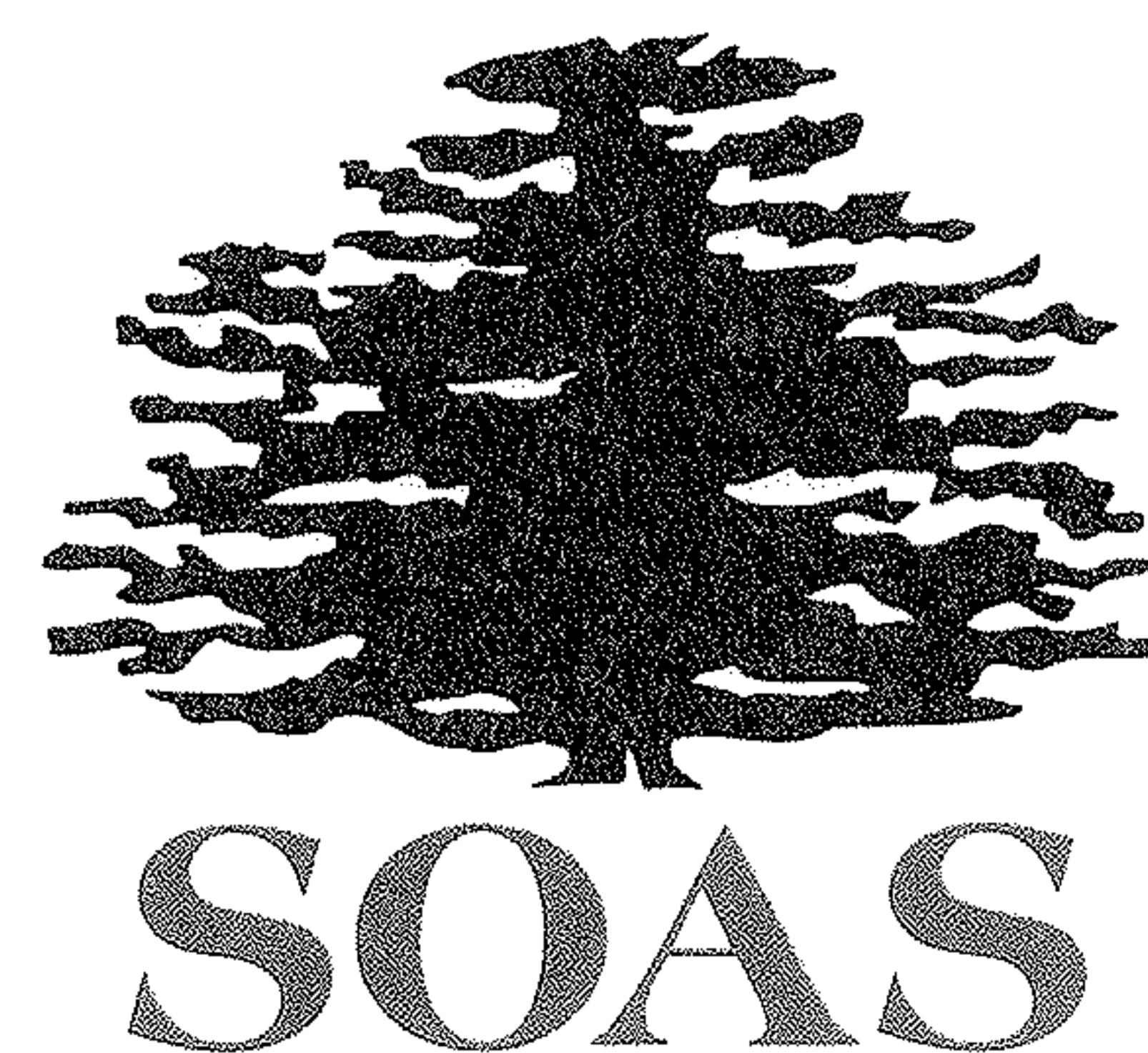
The world's knowledge of Cambodia would be sadly diminished if the Post goes under. This is a true paper of record.

It should not merely seek to remain through the election but as long as possible.



14th Floor, Charn Issara Tower, 942/149 Rama IV Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.  
MAIL: P.O. Box 775, Bangkok 10501  
Telephone: ~~233-2257, 233-2285 and 234-5550~~ Fax: (66-2) 237-6283

Tel: (662) 2660740-2



University of London

Thornhaugh Street  
Russell Square  
LONDON WC1H 0XG

Telephone 0171-637 2388

Fax 0171-436 3844

To Whom It May Concern,

19 October 1997

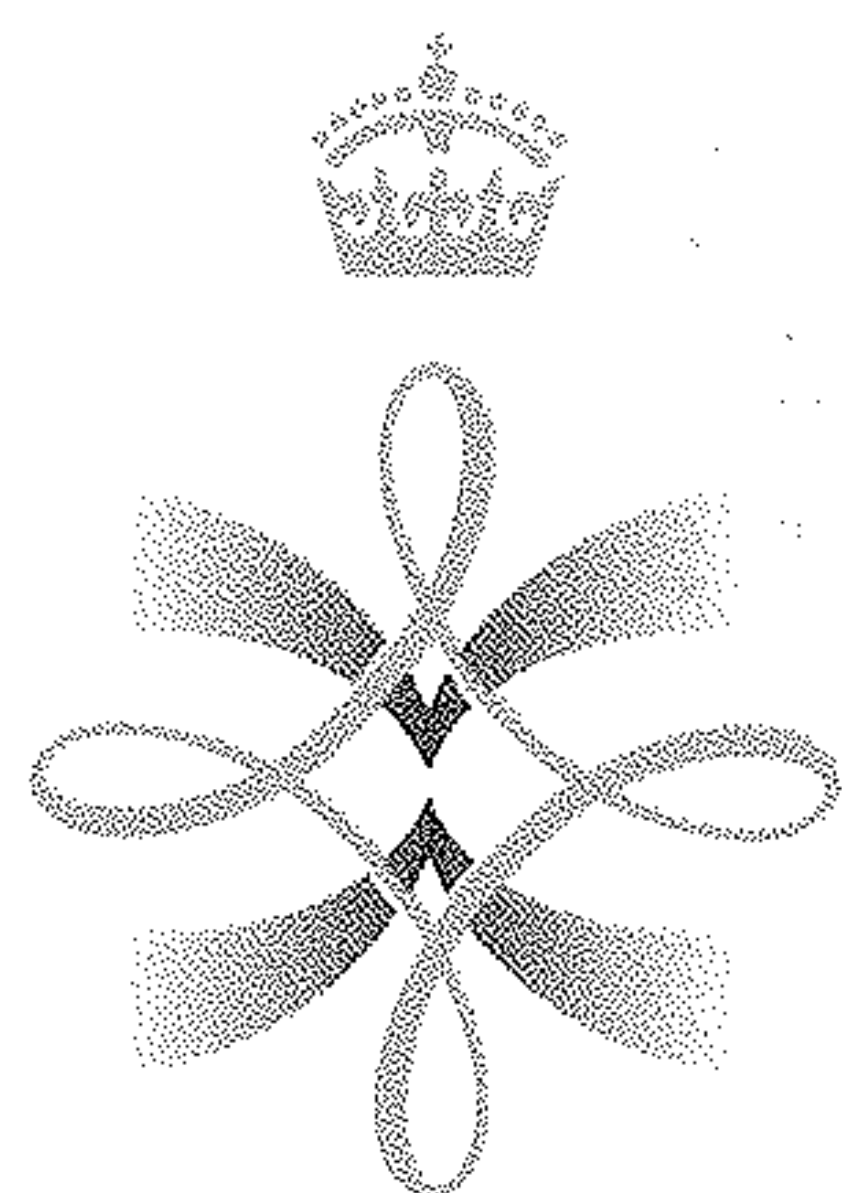
I have followed the *Phnom Penh Post* since its inception in 1992, when I was Deputy Director of the Information/Education Division of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia. From the beginning, the *Post* has been an invaluable source of information on political and other developments in Cambodia and a training ground where Cambodian journalists have learned the skills of serious and solid reporting. As threats to freedom of the press and of expression have intensified, and as other publications have often given in to the temptation to seek the safety of powerful political protection, the *Post* has remained true to its original goals. Unfortunately, early plans for a Khmer edition fell by the wayside.

Since the violent political confrontation that resulted in the coup d'etat of early July, the future of freedom of expression in Cambodia has become even more threatened. As Cambodians and signatories to the 1991 Paris Agreements on Cambodia strive for a return to non-violent political contestation via free and fair elections, it is essential the the *Post* continues to publish, that its staff of Cambodian reporters be expanded, and that its reportage becomes fully available in Khmer for wide dissemination. This will contribute directly to the chances for a fair election by helping voters make informed choices when they vote. It will increase the possibilities for institutionalization of responsible and objective journalism in both the immediate and long term, and thus also contribute to the chances that public opinion will have to be taken into account by the state.

Funding for the *Post* along the lines suggested above would thus be money well spent.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Heder  
Lecturer in Politics  
School of Oriental and African Studies



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES

1996

School of Oriental and African Studies

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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INSTITUTE OF EAST ASIAN STUDIES  
2223 Fulton Street #2318  
Telephone: (510) 642-2809  
FAX: (510) 643-7062

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720-2318

November 12, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

At this critical juncture in Cambodia, it is imperative that a journal exists which can convey information about the complex, ever changing scene in a manner both comprehensive and objective. The Phnom Penh Post fulfills that function in excellent fashion. With elections forthcoming, its role becomes even more vital. Thus, support for it constitutes support for human rights and democracy, causes which many Cambodian citizens champion but which require the type of open courage that the Post displays.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Scalapino  
Robson Research Professor  
of Government Emeritus



Human Rights Program  
Harvard Law School

Director  
Prof. Henry J. Steiner  
Areeda Hall  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Tel. (617) 495-3107  
Fax. (617) 495-1110  
Email:  
hsteiner@law.harvard.edu

Projects Director  
Peter Rosenblum  
(at Program Offices)  
Email:  
prosenbl@law.harvard.edu

Program Administrator  
Susan Culhane  
(at Program Offices)  
Email:  
culhane@law.harvard.edu

Program Offices  
Pound Hall 401  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Tel. (617) 495-9362  
Fax. (617) 495-1110

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November 11, 1997

To Whom it May Concern:

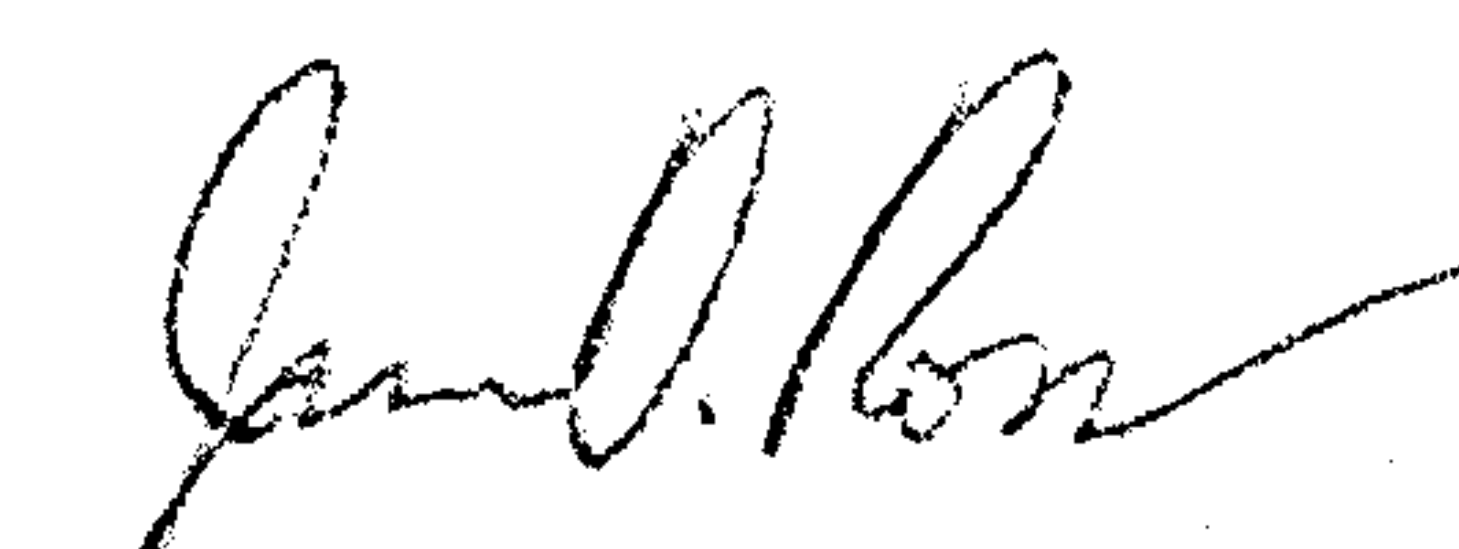
As a human rights lawyer who has closely followed events in Cambodia since 1989, including 1994-96 when I lived in Phnom Penh, I have been an avid reader of the *Phnom Penh Post*. Its in-depth coverage of Cambodia, from politics to economics to the arts, is superb. It has also published a wide range of viewpoints, both Cambodian and foreign, that are just not available elsewhere. Equally important, it has been the leading training ground for young Cambodian journalists, who get "hands on" experience that cannot be replicated in seminars and training programs.

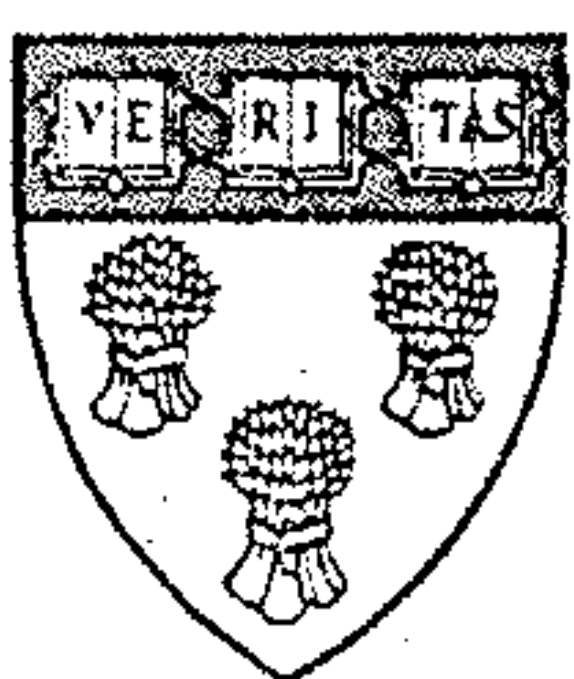
To my knowledge, the *Phnom Penh Post* has ensured its independence by relying solely on advertising revenue and sales to meet its expenses. The economic downturn as a result of the July coup has seriously undercut this financial base. Grant assistance to the *Post* is now needed and I hope it will be forthcoming.

The demise of the *Post*, especially now, would be a major setback for freedom of expression in Cambodia -- an English language paper can cover topics that a Khmer paper would be afraid to. It is not an exaggeration to say that it would also result in greater isolation of the country from the world community.

As one who has followed Asia for more than a decade, the *Phnom Penh Post* is not only the best newspaper in Cambodia, it is the best newspaper of its kind in the region.

Yours sincerely,

  
James D. Ross  
Visiting Fellow



*Tony Kevin*

*13 Dampier Crescent, Forrest, ACT 2603  
Australia*

*Ph : (61)(6) 2956588*

*Fax: (61)(6) 2326252*

*e-mail: TonyKevin@bigpond.com*

5 November 1997

To Whom It May Concern,  
c/- Phnom Penh Post,  
PO Box 12-1074,  
Soi Suan Phlu PO, Bangkok 10121 Thailand

Subject: Funding for the Phnom Penh Post

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am delighted to offer to potential funding agencies my personal written endorsement of the value of the "Phnom Penh Post". I have been a keen reader of this fortnightly newsmagazine since I took up my post as Australian Ambassador to Cambodia in July 1994, and I continue to subscribe to it now that I have returned to live in Australia (in October 1997) where I am doing research work on contemporary Cambodian politics.

I have always found the news and news analysis of the PPPost of inestimable value to me in my former diplomatic and current academic work. It is quite different from any other English-language newspaper or magazine published in Cambodia and no other publication in any language compares with it. It offers serious in-depth investigative journalism and objective commentary on Cambodian affairs, of a very high order. It remorselessly tracks the main political stories and is not diverted by trivia. Importantly, it is totally objective - it calls the story as it is, without fear or favour to any political faction or leader. As such it is an essential source of political information for diplomats, UN agency workers, and scholars.

I am sorry that the PPPost is having difficulty attracting sufficient advertising revenue in the current depressed economic climate since the events of July 1997. I find it ironic that such an important public voice in the

encouragement of democracy in Cambodia - the PPPost and the independent Cambodian journalism that it indirectly supports and encourages - might become an economic victim of the current negative climate of international opinion generated by the events of July 1997.

It would be a tragedy if the PPPost had to cease publication for economic reasons. I would think that any liberal-minded international Foundation would be spending its money very wisely indeed in helping the PPPost to stay afloat until commercial conditions improve in Cambodia, and if a local NGO simultaneously funded the translation of PPPost articles into Cambodian.

All this is especially important with the national election coming up in May or later in 1998. Governments, diplomats, scholars and aid workers will all need the objective reporting and analysis the PPPost will provide of this very important election campaign and its follow-up afterwards.

I hope that readers of this letter in a position to assist the PPPost financially through the present difficult time will do so, in the interests of supporting democracy in Cambodia.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Kevin', written in a cursive style.

Tony Kevin  
(Australian Ambassador to Cambodia 1994-1997)

Brussels, 29 October, 1997

To whom it may concern,

I have been a devoted reader of the Phnom Penh Post, both in Cambodia and in Belgium, ever since it started publishing. It is my belief that it has been the best foreign-language newspaper (I have been reading all the French as well as all the English ones), indeed practically the only one ever to offer any analysis, and any study of aspects of the culture, in addition to reporting and investigation. Having first gone to live in Cambodia in early 1988, when there were precious few Khmer-language newspapers, and having worked with various local media, I am more aware than most that the presence of more newspapers, in various languages, is one of the few genuine improvements that have taken place since, however dubious some of the local exponents may be.

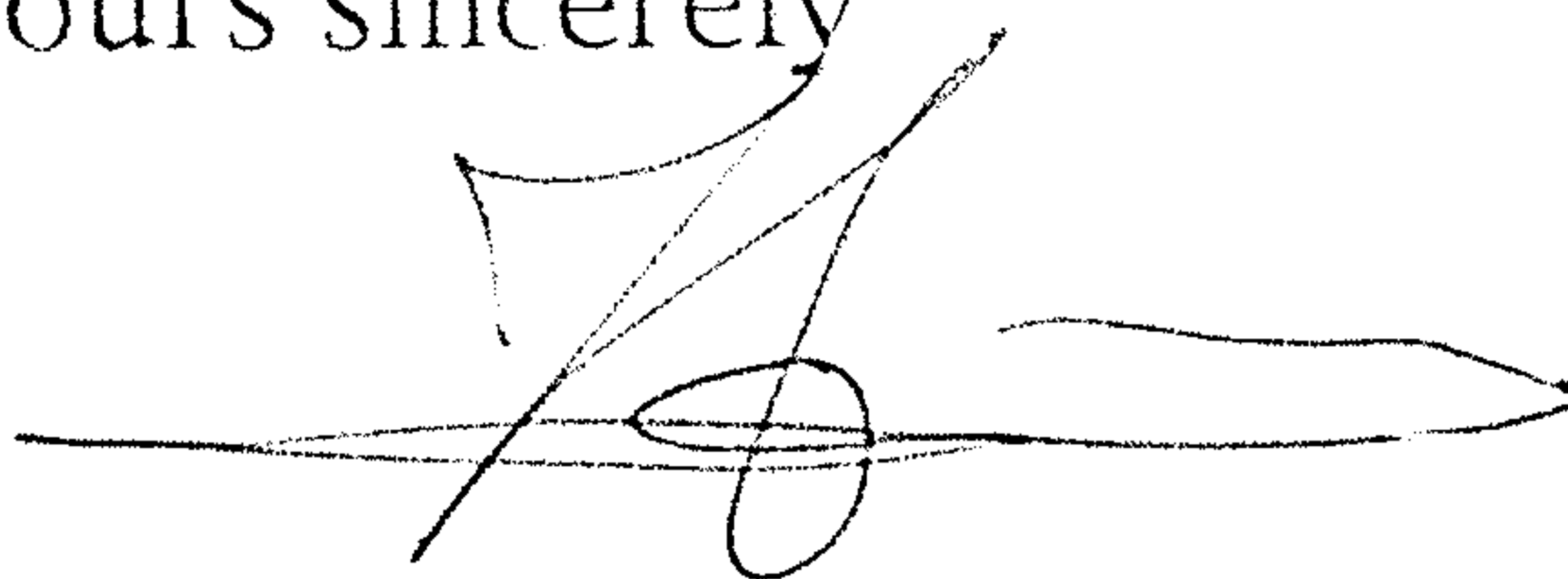
Given the well-known weaknesses of a great many Cambodian papers, foreign-language ones can and should serve as an example, as well as a 'school' for the more professional Cambodian journalists. I believe that none has done this better than the Post. It would therefore be very useful for what we may still wish to call a 'fledgling democracy' to have more wide-ranging training programmes, enabling more local would-be journalists to learn their trade, avoiding the pitfalls of rumour-mongering, insult-banding and other unprincipled mercenary activities.

A paper with the qualities of the Phnom Penh Post should play an even greater role in the difficult circumstances of today's Cambodia, and in the run-up to the 1998 elections. It would be a disaster if it were to cease publishing, for financial reasons, when more than ever Cambodians, foreigners residing in Cambodia, Cambodia experts, and those like me for whom Cambodia has become something of a second fatherland, will rely on it to obtain, not only the raw information which other papers also provide, but some understanding of what is going on in that baffling country.

I would therefore urge all who can do anything to help save, or indeed

improve a paper which has I believe often suffered from insufficiency of funds, to do all they can. The argument that the Post isn't a non-profit organisation seems to me totally inappropriate in this case, as the paper clearly contributes, in a specific way, to the task of rebuilding the country in which NGO's and others are also involved, and also contributes to the task of comprehending the country and its culture, which far fewer people, indeed far too few, are pursuing.

Trusting that people and institutions that have already shown their interest in democracy, in the dissemination of information, in the reconstruction of Cambodia and its culture will hear this, and doubtless numerous other appeals, I remain yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Philippe Hunt', written over a horizontal line.

Philippe Hunt

192 avenue du Bois de la Cambre  
B-1050 Bruxelles  
Belgium

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Deschutes  
National  
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File Code: 11-17-97

Date: November 17, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

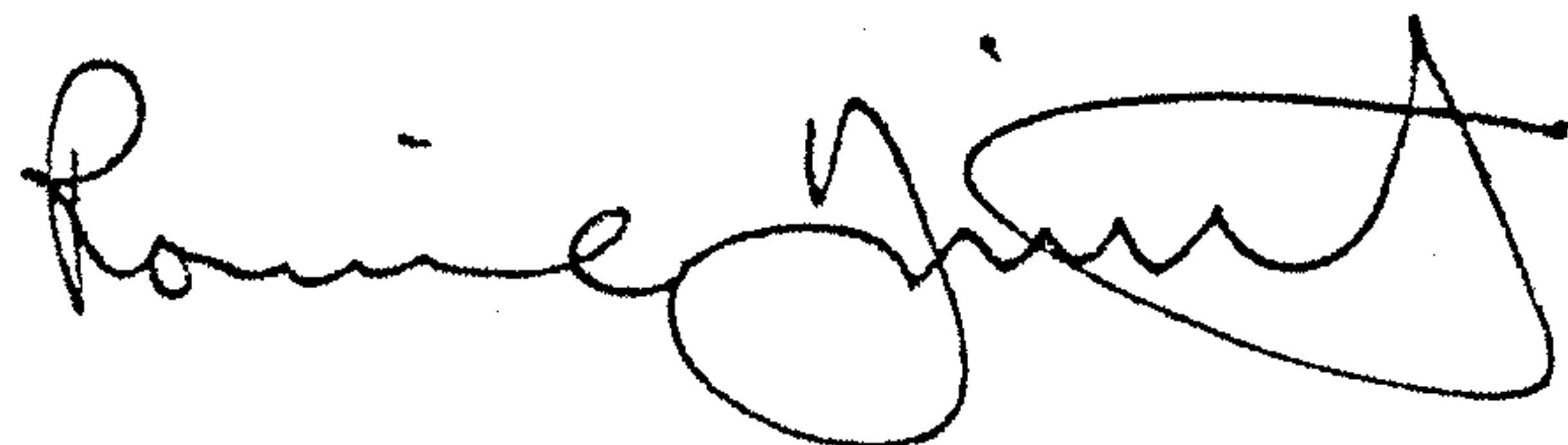
It is an honor and a privilege for me personally to write this letter in support of the Phnom Penh Post newspaper.

Over the years the Post has been the "eye and ear" for people within Cambodia and around the world who are working or dealing with issues and concerns in the Kingdom of Cambodia. The Post has a very good track record and strong reputation of being independent, responsible, reliable news, information, with in-depth reporting and analysis. The Post has provided the "eye and ear" for the rest of the world about social, political, environmental, and economic issues and concerns in Cambodia. The Post plays a key role in the development of training program for the local reporters. The Post's ability to cover issues relate to democratic development, human rights, and the election, through its fair and none-bias reporting, has been absolutely invaluable. The Post, as a role model, also bring strong integrity and ethic back into news media in Cambodia where freedom of the press and professionalism have never been very strong. The Post's excellent record as an ethical and social conscious organization speaks for itself in its responsibility to Cambodia and the world.

As a reader and benefactor of the Post's excellent journalism, I without a doubt support the Post important work, especially in the up coming general election in Cambodia. There is no price is too high for democracy and human rights, which the Post clearly one of the strongest champion and advocate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at above address or by phone at (541) 383-4720, FAX 383-4700, or E-mail: RYIMSUT@JUNO.COM, should you have any question or concern.

Sincerely;



Ronnie Yimsut,  
A Member of the USDA Forest Service  
International Forestry Support Program and  
the World Monuments Fund with on going environmental  
conservation projects in the Kingdom of Cambodia.



សម្ព័ន្ធខ្មែរជំរឿន និង ការពារសិទ្ធិមនុស្ស លីកាដូ  
Cambodian League for the Promotion  
and Defense of Human Rights

December 13, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to add my support to the Phnom Penh Post's efforts to raise funds to enable it to maintain and expand its reporting capabilities in the lead up to elections next year.

In fact, as a newspaper that contributes significantly to the process of monitoring the political climate and related human rights issues here in Cambodia, I strongly believe that it is absolutely essential that the Phnom Penh Post be able to continue its operations in the coming year.

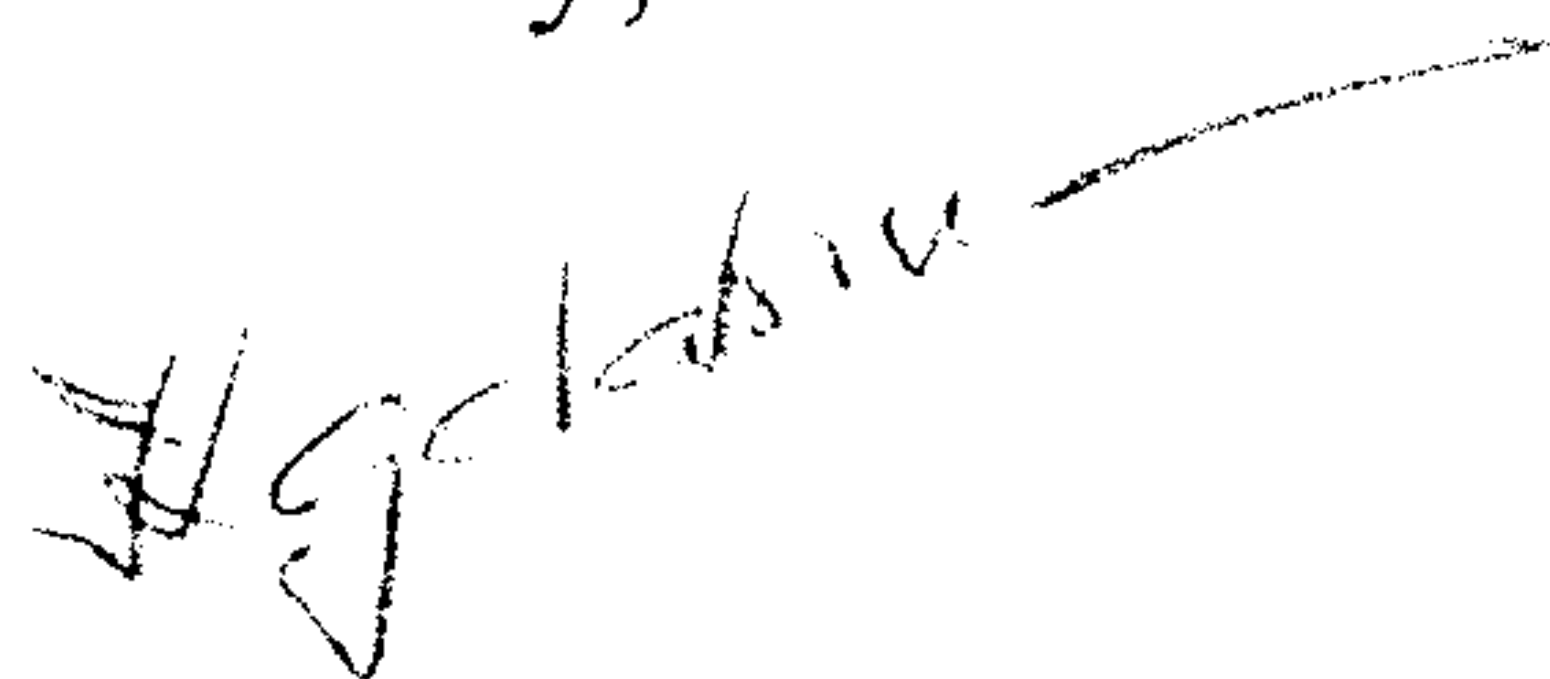
While there has been much discussion among Cambodia's friends in the international arena over the issue of monitoring the upcoming polls in 1998, and whether sufficient support will be available to do the job, it is important to highlight that the Phnom Penh Post — as an independent, non-partisan and reliable source of information — is already functioning as a *de facto* election monitor. I should also add that the Post performs this function in an extremely cost effective manner (as I am fully aware that its staff work at subsistence wages) and with a level of courage and determination that has earned my sincere admiration, especially given the climate of political violence which exists in Cambodia today.

Moreover, in the context of the impending electoral process, it is important to keep in mind that the task of monitoring human rights violations and assessing Cambodians' ability to participate in political affairs needs to begin now. In this regard, the Post is ideally suited to play a major role in the overall electoral mechanism.

As the director of Cambodia's largest human rights NGO, I can only say that without the Post the world's ability to know what happens as Cambodia embarks on the road to free and fair elections will be severely diminished.

Accordingly, any donor would be well-advised to lend the Post their full support.

Sincerely,



Kek Galabru  
President

# F.A.S.

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*President*

October 5, 1998

Until now, Cambodia has had a surprisingly free press—especially in comparison with the press controls imposed by Cambodia's neighbors. But the result, with the prominent exception of the Phnom Penh Post, has been yellow journalism with outrageous partisanship, savage insults, and thinly veiled corruption. In this context, the Phnom Penh Post has been a light in the darkness, especially for the outside world trying to understand one of the most complicated political contexts in the world.

Freedom of the press is more important than any other characteristic of a society. With freedom of the press, attention may be drawn to whatever is wrong—and thus wrongs may be righted. On the other hand, in the absence of freedom of the press, almost anything can and will go wrong and little can get fixed.

The Government of Prime Minister Hun Sen should receive more credit than it has, heretofore, for permitting the independent voice of Phnom Penh Post to continue—a voice that has dared to report any and all accusations. But the Government should be harshly rebuked if it changes the policy and suppresses The Post under whatever provocation and with whatever excuse.

The international community may be asking too much too quickly in expecting a country as recently devastated as Cambodia to succeed in implementing democratic give and take between implacable enemies and to do so before Cambodia has fully consolidated its struggle against anarchy, illiteracy and tremendous poverty. But it can and should demand western-style freedom of the press. And the suppression of the Phnom Penh Post's right to publish would obliterate that freedom.

Jeremy J. Stone

—Stone is President of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and, in that capacity, was host to Prime Minister Hun Sen's first visit to the United States. FAS is a civic organization, founded in 1945, devoted to issues of peace and security and sponsored by 59 Nobel Prize winners.

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# THE AGE

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Throughout my 25-year career as a journalist I have never felt more concerned about the future of a newspaper than I do now about the Phnom Penh Post. Let me say straight off that it would be a tragedy for the long suffering people of Cambodia if the paper is forced to close. As anybody who has read the paper since its first edition will know the Post has played a vital role in attempts to bring some sort of normalcy to the traumatised country.

Its publishers, editors and staff have risked their lives to provide a balanced and reliable coverage of events in Cambodia with a standard of professionalism that is the envy of some of the best newspapers in the world, including my own, The Age of Melbourne.

Intimidation and threats have been ignored to provide balanced news and analysis. The Phnom Penh Post staff worked on fearlessly while Cambodian journalists were getting murdered. I don't recall a story where they buckled to the pressure.

While a frequent traveller to Cambodia I have never lived there and rely on the Post to provide an indepth coverage of issues such as democratic development, human rights and the electoral processes.

Like me I know it is the required reading of key foreign policy makers in the Australian Government as well as aid agencies, academics and journalists.

The brave few in Cambodia who have been prepared to blow the whistle on the brutal dark side of Cambodian politics would lose their window to the world if the Post closes.

I do not look upon the newspaper as a business as everybody connected with it has only ever made enough money to exist virtually hand-to-mouth. I see it more as a non-profit making service that has consistently over five years played an integral role in what was happening in Cambodia.

A few years ago at one of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) meetings in Bangkok Australia's then Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, pleaded with Second Prime Minister, Hun Sen, not to force the Post's closure. Mr Hun Sen was upset about something that had appeared. Minister Evans knew the value of the paper in fostering democratic institutions and creating a political climate where the truth could be presented in a fair and balanced way.

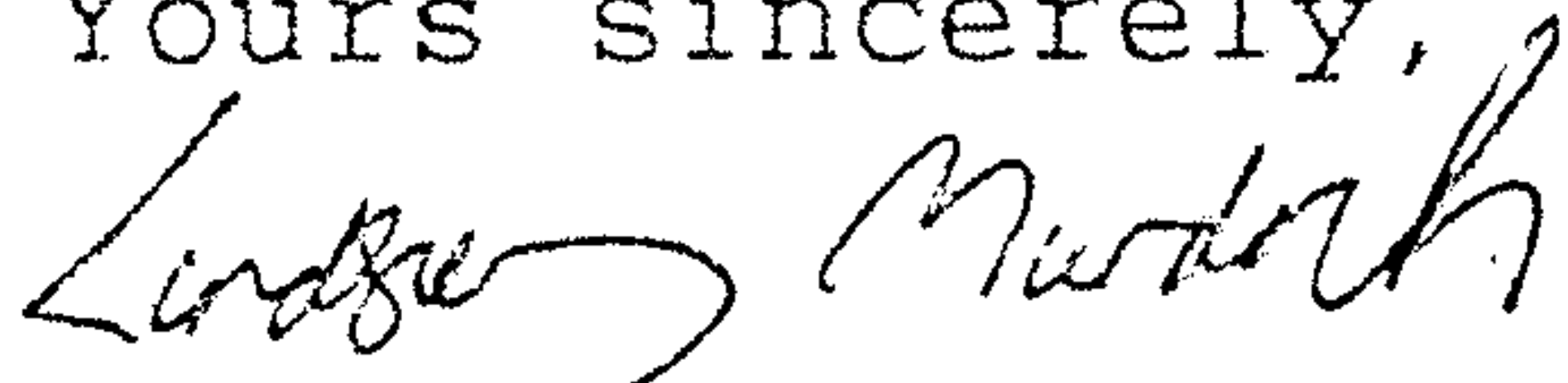
I want to make another point about the Post. The newspaper has given a start in journalism to dozens of young Cambodians, many of whom have gone on to brilliant careers elsewhere. The pay has been lousy (often just board and keep) but the Post's staff can be proud of the work they have done and continue to do.

I have just returned from a visit to Cambodia and know that the Phnom Penh Post is undergoing a real struggle to survive after the events of July 1997. This is not the Post's failing. The fact-of-life in Phnom Penh is that advertising has collapsed because businesses have collapsed.

Later this year Cambodians are scheduled to vote in elections. The need for fearless, accurate and independent coverage of the electoral processes has never been greater.

If you can help save this newspaper you would be doing a great thing for the people of Cambodia. God knows they deserve it. I would be very happy to talk with anybody about my views on this matter. I can be contacted through The Age, 250 Spencer Street Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, telephone 61-3-96004211 or E-Mail LMURDOCH@THEAGE.FAIRFAX.COM.AU

Yours sincerely,



Lindsay Murdoch  
international affairs correspondent  
The Age

# REVIEW

Far Eastern Economic Review

October 27 1997

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I understand from my friend and colleague Michael Hayes, publisher of the Phnom Penh Post, that his publication is currently facing grave financial problems. I and many of my colleagues here in Bangkok are deeply disturbed to hear about this situation.

I therefore do not hesitate to give my full endorsement to Mr Hayes' efforts to keep the Post afloat by seeking outside funding. His publication has been an important, professional organ in Phnom Penh keeping readers there and, indeed, throughout the world informed about the situation in the fractured country. This it has done in a reliable, independent and professional way. It has been particularly important as a watchdog on any human rights violations in the country.

I wish Mr Hayes every success in his endeavour to keep the Post alive, particularly now in the run up to a scheduled general election next May. I hope that the necessary funds will be forthcoming from the various foundations and commercial concerns I understand he is approaching.

Signed



Rodney Tasker  
Southeast Asia Correspondent  
Far Eastern Economic Review

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# THE



# TIMES

**JAMES PRINGLE**  
China Correspondent

Beijing  
12 Nov., 1997

TEL: 8610 6532 4120  
FAX: 8610 6532 2858  
MOBILE: 139 119 0737  
E-MAIL: pringle@public.east.cn.net

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Recent events in Cambodia have been disturbing, but to me the final straw seems to be the financial difficulties the 'Phnom Penh Post' finds itself in, given the economic meltdown in Phnom Penh. The Post had seemed to fit in so well to the new Cambodia that arose from the UN-sponsored elections in 1993, a Cambodia that we hope has not been extinguished by the events of last July in Phnom Penh.

It was the Post's reputation for impartial, responsible, accurate-news-gathering and analysis under Michael and Kathleen Hayes, and their team, that made it so valuable to readers inside Cambodia, and by providing a window on Cambodia for those of us on the outside.

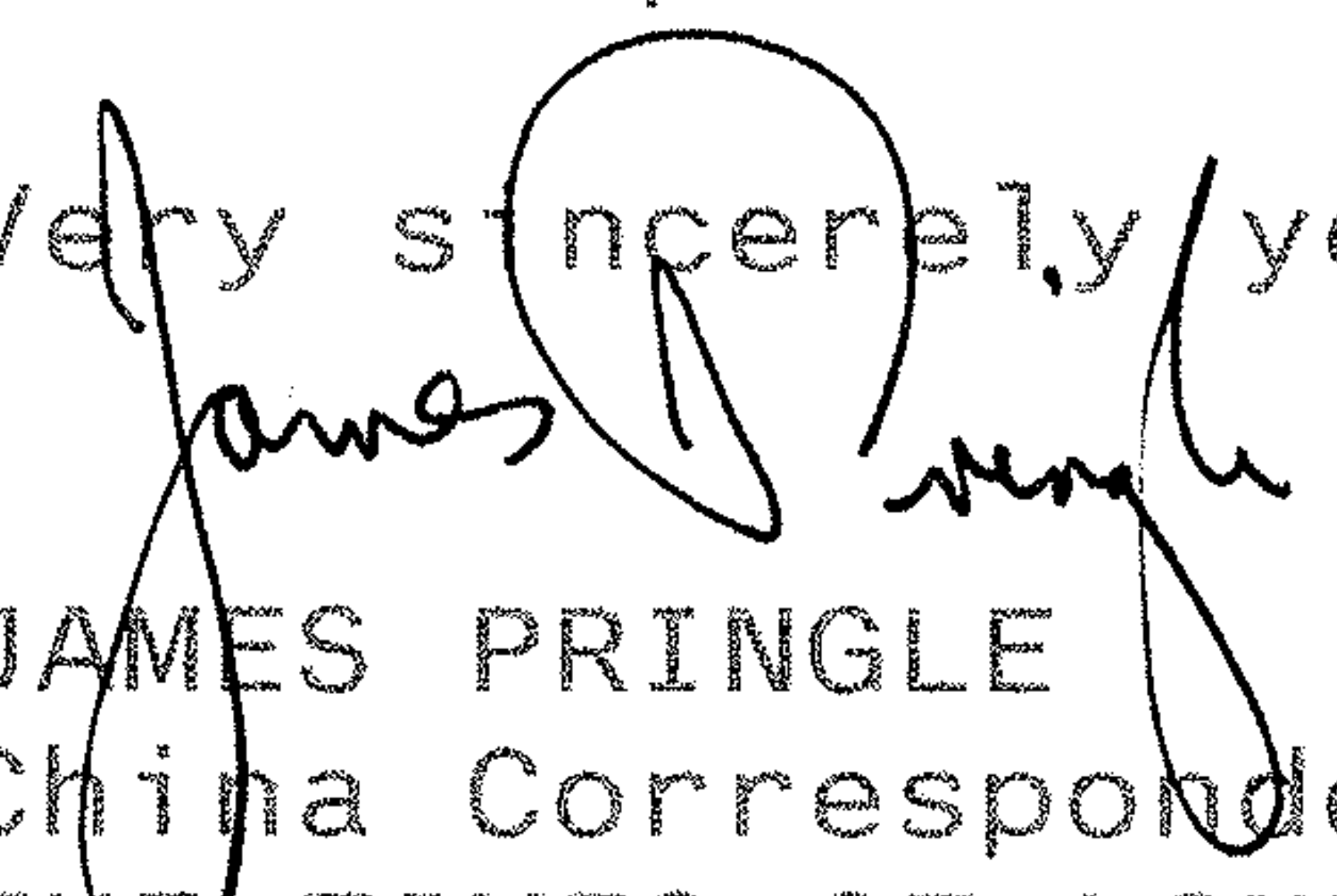
Sitting as I am in Beijing, but covering South East Asia, the Post is the only newspaper I subscribe to outside the main Hong Kong dailies. It is of a quality I have rarely seen elsewhere in the developing world, be it in Asia, Africa or Latin America.

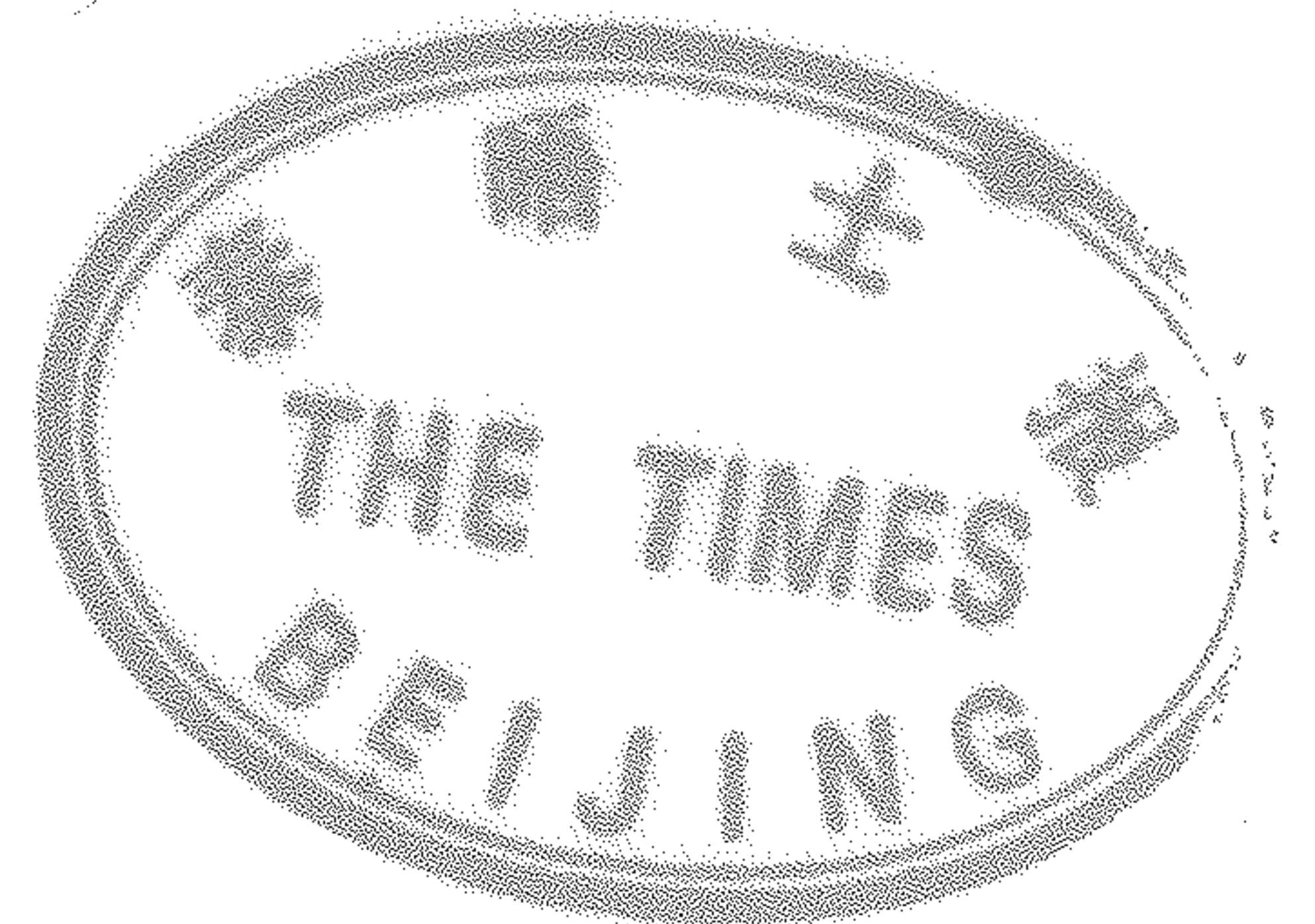
The most worrying immediate threat in the possibility that the Post may not be able to publish much longer is to the coverage of promised elections in May next year. Cambodia needs a newspaper of the Post's integrity to help ensure any threats to the election are brought to light, and that the polling is fair. So obviously, there is a particularly critical need for the Post in the coming year.

The Post also plays a valuable role in the training of Cambodian journalists, providing them with an awareness of the democratic process, human rights and - not least - the ability to provide well-written news stories. I know several Cambodians who have learned the reporting trade on its staff, and they are of the highest quality - and this is just what Cambodia needs at this decisive time.

The Post is a 'business' only in a nominal sense. The entire staff, as I have seen firsthand, has been selfless, and the newspaper has just broken even during the past five years. Any assistance you can give in helping the Post survive its present travails will be appreciated in future not only by all who care about Cambodia, but by the people of Cambodia itself. Thanking you for your cooperation.

Very sincerely yours

  
JAMES PRINGLE  
China Correspondent,  
THE TIMES OF LONDON





*Norodom Sihanouk*  
*Roi du Cambodge*

à Monsieur Michaël G. HAYES  
Editeur et Rédacteur en Chef  
de PHNOM PENH POST  
PHNOM PENH

Monsieur le Directeur,

Votre très aimable lettre en date du 17 octobre 1997, dont je vous remercie infiniment, m'a attristé au regard des sombres perspectives que vous m'annoncez quant à la survie financière de votre estimé journal.

"PHNOM PENH POST" tient une place inestimable au sein de la presse de langue étrangère au Cambodge. Ses reportages, interviews, commentaires, soucieux d'objectivité, apportent à ses nombreux lecteurs une information essentielle, dans le contexte éminemment complexe de la situation prévalant actuellement en mon si éprouvé pays.

Vous connaissez sans doute les nombreuses déclarations que je n'ai cessé de faire sur la nécessité d'assurer la liberté d'opinion, d'expression et de presse en notre Royaume.

Je forme le vœu fervent que la valeureuse Direction de "PHNOM PENH POST", assistée par une équipe rédactionnelle dévouée et compétente, trouve les moyens appropriés pour poursuivre longtemps encore la mission d'information qui lui est dévolue.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Directeur, l'assurance de ma haute et cordiale considération.



Siemréap-Angkor, le 21 Octobre 1997



## Asian Human Rights Commission

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Unit D, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Mongkok Commercial Centre,  
16 - 16B Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hongkong.  
Tel: +(852) - 2698-6339 Fax: +(852) - 2698-6367  
Email: ahrchk@hk.super.net

31<sup>st</sup> October, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

### A Letter of Support for the Phnom Penh Post

I am happy to write a letter of support for the *Phnom Penh Post*. The publication of this journal is one of the best things that has happened to the media in this part of the world. This journal has demonstrated the commitment of the media to a country which has very little to offer by way of returns. It would be a pity if this valuable effort is abandoned due to resource problems.

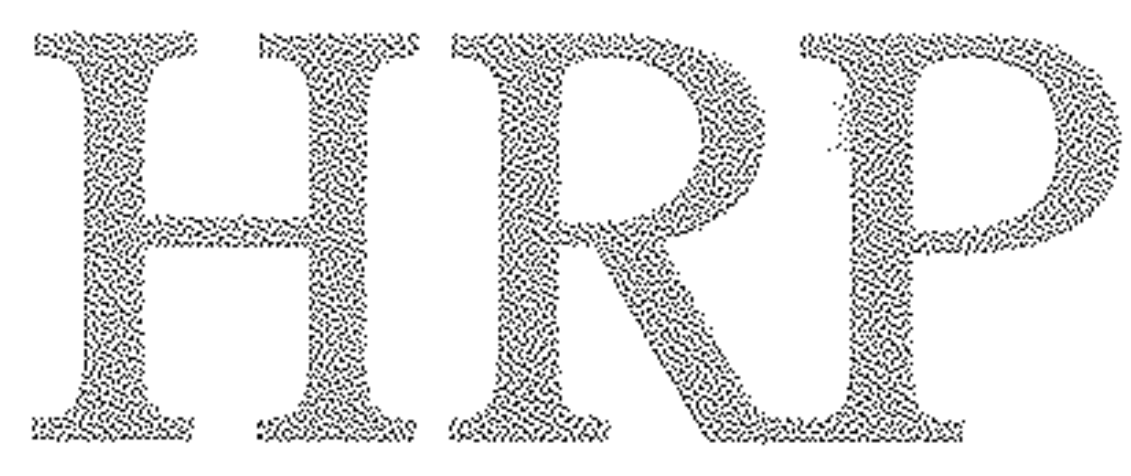
I have been a close witness to the continuing tragedy of Cambodia since early 1992. First as a senior U.N. officer in charge of the investigation unit of the human rights component of UNTAC and later as the first officer in charge and the chief of the legal assistance unit of the U.N. Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia. Since 1995, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) based in Hong Kong has been very much involved in human rights work in Cambodia.

The emergence of the *Phnom Penh Post* as a regular newspaper can really be appreciated only when one recalls the limited access to Cambodian news that was available to the outside world through only a few international agencies. The *Phnom Penh Post* has been able to provide reliable information on current events on a regular basis. In fact, one would have wished it to have more resources to grow into a weekly paper. It also has several committed and talented journalists, some of whom I have had the privilege of knowing.

In my view in the present circumstances of Cambodia, it is not possible to produce a paper of this sort purely on a profit making basis. It needs other support. Given the crucial nature of the present situation and the importance of the developments now taking place to the people of this very unfortunate country, the *Phnom Penh Post* can continue to play a very useful role. I would hope that the paper will find generous support from agencies and persons concerned about the future of the Cambodian people and the defence of a free media as an integral part of democratization.

Thank you for the valuable contribution you are making to the people of Cambodia and to those who are concerned for the country beyond its borders.

Basil Fernando  
Executive Director



Human Rights Program  
Harvard Law School

**Director**

Prof. Henry J. Steiner  
Areeda Hall  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Tel. (617) 495-3107  
Fax. (617) 495-1110  
Email:  
hsteiner@law.harvard.edu

**Projects Director**

Peter Rosenblum  
(at Program Offices)  
Email:  
prosenbl@law.harvard.edu

**Program Administrator**

Susan Culhane  
(at Program Offices)  
Email:  
culhane@law.harvard.edu

**Program Offices**

Pound Hall 401  
Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Tel. (617) 495-9362  
Fax. (617) 495-1110

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November 11, 1997

To Whom it May Concern:

As a human rights lawyer who has closely followed events in Cambodia since 1989, including 1994-96 when I lived in Phnom Penh, I have been an avid reader of the *Phnom Penh Post*. Its in-depth coverage of Cambodia, from politics to economics to the arts, is superb. It has also published a wide range of viewpoints, both Cambodian and foreign, that are just not available elsewhere. Equally important, it has been the leading training ground for young Cambodian journalists, who get "hands on" experience that cannot be replicated in seminars and training programs.

To my knowledge, the *Phnom Penh Post* has ensured its independence by relying solely on advertising revenue and sales to meet its expenses. The economic downturn as a result of the July coup has seriously undercut this financial base. Grant assistance to the *Post* is now needed and I hope it will be forthcoming.

The demise of the *Post*, especially now, would be a major setback for freedom of expression in Cambodia -- an English language paper can cover topics that a Khmer paper would be afraid to. It is not an exaggeration to say that it would also result in greater isolation of the country from the world community.

As one who has followed Asia for more than a decade, the *Phnom Penh Post* is not only the best newspaper in Cambodia, it is the best newspaper of its kind in the region.

Yours sincerely,

James D. Ross  
Visiting Fellow

