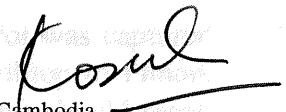


To : Editor
Phnom Penh Post
July 22, 1997

Khmer Rouge: Cause of July 97 Fighting

by Phat Kosal, Assistant to Director Youk Chhang of the Documentation Center of Cambodia

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The cause of July 97 fighting is the Khmer Rouge. It is very obvious that the Khmer Rouge has recently been the main ignition point to cause the flare-up.

According to the so called, "*White Paper*" Background on the July 1997 Crisis: Prince Ranariddh's Strategy of Provocation, published by the Ministry of Information, the crisis stemmed from the objective of Prince Ranariddh to confront the CPP through the illegal importation of weapons, build-up of private armed forces, movements of troops from original positions and his illegal and secret negotiations with the hard-liners of the Khmer Rouge in Anlong Veng attempting to impose intimidation, violence and destabilize the democratically elected Government of Cambodia.

The KR is indeed the fundamental cause of the war-like fighting which has recently broken out in the capital of Cambodia. It is beyond doubt that since Co-prime Ministers made respective efforts to bring the KR force into their side, the feud between the two had simmered and led to a huge split, especially within the army. The KR political and military organization is like a fire bonze covered by ash and it will flare up when there is wind blowing.

"We must caution against trusting the Khmer Rouge and they may not have somebody alive when they show up", said David P. Chandler, the author of a biography of Pol Pot in his interview with the News York Times on June 19, 1997.

The KR when realizing their movement will not survive anymore, they have been trying to find ways, politically and militarily, to get into the Cambodian government so that they could emerge as legitimate members of the Cambodian society. It was a simple deal: The Khmer Rouge leadership were looking for legitimacy and it is a perfect opportunity when Prince Ranariddh was looking for the military support that these recalcitrant communists could bring to gain control from CPP in the next election.

The KR remains dangerous and tricky as always. As of today, it is beyond questionable doubt that behind Khiev Samphan is Pol Pot, still as the top of organization. Khiev Samphan, who speciously claimed his break-away from Pol Pot, started alliance with Prince Ranariddh. Yet he himself serves the policy of Pol Pot. According to Working Paper 70: Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan, published in 1991 by Stephen Heder, Monarsh University: To assist Pol Pot in the conduct of the general purge, Office 870 Chairman Khieu Samphan was dispatched to the West Zone in August 1997 to conduct an investigation into the confused situation it had provoked there. In his role as Chairman of the State Presidium, he spoke on the occasion of the 1978 celebration of Democratic Kampuchea's 17 April National Day. He fully repaid the compliment Pol Pot had given him the previous September. He was nothing short of lavish in his praise for the leadership and policies of the Communist Party of Kampuchea. He declared that the

situation in Democratic Kampuchea was "excellent... in all fields" and attributed this to "the correct and clear-sighted leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea".

Shortly, after that there had appeared another shocking story that Pol Pot was captured by the break away KR force and then was being brought down from hilltop to Phnom Penh to face justice. Later, there was news that Pol Pot surrendered. One should recall that traditionally, the KR kills its own rather than cutting the deals with Cambodian authority. Pol Pot himself has ordered executions of dozens of top figures who fell out of favor in the past three decades. "Pol Pot, Ta Mok and their core communist comrades are not so stupid as to give up their lifetime treasure and submit themselves to their enemy, the Cambodian people. They will try everything to their last breath to survive and to gain control in Cambodia because they know that they are criminals they know that they are responsible for the crimes of genocide they committed between 1975 and 1979. They also know that they will be put on trial for the killing of nearly 2 million people if they surrender. Otherwise, they can come to the Central Market at any time and do not need to ask for amnesty from the King", said Youk Chhang, Director of Documentation Center of Cambodia of the Cambodian Genocide Program, in the Phnom Penh Post, June 27-July 10, 1997.

A world leading historian on Cambodia subject, Professor Ben Kiernan asserted in his piece to The New York Times on June 20, that The Pol Pot Regime committed genocide against Buddhist monks and three of Cambodia's ethnic minorities groups. The Khmer Rouge killed people because they were educated, because they were from urban areas or simply they were peasants. A legal accounting of these crimes would be one of the trials of the century.

The more often you talk about the KR and the harder you try to bring the KR into the society, the more harm you incur upon yourself. Cambodia must put a complete end to the KR organization to realize a full peace and stability./end...