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National Security Policy Review in Cambodia

Chap Sotharith and Im Sithol

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Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, CICP
Pum Paung Peay, Sangkat Phnom Penh Thmey, Khan Russey Keo,
Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia
P.O.Box 1007, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Phone: 85512 819953
Tel: 85516 982558
Fax: 85516 982559
Email: cicp@everyday.com.kh
Website: <http://www.cicp.org.kh>

Abstract:

After a long time in war and conflict, Cambodia armed forces have been integrated into a single entity with full ability to defence the country and people. Defence and security policy in Cambodia is integrated in the White Paper and not in national security policy. It has been formulated by the Ministry of Defence with only limited participation from the Parliament and civil society. The local capacity in formulating national security policy in Cambodia is still limited and hence the need for foreign assistance. The paper assesses the national defence policy with highlight of role of parliament in oversight security sector governance.

About the Author:

Dr. Chap Sotharith is Executive Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, CICP, a leading research think tank in Cambodia especially in policy analyses and International and strategic studies. He is also an Advisor to H.E.Mr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in charge of the Office of Council of Ministers. He holds a Ph.D (Economics), School of Economics and Business, The University of Sydney and a Master Degree in Human Settlement Development from Asian Institute of Technology, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Chap Sotharith has been invited as lecturer, speaker and discussant in many national, regional and international conferences and has written many papers and books both in Khmer and English related to many topics such as economic development, finance, banking, international relation, security and so on.

Tel. (855) 12 900 484

E-mail. chapsotharith@hotmail.com ; cicp@everyday.org.kh

Mr. Im Sithol is Research Fellow, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace, CICP. His researches related to regional economic cooperation, international laws, regional security and governance security sector. Mr. Sithol holds a Bachelor degree from the Royal University of Law and Economics, Phnom Penh, and Diploma from Ecole Royal d'Administration (ERA), which is the government school for training civil servants. He is also chief of Economic Cooperation Bureau, ASEAN Department, Office of Council of Minister and member of advisory teams in the cabinet of H.E.Mr. Sok An, Deputy Prime Minister.

He can be contacted by hand phone : 855 16 863 786 and

E-mail : sitholibra@hotmail.com

National Security Policy Review in Cambodia

by Chap Sotharith and Im Sithol *

1. Introduction

Cambodia, with a surface area of 181,035 km² and a population of 14 million, is situated in South-East Asia and counts Laos, Thailand and Vietnam as its neighbours. Some two thirds of the country consists of forests, mountain ranges and hills. The majority of the population live in the plains, where the land is favourable for agriculture, and especially rice farming and fishing.

Cambodia is experienced in dealing with disasters due to a protracted war lasting over two decades, marked principally by the genocide committed by the Khmer Rouges.

Fortunately, as a result of the Paris Agreement of 23 October 1991 between the four Cambodian parties, the Supreme National Council was set up and was tasked with achieving national reunification and reconciliation. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was charged with monitoring compliance with the Agreement and organising elections in 1993. After the General Election in 1993, a constitutional assembly was convened to draw up the new Constitution which was subsequently adopted in 1993. The new Kingdom of Cambodia with a constitutional monarchy, democracy and pluralism was then established.

After many changes in regimes and civil wars, Kampuchea or Cambodia has been redirected back onto the right track as a nation with full recognition from the international community. This paper reviews the country's national security policy and concludes that defence and security policy in Cambodia is integrated in the White Paper and not in national security

* Chap Sotharith and Im Sithol, Executive Director and Research Fellow, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace.

policy. The NSP is formulated by the Ministry of Defence with only limited participation from the Parliament and civil society. The local capacity in formulating national security policy in Cambodia is still limited and hence the need for foreign assistance. The German and Australian governments provided assistance as concerns the technical aspects of formulating the White Paper and they also sponsored many forums related to security policy.

2. Historical background

Cambodians consider themselves to be Khmers i.e. descendants of the Angkor Empire that extended over much of Southeast Asia and reached its zenith between the 10th and 13th centuries.

After achieving full independence from the French in 1953, the Cambodian people enjoyed reconstruction and development. However, at the same time, Cambodia also faced many problems including revolutions, fraternal wars and political turmoil caused by differences in ideologies among political factions.

After the 18 March 1970 *coup d'état* and the victory of the Khmer Rouge on 17 April 1975, Cambodia found itself in a state of chaos which did not improve until 7 January 1979, when the Khmer Rouge was toppled by the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Armed Forces with support from the Vietnamese armed-forces.

From early 1979, the effect of the Cold War brought about a new security dimension to Cambodia: an increased effort to prevent the return of the genocidal regime, and a movement against the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. The Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Armed Forces, which later changed its name to the Cambodia People's Armed Forces (CPAF) of the Phnom Penh government, was re-built consistent with the socialist system and with the support of Vietnam, the former USSR, and other socialist countries. The Army evolved from battalions to divisions. Besides this simple reorganisation of the military structure, the Phnom Penh government also set up other command and coordinating systems such as military regions and provincial unified commands. Furthermore, to support its security plans across the country and to add to regular units during operations, the government established armed militia in communes and villages.

The USSR and Vietnam provided various materials and training. In addition, before its final withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989, the Vietnamese troops helped to strengthen the fighting spirit and combat techniques of the CPAF. The creation of the Coalition Government of

Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) on 22 June 1982, which was based on the Khmer Rouge Constitution, having the Khmer Rouge as the core force, and as a government recognised by the UN– extended armed conflict in Cambodia, and allowed the Khmer Rouge to exist until early 1999. As a result of the above-mentioned factors and the influence of the ideological context of the Cold War as well as the interference of some global powers, Cambodia became bogged down in a disastrous tragedy within an insecure environment. This remained the case for more than 20 years after 1970, and was only resolved through the free and democratic elections of 1993. Consequently, the new Cambodian armed forces were formed with a national reconciliation and social integration policy which allowed former warring factions including People’s Republic of Kampuchea, Khmer Rouge soldiers, KPLF, Molinaka and FUNCINPEC to be integrated into the national Armed Forces.¹

3. The Building of Royal Cambodian Arms Forces

Cambodian armed forces were formed or abolished according to regime changes. The present armed forces were formed and are based on the former Kampuchean People’s Revolutionary Armed Forces which toppled the Khmer Rouge on 7 January 1979. For the sake of Cambodian people and humanity in general, the Kampuchean (or Khmer) People’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (KPRAF) (the troops led by Heng Samrin, Chea Sim and Hun Sen) with support of the Vietnamese army, defeated Pol Pot from power on 7 January 1979. This date was regarded day that the Cambodian People were liberated from the genocidal regime. Some political analysis envisages that the presence of Vietnam in Cambodia at the time was in essence an invasion whereas many others assume that Vietnam supported the Cambodian troops in overthrowing the Pol Pot regime and that the purpose for this action was to liberate the Cambodian people from genocide.

After armed conflicts among warring parties lasted for over three decades, a legitimate national armed force, the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF), was re-established in 1993 following the creation of a democratically elected coalition Government. The formation of this government was a great achievement stemming from the Paris Peace Accords, UN peacekeeping operations in Cambodia (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia,

¹ The KPLF (Khmer People Liberation Front) is led by Mr. Son San, former Prime Minister during the 1960s; FUNCINPEC (is the French Acronym for United Front for Cambodian Independence, Neutrality, Peace and Cooperation).

UNTAC), and the noble leadership of His Majesty King Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihanouk in achieving national reconciliation and unity. A formula whereby it was decided that the armed forces of all parties were to be integrated into one national armed force was agreed. This new RCAF comprised 60 percent of the armed forces of the State of Cambodia (SOC), 30 percent of the Front Uni Nationale pour le Cambodge Independent, Neutre, Pacifique et Cooperatif (FUNCINPEC) force, and 10 percent the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) force. Although stubbornly boycotted by the Khmer Rouge hardliners, and a failure of UNTAC to disarm and demobilise 70 percent of each armed force, this establishment was reinforced by an effective political solution as well as the peace loving will of a large Cambodian circle.

Cambodia rushed to formulate a professional military institution. Despite strong efforts in the initial stages, the process was hindered by a number of crises. The expansion of the crisis of "ghost soldiers"² and political tendencies within the RCAF were some of the major obstructions that caused a number of well-intended measures to fail. The internal security situation of the nation also contributed to the force development process remaining at a stand still. As the outlawed Khmer Rouge rebels intensified their anti-government activities throughout the country, the RCAF was obliged to control this rebellion. The fact that the RCAF was constantly participating in operations meant that training, which is so important for developing military capability, was minimised and only limited maintenance of military equipment was undertaken.

The political and security environment has been the most stable in recent history, indicating that Cambodia may have finally achieved total peace. This environment has been achieved through a policy of national reconciliation and unity under the rule of His Majesty the King Norodom Sihanouk, and the 'win win' policy which was initiated by Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen's and benefited from the goodwill of the Cambodian people. This achievement has been reached through a change in government systems, the disappearance of violent political confrontation (that had previously resulted in the application of military force), and the total disintegration of the political and military organs of the Khmer Rouge.

² Ghost Soldiers have their names listed on the payrolls but do not in actual fact exist. This was created either for personal benefit as a result of mistakes occurring.

The RCAF now has to reactivate its reforms consistent with the Government's political guidelines. These guidelines direct the armed forces to demobilise to an acceptable size, achieve sound capability, and inculcate high ethical standards and dignity and the advancement towards international standardisation in the future. The RCAF now has to plan for its agenda to include security cooperation for the common benefit of the whole region. Instead of combating internal strife, the RCAF is now extending its relationships to the international arena. Just as importantly, the Government wishes to reduce expenditure on defence and security and channel the savings to other social development issues.

Having achieved security advantages, the commitment of the nation's top leadership, and assistance from friendly countries, the Ministry of National Defence and High Command Headquarters are now embarking on producing their strategic defence policy. The aim is to achieve the desired outcomes of the Royal Cambodian Government and the people of the nation.

Though Cambodia has achieved full legitimacy and reconciliation, the Khmer Rouge rebel groups still continue to isolate themselves and created rebellions in some parts of the countries. Cambodia still faces war and the Cambodian people still live in fear and insecurity. To resolve this problem, the Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen set up a Win-Win Policy by offering them a pardon and integrating them into the society. The Khmer Rouge Arm Forces and administration were integrated into the Royal Government and Royal Arms Forces. The remaining elements of the Khmer Rouge fully dismantled and surrendered in early 1999. However, the top leaders who are responsible for crime against humanity and genocide are awaiting trial at the Extraordinary Court of the Cambodian Courts, ECCC, which is a hybrid of the UN-Cambodia tribunal.

Cambodia has adopted a multi-party system of liberal democracy. The country's official name is the Kingdom of Cambodia. It is an independent, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned State. Right from the beginning the practice of democracy in Cambodia has run into numerous difficulties. However, the Royal Government has done all in its power to gradually to achieve genuine democracy by strengthening the legal system, enhancing observance of the rule of law and guaranteeing respect for individual rights.

4. Military Cooperation

The changing nature of the security environment demands that nations work closely together to promote stability and to tackle shared concerns. The key to Cambodia's efforts in this area is its membership of ASEAN and good relations with its neighbours.

ASEAN Cooperation

In a speech delivered by Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen at the opening of Cambodia's entry into ASEAN on 5 May 1999, four points concerning Cambodia's interests once it is admitted into ASEAN were mentioned. These points were:

- ASEAN has established security, peaceful and stable environments in the region, which are helping to boost economic growth. Peace and stability can be achieved through a framework of effective cooperation and consultation based on the principles of the 1967 Bangkok Declaration, especially the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Cambodia believes that this principle is an excellent rule with which relationships and disputes within the circle of ASEAN can be strengthened and resolved.
- ASEAN is a region for cooperation that helps foster community spirit among its members. The principle of "CONSENSUS" in decision-making is a strong foundation for the spirit and culture of cooperation in the community. Although some differences may arise, the spirit of cooperation in ASEAN will not allow the undermining of the group. While difficult to implement, ASEAN will try to maintain such an important principle.
- ASEAN's economic growth over the past two decades is well-known. Although suffering from recent financial crisis, Cambodia believes that this will fade away in the near future. ASEAN's position will not only become firm once again, but its improvement will be very considerable.
- ASEAN is a forum for diplomacy and a major international gateway. Over the past 30 years, ASEAN has established a mechanism for cooperation and consultation by maintaining a close relationship with its partners through ARF, APEC, ASEM and ASEAN Dialogue Partners. This mechanism has set up an effective network in foreign

cooperation and relationship between ASEAN and its partners in the important political and economic fields throughout the world.

Bilateral Initiatives

Cooperation within ASEAN is complemented by enhanced relations between Cambodia and its neighbours.

Thailand. Thailand shares sea and land borders with Cambodia in the north and west. Its population is six times greater than Cambodia's and its military power is much more modern than Cambodia's. It also has close military relations with the USA and conducts annual military exercises. Recently, and especially prior to the financial crisis, Thailand accelerated its military modernisation programme. Although some critics suggest that this modernisation led to a regional arms race, Cambodia believes that Thailand needed such a military modernisation programme because of the country's economic improvement and military relations with the USA. Though the two countries have experienced confrontations and poor relations in the past, Cambodia has never thought of Thailand as a military threat to its security. This opinion is based on the view that Cambodia is not in competition with Thailand, nor is there any evidence of a potential crisis that would cause Thailand to use military force against Cambodia. In 1997, the two countries sought to find a solution to their overlapping economic areas. Through subsequent negotiations, both countries have indicated the possibility of establishing a joint venture in order to make possible the use of overlapping economic areas in the Gulf of Thailand. However, a question mark hangs over the exploration for natural gas. Until there is an agreement about gas exploration, economic development in this area is set to remain out of reach, especially for Cambodia.

Land border disputes between the two countries have rarely arisen over the past two years with only minor incidents occurring. Because of wars and internal security concerns, Cambodia has not been able to maintain permanent control over its border. The continuing border defensive system established by Thailand in the 1980s, and other factors, resulted in the border line in some areas being unclear and needing to be inspected and resolved through negotiation and peaceful means. These on-going concerns about the borders led the two countries to agree to create a joint General Border Committee working from the local to the national level in 1996. This committee has worked tirelessly in an attempt to resolve border

issues. As a result of the committee's efforts, security on the border is now stable, and trade corridors between the two countries are being opened regularly and securely. In recent times, there have been numerous examples of effective cooperation between the two countries. Through effective cooperation Cambodia and Thailand solved the problem of Cambodian refugees located in Thailand. All of the Cambodian refugees were successfully repatriated to their native country.. In mid-1999, Thailand approached the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggesting the creation of a joint maritime patrol working along the sea border. The purpose of this patrol was to prevent the destruction of natural resources and clamp down on piracy. Cambodia welcomed the approach and hopes that it can respond positively in the future.

Vietnam. Like Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam underwent many confrontations and wars in the past. The two peoples still bear misconceptions and hatred towards each other. At present, however, the bilateral relations between the two countries are generally good apart from uncertainty over some border demarcations and overlapping maritime economic areas that need to be resolved through negotiations. A Joint- Border Committee, whose task is similar to that established between Cambodia and Thailand, has been created by the two countries. Recently, the National Commission on Border Issues of the two countries held talks in an attempt to seek a formula for solving existing border problems. The two sides agreed on an approach that should put an end to their border problems as soon as possible. The population of Vietnam is seven to eight times greater than that of Cambodia and the country maintains a large defence force. The defence force inventory includes large quantities of weapons and equipment. Although border disputes and illegal immigrants are of concern to Cambodia, there is no evidence to support the likelihood military tensions occurring between the two countries in the foreseeable future. Cambodia has drawn this conclusion because the Cold War is over, Vietnam is a member of ASEAN and the priority for Vietnam is to develop its own market economy and cross border trade.

Laos. Relations between Cambodia and Laos are generally good. Despite some uncertainties occurring in the northern border regions of Cambodia, these issues are currently being resolved in a peaceful manner. Based on the smaller size of Lao population, Cambodia never thinks of any aggressions by Laos as a threat to its national security. Lao PDR and Cambodia have rarely experienced confrontations or hostilities. Indeed, Cambodia considers the Lao PDR to be a good neighbour.

Engagement with Others

USA: Security cooperation with the major Asia-Pacific powers is similarly important to Cambodia's future. Cambodia's relationship with the **USA** remains a priority in the field of economic development. The Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status and Generalized System Preference (GSP) boosts Cambodia's major industrial exports. In addition, the USA assists Cambodia in human resource development and other forms of humanitarian assistance. In relation to national security, Cambodia will continue to extend her cooperation with the USA in both the military and social security fields (such as the fight against drug trafficking). In the past, the RCAF received assistance through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) scheme and the Title 10 Program of the USA. This assistance focused on human resources development through education, training, as well as attending seminars and conferences. Additionally, the RCAF received assistance under the Military-to-Military Contact Program, which helped to increase the RCAF's capability in the fields of engineering, mine clearance, health care, legislation and human rights. Following the political differences in July 1997, all of these remain suspended except for tropical medicine research. Through a sequence of diplomatic and military consultations, the Cambodian Ministry of National Defence has tried to have the above-mentioned US military assistance resumed. This assistance is considered to be most important for the development of the RCAF's ability to perform its tasks and to participate in national reconstruction. The Cambodian Ministry of National Defence trusts that because of Cambodia's positive attitude towards reform of the RCAF, the above mentioned military assistance will be resumed and further extended.

France: Due to colonial legacy, Cambodia has maintained traditional cooperation with France in many areas. France maintains an active military cooperation in the fields of training of cadet officers, training of the Royal Gendarmerie and the offer of training for the Ministry of the Interior. Currently, France and the European Union are focusing on the reconstruction of Cambodia. Cambodia believes that this rise in French and European Union assistance will be of benefit to the nation as a whole as well as to the Ministry of National Defence.

Russia: The Cambodian Ministry of National Defence signed a memorandum on bilateral military cooperation with **Russia** in 1995. But as this powerful country encountered domestic economic crises, cooperation so far has not produced an outcome. Russia's view is that

defence cooperation should take place in the near future. The Cambodian Ministry of National Defence will always welcome defence cooperation with Russia given that most of the military equipment and materials used by the Cambodian military were secured from the former Soviet Union.

China: Cambodia has long traditional relations with China. China's investment in the Kingdom of Cambodia has reached a high level in such fields as light industry and agriculture. Recently, trade relations have also increased. China is also attempting to build closer relations with Cambodia in the military field. This includes granting non-refundable assistance for training, shelters, health, engineering and transportation. In the area of human resources training, China has accepted RCAF personnel for training in the strategic, tactical, technical and medical fields. The Cambodian Ministry of National Defence will attempt to strengthen its relations with China, especially as concerns engineering and specialised training.

Australia: Cambodia continues to receive Australia's assistance programmes to many areas such as human resources, education, agriculture, health care, criminal justice, mine clearance, and DCP. Resuming defence assistance in mid-1999, Australia changed the objective of its DCP to focus on technical assistance in the development of strategic policy documents including the Defence White Paper, professional military education and training, English-language training and military medical assistance. Cambodia's Ministry of National Defence will continue its close relations with Australia in order to extend military cooperation in other fields such as military skills training, and other mutually agreed possibilities for Cambodian military servicemen, thereby allowing their participation in international cooperative activities in the future.

The United Nations: From 1991 onwards, the image of the United Nations remains at the forefront of the minds of the Cambodian people. With the clear-sighted leadership and facilitation of the King of the Kingdom of Cambodia and strong spirit of national reconciliation among Cambodian political parties, the UN helped to bring about peace and democracy to Cambodia by way of the 1993 general election. Having concluded its mandate, which at its peak included more than 20,000 personnel, the UN left in place its systems of assistance including the bureau of human rights and other functional agencies to help restore Cambodia's infrastructure, economy and legislative system. Cambodia intends to act as a

responsible international nation and will retain strong links with the UN. Cambodia sent a demining troop under the UN flag to Sudan for an international peace keeping and humanitarian assistance.

5. Assessing National Defence and Security Policy

According to Article 49 of the Cambodian Constitution, all Cambodian people have an obligation to contribute to the building and defense of the nation. The national defense strength fundamentally depends on people force, and the RCAF is the core in the implementation of this defense responsibility. The RCAF is born from the people and must implement the Royal Government's political guidelines of defending the nation and maintaining security, of engaging in nation building and to save people from disasters.

The 73 Points- Political Platform

The National Defense and Security Policy is rooted from the 73-points Political Platform, which is resulted from coalition government 2003-2008 of CPP and FUNCINPEC. There are 7 points related to the National Defence and Security Policy as follows:

- The Royal Government of Cambodia holds firmly to the purpose of strengthening peace, stability, security, and public order. On this basis, it will continue to reinforce the work of reforming all armed forces, which will include a clear count of the actual number of troops, to strengthen quality and ensure a consistent loyalty to the nation, to ensure the supremacy of the Constitution, and to ensure good discipline and morality and high professionalism, which will make these forces highly efficient in performing their duty to defend the country, ensure national security, and maintain public order in all circumstances. (Point 16)
- The Royal Government will continue to build and strengthen the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces as a unified national military that has just enough troops and sufficient capacity to protect independence, sovereignty, the integrity of the country's land, water, and air, all achievements of the nation, and its authorities and citizens. The military will become a strong force that actively participates in building the country and rescuing citizens in times of disaster. (Point 17).
- The Royal Government will pay more attention to building professionalism and to helping stabilize the livelihoods of demobilized soldiers who return to their homes as

normal citizens. At the same time, the Royal Government will continue to concentrate on raising the livelihood of actively serving soldiers and will continue to implement well the pension policy for disabled veterans, families of deceased soldiers, soldiers unable to work, and veterans. Priority will also be given to the construction of barracks with the aim of strengthening discipline and military strategies and training, educating, recruiting, and increasing human resources in order to build up permanent active military forces with high skills and professionalism. (Point 18).

- The Royal Government will continue to build up and strengthen the National Police to become a force equipped with high professionalism, modern technology, and a spirit of responsibility, which strictly abides by the laws, respects human rights, serves the citizens honestly, has the capacity to achieve good management, security, and public order, protecting the lives and property of the citizens, protecting the citizens' rights of expression through legal demonstrations and strikes, as well as protecting concord in society. (Point 19).
- The Royal Government will continue to participate actively with the international community in promoting cooperation to prevent and fight against all kinds of terrorism and subversive activities inside and outside the country. In this regard, the Royal Government holds firmly to the policy that absolutely prohibits illegal militants who wish to create instability in Cambodia or use Cambodian territory to act against neighboring countries. The Royal Government is determined to take all necessary action to increase effectiveness in preventing and suppressing all kinds of crime, especially drug abuse and trafficking, trafficking of women and children, kidnapping, armed robbery, sexual abuse, and other violations that create fear in society and cause morality to decline. (Point 20).
- The Royal Government is determined to enforce the Law on Citizenship and Law on Immigration in order to protect the interests of Khmer citizens. Legal immigrants will be respected and protected by law. All violations by foreigners and all problems regarding immigrants will be resolved thoroughly in accordance with the legal provisions in effect and with equality for citizens of every nationality. In this regard, the Royal Government will examine the possibility of establishing a Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship at an appropriate time. (Point 21).

- The Royal Government is firmly determined to improve the working conditions and living conditions of all the armed forces and to increase the participation of every citizen in maintaining peace, stability, security, and public order. (Point 22).

Defence White Papers

Cambodian National Defence policy is integrated in the Defence White Papers which were issued in 2000 and 2006. Managing these security challenges effectively will not be an easy task and it will take some years to achieve a comprehensive outcome for the Cambodian case. National resources are not unlimited and the right balance must be maintained between expenditure on defence and security, and the resources devoted to overall national development. The clear national objective is to achieve security and development together. To support this national goal, Cambodia's defence policy needs to pursue several key objectives during the coming years. These are to:

- maintain the capacity to ensure stability and social order within Cambodia in support of national interests;
- protect the nation's borders against transnational crimes such as the unauthorised movement of people, drugs, criminal activity, firearms and other goods that may be detrimental to national security;
- reshape the RCAF into a smaller, more professional military force able to defend Cambodia's national interests;
- contribute to national development through the provision of specialist skills and services (e.g. engineering, communications, transport and medical);
- develop over time an enhanced capacity to protect Cambodia's interests in surrounding maritime areas;
- engage in confidence-building measures with Cambodia's neighbours including meetings between senior officers and the development of security dialogues. The RCAF has an essential part to play in promoting national cohesion and development in support of other Government agencies. The specific initiatives set out subsequently in this White Paper provide a clear agenda for realising that potential.

On 8 November 2006, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence H.E. Tea Banh used the occasion of the 53rd Armed Forces Day to launch the Defence White Paper

2006 with the title: “*Defending the Kingdom of Cambodia 2006: Security, Development and International Cooperation*”.

The launch was the highlight of good and long-term cooperation between the Ministry of National Defence and foreign partners including the Friedrich Neumann Foundation (in Germany) and Australia in the area of Security Sector Reform. A trusting and close relationship was built which enabled both partners to easily understand the requirements from the civilian and military side which have to be addressed in a transparency paper like the Defence White Paper.

The White Paper covers the Defence Policy of the Kingdom of Cambodia and addresses topics such as “Review of National Defence Policy in the Defence White Paper 2000,” a threat analysis, strategy and strategic initiatives and -very important- mechanisms of governance including transparency and accountability for the implementation. With this range the paper is an important “compass” for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in the future as Prime Minister Hun Sen put it in his foreword. Based on this Defence White Paper the Friedrich Naumann Foundation will continue to support the implementation of reforms inside the RCAF in close cooperation with the respective decision-makers.³ The main forces include the legislative sector, but also educational issues and transparency. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation is looking forward to cooperate in these fields and also collaborate closely with partner organisations like the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) which have already contributed to the work of the foundation in the past.

The win-win strategy of the Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen led to Cambodia resulted in it taking more than 500 years for Cambodia to become unified. The Civil Service and the Armed Forces were only established as a unified and coherent branch of the State in 1999, with the amalgamation of Khmer Rouge Armed Forces and administrative services. In the past year, the security outlook of the Kingdom of Cambodia has changed due to the evolving regional and global security situation. The national reconciliation has ended the internal crisis that troubled and destroyed the nation for the decades. However, Cambodia still faces the need to address other major non-traditional issues that threaten the national security and development such as international terrorism and transnational crime.

³ The Ministry of National Defence formed a team in charge of drafting the White Paper while foreign partners provided technical assistance including training, lectures, study tours, publications, and the creation of forums for debate and discussion.

In its efforts to integrate into the international community, Cambodia has undertaken duties for the common interests of the nation in the region as well as in the world. Cambodia has fully cooperated in many areas including security. The Royal Government of Cambodia has shown its strong determination to combat terrorism. This is revealed through a number of major measures taken by the Royal Government of Cambodia not only for security and harmony of the people of Cambodia but also for the wellbeing and common interests of people in the region and the world. In the peaceful period, the Royal Government's policy in the defence sector focuses on security and development throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia. These objectives are set based on three main factors such as the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Royal Government's Political Agenda and assessment of threats to security of the Nation, demanding the full contribution and commitment by the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF).

- The defence force must absolutely be responsible for prevention and resistance against any external threat, must safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation and must also contribute to ensuring stability, security, safety and social order.
- To assist the Royal Government in the effort to restore and rebuild the nation's administrative, economic, and social infrastructure, especially in response to the Royal Government Policy on poverty reduction. The RCAF has the obligation to contribute to this duty, using capability and resources such as constructing and repairing roads, building and fixing irrigation systems, demining and so forth.
- When there are disasters such as floods, droughts, or epidemics, the RCAF has the obligation to cooperate with all relevant authorities to rescue people,
- Capability should be further developed to participate in international peace operations within the framework of requests formulated by the United Nations.

With differences across the countries of the region, Cambodia conducts military reform with demobilisation of the Armed Forces, decreasing the military spending and promoting quality and efficiency of the armed forces. Thus the national budget is transferred to socio-economic and infrastructure development. The setting of national priorities is a key factor in preparing strategic plans and for the effective implementation of all these plans. It also helps to simplify the performance of roles and duties of every soldier in the RCAF. In addition, constant adherence to the priorities can help to ensure transparency and effectiveness in

utilising limited resources; especially in terms of the national defence budget. Because the global security situation had changed considerably after September 2001, the Royal Government of Cambodia reviewed the defence policy in the Defence White Paper 2000 to respond to the security situation in a positive manner. In order to implement the Defence White Paper which the Defence Strategic Review (DSR) officially publicised in 2002, the policy of countering international terrorism was established and was included as one of the strategic objectives that are being implemented. At the same time, in order to successfully implement all the principles in the DWP 2000, the DSR 2002 provides some recommendations in which the national defence priorities are redefined by focusing on some primary aspects including those that are described below:

- Strengthen border protection capability to prevent transnational crime and infiltration of terrorists and to increase contributions to infrastructure and community development along the border,
- Expand the capability of the navy in the fields of technology and resources to make the patrol and protection of waters more effective,
- Set up force development mechanisms as quickly as possible to ensure the sustainability and quality of the defence force,
- Accelerate defence reform, especially the demobilisation of the armed forces, raising the living standards of the defence force, reorganising units and structuring training systems,
- Increase participation in national development, especially in the fields of engineering, relief operations, suppressing and eliminating circulation and illegal small arms, environmental protection (particularly preventing deforestation), replanting trees and other humanitarian activities,
- Gradually develop the capacity to participate in international and regional cooperation in the future, and especially in UN small-scale peace-keeping operations.

The change of national defence priorities does not disrupt the implementation process of any strategic politics. Instead, it provides new principles with more needs and enables the RCAF to overcome various obstacles.

Military Strategy

The DWP 2000 and DWP 2006 define a military strategy based on “flexible and controlled response.” The strategy requires the RCAF to respond in time and according to the reality of each situation to any circumstances that can be seen as threatening the nation’s security and interests. Nevertheless, the Cambodian approach must always be controlled with patience and thoroughness.⁴

The implementation of the strategy has seen positive results in the past and has ensured the sustainability of peace and better social stability. Therefore, Cambodia must continue to apply this strategy until it needs to be changed.

The three-layered national defence system of Strategic Level, Operational Level, and Tactical Level is the core of strengthening this military strategy. Based on past experience, the RCAF must pay more attention to a number of principles (these are mentioned in the next chapter).

Priorities for National Defence

The DWP 2000 and the DSR 2002 define in sequence a number of priorities in an attempt to promote the effectiveness and progress in the RCAF reform process. Although encountering some obstacles, defining these priorities has, in the past, produced positive results for the implementation of strategic principles. According to the evolution of the international security situation and the needs of the RCAF reform process in the next five years (2006-2010), we should review the priorities of national defence through the following recommendations:

In presiding at the closing ceremony of the RCAF 5-Year Work Achievement Review (2000-2004) and the Future 5-Year Objectives (2005-2009) at the Ministry of National Defence, Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen emphasised following priorities:⁵

- Further reform of the whole defence institution must be made. The reform must be focused on reorganising the military structures at all levels, improving bureaucratic and legal systems and, more importantly, reorganising command and control, logistic and financial

⁴ The DWP 2006 is prepared for the updated and new challenges in the new security situation in Cambodia, the region and the world.

systems.

- Border protection measures must be strengthened more effectively by ensuring the permanent presence of suitably equipped armed forces on all borders. The sustainability of this force must be maintained by a number of measures to be detailed in the next chapter.
- The utility and management of national defence resources must be checked and reorganised so that they can be used according to the intended objectives and transparently to prioritised plans.
- An appropriate resource must be put aside to restore the poor condition of military equipment or, if possible, to re-equip; especially naval vessels and the Army's military equipment that are vital for the protection of land borders and maritime areas.
- It is necessary to build military bases so that units will be properly controlled. Such construction must gradually be made and the bases must be built in a favourable location.
- More effort must be made to develop the defence force, including determining the required RCAF size, the implementation of the Compulsory Military Service (CMS) Law and a modern military legal system including the Pensions Law, the Defence Disciplinary Act etc., as well as human resource training and improving the standard of living for soldiers.
- Counter-terrorism capability must gradually be built up by attempting to absorb support from the international community.
- A number of capabilities must be strengthened so that they can be used in international peace operations.
- Medical service capabilities must also be strengthened so that the RCAF is able to contribute to international operations in the framework of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). These capabilities can also be used for local development work like providing basic medical services including emergency aid and educating the public to be aware of hygiene.

In order to gain success in the above-mentioned priorities the RCAF and other involving institutions demands proper planning, particularly in the next RCAF's Five-Year Plan (2006-2010), a strong commitment and determination by Cambodian leaders in the implementation of measures, the right use and management of the defence budget and regular control of the

⁵ The ceremony is part of the Conference or Session which reviews the achievements and future direction of the Royal Armed Forces. The recommendations were integrated in the DWP 2006.

process.

RCAF Roles

As already defined by DWP 2006, the RCAF has four primary roles: 1. defending the country and national interests, 2. ensuring security, safety and social order, 3. contributing to national construction, and 4. enhancing international cooperation. These important roles will continue to be attributed to the RCAF because they are consistent with the new objectives of the Kingdom of Cambodia's national defence: Security, Development and International Cooperation.

RCAF Strategic Initiatives

Border Defence

One of the important and vital national defence priorities defined in Chapter 3 of DWP 2006 is to safeguard the borders of the Kingdom of Cambodia. While border disputes, threats from transnational criminals and international terrorism remain a concern, Cambodia needs to strengthen its border protection capability to maintain peace and stability with neighbouring countries and to ensure the security of the entire nation. The capability of border protection forces must be strengthened, especially the sustainable presence of forces at all strategically important points, expertise in preventing any infiltration by international terrorism and transnational crime, mobility, communication, information collection, cooperation with other competent authorities, etc. Strengthening the presence of border protection forces does not mean confrontation; on the contrary, timely understanding and control of situations is an important element for finding a positive solution and confidence-building in the region. In addition, regular contact at the working level with partners will increase confidence and facilitate better relationships.⁶

The first issue to be dealt with concerns rotating border protection forces. Given that the structure of communication along the border areas is inadequate and, coupled with the natural conditions of the locality, border guards have difficulty in performing their duties and face

⁶ Border protection is the responsibility of the RCAF, while the police have a role in immigration and drug control. Some of the responsibility for dealing with security threats such as anti-terrorism, drug control is shared by the police and the RCAF.

exhaustion. Therefore, the regular rotation of forces is required, especially to ensure the presence (of forces) at all times. If required, forces of Sub-Operational Zones under each military region could be reinforced for this purpose. Geographic importance should be reviewed for the deployment of border protection units; for instance, the deployment of military forces will not be necessary in certain areas.

Consideration should be given to equipping border protection forces with a number of suitable materials and necessary equipment such as Parsifal gear for operations in mountainous regions, GPS, communication radios, the means for troop movement, rations, etc. Other technical skills concerning counter-terrorism and transnational crime are being offered on a regular basis by some friendly countries.

To make border protection effective and avoid disruptions, the performance of duties by all categories of border protection forces must be coordinated. For internal coordination, the unified command commission of provinces/municipalities could be a coordinating mechanism for cooperation between relevant authorities, and military regional border peacekeeping committees have a duty to coordinate with foreign partners on a regular basis. Border protection tasks must be clearly defined for the RCAF and the National Police.

Maintaining a constant presence along the border areas is necessary. The personnel assigned to this task require there to be roads for communication, with water and electricity available. RCAF Engineering is capable and has some resources to gradually build roads for communication means along the border. Small-scale hydroelectricity could be built in places where a source of water can be found. Apart from the settlement of local people following the establishment of infrastructure, demobilised soldiers wanting to make a new life for themselves can also settle there. In addition, the demobilised soldiers could become reserves should the country experience a state of emergency. It should also be noted that the creation of roads represents an important means of communication for border protection missions.

Based on the assessment of all threats to the security of the Kingdom of Cambodia and in the response to all of the strategic policies defined in both the DWP 2000, DSR 2002 and DWP 2006, a military strategy was prepared on the principle of “flexible and Control Response.” This strategy is an appropriate stance that Cambodia and especially the RCAF must adhere to given that the country has only just emerged from war and while the RCAF is undergoing

reform and capability development. In addition, this strategy contributes to the Royal Government's policy on national reconciliation, peacefulness with neighbouring nations, and good-will and effort to integrate Cambodia deeper into the international community.

Cambodia's external security relies primarily on the strengthening of its internal security, a guarantee of national unity, political stability and economic growth. Nevertheless, although the nation has also chosen a policy of dialogue, it doesn't mean that the presence of military force on the border is neglected. Although Cambodia is a small country with an effective military capability, it reserves the unconditional right to respond to any possible external aggression, specifying that and this response would be conducted with thorough control and patience.

Although military measures may be taken in such circumstances, other options may be applied to reach a peaceful solution.

Outcomes of implementing the strategic initiatives

Over the past five years (2001-2005), we have seen some progress in the implementation of strategic plans defined by the DWP and the RCAF five-year plan. However, some important strategic objectives have not been practicable and have made little progress. We have observed the following accomplishments and shortcomings.

The RCAF has continuously strengthened the security measures along the border, deploying border protection units at all strategic points to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The border protection forces are very important in ensuring that there is always a permanent surveillance of the border to prevent any encroachments and to cooperate with other competent institutions to counter transnational crime. These forward-deployed units can be immediately sent to incidents and also collect and provide intelligence for the purposes of operational planning. Under the Royal Government's policy on community development in remote and isolated rural areas, especially areas along the border, the border protection forces are the important security protection shield of the future.

However, the border protection forces are currently encountering a number of difficulties such as a complex terrain, a lack of roads for communication along the border, capability

deficiencies in some specialised skills, difficulties in supply and transport, and a lack of forces for rotation, etc.

The downsizing of combat units from divisional level to brigade level and the amalgamation of some regular brigades are a brilliant success. This measure helps address the crisis of insufficient forces, making command and control suitable to the competency of commanders and thus facilitating logistic and material supply system. In addition, the reorganisation clearly demonstrates the steady progress of the RCAF reforms.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has been largely successful in demobilising its military personnel, the number intended for demobilisation in phase Two; remain to be mobilised, the current figure presents a significant reduction compared to approximately 165,000 personnel who were serving before 1999. The Royal government plans to demobilise more military personnel in the not too distant future.

Cambodia's Fight against Terrorism

In accordance with the United Nations Security Council's Resolution 1368 (2001) of 12 September 2001 and 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001 relating to collective efforts to combat international terrorism, the Kingdom of Cambodia has been committed to working together with the international community to combat all acts of international terrorism. This commitment is in conformity with the DWP and other security policies in Cambodia.

On the national front against terrorism, in 1992 Cambodia adopted a law relating to the punishment for acts of terrorism. In the international arena, Cambodia ratified a number of international conventions and protocol related to terrorism suppression.

ICT skills training for the RCAF Special Forces.

- Further strengthen control measures for weapons and explosives, in particular, greater attention must be paid to the great danger of using chemical substances to make improvised explosives.
- Regular strengthening of the implementation of security measures for various potential targets which are vulnerable to any possible attacks such as international airports, tourist destinations and important resorts, international educational establishments, supermarkets, foreign embassies, etc.
- Strive to deny access by external terror networks, especially infiltration of terrorist

networks, ideological indoctrination, and the transfer of technologies by the internet, and financial transfers by terrorists.

- Enhance international cooperation in order to further seek technical capability, expertise and resources and information.

Fight against Drug Trafficking

In the past, Cambodia had little experience in dealing with drug trafficking, and drug abuse was relatively uncommon. Currently, international drug dealers use Cambodia as a transit point for their business. Illegal entry into Cambodia is often linked to an increase in illegal drug and human trafficking. These illegal practices are not only of concern to the Cambodian society, but may also have a detrimental effect on Cambodia's relations with the countries that are the final destinations for these illegal commodities. Besides illegal immigrants from neighbouring countries who reside in Cambodia, there are many other illegal immigrants whose countries do not border Cambodia. These illegal immigrants use Cambodia as a staging post prior to moving on to a third country. Illegal transmigration is threatening Cambodia's social security and controlling them is proving difficult. During their short stay in Cambodia they often use the country as their personal killing and kidnapping field. What is more, as they intend to live in a third country Cambodia has an international obligation to the security of that target country.

6. Roles of Parliament in National Defence Policy

Structure

The committee No.4 consists of 9 members (MPs) including a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

The members of the Committee are:⁷

1. H.E.Mr. Yim Sovann, (SRP) Chairman
2. H.E.Mr. Pall Samoeun, (CPP) Vice-Chairman
3. H.E.Mr. Som Chen, (CPP) Secretary
4. H.E.Mr. Hul Savoin, (CPP) member
5. H.E.Mr. Koy Douk, (CPP) member

⁷ Source: the National Assembly website: <http://www.national-assembly.org.kh/parliamentarian.htm#>

6. H.E.Mrs. Chem Savay,(CPP) member
7. H.E.Mr. Sim Soly, (FUNCINPEC) member
8. H.E.Mr. Sin Pin Sen, (FUNCINPEC) member
9. H.E.Mr. Chrea Sochenda, (SRP) member

The operation of the Committee is adopted by the internal rule of the National Assembly. There are only three supporting staff and all of the work is done from two small rooms in the old National Assembly building.

In 7 July 2007, the new National Assembly building was inaugurated and all the MPs and supporting staff moved to the new location which offered more space and better facilities.

The roles of the Committee on Internal Affairs, National Defence, Investigation, Clearance and Civil Service (Committee No. 4) are as follows:

- Monitoring the government affairs and law implementation and the policy related to the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of National Defence and Investigating and Clearing all levels of civil servants.
- Researching documents for the committee duties.
- Coordinating between the National Assembly and the Royal Government.
- Studying and conducting research on bills, private bills and the other affairs under the competence of the Committee.
- The general organisation of the Army, cooperation policy and the army assistance, general administration of territorial authorities, investigating, and clearing corruption.

The Committee has the following duties:

- Control, study the bills or private bills from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence. According to the article 97 of the Constitution 1993, the Committee can summon members of the Royal Government or the ministerial representative to clarify or to make amendments in all fields related to its responsibility.
- Receive proposals from people concerning the local, communal, district, provincial administration and national security in order to jointly study with the Ministry of the

Interior by summoning the Minister or his or her representative to explain and report to the permanent committee or the National Assembly when deemed necessary.

- Request and receive reports from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence about the investigation and clearance issues by summoning representatives or those responsible to look into the issue(s). This committee has no direct clearance.
- Make private bills in relation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence if there is a lack of information or, when necessary, to report to the National Assembly to decide on its agenda.
- Communicate with the other countries and work in the areas which the committee is responsible for and report to the permanent committee or the National Assembly to decide on the agenda.
- Regularly monitor the activities of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence concerning the implementation of the political platform of the Royal Government, the existing laws of the Kingdom of Cambodia and agreements with foreign countries on the work of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence.
- Investigate any irregularities (breaches of the law) that occur in the Kingdom of Cambodia and all cases relating the National Assembly. The issues come under the responsibility of the Committee on Interior Affairs, National Defence, Investigation, Clearance and Civil Service.
- Receive claims related to the competence or framework of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of National Defence. The committee monitors, considers, and makes written interventions for the ministries concerned.
- Visit the armed forces, control any irregularities and needs of the armed forces and make reports about their proposals to the National Assembly, the Royal Government and the related ministries.

Procedures and Practice of Committee No.4

The Committee holds its meeting in secret with no possibility for the public to attend them. The Committee conducts its meetings more or less regularly according to the demand and when draft laws are proposed for debate. All draft defence laws always first discussed in the Committee before deliberation in the Plenary Session of the Parliament. However, there are

very few laws concerning defence and security in Cambodia apart from the Law on Conscription and Budget Law. The specific knowledge on or experience with defence issues is a major criterion in order to select MPs to be members of the Committee.⁸

The Cambodian parliament has been supported in capacity-building the oversight of the activities of the government. For example, the second committee of the Assembly and Senate sponsored by UNDP, CCSSP in cooperation with EIC on 3 November 2005 at the Intercontinental Hotel organised a conference on the Financial, Fiscal and Administration of a Successful Corruption Control in the Public Administration. The Conference aimed to strengthen good governance particularly in the income collection, organisation of state budget and to find the way how to adopt the state expenditure in a proper way. The panellists who are members of the Senate and Parliament suggested the participation of the legislative power in the state budget preparation especially the partaking of the National Assembly with the Government in the preparation of the annual finance bill that is considered to be the vital law for state functioning. It is regarded as a new movement in strengthening the capability of the Parliament because in the past, this bill was prepared by the government and only submitted to the National Assembly for discussion and adoption. Hence, in the past, the Parliament lacked sufficient time to study the bill in detail. During the preparation phase, the Parliament and in particular the nine assembly committees can raise proposals related to their areas of responsibility. If considered to be a priority, an increase in expenditure may be proposed whereas should this not be necessary, the expenditure could be reduced.

Concerning the expenditure of national defence, generally donor countries as well as international financial institutions offer to reduce expenditure on defence and increase the expenses on social and economic development. But the Committee No. 4, which is responsible for these affairs, can suggest increasing or decreasing the security budget drafted in the annual finance bill or can propose the private bill if needed. However, due to confidentiality and national security reasons, the Committee never knows the details of defence budgets except the whole payrolls and lump sum budget by sectors such as administration. Details on procurement and intelligent spending are still the classified

⁸ The author interviewed H.E.Mr. Monh Sophan in January 2006 when he was the Chairman of Committee 4. The committee was later chaired by H.E. Mr. Yim Sovan from the Opposition Sam Rainsy Party after his party lifted the boycott to join the debate session.

national secrecy. If the explanation put forward by the committee is found to be adequate, the entire assembly can approve the committee's proposal.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Defence and security policy in Cambodia is integrated in the White Paper and not in national security policy. It has been formulated by the Ministry of Defence with only limited participation from the Parliament and civil society. The local capacity in formulating national security policy in Cambodia is still restricted and hence the need for foreign assistance. The German and Australian governments have provided technical assistance in formulating the White Paper and sponsoring many forums relating to security policy.

The security policy should be subject to the same standards of efficiency, equity and accountability as any other [public] service. Consequently, apart from the security apparatus, the security sector includes the elected and duly appointed civil authorities, such as the executive government, the relevant ministries (so-called 'power ministries,' particularly the ministries of defence and the interior), the parliament and its specialised committees, as well as the judicial authorities and special oversight bodies such as human rights commissions and ombudsmen. The role of these bodies is to ensure that the security apparatus is managed in an efficient and effective way and also that it is held accountable to current standards of democracy and human rights.

The following recommendations should be taken into account for legislative power especially by the Committee (No.4) of Interior Affairs, National Defence, Investigation, Clearance and Civil Service for strengthening the effective and efficient control and investigation on national security and national defence:

- The committee on Interior Affairs, National Defence, Investigation, Clearance and Civil Service should have its own budget package for working in defence and security studies.
- The committee should employ experts who have expertise on military affairs and national security and in particular expertise on international relations, foreign policies, defence studies and preparing strategies related to the fields.

- The committee could be allowed to participate in the main processes of the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Interior such as military and national security strategy preparation, military procurement, weapons purchasing, mission of security force in peace keeping in framework of the United Nations etc.,. (However, the participation should only concern monitoring and transparency matters and not any interference in the executive's affairs).

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