



K. Rouge Number 2 Was 'CEO of Cambodia': Expert July 18, 2012

The deputy leader of the Khmer Rouge was "extremely active" in the brutal 1970s regime, a renowned historian told a UN-backed court Wednesday, undermining attempts by the accused to downplay his role.

"Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea, 86, has repeatedly told judges at his atrocities trial that he was mainly in charge of educating fellow cadres and was less powerful than members of a military committee chaired by Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot.

But giving evidence at his trial Cambodia expert David Chandler, a retired history professor from Australia's Monash University, painted a strikingly different picture of Nuon Chea's role in the 1975-1979 regime.

The scholar said the relationship between "Brother Number One" and "Brother Number Two" was the capitalist equivalent of "calling Pol Pot the president and Nuon Chea the CEO of Cambodia".

"It's certainly in his interest to diminish the range of his activities... but I think the evidence is overwhelming that he was extremely active in many, many spheres of the regime... including military affairs," Chandler said.

Led by Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the hardline communist Khmer Rouge emptied cities, abolished money and religion and wiped out up to two million people through starvation, overwork or execution in a bid to create an agrarian utopia.

Nuon Chea and his co-defendants -- ex-foreign minister Ieng Sary and former head of state Khieu Samphan -- deny charges of war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

Chandler, the author of several books on Cambodia including a biography of Pol Pot, will continue giving evidence on Thursday.