



Remarks With Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong

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Secretary of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HOR: (In Cambodian.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you very much Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to spend this time with you discussing these matters of great importance to both of our countries. This is my sixth trip to Asia as Secretary of State but my first to Cambodia, and it represents the commitment that President Obama and I have made to restoring America to a high level of engagement in the Asia-Pacific region and in particular to work with the government and the peoples of countries such as Cambodia.

Our two countries recently marked the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic ties, so even as we celebrate old milestones we are firmly fixed on the future to broaden and deepen our partnership. And we had very productive talks this afternoon and I look forward to meeting with the prime minister shortly, and I greatly appreciated the honor of meeting with His Majesty the King earlier today. And then finally, I will meet with leaders of the political opposition.

My discussions have left me convinced that we can work even more closely together to help meet the challenges facing Cambodia and all of Southeast Asia. With help from the United States Government, Cambodia is doing more than ever before to improve its health systems. And in – particularly, we applaud the Government of Cambodia for its commitment to prevent the spread of HIV and deliver life-saving treatment to people living with AIDS.

Our Peace Corps volunteers are now teaching English. And from what I saw earlier in my town hall with these very impressive young people, they are certainly connected to the global economy, and English is one of the keys for doing that.

Through our whole-of-government Feed the Future Initiative, we will be helping the people of Cambodia mount a comprehensive fight against hunger by raising agricultural productivity and making nutritious foods more widely available.

I especially appreciate the commitment of the Cambodian Government to the Lower Mekong Initiative. The deputy prime minister and foreign minister have been deeply involved in this work. It's a promising new mechanism for the United States, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand to address the challenges in education, health, and the environment that affects all of the people of the Lower Mekong Basin, most especially to address the impact of climate change.

We had our third ministerial in Hanoi two days ago and we look forward to following up on the excellent ideas that Cambodia presented. I also want to acknowledge, as His Excellency did, that Cambodia is making progress in countering corruption. With strong implementation, the new anticorruption law can be a powerful tool to prevent, detect, and punish corruption. This will reassure foreign investors. But more importantly, it will serve the needs of the Cambodian people. It is inspiring to see this country creating such a promising future after a generation of conflict and suffering.

I had a very emotional tour of the Tuol Sleng Museum and I looked at the faces of the young Cambodians, both those who were killed at that terrible place of suffering and those who did the killing. And what is most important is that Cambodians themselves are educating the young generation about a painful chapter in this country's past and honoring the memory of those who died by working hard to bring accountability and justice while seeking to stabilize and reconcile as well.

Today Cambodia is not only preserving its own peace, it is sending Cambodians overseas to serve as UN peacekeepers in Chad and the Central African Republic and assisting in demining missions in Lebanon and Sudan. So Cambodia is actually using the lessons of its own painful past to help save lives and help other countries who are grappling with conflict and war.

We recently contributed \$5 million to Cambodia's Khmer Rouge Tribunal. And as I told His Excellency, we are committed to helping Cambodia hold accountable those senior Khmer Rouge leaders most responsible for atrocities. I salute the tribunal's ongoing efforts to bring justice to the victims that promote the rule of law. And I will do what I can to work with the Cambodian Government, with the United Nations, and the international community to ensure that we have the resources needed to proceed with Case 002.

I am very optimistic about Cambodia's future. The last years have been transformative for this country. And I hope that the United States can be a good partner and a friend as the Government and people of Cambodia make the necessary steps to improve your democratic institutions, to improve the economy, to provide the kind of opportunities that the young people I met with earlier today deserve to have. This visit, Your Excellency, has left me encouraged that our partnership can deepen and grow to serve both our peoples in the years to come. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Thanks, Excellency. Due to the time constraint, the floor is open for only four questions – two questions from Cambodian press and the other two questions from American press. Please raise your hands to get the floor.

QUESTION: (In Cambodian.)

SECRETARY CLINTON: I discussed the debt issue with the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and if any of you were at the town hall earlier, you know that two of the young questioners, they also asked me about the debt issue. We have agreed that the United States will send a team of experts as soon as possible to resume discussions over ways to settle this debt. The discussions, as you know, ended in 2006. We very much want to see this matter resolved, and as His Excellency said, in accordance with Paris Club principles and in service of Cambodia's development.

MODERATOR: Second question, please. Gentleman, have the floor. (Inaudible) mike. (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: Hello. This is a question for both Madam Secretary and the foreign minister. Madam Secretary, you said that the U.S., of course, (inaudible) tribunal. Are you looking to see the Cambodian Government do what the foreign minister said that they did not want to do, which is to expand the scope of the trials? Is there enough support? Is the government giving the tribunal enough support? And then secondly on human rights, last week and again today, the foreign minister seemed to indicate that there were already too many groups here promoting human rights. Last week, there was a suggestion that the UN human rights office here should be closed down. I'm wondering what you think about that idea.

And Mr. Minister, I'm wondering if that is indeed what the government's position is, is that there are already enough human rights groups here that you don't need the UN office. Thank you.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Matt, as to your first question, we are in full agreement with the Government of Cambodia that Case 002 should be brought to trial as soon as possible. That is our first and most pressing piece of business. There is not yet the funding available to do that trial. The estimate is somewhere between \$46 and \$50 million that will be needed to conduct that trial, funding that would go to the United Nations for the international aspects of the trial and funding that would go to the Cambodian Government. So my highest priority right now is to make sure that we have that money in place so that trial can begin. It is scheduled to begin in the first half of 2011; the sooner the better is my view.

Now there is, as I think you heard His Excellency, concern on the part of the Cambodian Government about going beyond that. That is something that we in the international community should consult closely with the Cambodian Government on. But the first piece of business is getting 002 to trial, and I want to see that happen as soon as possible. So I will be personally reaching out to help raise the money that is needed to get that done.

Secondly, I did not hear the deputy prime minister and the foreign minister say that there were too many NGOs. I think he was making the point, as he did with me in my private meeting with him that there are more than a thousand NGOs in Cambodia, more than a hundred that are committed to human rights. I personally believe that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is a valuable resource. It provides technical assistance to the government. It also works with these NGOs that are in Cambodia – both Cambodian NGOs and international NGOs on a variety of concerns, including human rights, trafficking in persons, and the rule of law. So the High Commissioner's Office is active in ways that we think are very complementary to what the Cambodian Government is committed to doing, and we think the work is important and we would like to see it continue.

MODERATOR: Second question, please. Gentleman, have the floor.

QUESTION: Thanks for question. I'm (inaudible) from *Cambodia Daily Newspaper*. Madam Secretary (inaudible). I would like to hear about the U.S. position on the Cambodian Government, which has announced (inaudible) want to close the UN Human Rights Office in Cambodia and (inaudible) be chief of the human rights office in government. And also the second question, if I may –

MODERATOR: Only one question.

QUESTION: Sorry. Please.

SECRETARY CLINTON: Well, I believe that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights is a valuable resource and I would hope that it would continue its work, which is important. It works with NGOs; it works with the Government of Cambodia. I think the Government of Cambodia is making significant progress on human rights, and I would like to see that progress continue. I would like to see the cooperation between the United Nations and the Cambodian Government be such that it assists in promoting human rights, ending the trafficking in persons and upholding the rule of law. So from our perspective, we would like to see the work by the UN here on human rights continue.

MODERATOR: Thank you. The last question goes to American –

SECRETARY CLINTON: I think His Excellency might wish to say something.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HOR: (In Cambodian.)

MODERATOR: The last question, please, to American press. Lady, you have the floor.

QUESTION: Hi, Madam Secretary. I wanted to pick up with a question about what you said earlier, that you'd be willing to send a team of experts to explore new approaches. Can you give us a little detail about what those approaches might entail?

And Mr. Foreign Minister, the Secretary earlier today was saying that Cambodia should pursue alliances beyond – broad alliances beyond those with China.

MODERATOR: Speak louder, please.

QUESTION: The Secretary was suggesting earlier today that Cambodia should pursue alliances broadly, regionally, beyond just China. Could you give us your response to that, please?

SECRETARY CLINTON: We are very, very interested in pursuing a settlement on the debt that was incurred by Cambodia during the Lon Nol regime. There have been no discussions since 2006 at all, and we think it's time for our experts to meet and explore a broad range of potential areas for settling of this debt.

At this point, I don't have any preconceived notion of how that will happen because there are a number of different approaches that can be pursued. And we have learned a lot about how to do this during the last decade, so I think the first thing we should start with is a very open discussion between our respective expert teams about options that would be available. But it is my intention to move this up the ladder of priorities, because I think it is something that needs to be given immediate attention. It is a concern that it has not been even addressed, and I would like to see us make it a priority. And His Excellency has agreed, so we will begin to work on that together.

MODERATOR: Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, the joint press availability is now concluded. Thank you very much for your participation.

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