

NATIONAL

Ieng Sary's Chinese Passport Shows Beijing's Support of KR

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THE CAMBODIA DAILY

Ieng Sary, the recently deceased foreign minister of the Khmer Rouge, was given a Chinese passport by Beijing after the fall of the Pol Pot regime in 1979, a move by the Chinese government to curtail the Vietnamese-installed People's Republic of Kampuchea, historians said yesterday.

Issued on January 27, 1979, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the passport portrays Ieng Sary under the alias Su Hao, who was born in Beijing on January 1, 1930.

"This passport is valid for travel to all countries in the world within a period of five years from its date of issue," the passport states in three languages.

According to Philip Short's "Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare," Pol Pot decided to send Ieng Sary to Beijing after Vietnamese forces toppled the Khmer Rouge in January 7, 1979, in order to formulate a plan of resistance with the Chinese.

With the help of a Thai military helicopter, the former foreign minister was taken from Poipet to Bangkok where he boarded a commercial flight to Hong Kong on January 11. He met with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping the next morning to discuss how to expel the Vietnamese from Cambodia.

"He was supplied with the Chinese passport to make his traveling of the world easier...to spread the cause of the Khmer Rouge,"



Documentation Center of Cambodia

A passport issued by China in 1979 to Ieng Sary under the alias Su Hao

historian Henri Locard said yesterday. "The Chinese had by then decided that they would support the Khmer Rouge in order to force the Vietnamese to leave Cambodia."

Mr. Locard added that the alias, Su Hao, is especially curious given that there was a Chinese ambassador to Phnom Penh named Sun Hao, and it was likely that the Chinese had just provided Ieng Sary with a variation of the name.

Julio Jeldres, official biographer for late King Father Norodom Sihanouk, said Ieng Sary did not have a passport when he escaped to Thailand after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979.

"The Chinese provided him with a 'Service Passport,' which is one rank down from a 'Diplomatic Passport' but allows the bearer to move unquestioned in and out of the countries that recognized Chinese passports at the time," Mr. Jeldres said in an email, explaining that between 1980 and 1990, several European

countries and Australia had ceased to recognize Democratic Kampuchea, making that passport impossible to travel on.

From the time of the passport's issuance in late January 1979, Ieng Sary traveled extensively, said Mr. Jeldres. This included trips to Sri Lanka for a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement, to New York for U.N. meetings, and to Thailand to discuss border problems between

the two countries that stemmed from massacres committed by the Khmer Rouge in Thailand.

From the time Ieng Sary defected to the government in 1996 until 2001, he held a Cambodian diplomatic passport that was issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Ministry spokesman Koy Kuong said yesterday that he was unaware of the reasons as to why such a passport, which is reserved for government officials, was given to the war crimes suspect.

After Ieng Sary's death on March 14 from natural causes, information has emerged regarding his assets, including a reported Hong Kong bank account that once contained up to \$20 million, which was largely amassed from the Chinese government for use by the Khmer Rouge, as well as from selling huge amounts of timber and gemstones extracted from the Thai-Cambodian border areas he commanded.

Prosecutors Confirm Ieng Sary Died of Natural Causes

The Office of the Co-Prosecutors at the Khmer Rouge tribunal yesterday released its findings following a standard investigation into the death of war crimes defendant Ieng Sary last month at the age of 87, declaring that he died of natural causes. While Ieng Sary suffered from a litany of ailments in recent years, including lumbago and dizziness, "It has been conclusively determined that Ieng Sary died of natural causes at 8:45 a.m. on 14 March 2013 from irreversible cardiogenic shock due to a long-standing ischaemic cardiopathy that pre-dated his arrest and detention at the [court]," the prosecutors said in a statement. The findings were consistent with conclusions drawn by his treating doctors, and "no suspicious circumstances" surrounded his death. In accordance with his family's wishes, no autopsy was performed, nor toxicology tests conducted, and Ieng Sary's body was released to his family for burial at 1:32 p.m. on the day he died, the prosecutors said. A full report containing details about the defendant's medical history will not be made public, they added. (Lauren Crothers)

Rocket...

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International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague starting April 15 that could decide ownership of a 4.6-square-km plot of borderland next to Preah Vihear Temple over which Thailand and Cambodia have engaged in several deadly clashes since 2008.

Speaking with reporters at the site of the well-publicized exercise, Defense Minister Tea Banh insisted that the Cambodian military was simply giving its new military hardware a normal test run, and that the show of strength had nothing to do with the ICJ meeting.

"It is new for us so we need to practice with them and prepare for when we need to use them,"

he said.

Underscoring the government's official line that the firing of hundreds of rockets had nothing to do with the hearing at The Hague, Prime Minister Hun Sen also insisted yesterday that there was no muscle flexing in the affair.

"There's no showing our muscle or anything," Mr. Hun Sen said at the Annual Meeting of the Cambodian Mine Action Center at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh.

"The Khmer don't have any muscle to show, we just have this [live fire exercise]. Some are new and some are old [rockets]. We shoot them to see their capacity," Mr. Hun Sen said.

"There's no country in the world that doesn't have weapons. But we're not threatening to go to war with anyone. It's just to protect ourselves and to train the

soldiers so they know how to use them. If they don't know how to shoot and it comes time to shoot, they won't know where to shoot," he continued.

General Banh declined to say when Cambodia bought the new truck-mounted BM-21 rocket launchers, who they were purchased from or how much the new military hardware cost the government. But he conceded that the weapons systems did not come cheap.

"We spent money to buy the new military equipment that is high quality, of course, and they were expensive," he said without giving details.

When RCAF fired 200 BM-21 rockets in February 2010, Mr. Hun Sen said that the exercise cost \$500,000. That was three years ago, with 400 fewer rockets,

meaning that yesterday's military exercise cost at least \$1.5 million in ammunition alone.

The 2013 national budget saw a nearly 16 percent year-on-year increase to the Defense Ministry, whose budget for this year will be \$245 million, a figure that amounts to some 13.32 percent of the country's entire expenditure for this year.

During the drafting of the budget last year, Gen. Banh said he needed the extra money to be better prepared along the Thai-Cambodian border.

The budget was passed without the approval of the opposition SRP who said it was wrong that defense should take the lion's share of the 3.1 billion annual budget and that the education and health sectors should be prioritized instead.