



**Defence Teams Press Scholar  
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It was historian David Chandler who appeared to be on trial yesterday at the Khmer Rouge tribunal as defence teams spent the day putting Chandler's previous writings and testimony under the microscope.

Even co-accused Brother No 2 Nuon Chea had two questions of his own for the one-time US diplomat who has spent the better part of his academic career researching Cambodia and the Democratic Kampuchea period.

"From the very beginning until now," Nuon Chea began, pausing to don thick reading glasses, "between the people of Cambodia and Vietnam, what has been the course of this dispute?"

"If one is looking for a phrase, I would say, a lot of history and mutual distrust," Chandler answered, thanking Nuon Chea – "a person whom I do respect" – for his question.

Nuon Chea's lawyers then attempted – unsuccessfully – to question Chandler on links between Khmer Rouge cadre and the current ruling Cambodian People's Party.

American lawyer Andrew Ianuzzi, whom trial chamber judges have found guilty of courtroom misconduct in Case 002 proceedings, attempted to pose several questions to Chandler.

However, the expert witness was not allowed by chamber president Nil Nonn to answer any after repeated objections by the prosecution and civil party lawyers

Talking about the structure of the Khmer Rouge as a "pure party" – a government by and for a ruling party, Ianuzzi asked whether such an arrangement would "describe the state of political affairs in Cambodia today, more or less?"

The question was objected to and Ianuzzi moved on, later attempting to ask Chandler for his comment on a quote concerning an unnamed Cambodian politician.

“[He] is an extremely competent politician, the most competent politician in Cambodia ... He’s also a thug. He’s got blood on his hands. He does things to people who get in his way that are not at all pleasant,” Ianuzzi quoted – but was cut off by an objection questioning the relevance of the question.

The quote read by Ianuzzi echoed a quote from Chandler in reference to Prime Minister Hun Sen in the documentary *The Trap of Saving Cambodia*.

“Thuggish behaviour is particularly relevant. Thuggish behaviour [would include] interference with the judiciary, and this is a major issue that needs to be addressed in this court,” Ianuzzi shot back.

Nuon Chea’s lawyers pushed the interference issue with Chandler, pressing him on an earlier comment he had made that Khmer Rouge-era documents had been “culled” under the supervision of the Vietnamese and the Vietnamese-backed government that overthrew the Khmer Rouge in 1979.

“There are collections of documents known to be in Vietnam that were taken from here and not available to anybody. That is the source of my use of the word ‘cull’,” Chandler explained, adding that documents could have been destroyed or stored elsewhere as well.

Dutch lawyer Jasper Pauw attempted to press Chandler on links between that Vietnamese-backed government and the current CPP government.

“Do you agree with the statement that a trial of the Khmer Rouge leaders might be embarrassing to the current regime of Cambodia,” Pauw asked.

Chandler, however, was instructed not to answer the question by the panel of judges.

Later, Pauw said he wanted to point out “for the record” that Chandler’s answer, not captured by his microphone, which was turned off, was “might be, yes”.

Tension increased as the lawyer for former Khmer Rouge Minister of Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary, Michael Karnavas, began his questioning of Chandler.

Frustrated gesticulations and terse smiles were symptomatic of the passive-aggressive exchange between the two.

In challenging Chandler’s biography of Pol Pot for its “poetic” writing, Karnavas asked the scholar: “Is this because you are trying to make history a popular read, as opposed to writing history?”

“I don’t like the implication that history is some unreadable pile of junk,” Chandler shot

back, defending his intimate research into Pol Pot's life.

Karnavas offered something of an apology afterward. "I hope I have not given the impression that history should be dull or a bunch of junk," he said.