

**Samphan's 'Integrity' Illuminated At Khmer Rouge Court**

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Cambodian history scholar David Chandler yesterday echoed what has become a serial sentiment during testimony at the Khmer Rouge tribunal.

“[Khieu Samphan] was well known as a man of extreme and rather bewildering integrity,” Chandler testified in response to questions by the Case 002 co-accused’s lawyers.

Chandler described Khieu Samphan as a shockingly incorruptible parliamentarian in the 1960s under then-King Norodom Sihanouk’s rule, a factor that inspired fear and anxiety in the monarch.

“He was just the kind of person Sihanouk didn’t know how to deal with,” Chandler said. “He [Sihanouk] had no experience with people that he couldn’t dominate, manipulate, purchase, rent.”

Amongst Sihanouk’s “crony circle”, Khieu Samphan’s honesty was “very rare indeed”, Chandler added.

Sihanouk was becoming anxious about Khieu Samphan, who, besides a possessing strong moral code, was known for his leftist ideals, Chandler said.

And “when Sihanouk got nervous, he got aggressive”, prompting Khieu Samphan to leave Phnom Penh in the ’60s and seek refuge in the countryside, where he later became a member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Kampuchea.

Chandler – who served as a US diplomat in the embassy in Phnom Penh during that era – conceded that Khieu Samphan’s leftist ideals had put him onto the radar for the Americans as well.

Frustration mounted between Chandler and Khieu Samphan's Cambodian lawyer Kong Sam Onn in the afternoon during a confused exchange marred by translation difficulties and oral slip-ups.

Tension between Chandler and co-accused Ieng Sary's lawyer Michael Karnavas similarly dominated the morning.

The two swayed between stern tones and limping apologies as Karnavas quizzed Chandler on his research methodology and the articulateness – or inarticulateness – of Chandler's testimony over the four previous hearing days.

This included a laboured dissection of such Chandler turns of phrase as "I think", "I feel" and "might be", among others.

In an illustrative exchange touching on the gaps left by missing documentation from the Democratic Kampuchea period, Karnavas quizzed the historian on statements he had made as to how many documents may have existed during the regime.

"Your conclusion is a guess it is not?" Karnavas demanded.

"I am not going to say 'my wobbly conviction is'... I corrected myself as I was talking. I could see 'guess' was too loose, so I changed it to 'conclusion'," Chandler shot back.

Chandler concludes his testimony today.