

The Daily Newspaper of Record Since 1993  
*The* CAMBODIA DAILY

**Letter to The Cambodia Daily**  
**Elizabeth Becker**  
**August 27, 2011**

I have had numerous requests for my response to an anonymous article published in the Cambodian government's official press –Agence Kampuchea Press or AKP on August 24, 2011. The article was intended as a critique of my opinion piece that ran in the International Herald Tribune on August 17, 2011.

The problem was: Who do I send it to? Normally if an official takes issue with an article, he or she writes a signed letter to the news organization that ran the piece. Instead, the Cambodian government chose to publish a mean-spirited attack written by an anonymous writer who cannot be held accountable for the articles' many inaccuracies and distortions. Here is my answer:

The Paris Peace Accords made peace possible in large part by depriving the Cambodian factions of their foreign sponsors. Critical was China dropping the Khmer Rouge. Without the Chinese, Pol Pot and his army were incapable of returning to power. Indeed the only major battles in Phnom Penh after the peace accords were between the forces of Prince Ranariddh and those loyal to Hun Sen. (These were the two 'co-prime ministers' at the head of the government following the elections held under the auspices of the U.N.)

The governments that negotiated the Paris Accords would be surprised to learn that all of their hard work was for naught and that the peace talks, which included all of the Cambodian parties, had nothing to do with how the Cambodian Constitution was shaped. At a minimum the Cambodian government news agency's anonymous article reflects a singular refusal to acknowledge the role of the Paris Accords in bringing peace to Cambodia, a strange position on the eve of the accords' 20th anniversary.

As far as the proposed NGO law is concerned, I believe the Cambodian and foreign NGOs are right in asking for serious modifications. Otherwise, the governments and the United Nations that spent years and hundreds of millions of dollars to bring peace and democracy to Cambodia will be unlikely to vote in favor of Cambodia being given a seat at the U.N. Security Council.