

Cambodia to spend US\$100 Million for Military Development near Thai Border

PREAH VIHEAR, Cambodia, February 6, 2010 (PQRU)- **Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of Cambodia, said on Saturday that the Royal Government will invest \$100 million for the development of military and social sector in Preah Vihear province, the move aimed at strengthening its defense system and the living standard of the locals.

“This amount of money (\$100 million) is not going to spend only in the field of defense operation, but also to invest in the social development in this area,” the Prime Minister said. Samdech Techo Hun Sen assured that his ruling party officials are always there to support military operations to protect the nation from being invaded by any foreigners including Thailand. “Roads, bridges and military bases as well as military’s houses have been built and upgraded across the province, where the Temple of Preah Vihear located. These facilities enable our soldiers to strengthen their capacities so as to prevent any invasion of the tricky neighbor,” Samdech Techo said.

At the same time, Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Sok An, who is also Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, said he was pleased with the progress has been made by the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) over the construction of military facilities located on the 820 hectares of land.

“But we cannot achieve everything overnight. At the same time we must take tough preventive measure on any foreign aggression. We never let any foreign country take Cambodian land even a single inch,” Dr. Sok An said.

Samdech Prime Minister Hun recalled then the King Norodom Sihanouk, who won the case against Thailand over Cambodia’s claimed the Temple of Preah Vihear in which the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1962 ruled that the Temple of Preah Vihear is situated in territory under the sovereignty of Cambodia.

Samdech Techo told the crowd of more than 4,000 soldiers; who attended the ceremony, which displayed more than 20 tanks, heavy weapons including missiles; “I assured our retired King Norodom Sihanouk that we are doing our best to protect the territory from being aggressively invaded by any foreign countries. Indeed, we are trying to avoid any militarily confrontation. But this issue is entirely depends on Bangkok government.”

“We do not want bloodshed with Thailand, but we will only if it’s necessary,” he was speaking at the inauguration of a US\$3.5 million newly built military headquarter, which was funded by Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Sok An,” he added.

He also slammed the Thais Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva; who was quoted in Thais media this week, saying that Cambodia’s leaders should negotiate first with Thailand, before Hun Sen himself is going to visit the Temple of Preah Vihear; “where is the 4.6 square km of disputed area. We, Cambodians, have never accepted any Thais unilateral map.”

Samdech Techo continued, “Cambodian troops will not pull out from the area. I do not need any negotiation with you (Thailand). That is our land and we do not need you to come and welcome us on our land. I can go any time I want to, and I can go anywhere if I want to. It is up to me, not you (Thailand’s leader).”

Relations between the two nations have turned sour since Thailand was not pleased with the UNESCO listed the Temple in July, 2008 and sent their troops into Cambodian territory around the Temple of Preah Vihear.

The Prime Minister said if the situation returned to as normal as that before 15 July 2008, he would reassess the re-opening of the entrance gate for tourism service, which would provide benefits to Thai people and hotels from other side; otherwise, Bangkok government should be responsible for any failure, not the Cambodian side. Since 15 July 2008, both sides clashed their troops in several occasions which caused several deaths.

(Press and Quick Reaction Unit)