

October 2 1975. Sinahouk talked about Cambodia. He WAS GUARDED, STATING REPEATEDLY THAT THE SITUATION WAS BASICALLY SATISFACTORY, BUT BETWEEN GENERALIZATIONS HE PROVIDED SOME DETAILS OF HIS OBSERVATIONS DURING HIS 9-29 SEPTEMBER VISIT TO PHNOM PENH.

2. SIHANOUK SAID THAT THE NEW SYSTEM IN CAMBODIA APPEARED TO BE A COLLEGIAL ONE, WITH NO ONE POLITICAL FIGURE CLEARLY DOMINANT OVER THE REST. SIHANOUK HAD FORMED HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM THE DEFERENCE WITH WHICH THEY TREATED OR SPOKE OF ONE ANOTHER, AND, ON THIS BASIS, HE BELIEVED THAT THE MOST INFLUENTIAL WERE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTERS K H I E U SAMPHAN, I E N G SARY AND S O N SEN, AND LIBERATION ARMED FORCES DEPUTY COMMANDER S A L O T H SAR, (FIELD COMMENT: ALL THE ABOVE HAVE BEEN TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE KHMER COMMUNIST PARTY). SIHANOUK NOTED THAT MINISTER OF INTERIOR H O U YOUN AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION H U NIM APPEARED TO HAVE DECLINED IN IMPORTANCE; HOU YOUN IN PARTICULAR WAS SAID TO BE SERIOUSLY ILL AND TO HAVE BEEN WEAKENED

POLITICALLY BY THE HOSTILITY OF IEN SARY. SIHANOUK FURTHER SAID THAT A NUMBER OF SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT WERE IN POOR HEALTH. IN ADDITION TO HOU YOUN, SALOTH SAR AND HIS WIFE, MADAME K H I E U PONNARY, A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION, HAD BEEN WEAKENED BY REPEATED ILLNESSES. SIHANOUK HAD NO CLEAR IMPRESSION OF THE ACTUAL ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, AS SENIOR OFFICIALS CALLED ON HIM AT THE ROYAL PALACE RATHER THAN HAVING HIM VISIT THEIR OFFICES. HE HAD NOT EVEN SEEN SALOTH SAR, WHO EXCUSED HIMSELF FROM VISITING SIHANOUK ON GROUNDS OF A HEAVY WORKLOAD AND ILL HEALTH.

3. DURING HIS VISIT, SIHANOUK WAS GIVEN LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR DIRECT OBSERVATION OF CONDITIONS IN CAMBODIA. HIS ONLY MAJOR TRIPS AWAY FROM THE ROYAL PALACE WERE TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT ON HIS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE, A VISIT TO A FACTORY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PHNOM PENH, AND A SHORT TRIP TO THE RICELANDS CLOSE TO PHNOM PENH. FROM WHAT HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE, PHNOM PENH WAS STILL NEARLY DESERTED, THE CROWD WHICH

E T

GREETED HIM UPON HIS ARRIVAL NUMBERED ONLY IN THE HUNDREDS, AND THE STREETS OF THE CITY WERE VIRTUALLY EMPTY, THOSE SIMPLE CITIZENS WITH WHOM HE CAME IN CONTACT--STREET CLEANERS AROUND THE ROYAL PALACE, FACTORY WORKERS, AND PEASANTS IN THE RICELANDS--WEPT UPON SEEING HIM, WHETHER FROM SENTIMENT OR UNHAPPINESS HE COULD NOT SAY.

4. DESPITE EARLIER PROMISES BY KHIEU SAMPHAN THAT HE WOULD BE WELCOMED TO PHNOM PENH BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, SIHANOUK IN FACT SAW ONLY RGNU MINISTER OF JUSTICE NORODOM P H U R I S S A R A AND SISOWATH D O U S S A D Y. HE HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT THAT HE WOULD SEE HIS SON NORODM N A R A I D I P O, SISOWATH M O N I R E T H AND NORODOM K A N T O L, BUT KHIEU SAMPHAN IN EACH CASE ASSURED HIM THAT THEY WERE WELL BUT WERE NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE ENGAGED IN THE WORK OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION OUTSIDE PHNOM PENH, PRIME MINISTER P E N N N O U T H' LIKEWISE SAW NONE OF HIS SONS, BUT WAS ASSURED THAT THEY WERE IN GOOD HEALTH AND WORKING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

5. SIHANOUK ASKED KHIEU SAMPHAN PARTICULARLY ABOUT

HIS COUSIN, FORMER BRIGADIER GENERAL NORODOM
CHANTARAINGSEY. SAMPHAN REPLIED THAT
CHENTARAINGSEY HAD USED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SIHANOUK TO
DECEIVE THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE, BUT WOULD DO SO NO MORE.
ACCORDING TO SAMPHAN, CHANTARAINGSEY HAD LED A RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT AGAINST THE NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT HAD BEEN CAPTURED
IN JULY 1975 AND EXECUTED FOR HIS CRIMES. SIHANOUK ADDED
THAT A GREAT MANY OFFICIALS THE FORMER REGIME HAD DIED,
BUT HE MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY ONLY FORMER HIGH POLITICAL
COUNCILMAN SISOWATH WIRIKMATAK AND FORMER PRIME
MINISTER LONG BORET.

6. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH A RGNU DIPLOMAT,
SIHANOUK SAID THAT DURING HIS VISIT HE HAD NOTED INDICATIONS
OF CONTINUING MILITARY ACTIVITY CLOSE TO PHNOM PENH. ON
SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING THE NIGHT HE HAD HEARD MORTAR AND
SMALL ARMS FIRE. SIHANOUK ALSO SAID THAT THERE HAD
REPORTEDLY BEEN A SUDDEN UPSURGE IN RESISTANCE ACTIVITY
DURING LATE JUNE AND EARLY JULY ON THE PART OF FORMER
SOLDIERS OF THE REPUBLICAN ARMY WHO HAD HIDDEN THEIR
WEAPONS. SIHANOUK KNEW NO FURTHER DETAILS, THOUGH KHIEU

SAMPHAN CLAIMED THAT THIS ACTIVITY WAS THE RESULT OF AN AMERICAN PLOT AND THAT IT HAD ALREADY BEEN STAMPED OUT.

7. WITH RESPECT TO HIS FUTURE PLANS, SIHANOUK SAID THAT HE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO CALL A CONFERENCE OF RGNU MISSION CHIEFS IN PHNOM PENH DURING DECEMBER, BUT NEITHER THE DATE NOR THE CONFERENCE ITSELF WAS YET CERTAIN. SIHANOUK EXPECTED TO CONTINUE HIS TRAVELS ABROAD UNTIL LATE NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER, FOLLOWING HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HE WOULD RETURN TO PEKING, THEN VISIT NORTH KOREA, THEN TRAVEL TO A NUMBER OF FRIENDLY COUNTRIES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND AFRICA.

8. IN AN EARLY OCTOBER LETTER FROM PEKING, NORODOM
S I H A M O N I, ONE OF SIHANOUK'S SONS WHO ACCOMPANIED
HIM TO PHNOM PENH, WAS MORE EXPLICIT THAN SIHANOUK HIMSELF
CONCERNING THE WEAKNESS OF SIHANOUK'S POSITION. SIHAMONI
SAID THAT SIHANOUK HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ISOLATED DURING HIS
VISIT TO PHNOM PENH AND HAD NEITHER PARTICIPATED IN
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NOR HAD ANY SIGNIFICANT CONTACT WITH
THE POPULATION. IN SIHAMONI'S WORDS, THE COMMUNISTS HAD
CREATED A DESERT AROUND SIHANOUK.