

IV. 15 Dec 71

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SIHANOUK INTERVIEW WITH AL-AKHBAR ON U.S. INTERFERENCE

Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 18 Nov 71 p 4 M

[Peking Letter by Muhannad Mustafa Ghunaym]

[Text] Prince Sihanouk, the legitimate chief of state of Cambodia, the man who has never known despair in his life, which has been full of exciting events, told me in a rather bitter and pained voice: They bought my relatives and the commanders of my army, headed by my cousin Sirik Matak and the army commander Lon Nol--the two men who led the coup against me. You will probably be surprised and wonder about the secret which prompted these men to sell themselves to the Americans. But I must admit that our state is poor, our army was also poorly equipped. Moreover, the Americans were giving generous bribes to the army officers--private apartments, Mercedes cars, and various other luxuries. Thus many army officers and politicians went after U.S. funds and aid.

Sihanouk spoke enthusiastically revealing his love and pride for his wounded homeland, which is suffering because of the ambitions of imperialism, regardless of what has happened to it. He said: We fought a long, hard struggle for the liberation of our country. First we got rid of French occupation. The conspiracies against us did not stop even after we gained our independence. Your late leader Jamal 'Abe an-Nasir and President Anwar as-Sadat after him supported our long struggle. Your people have fought and continue to fight the imperialist conspiracies. You have had long experience not only with the old colonialism but also with neoimperialism and colonialism.

They did not want us to live as an independent and neutral state. They were not pleased when we chose the path of nonalignment, complete independence, and self-reliance in the development of our country. They feared that our country would set an example which would jeopardize their position in Southeast Asia. They wanted us to follow the example of these states which completely depended on them even though they are bigger and richer than Cambodia, such as Thailand, the Philippines, and South Vietnam, which have agreed to be colonies for U.S. neo-imperialism. But we refused to turn our country into such a colony. They offered us enormous sums and aid but we preferred to rely on ourselves--hence the beginning of our conflict with the United States.

The struggling Prince, who manages his people's struggle from a huge mansion in Peking, remained silent for a short while, and then continued to tell the story of his dispute with the leader of neo-imperialism. He said: I met the former U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1958. His ideas astonished and infuriated me. He said: "Your neutrality is immoral. If you do not stand with us this means you support the communists." Dulles condemned our recognition of the PRC. He said this was an anti-U.S. act. But all the revolutionary states appreciated our stand and became our friends.

The first time I met 'Abd an-Nasir was in 1955 in Bandung. I also met the PRC premier Chou En-lai. Our relations have become stronger ever since. This angered Dulles, who attacked my friendship with Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, and 'Abd an-Nasir. But I told him: we want to be friends with everyone--you and the others, Egypt, China, and so on.

We are a small state in need of the friendship of all the states without distinction or consideration of their social and political systems. But the United States turned down our friendship because it only accepts the friendship of the agents who accept its aid and domination.

Sihanouk said proudly: Cambodia was the only state which openly rejected U.S. aid and demanded it be stopped. Until 1963 they were giving us about 30 million dollars. Yet now they are giving the Lon Nol government over 300 million dollars. I told them: you are giving us this small aid to humiliate us and prevent us from obtaining arms from China and the Soviet Union. But we wanted to defend our borders against the raids of the Thai and Saigon forces. We had only old weapons given to us by the United States. We did not have planes or warships. China and the Soviet Union offered us planes and ships, but the United States warned, "If you obtain aid from us then you must not obtain aid from any other quarter." This conflicted with our independence.

The prince, who still looks young in his forties, smiled and said: In 1965 our country was attacked by the Saigon government forces. When we tried to defend ourselves, the Americans told us it was impermissible to use the arms they gave us against their allies. The U.S. ambassador said: "We give you our arms to fight only the communists." I told him, "But the communists are not attacking us. We are only attacked by your allies, particularly Thailand and Saigon, which are members of SEATO."

Sihanouk spoke about the numerous conspiracies against his country and said: They hatched many conspiracies against me and my country from 1958 to 1965, and their planes strafed Cambodian border villages several times killing many innocent people. I told them then that if they continued their aggression against us I would not accept their aid, because it meant great humiliation for Cambodia. For the 30 million dollars we only got old arms. Furthermore, our villagers who were being attacked were asking why I should accept dollars from the United States while it attacks them. They would come to consider me a traitor. Therefore I decided to end all cooperation with the United States, and I demanded that they stop all their aid to us. But they continued to strafe the villages, claiming that communist revolutionaries were hiding in them. Therefore in 1965 I severed relations with the United States.

I asked the Prince, who looked rather sad while reviewing his relations with the United States, what Washington did after the severance of relations. He said: They mobilized a secret army of hostile Cambodian tribes living in Thailand and South Vietnam. In the past these two states were part of the ancient Cambodian empire, and there are two million Cambodians living in these two states. U.S. intelligence financed this army, equipped it with arms and experts, and called it "Free Cambodians." But this conspiracy did not succeed thanks to the unity of the Cambodian people at that time. Strangely enough, Gen Lon Nol, who was defense minister and army commander then, cooperated with me in my struggle against this conspiracy. But the situation changed in 1966 when the Americans doubled the funds they were spending to buy my men. The dollars began to pour into the hands of U.S. agents.

Sihanouk recalls something he missed mentioning in his story and said: Before stopping the U.S. aid, I noticed that it was only given to capitalists, businessmen, and owners of private factories. They were the main beneficiaries of this aid.
[paragraph continues]

Therefore, I decided in 1963 to nationalize a large part of industry, the banks, and the import-export trade. This socialist measure angered the politicians and the beneficiaries of the U.S. aid and capitalism. U.S. intelligence exploited the opportunity by lavishing funds on the opponents of my socialist policy.

When I held new parliamentary elections in 1966, the result was that the pro-U.S. rightwing elements won the majority of seats thanks to U.S. funds. Of the 90 members of parliament, only three were leftists. Yet the majority of the previous parliament were leftists and neutrals. I depended on only three members in carrying out my socialist policy. The rest of the parliament was supporting the United States against me. What made things worse, many of the army officers were against obtaining arms from China or the Soviet Union. They demanded that we deal only with the United States for their own personal interests.

The Prince shook his head sorrowfully and said: The ministers, army officers, and members of parliament had betrayed me and worked against me after being spoiled by the funds and bribes of U.S. intelligence. I felt more isolated from then on. In December 1966 we held a national congress in Phnom Penh. Delegations came from all the cities and districts to discuss important political issues. In that congress, I reviewed the disputes between me, as chief of state, and the politicians. Lon Nol was already premier, thanks to the support of the rightwing members. He had decided with the support of the parliament to abrogate the nationalization policy and accept U.S. aid. But the majority of the members of congress backed my policy and condemned the policy of Lon Nol and his parliament. However, the congress did not have official authority. Under the constitution all the authority was in the hands of the parliament.

I asked Prince Sihanouk: You were accused in the West of having been a dictator. What is your opinion? He said scornfully: How could I have been a dictator when I was unable to work with the rightwing parliament, which supported the reactionary government's policy against me? Lon Nol and U.S. intelligence exploited my trip to Paris in January 1970 for treatment and my stay there until March, to work freely against me. I had already restored relations with the United States in 1969 under parliamentary pressure.

The coup against me took place on 18 March 1970 while I was abroad. The first thing the coup leaders did was to expel the staff of the DRV embassy and the South Vietnamese Revolutionary Government. They claimed that I was a traitor because I supported the Vietnamese revolutionaries and provided them arms, provisions, and medicine.

"I do not deny that I have always been against colonialism and imperialism and supported the strugglers against them, just as Jamal 'abd an-Nasir supported the Palestinian revolutionaries, Algeria, and every part of the Arab World. Like Israel, the Saigon government is a U.S. stooge. Despite its neutrality, Cambodia could not withhold aid to those struggling to liberate their country, particularly the Vietnamese and Lao strugglers.

We are all the sons of Indochina, we fought together against French colonialism. I decided to back these revolutionaries, whom I consider the same as the Palestinian revolutionaries. I allowed them to use some unpopulated areas on the border and provided them food, medicine, and hospitals. The Cambodian people supported me on this. I also allowed Sihanoukville harbor, which I consider a small Alexandria, to be used to supply the Viet Cong fighters with arms.

Sihanouk shook his head disdainfully and said: They claimed that I was paid for this by the Vietnamese revolutionaries, although they are very poor. It is not sensible to say that I was paid for my aid, because I did not need the money. I was not poor. I come from a wealthy family which ruled for several centuries and included dozens of kings. I am a revolutionary "pharaoh." I supported the revolutionaries because I realized that they would be the future rulers of Vietnam. After victory, they would be grateful to Cambodia and its people. I was fully confident of this. The United States cannot possibly triumph in Vietnam. If they hatched this coup against me believing that this would help them win the war, then I am sure that they will not win. Their position deteriorated after the coup. All the peoples of Indochina united against them. The Indochinese struggling forces of Cambodia, Laos, South Vietnam, and the DRV formed a single front against U.S. aggression.

I asked the prince why he is using Peking and not Cambodia as base for leading the struggle. He proudly said: Some foreigners have asked me this question. The fact is my people refuse to let me risk my life, because I am the symbol of the people. I must be alive so their struggle will be legitimate. The Ho Chi Minh Trail is the only road to Cambodia, and this trail is being bombed daily by U.S. aircraft. Perhaps you recall that General de Gaulle stayed in London throughout World War II leading the struggle of Free France. Then he went to Algeria. He did not return to France until the allied landing in Normandy, and he did not enter Paris until it was liberated.

Some Western states claim that there are two Cambodian governments, one inside and the other outside the country. They claim that we are a government in exile. But the fact is half of the ministers of my government are inside Cambodia itself. We actually control two thirds of the country. We have a government, army, and territory which we are ruling. We are a real state and a single front. We have seized all the Cambodian countryside. We cannot seize the cities because U.S. planes are used against us. We have destroyed all the planes of the Lon Nol coup government but Nixon's planes have replaced them. We do not have planes, tanks, or heavy artillery. All we have is small arms and medium rockets.

In short, the situation now is such that we cannot defeat the United States, but neither can the United States defeat us. We will triumph even if our struggle continues for years. The day will come when the United States will withdraw and its agents will collapse. We are ready to continue the struggle 10 or 20 years until we throw U.S. troops into the sea.

I asked the Prince's opinion on the talks which U.S. President Nixon will hold in Peking. He said: We requested the Chinese Government to ask Nixon to withdraw his air and ground forces from all Indochina so its people can settle their own problems. The United States is the only state violating the 1954 Geneva conventions, while the other major powers are honoring them. We believe that the solution of the problem is easy if the U.S. troops withdraw from those countries.

We believe that Nixon will be compelled to pull out his troops under pressure from the U.S. people and congress and the world public. The PRC will not abandon us but will continue the policy of backing the Indochinese peoples and will ask Nixon to withdraw all of his troops. There is no half-solution in this problem.

Only the U.S. Air Force prevents us from seizing the capital, Phnom Penh, where there are numerous historical treasures which we do not want destroyed. We are strengthening our positions around the capital but we refuse to destroy it. Neither can the Lon Nol army attack the old city of Angkor, which is in our hands.

I asked the Prince: Why do you stay only in Peking? He said: Because I cannot continue my struggle from any other place. Here I can directly contact my supporters in Cambodia by radio. Very often I go to the border of my country to meet my supporters inside the country. I want to emphasize that it is the Cambodian people who are fighting the Americans and their agents not the Vietnamese revolutionaries or Hanoi soldiers. Otherwise, how do we explain the daring attacks which we are carrying out inside Phnom Penh on the Americans, and the blowing up of planes and fuel depots in the capital?

The Prince concluded his interview by saying that he intends to make a tour of friendly states early in the new year and that he is looking forward to visiting Egypt.

RGNUC FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN CONDEMNS ROK STATE OF EMERGENCY

Peking NCNA International Service in English 1205 GMT 14 Dec 71 B

[Text] Peking, December 14 (HSINHUA)--The announcement of the so-called "state of national emergency" by the Pak Chong-hui puppet clique of South Korea is denounced by the spokesman of the foreign ministry of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia in a statement issued on December 11. The spokesman declares that the announcement is, in fact, war provocation and a threat of war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The RGNUC statement says that the Pak Chong-hui puppet clique, following out the orders of its master, U.S. imperialism, on December 6 proclaimed a so-called "state of national emergency" throughout the whole of South Korea. The fictitious pretext for this announcement was "a sudden change in the international situation" and "the threat of southward aggression from the north". This clique has in fact taken a series of arbitrary measures in an attempt on the one hand to place its puppet army in a state of war and on the other to further enclose "in a military and fascist crucible" the profound vigorous aspirations of the South Korean people for democracy and the reunification of the fatherland.

The statement declares: "These acts have dangerously aggravated the situation in Korea and that part of the world. A new war could break out there and menace peace in Asia and throughout the world at any moment. U.S. imperialism and its lackeys must be held responsible for all this."

It notes that "this new provocation of war against the Korean people has evoked strong indignation from the people and governments of the world who cherish peace and justice."

It stresses: "The Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia and the Cambodian people resolutely support the just stand of the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Korean people as expounded in the December 7 statement.

"They firmly believe that these manoeuvres of provocation of a new war and the barbarous repression of the masses of the people in South Korea will be widely and energetically combated, denounced and condemned by the Korean people and the peace- and justice-cherishing people and governments of the world and that the righteous aspirations of the Korean people for freedom, democracy and the peaceful reunification of the fatherland will certainly be realized."

The statement concludes: "The Cambodian people will, as always, fight side by side with the heroic fraternal Korean people to shatter all the manoeuvres of U.S. imperialism, reviving Japanese militarism and the Pak Chong-hui puppet clique."

HUOT SAMBATH CONDEMNS U.S.-SAIGON INVASION OF CAMBODIA

CAMBODIAN INFORMATION AGENCY [Clandestine] in French to Southeast Asia and the Far East 1200 GMT 12 Dec 71 D

[Text] Kampuchea 12 December AKI--At a press conference held in Belgrade on 8 December, Mr Huot Sambath, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to Yugoslavia, strongly condemned U.S. imperialism and its Saigon valets for launching a new invasion of Cambodia.

He stressed that this new invasion proved once again that the Nixon administration does not intend to peacefully solve the Indochinese problem. The Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia appeals to all peace- and justice-loving peoples, as well as world public opinion, to oppose these new acts of aggression of U.S. imperialism and demands that the U.S. imperialists and Saigon puppet troops withdraw immediately from Cambodian territory.

Mr Huot Sambath affirmed that the Cambodian people will never accept any compromise in their war for national liberation. Together with the peoples of Vietnam and Laos, the Cambodian people will boot that U.S. imperialists out of Indochina and annihilate the Phnom Penh traitors.