

Human rights mafia commits fraud against Cambodia

by Michael O. and Gail G. Billington

World War II never ended for former colonial Indochina, rather it mutated into the Cold War-era anti-Communist wars that lasted, officially, up until 1990 for Cambodia. Unofficially, as anyone familiar with the tortured history of the country knows, that war continues to this day, only the principal warriors waging battle against the government are now so-called “human rights” advocates, who wish to keep this long war going by other means, including gross distortion of the country’s history and willful disregard for evidence that contradicts their own self-serving version of events, especially those of 1997-98.

In preparation for national parliamentary elections on July 26, the overwhelming evidence is that more than 98% of eligible voters registered to vote. On election day, 90% of those registered, voted—compared to 49.2% of eligible U.S. voters who participated in the 1996 Presidential elections. Despite both of these remarkable rates of voter participation, both branches of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), would wish the Clinton administration to declare these elections unacceptable, because the candidate of *their choice*, the one *they* deemed *most democratic*, will not control the new government, that is, principally, former Finance Minister Sam Rainsy, and, secondarily, Prince Norodom Ranariddh. The NED is joined in this prospective election theft by British-based Amnesty International and George Soros’s Human Rights Watch-Asia.

In so doing, this human rights mafia opposes UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s message to the nation of Cambodia on Aug. 7, congratulating them on the overwhelming voter turnout, conducted in a climate that “was primarily peaceful and orderly,” and expressing the hope that “all political parties will resolve outstanding problems through dialogue and due process,” with the objective “of a government that fully reflects the wish of the Cambodian people for reconciliation, pluralism, and development.” Similarly, the 500-person Joint International Observers Group, representing 30 countries, principally the European Union, Japan, and Cambodia’s Southeast Asian neighbors, gave the election process a “thumbs-up” shortly after the voting occurred. Even former U.S. Rep. Steven Solarz, one of the co-chairman of the 25-

member U.S. observer team along with former Bush ambassador James Lilley, called the success of the election “a miracle on the Mekong,” and warned Rainsy that he would have to produce “credible evidence” to back up any assertion of vote fraud.

Sudden obstructive amnesia

When the initial vote count revealed that Second Prime Minister Hun Sen’s Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) would win 64 of 122 parliamentary seats, with Prince Ranariddh’s Funcinpec party coming in with 43 seats, and the Sam Rainsy Party trailing with 15, intense obstructionism erupted, in defiance of Hun Sen’s immediate offer to form a coalition of the three parties for purposes of national reconciliation. Instead, with Rainsy in the lead, his party and Funcinpec immediately challenged the results, and boycotted the coalition, claiming more than 300 instances of fraud, intimidation of constituents, and declaring a sudden case of amnesia on pre-election discussions of the formula for allocating parliamentary seats. At the heart of the seat allocation issue, is Rainsy’s calculation that a “correction” would give Funcinpec and the Sam Rainsy Party a controlling majority in the Parliament, but not the two-thirds majority required to keep Hun Sen out of the government.

The human rights mafia is now exploiting this delay, as evidenced by statements from NDI and IRI election observers, who are suddenly plagued by doubts about the universal enthusiasm on election day, including IRI’s Asia division chief, Paul Grove. In a commentary in the Aug. 9 *Washington Post*, NDI observer and Johns Hopkins Prof. Steven Morris goes so far as to demand that the United States buck the JIOG and UN Secretary General’s view of the elections, demanding that “Cambodia can have a civilized government responsive both to its people’s needs and to the security interests of its neighbors only if the Hun Sen regime is removed from power. Earlier this year, the United States could have stood firmly behind the beleaguered opposition parties and supported a boycott of the election until conditions for a genuinely free contest existed. It could now declare the election results unsatisfactory.” It is time, Morris continued, for the United States to “take the moral lead.”

On Aug. 6, no doubt based on testimony of IRI and NDI

election observers, six U.S. Congressmen wrote to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright demanding that the United States “not recognize, politically or economically, any Cambodian regime until all charges of fraud are investigated with credible U.S. and international observation,” and until all documents on the seat-allocation plan be turned over—they don’t say to whom—for examination, and until “internationally supervised re-voting and ballot counting” are conducted “where there are credible charges of fraud and vote tampering.” The six signers are Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), Gerald Solomon (R-N.Y.), Dan Burton (R-Ind.), Tom Campbell (R-Calif.), and Chris Smith (R-N.J.).

There is nothing surprising about this stance by the human rights mafia. A month before the July 26 elections, NDI and IRI spokesmen told a seminar sponsored by Amnesty International and Representative Rohrabacher’s office that a truly “free and fair election” in Cambodia would deliver a majority to the urbane former Paris banker, Sam Rainsy—a distinctly Hollywood view of what the 80% of the Cambodian population, who live in the severely underdeveloped countryside, would wish. As one Asia hand observer at the seminar quipped, Hun Sen has the overwhelming support of the Cambodian people; Rainsy shines in the glare of “international consensus.” Just imagine, for a moment, Rainsy campaigning across the countryside in his \$40-60,000 Land Rover, and his habit of lapsing into English during campaign events, so that foreign journalists, and observers, can follow.

No one elected the NED

Fortunately for Cambodia and the United States, no Cambodian ever elected the IRI, NDI, or the rest of the human rights mafia to represent them, just as no American citizen ever elected the NED to make U.S. foreign policy. Some members of Congress apparently don’t understand that.

Why are the “human rights” organizations so hell-bent to undermine the electoral process in Cambodia? To understand this apparent enigma, recognize that the political attack on Cambodian sovereignty is a *single piece* with the economic subversion of the rest of Southeast Asia over the past year. That subversion, triggered by George Soros and fellow speculators, and made worse by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), has collapsed their economies, standards of living, and, in some cases, social stability. In addition to the pure greed of the speculators, the driving motivation of the Wall Street- and London-centered financial oligarchy is to reassert colonial-style control over the wealth of Asia, in anticipation of the collapse of their bubble economy. To achieve “recolonization,” the political alliance that was emerging to unite former Indochina with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and between ASEAN and China, was and remains a primary target for subversion.

Cambodia has long served as a trigger for regional subversion, situated at the hub of Southeast Asia. In the past 30 years

alone, Cambodia has been subjected to: in 1970, intensive bombing followed by invasion by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces, targeting the Ho Chi Minh trail; in 1973, U.S. raids dropped more bombs over wide areas of the country than on all of Europe in World War II; 1975-79, four years of hell under the genocidal Khmer Rouge; 1979-91, twelve years of civil war, following the Vietnam-backed removal of the Khmer Rouge and the accession of the party now headed by Hun Sen. During those 12 years, the United Nations, and the United States, *recognized the deposed Khmer Rouge as the official representatives of Cambodia at the UN!* What the human rights mafia is doing today is to uphold this wretchedly opportunistic and pragmatic policy.

The 1993 elections, brokered by the UN and the ASEAN nations, brought relative peace and some hope for development. The royalist Funcinpec party of Prince Ranariddh won only seven seats more than Hun Sen’s CPP, under conditions in which the Khmer Rouge actively sought to subvert the elections. As a result, a coalition government was formed with two “co-Prime Ministers,” First Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh and Second Prime Minister Hun Sen. In the 20 years prior to those elections, Prince Ranariddh had been in an uneasy alliance with the Khmer Rouge, but had ostensibly broken those ties. The coalition functioned reasonably well, but when the next scheduled elections were approaching in 1998, Prince Ranariddh made the astonishing move to *revive his alliance with the Khmer Rouge*, against Hun Sen. The plot was discovered and crushed by the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in the first week of July 1997. Prince Ranariddh fled into self-imposed exile; the Khmer Rouge has been largely dismantled (see *EIR*, Sept. 5, 1997).

Subversion

Rather than winning the approval of the “world community,” Hun Sen was accused of carrying out a coup against First Prime Minister Ranariddh and Cambodia was penalized with economic sanctions by the United States and others. Ranariddh was joined by Rainsy, with support in turn from the IRI, the Republican Party branch of the NED, made infamous for the “democracy fighter” cover they gave the 1980s George Bush-Ollie North Iran-Contra operations. Ranariddh and Rainsy toured the world, garnering support to overthrow “dictator” Hun Sen. Nearly alone among Western press, *EIR* exposed this fraud. For example, on May 22, the *Phnom Penh Post* released excerpts of three notebooks found in a Khmer Rouge camp, which substantiated the nature of Ranariddh’s conspiracy with the Khmer Rouge—and yet, *EIR*, to our knowledge, is the only Western publication that covered this evidence (see *EIR*, June 12, 1998).

The plot between Prince Ranariddh and the Khmer Rouge was exposed only 48-72 hours after the full-blown outbreak of Southeast Asia’s financial “contagion,” when the Thai government abandoned defense of the baht on July 2, 1997. Note

also that Soros, the primary speculator behind that financial warfare, is a sponsor of many NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch, which led the mobilization against Hun Sen! The same NGOs chanting for “democracy” and “human rights,” are stridently blaming Southeast Asia’s economic problems on “collusion, corruption, and nepotism,” and “lack of transparency” — not Soros and the IMF.

Hun Sen’s counter-offensive

Confident of his popular support within Cambodia, Hun Sen had no problem showing magnanimity toward Ranariddh and Rainsy. Ranariddh was tried *in absentia* for his documented treasonous deal with the Khmer Rouge, including illegal weapons trafficking, but, with Hun Sen’s support, he was pardoned by his father, King Norodom Sihanouk, and returned to campaign for the July 26 election. This, despite the fact that Ranariddh’s leading loyal general, Gen. Nhieuk Bun Chhay, was and is still holed up in a town near the Thai border with a small contingent of troops and some die-hard Khmer Rouge, fighting the national army! Rainsy also returned, and formed his own party, modestly named the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), for the elections.

The human rights mafia went to work. Every possible effort was made to accuse Hun Sen and his CPP of plotting to steal the election through fraud, intimidation, blocking opposition parties from media access, and murder. But Hun Sen, the CPP, and the National Election Commission—the latter accused of being “front men” for Hun Sen—took extensive measures to ensure fair elections. An incredible 98%-plus of the eligible population registered to vote, with relatively minor problems in the process. The 39 parties participating in the elections received their allotted media access; Hun Sen hardly campaigned the last week, while he recovered from an appendectomy. When opposition parties, such as Rainsy’s, refused to observe restrictions against campaign rallies in certain areas, including the capital Phnom Penh, for security reasons, the police were ordered to stand aside and let the rally pass. The army of more than 500 international observers witnessed this reality, as the NGOs came to look increasingly absurd, with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the IRI whining for postponing the elections for the sake of democracy, right up to the eve of voting.

Meanwhile, both Ranariddh and Rainsy ran their campaigns in a manner that shocked even their own supporters: They adopted the racist, xenophobic rhetoric of the Khmer Rouge, denouncing the Vietnamese as the racial enemies of the Khmer people, who supposedly aspire to conquer and absorb Cambodia.

“Our neighbors [the Vietnamese] are moving in to occupy your villages,” lied Ranariddh. “You can choose between a regime which cannot defend your territory and one which can.” He said that a vote for him would mean “fewer Vietnam-

ese” in Cambodia. Rainsy called for Vietnamese, who comprise up to one-tenth of the population, to be expelled from the country, while describing Hun Sen as “the monster of war who has been serving the interests of Vietnam.” Both constantly referred to the Vietnamese as “*yuon*,” a derogatory term used by the Khmer Rouge in their genocidal “ethnic cleansing” against this minority.

Reaction

In the final month before the July 26 election, the massive effort to discredit the election began to crumble, as the blatant nature of the lies was exposed. One of the most damning cases is that of Dr. Gerassimos Foulanos, LL.D., a Swede, who served for five years as a senior legal consultant with the UN Center for Human Rights and for the last two years as a judicial mentor for the UNCHR’s office in Phnom Penh. Dr. Foulanos issued a report on July 23 on the “Activities of the UNCHR in Cambodia,” which described his employment there as “the two worst years of my entire professional experience.” He said that a “heavy atmosphere of political correctness, political indoctrination, and political involvement reigns at the Center. UNCHR shows no interest in debating human rights issues, strengthening the only mechanism that can deliver protection of human rights, namely the legal system, or promoting the enjoyment of those basic rights that really matter to most Cambodians. Instead, it is all about politics and political opposition against the government of the country.”

Dr. Foulanos described the actual mandate of the UNCHR in Cambodia, which calls for building institutions, strengthening the justice system and the organizations of civil society, education, and monitoring human rights. He concludes: “Even a glance through the Memorandum of Understanding reveals that UNCHR can be severely criticized for not honoring its commitments and not doing its homework.” While the assistance programs “never rose up to the occasion,” the monitoring role “grew disproportionately, often exceeding even its conceptual limits, taking the form of intervention and protection . . . i.e., infringement of state sovereignty.”

“The UNCHR gurus of political correctness,” he concluded, “see the CPP and their allies [Hun Sen] as ‘the Bad.’ Funcinpec, SRP, and all their allies are ‘the Good.’ Even opposition political activists who participate in underground subversive activities or are involved in criminal activities are Good and, therefore, must be protected. Some of the Cambodians who work at the UNCHR are staunch Funcinpec or SRP supporters who believe that . . . Cambodia is still occupied by the Vietnamese, etc. It is dispiriting that a Human Rights organization harbors this racial hatred, this racial paranoia, instead of taking action against it!”

He points with amazement at the fact that the head of the center attended a rally for Prince Ranariddh, and asks: “How then to trust UNCHR reports signed by [U.S. Special Repre-

sentative to Cambodia] Mr. Thomas Hammarberg?” Hammarberg’s reports, it should be noted, were the principal evidence used to build the case that Hun Sen pulled off a “coup” in July 1997.

The U.S. role

To his credit, President Clinton forcefully refused to countenance any deals with the Khmer Rouge, following the events of July 1997, and criticized Ranariddh directly on this account. However, Clinton also allowed all U.S. assistance to the election process, about \$2.3 million, to be funneled exclusively through U.S. NGOs, of which \$700,000 went to NDI and the IRI. In Cambodia alone, the IRI has repeatedly promoted Rainsy’s hysterical diatribes against the government and against the Vietnamese. Much of its propaganda centered on a bloody incident on March 30, 1997, when a political rally held by Rainsy in Phnom Penh was subjected to a hand-grenade attack, killing 16 and injuring more than 100, including an American operative of the IRI, Ron Abney. This terrorist attack was promptly blamed on Hun Sen and his government in IRI and NDI literature and in their reports to the U.S. Congress. The FBI was brought in to investigate, but the investigation was cut short after U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Quinn informed them that he could no longer guarantee their safety, and to this day the FBI report has not been released.

However, on May 13, two experts from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who had been invited by the Cambodian government to investigate the incident, as well as the deaths which occurred during the military action in July 1997 to disarm the Ranariddh-Khmer Rouge conspirators, released their own assessment. The report sheds some light on the FBI’s and IRI’s role, which should make them squirm.

It appears, according to the two experts—Arun Bhagat, former head of the Indian Intelligence Bureau, and Prof. Peter T. Burns, Queen’s Counsellor from Canada—that the FBI had prepared a sketch of the grenade throwers from the many eyewitness accounts, using the most advanced available technology. The report states: “The sketch of the culprits made by the FBI experts resembled one Brasil who had been involved in criminal activities. The police claimed that it had not been possible for the investigators to interrogate Brasil because he had been given shelter by Nhiek Bun Chhay.” Nhiek Bun Chhay is the general, loyal to Prince Ranariddh, who is still in rebellion against the Hun Sen government and in cahoots with the remnants of the Khmer Rouge “hard-liners.”

Has the FBI refused to issue their report because the result did not conform to their political prejudices?

The two investigative experts reported that the government of Cambodia “would welcome the assistance of the FBI again and were also awaiting the report of the investigations which had been conducted by the FBI.”

The future

The July 26 election results gave Hun Sen’s CPP 64 seats, Prince Ranariddh’s Funcinpec 43, and the Sam Rainsy Party 15 seats in the Parliament. Since a two-thirds majority, 81 of the total 122 seats, is required to form a government, Hun Sen initially proposed a coalition with both parties, with himself as Prime Minister. Prince Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy, as of Aug. 7, are boycotting the coalition, pending settlement of their 300 claims of vote fraud and the seat-allocation issue. On Aug. 8, Canadian Theo Noel, a senior technical adviser to the National Election Coalition (NEC), told a press conference that the claim of a change in the seating formula was bogus—the only change had been an arithmetical error in the election handbook. As for the 300 claims of fraud, on Aug. 8, the NEC reported, on the basis of a testing of 10 alleged worst-case examples, the error was less than 0.5%, and the NEC simply did not have the resources and the international community was not prepared to foot the bill for a re-vote with observers at 300 polling stations.

As of Aug. 11, these issues have been referred by the NEC to the Constitutional Council, the highest judicial body, also conveniently accused by Rainsy and the human rights mafia of being “Hun Sen’s men.” Rainsy and Ranariddh now have 48 hours to file complaints, on which the Council will rule in 10-20 days. The current National Assembly will be dissolved on Sept. 24. If the stalemate continues, Hun Sen has suggested that a new assembly be seated reflecting the 64 CPP, 43 Funcinpec, 15 Rainsy formula, and the current cabinet to stay in place. Hun Sen now says he would prefer a two-party coalition with Ranariddh’s Funcinpec, leaving Rainsy in the opposition. Worst case, Hun Sen has raised the possibility of convening the National Assembly to pass a change in the Constitution, replacing the required two-thirds majority with a simple majority, based on which, his CPP could immediately take control. However, that could cause a parliamentary deadlock, with Ranariddh and Rainsy in the opposition.

Compounding matters, this obstructionism is verging on another important deadline. On Sept. 9, the UN General Assembly will convene. For 12 years, from 1979-90, that seat was held by the Khmer Rouge on behalf of its coalition with Ranariddh. After the July 1997 events, Cambodia’s seat remained empty. Isn’t it time for the curse to be lifted from this troubled land?

The July 26 election sparked new hope for Cambodia, although it comes in the midst of the greatest global financial breakdown of history. Still, a stable Cambodia, *sans* the Khmer Rouge, and committed to domestic and regional development, can contribute to a solution to the global crisis, rather than serving yet again as a cauldron of death. And, perhaps other nations will learn from Cambodia’s close encounter with the human rights mafia.