

MESSAGE AND SOLEMN DECLARATION OF SAMDECH NORODOM SIHANOUK, HEAD OF STATE OF
CAMBODIA

(23 March 1970) [*Translated* from adaptation in French]

I wish to convey my most sincere compliments to Her Majesty the Queen, and my respect to the Buddhist clergy and to my dear countrymen.

I am sending you my most sincere, steadfast and affectionate greetings.

A tiny group of reactionary bourgeois and princes, who managed to rise to the top thanks to the Sangkum Reastr Niyum and its Chairman, and thereby accorded themselves all manner of privileges, have not only been brazen enough to show me their gratitude by unlawfully “ousting” me, but they have also slung mud at me by means of monstrous slander and accusations, such as that of selling my country off to “foreign powers”.

However, looking at their calumny and accusations, I am only pained by the current developments in our country, which are commandeered by groups of traitors and renegades, who have put the country in a choke hold of dictatorship (after having violated and flouted the Kingdom’s Constitution) and are now dragging it straight into anarchy and into the war triggered by US imperialists, whereas (for the many long years leading up to the crisis set off by the leaders of the 18 March 1970 coup d’état) Cambodia was known the world over as a haven of peace and stability.

The freedom, democracy and relative prosperity, as well as the national unity and oneness that our country enjoyed in the past have now been annihilated, nullified...

Our soldiers have received orders to cease defending the country’s borders and its territory, turn against their fellow countrymen and show no mercy in dealing with anyone who dares “lift a finger” to oppose – be it verbally – the new fascist government, which is helping further American imperialism.

Here, I am not making any accusations, but simply stating facts which are recognised by all well-informed observers the world over.

The Lon Nol-Sisowath Sirik Matak-Cheng Heng clique has declared me a “traitor”, saying that I am “selling” the country off to foreign powers, simply because, not only have I endeavoured to safeguard our reputation as a wise and mature nation, but I have also made sure that our motherland does not find itself in grave danger by going too far in provoking, Vietnam, a socialist country that even the United States, the wealthiest, biggest military power in the world, failed to bring to its knees.

My enemies call me a traitor because of my devotion and loyalty to my country.

However, I am not overly concerned about their “attack”, because they themselves are traitors in their own right, are ravenously hungry for power and honours and are so cowardly that they dare attack Sihanouk only in his absence, and can only “stab” him from the back.

So I will not be intimidated by this ill-reputed clique, and will not let it weaken my firm resolve to defend the superior, long-term interests of my motherland, as well as its freedom.

It will not be long before thousands of Khmers within the country, and thousands of Khmers outside the country rise up and revolt against the reactionary Lon Nol-Sirik Matak-Cheng Heng clique, and against its handlers, the American imperialists. Each and every patriot in the country will rise up and crush these traitors, and drive their accomplices and American handlers out of our country. After gaining victory, our patriots will build a new Kampuchea where power will forever be in the hands of its hard-working, progressive, honorable people, and will work towards making sure that our country has a bright future and that social justice, equality and fraternity prevail among all Khmers.

The betrayal, cowardice, slander and empty attacks of the reactionaries have opened my eyes and made me realise that it was inexcusably naïve and absurd for me to believe that it was possible to build a free, democratic, peaceful, prosperous and happy nation with such mentally challenged personalities, corrupt bourgeois, fascists and reactionaries as those who now are part of the “government” and “parliament” in Phnom Penh.

With this in mind, I should tender my resignation as Head of State after the victory that our people will certainly win over the enemies and reactionary oppressors, as well as their handlers, namely the American imperialists, and thereby give our progressive youth and hard-working people the opportunity to fully assume – in partnership with the nation as a whole – the responsibility of building and defending the country.

Under the current circumstances, my mission has not yet been accomplished, since I cannot accept that the reactionary traitors continue to trample the ideals, laws and fundamental principles of our State with impunity, on the strength of the US dollar and at the point of the bayonet.

It is in this spirit that I solemnly declare as follows:

I. In my capacity as lawful Head of State of Cambodia unanimously chosen by the Khmer people, I irrevocably dissolve the Lon Nol government and both Houses of Assembly that betrayed their oaths of office and the Constitution of the Kingdom.

II. I invite all my compatriots and all expatriates residing in Cambodia to neither recognize nor honour the decrees (*Prakas, Kret*), laws (*Kram*), orders, messages, circulars, judgments, all sorts of decisions, sentences which are or will be “the work” of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak-Cheng Heng clique and their accomplices and servants.

III. A new government of national unity will be formed.

A provisional consultative assembly will also be formed to assist the government; its members will be qualified representatives drawn from the different categories of Khmer society (monks, peasant farmers, workers, traders, industrialists, soldiers, police, provincial guards, youths and intellectuals, civil servants, women, etc.

IV. A National Liberation Army will be formed.

V. Khmers residing abroad and Khmers residing in our country (the clergy and laity, soldiers and civilians, men and women) who espouse the ideals of independence, democracy, neutrality, progressiveness, socialism, Buddhism, nationalism, the territorial integrity of the country with its current borders, anti-imperialism and anti-neo-colonialism, should link hands to form a United Front whose official appellation will be “National United Front of Kampuchea”, abbreviated as FUNK.

The fundamental mission of the FUNK is:

1. To liberate our country from the oppression and dictatorship of the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak-Cheng Heng clique of pro-imperialist reactionaries.

2) Fight the American imperialists who are attacking our Indochina, oppressing our people, and sowing the seeds of injustice, war, catastrophes of all sorts, hostility and division, unrest, and are fuelling crises and creating misery among our three peoples – Khmer, Vietnamese and Lao; this struggle will be undertaken alongside the socialist, progressive and anti-imperialist countries in the region and beyond, and with their support.

3) Rebuild our country and quickly put it back on the road to development after overcoming our enemies; the mission of building our country is to be undertaken by all Khmers in a spirit of camaraderie, solidarity and total unity, as required by the rigors of the struggle.

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I miss my beloved country a great deal, and it will remain my sole purpose in life.

I also think a great deal about my poor mother, our Buddhist clergymen and our beloved people.

If I do not die in the struggle that our patriotic, progressive people and us are about to launch together, I will make sure to go and greet them and embrace them once they achieve their certain victory over the imperialists and their lackeys.

In view of this struggle, I call upon all my children (compatriots), both soldiers and civilians, who can no longer tolerate the undue injustice of the traitors, and who have the courage and feel patriotic about liberating our motherland, to join the resistance and fight our enemies.

For those of you who are already armed or those who have received military training, I will send you ammunition and new weapons in a timely manner. Should you not want weapons but wish to receive military training, I will make arrangements to send you to the Military Academy of the United National Front of our Kampuchea, which is located quite far away from your barracks and village, at a safe distance from the enemy.

For you my children (compatriots) in Europe or all around Europe who are prepared to serve their motherland and their people as part of the Liberation Army or of the FUNK, I urge you to come and meet me in Moscow or in Peking.

Long Live Cambodia!

NORODOM SIHANOUK