



Continuity and Change in the Political Economy of Cambodia

Before and After the Commune Elections

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“The rich are different from you and me.” –F. Scott Fitzgerald

“Yes, they have more money.” –Ernest Hemingway



Pre-Election Details

- ◆ Letter of the law followed, but spirit of the law ignored. Example: Government vehicles were not to be used for electioneering. License plates were switched.
- ◆ Ministry of Interior insists on having its “representative” on commune council. Gets its way.
- ◆ Pre-election “debate” not televised, decides NEC.



The Killings

- ◆ Senior official and advisor to SKP quoted in *Wall Street Journal* as saying, basically, we don't want to rock the boat with CPP.
- ◆ Similar pattern observed as in previous election—killings totaled 23 this time.
- ◆ Probability of this being “random” estimated equal to getting about 5 out of 6 numbers correct on CA lotto (author's own calculations)

Corruption

- ◆ *Chakraval* reported that more than a dozen senior officials of several ministries (of which Interior was one) had accounts in Singaporean Banks of between \$1.2 and \$20 million, each.
- ◆ Cited World Bank, but turns out to have been completely unsubstantiated. Story was picked-up by *Cambodge Soir* nonetheless.
- ◆ Friend reports that director-level officials in Ministries are sending kids to Singapore to study. Every time he rides PPH-SIN, either the son or the father is sitting next to him!

Post-Election

- ◆ Consensus is that FUNCINPEC is in very serious trouble.
- ◆ Next election, it is certain to lose.
- ◆ Rising influence of SRP is apparent, but campaign tactics are all the same... plus ça change...
- ◆ Before: 1621 out 1621 communes controlled by CPP 100%.
- ◆ After: 1600 out 1621 communes majority-ruled by CPP.

Progress?

- ◆ If proportional representation, then it is not as bad as it looks. Councils are composed of ½ dozen members, so majority rule ≠ control.
- ◆ However, in Cambodia, it does... more or less.
- ◆ S\$850 bottle of wine and Mercedes SLK... LMH resigns from KID. Cambodia's first ATM operates at Canadia Bank... one million riels or dollars? Alleged *al Qaeda* account discovered.
- ◆ Standard Chartered Bank and Banque Indosuez both pull out.