

## SPEECH OF DEPUTY SECRETARY NUON CHEA ADDRESSED TO THE PARTY MEMBERS ON JANUARY 17, 1978 DURING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF KAMPUCHEA ARMY ESTABLISHMENT

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On this occasion and under the present circumstances, I wish to make two important points. The first is that the founding anniversary of our nine-year old army reminds us of the very high sense of heroism of our Revolutionary Army. At this moment we think with profound emotion and revolutionary sentiment of our comrades-in-arms, male and female combatants and cadres of our army, who made all kinds of sacrifices for the most difficult, complicated, tortuous and involved revolutionary struggle until the total liberation of Cambodia, freeing the people worker and peasants and bringing to them forever the status of masters of the nation and of their own destiny.

The second point we should consider on this occasion is that as we think of our formerly empty-handed army and its present condition, we should take great pleasure in the thought that never before have we had an army such as the present Revolutionary Army—an army with truly revolutionary characteristics. A valiant, competent and wonderful army absolutely loyal to our revolutionary organization, our people—the workers and peasants—our state power and our beloved fatherland. Our Revolutionary Army was founded, strengthened, expanded and transformed from secret defence forces into guerrilla units, regional units and regular army units which launched guerrilla warfare, large-scale warfare, internal war and revolutionary war against the US imperialists and their lackeys for the liberation of the nation and people, until the day we won the great victory of 17th April 1975.

We have also strengthened and developed this army politically, ideologically and organizationally. Now our army has all the characteristics of a truly revolutionary nature—it is a fully organized army, including ground, naval and air forces which are defending the national territory and territorial waters and air space—the whole territory of

Cambodia. For thousands of years our people have never had an army comparable to the present one. Realizing this, we are proud of, and fully satisfied with, our people, our army and our revolutionary organization, which have waged a protracted struggle to build up Democratic Cambodia, the Cambodian people—workers and peasants—the state revolutionary power and a valiant capable revolutionary army.

To repay the debt of gratitude to our army, all of us, whether in it or outside, must pledge ourselves in memory of our combatants and our people to carry on the tradition of our heroes, who fought valiantly in past struggles, by continuing to perform correctly their revolutionary tasks and by fulfilling in the best way possible the tasks of defending and building the country. If we fulfill these tasks with great care and a high sense of responsibility, then all of us will be repaying properly and fully the debt of gratitude to our heroes. To do so is our



Nuon Chea making statement



determination.

On this occasion, we also resolve further to consolidate further and expand our revolutionary position, In all our activities and tasks, small or large, we must always maintain the spirit of struggle and regard this determination as our driving force. We must use the pledge given in memory of our heroes as the driving force to boost our morale. We are strong, but this driving force can make us even stronger.

Why are we fulfilling the revolutionary tasks of the new era? We are doing it to abolish forever our century-long slavery. We liberated our country from slavery on 17th April 1975, and our people were also freed that day. Why should we continue to perform our tasks correctly? We are doing it for the defence of Democratic Cambodia, the Cambodian workers and co-operative peasants in the coming decade, century, millennium, the next 10,000 years, forever. We are doing it to build our Democratic Cambodia by leaps and bounds. This is why we should perform our tasks.

Is this an honour? Yes, it is an honour for us. The great victory of 17th April 1975 brought our nation, people and army great honour which we must preserve, consolidate, expand and prevent from being tarnished and lost. The fulfillment of our tasks is therefore aimed, firstly at repaying the debt of gratitude to our heroic male and female combatants and cadres who have passed away and, secondly, at defending forever the honour of our nation and people.

The 17th January of 1968 was the day of the birth of the Cambodian Revolutionary Army. At the beginning of 1967 the traitorous Lon Nol clique waged an internal war, repressing, shooting, and killing innocent people and Cambodian patriots and revolutionaries in the most ferocious manner in large-scale and systematic actions. January 17th 1968 was the day the secret defence units of our revolution were turned into, and reorganized as, guerilla units which were then ordered by our revolutionary organization to attack an enemy position on the bank of the Sangke River, eleven kilometers from Battambang town; the Bay Damram position, which we completely destroyed, capturing enemy weapons to arm ourselves.

This was our first armed exploit.

The start of the armed struggle on 17th January 1968 was not an accidental event. Since 1960, our Cambodian revolutionary organization had drawn up the strategic and tactical lines for the revolution of a democratic nation. We realized that the US imperialist, their lackeys and all kinds of exploiting classes used dictatorship and force in their attempts to kill and terrorize our people. It was our well-defined position that political action alone would not succeed in crushing and overthrowing the US imperialists, their lackeys and all the exploiting classes. The enemy used force of arms and his totalitarian tools with which he repressed and killed our people. After 1960, our revolutionary organizations clearly decide therefore that political action and armed violence must be used to overthrow and crush the enemy. We had to turn revolutionary forces in to a revolutionary army. After 1961, we began to organize our secret defence units.

These secret defence units were hidden in villages, bases and towns. Some of them were armed with firearms, but most of them were armed only with cutting weapons, clubs and rocks. These secret defence units had the duties of defending the cadres and the people and crushing enemy intelligence agents and other enemy forces which caused trouble for the people.

A number of secret defence guards were lost; the enemy arrested some of them. Our combatants continued to fulfil their duties as secret defence guards to ensure security for our cadres, offices, places of meeting and to serve as messengers. These tasks were dangerous. Our cadres had to move from one village to another to perform their tasks. Without the secret guard, our cadres could not have survived; we would all have been killed by the enemy. However, our secret defence units were fully informed about the situation in the village and communes and the position of enemy military and police force. Our secret guards also serve as our guides, carrying out the necessary tasks of our army, our secret guards always volunteered to escort our cadres anywhere they went.

Year by year, we expanded our secret defence units. From 1961 to 1966, the revolutionary bases throughout the country and in every region had their secret defence units,



each of these units consisted of at least three people. These secret defence units were the core of our army.

The birth of our Revolutionary Army on 17th January 1968 was no accident, no invention. That day saw the beginning of the successive and systematic struggle movement along our strategic and tactic lines. The secret defence units were born; these units were then transformed into guerrilla units which started fighting first of all in Battambang Province and launch an all-out offensive, waging a guerrilla war throughout the country. The enemy was not capable of containing our forces. Had this event really been an accident or had it been an attack without strategic and tactical planning, we would have been crushed by the enemy immediately. In fact, the enemy could not crush us because in 1968, although we had not seized many rifles from the enemy, the determining factor of the offensive was not weapons but the fact that all of us were joined in an offensive against the enemy.

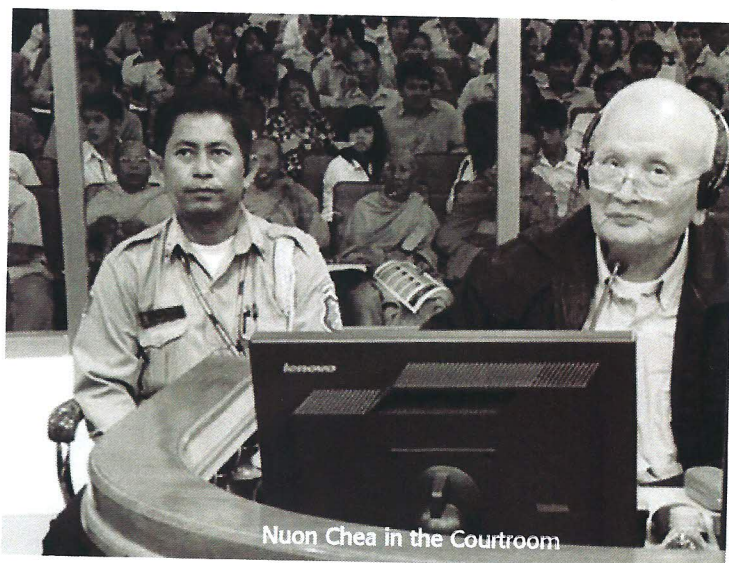
As I said earlier, in the first month we attacked the enemy in the North-West and in the second month we moved in on enemy forces in the South-West. The enemy was then not able to concentrate his forces on the North-West because his forces were also attacked in the South-West. When armed struggle started in the East, the enemy had to move some of his forces to defend the Eastern front, and when the offensive spread to the North-East, the enemy moved some of his forces to that area and then to the North.

In April 1968, our guerrilla units were waging guerrilla was in 17 of the country's 19 provinces. Under these circumstances, were the enemy forces able to counter-attack our guerrilla units throughout the country? No, the enemy could not attack us. Only our forces were in the position to launch attacks. In short, why could the enemy not crush us? Because we had a systematic organization, that meant that our army was founded on a well-planned strategic and tactical bases, including the creation of secret units, and was successively tested and developed to its present state.

This army, which developed within the revolutionary movement, is now extremely powerful. At the time, we did

not have enough weapons and our men were few but the correct lines of the people's war made us strong. Those who have correctly followed the organization's lines went through all the phases of secret units, have been tempered in the movement and have grasped the guerrilla-war tactics of our revolutionary organization. These people are the future leaders of our forces and our guerrilla units and the core of our army.

It follows that this army has not come from any military academy; in fact, it came out of a revolutionary struggle movement which began with empty hands. All these people united around the lines of our revolutionary organization and grasp all its stands. We attacked the enemy with empty hands, Enfield rifles or locally-made firearms. This was how we started fighting



the enemy. Our army is very strong. An army which can fight the enemy only with big guns and by expending a large quantity of ammunition is not strong.

An army which starts empty-handed and which passes through successive revolutionary struggles and develops itself gradually is an extremely powerful one. This is the history of our army.

We must grasp and understand the true nature and results of our revolution. When we won the victory over the US imperialist, we had neither naval vessels nor armoured vehicles. As for artillery, we only had some pieces captured from the enemy. This army had no planes, tanks or artillery pieces and was short of



ammunition. Yet our fight was crowned with success. We must remember all this to realize that this army is strong. Why is it so strong? It is strong ideology, policy, organization and correct combat tactics that makes it strong. Understanding the history of this army makes us realize the influence and the power of our revolutionary army. If we strengthen and expand this army in accordance with this trend, no enemy can defeat it. Our army does not commit aggression against any country. But in the event of aggression by any country, our army and people can fight for an unlimited number of years as long as it adheres to this line. If we have planes, naval vessels, tanks and artillery but not adhere to the principles of people's war and the military lines of our revolutionary organization, we will not have an army as strong as



the one we had in the struggle against the US imperialist and will never be as strong as when we had no planes, tanks and naval vessels. For this reason, we must remember our fight against the US imperialists.

Is this the end of our Army's duties? Should this Army continue to carry on its tasks? The quality of our army has already reached its present stage, should we stop at this point or should we go on? We should be proud of, and satisfied with, the quality of our army, we must strive to build, strengthen, expand and improve it and make it capable of defending and building the country.

Past experiences show that we smoothly carried

out our revolution, the national liberation and the tasks of defending and building the country were all done with a high sense of self-reliance. During devastating war unleashed, by the US imperialists, in the past five years, we were able to solve economic problems. We never imported rice. We were able to ensure self-sufficiency. After the war, we encountered some difficulties. However, these problems were all solved. Then we had another problem. Could we solve it? Did we fulfil the 1976 plan? Were we able to apply the rice rationing orders prescribed by the state? The first order allotted 30 kg to each person per month, the second 25 kg and the third 20 kg. According to reports received early this month from every region and according to our finding after visits to each of our bases, we realize that these rationing orders were appropriate. In short, each Cambodian has 312 kg of rice to eat per year. This is a very large quantity of rice. The living conditions of our people have gradually improved. In other words, our people have enough to eat. We have reserved two bushels of paddy for each person in 1977. At the same time, we have surplus of more than 150,000 tons of rice for export. This means that we have completely fulfilled the 1976 plan.

Rubber production increased in accordance with the 1976 plan, as did the production of cereals and other industrial crops. All this was achieved by our people in spite of innumerable difficulties encountered as a result of the devastating war. We must preserve this tradition and position, strengthening and expanding it for our national defence and construction tasks. In the future, as we gather more experiences, so our strength will gradually grow.

The conditions for our Cambodian revolution have been gradually improving and it has grown stronger and developed in every respect, steadily moving forward. This is the situation as it is today and the prospects for the Cambodian revolution in 1977 are much better than they were in 1976. May all comrades—male and female combatants and cadres of the Revolutionary Army—whether they are on land or in our territorial waters, enjoy the best of health and achieve success while fulfilling their tasks in this new phase of our revolution to defend and build Democratic Cambodia.