

A joint statement from FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party, issued from Bangkok by Ranariddh on 4 November 1998, showed that the positions and policies of the CPP and the opposition were not so far apart²¹, on paper at least.

They called for confidence building measures, including military reintegration, amnesties and safety of the opposition, and outlined a "programme for a new direction." This sought an end to impunity and corruption, respect for human rights, reconstitution of the NEC and Constitutional Council to make them more balanced. The statement urged that priority be given to administrative and judicial reform and proposed measures to alleviate poverty, improve the economy, protect workers and ensure resumption of IMF aid. They said the government must tackle illegal logging and protect the environment.

It was now a question of winning a satisfactory package from the CPP. This meant finding a suitable position for Ranariddh, who clearly would not be prepared to work under his old nemesis Hun Sen. In the end, both FUNCINPEC and CPP budged slightly but both had reason to be pleased with the final deal.

FUNCINPEC had secured almost 50 percent of the cabinet, including nominal joint control of the key defence and interior portfolios and leadership of the important justice and information ministries. CPP had originally insisted on keeping all five key ministries – defence, interior, justice, foreign affairs and finance -- and proposed a 60-40 percent carve up of the cabinet.

Ranariddh, whose political career and personal reputation lay in tatters in July 1997, had secured amnesty for two loyal military commanders and two of his relatives and won the plum post of parliamentary chairman for himself.

But there were costs. Ranariddh had been forced to accept Hun Sen's leadership and, in effect, shelved most of his post-poll demands and complaints. FUNCINPEC was also seen as getting the raw deal in the allocation of the ministries, with CPP getting the money making ministries (such as finance, industry, commerce, agriculture, foreign affairs and planning) and FUNCINPEC taking social sector ministries (including rural development, health, education, women's affairs and culture).

²¹ A Joint Proposal by FUNCINPEC and the Sam Rainsy Party. November 4, 1998. Ranariddh and Hun Sen both acknowledged the similarities, which gave them a base for negotiations and a common platform.