

# Why can't war debt be resolved?

WEDNESDAY, 06 OCTOBER 2010 15:02 VANNARITH CHHEANG

**Dear Editor,**

Cambodian-United States bilateral relations have been growing remarkably in recent years, but the issue of outstanding debt remains an obstacle.

Cambodians have always been interested to know how and when the US might forgive this debt. During the academic symposiums celebrating the 60th anniversary of Cambodia-US bilateral relations, many questions were raised with regard to the debt issue.

Recently, the Cambodian government has expressed clearly that it would never pay back the debt by calling it "dirty debt". For Cambodians, it is clear that the US was partly responsible for igniting the civil war in Cambodia and responsible for the damages caused by the US aerial bombings. Based on these facts, the US should forgive Cambodia's debt.

This issue attracted the attention of the members of Congress in Washington, DC, on September 30, 2010, when the chairman of the subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the global environment, Eni FH Faleomavaega, expressed his position to recycle Cambodia's debt by swapping or converting it into development assistance; for instance it can be transformed into funding sources to preserve the cultural and natural heritage sites of Preah Vihear temple.

Since the US has forgiven the debt of other countries under special circumstances, why can they not do the same for Cambodia?

What are the criteria set by the US to provide special status?

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