Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister H.E. Dr. Sok An told visiting U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Yun on Wednesday that “the Indonesian military observers’ mission will be very important for monitoring the ceasefire and the protection and salvation of Preah Vihear Temple.”

“Cambodia is ready to cooperate with the Indonesian military observers”, the Press and Quick Reaction Unit of the Council of Ministers quoted H.E. Sok An, who is also Minister in charge of the Office of the Council of Ministers, as assuring Mr. Yun.

The Cambodian deputy prime minister said that the presence of the 13 Indonesian military observers on Cambodia’s side of the border would “contribute to building trust for both countries as well as to preventing the danger of further crimes against culture.”

He further informed the U.S. delegation that Thailand is trying to avoid any meetings mediated by a third party.

H.E. Sok An said that Thai military commanders, according to Thai media reports, did not want to attend a scheduled meeting on April 7-8, to be held in Indonesia. The meeting had already been postponed once because of Thai reluctance.

The deputy premier also showed photographs of serious damage to the 900-year-old Preah Vihear Temple caused by Thai troops’ artillery fire. “The Thai troops even fired at the sign board calling for the protection of this world cultural heritage,” he said.

H.E. Sok An also briefed the delegation about the Thai troops’ use of unconventional weapons, namely cluster munitions and gas shells, during their Feb. 4-7 attack. He noted that the Thai military is again building up its forces along the border, including tanks and heavy weapons.

During the Feb. 4-7 attack, at least six Cambodian military and police were killed and at least 30 Cambodians were wounded. More than 3,000 Cambodian families were displaced from areas

near the Temple of Preah Vihear.

H.E. Sok An said that Thailand has violated the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1962, which ruled that: the Temple of Preah Vihear is situated in territory under the sovereignty of Cambodia. The Court found that Thailand is under obligation to withdraw any military or police forces, or other guards or keepers, stationed by her at the Temple, or in its vicinity on Cambodian territory. Thailand is under an obligation to restore to Cambodia any objects of the kind specified in the Cambodia's fifth submission which may, since the date of the occupation of the Temple by Thailand in 1954, have been removed from the Temple or the Temple area by the Thai authority.