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PILPG Establishes Relationship with Cambodia Genocide Tribunal

Last week, the Co-Prosecutors of the Cambodia Tribunal, Robert Petit of Canada and Chea Leang of Cambodia and Michael Scharf, a Managing Director of the Public International Law & Policy Group and Professor of Law at Case Western Reserve University School of Law, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to govern the provision of legal research assistance by PILPG and the Cox Center War Crimes Research Office to the Office of the Prosecutor of the Cambodia Tribunal.

PILPG and the Case War Crimes Research Office have similar agreements with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Iraqi High Tribunal, and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Over 120 of the memos prepared by PILPG and Case are available at: www.law.case.edu/War-Crimes-Research-Portal.

The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia – the new U.N. established tribunal was established to prosecute the Khmer Rouge leaders for the 1970s genocide in Cambodia.

Over two million Cambodians were slaughtered in the killing fields of Cambodia between 1975 and 1979. Although the notorious Khmer Rouge leader, Pol Pot, is no longer alive, at least seven of his chief lieutenants are available for the genocide trial, which is expected to begin in spring of 2007.

Professor Scharf recently returned from a week long training program in Cambodia, where he led a series of training sessions for the judges and prosecutors of the Tribunal. At the invitation of the Co-Prosecutors and Co-Investigative Judges, Professor Scharf joined a select group of international experts that provided the training.

The training session covered such issues as international criminal procedure, international crimes, international theories of criminal responsibility, and international trial management. Scharf led sessions on maintaining control of the courtroom in the face of a disruptive defendant or defense counsel, the rights of the accused, and the crimes of genocide and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

According to Scharf, "the Cambodia Tribunal faces more challenges than any other war crimes tribunal. The evidence is over thirty years old. The documentary record is scant. And there is a public expectation that the Tribunal will be able to convict the Khmer Rouge leaders of genocide, but the case for genocide is an extremely difficult one to make out since the victims did not clearly constitute a distinct racial, ethnic, or religious group."

Scharf, who has just authored a book entitled "Saddam on Trial: Understanding and Debating the Iraqi High Tribunal," (<http://www.cap-press.com/books/1625>) says that

"the Cambodian Judges and Prosecutors were intensely interested in the lessons learned from the Saddam Trial. They want to make sure that they are able to maintain control of their courtroom in the face of a highly disruptive defendant."

In 2005, Michael Scharf, Paul Williams, and the Public International Law and Policy Group, were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and others "for the work they have done to help in the prosecution of major war criminals, such as Slobodan Milosevic, Charles Taylor, and Saddam Hussein."

About the Public International Law & Policy Group

The Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG) is a global, pro bono law firm providing free legal assistance to governments and states involved in conflicts. In 2005 PILPG was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

PILPG's four primary practice areas are Peacebuilding, International Justice, Post-Conflict Political Development, and Public International Law. To provide pro bono legal advice and policy formulation expertise, PILPG relies almost exclusively on volunteer legal assistance from more than sixty former international lawyers, diplomats, and foreign relations experts, as well as pro bono assistance from major international law firms. Annually, PILPG is able to provide over \$2 million worth of pro bono international legal services.

Because of its diverse network of volunteers, PILPG is able to maintain volunteer points of contact in London, Paris, New York, Washington D.C., Cleveland, Boston, Rome, The Hague, Stockholm, Brussels, Kabul, Nairobi, and Seattle. In July 1999, the United Nations granted official Non-Governmental Organization status to PILPG.

The Managing Board of PILPG includes

Paul Williams - Executive Director,

Michael Scharf - Managing Director, and

James Hooper - Managing Director.

To learn more about the Public International Law & Policy Group, please visit our website at <http://www.pilpg.org>.