Berghof
Research Center
Forschungszentrum
for Constructive
für konstruktive
Conflict Management
Konfliktbearbeitung

Kiyoko Ogura

Seeking State Power

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

Berghof Series
Resistance/Liberation Movements and
Transition to Politics

Kiyoko Ogura:
Seeking State Power - The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

Berghof Transitions Series No. 3

© Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management 2008

Copies can be ordered from:
Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management
Altensteinstraße 48a
D–14195 Berlin, Germany
Te. +49/(0)30 - 8441540

Via Internet:
http://www.berghof-center.org/

ISBN 978-3-927783-89-8

Berghof Transitions Series

Resistance/Liberation Movements and Transition to Politics

Editors
Veronique Dudouet and David Bloomfield

The Berghof Research Center is grateful to acknowledge the project funding generously provided by the International Development Research Center, Ottawa, Canada, and by the Ford Foundation, New York, USA, and the support and co-operation provided by the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (BFPS) and our institutional partner, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, South Africa.

About this Publication Series

This case-study is one of a series produced by participants in an ongoing Berghof research project on transitions from violence to peace ('*Resistance/Liberation Movements and Transition to Politics*'). The project's overall aim is to learn from the experience of those in resistance or liberation movements who have used violence in their struggle but have also engaged politically during the conflict and in any peace process. Recent experience around the world has demonstrated that reaching political settlement in protracted social conflict always eventually needs the involvement of such movements. Our aim here is to discover how, from a non-state perspective, such political development is handled, what is the relationship between political and military strategies and tactics, and to learn more about how such movements (often sweepingly and simplistically bundled under the label of *non-state armed groups*) contribute to the transformation of conflict and to peacemaking. We can then use that experiential knowledge (1) to offer support to other movements who might be considering such a shift of strategy, and (2) to help other actors (states and international) to understand more clearly how to engage meaningfully with such movements to bring about political progress and peaceful settlement.

Political violence is a tool of both state and non-state actors, and replacing it by political methods of conflict management is essential to making sustainable peace. With this project we want to understand better how one side of that equation has been, or could be, achieved. Depending on the particular case, each study makes a strong argument for the necessary inclusion of the movement in any future settlement, or documents clearly how such a role was effectively executed.

We consciously asked participants to reflect on their experience from their own unique point of view. What we publish in this series is not presented as neutral or exclusively accurate commentary. All histories are biased histories, and there is no single truth in conflict or in peace. Rather, we believe these case-studies are significant because they reflect important voices which are usually excluded or devalued in the analysis of conflict. Increasing numbers of academics, for example, study "armed groups" from outside, but few actually engage directly with them to hear their own points of view, rationales, and understandings of their context. We are convinced that these opinions and perspectives urgently need to be heard in order to broaden our understanding of peacemaking. For exactly this reason, each case study has been produced with the very close co-operation of, and in some cases authored by, members of the movement concerned. As the results amply illustrate, these perspectives are sophisticated, intelligent, political and strategic.

So authenticity has in this instance been prized above accuracy. The reader may or may not agree with the perspectives expressed. But, much more importantly, we hope that the reader will accept that these perspectives are valid in themselves and must be included in any attempt at comprehensive understanding of violent conflict and its transformation. We urgently need to understand in more depth the dynamics of organisations who make the transition between political violence and democratic politics, in order to improve our understanding of their role, and our practice, in making peace.

The views expressed are those of the authors and contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies or any of its constituent agencies.

For further information on the project, please contact:

Veronique Dudouet (Project Coordinator)
veronique.dudouet@berghof-center.org

Oliver Wils (Project Director, BFPS)
oliver.wils@berghof-peacesupport.org

List of Contents

Introduction **7**

1. Historical context and establishment of the CPN (M) **9**

1.1 The long time dream of radical communists 9

1.2 Establishment of the CPN (M) and initiation of armed struggle 11

2. The Maoist armed insurgency: organisational growth and strategic evolution during the People's War **13**

2.1 First stage: strategic Defence 13

2.2 Strategic shift: the Prachanda Path 15

2.3 Second stage: strategic stalemate and Maoist expansion during the first ceasefire 16

2.4 Intensified warfare during the state of emergency 18

2.5 Third stage: strategic offensive 19

3. Between accommodation and revolution: a series of failed peace negotiations with the Nepali state **22**

3.1 The first peace talks (August-November 2001) 22

3.2 Informal dialogue during the state of emergency (November 2001-April 2003) 23

3.3 The second peace talks (April-August 2003) 24

3.4 Cooperation between the CPN (M) and the Seven Party Alliance against the monarchy 26

3.5 Maoist involvement in the 19-day April 2006 revolution 28

4. Transition to peace and non-violent politics in a democratic state **31**

4.1 Negotiations towards a Comprehensive Peace Agreement 31

4.2 Democratising the state: the Interim Constitution, Legislature and Council of Ministers 34

4.3 Postponement of the Constituent Assembly elections 36

4.4 Strategic debate within the Maoist camp: launching a popular movement versus pursuing the negotiation track 38

4.5 Organisational shift to peaceful struggle within the CPN (M) 41

4.6 Epilogue: Nepal is to become a federal republic 42

Conclusion **45**

Bibliography & overview of interviews with CPN (M) leaders **48**

Annexes 1-4 **49**

About the Author **55**

Introduction

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)[1] launched an armed insurrection movement, the People's War, on February 13, 1996. Six years earlier, this Himalayan kingdom had experienced a major political change. In April 1990, after nearly thirty years of direct rule by an autocratic monarchy, the Nepali people re-established multi-party democracy with a constitutional monarchy through a street movement lasting 50 days. On the left, the political landscape was divided into various communist factions, which went through a major phase of restructuring, leading to the formation of the CPN (United Marxist-Leninist),[2] the biggest communist party in Nepal, as well as the CPN (Unity Center) and the United People's Front Nepal (UPFN), both of which were formed by more radical groups. In the first general election held after 1990, the Nepali Congress (NC) party gained a majority in the House of Representatives and formed a government, while the CPN (UML) and UPFN became the second and third largest parties. Following several years of intra-party debates, two radical factions of the CPN (Unity Center) and its open political front, the UPFN, led respectively by Prachanda and Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, formally changed their party name to the CPN (M) in March 1995, with the primary objective of launching an armed rebellion: the People's War.

In the early stage of their insurgency, the Maoists mainly concentrated their activities in the mountainous region of western Nepal. They progressively expanded their armed forces and increased their areas of operation across the country, by attacking state forces and carrying out military actions on police stations. By the time of the first peace negotiations in 2001, they claimed that 80 percent of the Nepali territory was under their control. They established their own alternative power structures in their controlled areas, called the 'People's Government'. Although the political objectives of their insurgency were ambiguous when they initiated the People's War, during the 2001 negotiations they clarified this and asked for the election of a Constituent Assembly (CA), which has remained their main political demand ever since.

King Gyanendra's autocratic move in February 2005, by militarily taking control of executive power, initiated a major transformation of the political scene, as it compelled the CPN (M) and an alliance of seven major political parties, including the NC and the CPN (UML), to join forces against the monarchy. In April 2006, after a massive 19 day street movement across the country, the king returned sovereignty to the people of Nepal. A government formed by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) opened peace negotiations with the CPN (M), with a common aim to hold CA elections. In November 2006, both sides signed an historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), officially ending a decade-long war which had claimed more than 13,000 victims.[3]

After signing the CPA, an Interim Legislature with Maoist representatives was formed in January 2007, followed by an Interim Council of Ministers, including five CPN (M) Ministers. From June to November 2007, the peace process progressed rather smoothly, until the first postponement of CA elections. This hindrance led the CPN (M) to change their tactics from prioritising the election to demanding the prior establishment of a republic, resulting in a second postponement of the election. After a series of negotiations, on December 21, 2007 the CPN (M) and other parties finally agreed to hold the election in April 2008, and to declare Nepal a federal republic by promulgating it in the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

1 Hereafter, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is abbreviated to 'CPN (M)'.

2 Hereafter, the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) is abbreviated to 'CPN (UML)'.

3 According to the Informal Sector Service Centre, between February 13, 1996 and December 31, 2006, the total number of people killed by the state in connection with the People's War was 8,377, while 4,970 people were killed by the CPN (M).

This report follows the history of the CPN (M) since its beginning in 1995, focusing on key turning points and analysing how the organisation constantly tried to adapt its strategy and tactics in relation to political developments inside and outside Nepal. For that purpose, exclusive interviews were carried out with Maoist leaders, most frequently with Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, who is one of the main policy makers of the CPN (M) and has been a key figure in successive peace negotiations with the state.

1. Historical context and establishment of the CPN (M)

1.1 The long time dream of radical communists

Since its formation in 1949 in Kolkata, India, the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) has experienced continued intra-party debates about the most effective means for implementing political change. One faction has favoured a peaceful transition within the existing political system. In contrast, the other has advocated for armed struggle against the autocratic monarchy in Nepal. As Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, second-in-command of the CPN (M), explains, "The primary objective of forming the CPN was to bring about a new democratic revolution, basically that of peasants, by abolishing the feudal monarchy through armed struggle." However, until the launch of the People's War by the CPN (M) in 1996, Nepali communist groups did not resort to large-scale armed struggle.[4]

In 1960, the late King Mahendra seized power by military means, and introduced the Panchayat system, which strictly prohibited any activities by Nepali political parties. During the Panchayat period, the CPN broke up many times, with a major split occurring in 1974. Led by Mohan Bikram Singh and Nirmal Lama, a new party, the CPN (Fourth Convention), was formed, part of which later would become the present-day CPN (M). Bhattarai again explains, "While the CPN (Fourth Convention) did try to follow the path of armed struggle, the majority of the CPN was never prepared for this." Consequently, nearly 10 years later, the CPN (Fourth Convention) experienced a further split, with its more radical faction, led by Mohan Bikram, leaving to form the CPN (Masal) in 1983. Two years later, this faction broke up once more, as Mohan Vaidhya went on to establish the CPN (Mashal). These frequent splits, which impacted on these groups' long-term incapacity to take up weapons for accomplishing their aim, mainly occurred because of personal clashes among the leadership, with the strong personality of Mohan Bikram Singh as especially relevant factor.[5]

Even though both the CPN (Masal) and CPN (Mashal) sought to promote armed struggle, they did not put this idea into practice. According to Chandra Prasad Gajurel, former leader of the CPN (Mashal) and now a Central Committee member of the CPN (M), neither group could ever agree on concrete plans for carrying out an armed insurgency, nor did they have enough knowledge about how do so. However, as he goes on to indicate:

> After our participation in the first convention of the Revolutionary International Movement in 1984, we received plenty of documents on beginning a People's War from the Peruvian Communist Party, the Shining Path, as they too participated in this convention. We also had contacts with armed groups in India, such as the Indian Naxalite group and the Maoist Communist Center. By analysing those documents and the examples available in India, we also thought that although the 'mass line' was missing in Peru, the military plan and basic principles of the People's War adopted by the Shining Path nevertheless could be applicable in Nepal.

4 There is, however, one important exception: affected both by the Great Cultural Revolution in China and the Naxalite movement in India, the Jhapali group in eastern Nepal did launch a campaign to assassinate landlords in the region during the early 1970s.

5 During the Panchayat period, Mohan Bikram Singh played an important part in establishing communist strongholds ('red areas') in the Rolpa and Rukum Districts in western Nepal. Singh had many sympathisers among local schoolteachers, who contributed to spreading the communist ideology in these areas. These strongholds later became base areas for the CPN (M) insurgency.

Despite this, it would take five more years before any attempt at armed struggle would be realised. In 1989, for example, the CPN (Mashal) launched an urban insurrection in the Nepali capital, Kathmandu, by attacking police boxes. However, this insurrection was not effective and ended with the arrests of many party cadres. Taking full responsibility for the failure of this campaign, Vaidhya, the then General Secretary of the party, was demoted. Prachanda, (*aka* Pushpa Kamal Dahal), current chairman of the CPN (M), took over this position.

In January 1990, seven outlawed communist party factions, including its largest, the CPN (Marxist-Leninist), formed the United Left Front (ULF), with the aim of launching a popular movement against the Panchayat system. Crucially, neither the CPN (Mashal) nor the CPN (Masal) joined the ULF. Instead, they established the United National People's Movement (UNPM), which also included other more radical leftist groups. Working in cooperation with the largest outlawed party, the Nepali Congress (NC), the ULF launched a mass protest movement, subsequently referred to as the 'People's Movement' (*Jana Andolan*), in order to abolish the Panchayat system and restore multi-party democracy. Lasting 50 days, this campaign was so successful that in April 1990 the then King Birendra finally invited NC and ULF representatives to negotiations about re-instating a multi-party political system in Nepal. Although these two groups accepted this royal proclamation (subsequently declaring an end to their mass movement), the UNPM rejected it. Rather, they demanded that CA elections be held in order to formulate a new constitution. However, this demand was rejected by the majority alliance, as well as by the king. Instead, it was agreed that a new constitution would be formulated by a committee with representatives from the NC, the ULF, and the palace, leaving the UNPM entirely sidelined in this new political process. The new constitution addressed the issues of a constitutional monarchy and a multi-party parliamentary system, with the first general election to be held in April 1991.

After political parties were again legalised in 1990, some 30 years after being outlawed by the Panchayat system, various leftist factions in Nepal unified in advance of the scheduled parliamentary election. In particular, some radical factions—notably the CPN (Fourth Convention) led by Nirmal Lama, the CPN (Mashal) led by Prachanda and a faction led by Bhattarai that had rebelled against the CPN (Masal)—formed the CPN (Unity Center). Based on its on-going commitment to armed revolutionary struggle, the CPN (Unity Center) remained an underground organisation, but formed a political branch, the United People's Front Nepal (UPFN), led by Bhattarai, in order to participate in the general election. This manoeuvre was successful: the party became the third largest in the newly-elected House of Representatives,[6] with nine out of a total 205 seats. Only the NC, with 110 seats, and the CPN (UML), with 69 seats, were stronger.[7]

Bhattarai explains the objectives for participating in the election, despite the ideological rejection of the parliamentary system by the CPN (Unity Center):

> We participated in order to utilise the election as a forum for promoting revolutionary politics by demanding basic rights for oppressed people. We also wanted to expose the fact that a parliamentary system in Nepal would be inadequate because only a small section of rich people enjoy 'democracy'. Our activities in parliament were in fact one form of our preparations for the People's War.

6 After the return to constitutional monarchy in 1990, the Nepali parliament was made up of two chambers, the House of Representatives (*Pratinidhi Sawa*) and the National Assembly (*Rastriya Sawa*). The House of Representatives consisted of 205 members directly elected by the people, while the National Council had sixty members, ten nominated by the king, thirty-five elected by the House of Representatives and the remaining fifteen elected by an electoral college made up of chairs of villages and towns.

7 Formed in 1990, this was a new political party resulting from a merger between the CPN (Marxist-Leninist) and the CPN (Marxist).

Maoist leader Ananta (*aka* Barsa Man Pun), from Rolpa, reinforces this point by acknowledging that UPFN election victories in this district, both during the 1991 general parliamentary election and in the 1992 local elections, made it easier for his party activists to work there. In fact, Rolpa and its adjoining district, Rukum, eventually became Maoist strongholds.

1.2 Establishment of the CPN (M) and initiation of armed struggle

In late 1991, the CPN (Unity Center) held its Unity Congress, where party lines once again divided because of differences about how to implement revolutionary change. One faction, led by Prachanda, supported a Chinese-style protracted People's War; the other, led by Nirmal Lama, favoured a Russian-style general insurrection. Even after Prachanda's approach was adopted at the Unity Congress, intensive intra-party debate continued, eventually resulting in the break away of Nirmal Lama's faction in mid 1994. This would prove a crucial moment in the emergence of the CPN (M). For about six months later, in early 1995, Prachanda's faction and Bhattarai's UPFN held the Third Expanded Meeting of the Central Committee, when a decision was taken to change the name of both organisations to the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), under the Chairmanship of Prachanda. According to Bhattarai, this name change was oriented to strengthening the party's revolutionary image.

During this same meeting, the newly named CPN (M) also formally decided to quit parliamentary politics and begin preparations for armed struggle. Bhattarai describes the rationale behind this:

> For 238 years, the monarchy has been ruling this country in one form or another. Although since 1950, the people in Nepal had often launched political movements to bring about democracy, we could not establish it. Economically, our society is still at the semi-feudal stage: there are still big landlords and many peasants are unable to produce enough through their labours. Another problem is domination by foreign forces, especially by our neighbour India. A semi-colonial relationship with India continued even after India's independence. Nepal had to sign an unequal treaty with India in 1950 and its political and economic domination over Nepal continues to this day. To solve all these problems, we need to bring revolutionary changes. We have to overthrow the monarchy and then bring about socio-economic changes and radical land reform by acquiring political power through armed struggle.

Ananta elaborates Bhattarai's view by identifying five specific class problems in Nepal that must be resolved:

> We are communists, so we always talk about the class struggle. Firstly, in our society there are distinct economic classes of rich capitalists, poor peasants and labourers. Secondly, most of the people in power are Indo-Aryan high caste Hindus, but very few people from the lower castes and Janajatis [ethnic groups] are included in the power structure. Thirdly, people from regions such as Madhes [a plain region bordering with India] and Karnali [a Himalayan region in western Nepal] have traditionally been excluded from the power structure. Fourthly, outcaste Hindus, the Dalits, are still discriminated against, even in the 21st century. And fifthly, partly because of the Hindu religion, women in Nepal do not have equal rights with men in relation to property, education, health and so on. We

> fought peacefully for these oppressed classes for several years through the parliament and the street movement. But the government tried to suppress us by using police force and charging us with thousands of false crimes. In particular, after Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala of the Nepali Congress dissolved the House of Representatives because of an intra-party dispute in July 1994, we concluded that the parliamentary system in this country cannot work for the betterment of the people. We therefore decided to quit parliament and boycott the mid-term election in November 1994.

Having decided to launch an armed struggle at their 1995 meeting, the CPN (M) then had to determine an appropriate military strategy. Corresponding the radicalisation of their image by their name change, they adopted Mao Tse-tung's concept, a Protracted People's War, as their basic guideline for armed struggle. This Chinese-style approach to armed revolutionary struggle consists of three primary tactics: 1) encircling urban areas from the countryside; 2) a military strategy of guerrilla warfare; and 3) developing the war in three distinct, incremental phases: strategic defence, strategic stalemate and strategic offence. Bhattarai clarifies why the CPN (M) regarded this particular military strategy as useful:

> In a country like Nepal, where more than 80 percent of the population are peasants living in rural areas, it would be difficult to organise the masses for rising up against the State. We had to start with small forces that could expand and control rural areas, at first, and then could move on to urban areas in order to mobilise the masses. We basically decided to follow Mao's strategy. However, … as the situation in Nepal at this time was quite different from that in China half a century earlier, we thought it necessary to develop both the ideology and military strategy in our own unique way.

After their Third Expanded Meeting, the CPN (M) began ideological, political, organisational and material preparations for the People's War. Although Mao Tse-tung had launched an insurgency in only one area of China, the CPN (M) worked along three separate fronts where they had strong support bases: 1) the Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot Districts in midwestern Nepal; 2) the Gorkha and Lamjung Districts in central Nepal; and 3) the Sindhuli, Kavre and Sindhupalchok Districts in eastern Nepal. In October 1995, CPN (M) Central Committee members organised two meetings in the Gorkha and Rolpa Districts in order to finalise their plans for launching the insurgency.

In response to these activities, the government initiated its infamous Operation Romeo, seeking to control the Maoists by mobilising hundreds of police in Rolpa. Although the police arrested several hundred people during this two-month operation, it did not succeed in stopping the CPN (M) from initiating its armed struggle. The Maoists began holding mass meetings throughout Nepal, including Kathmandu, to publicise their intention to begin an armed insurrection.

Responsibility for determining the start date was given to the highest body of the party, the Politburo. As one of its members, Gajurel explains, "We held a Politburo meeting in Kathmandu at the end of January 1996, and decided to start the People's War on February 13th. We had kept the date of initiation very confidential and began preparations for day one of the armed struggle." At this same meeting, the Politburo prepared a memorandum listing 40 demands related to nationalism, people's democracy and livelihood, stating that if the government did not demonstrate any interest by February 17th, then the CPN (M) would launch an armed movement against the state. On February 4th, Bhattarai and a female party leader, Pampha Bhushal, went to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's office to hand over this list of demands in the name of the UPFN. The government indicated no interest at all and the CPN (M) therefore began its People's War as originally planned.

2. The Maoist armed insurgency: organisational growth and strategic evolution during the People's War

This section analyses the dynamics of 10 years of armed insurrection by the CPN (M), and the development of three instruments of the People's War: the party apparatus, the People's Liberation Army and the executive power branch of the movement, the People's Government, also called the 'United Front'. Between 1996 and 2006, the Maoist party tremendously expanded its armed forces—up to 30,000 combatants, and transformed the landscape of both Nepali politics and territory, controlling up to 80 percent of the country. The three chronological stages of the People's War also are successively reviewed (i.e., strategic defence, strategic stalemate and strategic offensive).

2.1 First stage: strategic Defence

When the CPN (M) began the People's War on February 13, 1996, there were fewer than 100 full-time party workers, which only included members of the Central Committee, the Regional Committees and District Secretaries.[8] According to Gajurel, who was at the time Party In-charge for eastern Nepal, for example, the party had District Committees in less than half of the country's districts (i.e., only 35 of 75). The number of trained armed forces was equally small, as Ananta verifies:

> We formed three types of forces, called *Radak Dal* [Fighting Groups], *Gaun Surakcha Dal* [Village Defence Groups] and *Swayamsewaka Dal* [Volunteer Groups]. In Rolpa, for instance, we formed four *Radak Dal*s, many members of which belonged to the District Committee, with each group having around 15 members … But the total number of our armed forces in the country was only around 200.

The first military actions of the People's War were simultaneous attacks on police posts in three different districts—Rolpa and Rukum in the west, and Sindhuli in the east—with the successful capture of a limited number of rifles and explosives. On the same night, the CPN (M) also distributed thousands of pamphlets appealing for mass support for the People's War as a means to establish a new democratic state in Nepal. Ananta, who had commanded the attack on the police post in Rolpa, describes his experiences of these early events:

> Around 35 select members of the *Radak Dals* in Rolpa, including two women, participated in the first day's action. We had only one .303 rifle, some homemade guns, *Khukhuris* [Nepali knives] and a few explosives with us. As we didn't know how to make bombs very well, the explosives we brought with us didn't work. The rifle was also broken. Still, we easily defeated the policemen there.

Despite their small numbers, as Ananta goes on to point out, during the first 15 days of the armed struggle, the CPN (M) carried out nearly 6,000 actions throughout the country, including torch processions, targeted explosions, burning bank documents and physical attacks on their enemies (i.e., landlords, bureaucrats and capitalists).

8 For a mapping of the CPN (M) structures, see Annex 3.

The CPN (M) insurgency was well planned and highly organised. During the First Plan of its military campaign, under the slogan 'Let us march ahead on the path of struggle towards establishing the people's rule by wreaking the reactionary ruling system of state', four distinct types of actions were carried out: 1) publicity; 2) enemy sabotage; 3) guerrilla actions; and 4) the assassination of class enemies. Once the government began a counter offensive against Maoist activities, the CPN (M) entered into its Second Plan, transforming the *Radak Dals* into squadrons. Summing up CPN (M) objectives, the slogan of the Second and Third Plans was: 'Let us develop guerrilla warfare in a planned way'. Following this strategy, Maoist fighters carried out an increasing number of ambushes on the police forces. After 18 months and entering into their Third Plan, the CPN (M) formed platoon-level forces in order to undertake yet more actions against the police forces. The primary purpose of this increased military capacity was twofold: 1) to collect guns and ammunition; and 2) to create local power vacuums.

In May 1998, the NC-led government launched a further counter-insurgency police operation, Kilo Sierra 2, which significantly increased Maoist fatalities. In response to this rising death toll, the CPN (M) convened its Central Committee for a Fourth Expanded Meeting in August. As Ananta explains, this would mark an important shift in CPN (M) military strategy:

> After we suffered large-scale casualties during the Kilo Sierra 2 operation, we realised that we would have to build our base area in order to develop the insurgency. By this time, local power already had begun to erode in some districts, such as in Rolpa and Rukum. We had to develop those guerrilla zones to increase our base area.

As a result of this decision to re-orient its military strategy, the CPN (M)'s Fourth Plan consisted of organising a task force that could carry out more professional military actions. Formed in early 1999, this task force combined three separate platoons from the Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot Districts. Under this Plan, the Maoists began to carry out larger-scale raids on police posts. This mobile warfare strategy was very effective: police posts and government offices were emptied in many villages, enabling the CPN (M) to begin establishing their own local power bases, by forming People's Committees, and later People's Governments. In December 2000 and March 2001, the first district-level People's Governments were established in Rukum and Rolpa.

Some eight months after the formation of its task force, and less than four years after the People's War had begun, the CPN (M) formed the first temporary company of its armed forces in Rolpa,[9] followed shortly by a second one in the Bheri-Karnali region. In September 2000, these two companies, based in western Nepal, carried out one of the first significant military actions of the People's War. Their combined strength consisted of 416 armed forces and 150 volunteers,[10] including more than 100 women (Pasang 2007). After a very hard, long trek on foot through the Himalayas at 4,400 metres above sea level, they arrived in Dunai, government headquarters of the Dolpa District. Once there, the companies carried out attacks on the District Police Office, the District Jail, the District Branch of the Nepal Bank and other government offices. Importantly, they also captured the government District Headquarters. During this military action, 15 police officers were killed, nearly 50 more were injured, all of the local prisoners were freed and Rs. 50,000,000 (€ 544,000.00) in cash was stolen. As Ananta, who led the forces as a political commissar, explains, "For the first time we attacked a District Headquarters and captured a Chief District Officer. The Dunai attack was a climax in the armed actions during the Strategic Defence stage in the People's War."

9 In early 2000, after an attack on Ghartigaun police post, this became a regular company.

10 Volunteers were non-armed Maoists and villagers who were in charge of helping to carry injured combatants and transport the weapons and ammunition they had captured.

2.2 Strategic shift: the Prachanda Path

Five months after the Dunai attack, in February 2001, the CPN (M) held its Second National Conference in India, which was the first mass meeting of the party since the start of the armed insurgency. Its goal was to review the first five years of the People's War and formulate future plans. Specifically, the party concluded that it could not achieve its political objectives by means of a protracted People's War alone. Hence, large-scale strategic shifts were necessary. To this end, CPN (M) leaders decided to adopt a strategy of urban insurrection, as well as work to mobilise a general public rebellion. Named the 'Prachanda Path', this new strategy was referred to as a fusion of the Chinese model of the Protracted People's War and the Russian model of urban insurrection. It was also decided to form the People's Liberation Army (PLA), the CPN (M)'s regular armed force, which would carry out more centralised military actions. In turn, this would strengthen the party's capacity for mobile warfare.

Shortly after this conference, in April, the CPN (M) operationalised their new strategic plan and attacked two police base camps in the Dailekh and Rukum Districts, killing more than 60 police officers. As a result, nearly all of the police forces in these areas withdrew from their village outposts and relocated to their District Headquarters. Local government administration personnel also left. Effectively creating a local power vacuum, these combined events enabled the establishment of a Maoist base area, where the CPN (M) could freely exercise power. Hence, it was stepping up the scale of their military activities that permitted the CPN (M) to carefully expand the areas under their control and establish local People's Governments. It was in this context that the Narayanhiti Palace massacre occurred, a fateful event that changed the entire political landscape of Nepal, including the People's War.

On June 1, 2001, at a palace dinner party, 10 members of the royal family died, including the then ruler, King Birendra. There was, however, a notable absence that fatal night: the younger brother of the king, Gyanendra, whose succession to the throne was immediate. Following the massacre, King Gyanendra formed a high-level committee to investigate the incident. After only one week, this committee concluded that Crown Prince Dipendra had shot and killed the other nine royals, including his parents, the king and queen. Although Dipendra also died, the committee report did not explain how, merely suggesting that either he had committed suicide or had been killed by somebody else. Despite foreign media reports in support of the committee's conclusion, the majority of people in Nepal did not believe the crown prince was responsible for all that had happened. Rather, they suspected King Gyanendra had been involved because none of his own family members (with the exception of his injured wife) were harmed in the incident.

In the midst of this confusion, five days after the event, the CPN (M)'s top ideologue, Bhattarai, published an article in *Kantipur*, a popular Nepali newspaper, claiming that King Gyanendra, a hardliner, had plotted the massacre with the support of both the South Block (i.e., India's foreign ministry) and the US government, in order to replace his more 'democratic' predecessor. Bhattarai elaborates the CPN (M) analysis of these events:

> After the Palace massacre, the traditional monarchy was replaced by a more hard-line monarchy backed by some foreign forces. … This was a conspiracy planned against the Maoists. PM Koirala had asked Birendra, Supreme Commander of the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA), to mobilise the army against the Maoists, but he was unwilling to do so. Consequently, these foreign forces, along with hard-liners close to the palace, made a pact with Gyanendra.

Gajurel further explains:

> About several months before the Palace massacre, [King] Birendra twice sent his brother Direndra as his official emissary to meet our leaders. … We understood that the king's intention was to inform us that there should be some good understanding between us and the monarchy so as to safeguard the sovereignty of Nepal, especially against India. We discussed the letter brought by Direndra in the Central Committee meeting. … However, the Narayanhiti Palace massacre changed everything.

As a result of the Palace massacre and ensuing events, the CPN (M) undertook a major tactical change in relation to their primary target. As Bhattarai again explains:

> Before the Palace massacre, the king was in the background of the political scene. In fact, he was politically inactive. It was the NC government that mobilised the police forces against us. At this point, the RNA had not yet been mobilised. Therefore, we did not directly attack the monarchy and the king's army. Rather, we attacked state power, which was controlled by parliamentary forces. After the Palace massacre, however, the political equation changed and the new king took control by exercising his absolute power. Hence, our new target became clear—the monarchy.

After the Palace massacre, the CPN (M) intensified their activities in both rural and urban areas. In mid July, for example, they again raided a police post in Holeri (Rolpa District), abducting 70 police officers. In response to this, PM Koirala asked King Gyanendra to deploy the royal army in order to rescue the abducted police officers, as local media reports testify. One week later, in a sudden and unexplained move, Koirala resigned. As it subsequently became known, the primary cause of his resignation was due to the fact that although the RNA were deployed, they did not fight against Maoist forces. Immediately after Koirala's resignation, on July 22nd, Sher Bahadur Deuba was elected as the new prime minister. On that same night, Maoist forces raided the Bajura police post, in a neighbouring district of PM Deuba's home district, killing 17 police officers. The new prime minister was clearly shocked by this attack and declared a ceasefire the following day, which the Maoists readily accepted. Quite suddenly, then, the government and the CPN (M) declared an official truce and agreed to hold peace negotiations for the first time since the beginning of the People's War five years earlier.

2.3 Second stage: strategic stalemate and Maoist expansion during the first ceasefire

While the CPN (M) sent a delegation to negotiate with the Deuba government (see below in section 3.1), it also decided to enter the second stage of the People's War, strategic stalemate, at a Central Committee meeting in Siliguri, India, in July 2001. According to Bhattarai:

> After the first truce was declared, we thought we had entered the stage of strategic stalemate because we had militarily defeated the police forces at that time. We were also in a politically superior position to the government. So we thought we were on equal footing with the State.

Strategic stalemate aims to gain a power balance with state forces by reducing the capacity and influence of the state while building up an alternative government-in-waiting. Between July and November 2001, the CPN (M) took advantage of the positive climate and open environment created by the on-going negotiations to expand their armed forces and increase their local power bases.

In early September, the party held a general conference in the mountainous area of the Rolpa District, and formed the United Revolutionary People's Council Nepal (URPCN). Led by Bhattarai, this was the CPN (M)'s Central People's Government. As the ceasefire continued, the CPN (M) also intensified their efforts to establish local People's Governments throughout the country. Four months later, they had formed district-level governing bodies in nearly two dozen of Nepal's 75 districts. They also held open mass meetings both in rural and urban areas, including the Kathmandu Valley.

Important military developments were also initiated at the general conference in Rolpa. Specifically, the CPN (M) officially formed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Chairman Prachanda himself became its chief. The Maoists now had structures in place for each of the three instruments of the People's War: the party, the army and the power, or the People's Government. As Ananta remarks, "In terms of military organisation, training and equipment, we developed our army most during the first truce period." Bhattarai sums up the advantages of this truce for the CPN (M):

> During the first truce, we gained more and lost less. We were able to go among the masses and propagate our political demands in a variety of ways. Internally, the more open environment allowed us to hold some important meetings and training sessions. Although the negotiations were unsuccessful, we did not regret this at all.

After the third round of negotiations broke down in November 2001 (see below in section 3.1), the CPN (M) unilaterally broke their ceasefire, and resumed the People's War by carrying out simultaneous attacks on two District Headquarters, including Ghorahi (Dang District), where the PLA used a 1,100 strong force to raid the barracks of the RNA. This was the first ever PLA attack on the royal army, thus representing a significant shift in their military strategy. Ananta, who was then in charge of Western Regional Military Headquarters, explains:

> By the time of the Holeri attack [in July] our battles with the police had already ended. We had defeated them. But after the Palace massacre, both the king and the army became active. We eventually discovered that even during the ceasefire period, the RNA had been increasing its forces and weapons capacity in various places. In Ghorahi, for example, the RNA had raised its troop levels from a company to a battalion force in preparation for attacking us in our base area. We therefore were obliged to attack the army barracks there.

This attack was successful, and the Maoists captured a large number of weapons and ammunition. The following day, Prachanda issued an official statement announcing the formation of the PLA and the URPCN. Established a few months earlier, the CPN (M)'s national governing body and regular army were now public realities.

The successful Ghorahi attack also marked a shift in CPN (M)'s military strategy, as indicated by Ananta:

> Before, we used mobile warfare tactics against the police, that is, 'hit and run' tactics with relatively small forces. But after the Ghorahi attack, we entered into a stage of highly mobile warfare and began to develop a positional warfare strategy, using larger PLA forces against our government targets.

Two days later, following another CPN (M) raid on Salleri (Solukhumbu District Headquarters) in eastern Nepal, the government declared a six month state of emergency and, for the first time, mobilised a full-scale nationwide deployment of RNA forces against the CPN (M). This was an important turning point: up until then, only the Nepal Police and the Armed Police Force[11] had been deployed to control the Maoist insurgency. However, after the state of emergency had been declared, both police forces were united under the command of the RNA. This resulted in a sharp rise in the number of casualties on both sides.

2.4 Intensified warfare during the state of emergency

In the months following the government declaration of a state of emergency in November 2001, the CPN (M) increased the scale of their military activities, especially in their base area of western Nepal. For instance, they carried out several raids on communications facilities in the Rolpa and Salyan Districts, effectively cutting off telephone services in those areas. In mid-February 2002, two PLA battalions, with approximately 1,200 forces, simultaneously attacked the District Headquarters in Mangalsen and the security forces at nearby Sanphebagar airport in the Accham District. At least 132 government security personnel, five civilians and 35 Maoists died in those attacks, making this the largest ever government loss.

Once PLA forces had returned to their base area, the security forces launched an air and land operation against them in an attempt to break up a gathering of PLA forces in eastern Rolpa, where an attack on Khalanga (Pyuthan District) was being planned. Although the PLA were forced to cancel this action at that time, they re-grouped and instead attacked the security force base camp in Gam village, located in northeast Rolpa, in May 2002. More than 70 security personnel and 35 Maoists were killed. The PLA was subsequently defeated in an attack on the army barracks in Khara (Rukum District), but in September they once again achieved victory in the District Headquarters of Arghakhanchi. Attacking the District Police Office, the District Jail, the RNA barracks and other government offices, they killed 69 government security personnel and captured a number of weapons.

However, the PLA's onward march came to a halt when they attempted to attack Khalanga (Jumla District) in mid November. Although they won over the police forces (killing 33 officers), they could not defeat the army. This was a bitter experience that resulted in a further change in their military strategy, as Bhattarai explains:

> From Ghorahi to Arghakhanchi, we carried out mostly successful military actions. But during those periods, the US and Indian governments were providing military assistance to the RNA, supplying them with modern weapons and US army training. The US army also taught the RNA to fortify their barracks, which made it difficult for us to carry out raids. After the Jumla attack, we therefore changed our tactics to drawing the security forces out of their barracks.

11 The Armed Police Force is a paramilitary force established in October 2001 with the purpose of countering the Maoist insurgency.

2.5 Third stage: strategic offensive

In January 2003, a PLA Special Task Force in the Kathmandu Valley assassinated the chief of the Armed Police Force, along with his wife and his bodyguard. This produced a startling result, as three days later, the government and CPN (M) took separate action to publicly declare a truce. Simultaneous to bilateral negotiations with the state (see below in section 3), in May 2003 the CPN (M) held a Central Committee meeting in the Rolpa District, taking important military decisions. In particular, according to Ananta, the party decided to form People's Militias and therefore began giving military training to all of its full-time party workers, as well as the general population in their base area.[12] They also formed a division-level PLA force in western Nepal in June, followed one year later by another in the east.

As soon as the CPN (M) broke their second truce at the end of August, they carried out two unsuccessful raids on the bases of the Armed Police Force in western Nepal. After this, the PLA primarily engaged in decentralised actions (e.g., assassinations and ambushes on security force vehicles). In March 2004, they once again began carrying out large-scale attacks, launching assaults on two District Headquarters, Bhojpur in the east and Beni in the west.

In terms of personnel and weaponry, the Beni attack was the largest-ever PLA military action. A variety of weapons were used and a total of some 4,500 people, including 2,600 armed combatants, drawn from all four of the PLA's Western Division brigades, participated in the attack. As Division Commander, Pasang (*aka* Nanda Kishor Pun) explains, "We needed to develop our war from mobile warfare tactics to positional warfare and had to show that we could carry out large-scale military actions."[13] In the attack, the PLA captured the District Police Office and the District Jail. They also destroyed nearly all of Beni's government buildings. Although they did not capture the RNA barracks, nonetheless this action was a success: PLA forces occupied the District Headquarters for nearly 12 hours.

Alongside these military activities, in January 2004, the CPN (M) also had begun new political exercises designed to enable autonomous governance by local people. Specifically, the country was divided into nine Autonomous Regions. Six of these were defined by nationality and the other three were regional. They also formed a People's Government and People's House of Representatives in each region (except in the Kathmandu Valley).[14] By forming these regional bodies, the CPN (M) had completed the creation of their own parallel power structures, from the village level right up to the central government.

The PLA military structure also had become highly developed, with two Divisions, seven Brigades, 19 Battalions, and many more Companies, Platoons and Squads in active operation.

Consequently, after three years of the second stage of the People's War, strategic stalemate, the CPN (M) decided it was time to enter into the final stage, the strategic offensive, with the aim of acquiring control of governing power at the state, or central, level. This decision was taken in August 2004, during a Central Committee meeting in Phuntibang (Rolpa District). Bhattarai explains this decision:

> By the time we sat for the Phuntibang meeting, we had successfully mobilised the masses by forming People's Governments at various levels and on various fronts. Most of the police stations in rural areas already had been abandoned and we were slowly expanding our military organisation. We also had begun

12 People's Militias were organised on a local basis, separate from other PLA military units.

13 Interview with Pasang in Rolpa, March 2006.

14 Later, the Maoists changed this to 'Autonomous Republic'.

> to practice positional warfare, which was the final stage of the People's War. We therefore thought that this was the time to enter the stage of the strategic offensive.

At the Phuntibang meeting, the CPN (M) made another crucial decision: to mobilise popular opinion against India. This strategic development was based on changes in Indian government policy toward the CPN (M), many leaders of which used to take safe shelter there. For example, in August 2003, an important member of the CPN (M) Politburo, Gajurel, was arrested at Chennai Airport. Over the next few months, other Maoist leaders met the same fate, and by April 2004, 11 out of the 95 Central Committee members had been arrested in India. Because of these incidents, the CPN (M) decided to relocate their party headquarters from India (where Chairman Prachanda and his staff had taken refuge) to Nepal. Amrita Thapa Magar, who participated in the Phuntibang meeting, remarks:

> After September 11th, the Indian government played a central role in suppressing our struggle. They banned our support organisation in India, the All India-Nepal Unity Society and began to arrest many of our leaders. We concluded that we should educate the general public to rise up against India's intervention and thus launched a campaign to dig tunnels for political awareness and for self-defence, to protect ourselves from potential air attacks by the RNA and the Indian army.

The Phuntibang meeting, finally, also was marked by intra-party confrontation that arose between Chairman Prachanda and his second-in-command, Bhattarai. Bhattarai clarifies this disagreement from his own position:

> After more than eight years of the insurgency, a sort of class system appeared in our party. Bourgeois characters slowly began to emerge, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction among some of the cadres. Another issue was the centralisation of leadership. In the previous year, when we had adopted Prachanda's concepts in 'The Development of Democracy in the 21st Century', we also agreed to adopt the idea of democratising the party so as to avoid concentrating power in one leader. However, against this, the Central Committee concluded that all party power should be centralised in the chairman, including authority for all three instruments of the People's War— the party, the army and the power, or the People's Government. Because we were entering the final stage of the war, the Committee decided we needed strong leadership. Along with other comrades, I opposed this decision. We thought that if one person became too powerful, then the party would become autocratic.
>
> We also had differing opinions regarding the anti-India campaign. Because there was no direct Indian military intervention in Nepal (for example, like the US did in Vietnam and Japan in China), we said we should focus instead on fighting against the monarchy. We maintained that democracy, not nationalism, should be the principle issue, while other comrades insisted on the need to prepare for an external intervention.

After Bhattarai's faction used the Nepali media to expose this confrontation in a 'Note of Dissent' that was issued in late 2004, this leadership conflict became more serious. So much so

was this the case that according to Ananta, the CPN (M) was about to split. The Politburo made a strong response to the public leaking of information about this internal party conflict. At a Politburo meeting in Lahabang (Rukum District) at the end of January 2005, they decided to take punitive action against three Politburo members: Bhattarai, his wife Hishira Yami, and Dina Nath Sharma.

However, the day after this decision was taken, on February 1st King Gyanendra carried out a *coup d'Etat* with the support of the RNA. This was a decisive turning point in relation to the CPN (M)'s internal dispute, according to Bhattarai: "After the king's coup, our internal dispute over issues of priority was automatically resolved because it had become clear that he was the main enemy. Actually, the king's move against the state brought us together." At a central committee meeting in Chunbang (Rukum District) in October 2005, the party decided to withdraw its punishment of Bhattarai and the two other leaders, thus restoring party unity.

Having declared a new unilateral ceasefire one month earlier (see below in section 3.4), the party nevertheless decided to pursue their strategic offensive by moving their armed forces towards the capital in order to attack central power forces. As Ananta explains:

> PLA forces in eastern Nepal moved towards the west, that is, towards Kathmandu and those in the west moved towards the east. Under the new slogan 'Attack on the head [central power, or the palace] by stepping on the backbone [the highway]', we centralised our PLA forces in both the Gandaki and Janakpur Regions, as well as in the surrounding area of the Kathmandu Valley. We intensified our military actions on highways, in urban areas and at District Headquarters. After the Chunbang meeting, we also increased PLA forces from three to seven divisions—partly because we came to know that the RNA were also increasing their divisions to six, and partly because we had to be ready for possible mass uprising in urban areas. After that, as many party full-timers as possible joined the PLA.
>
> Even though a PLA division commander was killed in RNA aerial bombing in the Rolpa District in November, the CPN (M) voluntarily extended their three-month ceasefire for another month. However, after the security forces launched their largest-ever operation against the CPN (M) at the end of December—clearly with the intention of stirring them up and getting them to break their truce, the CPN (M) broke their unilateral ceasefire and resumed military action in early January 2006.

However, this last series of campaigns would only last a few months, ending in April, when the Maoists joined other political forces to participate in a peaceful revolution and a new peace process began the following month. Subsequent events are treated in section 4, after a review of the dynamics of peace negotiations between the CPN (M) and the Nepali state since 2001.

3. Between accommodation and revolution: a series of failed peace negotiations with the Nepali state

The CPN (M) is at heart a political party, and it always has subordinated its military structure and strategies to its long-term political vision. Its initial overarching aim was to secure state power and establish a socialist democracy. Its primary political demands, first articulated during the February 2001 national party conference and consistently spelt out during the last few years of the People's War, have evolved around: 1) a call to convene a roundtable conference with all political parties; 2) the formation of an Interim Government that included the CPN (M); and 3) the election of a Constituent Assembly tasked to formulate a new constitution.

This section examines the successive attempts by the CPN (M) and Nepali governments to end the armed conflict and resolve its various structural and security issues through inter-party negotiations. The time frame in question begins in 2001 and ends in May 2006, when Maoists made a decisive turn to peaceful struggle.

3.1 The first peace talks (August-November 2001)

The first series of negotiations between the CPN (M) and the Nepali government took place shortly after the Palace massacre, the replacement of PM Koirala by his NC colleague Deuba and mutual ceasefire declarations by the Maoists and the government in July 2001 (see above in section 1). In August, they held a first round of peace talks on the outskirts of Kathmandu. The Maoists were represented by a three-member negotiating team. In the first meeting, no agenda was tabled, as Bhattarai explains:

> We wanted political change with the least sacrifice. We therefore gave the government an opportunity to devise a political solution. At the same time, we wanted to publicise to the masses our political will to find a solution through peaceful negotiation. Politically, the power balance was in our favour because [King] Gyanendra was not popular among the people and there were disputes among NC party members. So we thought there was a minor chance of success.

Just two days before the second round of talks was scheduled to begin, the World Trade Center in New York was attacked. This far-away event radically changed the political scene in Nepal. In particular, this had hugely negative consequences for the CPN (M) and opposition against them grew, both within and outside Nepal. Following anti-terrorist trends, the Indian and US governments listed the CPN (M) as a proscribed terrorist group, and the Indian government deployed its security forces along the Nepali border and banned the CPN (M)'s sister organisation in India.

Despite these developments, the second round of talks went ahead as planned. The CPN (M) tabled a 31-point list of demands to the government talk team. Three political demands were of special significance: 1) to give the right of formulating a new constitution to the people; 2) to dissolve the current government and form an Interim Government; and 3) to take steps toward the introduction of a republic in Nepal. This latter demand proved to be a sticking point, even though the CPN (M) eventually shifted their position. Bhattarai discusses the rationale behind this change:

> Our priority was to directly declare a republic, but the government side was not ready for this. So we instead proposed to hold CA elections where this issue could be debated. This was our second option. However, the government did not even accept this alternative demand, telling us that the Nepal constitution was one of the best in the world and there was no need to make a new one.

Although the CPN (M) participated in a third round of talks in mid November, there was no possibility of the two sides finding a solution to their disagreements. On the contrary, the government flatly rejected all three of the main CPN (M) demands. Clearly, this was an effect of growing anti-terrorist sentiments throughout the world, which Ananta confirms:

> Before September 11th, the government showed more flexibility. There was a slight possibility of finding a middle way. But after that, all possibilities were lost. In particular, the US-backed Deuba government began to behave to us in such a way as to tell us, 'You have to surrender. Otherwise, go back to war.'

On November 21st, after an inconclusive end to the third round of talks, Prachanda made a public declaration that the peace negotiations had broken down. Two days later, the CPN (M) made a unilateral decision to break the truce by attacking two District Headquarters, and on November 25th, the government announced a six-month State of Emergency (see above in section 1).

3.2 Informal dialogue during the state of emergency (November 2001-April 2003)

While official negotiations reached a deadlock and the parties went back to war, behind-the-scenes moves between the CPN (M) and the other main political parties began to take place. Already, in September 2001, the Maoists had arranged a secret meeting with top leaders of other communist parties in Siliguri (India), where they offered to work together to fight for establishing a republic. However, the CPN (UML), the largest communist party in Nepal, did not agree with this. Later, in April 2002, Prachanda and Bhattarai also met with NC president Koirala in New Delhi. This was the first ever such meeting between the two parties. According to Bhattarai, they made the same proposal to Koirala:

> After the Palace massacre, we had been trying to unite with other political parties to fight against the monarchy and took steps to meet with them. We told Koirala, 'Let's fight together against the monarchy. We will accept the multi-party system, if you agree to a republic'. In terms of a joint movement, Koirala was not negative, but could not give us a clear answer. In May, we had another meeting with second rank leaders of the NC … in New Delhi. Just two days after this meeting, King Gyanendra dissolved the House of Representatives.

When the six-month state of emergency was set to expire in May 2002, a large-scale dispute about extending it arose within the ruling NC. PM Deuba asked King Gyanendra for permission to dissolve the House of Representatives, and extend the state of emergency for another three months. The king allowed Deuba to do so, but only on the condition that there would be a general election within six months, as stipulated in the constitution. Although this appeared to be a move on Deuba's part, Bhattarai instead claims that the House of Representatives was dissolved because the king had been informed about the CPN (M)'s attempt to form an alliance

with other political parties against the monarchy. After this dissolution, which was followed by the nationwide dissolution of local government in August, Nepal entirely lacked any type of representative political leadership. This move allowed King Gyanendra to more easily exercise his power, and also prompted a split in the NC, with Koirala remaining as leader of the mainstream party, and PM Deuba heading up the new Nepali Congress (Democratic), or the NC (D).

The CPN (M) indicated its willingness to resume negotiations while denouncing PM Deuba's manoeuvres. In a statement issued after the Arghakhanchi attack, Prachanda declared: "If the government wants a positive, peaceful and political solution, we are ready to declare a ceasefire at any time in order to start talks. However, if the government continues its false propaganda about its intentions to hold a general election and keeps murdering people, we want to make it clear that we are prepared to step up our military actions." But far from showing an interest in negotiations, the administration continued to try to control the Maoist insurgency through military means.

During this time, King Gyanendra also was publicising his intention to become involved in politics by making frequent appearances in both the national and international media. On October 4th, when PM Deuba asked the king to postpone the general election because of the public security situation, the king responded by dismissing him and his cabinet. One week later, he appointed a royalist supporter, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, as the new prime minister. Because the constitution did not give the king this right, his action was in fact a bloodless coup.

3.3 The second peace talks (April-August 2003)

In reaction to the king's anti-constitutional move, in autumn 2003 the five main Nepali political parties, including the NC and the CPN (UML), started a street protest movement against the autocratic rule of King Gyanendra. When the CPN (M) and the Palace-backed government unexpectedly announced a second mutual ceasefire (see above in section 2), this move created suspicion among the mainstream parties' ranks: within the triangular structure of Nepali politics, they effectively had been sidelined by the king and the CPN (M).

Despite its efforts to forge an anti-monarchy alliance with the opposition parties, the CPN (M) nonetheless took up the king's offer for a second round of peace negotiations. Bhattarai discusses the rationale behind this move:

> After the Palace massacre, we constantly interacted at various levels with other political parties in order to unite against the king. However, they did not respond to us. In contrast, the king offered us the chance of negotiations. As we had been saying that we were ready for talks at any time, and that we wanted a political solution, there was no reason to reject this offer. From the king's side, he might have thought that he would be able to acquire political legitimacy by calling for negotiations with us. From our side, although we were not so hopeful about the success of talks, we nonetheless thought there would be nothing for us to lose. After fighting with the RNA for nearly a year, we had gained both political and military strength. Since the new king was unpopular because of his notorious image and the other political parties were marginalised, we thought we were in a more favourable position than at the time of the first peace negotiations. This was why we sent high-ranking leaders to negotiate with the king, despite our apprehensions that he only might be playing a game.

Negotiations began in Kathmandu in late April 2003. The government team was led by the Minister for Information and Communication, Ramesh Nath Pande, with Bhattarai

leading a three-member Maoist team. The CPN (M)'s list of 24 demands included the formation of Interim Government, and the organisation of CA elections within six months. Concerning the new Constitution, they demanded full sovereignty for the people, a system of proportional representation for parliamentary elections, the formation of a new national army that combined both the PLA and the RNA and the declaration of Nepal as a secular state.

In early May, both negotiating teams discussed the possibility of restricting RNA activity to a five kilometre radius from their barracks during the ceasefire period. However, this gave rise to strong repulsion from top RNA leadership, who officially rejected this idea. Although Minister Pande stated in a BBC Radio interview that the government had regarded this restriction of RNA activity as only a proposal, Bhattarai claims that the government team actually had made an agreement:

> We held an unofficial and confidential meeting with the government talk team in the morning of the same day that we sat for the second round of negotiations. In that unofficial meeting, government ministers, including Pande, agreed to this restriction. However, while we were in the second round of talks, Prime Minister Chand phoned me and said that there was some resistance from the Palace about this issue. I then told him to get a confirmation from the Palace. After an hour, Chand phoned again to say 'OK'. So, as far as we were concerned, we had made a decision on this issue and made it public in a press conference held after the meeting.

Chand resigned 21 days after this controversy. On June 4th, the king appointed an even more hardline royalist supporter, Surya Bahadur Thapa, as the new prime minister. The Thapa administration formed a new talk team, but their relationship to the CPN (M) increasingly cooled down. After the security forces began to arrest CPN (M) members in the capital during July, the party abruptly closed its Kathmandu offices. Its negotiating team members, along with other party activists, also went underground. At the end of July, the CPN (M) gave the government a five-day ultimatum, including five conditions for their continued participation in the peace process. In particular, they demanded the king's direct participation in the negotiations and the annulment of the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Agreement, which had been signed with the US government three months earlier.

Although the government did not respond to all of the CPN (M) conditions, they nonetheless agreed to sit for a third round of negotiations. According to Bhattarai, they did so 'just for public attention'. Two days of talks began in western Nepal in mid August, when the government talk team tabled their own concept paper, which proposed amendments to the constitution. However, the CPN (M) did not give up their demand for CA elections. On the day when negotiations were set to begin, this stalemate worsened because 19 non-armed Maoists and civilians were killed by the RNA in the Ramechap District in eastern Nepal. One week later, Chairman Prachanda declared through the party website that the seven-month long truce was over and that the second peace talks had ended.

3.4 Cooperation between the CPN (M) and the Seven Party Alliance[15] against the monarchy

In 2005, the political spectrum altered significantly following a rapprochement between the Maoists and the mainstream opposition parties against the king. One important factor that enabled this shift was the ideological reorientation undertaken by the Maoists in May 2003, during the second series of peace negotiations. At a Central Committee meeting in the Rolpa District, Prachanda presented a proposal entitled 'The Development of Democracy in the 21st Century', which was unanimously endorsed. One of its principle concepts was for the CPN (M) to accept a competitive multi-party political system instead of the traditional one-party communist system, as Bhattarai explains:

> We analysed communist experiences in the 20th century, especially why socialism had been unsuccessful. We then concluded that in order to make it possible for the people to correct the mistakes of the one-party system, there should be competition among political parties within a constitutional framework. This was not a completely open system, but instead restricted competition to anti-monarchist and anti-imperialist parties. Therefore, accepting the multi-party system did not mean we had given up our effort to establish socialism. Rather, we thought that there should be political competition even in a socialist system.

Another event which facilitated cooperation between the CPN (M) and SPA was the king's second bloodless coup. On the morning of February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra appeared on state television to address the nation. In his 30-minute speech, he first proclaimed that he intended to dismiss the Deuba administration[16] on the grounds that it was neglecting the issue of holding a general election. The king also accused politicians of devoting themselves to intra-party fighting for control of power. He further declared that he would form a new government under his own leadership. Within three years' time, he promised to restore the multi-party political system by once again establishing peace and security in Nepal. The king also announced that the State would take a strong action against the Maoist insurgency.

Simultaneous to this royal proclamation, RNA security forces were deployed. They detained the leaders of the main political parties and cut off all communication facilities, including telephone lines, mobile phones and internet connections. That same evening, another national state of emergency was declared, which restricted the fundamental rights of the people, including freedom of speech, freedom to gather in public and freedom of movement, and so on. This coup had a powerful political effect throughout the country.

One immediate response from the CPN (M) was to send Bhattarai to India, in order to engage with other Nepali political leaders who had left Kathmandu after the king's move and to lobby Indian politicians for support in the stand against the monarchy. While in India, Bhattarai was very busy, as he indicates:

> As soon as I reached New Delhi, I met Prakash Karat, the General Secretary of the CPI-M [Communist Party India-Marxist], as well as some leaders of the NC and CPN (UML), and I arranged a meeting between Comrade Prachanda and the NC leader, Koirala. These two top leaders met in New Delhi on June 13, 2005, their

15 The Seven Party Alliance (subsequently referred to as the SPA) includes: the NC, the NC (D), the CPN (UML), the ULF, the People's Front of Nepal, the Nepal Laborers and Peasants Party, and the Nepal Sadhbhavana Party (Anandi Devi).

16 Deuba had been restored as prime minister in June 2004, following intense political protest.

> first meeting for three years. By that time, the seven main political parties had decided to unite and fight against the autocratic rule of the king, in particular to hold CA elections. In this meeting, we put forward our demand to Koirala to form an alliance with us for joint movement on behalf of forming a republic. We said it was only through a united movement that we could defeat the monarchy. Koirala replied by saying, 'We can go slowly in that direction.' Although he did not give us a clear answer, this meeting nonetheless eventually paved a way for the formation of an alliance with the SPA.

The three foreign governments—India, the US and the UK—that had been giving military assistance to Nepal in their counter offensive against the CPN (M) also expressed their displeasure about the king's coup and suspended their support.

In May 2005, the SPA launched a peaceful movement against King Gyanendra. They demanded both the restoration of full democracy in Nepal and the re-instatement of the House of Representatives, which had been dissolved three years previously, in May 2002. The NC also made an historic decision to remove all references to the monarchy from its party constitution. Simultaneously, a number of civil society groups began a street movement against the monarchy.

Meeting with representatives from the NC and the CPN (UML) in New Delhi in August, CPN (M) leaders Bhattarai and the party spokesperson, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, announced their willingness to declare a unilateral truce. According to Bhattarai, the reasons for this decision were as follows:

> King Gyanendra planned to visit New York to attend the United Nation's general conference in September. We thought if we unilaterally declared a truce, and the king's government did not respond to this, then he would be put in a difficult situation at the UN conference. Although the SPA was sceptical about our decision, thinking that it might give an advantage to the king, we nonetheless declared a three-month ceasefire in early September.

In fact, the CPN (M)'s strategy worked: King Gyanendra cancelled his trip to New York, and an alliance between the Maoists and the SPA became more realistic. One month after declaring their truce, the CPN (M) held a Central Committee meeting in Chunbang (Rukum District), where an historic decision was made to ally with the SPA to fight against the monarchy. The party also decided to launch a people's movement guided by the slogan 'Democratic Republic' (*Loktantric Ganatantra*), and to focus their international campaigns against US imperialism.

Following this Central Committee meeting, bilateral discussions between leaders of the CPN (M) and CPN (UML)[17] resulted in a decision to convene a meeting of all the top political party leaders in New Delhi on November 17th. Together, they reached an historic 12-point Understanding, including an end to the king's direct rule, the institution of full democracy through the election of a Constituent Assembly that would formulate a new constitution and a request to the UN to supervise both the RNA and the PLA in order to guarantee a fair and impartial CA election. Bhattarai recalls:

> In the meeting, discussions were primarily among three political parties—the NC, the CPN (UML) and the CPN (M), plus a few leaders from the CPN (Unity Center). While drafting the Understanding, we insisted on the term 'democratic republic' instead of 'full democracy'. However, leaders from the NC did not agree

17 CPN (UML) Standing Committee member Bamdev Gautam met with Prachanda and Bhattarai in Rolpa. They agreed to fight together for a republic and signed a 6-point Agreement.

> to the word 'republic'... So we had to compromise with [them] on this issue. But we understood that if we agreed to a neutral term, we could interpret it our own way. In terms of the weaker term 'Understanding', we in fact had proposed 'Agreement', but the NC again disagreed with us, instead insisting that it should just be an Understanding. They were worried that if they directly allied with the CPN (M), legal complications might arise. On this issue, too, we ultimately made a concession to them because we thought that the most important thing was to form a united front with the SPA to fight against the monarchy. After we made an alliance with them, three-way fighting amongst the central political forces in Nepal had, for the first time, become two-way fighting. That is, the revolutionary Maoists and the democratic parliamentary parties joined forces to fight against the autocratic monarchy. That was an important moment.

The king's government declared it would hold municipal elections throughout the country in early February 2006. In response to this move, and with tacit support from the SPA leadership, the CPN (M) announced an end to their unilateral ceasefire and made it clear that they would do their best to obstruct the election. After resuming their military activities in January, the PLA raided several municipalities, including the historic town of Tansen (Palpa District), and the Tankot police station inside the Kathmandu Valley. They also assassinated a number of candidates who were standing for election. As a result of these actions, nearly 75 percent of the seats were without candidates and voter turnout only reached 21 percent.

Ten days after the municipal elections, in mid-February 2006, Chairman Prachanda issued a statement declaring that an indefinite blockade of the Kathmandu Valley, as well as all District Headquarters, would begin on March 14th, to be followed by an indefinite general strike across the country. Five days after the blockade began, CPN (M) leaders met with the SPA in New Delhi. As Bhattarai explains, another important agreement was reached:

> After the municipal elections ended unsuccessfully, the SPA became inactive again. Although our understanding was that we would launch joint movements against the monarchy, they had failed to do so effectively. We requested that they hold a meeting to make a decision about this, but they did not respond. So we declared that we would start our own programmes. They then agreed to attend a meeting. In addition to me, Shekar Koirala from the NC and both Jala Nath Khanal and Bamdev Gautam from the CPN (UML) attended. We reached an agreement that we would cancel our 'political general strike', with the SPA instead launching a four-day general strike on April 6th, including a mass rally in Kathmandu on April 8th. On the day of the meeting, we issued a joint statement entitled 'The Second Understanding'. In fact, we had used the word 'Agreement' in New Delhi, but this again was changed to 'Understanding' in Kathmandu.

3.5 Maoist involvement in the 19-day April 2006 revolution

The four-day general strike actually lasted 19 days. Although it was called publicly by the SPA, the CPN (M) fully participated in various ways. The Maoists had proposed a joint movement, but the SPA hesitated. According to Bhattarai, "They were afraid of having a direct alliance with us because of pressure from foreign forces, mainly the US. In order to support the strike, we compromised and it was formally announced in the name of the SPA."

Days before the general strike was scheduled to begin, the CPN (M) declared a unilateral truce in the Kathmandu Valley so that the SPA could freely carry out their street programmes,

including demonstrations and mass rallies. On April 4th, the king issued a prohibition order against mass gatherings and demonstrations in Kathmandu and Lalitpur. As soon as the general strike started, all traffic was stopped and most of the schools, shops and offices throughout the country closed down. Despite the prohibition order and the daytime curfew in Kathmandu and surrounding areas, many people took to the streets. Although the government tried to control the masses by activating all of the police forces, the Armed Police Force and the RNA, confrontations between the people and the security forces intensified on a daily basis. The Home Minister, Kamal Thapa, blamed Maoist penetration of the movement, even though the CPN (M) never officially declared their involvement.

Outside the Kathmandu Valley, the PLA continued military activities. On the eve of the first day of the general strike, they carried out simultaneous attacks on two District Headquarters, in Butwal and Taurihawa. Ananta, deputy commander of the PLA and In-charge of the Special Central Region, which included the Kathmandu Valley, describes their involvement:

> During the 19-day general strike, a brigade of the PLA's Third Division was in the Kathmandu Valley. They went to demonstrations and participated in street agitations, throwing stones and fighting with security forces. We also sent as many people as possible from the surrounding districts of the Kathmandu Valley under the banner of the SPA to participate in demonstrations. We sent more than 90,000 people from the Kavre District alone to the cities, including Kathmandu and Banepa.

Even though a curfew had been imposed and the royal government was doing its best to suppress the strike, more and more people came out to the streets, chanting anti-monarchy slogans. The strike spread throughout the country, and even included government officials. On April 21, 2006 Nepal's largest-ever demonstration occurred, with several hundred thousand people filling the 27-kilometre long Ring Road that surrounds Kathmandu and Lalitpur. That night, King Gyanendra responded by declaring that administrative power would be returned to the people. He also appealed to the SPA to select a prime minister themselves and recommend him or her to the king, but the SPA rejected this offer, instead calling for a 'Million People Demonstration' on the Ring Road on April 25th. However, in a late evening broadcast on government-run television on April 24th, King Gyanendra proclaimed that he would return sovereignty to the people and reinstate the House of Representatives (dissolved four years earlier, in May 2002), which was a primary demand of the SPA. He also asked them to form a new government. The following day, the SPA declared an end to their general strike, calling the royal proclamation a victory. This decision produced confused reactions among the general population and political activists, as many people were dissatisfied with the decision to end the general strike. They thought that if the strike had continued for a few more days, the goal of a republic could have been achieved.

The CPN (M) condemned the SPA for accepting the king's proclamation without consulting with them and made it clear that they intended to reject it. They further declared that they would begin blockades in all of the District Headquarters until an announcement to hold CA elections was made. However, in response to a request by the NC leadership, the CPN (M) announced the next day that it would postpone the blockades until the first meeting of the reinstated House of Representatives. According to Ananta:

> The SPA betrayed us by compromising with the king without consulting us. Although we were the very force fighting against the monarchy, the SPA compromised with the king to get power and jobs in Parliament. We also thought they

> made a concession in order to maintain the ceremonial monarchy. But the Nepali people who had participated in the general strike wanted to get rid of the monarchy and institute a republic. So in that sense, the SPA had betrayed both us and the people. At the same time, we knew that the people in Nepal were longing for peace. Moreover, the SPA had assured us they would hold a meeting of the reinstated House of Representatives for only one or two days before dissolving it. They also assured us that after this, they would hold a roundtable meeting to form an Interim Government which included the CPN (M). But … instead of dissolving the House of Representatives quickly, they ran it for the next eight months.

The SPA appointed Koirala as the new prime minister, which was the 83 year old NC leader's fourth mandate. On April 30th, the reinstated House of Representatives passed a vote to hold CA elections. With control over more than 90 percent of the chamber, the SPA adopted the 'Proclamation of the House of Representatives 2006' on May 18th, which brought about a number of significant historic constitutional changes. In particular, all of the king's special rights were abolished and he became an ordinary Nepali citizen. The RNA became the Nepali Army (NA). The king could no longer appoint the army's Commander-in-Chief, who instead would be selected by the Cabinet. And Nepal gave up its official title as a Hindu state to become a secular state. The CPN (M) welcomed this proclamation, although they expressed dissatisfaction with the SPA for not altogether abolishing the monarchy and accused them of trying to maintain a ceremonial monarchy.[18]

On April 26th, the CPN (M) announced a three-month ceasefire, and the new SPA government did likewise on May 3rd, setting the stage for a third, decisive series of peace negotiations.

18 Official statement by Prachandaon May 18, 2006.

4. Transition to peace and non-violent politics in a democratic state

This final section presents both the internal transformations within the CPN (M) from a wartime movement to a peacetime party, following its decision to give up the armed struggle and engage in a process of peaceful political development, as well as its interaction with other political forces in Nepal since May 2006. It also describes the dynamics of an unsteady but decisive peacemaking and democratisation process, along with the multiple structural and procedural issues that repeatedly have impeded its development; e.g. constitutional change, the Constituent Assembly election, arms management, inter-ethnic clashes and minority groups' representation, etc.

4.1 Negotiations towards a Comprehensive Peace Agreement

On May 26, 2006, the Maoists and the government held a first negotiation meeting in Kathmandu, with the two teams headed respectively by the CPN (M) spokesperson Mahara and the Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaura. They agreed on a 25-point Code of Conduct that each would have to maintain during the truce. In the press conference held after the meeting, Mahara said, "In contrast to the two previous peace negotiations, this time both sides have already agreed to hold CA elections. So we think the future of the negotiations is bright. We will not return to bloody war again."

Demonstrating the truth of Mahara's words, CPN (M) leaders and cadres, who had worked underground since the beginning of the People's War, slowly began to appear in public, participating in mass rallies and other public programmes. The CPN (M) also held a huge mass demonstration in the centre of Kathmandu in early June, including thousands of PLA members and numerous cadres from other parts of Nepal. Both in public speeches and through media interviews, Maoist leaders tried to convey their intention of not returning to armed struggle. Chairman Prachanda and Bhattarai, who until then had remained underground, also began to make public appearances, including national and international television programmes and in magazines, in order to speak about their desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Prachanda's first media appearance in 35 years of political life took place at the press conference that was held after a meeting with SPA leaders at the prime minister's official residence on June 16th.

This summit was a dramatic and historic event. The head of the government negotiating team, Home Minister Sitaula, arranged for the two top CPN (M) leaders to be flown to the meeting by helicopter from Siklis (Kaski District), where they had been holding a political training session. Lasting until late evening, the meeting resulted in an Eight-point Agreement between the eight political parties; i.e., the CPN (M) and the SPA. Highlights of this Agreement included: 1) the formation of both an Interim Constitution and power-sharing government within one month; 2) dissolution of both the House of Representatives and various levels of the CPN (M)'s People's Governments; and 3) an invitation to the UN for supervision of the arms management process for both the NA and the PLA, until CA elections could be held. As Bhattarai explains:

> Because the king had been defeated, we assessed that there was a greater possibility of success for the peace negotiations. We already had decided that when the peace process moved ahead, our top leadership both would participate and begin making public appearances. However, it was not pre-planned that we would appear in front of the media on that very day. Instead, this was suddenly decided when we were at the prime minister's residence. In fact, regarding the

> Eight-point Agreement, a preliminary understanding already had been reached when we talked with Home Minister Sitaula in Siklis. This was finalised at the first summit meeting. We thought this Agreement was a major breakthrough because our main demand to dissolve the old Parliament and form an Interim Legislature, along with an Interim Government (including our representatives) had been accepted. This is why we decided to appear in front of the media while we were holding the meeting.

Despite the presence of top SPA leadership at this first meeting, soon afterwards some of these parties—notably the CPN (UML) and the NC (D)—blamed the NC and the CPN (M) for making decisions about important issues without consulting them. Specifically, they pointed to the decision to dissolve the House of Representatives. In addition to such in-fighting among the SPA, the poor health of the aged prime minister also often disrupted the smooth progress of the peace process.

As soon as the Eight-point Agreement was made public, a variety of disagreements broke out over its provisions. For instance, the committee formed to draft the Interim Constitution was criticised publicly because no women were included among its six members. Serious criticism also arose among many MPs, including within the NC itself, about the decision to dissolve the House of Representatives. Amidst this growing dissent, another factor created even greater problems. Namely, it soon became known that without consulting any of the other parties, PM Koirala secretly had sent an official letter to the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, on July 2nd to request CPN (M) weapons decommissioning. The CPN (M) reacted with strong opposition to this move, claiming it was against the earlier 12-point Understanding and the Eight-point Agreement. On July 23rd, Chairman Prachanda also wrote a letter to the UN General Secretary opposing the contents of the government's letter. On July 31st, during a meeting with the UN investigation team sent to address the issue of arms supervision in Nepal, PM Koirala made it clear that he was not going to include the CPN (M) in the Interim Government until PLA arms had been decommissioned. This issue would become the central obstacle to the peace process.

After several rounds of negotiation, the government and the CPN (M) finally reached an agreement to send another letter to the UN Secretary General, which was handed over to a UNHCR representative on August 9th. This letter contained a number of joint requests, asking the UN to: 1) monitor the human rights situation in Nepal through the OHCHR's Nepal office; 2) monitor whether both armed forces, the NA and the PLA, were observing the code of conduct during the truce; 3) deploy experienced civilians to verify and monitor PLA soldiers and weapons, to ensure that the NA remained inside its barracks and to make sure that neither side was using weapons; and 4) supervise CA elections. However, even after this joint letter was sent, PM Koirala, along with a chorus of foreign voices (including the US Ambassador), continued to assert that until and unless the Maoists disarmed, they would not be invited to join the Interim Government.

In addition to this large-scale disagreement over weapons decommissioning, the committee drafting the Interim Constitution also encountered difficulties in completing their mission because of divergent opinions among its members. One of the main issues that they could not agree on was the monarchy. In particular, CPN (M) committee members maintained that the Interim Constitution should declare a republic, but other members objected and instead argued that the future of the monarchy should be decided in the Constituent Assembly. At the end of August, the committee finally submitted an incomplete draft to both negotiation teams, with most of the important issues remaining undecided.

In late August, the CPN (M) held another Central Committee meeting in Kamidanda, close to the Kathmandu Valley, to discuss a strategy for dealing with the current stalemate. Chairman Prachanda tabled a proposal that was severely critical of the current state of play. He

accused the leaders of the mainstream Parliamentary parties of refusing to dissolve the House of Representatives. He criticised the prime minister for secretly sending his letter to the UN, further suggesting that Koirala had been operating under the influence of foreign forces, especially the US. He criticised the government for appointing Rukmangad Katawal as the new Commander-in-Chief of the NA on the grounds that he grew up in the palace and was known as one of the primary suppressers of the People's Movement in April. And he expressed suspicion that foreign forces and their Nepali followers intended to drive the Maoists back to the war. At the end of their four-day meeting, the Maoists concluded that they would not give up on the peace process. Primarily by continuing peaceful urban street protests, they also decided to put strong pressure on the government for devising a political solution. They further agreed that they would accept UN supervision of the arms management process, but only after political issues related both to the Interim Constitution (i.e., the future of the monarchy) and the Interim Government were resolved.

Because of differing opinions between the Koirala-led government and the Maoists, primarily over the issue of arms management, the SPA and the CPN (M) did not hold the second round of negotiations until nearly four months later. In early October, top leaders from both sides finally got together again at the prime minister's residence. It took one month to reach joint agreement on all of the primary issues, including the future of the monarchy and arms management. Bhattarai, a CPN (M) negotiating team member, discusses at length the most difficult issues for reaching consensus:

> The most controversial issue was the monarchy. We wanted to directly declare the end of the monarchy and establish a republic in the Interim Constitution. However, the leaders of the NC in particular … did not want to decide the future of the monarchy before CA elections, but instead wanted to wait until afterwards. Our view was that the elections could take a couple of years and we did not want to keep the future of the monarchy undecided for such a long time. Ultimately, we conceded to take a middle path, agreeing that this could be decided by simple majority during the first CA meeting. This was our primary compromise during the negotiations.
>
> Another difficult issue was over the arms management process. The government wanted to disband our army, through the so-called DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration). However, we rejected this because we had not been defeated. Moreover, the PLA was the main force behind political change. So we said the old army (the NA) should be disbanded, along with our army, and both should be integrated to create a new national army. They also wanted us to hand over weapons, but we did not accept this. The point of common agreement between us was that the old army would remain in their barracks and our army would stay in the cantonments until after CA elections were held. In the meantime, we agreed to deposit our weapons for UN supervision, putting them in a single lock system to which we would keep a key. The same number of NA weapons also would be deposited for UN supervision. We went through quite tough negotiations before reaching this agreement.
>
> The third problem was restructuring the state. We repeatedly put the same words in all of the agreements we made with the SPA, which were 'to restructure the state in order to solve the problem of classes, nationalities, regions, gender and caste'. So we discussed different models for a state system. One model restructured the present unitary system and another introduced federalism. We had been advancing this idea in the draft we made for the Interim Constitution,

> entitled the 'Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nepal'. We even practiced this model during the war by establishing nine Autonomous Regions. But some parties, especially the NC, resisted the phrase 'federal republic system'. Ultimately, however, they agreed to 'federal system'.

The CPN (M) also conceded their position that members of the CA be elected through a proportional representative system, and instead accepted that 50 percent of the seats would be reserved for direct election, despite intense intra-party debate on this issue.

In early November, both negotiating teams reached an historic Six-point Agreement, in which they first and foremost made a commitment to sign a Comprehensive Peace Agreement no later than November 16th, and to hold CA elections by mid-June 2007. They further agreed to: confine both armies to their respective bases by November 21st; finalise and institutionalise the Interim Constitution by November 26th; dissolve both chambers of the parliament and form a new unicameral Interim Legislature on the same day; and form the Interim Council of Ministers by December 1st.

On November 21st, 2006 (several days later than expected), in the presence of diplomats and the national and international media, the government of Nepal and the CPN (M) signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in a ceremony held in Kathmandu. This marked an official end to the armed conflict that had begun 10 years earlier. The agreement also officially declared that the king no longer would have any authority in the affairs of state government and announced the formation of a Trust to manage the property of the late King Birendra and his family in the interest of the state, as well as the nationalisation of all property that King Gyanendra had inherited when he became king. However, the implementation of the Agreement would be significantly delayed.

4.2 Democratising the state: the Interim Constitution, Legislature and Council of Ministers

After signing the CPA, the SPA and CPN (M) negotiation teams immediately began drafting the Interim Constitution. On December 16th, they managed to reach a joint agreement on 168 items to be specified in the Interim Constitution, but PM Koirala again insisted that it only could be validated after completion of an agreement about UN supervision of the arms management process. A few days later, Koirala and Chairman Prachanda reached an interim arrangement, agreeing that ex-Gurkha[19] soldiers would be deployed to supervise PLA forces, which were restricted to their cantonments, until the UN team would arrive in Nepal. They also agreed that the Interim Constitution immediately would be validated once the ex-Gurkhas had arrived in the cantonments.

On January 15, 2007, the House of Representatives validated the Interim Constitution and later that same night the first session of the Interim Legislature was held. Consisting of 329 members, it included former members of the House of Representatives (except for royalists), 73 CPN (M) representatives[20] and 48 new appointees who were drawn from all eight political parties.[21] Although the CPN (M) had laid claim to obtaining either the position of Chair or Vice-chair of the Interim Legislature, they compromised and ceded both seats respectively to the CPN (UML) and the NC (D). In exchange, they agreed to take the position of deputy prime minister in the interim government.

19 Gurkhas are Nepali soldiers who work in the Indian and British Armies.

20 The CPN (M) published the names of its representatives, including 29 women (many of whom were the widows of PLA combatants and party members killed during the People's War), 23 Janajatis (ethnic minorities), 11 Dalits (outcaste people) and 20 Madhesis (people of Indian origin).

21 Ten of these were appointed by the CPN (M).

The formation of the Interim Council of Ministers was impeded by several obstacles. One of the main causes for this delay was unrest in the Tarai region, which borders India. On January 19th, a PLA soldier guarding a Maoist leader killed an activist who was participating in a general strike called by the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF). This incident sparked a series of riots throughout eastern Tarai. The government failed to control the situation and the riots spread, eventually turning into a serious conflict between the Madhesi community (of Indian origin) and the Pahadi community (from the mountain regions of Nepal). Taking this growing situation seriously, PM Koirala addressed the nation in late January. In this speech, he made a commitment to introduce a federal democracy in Nepal and reinstitute political constituencies that reflected both the population and geography of Nepal for the CA elections. He also conveyed his impression that supporters of the monarchy appeared to be behind these incidents and appealed to Madhesi groups to come for talks with the government.

On the next day, Chairman Prachanda held a press conference in Kathmandu, blaming national and international forces that did not want CA elections—mainly Hindu fundamentalists in India and the US government, for inciting these riots. He also expressed his commitment to the CPN (M)'s policy of self-determination for oppressed ethnic minorities like the Madhesis and Janajatis. In early February, both the CPN (M) and the SPA agreed to distribute 49 percent of all the seats to be allocated by direct election to the 20 districts in Tarai region, and 51 percent to the 55 districts in the hill and mountain regions. However, the situation in the Tarai region worsened, and on March 21st, MPRF activists, along with armed groups from India, attacked Maoists who were preparing for a mass rally in Gaur (Rautahat District). They killed 29 people, most of whom were members of the CPN (M)'s youth organisation, the Young Communist League (YCL), formed in December 2006.

Another delay in forming the Interim Council of Ministers related to criticism of Maoist behaviour by SPA leaders. PM Koirala frequently threatened the CPN (M) that they would be banned from the Interim Government unless they both stopped their illegal activities (i.e., carrying weapons) and returned property belonging to people displaced during the war. In late February, when the UN Mission to Nepal (UNMIN) publicised the comparative numbers of PLA combatants (30,852) and weapons (3,428) that had been registered in the cantonments under their supervision, even more voices of suspicion were raised, given this large discrepancy.[22] The Maoists were criticised further when growing media coverage of YCL activities revealed that the youth group was punishing criminals and controlling road traffic. After the Kathmandu YCL detained and beat a hotel owner, the Nepal Chamber of Commerce protested by announcing a strike, resulting in a two-day closure of most of the shops, schools and industries in the Kathmandu Valley.

The last stages in forming the Interim Council of Ministers also were hindered by disputes among the three central political parties over the distribution of government portfolios. Although all eight parties had agreed to renew PM Koirala's mandate, the NC stubbornly refused to relinquish other important portfolios, including that of deputy prime minister, in spite of a prior agreement with the CPN (M). The Maoists compromised once more by relinquishing their claim over this position, as Bhattarai explains:

> The Interim Government was supposed to be formed within two weeks after the formation of the Interim Legislature. However, it took nearly two and a half months. Furthermore, the three major parties [the NC, CPN (UML) and CPN (M)] had agreed to share out three powerful seats among themselves: the NC would take the seat of the prime minister; the CPN (UML) that of Chair of the Interim

22 US Under Secretary of State for Management, Henrietta Fore, who was visiting Nepal in early March, conveyed her government's dissatisfaction to the prime minister.

> Legislature; and the CPN (M) that of deputy prime minister. But the NC began to insist that there should not be a deputy prime minister. We sensed that they were delaying the formation of the Interim Government in order to postpone the CA elections. When we recognised this conspiracy, which was being played out by NC royalists and supporters of foreign power (even in the CPN (UML)), we decided to sacrifice the seat of deputy prime minister in order to foil this plot, so that the elections could be held on time in the middle of June 2007. If we did not join the Interim Government, other parties would have blamed us, saying that because the Maoists have not joined the government, the election must be delayed. We wanted to deprive them of using that excuse.

The CPN (M) subsequently joined the national government and acquired five ministry portfolios: Information and Communication, Physical Planning and Construction, Local Development, Forest and Earth Conservation, and Women, Children and Social Welfare. On April 1st, the Interim Council of Ministers finally was formed.

4.3 Postponement of the Constituent Assembly elections

On the 11th anniversary of the People's War, February 13, 2007, the CPN (M) held a huge mass rally in the centre of Kathmandu. For Chairman Prachanda, this was his first public address in the capital. In his one-hour speech, he stressed that there was a conspiracy to obstruct CA elections, announcing, "If the election is not held by the middle of June, we should declare a republic." One week later, King Gyanendra broke his long silence. He issued a message to the people defending his move on February 1, 2005, saying that his actions were in accord with the will of the Nepali people. After this incident, many government parties expressed suspicions about the king's intentions. In particular, Maoist leaders more strongly began raising their voices, calling for the declaration of a republic in advance of CA elections.

In mid April, the Electoral Commission officially announced that it would be physically impossible to hold the elections as originally scheduled because they did not have enough preparation time. The political parties responded with mixed opinions. The CPN (M) insisted on declaring a republic, either through a popular street movement or in the Interim Legislature. Central Committee member Ananta explains their view:

> We determined that India and the US were trying to obstruct CA elections by provoking the Madhesis and Janajatis because they thought that if the election was held, then Nepal would become a republic and power would be in Maoist hands, which they did not want to see happen at any cost. We came to the peace negotiations to restructure the State. We wanted to see changes. We had long been demanding a Constituent Assembly, a republic, a federal system and revolutionary land reform, but some political parties did not want this. Instead, they still wanted to keep the monarchy and the old system intact. Even though more than a year had passed since the political change in April 2006, the king was still there and corrupt officials were still in their seats. Seeing all these situations, we concluded that the election even would not be held in December of this year [2007] and that we could not create a republic through the Constituent Assembly. So we stressed the declaration of a republic in the Interim Legislature and decided to take the line of a peaceful movement to achieve our objective.

After the Election Commission publicised its decision, Chairman Prachanda repeatedly stressed the argument that since the basis of unity among the eight political parties was to hold CA elections by mid-June 2007, its postponement meant that they would have to unite under a new policy—instituting a democratic republic. In contrast, PM Koirala instead favoured the option of a ceremonial monarchy, suggesting that King Gyanendra should abdicate in preference to his five-year-old grandson, Hriyadendra. Bhattarai clarifies the foreign influence behind this stance:

> A 'ceremonial monarchy' is not an idea of the Nepali people, but rather is a creation of foreign forces, such as India and the US, who are in favour of maintaining the monarchy in Nepal. Although they say, 'Let's let Nepali people decide the future of the monarchy', that is only a diplomatic statement. In their true hearts, they want to preserve the monarchy in Nepal. That is why the NC, which always depends upon foreign forces, did not take a clear stand on the monarchy. Whenever they have to reach major decisions, they cannot stand up against foreign pressure.

In mid April, the flames that burned in the Tarai region spread to the Interim Legislature. Lawmakers from various Madhesi political parties began to obstruct its proceedings by surrounding the Chair's seat and demanding that the recommendations of the Election Constituencies Delineation Committee not be implemented. At the end of May, all eight political parties decided to accept their demands and the proceedings of the Interim Legislature were resumed. However, some Madhesi groups which were not represented in the Interim Legislature, including the MPRF and armed groups that had split from the CPN (M),[23] continued their movement, demanding both autonomy and a proportional representative system for the elections. Bhattarai explains the CPN (M) view of these events:

> Those problems raised by Madhesis and Janajatis were not a big challenge for us because they raised the same issues that we had been raising. We were the very party which had been claiming that these historically oppressed groups should be given autonomy. The only problem was that they were being instigated against us by other forces, such as royalists and foreign influences.

The situation relative to the PLA forces was another problem raised by the Maoist side. The CPN (M) rejected the scheduled May 1st start of the verification process of PLA combatants registered in the cantonments and instead demanded as a condition of their cooperation that the government agree to provide a monthly allowance of Rs. 3,000 (€33.00) per combatant andimprove the physical living conditions in the cantonments. These demands were granted by the government on May 20th. However, the relationship between PM Koirala and the CPN (M) worsened when Koirala accused the YCL of illegal activities, calling them the 'Young Criminal League', after its militants detained a famous industrialist (also a relative of Koirala) and made a public display of handing him over to the police on the charge of owing a debt of Rs. 280 million (€3 Million) to the Nepal National Bank. In fact, YCL activities became a great concern for the SPA and foreign diplomats. The dispute between the prime minister and the CPN (M) temporarily was resolved after Koirala and Prachanda met on June 10th and agreed to stop openly accusing one another. Bhattarai offers his impression of this situation:

23 These included the *Janatantrik Tarai Mukti Morcha* (Democratic Terai Liberation Front).

> During the last year, after we came to the negotiating table as rebels, we had to use maximum restraint and maximum flexibility to make the peace process go ahead. We made all the necessary compromises to hold CA elections by the middle of June 2007. But the political leaders in power were too irresponsible and not serious enough to meet this election deadline. The nature of the political parties, especially the NC, the royalists and foreign forces, were the primary factors hindering the peace process. One of the main causes of delay in holding the election lay in the character of the ruling NC, which represents the landlord class and bureaucratic capitalists. Although they talk about democracy, they are basically conservative people. They do not want revolutionary change, but rather want to compromise with the monarchy and foreign forces. Although the majority of the rank and file of the NC support a republic, the top leadership still has this old tendency. While some parties blame Koirala for delaying the peace process, he is the only leader who could be accepted as prime minister because of his acceptability in international circles. We accepted this reality.
>
> The second factor is the royalists, who need the power of the monarchy. Other political parties do not want to antagonise the NA, which remains loyal to the traditional monarchy. Hence the monarchy is trying to manipulate the army, as well as royalists inside the bureaucracy and in industrial fields. These monarchical forces are behind the Madhesis and some other groups which are creating unrest in Tarai.
>
> Another factor, foreign forces, especially India and the US, are very scared about revolutionary change in Nepal because it might result in making communist power strong here. So they are trying to intervene both directly and indirectly in Nepali politics through various channels.

On June 14th, the Interim Legislature passed its second amendment to the Interim Constitution by an overwhelmingly majority. This included a provision that the Interim Legislature could abolish the monarchy with a two-thirds majority vote if it could be proved that the king was trying to disturb CA elections. Ten days later, the Interim Government declared that the election would be held on November 22, 2007. Altogether 480 representatives would be elected, with half voted in through direct election and the other half through proportional representation.[24]

4.4 Strategic debate within the Maoist camp: launching a popular movement versus pursuing the negotiation track

Since its participation in the April 2006 movement, the CPN (M) constantly had been debating the best political strategy to pursue once armed struggle ended. Two alternative options were discussed during a Central Committee meeting in Panjab, India, in May 2006, as Bhattarai indicates:

> Our goal ... was to achieve a democratic republic in Nepal through a Constituent Assembly. To this end, we prepared two options. Firstly, since we did not achieve our goal through the 19-day general strike, we would do our best to secure this

24 In addition, the government would appoint 17 people, bringing the total number of CA members to 497.

through peace negotiations; but given the history of the SPA, especially the NC, they might not want a republic. Secondly, in case we failed to do this through the negotiations, then we would go through another phase of mass movement, which would be peaceful, like the 'October Revolution' in Russia. Although the aim of the October Revolution was to achieve socialism, in our case this movement would be launched to establish a democratic republic.

In the following months, the CPN (M) placed more emphasis on pressuring the government primarily through negotiations rather than through peaceful mass protest. But in April 2007, following the first postponement of CA elections by the Electoral Commission, during a Central Committee meeting in Kathmandu they decided to launch a street movement to demand the establishment of a republic in the Interim Legislature. In May, Maoist leaders reiterated their threat to launch the Three *S*s Movement - in *Sarak* (the streets), in *Sarkar* (government) and in *Samsad* (Parliament). However, they did not put these decisions into practice and instead decided to give negotiations with the SPA another chance, as confirmed in June by Amrita Thapa Magar, CPN (M) member of the Interim Legislature:

> After the peace negotiations started, they progressed in a very zigzag way. Once the Interim Legislature and the Interim Government were formed, things became more positive. Although we decided at the Central Committee meeting in April to follow the path of a peaceful movement, we will see in November if the election will really be held. If this is not the case, we will follow the people's will.

Then, on August 3rd through 8th, the party held its Fifth Expanded Meeting in Kathmandu. This was their largest-ever meeting, with more than 2,000 party members from across the country in attendance, including most of the senior District Committee members and high-ranking PLA commanders. At this meeting, the Maoists analysed their experiences of the peace process over the last one and a half years and discussed future directions. One Central Committee member, Sudarshan (*aka* Hemanta Prakash Oli), explains the general analysis formulated by the party:

> In the Fifth Expanded Meeting, we agreed that it was a correct decision for us to come to the peace negotiating table. We were on the right path before we joined the Interim Legislature in January. However, things started to go wrong after that. Groups of Madhesis and Janajatis began coming onto the streets, promoting our former slogans. In particular, they called for the introduction of a full proportional representation system for CA elections and the adoption of a federal democratic republic, which we previously had been demanding but had given up during the negotiations. Even after we had joined the Interim Government, it made no difference. We could not work effectively in government.

The Nepali media reported that Maoist leadership faced strong criticism from party cadres during this meeting, particularly for their excessive flexibility during the peace negotiations. As one of the participants, Vividh (*aka* Kali Bahadur Kham) describes this:

> We had adopted a tactic of maximum flexibility at the Chunbang meeting in October 2005. So we went to the peace negotiations to compromise, but some comrades thought we made more compromises than we should have done. Compromises should be for the benefit of the people. However, they were made in a dark room of the prime minister's residence, without letting the people know. When the leaders made these compromises, the people were isolated and that is why many of our cadres were dissatisfied with the outcome of the negotiations. Ac-

> tually, the leaders should have exposed what was going on in these meetings, even by halting talks for a couple of days. That was the most serious mistake made by CPN (M) leadership. Chairman Prachanda admitted this mistake and criticised himself during the meeting.

According to another Central Committee member, Gajurel, the idea of launching a popular movement also became a big issue during the meeting: "Many comrades maintained that we should have launched the People's Movement soon after the decision of the Central Committee in April and complained about the failure to do so."

Four days after the Fifth Expanded Meeting ended, Chairman Prachanda held a press meeting in Kathmandu to announce that his party had reached the conclusion that until Nepal's monarchy was abolished, it would not be possible to hold fair elections and that there was no alternative but to go for a *Jana Vidroha* (a People's Revolt). Answering a question regarding their former agreement with the SPA to make a decision about the future of the monarchy during the first day of the Constituent Assembly, he said, "We only agreed with the SPA on the condition that CA elections would be held no later than mid June. As it has been impossible to hold them on time, the agreement has become meaningless."

On August 20th, in separate statements, Prachanda and Bhattarai made 22 demands as pre-conditions for the elections, with a September 17th deadline. The main conditions included: 1) proclaiming an end to the monarchy in order to establish a republic through the Interim Legislature; 2) starting procedures to nationalise the properties of the late King Birendra and his family, as well as all of King Gyanendra's inherited property; 3) withdrawal of all NA forces from Narayanhiti Palace; 4) punishment for all of those found guilty by the Rayamajhi Commission;[25] 5) the immediate formation of a Security Council that would democratise the NA and integrate it with the PLA; 6) organising a roundtable meeting that would ensure the proportional representation of all classes, nationalities, regions, Madhesis, women, Dalits and minority ethnic groups; and 7) payment of at least Rs. 100,000 (€1,100.00) per person to all of the families of those who had died in relation to the People's War. An extract from these statements explains the CPN (M) rationale:

> According to the plan directed by the monarchy and its foreign supporters, the environment in which the election could not happen in June was created through unnecessary confrontation, murders, terror and anarchy in various parts of the country, including the Madhes… The main obstruction for CA elections at this time is the monarchy. Accordingly, only by demolishing the monarchy and declaring a republic through the Interim Legislature, can we construct the infrastructure for the elections. It is an unavoidable necessity for us to struggle in the government, in parliament and in the streets.

These declarations were followed by intense negotiations between the CPN (M) and the government to try to keep the Maoists onboard. Just two days before the deadline was set to expire, the situation in the Tarai region worsened when another massacre occurred in the

25 The Rayamajhi Commission, headed by former Supreme Court justice Krishna Jung Rayamajhi, was a high-level judicial body formed by the SPA government to investigate the atrocities committed by the security forces and the royal-backed government in suppressing the April 2006 mass movement. At least 23 people were killed and thousands of others were injured. After its investigation, the Commission recommended actions against 202 people, including the current commander of the Nepal Army and most of the then government ministers. However, the Commission did not recommend any action against King Gyanendra, who was the government leader at the time.

Kapilbastu District. Following the killing of a local leader[26] by an unknown group, riots broke out in villages close to the Indian border. According to a report issued by the National Human Rights Commission, during these incidents at least 22 people were killed by Madhesi groups, 119 houses were burnt and more than 5,000 people were displaced. Most of the victims were Pahadis. The Maoists denounced these incidents as a royalist conspiracy.

Negotiations broke down on September 18th, and shortly afterwards the CPN (M) held a mass rally in Kathmandu, where Bhattarai made two announcements: 1) that all four remaining CPN (M) representatives had quit the Interim Council of Ministers;[27] and 2) that a series of agitation programmes, including attempts to disrupt CA elections, would begin that day and last until October 6th. At this rally, Bhattarai insisted, "Our movement will be a peaceful one and we shall not break the Peace Accord, nor leave the peace process." He further indicated that if the government violently tried to suppress their peaceful movement, the CPN (M) would return to armed struggle.

4.5 Organisational shift to peaceful struggle within the CPN (M)

This sub-section investigates the structural changes implemented in the Maoist party, army and executive power (i.e., the People's Governments) after their decision to give up armed struggle following the successful April 2006 movement (see also annex 3 and 4). As Bhattarai indicates:

> After 10 years of the People's War, we had entered into the phase of the peaceful development of the revolution. The form of our struggle had changed. Before, our activities were concentrated in rural areas and our main fighting forces were the PLA. But now, we had to do more in urban areas, with mass mobilisations and open activities as the primary focus of our work. We therefore had to train the party and PLA cadres in this new approach. For that purpose, Comrade Prachanda and I visited all five regions throughout May and June 2006 to give political classes, mainly about how to develop this peaceful revolution.

As soon as the peace negotiations started, the CPN (M) initiated a variety of organisational changes to adapt its structure to this new strategy. For example, many PLA Political Commissars were transferred from the military apparatus to the Party organisation. According to Amrita Thapa, a female Brigade Commissar of the PLA, who was sent to the Theratung District as District in-Charge and then to the capital as a Secretary General for the Women's Front, many former members of the Central Committee were appointed as District in-Charges in the eastern region to have talks with other political parties.

In December 2006, during a Central Committee meeting in Bhaktapur, the CPN (M) decided to shift their overall party structure from a war-time to a peace-time system. Primarily, this meant adapting their party organisational structures to reflect those of the state administration. To this end, they formed an 11-member Central Secretariat[28] that became its highest decision-making body.

Following the formation of the Interim Legislature with Maoist representatives in January

26 The victim was the district president of a retaliation committee working against the Maoists, which was formed with the support of the RNA during the royal regime.

27 The fifth Maoist minister, Matrika Yadav, already had resigned from the Interim Council of Ministers in August.

28 Members of this Secretariat included Chairman Prachanda, Baburam Bhattarai, Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Dev Gurung, Mohan Vaidhya, Chandra Prasad Gajurel, Ananta, Post Bahadur Bogati, and Netra Bikram Chand.

2007, Chairman Prachanda issued a statement declaring that all of the CPN (M)'s parallel People's Governments, along with the People's Courts (their judicial system), would be dissolved. As a result, Maoist leadership faced challenges about maintaining their revolutionary image, which had been weakened when they joined the state. Defending his party against such claims, Chairman Prachanda commented, "We have not yet given up communism. Our final objective was to achieve communism through a democratic republic."[29]

Finally, in a Central Committee meeting held immediately following the Fifth Expanded Meeting in early August, the CPN (M) decided to change radically its national power structure by dissolving all the Regional Bureaus. First introduced after the start of the People's War, their purpose was to establish effective channels of communication between the central leadership of the party and cadres at district levels. These Regional Bureaus were replaced by 11 new State Committees.[30] Governing bodies above the level of the District Committees, these State Committees better reflected the diverse ethnic identities and geography in Nepal. As Prachanda explains the CPN (M)'s intentions, "We formed these State Committees, covering all the geographical areas in the country, by considering the reconstruction of the state in relation to the concept of ethnic autonomy."[31] As the highest-level party authority after Chairman himself, five Central Bureaus led by top party leaders also were formed. These included a Central Military Bureau, a Central Organisation Bureau, a Central Front Bureau, an International Bureau and a Central Publicity, Publication and Training Bureau.[32]

In addition to this, the CPN (M) altered their previous way of dividing the nation in order to reflect the state's regional delineation.[33] According to Sudarshan, the Maoists were 'foreseeing CA elections and coordinating with the other political parties'.However, there were also other practical reasons for this re-organisation. PLA division commander Vividh explains:

> When we formed the State Committees, we wanted to demonstrate that we would restructure the nation in this way in the future. From the viewpoint of the party organisation, the State Committees would be stronger than the Regional Bureaus because we could make the people and cultures in each region more powerful through this system. Furthermore, this structure would be useful both in case CA elections are held and, if not, in case we instead launch a movement.

4.6 Epilogue: Nepal is to become a federal republic

The events of September 2007 described earlier (see above in section 4.4), when the CPN (M) left the Interim government and ended negotiations with their former SPA allies, potentially could have led to a major disruption of the peace process. Instead, several major political developments enabled a resolution of the conflict over the state restructuring process.

On September 26th, following the unification of two major political parties—the NC and

29 Interview with BBC Radio Nepali Service, January 18, 2007.

30 The names of the State Committees are: the Seti-Mahakari State Committee, the Tharuwan State Committee, the Bheri-Karnali State Committee, the Magarat State Committee, the Tamuwan State Committee, the Tambashaling State Committee, the Newa State Committee, the Madhes State Committee, the Kirat State Committee, the Limbuwan State Committee and the Kochila State Committee. The CPN (M) separated the Limbuwan State Committee and the Kochila State Committee from the former region of the Kirat Autonomous Republic.

31 Email statement from August 16, 2007.

32 Respectively, these Bureaus were headed by: Chairman Prachanda, Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar, Baburam Bhattarai, Chandra Prasad Gajurel and Mohan Vaidhya.

33 The State divides the country into six zones. Accordingly, the CPN (M) formed Regional Bureaus in each zone.

the NC (D),[34] for the first time in its 60-year history, the newly-merged NC officially adopted a new policy in support of a democratic federal republic. Consequently, the possibility of instituting a republic during the first CA meeting suddenly became much greater. Despite this, the CPN (M) did not relinquish their demand to establish it prior to the elections. Instead, on September 28th they submitted a written application to summon a special session[35] of the Interim Legislature in order to amend the Interim Constitution. The Maoists had two specific objectives: 1) that Nepal would be declared a republic; and 2) that a full proportional representation system for CA elections would be adopted. The CPN (M) had signatures from all 84 of its Interim Legislature members, along with signatures from three members of other political parties.[36]

Therefore, another series of high-level negotiations began. However, because of persistent disagreements between the NC and the CPN (M), on October 5th the elections were indefinitely postponed for a second time, despite strong foreign pressure against this decision.

Although a special session of the Interim Legislature had been summoned for October 12th and CPN (M) legislators had proposed amendments to the Interim Constitution, this meeting was postponed until 29th for the purpose of seeking political consensus. Despite continuous efforts to avoid a vote in the Interim Legislature which might bring inter-party division, agreement could not be reached because both the NC and the CPN (M) refused to compromise on their positions. On November 4th, the CPN (M) reached a last-minute agreement with the CPN (UML) to demand the adoption of a full proportional representation system and to ask the government to immediately determine the process of establishing a republic. Despite NC opposition, both bills were approved by a simple majority in the Interim Legislature. However, PM Koirala showed no intention of enforcing them. Maoist leaders thus began to raise their voices to demand a change of government. A regular session of the Interim Legislature started on November 19th, and on December 15th, after several weeks of intense inter-party debate, the seven parties finally agreed to hold CA elections before April 12, 2008 and tabled a bill to amend the Interim Constitution.

Regarding the reasons behind the Maoists' decision once again to shift their strategy from launching a street movement to supporting CA elections, Prachanda said:

> Our demand for instituting a federal republic was the most crucial issue. At the point when we felt that there was a very conducive environment and other parties were almost ready to go for it, around the third week of November, we reached a conclusion that we now should go for the election.

On December 23rd, these parties signed a '23-point Agreement'. This package deal included an agreement to declare Nepal a federal democratic republic in the Interim Constitution and enforce this in the first CA meeting by simple majority. It also announced an increase in the number of CA members from 497 to 601, of which 335 would be elected through the proportional representation system, 240 through the 'first past the post' system and 26 nominated by the prime minister. Badal (*aka* Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar), member of the CPN (M) Central Secretariat, offers the following reasons for the CPN (M) concessions:

34 First splitting in August 2002, the two parties once again merged on September 25, 2007 in a clear attempt to gain advantage in the upcoming election.

35 The second session of the Interim Legislature ended on August 24th despite opposition from some political parties, including the CPN (M). According to a provision in the Interim Constitution, a special session may be called by a motion that has signatures from more than one quarter of all the members of the Interim Legislature. The prime minister then has to summon a special session within the next 15 days.

36 The number of CPN (M) Interim Legislature members increased to 84 after the CPN (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), with one member, merged with the CPN (M) on September 24th. As a result, the CPN (M) became the second largest political party in the Interim Legislature, after the NC. The CPN (UML), with 83 members, became the third largest.

> Because the NC finally compromised by accepting that a federal democratic republic would be declared, we made a concession regarding the electoral system. Although our demand to adopt a full proportional representation system for CA elections was not adopted, the number of seats to be allocated through proportional representation increased from 240 to 335. We thought this was a gain for the people.

CPN (M) leadership also took adequate precautions to avoid further intra-party criticism by organising a gathering of civil society members to get their advice just a few hours before they signed the '23-point Agreement' on December 23rd. On the same day, they also convened a Central Secretariat meeting to discuss the decision to accept a mixed electoral system. It was agreed to add a sentence in the preamble of the Agreement, stating that, "There were differing views among the parties, but we made some concessions for the sake of national necessity." Prachanda offers another reason for this compromise:

> If CA elections had not been held because we stuck to our demands, we [Maoists] would have been blamed for the failure of peace process. We did not want that to happen. Declaring an end to the monarchy in the Interim Constitution was a big change. We also succeeded in gaining more proportional representation. In fact, most of our 22 demands were accepted as a package agreement with fixed deadlines. So we decided to go for a consensus.

The CPN (M) also agreed to rejoin the Interim Council of Ministers. In accordance to these agreements, the government tabled the third amendment proposal of the Interim Constitution to the Interim Legislature, which passed it by an overwhelming majority on December 28th. The seven parties also decided to hold CA elections on April 10, 2008.

Conclusion

After the CPN (M) gave up 10 years of armed struggle in April 2006 and entered into the peace process, they consistently maintained a dual political strategy: participating in the negotiations and launching a peaceful protest movement. However, they did not take up the latter until September 2007. Even when the Maoists announced the start of their protest movement, after quitting the five-month-old coalition government, they repeatedly tried to convey their commitment to the public that they would remain in the peace process. In fact, they continued to give negotiations a chance after their priority became launching a peaceful mass movement.

From time to time, CPN (M) leaders publicly have announced their willingness to take up arms again, but these threats mainly were aimed at pressuring the government. About the likelihood of returning to war, the three top leaders of the CPN (M), all of whom participated in the peace negotiations,[37] made the following remarks.

As Badal explains:

> We have not yet given up our ideology of armed struggle. We will keep this option open even during the on-going peace process. However, we will consider this option only when the state or the regressive forces try to suppress us.

Bhattarai elaborates:

> Definitely, our choice is not to return to armed struggle. After 10 years of armed struggle we achieved what we wanted. If external forces do not want peaceful change in Nepal, and try to intervene and sabotage the peace process, we would be forced to go back to war. However, this is not our preference among the available choices.

Finally, as Chairman Prachanda clearly states:

> There is no possibility for us to go back to war. Our People's War already has brought radical change in Nepal, politically and socially. It is not necessary for us to take up arms again.

As demonstrated in this narrative, one of the factors ensuring steady progress in the peace process, despite frequent deadlocks, has been a strong commitment to a political solution from CPN (M) leadership. Another factor that played an important role at the negotiation table was the flexibility on the part of the Maoists, especially their willingness to compromise. In fact, this was one of the main dilemmas for the party leadership: how much flexibility should they allow during the peace negotiations? As Bhattarai asserts, "What we constantly have been emphasising, since the beginning, is to be firm with our principles and flexible in our tactics." Badal reinforces this, "We cannot be flexible regarding the two political issues of republicanism and federalism. But we can be flexible regarding process-related matters. The CA election is a process, so we can be more flexible."

While CPN (M) negotiators asserted the need to compromise during the drafting of the CPA in order to ensure that CA elections would be held on time, many party members thought that they had made too many concession by sacrificing long-held demands. This brought Maoist leadership under heavy criticism at the Fifth Expanded Meeting in August 2007, especially for giving

37 According to Badal, these three senior leaders were the main negotiation representatives for the CPN (M), together with party spokesperson, Krishna Bahadur Mahara. Later, after the Fifth Expanded Meeting, another senior leader, Kiran (*aka* Mohan Vaidhya) joined this team.

up the demand for a federal republic and a full proportional representation system favouring the inclusion of historically oppressed people, such as Janajatis, Dalits and Madhesis.

As a result, the CPN (M) decided to present 22 demands as pre-conditions for CA elections, followed by the resignation of Maoist ministers and a decision by the government to postpone the elections again. These developments led to a serious crisis in the peace process, with other political parties, the international community and even the Nepali people beginning to doubt Maoists' intentions and their commitment to peace. Some voices even suggested that the CPN (M) did not want CA elections to be held because they were afraid of being badly defeated.

However, despite frequent media reports that the peace negotiations were almost on the verge of collapse due to the stubbornness of both the NC and the CPN (M), the seven parties[38] ultimately managed to reach a consensus. The Maoists' attitude of compromise finally was rewarded: most of their 22 demands were accepted in the 23-point Agreement signed on December 23rd. Specifically, the Interim Constitution was amended to declare that Nepal would become a federal republic in the first meeting of the CA.

Holding CA elections to formulate a new constitution is now a common aim of all the parties that have been involved in the peace process since April 2006. But to achieve this, several remaining concerns must be overcome:

1) *Monarchy*: Although the Interim Constitution states that Nepal will become a democratic republic after an endorsement in the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly, there are still some factions supporting a monarchy, such as Nepal Army officers closely linked with the palace, conservative leaders in the NC and some royalist political parties. The Interim Government has failed to punish royalists who were proven guilty of repressing the People's Movement in 2006 and the Maoists are concerned about likely attempts to disrupt the forthcoming CA elections by these groups.

2) *Foreign forces*: Most foreign countries that have relationships with Nepal, including the United Nations and donor countries, have been stressing the need to hold CA elections as early as possible in order to establish stability in the country. The CPN (M) has been claiming that some foreign forces, especially India and the United States, are intervening in Nepali politics with the intention of weakening the position of the Maoists. Although the extent of its influence is difficult to prove, the 'Indian factor' has been quite critical to Nepal's peace process, ever since the 12-point Understanding in November 2005. It is said that India is very concerned about the likelihood of closer relations between China's Communist Party and the CPN (M). Indian diplomacy is, on the whole, much more concerned with maintaining strong influence over its Nepali neighbour than seeking satisfaction for the interests of the Nepali people.

3) *Madhesi factor*: The security situation in the Madhesi region in eastern Nepal, on the Indian border, is in fact the largest concern for CA elections because violence on the part of armed Madhesi groups is expected to rise as the election date approaches. The recent decision by Madhesi politicians to quit existing parties and join newly-formed Madhesi parties indicates severe dissatisfaction among their community with the seven parties and the current political process. The government response to the demands of such ethnic minority groups certainly will affect the peace process and an adequate political solution is needed for this new challenge, which appeared after the peace process began.

38 These are the CPN (M) and the six remaining parties from the SPA following the reunification of the NC and NC (D).

4) *Management of the armed forces*: On December 27, 2007, UNMIN announced that only 18,923 out of 31,318 people registered with the PLA had passed verification. Among the disqualified, 8,640 people were absent and 2,973 were minors. How to rehabilitate those who were disqualified, along with maintaining the morale of the armed forces in cantonments, are important challenges for the CPN (M), given the slow pace of the peace process and the as-yet unknown future of its PLA members. Maoists also have blamed the government for overlooking the sub-standard living conditions in cantonments. This issue was raised as a criticism against party leadership by PLA commanders during the Fifth Expanded Meeting.

5) *Integration of the PLA and the NA*: One year after Maoist armed forces moved to their cantonments, the process of their integration into the NA had not yet started. In accord with the CPA, a high-level Special Committee was formed in September 2007. However, as one of its members, the PLA deputy-commander Pravakar (*aka* Janardan Sharma), indicates this committee has met only once since its formation, which he blamed on government disinterest to this issue. The future of PLA members is quite unclear and there are frequent media reports about the unwillingness of some top-level NA officers to merge their armed force with the Maoist army.[39]

6) *Intra-party disputes*: Especially after the CPN (M) Fifth Expanded Meeting in August 2007, the media have been reporting on intra-party disputes about the issues related to the peace process. Although Maoist leadership seldom accepts this, dissatisfaction with their attitude of compromise at the negotiating table seems to have increased among party cadres. Lately, even the issue of the treatment of those disqualified in the UNMIN verification has become a point of dispute in the party.[40]

7) *Difficulty to control party cadres*: Despite frequent declarations by Maoist leaders on their commitment to control the activities of the Maoist youth organisation, the YCL, cases of violence committed by its members frequently still are being reported. During the latest Central Committee meeting (which started on January 5, 2008), Prachanda admitted the party's failure to control the YCL and asserted that their activities have actually damaged the Maoists' image. But due to a rapid expansion of the organisation, especially in urban areas, where thousands of youths have recently joined the YCL and the Maoist-affiliated trade union, it will be quite difficult for the party to fully control their cadres.

After disrupting the peace process and delaying elections for the Constituent Assembly, the CPN (M) has finally reached the conclusion that more delays in Nepal's transition to peace and democracy would be highly disadvantageous to their interests. However, there are still many obstacles on their way to their ultimate aim—establishing a new Nepal.

39 On January 6, 2008, Nepali Army Chief Rukmangat Katawal declared that he opposes the integration of politically indoctrinated combatants into the national army.

40 Although party leadership agreed to return them to their homes, it was reported that a division commander opposed it (*Kantipur*, January 2, 2008).

Bibliography

Ogura, Kiyoko (2004). 'Realities and Images of Nepal's Maoists after the attack on Beni', *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. Kathmandu: Social Science Baha.

Ogura, Kiyoko (2007). 'Maoists, People and the State as seen from Rolpa and Rukum', in: H. Ishii, D.N. Gellner and K. Nawa (Eds.), *Political and Social Transformations in North India and Nepal (Social Dynamics in Northern South Asia*, Vol. 2). India: Manohar.

Ogura, Kiyoko (2008). 'Maoist People's Government – the Power in Wartime', in: D.N. Gellner and Krishna Hachhethu (Eds.), *Local Democracy in South Asia: Micro Processes of Democratization in Nepal and its Neighbours*. India: Sage.

Onesto, Li (2003). 'The People's War in Nepal', in: A. Karki and D. Seddon (eds.), *Inside the Revolution in Nepal*. Delhi: Adroit Publishers.

Pasang or Nanda Kishor Pun (2007). *Itihaaska Raktim Paila*. Nepal: Sanbad.

The CPN (Maoist) (2004). *Some Important Documents of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)*. Nepal: Janadisha Publications.

The CPN (Maoist) (2006). *Historical Documents of CPN (Maoist)*. Nepal: Mechi-Koshi Regional Bureau.

Interviews with CPN (M) leaders

Amrita Thapa Magar (general secretary of the All Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary), member of the Interim Legislature): May 21, June 4, August 20, 2007.

Ananta *aka* Barsa Man Pun (member of the Central Secretariat and deputy-commander of the PLA): May 16 and 20, June 1, 2007.

Baburam Bhattarai (In-charge of the Central Front Bureau, chief of the United Revolutionary People's Front Nepal and member of the Central Secretariat): May 15, 17 and 19, 2007.

Badal *aka* Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar (In-charge of the Central Organisational Bureau and member of the Central Secretariat): December 30, 2007.

Baldev *aka* Chandra Prakash Khanal (member of the Central Committee and deputy-commander of the PLA): August 12, 2007.

Chandra Prasad Gajurel (In-charge of the Central International Bureau and member of the Central Secretariat): May 26, August 23, 2007.

Prachanda *aka* Puspa Kamal Dahal (Party Chairman, In-charge of the Central Military Bureau and supreme commander of the PLA): December 25, 2007.

Pravakar *aka* Janardan Sharma (member of the Central Committee, deputy-commander of the PLA and member of the Interim Legislature): December 30, 2007.

Sudarshan *aka* Hemanta Prakash Oli (member of the Central Committee and chief of the Magarat State Committee): August 10 and 26, 2007.

Vividh *aka* Kali Bahadur Kham (division commander of the PLA): August 17, 2007.

Annex 1: List of acronyms

CA	Constituent Assembly
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
CPN (M)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist)
MPRF	Madhesi People's Rights Forum
NA/RNA	(Royal) Nepalese Army
NC	Nepali Congress
NC (D)	Nepali Congress (Democrat)
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PLA	People's Liberation Army (Maoist)
PM	Prime Minister
SPA	Seven Party Alliance
ULF	United Left Front
UNMIN	United Nations Mission to Nepal
UNPM	United National People's Movement
UPFN	United People's Front Nepal
URPCN	United Revolutionary People's Council Nepal
YCL	Young Communist League

Annex 2: Chronology

1949	Formation of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) in Kolkata, India.
1960	Military coup by King Mahendra, introduction of the Panchayat system (in 1962)
1974	Split within the CPN, and formation of the CPN (Fourth Convention), led by Mohan Bikram Singh and Nirmal Lama
1983	Split within the CPN (Fourth Convention) and formation of the CPN (Masal), led by Mohan Bikram Singh.
1985	Split within the CPN (Masal) and formation of the CPN (Mashal), led by Mohan Vaidhya.
1990	January: Seven communist parties form the United Left Front (ULF) to launch a popular movement with the Nepali Congress (NC) party against the Panchayat system. Others (including CPN (Masal) and CPN (Mashal)) form the United National People's Movement (UNPM). April: Success of the People's Movement: abolition of the Panchayat system and re-establishment of multi-party democracy. November: Some communist factions, including CPN (Fourth Convention) and CPN (Mashal), form the CPN (Unity Center).
1991	January: The open front of the CPN (Unity Center), the United People's Front Nepal, is formed. April: Parliamentary election. Girija Prasad Koirala, leader of the NC, becomes prime minister.
1995	March: Third Expanded Meeting of the CPN (Unity Center)'s Central Committee. Establishment of the CPN (Maoist), led by Prachanda, and decision to follow Mao Tse-tung's strategy of Protracted People's War. November: The government launches a police campaign ,Operation Romeo, in the Maoist stronghold in Rolpa District.
1996	February 4: The Maoists hand over 40 demands to the Prime Minister's office. February 13: Launching of the CPN (M)'s armed insurrection.
1998	May: The NC-led government launches a counter-insurgency police operation, Kilo Sierra 2.
2001	February: Second CPN (M) National Conference. Adoption of a new strategy, called the 'Prachanda Path'. June 1: Narayanhiti Palace massacre. King Birendra, one of the victims, replaced on the throne by his brother Gyanendra. July: Resignation of PM Koirala (in his third mandate), replaced by his NC colleague Sher Bahadur Deuba. After a Maoist raid in Bajura, joint ceasefire declaration between the government and CPN (M). August-September: First and second round of peace negotiations between the government and CPN (M).

November: Third round of talks and truce broken off by the CPN (M), who resume their military actions against the police and Royal Nepalese Army. Official formation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and United Revolutionary People's Council Nepal (URPCN). The government declares a six-month state of emergency.

2002 May 22: Dissolution of the House of Representatives by King Gyanendra.
October: The King dismisses the Deuba administration and appoints Lokendra Bahadur Chand as new prime minister.

2003 January 29: Declaration of separate ceasefires by the government and CPN (M).
April-August: First, second and third rounds of renewed peace negotiations between the government and CPN (M).
May: CPN (M) Central Committee meeting and adoption of a proposal called 'The Development of Democracy in the 21st Century', accepting competitive multi-party democracy.
August 27: CPN (M) chairman Prachanda announces the end of the seven-month long ceasefire.

2004 March: One of the largest CPN (M) military actions on Beni, Myagdi District Headquarters. It involves 4,500 Maoist soldiers from the Western Division of the PLA.
August: CPN (M) Central Committee meeting in Phuntibang (Rolpa District): decision to launch the stage of strategic offensive.

2005 February 1: Coup d'Etat by King Gyanendra, who declares a state of emergency and dismisses the government.
May: The Seven-Party Alliance (SPA), including NC and CPN (UML), launch a peaceful pro-democracy movement against King Gyanendra.
September 3: CPN (M) declares a three-month unilateral ceasefire.
October: CPN (M) Central Committee meeting in Chunbang: decision to cooperate with the SPA.
November 22: CPN (M) and the SPA conclude a 12-point Understanding.

2006 January 2: Breakdown of the CPN (M) unilateral ceasefire.
April 6: CPN (M) and the SPA jointly launch a general strike.
April 21: Historic demonstration in the capital with the participation of several hundred thousand people.
April 24: King Gyanendra announces that the House of Representatives will be reinstated.
April 25: The SPA declares an end to their general strike. Koirala appointed prime minister (his fourth mandate).
April 26: The CPN (M) declares a three-month unilateral ceasefire.
April 28: Reinstatement of the House of Representatives after four-year suspension.
April 30: The House of Representatives announces the election of a Constituent Assembly (CA).
May 3: The SPA government declares a ceasefire.
May 18: The 'Proclamation of House of Representatives 2006' is promulgated. All the king's prerogatives are abolished.
May 26: Opening of peace negotiations between the government and CPN (M).

June 16: First public media appearance of the two CPN (M) leaders Prachanda and Bhattarai. The negotiation parties reach an 8-point Agreement.
October 8: Opening of second round of negotiations.
November 8: Conclusion of negotiations with the signature of a 6-point Agreement.
November 21: The government and CPN (M) sign a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Official end of the armed conflict. Commitment to hold CA elections by mid-June 2007.

2007

January 15: Promulgation of the Interim Constitution. Dissolution of the House of Representatives, replaced by an Interim Legislature.
January 18: Dissolution of CPN (M)'s People's Governments and People's Courts.
January/February: Riots in Madhesi community. Worsening security situation in the Tarai region, bordering with India.
March 21: 29 Maoists are killed in Gaur by Madhesi People's Right Forum (MPRF) supporters and some groups from India.
April 1: Formation of the Interim Council of Ministers, headed by PM Koirala, and including five CPN (M) Ministers.
June 24: The Interim Council of Ministers postpones CA elections until November 22.
August 3-8: CPN (M)'s Fifth Expanded Meeting in Kathmandu (2,200 participants). Strong intra-party criticism of the leaders' flexibility in the peace talks.
August 20: PN (M) issues a list of 22 preconditions for CA elections, including the establishment of a republic through the Interim Legislature.
September 18: CPN (M) Ministers quit the interim government and the Maoists launch a peaceful protest movement.
October 5: Indefinite postponement of CA elections.
December 23: CPN (M) and the six other political parties conclude a '23-point agreement'. CA elections are to be held before April 12, 2008.
December 28: Third amendment bill of the Interim Constitution is passed in the Interim Legislature. Nepal is declared a federal democratic republic.
December 31: The five Maoist Ministers rejoin the Interim Council of Ministers.

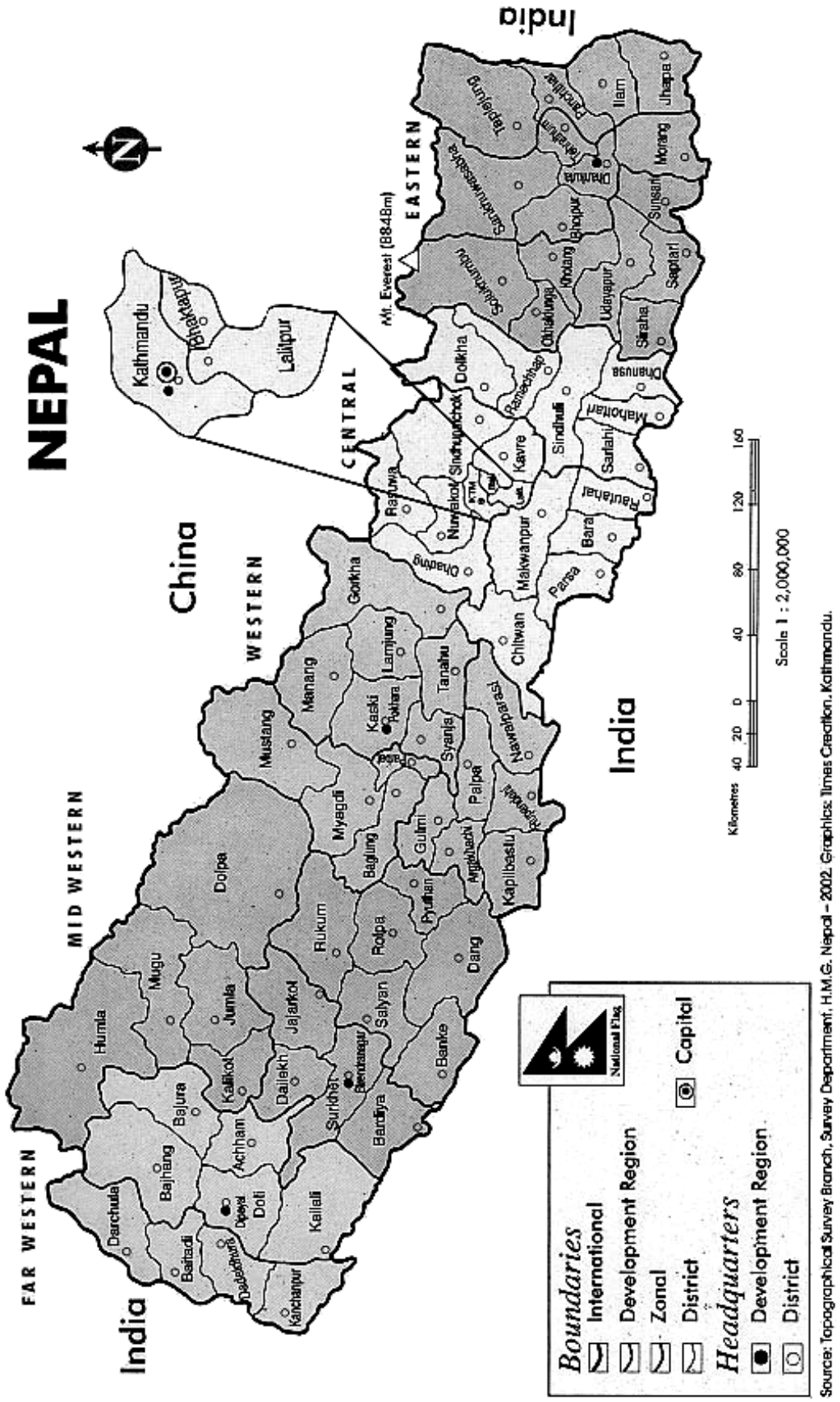
Annex 3: Organisational structure of the CPN-Maoist during the war (after the Chunbang Meeting in October 2005)

Party	People's Liberation Army	Power (People's Government)
General Headquarters (Chairman)	Central military commission (including party chairman)	United Revolutionary People's Council Nepal (Central People's Government)
Standing Committee (5 persons)	General staff (including all division commanders)	People's Governments of Autonomous Republics (9 regions)
Politburo (17 persons)	Divisional staff (7 divisions)	District People's Government
Central Committee (35 persons)	Brigades (including Special Security Forces)	Village People's Government
Command (West, Special, East)	Battalions	
Regional Bureau	Companies	
District Committees	Platoons	
Area Committees	Sections	
Village Committees		

Annex 4: Organisational structure of the CPN (Maoist) during peace time (after the Fifth Expanded Meeting in August 2007)

Party	People's Liberation Army	United Front
General Headquarters (Chairman)	Central military commission (including a party chairman)	United Revolutionary People's Council Nepal
In-charges of Central Bureaus (5 persons)	General staff (including all division commanders)	People's Councils of State Committees
Central Secretariat (11 persons)	Divisional staff (7 divisions)	People's Council at the District level
Central Committee (35 persons)	Brigades	People's Council at the Village level
State Committees (11, plus 3 sub-committees)	Battalions	
District Committees	Companies	
Area Committees	Platoons	
Village Committees	Sections	

Annex 5: Administrative map of Nepal



About the Author

Kiyoko Ogura is a Japanese journalist based in Nepal since 1993. She has done intensive research and media covering on the Maoists' People's War in Nepal since 2001, including some extensive fieldwork in the Maoist stronghold district of Rolpa. She is the author of numerous publications on Nepalese politics in English, Japanese and Nepali languages, including *Kathmandu Spring: People's Movement of 1990* (Himal Books, Kathmandu, 2001) and *Nepal Ousei Kaitai [Dissolving the Nepali Monarchy]* (NHK Books, Japan, 2007). She also wrote recent book chapters in H. Ishii, D.N. Gellner and K. Nawa (Eds.), *Political And Social Transformations in North India and Nepal* (Manohar, Delhi, 2007), and D.N. Gellner and Krishna Hachhethu (Eds.), *Local Democracy in South Asia: Micro Processes of Democratization In Nepal and its Neighbours* (Sage, India, 2008).