

NEPAL'S MAOISTS: THEIR AIMS, STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. BACKGROUND: MAOISM AND NEPAL	1
II. MAOIST POLITICS	3
A. POLITICAL PROGRAM	3
1. New democracy	3
2. Immediate demands	4
3. Attitudes towards the monarchy	4
B. ECONOMIC PROGRAM	5
III. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	7
A. THE PARTY	7
B. THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY	8
C. THE UNITED FRONT	10
IV. LEADERSHIP, SUPPORT BASE AND RESOURCES	12
A. LEADERSHIP, COMMAND AND CONTROL	12
B. MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT BASE	14
1. Class	14
2. Ethnicity and caste	15
3. Women	15
4. Prospects	16
C. RESOURCES	17
1. Finances	17
2. Weaponry	18
V. MILITARY STRATEGY	20
A. "PROTRACTED PEOPLE'S WAR"	21
1. Strategic defence	22
2. The New Line: Prachandapath	23
3. Strategic balance	24
4. From the 2003 Ceasefire to the Next Offensive	25
B. ONE YEAR OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE	26
VI. WHAT MIGHT THEY SETTLE FOR?	28
VII. CONCLUSION	30
APPENDICES	
A. MAP OF NEPAL	32
B. MAPS OF MAOIST REGIONAL BUREAU DIVISIONS AND PROPOSED ETHNIC AND REGIONAL AUTONOMOUS STATES	33
C. THE MAOIST LEADERSHIP	34
D. THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAOIST MOVEMENT	38
E. THE UPPER STRUCTURE OF THE "PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY"	39
F. THE 40-POINT DEMAND	40
G. THE CPN(M) 2003 NEGOTIATING AGENDA	42
H. ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP	48
I. CRISIS GROUP REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS ON ASIA	49
J. CRISIS GROUP BOARD OF TRUSTEES	50

NEPAL'S MAOISTS: THEIR AIMS, STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In less than ten years, the Maoist insurgency has transformed Nepal. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has spread armed conflict across the country and reshaped its political environment irrevocably. But their political aims are still questioned, and not enough is known about their structure and strategy. This background report seeks to fill in many of the gaps, based on close study of their writings and actions and a wide range of interviews, in order to provide policymakers in Nepal and the international community with information and insights needed to approach a peace process realistically.

The Maoists are at heart a political party. They have developed military capacity but it is subordinated to political control. They use terror tactics and coercion but they are not simply terrorists. They maintain links to other communist revolutionary groups on the subcontinent but they are neither Khmer Rouge clones nor is their campaign part of any global terrorism.

Maoist strategy is of a protracted people's war, both political and military -- the two cannot be separated. They have a long-term vision, and they have patience. They can be extremely astute politically (their September 2005 unilateral ceasefire announcement) but can also make grave miscalculations in terms of their own long-term objectives (their mishandling of leadership differences in early 2005).

The Maoists are not likely to collapse because of internal disputes. There are undoubtedly tensions within the top leadership and challenges of command and control but these do not add up to fatal weaknesses. The state's security-driven agenda under a succession of governments lacking legitimacy has only further strengthened their position.

The insurgents are pragmatic and tactically flexible. They are aware they will not win an outright military victory and have realised that an instant transition to socialism is impossible. They are willing to compromise to some degree and are keen to engage with domestic and international political forces.

The Maoists have employed force for political ends since the start of their armed campaign in 1996. They have used torture, execution and other forms of violence including terror and extortion. But they have also been more restrained than many insurgent groups: they have limited civilian casualties and generally avoided indiscriminate attacks. They have left the economy functional, if weakened, and have never targeted foreign nationals.

The Maoists are sensitive to domestic and international opinion. However, despite their philosophy of people's war they are not dependent on popular support. The seriousness of their engagement in any peace process will depend on their perceptions of risks and opportunities. The international community may play an important role in shaping these.

Senior Maoist leaders may well be motivated by a genuine desire for social and economic transformation. Their pursuit of domestic transformation takes precedence over their professed commitment to global revolution. They are more interested in controlling development efforts across Nepal and consolidating their grip on local populations' daily lives.

That the Maoists must be dealt with realistically is something Nepal's mainstream politicians have long understood. Having been on the receiving end of many of the rebels' most brutal assaults, they harbour no illusions about Maoist respect for political dissent. But at the same time they see the possibility of using both carrot and stick to persuade the Maoists to engage with them politically with the aim of getting agreement on a common program that would address certain of their demands that have won widespread support.

The Maoists themselves have acted pragmatically throughout much of the conflict. They have always kept in mind the need to hold the door open for future rehabilitation and reconciliation and have maintained a dialogue with mainstream forces partly to this end. They have also adopted a moderate policy towards international development efforts and have long called for international facilitation of a peace process.

Behaviour towards the newly established United Nations human rights mission will be a crucial test of Maoist attitudes and capacities. If they can prove that they are ready for peace and capable of implementing a negotiated settlement, the political mainstream will be ready to deal with them. Judging by widespread popular relief following

their September 2005 declaration of a unilateral three-month ceasefire, Nepal's people would back a reasonable compromise that delivers peace.

Kathmandu/Brussels, 27 October 2005

NEPAL'S MAOISTS: THEIR AIMS, STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY

I. BACKGROUND: MAOISM AND NEPAL

When Nepal's Maoists -- the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), the CPN(M) -- launched their "people's war" in February 1996, they were easily dismissed as a small communist splinter group that could do no more than stir up trouble in a handful of remote regions. They had almost no weapons, a tiny organisational base and a strategy that seemed outdated and unrealistic. But their movement has grown to the point where the state has relinquished control over most of Nepal's territory.¹ They have proved capable of outmanoeuvring mainstream parties politically and, when conditions are in their favour, of successfully attacking the well-armed Royal Nepalese Army (RNA). In the face of concerted efforts to defeat them, their insurgency has proved resilient.

Despite the Maoists' rise to prominence and the growing international concern at their threat to Nepal's established polity, surprisingly little is known about them. This is partly because of their own secretiveness: as an underground movement the Maoists are cautious about their security and keen to control their public image by restricting negative news. But it is also because most observers have been reluctant to grapple with the politics of the movement.²

¹ The Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) denies that control has been relinquished over most of Nepal's territory. It states: "...since 1 February to date...we truly believe that we have been able to contain terror activities of the Maoist on innocent citizens in the capital. With regards to the security situation in the country side, it is true that we have not been able to have a security presence in all the villages in the country. This is largely because of the lack of manpower, but it is not true that little has changed in the security situation in the country side. As the RNA's force is strengthened due to the prevailing needs of the country, we will continue to provide more security units in as many rural areas as we can to defensively deploy the army to provide security to the people...The Maoists do not control any areas nor do they have any liberated areas". Letter from Brigadier Dipak K. Gurung, director, Directorate of Public Relations, Royal Nepalese Army Headquarters, to Gareth Evans, Crisis Group President, 20 October 2005. Brigadier Gurung was writing in response to Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°41, *Nepal: Beyond Royal Rule*, 15 September 2005.

² Crisis Group reporting on the Nepal conflict since April 2003 is available at www.crisisgroup.org. There is also a growing

body of literature on the Maoist movement. Significant works published before February 2004 are detailed in Ramesh Parajuli, *Maoist Movement of Nepal: A Selected Bibliography* (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2004). Background reading on the insurgency in English includes Deepak Thapa (ed.), *Understanding the Maoist Movement of Nepal* (Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2003); Karki and Seddon (eds.), *The People's War in Nepal: Left Perspective*, (Delhi: Adroit, 2003); Deepak Thapa with Bandita Sijapati, *A Kingdom under Siege: Nepal's Maoist Insurgency, 1996 to 2003* (Kathmandu: The Printhouse, 2003); Michael Hutt (ed.), *Himalayan 'People's War'* (London: Hurst and Company, 2004). A large number of Maoist documents, including articles, policy papers, press statements and interviews, are available on the internet, especially at www.cpnm.org. The Maoists have also published two useful collections in book format: *Some Important Documents of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)* (Janadisha Publications, 2004) and *Problems and Prospects of Revolution in Nepal* (Janadisha Publications, 2004).

Like most communists, Nepal's Maoists are prolific writers and theorists and have produced a large body of work which sheds light on their goals and strategy. They have also been skilled propagandists, producing their own publications, running FM radio stations and using the domestic and international media to promote their point of view. In many key respects, the Maoists have done what they said they would do. Understanding their plans is not only crucial to tackling the insurgency militarily -- a task which has proved beyond the state so far -- but also to dealing with it pragmatically and plotting possible routes to a negotiated settlement.

This background report draws on many of the Maoists' own writings and statements, as well as much other material, to examine three basic questions:

- Who are Nepal's Maoists and what do they want to achieve? Are they really Maoist at all? Politics lie at the heart of the insurgency and understanding Maoist goals and political culture is essential to understanding the rationale for their armed struggle. It can also help efforts to bring them into the framework of parliamentary politics by addressing reasonable elements of their program.
- How is the movement organised and led? On paper, the structure is simple: party, army and united front. But the differences between theory

and practice are revealing, as are the ways in which the Maoists have departed from historical precedents. Questions of resources, support base and command and control also give clues to Maoist strengths and weaknesses.

- What are the Maoists' strategy and tactics? Are there signs that they will settle for a negotiated peace? The overall strategy of protracted people's war is well known in name but needs to be understood in context. The Maoists' public announcement that they have entered the final stage of strategic offensive implies confidence of a military victory. But in fact, there are more signs that the Maoists' internal politics are putting the party in a good position to compromise.

The Maoists themselves have fed the confusion over their true aims with a plethora of seemingly contradictory statements. Still proud to lay claim to the legacy of China's turbulent Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, they have also repeatedly insisted that they do not have a totalitarian vision for a future state. Calls for the rapid establishment of a "dictatorship of the proletariat" have been supplanted by emphasis on the need first to complete Nepal's "bourgeois democratic revolution" and establish a true multiparty democracy.³

The Maoists have also welcomed the establishment of a United Nations human rights monitoring mission and vowed to abide by international humanitarian law.⁴ Which of the many faces presented to the outside world is the true one? What does the speed with which the Maoists have often shifted positions say about their ultimate intentions? There are no definitive answers to these questions. Indeed, as the ongoing debates within the CPN(M) indicate, it may well be that the Maoists themselves have yet to settle on final answers. But this report attempts to lay out the evidence on which at least a better informed estimate of Maoist intentions and capacity can be made.

The scope of this report is limited. It is analytical rather than judgmental, drawing on dozens of published and private sources, including Crisis Group interviews that allow the Maoists to explain what they stand for in their own words.⁵ In doing this it seeks not to endorse any position but rather to test assertions against available evidence, though these sources in many instances are inevitably inadequate and self-interested.

Nevertheless, published Maoist writings, if read carefully, do tend to provide a reasonable guide to the movement's political culture and strategic aims, though statements on topics such as military clashes and political achievements tend to be designed as propaganda and must be approached with some scepticism. The Maoists are understandably keen to portray themselves in a good light and are, therefore, hardly forthcoming about indiscipline within their ranks or violations of international law. Maoist strategy has been fairly consistent since the early 1990s but since they adapt tactics to changing circumstances, observers are often confused. This report concentrates on providing a background guide to underlying politics and structural factors as a basis for more detailed reporting on specific issues in future.

³ Prachanda, press statement, 10 May 2005.

⁴ Prachanda, press statement, 13 April 2005.

⁵ Maoist terms such as "people's war", "people's governments", "People's Liberation Army", etc. are generally used without quotation marks. This is primarily for ease of reading and, of course, does not imply endorsement.

II. MAOIST POLITICS

A. POLITICAL PROGRAM

1. New democracy

The basic aim of the CPN(M) armed struggle is to capture state power and establish "new people's democracy" (*naulo janbad*).⁶ The concept of "new democracy" is inherited from the thoughts of Mao Zedong, which in turn built on the views of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. The "new democratic revolution" marks the transition from the classical Marxist stages of bourgeois hegemony ("old democracy") to proletarian hegemony ("new democracy").⁷ For a society in which even the bourgeois democratic revolution has not reached completion, however -- such as China in the 1930s or Nepal in the current Maoist analysis -- the new democratic revolution can telescope the stages of bourgeois and proletarian hegemony. Combined with the Leninist theory of "continuous revolution", this forms the basis of the Nepali Maoists' vision of their struggle:

This plan would be based on the aim of completing the new democratic revolution after the destruction of feudalism and imperialism, then immediately moving towards socialism, and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism -- the golden future of the whole humanity.⁸

⁶ This report follows Martin Hoftun, William Raeper and John Whelpton, *People, Politics and Ideology* (Kathmandu, 1999), pp. 200, 238 in translating *janbad* as "people's democracy". This brings out the Nepali language's clear distinction between *janbad* and *prajatantra*, both of which could be simply rendered in English as "democracy" but which carry very different connotations. To complicate the picture further, mainstream politicians increasingly prefer the term *loktantra* to *prajatantra*: *praja* ("offspring" or "subject") has paternalistic connotations while *lok* simply means "people" and carries less pejorative overtones.

⁷ A succinct but authoritative explanation of Mao's concept of new democracy can be found in Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 76-79. Mao's own seminal essay on the topic is "On the New Democracy", 1940, reproduced in Jacobs and Baerwald (eds.), *Chinese Communism: Selected Documents* (New York, 1963), pp. 66-77.

⁸ "Theoretical Premises for the Historic Initiation of the People's War", in *Some Important Documents of Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)* (Janadisha Publications, 2004). Excerpts from the document "Plan for the Historic Initiation of the People's War", adopted by the Central Committee of the Party in September 1995.

When the Maoists launched the people's war, they used their appeal to citizens to declare their resolve "to initiate the process of forcibly smashing this reactionary state and establishing a New Democratic state", in accordance with "the almighty ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to free humanity forever from the yoke of class exploitation".⁹

The question of what kind of "dictatorship" would be required to oversee this process has been answered in different ways, with the traditional Marxist "dictatorship of the proletariat" generally being supplanted by the Maoist concept of a mixed-class "people's democratic dictatorship": "The fundamental character of New Democratic or People's Democratic republican state shall be the people's democratic dictatorship with the participation of all the progressive classes including the national bourgeoisie and oppressed nations/nationalities based on worker-peasant alliance under the leadership of the proletariat".¹⁰

The concept of *naulo janbad* is far from exclusive to the Maoists. At the start of the 1990s almost all of Nepal's communist factions shared this goal. Most of them believed that multiparty democracy could be one of the stages in reaching this goal: "The disagreement was over how to travel along the road and on how pluralist the political institutions of *naulo janbad* would be".¹¹ While the moderate Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), the UML, opted for *bahudaliya janbad* (multiparty people's democracy), the Maoists hardened their opposition to the multiparty system that Nepal was moving towards.¹² Interviewed in September 1990, Baburam Bhattarai, who became the chief Maoist ideologue, explained the reasons for his criticism of parliamentary democracy and plans for a reformed system:

In a parliamentary democracy you don't redistribute the property, you just advocate free competition. Free competition among unequals is naturally in favour of the more powerful ones. When we perform this new democratic revolution, we will

⁹ "Appeal of the C.P.N. (Maoist) to the People: March Along the Path of People's War to Smash the Reactionary State and Establish a New Democratic State!", in *ibid*. This is a translation of the leaflet distributed across Nepal by the CPN(M) at the start of the insurgency in February 1996.

¹⁰ Common Minimum Policy and Program of the United Revolutionary People's Council, Nepal, Article 1.

¹¹ Martin Hoftun et al., *op. cit.*, p. 238.

¹² The "people's movement", led by a coalition of previously underground political parties, brought an end to three decades of absolute monarchical rule. King Birendra capitulated to demonstrators' demands for an end to the Panchayat system in April 1990, and a new multiparty constitution was promulgated in November 1990. For details, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°99, *Towards a Lasting Peace in Nepal: The Constitutional Issues*, 15 June 2005.

immediately redistribute property. We will confiscate all landed property and redistribute the wealth among the poor. The political institutions may be the same. We believe in political freedom. We will have elections, but the elections so far have been dominated by money.¹³

Maoist thinking has veered between more radical and moderate versions of this basic line.¹⁴ But they have been flexible in their approach, eschewing hardline demands if the circumstances require. For example, in the second peace talks with the government in 2003, they were willing to compromise on fundamental economic policy measures, such as accommodating foreign capital, which they have otherwise characterised as imperialist and "comprador".¹⁵

The Maoists believe nationalism provides an emotional rallying point for violent struggle: "The Nepalese people are very conscious and sensitive about the question of nationalism, and...they feel proud to lay down their lives while fighting rather than submit to the pressures of the foreigners".¹⁶ Nepal's Maoists have also drawn heavily on caste and ethnic grievances to mobilise popular support. They have likewise selected targets for political activism -- such as high private school fees -- designed to win middle class support. Their relative openness to foreign-aided development projects and ambivalence on key economic questions also points to a more pragmatic approach.

2. Immediate demands

Just before the launch of their people's war, the Maoists had submitted a 40-point demand to then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The headline points were related directly to nationalism.¹⁷ Four were targeted specifically

at India, demanding the removal of "unequal stipulations and agreements" in the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship (although not cancellation of the treaty itself),¹⁸ nullification of the 1996 Mahakali Treaty on water resources;¹⁹ control of the Nepal-India border and banning of Indian-registered cars from driving in the country; and lastly, a moralistic demand to stop the "cultural pollution of imperialists and expansionists", which primarily meant that "import and distribution of vulgar Hindi films, video cassettes and magazines should be stopped".

None of these demands can be described as particularly Maoist: many of them have been raised repeatedly across the political spectrum. Other nationalistic demands were primarily economic: that foreign (British and Indian) recruitment of Gurkha troops should cease and "decent jobs" be arranged for recruits; that foreign technicians should not be given preference over Nepalis; that the "monopoly of foreign capital" should be stopped; that customs duties should provide "sufficient income...for the country's economic development"; and that "bribing by imperialists and expansionists in the name of NGOs and INGOs should be stopped".

The primary Maoist demands have remained largely consistent since the earlier rounds of failed negotiation: a roundtable conference, interim government and elections to a constituent assembly. Since the royal coup of February 2005, however, their willingness to include the king in talks has decreased, and they have pushed the mainstream parties to accept the idea of a rapid transition to an interim government (in which they would hope to play a major role). They have already won considerable mainstream support for the concept of a constituent assembly, although their model has not been elaborated, and there are many potential pitfalls.²⁰

3. Attitudes towards the monarchy

One of the Maoists' ultimate goals is a republic. However, the initial 40 points they demanded did not tackle this question head on but rather called for a new constitution "drafted by the people's elected representatives" and for the army, police and administration to be "under the people's control". The only direct statement on the monarchy was that "all the special rights and privileges of the King and

and its well-being" and "Demands related to the people's living". For the text of the 40 demands, see Appendix F.

¹³ The treaty is available at http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/documents/treaties_agreements/indo-nepal_treaty_peace.htm.

¹⁴ The treaty is available at http://www.nepaldemocracy.org/documents/treaties_agreements/indo-nepal_treaty_mahakali.htm.

¹⁵ See Crisis Group Report, *Towards a Lasting Peace in Nepal*, op. cit.

¹³ Martin Hoftun et al., op. cit., p. 239.

¹⁴ The "hard" and "soft" lines on pluralist political institutions, and their significance in the search for peace, are discussed below.

¹⁵ Comprador, as used in Mao's analysis and, following from it, Nepali Maoist texts, refers to subservient domestic intermediaries or partners of foreign capital and governments who are instrumental in the subordination of the national economy to imperialism and foreign capital.

¹⁶ "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", document adopted by the third plenum of the CPN (Maoist), March 1995. Much of this sentiment is directed toward resentment of the role India has often played in Nepal.

¹⁷ For a breakdown of the 40 demands in nationalist, political, economic and social categories, see Harka Gurung, Ananda Aditya, Surendra K.C., Chuda Bahadur Shrestha and Sudheer Sharma, *An Overview of Recent Armed Conflict in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 2001), p. 97. The Maoists' own categories were: "Demands related to nationalism", "Demands related to the public

his family should be ended". The CPN (Unity Centre), the immediate predecessor to the CPN(M), had opposed the "the monarchical parliamentary multi-party system" and viewed the real aim of the 1990 people's movement as having been "to end the monarchical system".²¹ After two years of armed insurgency, the CPN(M) reiterated that "the analysis of the reactionaries that the king and monarchy are deep-rooted in the Nepalese society is not true...It was only after the emergence of the centralised feudal state in a certain stage of development of class division that attempts had been made to unnaturally impose the king and monarchism through the practices of the system of reward-and-punishment and divine theory".²²

Nevertheless, when it came to negotiations in 2003, the Maoists said they supported a freely elected constituent assembly and would, therefore, not impose their policy by force: "Different political forces can go to the people with their own views on monarchy and other progressive issues, and the final verdict of the people would be acceptable to everybody concerned".²³ During peace talks in both 2001 and 2003, the Maoists signalled that they would likely accept a continuing role for the monarchy if it were purely ceremonial. The royal coup of February 2005 and the growing rift between the palace and the mainstream parties have led to a hardening of rhetoric.²⁴ But the emergence of strong republican sentiment in student politics and within parts of the Congress and UML leadership has helped the Maoists pursue their preferred tactics.

While the CPN(M) wants a republic, it realises that it will be much more effective to encourage the pursuit of this demand by mainstream politicians than to push it unilaterally.²⁵ Party chairman and overall leader Prachanda

²¹ Political Line of CPN (Unity Centre).

²² "Experiences of the People's War and Some Important Questions" in *Some Important Documents Of Communist Party Of Nepal (Maoist)*, op. cit. (Extract from the resolution adopted at the Fourth Expanded Meeting of the Central Committee of the Party, in August 1998.)

²³ An Executive Summary of the Proposal Put Forward by CPN (Maoist) for the Negotiations. See Appendix G.

²⁴ "Raja ra dal: bheta nahune batotira", *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 30 May 2005.

²⁵ "The democratic movement of the Nepalese people against absolute monarchy, going on for more than half a century, is now heading towards a climax. Whereas the eight-year-long People's War (PW) led by the CPN (Maoist) for a people's republic has virtually wiped out the feudal socio-economic and cultural roots of the monarchy from the vast rural areas, the students affiliated to the major parliamentary parties, so far committed to the constitutional monarchy, have now switched over to the slogan of a republic and are spearheading the movement in the urban areas. This historical confluence of the two currents of the democratic movement, i.e. revolutionary and parliamentary, for the abolition of the monarchy and institutionalisation of the republic has opened an excellent

claims to be confident: "The Party wants to institutionalise a republican form of state through the Constituent Assembly and believes that in a free and fair election the mandate of the Nepalese people would be in favour of a republic".²⁶ At the same time, senior mainstream politicians still believe the Maoists might accept a ceremonial monarchy, with no powers, especially over the military.²⁷

B. ECONOMIC PROGRAM

For the Maoists, changes in Nepal's political institutions are only the means to a much more far-reaching transformation of its social and economic structure. The concentration on headline demands such as republicanism and a new constitution has often distracted attention from their economic and social goals, many of which have been elaborated in some detail. Maoist attitudes on these illustrate the nature of their movement and hint at their likely program if they were ever to gain power.

Their economic plans offer a hybrid model incorporating capitalist elements on a strongly nationalist frame. This reflects the post-colonial "mixed economy" applied in countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Egypt rather than a Stalinist command economy. The basic idea is that the "commanding heights" of the economy should be controlled by the state, while the rest is left to private capital.

Plans for social and cultural reform, not least the ambitious goal of eliminating caste, ethnic, gender and regional disparities and discrimination, are both a central plank of Maoist policy and a major selling point to many marginalised communities. The Maoists have tried to put some policies into practice in areas under their control and have brought about limited change. But the questions of how genuinely they believe in their stated policy and how closely they would insist on it if they gained any share of national power remain unanswered.²⁸

The starting point for Maoist analysis is their conviction that Nepal is "semi-feudal", "semi-colonial", and at the

prospect for consummation of the anti-monarchy democratic movement in the country". "Relevance of Monarchy in Nepal", Approach Paper presented by the Nepalese People's Right Protection Committee, India, New Delhi, 12 February 2004, available at http://cpnm.org/new/English/articles_news/relevance_monarch.htm.

²⁶ Prachanda, "A Brief Introduction to the Policies of the C.P.N. (Maoist)", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

²⁷ Crisis Group interviews, Kathmandu, July and August 2005.

²⁸ Maoist policy on ethnic autonomy and local government will be the subject of detailed future Crisis Group reporting.

mercy of imperialism and Indian expansionism.²⁹ Its people suffer economic exploitation and discrimination on many grounds. For Baburam Bhattarai, the people's war is a means to solve the economic problems of underdevelopment induced by imperialism, semi-feudalism and international capitalism.³⁰ In this view, Nepal lost its economic self-sufficiency and independence with British colonial dominance of South Asia. Trade imbalances with post-independence India, Indian investors' control of much of the economy and exploitation of its resources, along with ready access to cheap Nepali labour, have exacerbated this loss of economic autonomy.

The Maoists claim that Nepal's dependence on agriculture is primarily due to the distorting effects of the Indian economy and trade. On top of this, Nepal's "semi-feudal" society has contributed to stunted economic development and extreme regional imbalances. Nepali capitalism is based on import-dependent merchant capital concentrated in the hands of a few magnates, usury-driven finance capital and aid-financed bureaucratic capital. This has retarded the development of production-oriented national capital: "Thus, to develop national industrial capital by destroying the [foreign-origin] and bureaucratic capital and to pave the path of self-reliant development by breaking away...[from] dependency, a revolutionary transformation of society and the process of People's War have become inevitable".³¹

In this sense, the people's war is not only a political but also an economic program. Bhattarai proposes the following broad prescriptive measures for economic development policy:

- ❑ changing production relations: confiscating land from the feudals and capital from the comprador-bureaucratic classes;
- ❑ mixed ownership: land to be owned individually by peasants; major industries and financial companies to be state-owned, with joint-ventures between state and productive private capital; small and medium businesses and trade to be owned by private individuals;
- ❑ a protected and regulated economy: to ensure independent and self-reliant development;

- ❑ planned development: not a Soviet-style command economy but "a genuine mass-oriented and efficient economy functioning under a centralised leadership and guidance and decentralised initiative and management, which to a large extent was practiced in China during Mao's time"; and
- ❑ balanced development: economic and geographic balance between country and town, hill and plains, agriculture and industry, etc., but with industry as the leading sector and agriculture the foundation, the overall aim being "the urbanisation of the countryside and not the ruralisation of the cities".

²⁹ This analysis is repeated consistently in Maoist policy documents such as the Political Line of CPN (Unity Centre) and shapes the URPC program.

³⁰ Baburam Bhattarai, *Politico-Economic Rationale of the People's War in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 1998), available at http://insof.org/collected/bb_pe-rational.htm.

³¹ Ibid.

³² See fn. 15 above.

III. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Nepal's Maoists have attempted to emulate the classic Chinese communist structure of "three magic weapons": party, army and united front. The policy of the immediate predecessor to the CPN(M), the CPN (Unity Centre), explicitly endorsed the threefold revolutionary organisation. Significantly, it made clear that the united front would get only subsidiary attention, while the major effort went into the party and the army. This early indication of priorities may go some way towards explaining the shape the Maoist movement has subsequently taken:

For the success of the New Democratic revolution, it is a must, as taught by Comrade Mao, to develop the three instruments of "revolutionary Communist Party, revolutionary United Front and People's Army". It is evident that in such a revolution the role of the Communist Party and the people's war would be primary and that of the mass and class organisations and the people's movement be secondary. It is of primary importance to move ahead with a concrete program for the development of these instruments.³³

The Maoists do not publicise their command structure, and they protect the identities of many people in leadership positions. The means by which they maintain a system of command and control is kept deliberately obscure, and most of their leaders remain underground. But they have definitely followed the Chinese threefold system, within which they have generally emphasised the development of the party over the army and both of these over the united front.

The party has overall responsibility for all activities related to the "people's war" and for the development of policy. The army (PLA), which is under the full control of the party, is responsible for both offensive operations against the "enemy side" and defensive arrangements. Prachanda retains the top positions in both organisations, as chairman of the party and supreme commander of the PLA. The central body of the "united front" is the United People's Revolutionary Council Nepal, which the Maoists have fashioned partly as a revolutionary tool and partly as a central people's government in waiting.

A. THE PARTY

The CPN(M) is in many respects similar to mainstream political parties within Nepal and beyond. Its organisation follows communist principles but the resulting model is not dissimilar to that of the Nepali Congress or other moderate groups. Overall control of the party and military remains firmly with the "party headquarters", which in practice means Prachanda. He has the authority to take all immediate decisions, though these can subsequently be discussed by party committees which have the power to endorse, revise or -- occasionally -- reject them.

Political leadership. The organisational hierarchy under the chairman consists respectively of the standing committee, politburo, central committee, divisional commands, regional bureaus, sub-regional bureaus, district, area and cell committees.³⁴ The politburo contains at least 27 members, of whom ten are alternates.³⁵ Prachanda is chairman of the politburo's seven-member standing committee, whose other members are Mohan Vaidya (Kiran), Baburam Bhattarai, Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal), Post Bahadur Bogati (Diwakar), Krishna Bahadur Mahara and Dev Gurung. The central committee has nearly 100 members and has grown as the movement itself has expanded: at the second national conference in February 2001, there were only 55 members. But the increase in numbers has not been accompanied by any increase in authority: the majority of political and military-strategic plans are still formulated by the politburo and the standing committee. There is also a central advisory committee of senior, experienced political leaders and activists. Regional and district commanders underwent a major reshuffle during July-August 2005.

Divisional commands. Beyond the central political bodies, the three divisional commands have been granted broad authority. The three divisions -- western, special central and eastern -- were defined during the June 2002 central committee plenary's wide-reaching review of organisational structure. The special central command (the Kathmandu valley, surrounding hill areas and the Tarai areas of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat and others) was dissolved by the August 2004 plenum to form a new mid-central command. Certain areas which had fallen under the special command were transferred to the eastern command but most remained with the mid-central division.³⁶ The leader of each command --

³³ "Political Line of CPN (Unity Centre)" in *Some Important Documents*, op. cit. This is an extract from the Political Report adopted by the Unity Convention of the then CPN (Unity Centre) in December 1991. The Party's name was changed to CPN (Maoist) after the Third Expanded Meeting of the Central Committee in February 1995.

³⁴ See Appendix B below for details of current central committee members.

³⁵ Crisis Group e-mail correspondence with a Maoist leader, April 2005. There are two types of politburo members, full and alternate. Full members have voting rights.

³⁶ Before the creation of the divisional commands, there were five regional bureaus directly below the central committee: eastern, central, valley, western and expatriate (*pravas*). Now

Maoists use the English term "In-Charge" -- is an ex officio member of the standing committee. The radical redrawing of command borders was a particular feature of the August 2004 plenum: as well as shifting the Kathmandu valley into the eastern command, it also moved the Rapti area, encompassing the Maoist heartland of Rolpa and Rukum, into the central command.³⁷ The geographical scope of the three commands is now: western central command -- Mahakali, Seti, Karnali and Bheri zones; mid central command -- Gandaki, Lumbini, Rapti and Dhaulagiri zones; eastern central command -- Janakpur, Sagarmatha, Bagmati, Narayani, Koshi and Mechi zones.³⁸

International department. All units of the CPN(M) outside Nepal's borders fall under the international department, formerly headed by C.P. Gajurel (Gaurav) and now by Baburam Bhattarai.³⁹ The latter, accompanied by other senior leaders, held meetings in New Delhi in late May 2005 with Nepali and Indian political party representatives.⁴⁰ He has also been the main point of contact for other international dealings. The international department's responsibilities include expanding party organisation -- recruiting expatriate Nepalis, establishing international contacts and relations, fundraising, purchase of ammunition and explosives and arranging training. It initially concentrated on trying to build a base among Nepalis in India, both permanent residents and temporary

the regional bureaus report to the divisional commands, and they have increased in number and had their boundaries redrawn. Each regional bureau now combines two zones: Mechi-Koshi (Gopal Khambu in charge), Narayani-Bagmati (Agni Sapkota in charge), Janakpur-Sagarmatha (Mani Thapa in charge), Gandak [i.e. Gandaki-Lumbini] (Shakti Bahadur Basnet in charge), Rapti-Dhaulagiri special bureau (Netra Bikram Chand in charge) [Rapti-Dhaulagiri is described as a "special" zone as it encompasses the main Maoist base areas], Bheri-Karnali (Khadga Bahadur Bishwakarma in charge) and Seti-Mahakali (Lekhraj Bhatta in charge).

³⁷ Such a demarcation is not only geographically logical -- despite being the capital, Kathmandu is indeed towards the east of the country -- but also carries a symbolic message. While the state's Kathmandu-centric insistence had forced the creation of Western, Mid-Western and Far-Western development regions, carrying a clear implication of distant hinterlands far removed from the capital, the new Maoist arrangement demonstrated that previously marginalised areas could now be part of the "centre".

³⁸ Punya Gautam 'Biswas', "Bidrohiharuko bhritri sanjal", *Nepal*, 23 January 2005. It should be noted that the Maoists have redrawn the boundaries of certain districts so that they do not necessarily correspond to their official namesakes; there have also been disputes between adjacent Maoist autonomous governments over their boundaries.

³⁹ Gaurav was arrested by Indian security forces at Chennai airport on 19 August 2003 as the second ceasefire was about to collapse. He was reportedly travelling to Europe to represent the Maoists and try to present their case to Western governments.

⁴⁰ Crisis Group interviews, New Delhi, May 2005.

migrants. This type of work has now been expanded to Europe and North America.

Other departments. On paper, there are a number of further central departments, including policy and direction, broadcasting, publishing, schools, human rights, health, ethnic, legal and cultural. These structures are designed partly to shadow existing state entities and give the impression that the Maoists are building a full alternative structure. Apart from the sporadically prolific publishing department, however, there is little evidence that these nominal structures embody the type of full-fledged administration that their enumeration is meant to imply. Indeed, because of the capture of central leaders -- some fifteen are in prison in Nepal and India -- and the killing of others, the Maoists' central command is if anything understaffed, with gaps in various positions.⁴¹

B. THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

The main base of the Maoists' military strength is the People's Liberation Army Nepal (PLA). Its strength is hard to estimate. At the lower end, some analysts suggest that the Maoists have only a few thousand hardcore fighters. One military expert and retired RNA lieutenant-general put their strength at 4,000 armed guerrillas, 5,000 militia who have received guerrilla training and 20,000 armed militia.⁴² The Maoists themselves claim they have more than 10,000 armed guerrillas in their nine brigades,⁴³ a figure that many close observers tend to accept. Indeed, the RNA has offered a similar estimate: some 9,500 guerrillas and 25,000 militia.⁴⁴ Other experts are more cautious, suggesting a range of core fighters anywhere from 5,000 to 8,000 or so.

Of course, the Maoists and the RNA both have reasons to give higher estimates. The Maoists obviously want to create the impression that they have a mass support base and a considerable fighting force. The RNA is faced with the problem that earlier state estimates of a small Maoist guerrilla cadre simply do not tally with their depiction of the current situation. The RNA says that over 8,000 Maoists have been killed in the conflict so far, more than half since the breakdown of the 2003 ceasefire alone.⁴⁵ If

⁴¹ Crisis Group telephone interview with a Maoist leader, Nepal, March 2005.

⁴² Sadip Bahadur Shah, "Bhavishyahin vidroh", *Samay*, 30 December 2004.

⁴³ Crisis Group interview with a Maoist contact, Kathmandu, March 2005.

⁴⁴ Colonel Victor J.B. Rana, RNA press conference, *The Kathmandu Post*, 21 May 2005.

⁴⁵ Brigadier General Dipak Gurung, RNA press conference, Kathmandu, 6 May 2005 (in "Over 4,000 Rebels Killed Since Aug. '03", *nepalnews.com*, 6 May 2005) and Major General

both this claim and earlier estimates were correct, the entire Maoist army should have been killed by now. As one analyst commented on similar figures presented by the RNA in December 2003:

Wherever the numbers may lie, the fatalities inflicted on the Maoists would tend to suggest that the Maoists are now in flight, and the forces of the establishment are consolidating their domination over the country's hinterland that had, for some time, passed into the control of the insurgents. A closer analysis of developments, however, reveals the spectacle, rather, of a country hurtling towards chaos, with the state and its agencies in headlong flight.⁴⁶

The general headquarters of the PLA is under the leadership of Supreme Commander Prachanda. The "general staff" consists of the members of the party standing committee. The organisational hierarchy under the general headquarters is: division, brigade, battalion, company, platoon, squad and then militias, poorly armed fighters who have not received full guerrilla training. For certain areas such as Kathmandu, "special taskforces" have been established. These are raised from selected guerrillas either to serve in areas where there are no established regular units or to carry out more specialised actions from time to time.⁴⁷

This elaborate structure is a relatively recent development. At the start of their military campaign, the Maoists were very limited in number and lacked weaponry and uniforms. The first units, which had minimal equipment, were organised into "fighting units" (*ladaku dal*), "security units" (*suraksha dal*) and "volunteer units" (*svayamsevak dal*). According to the then military commander of the Maoists' central region, Sandip, the real development of the "people's army" only took place after the start of the government's Operation Kilo Sierra 2 of May 1998-April 1999.⁴⁸

In August 1998, the Maoists' fourth expanded central committee meeting (plenum) adopted the slogan of building "base areas" and building up military strength in order to challenge government repression. The Maoist guerrillas became increasingly well organised and well trained, until by the start of 2001 they had effectively defeated the police. They knew they were not capable of fighting with the RNA, however, so, in July 2001, they -

reciprocated the government's ceasefire offer and used it to strengthen their military capacity, running advanced training camps in many locations.⁴⁹ In September 2001, the formation of the "People's Liberation Army Nepal" was announced at a gathering of guerrillas from across the country in Kureli, Rolpa district. With their forces now better organised and trained, they attacked the army barracks at Ghorahi, Dang, in November and brought the RNA into the war.

As the guerrilla army grew in size, the central committee plenary of June 2002 decided to form brigade-level military groupings. In August 2004, these were incorporated into three divisions of three brigades each: the eastern division under Barshaman Pun (Ananta), the central division under Nanda Kishor Pun (Pasang) and the western division under Janardan Sharma (Prabhakar). The leadership of every fighting unit from company to division level is shared between a military commander and a political commissar, which the Maoists claim ensures political control over the army.⁵⁰ The commissar ranks higher and is in charge of the party committee formed within each military unit. All units above section level, including special taskforces, are under orders to work within the central plan defined by party policy.⁵¹ From late summer 2005, however, there have been credible reports that military and political workers at lower levels will be deliberately separated, not least to avoid the demonstrated risk of captured Maoists betraying the identities of too many comrades.⁵²

Beyond this, Prachanda announced in August 2004 the aim of forming a 100,000-strong people's militia up to the company level, under the command of district and regional headquarters.⁵³ In practice, militias take their orders from different bodies, from local party committees to people's governments.⁵⁴ Militia members are not generally expected to carry out the same guerrilla duties as mainstream fighters but can be called upon as reinforcements. They are poorly armed and do not wear uniforms.

Kiran Shumsher Thapa, RNA press briefing, Kathmandu, 20 May 2005 ("2,100 Security Men Killed During Nine Years: RNA", Kantipur Online, 20 May 2005).

⁴⁶ Ajai Sahni, "How Not to Fight an Insurgency", *South Asia Intelligence Review* 2(21), 8 December 2003.

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview with a company-level PLA Commander, Nepalgunj, February 2004.

⁴⁸ Interview with Sandip, then company-level PLA commander, *Nepal Samacharpatra*, 17 December 2000.

⁴⁹ Video footage from one such training camp in the north of Dhading district commanded by Pasang was obtained by the RNA and subsequently broadcast on Nepal Television. The Maoists themselves filmed training sessions extensively and have compiled at least two films of more than an hour each on the activities of the PLA, many sections of which date to the ceasefire period. These films have not been widely distributed, although segments can be viewed at <http://cpnm.org/video/WebLibrery/Final.htm>.

⁵⁰ Dinesh, "Janamukti senako vikas ra rajnitik karya", *Janadesh*, 10 August 2004.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Crisis Group interviews, Nepal, September-October 2005.

⁵³ Press statement, 1 September 2004.

⁵⁴ Dinesh, "Janamukti senako vikas ra rajnitik karya", *Janadesh*, 10 August 2004.

There have been credible allegations that the Maoists carry out forced recruitment and use child soldiers.⁵⁵ That they do indeed carry out coercive recruitment is not in doubt. Two of their campaigns in particular -- "one house, one guerrilla" and "shoes"⁵⁶ -- have been widely publicised. The Maoists also make no secret of the fact that they give military training to children and have militarised the school curriculum in areas under their control. Cases of Maoist student cadets have been well documented but evidence that child soldiers are used in combat is still patchy. Similarly plausible allegations that civilians are used as human shields surface after most large-scale attacks on security bases; again, however, the truth is hard to ascertain amid claim and counter-claim.

C. THE UNITED FRONT

The concept of the united front was central to Mao's thinking and to the communist victory in China. The idea is simple in essence but broad, and potentially difficult, in application. It means to "unite with all forces that can be united with in order to fight a common struggle against the enemy and to win in revolution and construction".⁵⁷ The key is that the type of forces that can or should be united with may vary entirely according to circumstance. From the period of the anti-Japanese struggle, Mao formulated and continually emphasised the "unity-struggle-autonomy" policy: "develop the progressive force, win over the in-between force, and combat the obstinate force".⁵⁸ The categorisation of such forces depended on objectives and interests; the Chinese Communist Party went through at least five quite different united front experiments.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ See "Caught in the Middle: Mounting Violations Against Children in Nepal's Armed Conflict", Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, January 2005, available at <http://www.watchlist.org/reports/nepal.php>. Child soldiers have also been the subject of international press reporting, such as John Lancaster "Concern Grows over Nepal's Child Fighters", *The Washington Post*, 14 June 2005.

⁵⁶ In the latter, Maoists place a pair of shoes outside the door of a house as a sign that one member of the household is expected to join the party, normally the military, as a "whole-timer". See Kishore Nepal, "The Maoist Service Provision in Parts of Mid and Far West Nepal", Centre for Professional Journalism Studies, Kathmandu, March 2005.

⁵⁷ Kwok-Sing Li (tr. Mary Lok), *A Glossary of Political Terms of the People's Republic of China* (Hong Kong, 1995), p. 451, emphasis added.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

⁵⁹ The first effort, cooperating with the KMT in the Revolutionary National United Front (1924-1927), ended in disaster as Chiang Kai Shek ultimately turned on the communists and sought to destroy them. It was only after the retreat to the remote

From the start of the 1990s, the Nepali Maoists planned the creation of a particular type of united front. It would be the least important of the three revolutionary "weapons", and it would be a hybrid of the various Chinese models: the "revolutionary United Front" would be "an instrument of struggle and an embryo of the new power".⁶⁰ In other words, it would not only be a broad coalition of organisations assisting in the revolutionary struggle but would also function as an embryonic government. Despite the existence of a plethora of fraternal organisations created alongside the CPN(M) and repeated efforts to build bridges with mainstream parties, it is the latter role of the united front that has come to predominate in Nepali Maoist discourse.

Nepal's Maoists bitterly criticised existing "reformist trends" within the communist movement that "focus on the legal movement and put emphasis only on forging unity-in-action with the various reactionary and Right revisionist political groups and of sectarian and mechanistic trends that only create noises by mechanistically forging [a] 'united front' of their Party cadres alone".⁶¹ A true revolutionary united front should bring together "anti-feudal and anti-imperialist patriotic, democratic and leftist forces as an instrument of developing class struggles... The principle function of such a front should be to develop struggles on the basis of people's problems that would gradually break the [limits of] law and the system. At the initial stages, the effective form of such a front would be confined to rural areas and at the local level".⁶²

As the Maoists approached the launch of the people's war, they defined a narrow role for the united front, with its component elements strictly subordinated to the party: "Armed struggle will be carried out by uniting all strata and categories of anti-feudal and anti-imperialist masses of the people under the leadership of the Party".⁶³ Within three years the armed insurgency had expanded significantly, prompting consideration of formalising the united front under the rubric of the "Central Organizing

countryside and the Long March that the communists were able to form an anti-Japanese front (1937-1945), which fought successfully to liberate China from the invaders. From the end of the second world war to the communist victory of 1949, the targets of the united front were obstructive external forces, the U.S. and USSR; once in power the objective was the transformation of the bourgeoisie; once the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution were over, the party leadership projected the image of a "New Era Patriotic United Front".

⁶⁰ "Political Line of CPN (Unity Centre)", *op. cit.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ "Theoretical Premises for the Historic Initiation of the People's War", *op. cit.*

Committee of the People's Republic of Nepal".⁶⁴ Its role would still be to mobilise "various left, progressive, patriotic and democratic forces" but it would be explicitly transitional: "[S]uch a central formation will principally work as a means of struggle for the time being and will work secondarily as a means of power". In this, it partially reflects the "people's democratic front" of the early People's Republic of China, which was meant to help fulfil fundamental state tasks and oppose internal and external enemies.⁶⁵ In September 2001, during the first ceasefire, the Maoists created a 37-member United Revolutionary People's Council (URPC) as such a front. It was headed by Baburam Bhattarai, with Krishna Bahadur Mahara as assistant convenor and Dev Gurung as secretary.⁶⁶

The Maoists have established a range of fraternal organisations to boost their popularity by carrying out above-ground political activities and mobilisation on their behalf. By 2000, there were more than twenty such organisations.⁶⁷ Before the declaration of a state of emergency in November 2001, they carried out open or semi-underground activities. The most influential has been the All-Nepal National Free Students Union (Revolutionary) led by Lekhnath Neupane. Other active organisations include the Nepal Trade Union Federation (Revolutionary) led by Salikram Jamarkattel; the All-Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary) led by Jayapuri Gharti; the All-Nepal Janajati Federation led by Suresh Ale Magar; the All Nepal Peasants Association (Revolutionary); the All-Nepal Teacher's Organisation (Revolutionary) led by Gunaraj Lohani; the Nepal National Intellectuals Organisation and the All-Nepal People's Cultural Union led by Mani Thapa; and the All Nepal Peasants Association led by Shivaraj Gautam.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ "Experiences of the People's War and Some Important Questions", op. cit.

⁶⁵ The Preamble to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China states that "In the course of the great struggle to establish the People's Republic of China, the people of our country forged a broad people's democratic united front, composed of all democratic classes, democratic parties and groups, and popular organisations, and led by the Communist Party of China. This people's democratic front will continue to play its part in mobilising and rallying the whole people in common struggle to fulfil the fundamental task of the state during the transition [to socialism] and to oppose enemies within and without". *Documents of the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China* (Peking, 1955), p. 134.

⁶⁶ Press statement of URPC, 26 November 2001.

⁶⁷ "Report of the High Level Recommendation Committee on Resolution of the Maoist Problem", 2000, His Majesty's Government Nepal, p. 12.

⁶⁸ Compiled from different media sources, including www.cpnm.org.

These organisations, termed "people's class organisations" (*janvargiya sangathan*) by the Maoists, are not strictly speaking part of a united front but ancillary wings of the party structure. They follow its direction and act as subsidiaries with specialised tasks or support bases. They are also useful as a way of drawing recruits into underground activities via semi-open groups that operate at a slight distance from the central party. New members of the CPN(M) tend to have been inducted from such groups, especially if they have earned a reputation for good work in them.

Apart from the students union -- the ANNFSU(R) -- all these organisations were formed after the start of the insurgency, and their contributions have been patchy. The ANNFSU(R) demonstrated the Maoists' reach in urban areas for the first time with a strike which shut down more than 30,000 schools across the country in November 2000. It further expanded its activities from the period of the first ceasefire in 2001, targeting the inefficiencies and inequities of the education system, in particular the fee-paying private schools which had mushroomed after 1990. Its campaigns to reduce private school fees were a clever tactical move that won support from a large lower middle class struggling to educate its children. The ANNFSU(R) claims a large membership but does not have an established structure in urban schools and colleges. Nevertheless, it continues to make political interventions, often school shutdowns.

The other organisation that has recently gained an active profile is the Nepal Trade Union Federation (Revolutionary), which brings together some dozen nominal unions.⁶⁹ Its main task is to advance Maoist aims through industrial action and to mobilise a support base by organising labourers in various sectors of the formal economy. Its leaders and members have also reportedly played an important role in collecting "donations" from industrialists and businessmen in Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Birgunj.⁷⁰ It was initially said to be behind scattered incidents of extortion, vandalism and bomb explosions but it gained a wider reputation in September 2004 when it forced the shutdown of twelve major businesses over labour conditions and complaints about the foreign capital

⁶⁹ These unions include the All Nepal Carpet Workers Union, All Nepal Transport Workers Union, All Nepal Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, All Nepal Construction Workers Union, All Nepal Meter Tempo Workers Union, All Nepal Press Workers Union, All Nepal Thangka Art Workers Union, All Nepal Painters Union, Nepal Shop Workers Union, Nepal Progressive Newspaper Vendors Union and Himalayan Trekking Workers Union.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interviews with Royal Nepalese Army officials, Kathmandu, March 2005.

and exploitive multinational corporations.⁷¹ It enforced its strike with a minor bomb attack on the grounds of the five-star Soaltee Hotel, which hurt the tourism sector and also served as a symbolic attack against the royal family, which is closely linked to the hotel.⁷²

However, the Maoists have yet to attempt the type of united front politics that was decisive in the Chinese revolution. Creating their own support organisations is not the same as persuading forces with different aims to join them in a shared task for limited common objectives. The main reason for this has probably been the Maoists' compulsion to eliminate political rivalry across the countryside by targeting other parties' activists. This has not created fertile ground for the kind of understanding that would be necessary to build a viable working alliance with other political groups. Nor, until the royal coup in February 2005, was there sufficient feeling within the mainstream parties that any collaboration with the Maoists could be safe or profitable. The Maoists' subsequent efforts to work with the mainstream parties will be the first, and probably most crucial, test of whether they can build a true united front.

⁷¹ Mukul Humagain, "Arathantra dhwasta banaune niyat", *Nepal*, 29 August 2004.

⁷² "Rebels force Nepal firms to close", BBC News, 17 August 2004, available at http://newswww.bbc.net.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3571884.stm.

IV. LEADERSHIP, SUPPORT BASE AND RESOURCES

A. LEADERSHIP, COMMAND AND CONTROL

The Maoists are in general disciplined and united but still face problems in controlling their large movement. Since the CPN(M) was formed in 1995 it has not suffered a single split; in contrast, each of the major mainstream parties has been fractured at least once. Prachanda is unlikely to face a serious challenge to his monopoly on power within the party. Apart from Baburam Bhattarai, there are no other leaders of a stature sufficient to present a threat to his authority; Bhattarai himself has repeatedly insisted he has no designs on the leadership and may have been chastened by the disciplinary action he underwent in early 2005. But maintaining such discipline requires constant effort. Senior leaders spend significant time dealing with policy debates and trying to prevent disagreements from becoming damaging. According to the RNA, this has had a direct effect on operational effectiveness by distracting attention from the implementation of plans and strategy.⁷³

There are other tensions within the party but none at the moment pose a grave threat to its unity or operational capacity. The most obvious area of current and potential divisions is the relationship between the party and the various ethnic front organisations. In 2004 there were notable splits in Saptari, where Maoist leader Jay Krishna Goit separated from the Madhesi National Liberation Front, and in the eastern hills, where there were several defections from the Kirat National Liberation Front. These received significant press attention but the Maoists insist they are unlikely to cause serious damage to the movement.⁷⁴ However, the fact that similar disputes have flared up again in the months following the royal coup suggests they do indeed represent a serious challenge.⁷⁵

The arrest of many senior leaders has caused the Maoists more serious problems. Among the fifteen central level cadres in prison in India are Mohan Vaidya (Kiran), a senior ideologue and respected figure who has in the past helped smooth over differences between Prachanda and Bhattarai, and C.P. Gajurel (Gaurav), who was working on the international front before being caught in Chennai

⁷³ See the assessment of Major General Kiran Shumsher Thapa published in *Annapurna Post*, 21 May 2005.

⁷⁴ Crisis Group interview, Kathmandu, March 2005.

⁷⁵ September 2005 saw reports of Maoist disarray in Tehrathum (Crisis Group e-mail communication) and of a "rebellion" by Madhesi cadres against the party "high command" ("Madhesi Maoists Revolt Against Party", *The Himalayan Times*, 20 September 2005).

trying to fly to London on a fake British passport. Other imprisoned colleagues were also carrying out significant tasks, and their loss has affected Maoist capacity.⁷⁶ Two important leaders were arrested in India and handed over to Nepal: Matrika Yadav, whose role was central in the Maoist expansion and mobilisation in the Tarai, and Suresh Ale Magar, a figurehead for ethnic activists within the movement. Since the Maoist unilateral ceasefire declaration of 3 September 2005, a number of mid-level commanders have been arrested, some apparently through their carelessness.⁷⁷

Many of the most capable Maoist leaders have been killed. Alternate politburo member Suresh Wagle (Basu) was killed by police in Gorkha on 8 September 1999; central leader Dandapani Neupane (Dipendra Sharma) disappeared from Kathmandu on 21 May 1999 and is assumed to have been killed; regional level leader and pro-Maoist journalist Krishna Sen was killed in police custody during the first emergency in 2001; central committee member Rit Bahadur Khadka (Pratap), of Dolakha district, was killed in Rautahat in July 2002; central committee members Mohan Chandra Gautam (Kumar) and Sherman Kunwar (Vishal) were killed in Siraha in 5 September 2004.⁷⁸ On 13 May 2004, central committee member and brigade commander Nep Bahadur K.C. (Parivartan) died in an accident,⁷⁹ and in March 2005 central committee member and Satbariya Second Brigade commander Jit was killed in a military clash in Bardiya.⁸⁰

There have also been surrenders, in particular after the RNA was deployed, such as of brigade commander Hom Prakash Shrestha (Himal), battalion commanders Jaya Bahadur Gharti (Prabhat) and Man Bahadur Malla (Sangharsh) and company commander Janu Chhantyal (Pratap).⁸¹ Political workers who have surrendered include regional bureau members Khop Bahadur Kandel, Ravi Karki and Mandavraj Karki.

⁷⁶ They include competent party managers such as Kul Prasad K.C., Hit Bahadur Tamang, Lokendra Bista, Dilip Maharjan, Chitra Narayan Shrestha and Anil Sharma.

⁷⁷ For example, security forces arrested 14th battalion commissar Umesh Shrestha (Anil), Khotang district in-charge Ganesh Karki (Prabhat) and ANNFSU(R) central committee member Ratna Dhakal in Kathmandu in September-October 2005. Saptari district in-charge Shivaram Yadav (Subash) was also arrested on 1 October 2005 in Kachandaha, Saptari district.

⁷⁸ Vishal, whose home was in Sindhuli, was the commissar of the Solu-Salleri Sixth Brigade.

⁷⁹ Prachanda, press statement, 5 June 2004.

⁸⁰ Jit was the second brigade commander to be killed by the RNA.

⁸¹ All these Maoists commanders were produced by the RNA during a press meeting. See, *Nepal*, 30 January 2004.

Surrenders and defections have taken place from most lower party levels but they do not seem to have extended to the central level. However, central committee members Rabindra Shrestha, Rekha Sharma, Mumaram Khanal, Krishnadhvaj Khadka and Bamdev Chhetri were accused by the party of "weakness" while in state custody in 2001; Sharma, Khadka and Khanal have not been rehabilitated, and Khanal has publicly declared that he is no longer associated with the CPN(M).⁸²

The writ of Prachanda still runs throughout the Maoist movement, and central-level decisions are fed down to the regional, district and village levels. There have been no major disruptions to this chain of command, so to this extent the movement remains united and disciplined. The reason is a well organised national command structure firmly in the grip of the central leadership. Numerous accounts of strong central management illustrate this, such as the cautionary tale of local Maoists who tried to make money out of the medicinal *yarcha gumba*⁸³ trade: "At one point several years ago, local Maoists inserted themselves as intermediary dealers and profited from the larger transactions. When the Maoist leadership learned of this practice, they stopped it, returned the trade to its traditional private dealers, and confiscated and remitted the ill-gotten gains to the Maoist central treasury".⁸⁴

But many observers question the firmness of central control, pointing to incidents where local commanders appear to be working against higher-level policies or simply in ignorance of them. The party has also taken action against cadres for carelessness or mistakes but such disciplinary measures are normally only publicised if there is particular pressure. This was the case with the killing of Dailekh journalist Dekendra Raj Thapa on 11 August 2004. It was only after intense national and international criticism that the then Maoist western central commander Diwakar was compelled to explain the murder. He claimed that Thapa was not just a journalist but also an informer, who had caused the deaths of a number of people. But there had been a mistake: according to Maoist central policy "any journalist guilty of such serious crimes could be arrested but capital punishment should not be carried out".⁸⁵ He announced that the party had ordered an inquiry but no

⁸² Interview with Mumaram Khanal, *Nepal*, 8 May 2005.

⁸³ *Yarcha gumba (cordyceps sinensis)* is a highly valued traditional medicine found in the Nepal Himalaya and exported to India and China.

⁸⁴ Robert Gersony, "Sowing the Wind: History and Dynamics of the Maoist Revolt in Nepal's Rapti Hills", report submitted to Mercy Corps International, October 2003, p. 14, available at <http://www.mercycorps.org/items/1662/>.

⁸⁵ Diwakar, in charge of the CPN(M) western central command, press statement, 21 August 2004.

results have been published other than a short statement on their website.

One reason for cases of indiscipline is the degree of autonomy granted to lower levels of the party. A certain amount of decision-making power is devolved to committees and other regional bodies according to their status. In particular, the three divisional commands theoretically have significant freedom to decide their own programs and plans of action in line with overall policy. But as their leadership is drawn from the standing committee, there is little likelihood of them taking a line that has not been agreed upon at the top level.⁸⁶

Local and district committees are granted the authority to decide on military targets and assassinations but the misuse of this authority has been a recurring feature.⁸⁷ The most sensitive part of the Maoist movement, the military, has so far not known significant internal indiscipline or anarchy.⁸⁸ This is partly due to the system of dual military/political leadership: while commanders lead guerrillas in action, the commissars' party rank is higher. The requirement for significant decisions to be taken by commander and commissar jointly reduces the likelihood of indiscipline.

Frequent claims that the Maoists have descended into anarchy or are "running amok" seem to be exaggerated and are denied by their military command. However, the Maoists suffer from a widespread problem of individual indiscipline. This is partly due to their rapid expansion. In the early years their cadres would be carefully selected, screened and educated in Marxist and Maoist doctrine before being given responsibilities. This created a small but politically focused and disciplined group.

But as the movement grew rapidly, especially with the need for increased recruitment once the RNA was mobilised, the process of careful selection was more or less abandoned. The average age of party cadres, whether on the political or military front, was also lowered. As a result, indiscipline and related problems have greatly increased. The Maoist dictum used to be "it is ideas that control the gun, not the gun that controls ideas" but for many cadres the gun seems to have grown more powerful. In recognition of the problem, internal corrective measures have been taken from time to time.

It does not appear that the Maoists have reached a command and control crisis but they clearly face difficulties. A large and diffuse movement which has doubtless attracted a fair share of criminal elements poses inherent management challenges. The loss of senior leaders through death, arrest or internal disputes has hampered their capacity. Internal tensions have a particularly damaging effect on general morale as well as operational effectiveness. It is surely no coincidence that the Maoists suffered several significant military defeats during the period of intense speculation over the possible breakdown of the Prachanda-Baburam partnership in early 2005.

B. MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT BASE

The Maoist movement could not have grown to the extent it has without mobilising a significant support base, even if it remains only a small percentage of Nepal's population. The RNA, for example, estimates that beyond their armed cadres and 14,000 political workers, the Maoists may have some 100,000 supporters.⁸⁹ The Maoists, obviously, would claim a far greater number, and there is certainly a larger category of latent sympathisers as well as committed supporters. Retired RNA Lieutenant-General Sadip Bahadur Shah estimates 24,000 active supporters and 200,000 sympathisers.⁹⁰

A number of surveys have indicated that while the Maoists might only win a low percentage of votes in a free and fair election, a much wider constituency agrees with their aims but not their means. Overall, there are three categories of supporters: committed "whole-timers", who have gone underground and take part in either military or political work; supporters, who provide assistance in a number of ways but are not declared Maoists and operate above ground; and sympathisers, who offer little if any practical help and may include those who are dissatisfied with Maoist violence but nevertheless back their political agenda.⁹¹

1. Class

Before launching their armed struggle the Maoists made a class analysis of the motivating forces on which they could hope to draw. They identified six broad classes from whom they could expect some support: the proletariat, poor peasants, middle peasants, rich peasants, petty bourgeoisie

⁸⁶ Crisis Group interview, Kathmandu, March 2005.

⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview with a Maoist cadre, Nepalgunj, February 2004. Such decisions are taken collectively by a committee or military commission but the secretary, commander and commissar have the major roles.

⁸⁸ "Declaration of PLA", document passed by the first national conference of the People's Liberation Army, September 2001.

⁸⁹ Colonel Victor J.B. Rana, RNA press conference, *The Kathmandu Post*, 21 May 2005.

⁹⁰ Sadip Bahadur Shah, "Bhavishyahin vidroh", *Samay*, 30 December 2004.

⁹¹ Crisis Group interviews with Maoist organisers and other political party workers, 2004 and 2005.

and national bourgeoisie.⁹² The latter three were expected to be only "vacillating allies", although the Maoists saw the petty bourgeoisie as playing a potentially "important auxiliary role". They also noted that "imperialists" and "reactionary forces" were concentrating on co-opting intellectuals.

Like traditional Marxists, the Maoists believe that although the Nepali proletariat is small, it remains "the most revolutionary class" and still bears the "historical responsibility of identifying and giving leadership to other allied classes". They concluded that the main motivating force, however, would be a mix of rural and urban workers: "farm workers, bonded labourers, landless peasants, porters, and poor peasants, and in our case in the cities the cart pullers, rickshaw pullers, drivers of tempos, taxis, and transport and hotel workers, etc." Interestingly, the middle peasants were also singled out both for the fact that they survive with difficulty despite owning land and because they outnumber other classes in the hills.⁹³

While these were the primary class categories for the Maoists to work with, they were assisted by the fact that other communist groups had built up a base of cadres schooled in Marxism. The Maoists were able to benefit through defections from the discontent of some members of mainstream communist parties. According to one Maoist leader, this was particularly the case with disaffected UML cadres in the east of the country.⁹⁴ This ideologically sophisticated core was instrumental in helping the Maoists in their early expansion.

Many of the Maoists' early campaigns also helped them win broader sympathy. For people long ignored by central government and conscious of the unequal development of the country, the Maoists seemed to offer new hope. The first experiments in "people's court" justice won support when exploitive moneylenders and landowners were punished, while campaigns against alcohol abuse and domestic violence painted the Maoists in a bold, reformist light. However, the novelty of these campaigns wore off, and their doubtful efficacy has limited their ability to boost Maoist strength.

2. Ethnicity and caste

The wide participation of otherwise excluded ethnic and caste groups is a notable feature of the Maoist movement.⁹⁵

⁹² "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", op. cit.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Interview with Ananta, Commander of PLA's eastern division, *Janadesh*, 16 December 2003.

⁹⁵ Sudheer Sharma, "The Ethnic Dimension of the Maoist Insurgency", May 2002 (unpublished report made available to Crisis Group), p. 26.

But participation has not translated into control at the top levels. The concentration in Rolpa and Rukum of independent-minded Magars, well aware of their historic exclusion from the Nepali state, was one of the factors that made this a suitable crucible for Maoist mobilisation. But there have been repeated accusations that young people from minority communities have been cynically manipulated by the leadership and used as little more than cannon-fodder.

There are only two members of ethnic minority communities -- Ram Bahadur Thapa and newly appointed Dev Gurung -- in the seven-member Maoist standing committee. Other bodies are more representative. Of the URPC's 37 members, twenty are from ethnic and *dalit* (outcast) communities, while there were eleven members of ethnic and *dalit* communities in the sixteen-member United People's Front, dissolved in 2000. There is also a significant presence of ethnic, *dalit* and Tarai leaders in the central committee.⁹⁶ Whatever the composition of the leadership, the fact that the Maoists have made an apparently serious commitment to minority rights -- something neither the palace nor the mainstream parties have ever been able to bring themselves to do⁹⁷ -- means that they offer an alternative that many in such communities, especially the radicalised and disillusioned youth, find attractive.

3. Women

The Maoists have made a particular effort to appeal to women and to recruit them as active participants in their movement.⁹⁸ Gender equality has always been a feature

⁹⁶ For example, Dev Gurung, Ram Bahadur Thapa, Man Bahadur Thapa, Suresh Ale Magar, Matrika Yadav, Nanda Kishore Pun, Barshaman Pun, Ram Charan Chaudhari, Chitra Narayan Shrestha, Rabindra Shrestha, Hisila Yami, Santosh Budha Magar, Purna Bahadur Gharti, Kumari Moktan, Hitman Shakya, Hit Bahadur Tamang.

⁹⁷ Crisis Group will examine this failure in detail in subsequent reporting on the mainstream political parties.

⁹⁸ The topic of women in the Maoist movement will be examined in its own right in subsequent Crisis Group reporting. Maoist women themselves, most notably Hisila Yami (Parvati), have written on the subject. See, for example, Hisila Yami and Baburam Bhattarai, *Marxbad ra mahila mukti (Marxism and Women's Emancipation)* (Utprekashan, 2000) and Parvati, "Women's Participation in the People's War" in Arjun Karki and David Seddon (eds.), *The People's War in Nepal: Left Perspectives* (Delhi, 2003). Prachanda has also published an article, "Problem of Women's Emancipation and the Need of Today", in *Problems and Prospects of Revolution in Nepal*, op. cit. Non-Maoist perspectives are available in Shobha Gautam, Amrita Banskota and Rita Manchanda, "Women in the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal", in Thapa (ed.), op. cit., pp. 93-124 and Mandira Sharma and Dinesh Prasain, "Gender Dimensions

of their political program. In the appeal that marked the start of the insurgency, the CPN(M) complained that "whereas this state has been treating women as second-class citizens for long, now it has intensified rape, trafficking and the process of commoditisation through advertisements, against them".⁹⁹ The URPC devoted a separate section to women and family in its policy manifesto, promising that under Maoist rule, "all forms of patriarchal exploitation of women shall be ended, and women shall be given all rights equal to men. Like son, daughter shall enjoy equal rights to parental property. Women shall be provided with special rights for participating in all organs of the state".¹⁰⁰ They also vowed to eradicate commercial sex work, take harsh action against traffickers, permit only marriage by mutual consent, permit abortion and give special consideration to women in divorce proceedings.¹⁰¹

Women have been inducted into all areas of the party, army and front organisations. It has been estimated that they constitute anywhere between 30 and 40 per cent of the Maoist guerrilla force.¹⁰² The Maoist women's organisation, the All-Nepal Women's Union (Revolutionary), has led campaigns against alcohol and domestic violence. It was particularly active around the time of the 2001 ceasefire but the arrest of its then leader, Rekha Sharma, and other senior figures caused severe disruption. In 2003 Jayapuri Gharti, a central committee member from Rolpa, was appointed the new chair of the organisation, and it has started to work more in rural areas. The Maoists have a stated policy of including as many women as possible in each military unit. According to their leaders, by 2000 there were many female squad commanders and deputy commanders, and in some areas there were all-women guerrilla units.¹⁰³ According to Hisila Yami (Parvati), by early 2004 women formed a third of the PLA and were represented up to the levels of vice-commander and commissar at the battalion level.¹⁰⁴

However, women still have a long way to go if they are to approach equality even within the Maoist movement itself. There are very few women in the central committee and politburo and not one on the powerful standing committee. The only politburo members are Pampha Bhusal and Hisila Yami, who faces disciplinary action. On the central committee, the remaining women members are Jayapuri

Gharti, Uma Bhujel, Kumari Moktan and Rekha Sharma (who is also apparently under disciplinary action). As many observers commented at the time, the lack of women on the Maoist negotiating team during talks with the government in 2003 seemed to belie the movement's rhetorical commitments.

While the Maoists certainly have brought about a degree of change in the role of women and attitudes towards them, it has not all been positive. The most significant result of conflict-induced rural depopulation has been that as men have left, women have been burdened with an even larger share of work than before. And the durability of other reform is yet to be tested. As one report, which details many Maoist-led improvements, cautions, "...change seems to have taken place due to Maoist action or threat of action. Only through continuous reinforcement of these positive practices by local people will they become sustainable social norms and values".¹⁰⁵

4. Prospects

The Maoists' early gains in public image and sympathy have not been sustained; most observers believe they have been significantly eroded during a period when the public has come to view all the actors in the conflict -- the monarchy, the Maoists and the political parties -- in an increasingly harsh light. When asked what popular support the Maoists might enjoy, a veteran communist activist said, "four or five years back they might even have won 50 per cent in a vote, two years ago maybe 20 or 30 per cent, but now I don't think they'd even get 10 per cent".¹⁰⁶ Such assessments are based on the perception that the innocent idealism which encouraged passive support for the Maoists in the earlier stages of the conflict has worn off as the movement has shown continued brutality without delivering on its seemingly progressive agenda.

The Maoists have been more successful at mobilising support in rural areas than in the towns. The urban revolt called for by the "Prachandapath" strategy adopted in 2001 has proved a damp squib.¹⁰⁷ Even radical students in the towns and cities still prefer to work within the mainstream parties, and the Maoists have not made any major breakthrough in general backing. The relative ease with which the royal government since February 2005 has broken the power of the Maoist *bandh* (general strike) in Kathmandu indicates the lack of committed support in the capital.

of the People's War" in Michael Hutt (ed.), *Himalayan 'People's War'* (London, 2004), pp. 152-65.

⁹⁹ "Appeal of the C.P.N. (Maoist)", op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Common Minimum Policy and Program of the URPC.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Mandira Sharma and Dinesh Prasain, op. cit., p. 154.

¹⁰³ Yami and Bhattarai, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁰⁴ Parvati, "Women's Participation in People's Army", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Mukta S. Lama-Tamang, Sumitra M. Gurung, Dharma Swarnakar and Sita Rana Magar, "Social Change in Conflict Affected Areas: Assessment Report", prepared for the UK Department for International Development, August 2003, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, April 2005.

¹⁰⁷ See section V.A.2 below for an outline of Prachandapath.

Meanwhile, the increased resort to coercive recruitment seems to indicate the hollowness of the Maoist support base. This does not necessarily affect their ability to continue fighting -- for that they only need to sustain their core cadre of guerrillas and political workers -- but it may affect their strategy and their calculations on the benefits or drawbacks of entering electoral politics.

C. RESOURCES

The Maoists have managed to find sufficient resources to maintain the various facets of their movement. Fighters have been provided with weapons and ammunition, and the political campaign has been sustained with significant funding. It is not possible to give a full picture of Maoist resource mobilisation but the following sections outline their pattern of operation.

1. Finances

The CPN(M) is Nepal's richest political party. Accurately estimating Maoist income and expenditure is difficult, primarily because of the nature of the movement itself but also because much of their support, such as forced donations for food or accommodation, comes in kind rather than cash. What figures are available on Maoist finances tend to be scattered and not always reliable. Most income is dedicated to running the party and military activities, of which supporting thousands of full-time workers forms a large proportion. Little money seems to be allotted to building administrative capacities or carrying out development work.

According to a study based on direct interviews with Maoist fighters, it costs Rs. 17,000 (approximately \$250) annually to provide one armed guerrilla with clothes and other basic necessities.¹⁰⁸ This excludes the cost of food, accommodation, weapons and ammunition and medical treatment which, whether in cash or kind, add up to many times this amount. Other sources agree that guerrillas are not paid a salary but are given a monthly allowance of Rs. 150 per month (just over \$2) for basic items such as soap and toothpaste.¹⁰⁹

Given the scale of the Maoist movement, the resources needed to sustain its political and military operations are on a scale far beyond that of any other party. Even in early 2002, a former Maoist district commander estimated that "the Maoists need to spend about Rs. 10 million (almost \$150,000) every month to keep the war going: for

the upkeep of their own guerrilla force, logistics and hardware".¹¹⁰ This did not include political and administrative expenses, and the movement has grown significantly in the past three years.

The Maoists' main sources of funds are bank robbery, donations and extortion.¹¹¹ Of these, the former has become more difficult as banks have increased security, and in most rural districts all deposits are moved to army bases at night for safekeeping.¹¹² Nevertheless, raids continue, with the Maoists claiming to have netted almost \$6,000 in one bank robbery in June 2005 in Bardiya district.¹¹³ Despite a crackdown on Maoist fundraising since February 2005, extortion continues.¹¹⁴ Secret contributors to the Maoists include not only businessmen, industrialists and traders but also senior politicians and civil servants.¹¹⁵ In the rural areas under their sway, the Maoists collect "taxes" from individuals with a cash income, such as teachers,¹¹⁶ and seasonal donations in kind, such as portions of the harvest, from farmers. Rates of "tax" on incomes vary from 5 to 25 per cent.¹¹⁷ Tourism has also become a source of cash for the Maoists, who levy compulsory contributions on trekkers of most popular mountain routes.

As the insurgency has progressed, Maoist networks in India and overseas have tried to build up their own fundraising capacity. It is impossible to estimate the significance of these, and most funds channelled into the country would, like the vast majority of regular remittances, follow unofficial routes. But Maoists based in Western Europe say they have been able to raise funds individually or through support organisations.¹¹⁸ In

¹¹⁰ Pushkar Gautam, "Red Terror", *Nepali Times*, 8 February 2002.

¹¹¹ From bank robberies between February 1996 and May 2003 alone, the Maoists are estimated to have seized over \$4.6 million in cash and precious metals (Dahal and Mainali, op. cit., p.105).

¹¹² Crisis Group interviews, Kathmandu and other districts, January-May 2005.

¹¹³ "Simultaneous Commando Attack in District Headquarter", Krishna Sen News Agency, 10 June 2005.

¹¹⁴ "Rebel Surrenders, 5 Extortionists Nabbed", *The Kathmandu Post*, 26 April 2005.

¹¹⁵ Crisis Group interview with a security official, Kathmandu, December 2004.

¹¹⁶ According to the Nepal National Teacher's Organisation, there are almost 143,000 teachers employed in government schools in Nepal, of whom the majority work in rural areas and are forced to pay 5 to 25 per cent of their monthly salary. See, Dahal and Mainali, op. cit., p.105.

¹¹⁷ Crisis Group interviews, Kathmandu, January 2005.

¹¹⁸ Crisis Group interviews with Maoist cadres in London, Brussels and Frankfurt, January-February 2005. Interviewees were not willing to comment on the amounts involved.

¹⁰⁸ Ujir Magar, "Maobadiko yuddha kharcha", *Nepal*, 4 July 2004.

¹⁰⁹ Rajendra Dahal and Mohan Mainali (ed.), *Bandukko bojh* (Kathmandu, 2004), p. 101.

comparison to external sources, the amounts raised from among Maoist cadres themselves are minimal.

Apart from centralised efforts, the Maoist regional autonomous governments have been instructed to seek financial self-sufficiency by raising their own levies. This has led to the identification of natural resources as potential revenue opportunities. As the head of the Seti-Mahakali government explains, "the resources for running our government come from taxes on the natural resources available in our region (such as herbs and timber), trade duties and voluntary contributions from various professionals and the ordinary working population".¹¹⁹ Medicinal herbs are a particularly lucrative option in the Rapti, Bheri and Karnali regions, where one people's government official claimed that the then "special district people's government" brought in more than \$7,300 annually.¹²⁰

The seasonal trade in valuable *yarcha gumba* is especially profitable. In 2003, a Maoist cadre claimed that tax had been collected in Dolpa on 1,300 kilograms of *yarcha gumba* at a rate of \$74 per kilogram. One international official reported Maoist earnings on *yarcha gumba* exported to India from Darchula district in the summer of 2004 to be in the range of \$600,000.¹²¹ The Maoists have also been accused of profiting from trade in marijuana. The U.S. has stated that "Maoist guerrillas are involved in drug smuggling to finance their insurgency....[Nepal's] Narcotic Drug Control Law Enforcement Unit reports that the Maoists levy a 40 per cent tax on cannabis production in certain areas".¹²² However, any income from narcotics is likely to be minimal and, given that Nepal is not a producer of hard drugs, unlikely to develop into a major source. Fears that Nepal will follow a Latin American or Afghan model of narco-insurgency are unfounded.

The Maoists have proved more than proficient in marshalling sufficient resources to sustain their campaign to date, primarily by illegal and coercive means. The fact that they do not, as far as can be ascertained, rely on significant inputs from overseas makes them more resilient as there is no simple cash pipeline that can be cut off. But it also affects their strategy: as long as they depend on living off a percentage of Nepal's overall economic turnover, they have no incentive to undermine the economy dramatically. A total collapse, or the destruction

of particular industries such as tourism, would have serious knock-on effects for the Maoists' own income. Ironically, therefore, the Maoists have an important stake in ensuring that the economy continues to function.

As national dependence on income from migrant workers in other Asian countries and the Middle East increases, the Maoists appear to be concentrating on claiming a proportion of remittances. Meanwhile, the Nepali government unintentionally helps to sustain the Maoists, with proportions of education, health and rural development budgets regularly finding their way into the CPN(M)'s coffers. And the Maoists' generally conciliatory attitude towards international aid is likely to continue: not only do internationally funded development projects deliver some services to rural areas that the Maoists are incapable of managing themselves, but they also disburse large cash budgets that the Maoists are adept at tapping into. Funding a movement of the size and geographical extent that the Maoists have created is not easy but there is no sign that a lack of income alone will prove a decisive factor in weakening the insurgency.

2. Weaponry

When the Maoists started their armed struggle, they had no organised military force to speak of and no real weaponry. According to Maoist leader Rabindra Shrestha, at the outset they had only two rifles, one of which was broken.¹²³ But as the Maoists stepped up their campaign, they started making their own muskets, taking licensed shotguns and other weapons from local residents and capturing the .303 rifles of the police. More recently they have enhanced their arsenal, primarily by capturing weapons from the security forces, to include sophisticated automatic weapons, explosives and mortars. Prachanda states that, "in the process of waging war we managed to snatch [a] few rifles from the armed police. It is these rifles that are now capturing automatic weapons from the royal army. Thus weapons sent by George Bush to suppress Nepalese people will soon be reaching the hands of Nepalese people, which will be directed against imperialism".¹²⁴ Estimates of the exact number of weapons they hold vary significantly.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ Interview with Lekhray Bhatta, *Janadesh*, 20 April 2004.

¹²⁰ Interview with Samil Pun Magar, member of then special district people's government, *Janadesh*, 11 May 2004.

¹²¹ Crisis Group interview, Kathmandu, September 2004.

¹²² "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report", Annual Report of U.S. Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, March 2005, <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2005/vol1/html/42366.htm>.

¹²³ Rabindra Shrestha, "Janayuddhaka suruka dinharu samjhanda", *Janadesh*, 22 May 2001.

¹²⁴ Interview with Prachanda, Maoist Information Bulletin-4, Occasional Bulletin of CPN(M), 15 September 2003.

¹²⁵ For example, see Sadip Bahadur Shah, "Bhavishyahin vidroh", *Samay*, 30 December 2004. Shah, a retired RNA lieutenant general, estimated the Maoists have a total of 3,295 weapons: 322 self-loading rifles; 132 sub-machine guns; 42 light machine guns; four general purpose machine guns; 56 Indian-made INSAS rifles; nine M16 rifles; 1,370 .303 rifles;

The Maoists have also purchased arms, in particular from the black market in the neighbouring Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, where there is a flourishing trade in illegal weapons. They had concentrated on buying detonators, explosives and bullets rather than guns but there is some evidence that they have also brought in AK-47 assault rifles, which some analysts suspect are from north east India.¹²⁶ A large arms seizure in the Bangladeshi port of Chittagong in April 2004 caused various observers to speculate that Nepal's Maoists were the intended end-users.¹²⁷

The Maoists have skilled bomb-makers who initially devoted their efforts to refining various types of homemade explosives -- socket bombs, pipe bombs, pressure cooker bombs -- and gradually became more skilled in electronically detonated landmines. They have also used Indian army grenades, which may have been obtained on the black market. While their main source of weapons has tended to be the state security forces themselves, there are indications that their needs for fresh ammunition and explosives are met primarily from smuggling across the border with India. According to the Maoists, they have brought equipment from abroad in order to set up factories to produce high quality weaponry inside Nepal.¹²⁸

Their general approach, however, has been to avoid unnecessary escalation in armaments.¹²⁹ While they were only fighting with the police, they were happy to rely primarily on weapons looted from police posts. It is since engaging with the RNA that they have sought to increase their stock of semi-automatic and automatic weapons and resorted to foreign purchases. The basic personal weapons of most guerrillas are SLRs, .303 rifles and muskets, while political commissars, senior officers and leaders opt for Chinese pistols, mostly looted from the police.¹³⁰ The

two Galil rifles; 25 AK-47s; five rocket launchers; ten 2-inch mortars; three 81mm mortars; 215 pistols and revolvers; 331 shotguns; 22 rifles; and 369 homemade guns. These figures are not independently verified and seem low given the widely accepted estimates for the number of Maoist guerrillas and militia members.

¹²⁶ Crisis Group interview with an intelligence official, Kathmandu, December 2004. Also see Sitaram Baral, "San AK-47ko", *Samay*, 13 May 2004, which states that the Maoists imported AK-47 rifles bought on the Indian black market and distributed them in limited numbers to battalions.

¹²⁷ "Arms Cache Was on Way to Third Country", *The Daily Star*, Bangladesh, 4 April 2004.

¹²⁸ Some weapons factories in Chitwan, Kailali and Rolpa were seized by the security forces in 2004.

¹²⁹ Interview with Prachanda, Maoist Information Bulletin-4, Occasional Bulletin of CPN(M), 15 September 2003.

¹³⁰ "Small Arms in Nepal: an Overview", Deepak Thapa and Sudheer Sharma, paper presented at national workshop on

government's published policy on Maoist surrender from 2003, which offers rewards for handing over weapons, indicates the range of armaments it believes the Maoists possess.¹³¹ One crucial difference that gives the Maoists an edge over the RNA in certain situations is that their weapons come from a variety of flexible sources. The RNA's highly specialised hardware requirements make it dependent on a few official sources and so vulnerable to supply constraints.

While the Maoists have developed their own training methods they were initially reliant on guidance from Indian insurgent groups.¹³² They are still far from reaching the standards of professionalism that a regular army would expect. "They seem to know what they're doing with their basic tactics when it comes to ambushes", observed a British military expert, "but they're still a rag-tag bunch that should be no match for a decent army".¹³³

The Maoists have benefited from increasingly sophisticated communications technology, from radios and satellite phones to email and internet. It is estimated that they are the largest users of satellite phones in the country.¹³⁴ They have also exploited the growth in mobile phone connectivity: suspicions that they had purchased many pre-paid mobile SIM cards was the main justification cited for the continued suspension of this service following the royal coup of February 2005. However, in the period immediately following the coup the Maoist communications network appeared to be functioning better than that of the government. While some Nepali diplomatic missions were cut off from all home news,¹³⁵ Maoists in Europe were receiving regular updates by satellite phone.¹³⁶ They also use radio sets and cordless telephones adapted to function as walkie-talkies.

The turn to e-mail and internet started in November 2001. Following the breakdown of the ceasefire, the Maoists' unofficial mouthpiece, the weekly newspaper *Janadesh*, was shut down and its journalists went underground.

"South Asia and Small Arms: Challenges and Responses", organised by SAP Nepal in Kathmandu, 10 April 2001.

¹³¹ "Government's Policy for Surrender", HMG Nepal, 18 December 2003, which claims the Maoists had 81mm, 40 mm and two- inch mortars, GPMGs, LMGs, SLRs, SMGs, M-16 rifles, INSAS rifles, Magnums, shotguns, Galils, .303 rifles, pistols, revolvers, airguns, home made guns, etc.

¹³² Sudheer Sharma, "Purvi himalayama ashantiko ago", *Himal*, 14-28 May 2001.

¹³³ Crisis Group interview with retired senior British army officer, December 2004.

¹³⁴ Crisis Group interviews with security officials, Kathmandu, March 2005.

¹³⁵ Crisis Group interviews with diplomats, London, Brussels and Geneva, February 2005.

¹³⁶ Crisis Group interviews, Western Europe, February 2005.

While print publications were maintained clandestinely, the growing use of the internet in Nepal led to the Maoists adopting it as a primary means of communication.¹³⁷ The faxing of press statements to selected journalists was gradually overtaken by e-mail distribution within the country and far beyond. Maoist political and news websites collect press releases and offer access to online versions of Maoist publications in Nepali and English. According to one researcher, "Nepal's Maoists are the first among all of the world's communist movements to make good use of communications technology".¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Maoist relations with the media will be the subject of future Crisis Group reporting.

¹³⁸ Bertil Lintner, "Natra yuddha lambinchha", *Nepal*, 17 September-1 October 2002.

V. MILITARY STRATEGY

The Maoists have laid to rest the myth that Nepal is a peaceful country whose citizens are naturally averse to violence. They have forcefully maintained that violence has been at the heart of the capture and exercise of state power throughout Nepal's history.¹³⁹ Their own armed struggle has dramatically demonstrated its viability in the face of initial expert indifference and scepticism, although the question of whether it can ever attain success is still open. For the Maoists, the justification of violence is not difficult. Mao's most influential early work, on the peasant uprising in his home province of Hunan, led him to a lengthy explanation of the rationale for bloodshed:

...a revolution is not the same as inviting people to dinner or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing fancy needlework; it cannot be anything so refined, so calm and gentle, or so mild, kind, courteous, restrained, and magnanimous. A revolution is an uprising, an act of violence whereby one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the authority of the feudal landlord class. If the peasants do not use the maximum of their strength, they can never overthrow the authority of the landlords, which has been deeply rooted for thousands of years.¹⁴⁰

He further asserted that in Hunan, "it was necessary to bring about a brief reign of terror in every rural area... To right a wrong it is necessary to exceed the proper limit, and the wrong cannot be righted without the proper limit being exceeded".¹⁴¹ Nepal's Maoists subscribe to this basic outlook and argue that Nepali history supports their interpretation.

The policy on armed struggle adopted by the CPN(M)'s third plenum in March 1995 asserted that:

The reactionary propaganda that the Nepalese people are peace-loving and that they don't like violence is absolutely false. It is an incontrovertible fact that the Nepalese people have been waging violent struggle for their rights since...historical times. Till today whatever general reforms have been achieved by the Nepalese people, behind them there was the force of violent and illegal struggle of the people.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", op. cit.

¹⁴⁰ Mao Zedong, "Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party", February 1927, reprinted in Jacobs and Baerwald, op. cit, p. 23.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", op. cit.

This point was reinforced by Prachanda in a separate essay: "People have not obtained even the least of gains without waging violent struggles. Today, the Nepalese society has arrived at such a point of crisis under the existing political system that there is no alternative on the part of the people other than to smash it".¹⁴³

The Maoists judged that the grounds for mobilisation were strong: "From the year 1951 onwards till today, mainly the Nepalese peasants and other sections of the people have been joining in [a] countless number of violent and armed conflicts against the reactionary state, and the anti-establishment feeling among Nepalese people has been very strong". The CPN(M) presented the new armed struggle as the chance to complete a long-running struggle and to represent a "great historical legacy".¹⁴⁴

The Maoist strategy, therefore, is based on armed struggle, and the growth of their political influence can largely be attributed to their military strength. The targets of their violence have been determined by the progressive stages of the conflict. The first aim was to eliminate obstacles to their political hegemony in rural areas, which led them to attack the state, primarily police posts, and rival political workers. The latter were far harder hit in the initial stages: in the first year of the war only six police were killed while some three dozen civilian "enemies of the people" were murdered.¹⁴⁵

The Maoists' political victims have been carefully selected. Up to July 2000 the vast majority (136) were Congress workers; the UML (22), RPP (19) and Masal (1) were secondary targets.¹⁴⁶ Once the RNA was deployed and the war assumed a more conventional military aspect, the Maoists concentrated their attacks on military targets and the proportion of civilian killings fell.¹⁴⁷ In contrast, state attacks on civilians increased,¹⁴⁸ to the extent that mounting domestic and international pressure forced the RNA to discipline 44 soldiers for rights violations.¹⁴⁹ Both sides, in short, have been fighting a dirty war.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ Prachanda, "War Policy of Nepalese New Democratic Revolution in the Context of Historical Development" in *Problems and Prospects of Revolution in Nepal* (Janadisha Publications, 2004).

¹⁴⁴ "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", op. cit.

¹⁴⁵ Prachanda, press statement, 12 February 1997.

¹⁴⁶ Report of the High Level Recommendation Committee on Resolution of the Maoist Problem, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 2000, p. 65.

¹⁴⁷ Sitaram Baral, "Morchabaddha ladain", *Samay*, 30 December 2004.

¹⁴⁸ Subash Devkota, "Sankatma sankatka", *Samay*, 21 April 2005.

¹⁴⁹ Yashoda Timsina, "Karvahima pare sipahi", *Nepal*, 17 April 2005.

¹⁵⁰ See Crisis Group Asia Report N°94, *Nepal: Dealing with a Human Rights Crisis*, 24 March 2005. There is also a question

A. "PROTRACTED PEOPLE'S WAR"

The CPN(M) adopted at its unification convention in 1991 the strategy of protracted war based on encircling the towns from the countryside. This concept was proposed by Prachanda and endorsed by the convention but it only took concrete form three years later. The third extended meeting of the party, in March 1995, adopted the following plans for putting the theory of people's war into practice:

...give priority to the rural work, but do not leave urban work; give priority to illegal struggle, but do not leave legal struggle too; give priority to specific strategic areas, but do not leave work related to mass movement too; give priority to class struggle in villages, but do not leave countryside struggle too; give priority to guerrilla actions, but do not leave political exposure and propaganda too; give priority to propaganda work within the country but do not leave worldwide propaganda too; give priority to build army organisation, but do not leave to build front organisations too; give priority to rely on one's own organisation and force, but do not miss to forge unity in action, to take support and help from international arena...¹⁵¹

People's war was the essence of the Chinese communists' military doctrine, advocated mainly by Mao Zedong and codified by him in numerous writings.¹⁵² The basic elements of the original Chinese version of "people's war" are: (1) the key objective and the highest form of revolution is to mobilise and arm the people to seize political power; (2) the key factor in winning a battle is to rely totally on the people, for they are the solid foundation for launching

of the nature and definition of military targets. The Maoists until recently enjoyed greater clarity of definition of their targets. The insurgency by definition reduces the distance between its militants and its civilian "host" population. In such a situation the counter-insurgency is at a disadvantage. Lately the RNA has started emulating the Maoists by moving about in civilian clothes and civilian transport. Its troops have also reportedly been dressing up in Maoist combat gear in an effort to fool local people, but the fact that they have frequently been exposed by victims of RNA excesses suggests this ploy has not been very successful. The theatre of war has been transformed to some extent but the RNA as outsiders cannot match the Maoists on this terrain.

¹⁵¹ *Nekapa maobadika aitihasik dastavejharu* vol. 1, Central Publications Department, CPN (Maoist), pp. 84-85.

¹⁵² Mao's most influential military writings include "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", December 1936, *Selected Works I* (Beijing, 1967), pp. 154-225; "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan", May 1938, *Selected Works II* (Beijing, 1967), pp. 373-406; "On Protracted War", May 1938, *Selected Works II*, pp. 407-84; and "Problems of War and Strategy", 11 November 1938, *Selected Works II*, pp. 506-21.

war; (3) establish the people's army mainly with peasants; (4) unite the major and local forces with the guerrilla forces and militia; (5) establish solid revolutionary bases at places where the enemy is weak and where there are geographic advantages; and (6) utilise the strategies of people's war because they are suitable to revolutionary war and provide accurate guidance for fighting a war.¹⁵³

Mao's core concept of the protracted war is that it is:

a war fought without hope of victory within measurable time but based on maintaining at all times the unity of army and people. It is the duty of the army, in Mao's view, so to politicise the population among which it fights that it not only draws from it men, supplies and information that it needs for combat, but also transforms the cultural and political structure of society step by step with the military success it wins. Revolution, thus, comes about not after, and as a result of victory, but through the process of war itself. Hence his best known slogan, with its very distinct meaning, "power flows out of the barrel of a gun".¹⁵⁴

The two sides are, therefore, fighting two different types of war in which the very concepts of victory and defeat, success and failure are reversed. The RNA is fighting a war of territory but the Maoists are fighting for something very different.

In China Mao divided the process of people's revolution into three stages -- strategic defence, strategic balance and strategic offence -- a structure followed by the Nepali Maoists, at least in theory, throughout their armed campaign. Following the August 2004 CPN(M) central committee plenary, it was announced that the Maoists had entered the final of the three stages, adopting the slogan "let us raise the process of revolutionary transformation to new heights and enter into the stage of strategic offence".¹⁵⁵ Whether this declaration reflects reality is discussed below. In any case, the Maoists have always emphasised that the course of their struggle will neither be straightforward nor simply replicate existing models:

The war will develop according to its own laws, not in a straight line but in a complex zigzag path. It is necessary to acknowledge the importance of Lenin's saying that the revolution always creates in its course of development an unusual and complex situation. The People's War will triumph after going through cycles of victory and defeat and gain and

loss. We shall be able to lead the People's War only by correctly grasping the law of contradiction, of transformation of wrong into right.¹⁵⁶

At the start of their campaign, they warned that the war would be "quite uphill, full of twists and turns and of a protracted nature".¹⁵⁷ But while "making use of all forms of struggle", they would stick principally to "the strategy of encircling the city from the countryside, with agrarian revolution as the axis and from the midst of and in conjunction with the rural class struggle".¹⁵⁸

In fact, much Maoist strategy is simply military commonsense, albeit codified by Mao on the basis of particular experience. Most insurgencies, whether consciously or not, adopt Maoist-style tactics of guerrilla warfare. Prachanda has argued that Prithvinarayan Shah's campaign to unite Nepal in the mid-eighteenth century illustrates the central features of Maoist protracted war doctrine.¹⁵⁹

1. Strategic defence

The attacks carried out by the Maoists to launch the "people's war" clearly indicated their political and revolutionary priorities. The armed struggle was launched on 13 February 1996 with surprise attacks on police posts in the western districts of Rolpa and Rukum and the eastern district of Sindhuli. In Rolpa the fighting lasted for a few hours, while in Rukum and Sindhuli the police handed over their weapons without a struggle. In Gorkha district the Maoists underlined their political intent by attacking Chyangling village's Agricultural Development Bank and Small Farmer's Development Project and burning papers relating to loans.

They also signalled their moralistic agenda with an attack on Gorkha's Manakamana Distillery. On the same night their petrol bomb attack on the Pepsi Cola factory on the outskirts of Kathmandu showed that they had multinational corporations in their sights and were willing to strike in the capital as well as the more remote rural areas. It was only after five days that the Maoists formally claimed responsibility for these attacks in a statement from Prachanda.¹⁶⁰

At first glance these attacks were not terribly violent -- no lives were lost -- but they were intended as a sign of the

¹⁵³ Kwok-Sing Li, op. cit., p. 341.

¹⁵⁴ J Keegan and A. Wheatcroft, *Who's Who in Military History* (New York, 1976), p. 209.

¹⁵⁵ Prachanda, press statement about the plenum, 1 September 2004.

¹⁵⁶ "Theoretical Premises for the Historic Initiation of the People's War", op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ "Appeal of the C.P.N. (Maoist)", op. cit.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Prachanda, "War Policy of Nepalese New Democratic Revolution in the Context of Historical Development", in *Problems and Prospects*, op. cit.

¹⁶⁰ Press statement, 18 February 1996.

determination of the Maoists to pursue a sustained armed uprising. In the words of one leftist analyst, "those events gave birth to a completely new possibility in terms of the construction of military force. In fact this was a new undertaking in the Nepali class war that had never before occurred in the country's history".¹⁶¹ However, these apparently minor and scattered events in a handful of districts did little to shake the political establishment in Kathmandu.

The first, defensive stage took some five years and involved a progression through six distinct working plans which were adapted to developing circumstances.¹⁶²

2. The New Line: Prachandapath

After five years of armed struggle, the Maoists carried out a full assessment of their progress. They had established at least temporary base areas in a number of districts,¹⁶³ and the party's influence had grown at an unprecedented rate. But these successes brought their own problems. The base area policy was clearly not emulating the revolutionary Chinese model, and the rapid expansion of cadres and activities led to organisational challenges. It was time to re-examine strategy.

The Maoists' second national convention, held at a secret location in February 2001, was the first mass meeting of the party since the start of the armed insurgency. The outcome was adoption of a new line that was given the name "Prachandapath". Proposed by Prachanda himself in his political report, it was ratified along with a change to the party constitution which resulted in his appointment as chairman.¹⁶⁴ The new strategy basically called for more focus on urban insurrection while continuing the build-up in rural areas and working to surround the towns.

The need for a change was justified by the argument that no single established model of proletarian revolution could still be appropriate given changing global conditions.¹⁶⁵ The initial faith that "protracted people's war" was suited to Nepal's situation was undermined by a growing

realisation that a decades-long struggle along Chinese lines was unlikely to be successful. Doubts that a slow build-up in rural areas would lead in itself to a decisive revolution led to a marrying of Maoist and Leninist tactics: the "people's war" in the villages would be complemented by a push for "people's rebellion" in towns and cities.

In some respects this was not so new. The policy of the CPN (Unity Centre) in 1991 had acknowledged that, "in the specificities of our country and the current world situation, the significance of urban mass movements has definitely increased".¹⁶⁶ Given the experience of the 1990 people's movement, whose success had hinged on the final mobilisation in the capital itself, it is not surprising that the Maoists also acknowledged the value of targeting the centre of power more directly.

Baburam Bhattarai described Prachandapath as a school of thought that was more than a set of tactics but less than an ideology.¹⁶⁷ But the personalisation of the new strategy by its direct linkage to Prachanda himself raised hackles within the party and among other communists.¹⁶⁸ Mohan Vaidya (Kiran) has made grand claims for the new line: "Prachandapath is now standing in a new turning point of history to make a qualitative leap in the process of becoming universal, not particular".¹⁶⁹ But Krishna Bahadur Mahara has said: "It is learned from the experience of Russia, China and others...We haven't given up Marx, Lenin and Mao but we don't want to take it as dogma. We want a 21st-century democracy in which the people supervise the state so that people with money cannot control the elections. We want transparency and equal opportunities for all parties".¹⁷⁰

The new policy incorporating urban insurrection recognised that in a highly centralised country such as Nepal it would be hard for rural actions alone to put serious pressure on the state. If the Maoist revolution were to progress, there would have to be new ways of bringing the struggle directly to Kathmandu, where state power was concentrated. A range of tactics for urban insurrection was proposed: to make continuous interventions in national politics, to use fraternal organisations to carry out strikes and street demonstrations, to foment revolt within the RNA and to seek to polarise sympathetic and opposed political forces. As these tactics were primarily non-violent, they were used during the first ceasefire of 2001. On 21

¹⁶¹ Govinda Neupane, "Nepali samajko rupantaran: prishtabhumi, parivesh ra vyuhachana", Kathmandu, Centre for Development Studies, 2001, p. 113.

¹⁶² These "working plans" can also be translated as "tactical plans/stages". The Nepali term is *karyanitik yojana*. See Thapa, op. cit., pp. 99-102.

¹⁶³ The Maoists started to declare "District Peoples Governments" in Rukum in January 2001.

¹⁶⁴ The fundamental tenets of Prachandapath were set out in the political report passed by the convention, "Mahan agragami chhalang: itihasko apariharya avashyakta", CPN(M) Central Publications Department, 2001. The report also laid out detailed strategic and tactical guidelines.

¹⁶⁵ CPN(M) press statement, 25 February 2001.

¹⁶⁶ Political Line of CPN (Unity Centre).

¹⁶⁷ Baburam Bhattarai, "Dosro rashtriya sammelanko yugantakari mahattva", *Kantipur*, 1 March 2001.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, Pradip Gyawali, *Prachandapath: vicharko kendrikaran ki bhrashhikaran* (Kathmandu, 2001).

¹⁶⁹ Kiran, "Philosophical Concept of Prachanda Path", December 2003, at http://insof.org/collected/k_conceptof_pp.html.

¹⁷⁰ Isabel Hilton, "The King and Mao", *Financial Times*, 14 May 2005.

September 2001 the Maoists had planned to organise a large anti-monarchist demonstration in Kathmandu but this was blocked by the government.

Much of the Maoists' effort went into developing their student front, which carefully targeted the inefficiencies and inequities of the education system, in particular the fee-paying private schools. The Maoists also used non-political riots in the Tarai towns of Butwal and Biratnagar, major industrial and trade centres, to further their political penetration. Immediately afterwards the Kathmandu valley erupted in riots following allegations that Indian film star Hrithik Roshan had made derogatory comments about Nepal. The Maoists were active in fomenting the unrest and in enforcing a two-day nationwide general strike.

But despite these efforts to create urban instability and political division, the Maoist strategy of urban insurrection has not demonstrated the ability to mobilise enough support to make its threat of revolution in the cities appear realistic. It has employed sometimes conflicting tactics -- trying to show a presence in the capital through bomb explosions and killings while at the same time holding out the possibility of collaboration with mainstream parties.

The political balance required to make Prachandapath successful is difficult and depends upon driving a wedge between the "constitutional forces" of the mainstream political parties and the monarchy. The Maoists know that to launch a successful mass movement against the monarchy they will have to cultivate links with sympathetic elements within the political mainstream. At the same time they will have to weaken the monarchy's grip on power, primarily through encouraging rebellion within the RNA, which remains loyal to the king. This is not an easy proposition. "If we can encourage the fracturing of the royal army, then the strategy of popular uprising will be successful", says a central Maoist leader, "but this will take some time".¹⁷¹ The combination of "people's war" and urban uprising strategies for revolution has not been tested elsewhere and offers no guarantee of success. Maoist leaders and workers acknowledge that Prachandapath will prove its validity only by success.¹⁷²

3. Strategic balance

The central goal in achieving strategic balance is to reduce the capacity and influence of the state while building up an alternative government-in-waiting. It requires the development of military capacity sufficient to hold one's own against opposing forces, though not necessarily equality. As always in Maoist doctrine, it is not the number of troops or range of their equipment that counts but the

ways in which tactics can be employed to make the most of existing capabilities and put the enemy on the wrong foot. The Maoists claim they reached the stage of strategic balance from the start of their direct confrontation with the RNA in November 2001,¹⁷³ following the breakdown of the first ceasefire and the abandonment of abortive talks. By then the Maoists felt that they had weakened the "old regime" to the extent that their "new regime" would start to be seen as an equivalent force. They marked entry to this stage with a "general offensive" involving audacious simultaneous attacks on multiple targets, including army bases.

At that point, the RNA's assessment of Maoist strategy was: "Establishment of bases in rural areas in order to encircle the towns and cities and finally encircle Kathmandu valley. For this they are carrying out ambushes and other terrorist activities...and strengthening their organisation".¹⁷⁴ The Maoists attempted to reduce the state's reach through attacks on police posts to force withdrawal; attacks on mainstream party activists to eliminate political competition; attacks on local government bodies and forced resignations of officers; attacks on infrastructure to reduce the state's delivery capacity; and the intimidation and cooption of remaining institutions and civil servants, such as teachers.

These tactics, helped by the state's ineffective response, were first notably successful earlier in the mid-western Maoist "heartland" districts of Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Jajarkot, Kalikot and Pyuthan. As state presence was reduced there -- a clearly visible trend by 1999 -- the abandoned countryside fell largely under Maoist sway. The escalation of the military conflict following the mobilisation of the RNA during the state of emergency declared in November 2001 only hastened this process.

By early 2004 the Maoists asserted that the formation of the URPC and the declaration of regional autonomous

¹⁷³ Prachanda, "Present Situation and Our Historical Task", *The Worker* No. 9, February 2004. (Document presented by Prachanda and adopted by the CPN(M) central committee in May 2003.)

¹⁷⁴ Royal Nepalese Army, "Brief to US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca", 17 December 2003, available at http://www.cpnm.org/new/English/articles_news/rna_briefing.htm. This document was leaked and published by a Maoist website; despite much press coverage, the RNA did not challenge its authenticity. The RNA's categorisation of the tactics employed by the Maoists to achieve their goals was: "(a) Sabotage of government and civilian properties; (b) Assassination of security forces, political, and other high ranking officials; (c) Urban terrorism (so-called urban guerrilla warfare); (d) Carry out extortion; (e) Attack soft targets (lightly held police posts, check points); (f) Ambushes (they say that would be carrying out 150 to 300 ambushes at a time...); (g) Carry out so-called decentralised operations and strengthen for centralised ops".

¹⁷¹ Crisis Group interview, Frankfurt, 15 February 2005.

¹⁷² Crisis Group interviews, Kathmandu, January 2005.

people's governments had "immensely contributed to consolidate the Base Areas and to prepare for impending strategic offensive through the country".¹⁷⁵ However, whether the Maoists have ever been successful in creating base areas is open to differing interpretations. The classical Maoist definition of a base area is a region where the presence of the "reactionary state" is entirely eliminated, and there is a genuine attempt to exercise "new people's power".¹⁷⁶

According to the principles developed by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party during their struggle for power, five conditions are essential to the creation of functional base areas: an extensive and reliable popular support base, a communist party guided by correct principles and solid organisation, a powerful people's army, suitable terrain for military action and sufficient economic resources to support the population.¹⁷⁷

According to Baburam Bhattarai, base areas are bordered by "guerrilla areas" where Maoist and state military control are in flux. Base areas are a more stable and developed form of such guerrilla areas. Beyond both of these is the area of state control, which should be subjected to repeated guerrilla incursions and attacks; this he defines as the "guerrilla action region".¹⁷⁸ When asked in an interview, "where is your Yenan?",¹⁷⁹ Prachanda replied: "All of the country's rural areas have become Nepal's Yenan".¹⁸⁰

In fact the Maoists had acknowledged even before the launch of the people's war that because of the prevailing conditions, "it is not found possible for the armed struggle in Nepal to survive independently in certain specific areas, to expand from there just as in China's Ching-Kang Shan".¹⁸¹ According to a leftist analyst who was once a colleague of the Maoists, the CPN(M) has realised that the process of rural advance towards building "liberated areas" will never create decisive military momentum, and the base area concept has, therefore, had to assume a lesser role.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁵ "Autonomous People's Governments Formed", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

¹⁷⁶ Mao Zedong, "Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War against Japan", May 1938, available at http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_08.htm#p6.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Baburam Bhattarai, *Rajnitik arthashastrako aankhijhyalbata*, (Utprekashan), 1998, p. 99.

¹⁷⁹ Yenan was the base area and revolutionary headquarters of the Chinese communists during their rebuilding and consolidation phase following the Long March.

¹⁸⁰ Om Sharma and Manarishi Dhital, interview with Prachanda, *Krishnasen Online*, 2 May 2004.

¹⁸¹ "Strategy and Tactics of Armed Struggle in Nepal", op. cit.

¹⁸² Shyam Shrestha, "Ke maobadiharu pheriekai hun?", *Himal Khabarpatrika*, 14-29 March 2001.

4. From the 2003 Ceasefire to the Next Offensive

All these were factors in the decision to call a ceasefire and talk to the government of Lokendra Bahadur Chand, appointed by the king following his dismissal of Sher Bahadur Deuba's elected government in October 2002. The ceasefire was announced on 29 January 2003 and stabilised when both sides signed a 22-point code of conduct on 13 March.¹⁸³ However, talks never reached substantive issues, and both sides accused the other of violating the ceasefire conditions. There are many reasons why the negotiations failed, including a lack of technical skills that was exacerbated by unprofessional facilitation. Neither side was well prepared for serious discussions. But the big political questions were the main obstacles.

The Maoists were certainly prepared for failure of the talks, and they used the ceasefire for intensive political and military development. In Kathmandu they milked the publicity value of their high-ranking negotiators. Despite public disgust at Maoist brutality, their press conferences were well attended by journalists and onlookers straining to get a view of the underground leaders, whose notoriety had been transformed by an aura of glamour.

Their negotiating position was designed to appeal to a mainstream audience: the proposed model of a roundtable conference, interim government and constituent assembly carefully avoided any reference to dictatorship of the proletariat or rolling cultural revolutions.¹⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the declaration of successive new regional autonomous people's governments underlined their longer term plans, while military recruitment and training quietly continued on a large scale.

The period following the breakdown of the talks and ceasefire saw the most intense escalation of the conflict. The international flow of military aid to the RNA, designed to give the Maoists "a bloody nose" and force them back to the negotiating table in a weakened position, was viewed positively by the Maoists. They concluded that in particular the heightened involvement of India and the U.S., but also the supply of weaponry from Belgium and advice from the UK, were not setbacks but had in fact "prepared a favourable ground to raise the P[people's] W[ar] to the third and higher stage of strategic offensive".¹⁸⁵ Already in early 2004 the party leadership was preparing for that transition

¹⁸³ "Sign 22-point code of conduct for peace talks", *The Kathmandu Post*, 14 March 2003.

¹⁸⁴ See Appendix F below for a summary of the CPN(M) 2003 negotiation agenda.

¹⁸⁵ "Report From the Battlefield: The Breakdown of Ceasefire and Resumption of Military Strike by PLA", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

and claiming that military and political progress had laid the foundations for the next stage:

Another specificity has been the highly successful political offensive carried out during [the] ceasefire and negotiations by boldly presenting [a] minimum program to bring about a progressive democratic change in the country. This prepared [the] ground for moving ahead towards strategic offensive and general insurrection when the old state rejected the political agenda put forward by the Party. In the immediate military plan three stages were chalked out... a plan of carrying out decentralised actions in the first phase, relative[ly] centralised ones in the second and big centralised ones in the third.¹⁸⁶

While the number of Maoists the RNA claimed to have killed since August 2003 seemed to suggest that the guerrilla forces must be on their last legs, a proposition widely accepted in Kathmandu diplomatic and government circles, the Maoists struck back in March and April 2004 with devastating attacks on the district headquarters of Bhojpur, in the eastern hills, and Beni in the west. As always, the RNA could truthfully claim that the Maoists did not completely overrun these towns and certainly could not hold them, but the psychological blow was grave. The attack on Beni demonstrated not only that the Maoists retained the logistical and political capacity to mobilise thousands but that their military capacity had definitely increased.

The attack on Beni was well planned and executed on different fronts: for perhaps the first time the Maoists showed that they could use mortars effectively in a classic night-time assault on a fixed defensive position, while their detailed preparations included the commandeering of stretchers and medical supplies and setting up of field medical posts. This was an important military development given the garrison nature of most RNA deployments in rural Nepal. Very few civilians were caught in the carefully executed assault; most had been warned by the Maoists in advance that an attack was in preparation. What most impressed one senior Western military expert was that the Maoists were able at the last minute to bring forward their timetable by 48 hours, "a remarkable feat for any army".¹⁸⁷ On the evening following the Beni attack, Prachanda released a press statement:

This second qualitatively successful action immediately after the centralised action of Bhojpur sometime ago has forcefully refuted false propaganda spread by the enemy [about the weakening of the Maoists' military strength] and forcefully proved the development and invincibility

of the people's war. Through decentralised actions throughout the country and these series of latest actions, the People's Liberation Army has established its military supremacy over the hoodlum Royal Army. Until the achievement of a forward-looking political solution along with complete changes, the series of military actions will continue.¹⁸⁸

These major military attacks were, moreover, timed to extract the maximum benefit from the political disarray in Kathmandu. The king's second directly appointed government, Surya Bahadur Thapa's, was under mounting pressure from a joint political party protest campaign. Far from offering a decisive strategy to take on the Maoists, Kathmandu was more riven than ever, and the Maoists had an embarrassment of choices for rifts to exploit. As much as their self-proclaimed military advances, it was the weakness and indecisiveness of the "old regime" that emboldened them.

By the time they convened their August 2004 plenum in western Nepal, Surya Bahadur Thapa had been replaced as prime minister by Sher Bahadur Deuba. To Nepal's international backers, the four-party coalition he cobbled together represented the best hope for a broad-based united front capable of giving political shape to a concerted counter-insurgency effort. To the Maoists, the unstable mix of opportunistic parties and palace appointees was an invitation to move towards a decisive confrontation.

B. ONE YEAR OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE

The Maoists announced the launch of their strategic offensive on 31 August 2004.¹⁸⁹ The first sub-stage was defined as a strategic counter-offensive. The Maoists used the claim of impending Indian military intervention to call for basic military training, both offensive and defensive, to be given to all villagers and for preparations for a Vietnam-style "tunnel warfare".¹⁹⁰

According to politburo member and western divisional commander Diwakar, the Maoists had moved into the final stage of the armed campaign to capture state power. "Within this a number of planned battles must be fought, and only at the end will we reach a [general] insurrection".¹⁹¹ For the Maoists, the critical characteristic of the final offensive stage is that it takes place when there is a final polarisation and reduction of the conflict to a clash between two opposed armies. As spokesperson

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview, Western Europe, November 2004.

¹⁸⁸ Translated in "Maoists Temporarily Seize District Capital in Western Nepal", A World to Win News Service, 29 March 2004.

¹⁸⁹ Prachanda, press statement, 31 August 2004.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Interview with CPN(M) standing committee member Diwakar, Krishnasen Online, 28 December 2004.

Krishna Bahadur Mahara said in an interview in early 2005, "...now it is bi-polar, and the real war is now between two armed forces -- one belonging to the king and the other to the revolutionary struggle."¹⁹²

The Maoists have not specified any time period in which to complete the strategic offensive and are cautious when it comes to promising rapid victory. Have they overestimated the strength of their position? Are they overextending themselves? In contrast, by the time the Chinese communists moved onto their final offensive, they commanded a vast regular army and held large swathes of territory securely.

Nepal's Maoists have certainly demonstrated their trademark lack of modesty in claiming to be on the cusp of a successful all-out offensive while their campaign still faces a range of formidable obstacles. In the words of their supporters, "in the Maoist conception, the revolutionaries launch a 'strategic offensive' when they are able to make their immediate aim the decisive destruction of the enemy's armed forces and the establishment of the rule of the people throughout the country".¹⁹³ The weakness of the Nepali state's political response to the insurgency is clear but the Maoists hardly seem capable of the "decisive destruction" of the RNA. Impartial military analysts agree that the RNA cannot re-establish control over the entire country but are equally emphatic that the state can hold its minimum defensive positions, even if that means only district headquarters and the capital.

The Maoists' determinedly upbeat pronouncements on their military progress are at odds with official accounts, which claim their fighting capacity has been decimated, and they have suffered a succession of serious setbacks. For example, the RNA claimed that it repelled simultaneous attacks on security force bases in the Tarai districts of Siraha and Dhanusha on the night of 9 May 2005, timed to coincide with the arrival in Kathmandu of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca.¹⁹⁴ In an interview a week later, however, Maoist eastern divisional commander Ananta claimed that "we were completely successful in our plan. The Mirchaiya Unified Command barracks were captured. Bandipur was hit and partly captured. The other two, Chorhawa and Dharapani, were hit hard".¹⁹⁵ According to Ananta:

The biggest achievement of this fighting is that it has established the basis for positional warfare in the days to come. The success of the first plan of the strategic offensive on the eastern front has confirmed our party's analysis that the strategic offensive would focus on highways, cities and headquarters. We have learned not only mobile and positional warfare; we have also learned to fight stable positional warfare....After the accomplishments of this battle, the enemy mobilised thousands of Royal Army soldiers, including its Ranger Battalion, its best contingent, to encircle and destroy us. But the PLA not only fought heroically and foiled their attempts but also inflicted serious losses on the enemy and captured heavy weapons and ammunition from them.¹⁹⁶

As always, the conflicting assessments reflect the propaganda aims of the two sides. In the post-February 2005 environment, the complete absence of any independent reporting of events makes it even more difficult to judge the truth. In the Siraha clashes, the RNA claimed that some three dozen local residents were "apparently used as human shields" by the Maoists.¹⁹⁷ Diwakar, in contrast, insists that "since they could not face the PLA, the Royal terrorists began to attack the local people with deadly weapons".¹⁹⁸

The assertions of both armed parties are unreliable and, in current circumstances, unverifiable. But in terms of Maoist policy, the crucial question is: what is "victory"? Many close observers of the CPN(M) are convinced that the Maoist leadership has long been aware that an all-out military victory is not only infeasible but also undesirable. As one Maoist supporter put it:

They don't just want to seize power, they want to retain it and use it to transform Nepal. They know that smashing the state by force of arms will be difficult and ultimately unsustainable. They're well aware how the world would react to a violent overthrow of Kathmandu and how difficult that would make it for them to remain in power.¹⁹⁹

The Maoists have always seen political and military actions as two sides of the same coin: this basic assumption lies at the core of all their policy statements and war strategies. It would be strange to expect their conception of victory to be any different.

¹⁹² Isabel Hilton, "The King and Mao", *Financial Times*, 14 May 2005.

¹⁹³ "Maoists Temporarily Seize District Capital in Western Nepal", A World to Win News Service, 29 March 2004.

¹⁹⁴ "Maoist attacks in Siraha and Dhanusha, 32 rebels killed", Kantipur Online, 10 May 2005.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with Ananta, *Janadesh*, 16 May 2005, translated in "Nepal Maoist Offensive: Four Simultaneous Assaults in the East", A World to Win News Service, 23 May 2005.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ "Siraha clash toll tops 45", *nepalnews.com*, 10 May 2005.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with Ananta, *Janadesh*, 16 May 2005.

¹⁹⁹ Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, November 2004.

VI. WHAT MIGHT THEY SETTLE FOR?

If the Maoists were to attain some degree of power, what would their objectives be? Given some of their stated preferences, Cultural Revolution-era China might be more of a guide than the pragmatic united front tactics that Mao earlier espoused. China before the Cultural Revolution took a transitional approach to the bourgeoisie but during the Cultural Revolution concentrated on the elimination of class enemies.²⁰⁰ However, the political system implemented by the Chinese communists when they came to power still reads as a basic template for the CPN(M)'s stated policies.²⁰¹

The model adopted by China for putting "new democracy" into practice was a "people's democratic dictatorship", a concept formalised by Mao as the communists entered Beijing.²⁰² He later clarified its essence as "democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries".²⁰³ The Nepali Maoists have indicated that they would follow the Chinese precedent and deny political rights to those they deemed opposed to socialist transformation.²⁰⁴ The 1954 Chinese constitution did not give special status to the Communist Party nor did it mention specifically what type of other parties would be permitted but the reality was a

²⁰⁰ "The political policy of the communist party was to continue with the coalition with this class, and the economic policy was the implementation of peaceful redemption and state capitalism. The objective was to eliminate the national bourgeoisie class and to gradually transform the majority members of this class to labourers", Kwok-Sing Li, op. cit., p. 452.

²⁰¹ The preamble of the 1954 Chinese Constitution uses "people's democracy" and "new democracy" as equivalents while describing the People's Republic of China as a "people's democratic dictatorship". Article 1 is more precise: "The People's Republic of China is a people's democratic state led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants". *Documents of the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China* (Peking, 1955).

²⁰² Mao Zedong, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", 30 June 1949.

²⁰³ Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People", 27 February 1957, speech cited in Kwok-Sing Li, op. cit., p. 338.

²⁰⁴ Article 19 of the 1954 Chinese Constitution: "The People's Republic of China safeguards the people's democratic system, suppresses all treasonable and counter-revolutionary activities and punishes all traitors and counter-revolutionaries. The state deprives feudal landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists of political rights for a specific period of time according to law; at the same time it provides them with a way to earn a living, in order to enable them to reform through work and become citizens who earn their livelihood by their own labour".

one-party state.²⁰⁵ Basic political rights -- freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and demonstration -- were all in theory constitutionally guaranteed²⁰⁶ but proved meaningless. The program of the United People's Revolutionary Council is strikingly similar:

In the New Democratic/People's Democratic system, the fundamental and political rights of all people including the rights to speak, write, publish, hold meetings and demonstrations and form organisations and political parties, elect and get elected, profess or not profess religions, settle in the place desired, etc. shall be guaranteed. Employment, education and health shall be considered as the fundamental rights of the people. Contrary to the propaganda of the reactionaries that there is one-party dictatorship of the communist party in New Democracy/People's Democracy, full freedom will be guaranteed for various patriotic, democratic and leftist parties on the basis of mutual co-operation and supervision with the communist party for a long time.²⁰⁷

If the warnings about "co-operation and supervision" were not sufficient to sound alarms, the program further clarifies that "the people of reactionary classes who would play [a] reactionary role during the people's revolution and act against the cause of the country and the people shall be deprived of all political rights for a definite period".²⁰⁸ The Maoists promise an elected National House of People's Representatives, which would "function according to the principles of democratic centralism".²⁰⁹ In their terms, democratic centralism means "maintaining a proper balance between democracy and centralism", with "proletarian leadership in every sector...and a method of high application of the mass-line".²¹⁰ Moreover, the Maoists'

²⁰⁵ Article 86 of the 1954 Constitution entitles individuals to stand for election but Article 32 of the Organic Law of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (adopted 20 September 1954) states that "Deputies to the National People's Congress must be loyal to the people's democratic system...they must also...give active help to the implementation of the Constitution, the law and the policy of the state". *Documents*, op. cit., p. 177.

²⁰⁶ Article 87.

²⁰⁷ Common Minimum Policy and Programme of the URPC, Article 4.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Articles 13-15. In the words of Mao, "Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline...Under this system [democratic centralism] the people enjoy broad democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline". Mao Zedong, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People", 27 February 1957, in *Selected Works*, op. cit., vol. v, p. 389.

²¹⁰ Common Minimum Policy and Program of the URPC, Article 9.

original aim after completing the "new democratic revolution" is described as "immediately moving towards socialism, and, by way of cultural revolutions based on the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, marching to communism -- the golden future of the whole [of] humanity".²¹¹

The threat of Maoist political totalitarianism must be taken seriously and has been underlined by their conduct to date. They have often used violence to target the very classes for whom they claim to be fighting, thus raising questions about their "hearts and minds" strategy. The character of Maoist rule in the parts of the country they control has tended to be authoritarian: for example, rhetorical commitments to ensuring freedom of speech have not extended to allowing anyone to speak out against them. In the words of Khadga Bahadur Bishwakarma, the head of the Maoist Bheri-Karnali autonomous government, "there will be a ban for a specific period on all forces or parties playing a counterrevolutionary role".²¹² The allegation of "counterrevolutionary" tendencies is a broad brush that has in the past been used to tar a wide range of opponents, including workers for all the mainstream political parties.

However, while the ultimate goal of socialism and communism remains official Maoist policy, since the 2003 ceasefire talk of the "new democratic revolution" has been gradually displaced by a commitment to complete the bourgeois democratic revolution. As Prachanda himself put it unambiguously, "the basic political strategy of the Party is to free the Nepalese society from feudalism and imperialism through the bourgeois democratic revolution".²¹³ This implies a significant shift in objectives, and one that would play a major role in shaping Maoist activities and approach to any future negotiations. At the same time as confirming that the Maoists' strategic offensive would continue, spokesman Krishna Bahadur Mahara also emphasised the possibility of a peaceful transition via a multiparty democratic stage: "If we are to forge an alliance with the other parties we have to be flexible. We envisage a two-step revolution -- first a multiparty democratic republic. If it was a genuine democracy, then we would work for the peaceful transformation of the state".²¹⁴

There is ample room within Maoist ideology to make this transition and justify it in terms of party theory. Marxists

have always been preoccupied with questions of the historical appropriateness of types of revolution. Lenin himself for many years believed that Russia would first have to undergo a democratic revolution before movement towards communism could be envisaged. He was only a belated convert to Trotsky's plan for "permanent revolution", which proposed skipping the democratic stage of development entirely and jumping into a proletarian-driven class transformation.

In the most significant Maoist writing on the topic, Baburam Bhattarai cites Engels in support of his argument that "a proletarian party needs to uphold the program of a bourgeois republic in a country like present-day Nepal".²¹⁵ Bhattarai quotes Engels' criticism of the Bakuninist anarchists in nineteenth century Spain, implying that there is a clear parallel for Nepal: "Spain is such a backward country industrially that there can be no question there of immediate complete emancipation of the working class. Spain will first have to pass through various preliminary stages of development and remove quite a number of obstacles from its path".²¹⁶

Ironically, Bhattarai's dismissal of "Bakuninist" approaches recalls nothing more than the classic critique of Naxalism from within the mainstream Indian communist movement.²¹⁷ As Mohit Sen observed of Naxalite strategy, "the central idea was that one should not wait for the people to be ready for armed struggle but to prepare the people for armed struggle by the starting of such a struggle by dedicated revolutionaries... This was, of course, nothing but the old anarchism of Blanqui and Bakunin dressed up in the new tunic of Lin Biao's army".²¹⁸ The fact that Bhattarai, and indeed Prachanda in many similar comments on the need for completing the bourgeois democratic revolution, adopt the language of mainstream Indian communists rather than Naxalites is highly significant.²¹⁹ A senior Indian communist leader has pointed to these parallels:

²¹⁵ Baburam Bhattarai, "Royal Regression and the Question of a Democratic Republic in Nepal", in *Monarchy vs. Democracy: The Epic Fight in Nepal* (New Delhi, 2005), p. 11.

²¹⁶ Friedrich Engels, "The Bakuninists at Work", cited in Bhattarai, "Royal Regression", *ibid.*, p. 11.

²¹⁷ The Naxalite movement, named for the village of Naxalbari in India's West Bengal (on the Nepal border), was a late 1960s Maoist uprising. It was largely defeated by a tough security response and by mainstream communist parties outflanking the Naxalites politically, carrying out land reform to build a small peasant support base.

²¹⁸ Mohit Sen, *The Traveller and the Road* (Delhi, 2003), p. 285.

²¹⁹ A full year before the royal coup, Prachanda chose to emphasise that "Marxism does not oppose adult suffrage and the representative institution elected thereof", "On the State and Democracy", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

²¹¹ "Theoretical Premises for the Historic Initiation of the People's War", *op. cit.*

²¹² J. Pandey, "Maobadi yenanma bandukko shasan", *Nepal*, 1-15 February 2004.

²¹³ Prachanda, "A Brief Introduction to the Policies of the C.P.N. (Maoist)", *The Worker*, No. 9, February 2004.

²¹⁴ Isabel Hilton, "The King and Mao", *Financial Times*, 14 May 2005.

The Maoists must be tempted with a CPM-style model.²²⁰ We can try to persuade them with an amnesty and mainstream participation. If they get a majority, so be it. There is also fatigue, and a long fight can encourage people who are getting tired of operations to find some face-saving mechanism, such as if they could claim "victory" on something such as land reform. Some are extremists but not all...once [the UML] came into the mainstream, they became power-oriented, all parliamentary machinations. That disillusioned the youth and created a potential Maoist following. That section can be brought back into the mainstream.²²¹

The Maoists will obviously need to deliver some successes to their cadres, whom they have done little to prepare for any sense of compromise with mainstream democratic forces. And they do have some bottom lines. In particular, they would want to see major moves on land reform, caste and ethnic equality, regional devolution and the monarchy. On the last, they still claim to be flexible, although it is hard to believe that current circumstances have not emboldened them and raised hopes that they can "win" the end of the monarchy. As for the rest, there is nothing politically insurmountable. When asked what the Maoists would settle for, a top-level Indian bureaucrat was optimistic:

They need a share in working out political arrangements, a level playing field to participate, an amnesty of some sort, to be seen by their own cadres to have got some elements of their program accepted. This is quite possible. It's not inconceivable to get an agenda they could sign up to.²²²

Much would then depend on the Maoists' own calculations for entering electoral politics: if they can be persuaded -- and persuade themselves -- that they have a viable future in the political mainstream, they may well be ready to talk seriously.

²²⁰ CPM is the standard abbreviation for the mainstream Communist Party of India (Marxist), which has led the United Front government in West Bengal since 1977.

²²¹ Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, December 2004.

²²² Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, December 2004.

VII. CONCLUSION

Whatever the outcome of their armed insurgency, the Maoists have changed politics in Nepal irrevocably. They broke the tacit consent of the post-1990 compromise and turned previously marginal issues into central questions that the state cannot avoid. In doing this they have convinced many of their initial assertion that the 1990 settlement contained inherent flaws and was not a stable division of political power.²²³ They have brought into sharp focus the failures of past gestures towards land reform, ethnic, caste and gender equality and regional issues, social and economic iniquities, and decades of failed development.

They have returned the possibility of a new constitution drafted by an elected body to the heart of the mainstream agenda and, helped by the palace, they have been largely responsible for making the formerly taboo topic of republicanism a rallying call for activists within the established parties. They have, in short, let many genie's out of their bottles. Regardless of the success or failure of their own movement, they have changed the environment in which future governments will have to work.

Most visibly and painfully, however, the Maoists have successfully demonstrated that Nepali society does indeed contain a capacity for violence that can be turned to political ends. The Maoists argue that the trauma of insurgency is a necessary corrective to centuries of oppression and, in comparison to this history of brutal state neglect, a price worth paying for radical reform. But mainstream democrats accuse them of having foreclosed the possibilities for progressive reform by undermining the achievements of the 1990 people's movement and incapacitating government. The mainstream consensus is that the Maoists, and their deliberate militarisation of the state, are primarily to blame for the resurgence of an authoritarian monarchy. The culture of violence, intimidation and summary justice which they have introduced across the country may prove hard to dislodge.

The Maoists also face intense critiques from fellow Nepali communists who view them as adventurists who have misread the political situation and embarked on a dangerously counterproductive course. While their overall objectives may be shared, mainstream communists reject the arguments for an immediate armed struggle and insist that a popular mass base should instead be cultivated and mobilised by peaceful means. Signs that Prachanda has been fashioning the movement around an all-powerful central command with personality cult trappings have also brought grave misgivings. The Maoists continue to

²²³ See Crisis Group Report, *Towards a Lasting Peace in Nepal*, op. cit.

look politically isolated, and clashes with even the most ideologically similar parties, such as Janamorcha, show how far they still are from winning the political argument.

Still, whether through force of arms, force of ideas or a combination of both, the Maoists have emerged as a formidable political organisation. They have been more successful than anyone envisaged, and their strategy of people's war has resulted in an armed movement that will not be easily displaced. "Prachanda and Baburam were no one -- we made them", says an experienced grass-roots communist activist.²²⁴ But the fact is that the Maoists have managed to overshadow the mainstream. There can be no resolution of the conflict without confronting their strengths and tackling their political agenda.

There are, however, encouraging signs that serious negotiations will be possible. The Maoists themselves have made ideological moves which open up the possibility of a principled compromise that they could sell to their cadres. They are not the next Khmer Rouge, nor are they a terrorist organisation that refuses to talk. The mainstream parties are facing up to the need for structural reforms in Nepali society and for a more equitable distribution of power. The seven-party alliance's acceptance of a constitutional assembly as a model for reform could tempt the Maoists into more substantive talks.²²⁵

International opinion towards the Maoists has not softened but policymakers are increasingly willing to engage them if they abide by certain rules. "We shouldn't have any trouble talking to the Maoists", observes one senior Indian national security expert. "But only if they observe two conditions: to drop links with Indian extremists and to accept multiparty democracy".²²⁶

The unilateral three-month ceasefire announced by the Maoists in September 2005 has provoked predictable reactions. A population battered by years of war has largely welcomed the reduction in violence, however temporary and conditional. So, too, have state security personnel and their families, many of whom are constantly harassed and threatened by the Maoists. Mainstream parties have taken the truce as partial proof of good faith but the Maoists will have to work hard to convince them that they can abandon their habit of violent repression. The royal government, pushed by a suspicious military leadership, has refused to reciprocate the ceasefire and insists the Maoists cannot be trusted. The RNA has used the ceasefire to arrest a few Maoists and to kill some others, thereby creating conditions for renewal of the conflict.

Past experience certainly suggests the Maoists will make the most of the ceasefire to prepare for alternative scenarios, including a possible escalation of the conflict. But their actions are more likely to be driven by their assessment of threats and opportunities than by the "sincerity" of their desire for peace. They will make a serious effort to rejoin mainstream politics only if they see sufficient advantages in it and are convinced that they will not make greater gains by other means. In this, as in their campaign to date, they will maintain a long-term perspective and will be armed with patience and the ability to countenance short-term setbacks in pursuit of slow progress. It is pointless to imagine that the most committed Maoists will ever abandon their political goals and the desire to achieve them. But if they decide they can gain more by compromise than by fighting, their capacity for hard-headed pragmatism may prevail.

Kathmandu/Brussels, 27 October 2005

²²⁴ Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, May 2005.

²²⁵ See Crisis Group Report, *Towards a Lasting Peace in Nepal*, op. cit.

²²⁶ Crisis Group interview, New Delhi, September 2005.

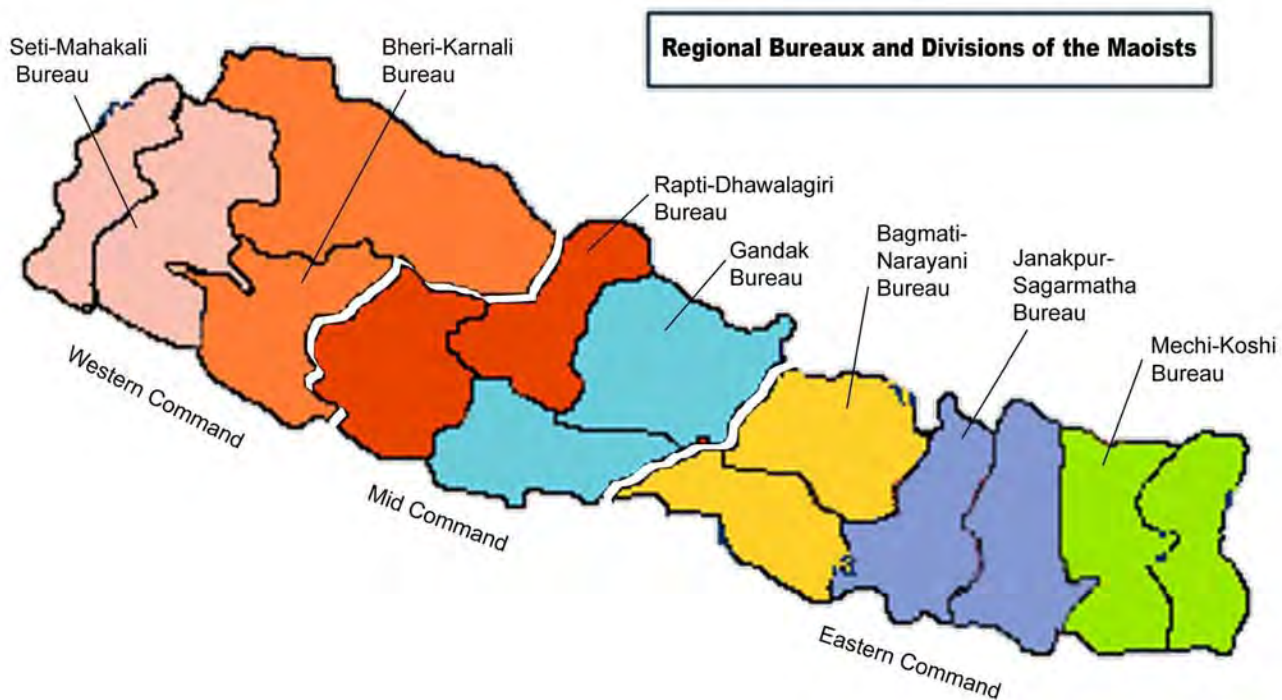
APPENDIX A

MAP OF NEPAL



APPENDIX B

MAPS OF MAOIST REGIONAL BUREAU DIVISIONS AND PROPOSED ETHNIC AND REGIONAL AUTONOMOUS STATES



APPENDIX C

THE MAOIST LEADERSHIP

HEADQUARTERS

Prachanda: Party Chairman and Supreme Commander of the People's Liberation Army

STANDING COMMITTEE

1. **Pushpa Kamal Dahal** (Prachanda, Biswas), Brahman from Chitwan, b. 1954 (Kaski): Chairman and Supreme Commander of the PLA. Joined communist politics as full-time underground activist with CPN (Fourth Convention) in 1970s; sided with Mohan Bikram Singh in 1984 split after his long-running feud with Nirmal Lama but went with Mohan Baidya against Singh in 1986; became general secretary of Mashal in 1990 and remained at head of party as it became Unity Centre then CPN(M). Holds an Intermediate science degree from Patan Campus and Bachelor of Science degree (in agriculture) from Rampur Campus, Chitwan and is the author of numerous articles, policy documents and press statements and some books, including *Nepali krantika samasyaharu (The Problems of Revolution in Nepal)*. Low public profile due to long years underground but tight grip on party.
2. **Mohan Vaidya** (Kiran, Agam), Brahman from Pyuthan, b. 1937: one of the founders of the CPN(M) and former general secretary of Mashal. Lifelong political activist seen as major Maoist ideologue and Prachanda's main mentor. Was arrested in Siliguri, West Bengal while in charge of Eastern Central Command March 2004 and remains in prison. Holds a masters degree from Tribhuvan University.
3. **Dr Baburam Bhattarai** (Laldhoj, Jitbir, Mukti Manav), Brahman from Gorkha, b. 1954: formerly in charge of Mid Central Command, coordinator of United Revolutionary People's Council, Nepal and chief of International Department. Disciplined in March 2005 but then reinstated. Entered student politics 1977; founder president of All India Nepali Student Association. Joined CPN (Fourth Convention) and remained with Mohan Bikram Singh's Masal after 1986 split, leaving in 1991 to form United Peoples Front, Nepal, which became the CPN(M)'s political front. Leader of CPN(M) 2003 negotiating team. A brilliant student: first School-Leaving Certificate topper from outside the Kathmandu valley; Intermediate science from Amrit Science College, Kathmandu; Bachelor of Engineering from Chandigarh, India; masters from the School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi and PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University with dissertation on "Natural and regional issues in Nepal's underdevelopment". Author of numerous articles and books including *The Nature of Underdevelopment and Regional Structure of Nepal*, *Rajnitik arthashastrako ankhijhyalbata (Politico-Economic Rationale of People's War in Nepal)*, *Marxbad ra mahila mukti (Marxism and Women's Emancipation)*, co-written with wife, Hisila Yami. The best known public face of the Maoist movement; seen by some as a threat to Prachanda's supremacy.
4. **Ram Bahadur Thapa** (Badal, Lakhan, Prem, Bhimsen), Magar from Chitwan, b. 1954: in charge of Eastern Central Command and member of CPN(M) 2003 negotiating team. School and college education from Chitwan, then went to USSR for higher studies but returned to Nepal for student agitation in 1979 and devoted himself to full-time underground communist politics. Played a leading role in building political base for people's war in Rapti hills. In 1997 removed from all party posts and sent to labour camp under disciplinary action but was gradually rehabilitated and promoted. Popularly labelled as military commander but prefers to describe himself as military strategist. Seen as a powerful pro-Prachanda member of the standing committee.
5. **Post Bahadur Bogati** (Diwakar, Ranadhvaj), Chhetri from Nuwakot, b. 1942: in charge of Mid Central Command and formerly of Western Central Command. Played a major role in building Maoist support in Rolpa and Rukum and the midwest, where he was active from the start of the people's war until March 2005. Self-taught with wide knowledge of Marxist philosophy and seen as a powerful member of the standing committee.
6. **Krishna Bahadur Mahara** (Amarsingh, Chattan, Balbhadra), Chhetri from Rolpa, b. 1958: CPN(M) spokesman, in charge of International Department (India) and deputy coordinator of URPC. Former coordinator of CPN(M) 2001 negotiating team and member of CPN(M) 2003 negotiating team. Promoted to standing committee early 2005 and the only person apart from Prachanda who can talk to the media on behalf of CPN(M) headquarters. Holds Bachelor in

Education degree from Tribhuvan University and worked as a schoolteacher in Rolpa for more than a decade. Elected United People's Front member of parliament from Rolpa in 1991.

7. **Dev Gurung** (Kanchha Bahadur, Dorje), Gurung from Manang, b. 1954: former head of Ethnic Department, Gandak Regional Bureau, and Tamuwan Autonomous Regional People's Government. Promoted to standing committee and appointed to lead Western Central Command, March 2005; probably no longer holds lower positions. Secretary of URPC and member of CPN(M) 2003 negotiating team. Entered communist politics as a student and became ANNFSU(R) president. Was arrested by police in Gorkha in 1996 and released on 6 January 2000.

POLITBURO MEMBERS

8. **Dinanath Sharma** (Kishor, Ashok), Brahman from Baglung: former Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia coordinator but placed under disciplinary action in March 2005, forced to resign from posts and current party status unclear.
9. **C.P. Gajurel** (Gaurav, Bijaya, Prabesh Kumar), Brahman from Sindhuli, b. 1948: former chief of International Department and responsible for relations with the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM) and World People's Resistance Movement (WPRM); also former chairman of the All India Nepali Ekta Samaj. Arrested at Chennai Airport in August 2003 when trying to fly to Europe on fake British passport; currently in prison in Chennai, India. Holds a Masters of Science degree from Tribhuvan University.
10. **Agni Prasad Sapkota** (Kanchan, Sushil, Parbat), Brahman from Sindhupalchowk, b. 1958: in charge of Narayani-Bagmati Regional Bureau and member of URPC. Member of the 2001 CPN(M) negotiating team. Entered politics while a schoolteacher in Sindhupalchowk.
11. **Mani Thapa** (Anukul, Anup), Magar from Pyuthan: in charge of Sagarmatha-Janakpur Regional Bureau.
12. **Matrika Yadav** (Ram Singh, Pradeep, Pratik), Tarai occupational caste Hindu from Dhanusha, b. 1947: chairman of Madhes Autonomous Regional People's Government and chief of the Madhesi Rastriya Mukti Morcha. Member of 2003 CPN(M) negotiating team. Arrested near Delhi in 2004 and currently in Nepal government custody.
13. **Pampha Bhusal** (Shrishti, Himali, Sarita, Puja, Smriti), Brahman from Arghakhanchi, b. 1961: head of Women's Department; member of URPC and most senior woman in the CPN(M).
14. **Netra Vikram Chand** (Viplab, Ratna Bahadur Shahi, Iman Singh), Chhetri from Rolpa: in charge of Special Regional Bureau under the Mid Central Command and former vice chairman of ANNFSU(R)
15. **Ishwar Man Pradhananga** (a.k.a. Rabindra Shrestha, Shashi Shrestha), Newar from Bhaktapur: head of Industry Department. Arrested in Kathmandu in 2001 and released in 2003.
16. **Janardan Sharma** (Prabhakar), Brahman from Rukum: Western Division commander.
17. **Varshaman Pun** (Ananta), Magar from Rolpa: Eastern Division commander.
18. **Hitrav Pandey** (Uttam), b. 1959: Basu Memorial Fourth Brigade commissar.
19. **Top Bahadur Rayamajhi** (Jivan, Amar, Anil, a.k.a. Kishan Pyakurel), Brahman from Arghakhanchi: member of URPC and in charge of NRN Command (India) since September 2004; former Lisne-Gam Brigade commissar and former Chairman of ANNFSU(R). Member of the 2001 CPN(M) negotiating team. Close to Baburam Bhattarai.
20. **Haribhakta Kandel** (Bimal), Brahman from Gorkha: chief of the Central Finance Department.
21. **Haribol Gajurel** (Shital Kumar, Prajwal), Brahman from Sindhuli: International Department member.
22. **Hitman Shakya** (Suman; also Suresh, Tutu, Sagar), Newar from Baglung, b. 1960: in charge of Special Regional Bureau under the Eastern Central Command and chief of the Central Education Department.
23. **Nanda Kishor Pun** (Pasang), Magar from Rolpa: Western Division commander.
24. **Hisila Yami** (Parvati), Newar from Kathmandu: alternate politburo member; former deputy chief of International Department but placed under disciplinary action in March 2005 and current party status unclear. Trained architect and lecturer on Pulchowk Campus since 1996 until going underground. Author of many articles and *Marxbad ra mahila mukti* (*Marxism and Women's Emancipation*) co-written with husband Baburam Bhattarai.
25. **Kul Prasad K.C.** (Sonam): alternate politburo member, currently in prison in Patna, India.
26. **Gopal Khambu** (Sahila), Rai from Solukhumbu: alternate politburo member; in charge of Mechi-Koshi Regional Bureau and head of Kirat Autonomous Regional People's Government.
27. **Devendra Paudel** (Sunil): alternate politburo member; former general secretary of ANNFSU(R), forced to resign, under disciplinary action.

28. **Khadga Bahadur Bishwakarma** (Prakanda), Dalit from Kalikot: alternate politburo member; chairman of Bheri-Karnali Regional Autonomous People's Government, in charge of Bheri-Karnali Regional Bureau and chief of Central Dalit Department.
29. **Kumar Dahal** (Vijay), Brahman: alternate politburo member and formerly in charge of Valley Bureau; former Chairman of All-Nepal Trade Union, currently in prison in Patna, India.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

30. Ganga Bahadur Karki (Vishva): Bethan Memorial Fifth Brigade commissar.
31. Santu Darai (Parwana): Mechi-Koshi Seventh Brigade commissar.
32. Ganga Shrestha (Prabhat): former general secretary of ANNFSU(R).
33. Gaurishankar Khadka (Rajendra): former UML leader.
34. Kumar Paudel (Kamal): central committee member of then UPF.
35. "Rajesh": Eastern Division vice-commander.
36. Lokendra Bishta: currently in prison in Patna, India.
37. Santosh Budha Magar (Bhrun): head of Magarat Autonomous Regional People's Government.
38. Dharmendra Bastola
39. Dhruva Parajuli (Santosh): Solu-Salleri Sixth Brigade commissar.
40. Pavan Man Shrestha (Prabhakaran): in charge of Valley Bureau, former chairman of Newa Khala.
41. Jayapuri Gharti: chair of All-Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary).
42. Uma Bhujel (Silu): member of Women's Department.
43. Padam Rai (Vikas): Bhojpur district, position uncertain.
44. Himal Rai: Bhojpur district, position uncertain.
45. Savitri Kaphle (Samar [male]): in charge of Bhojpur district.
46. Suresh Ale Magar (Sangram): currently in Nepal government custody.
47. Hit Bahadur Tamang (Shamsher): head of Tamang Autonomous Regional People's Government, currently in prison in Patna, India.
48. Ram Charan Chaudhari: head of Tharuwan Autonomous Regional People's Government.
49. Narayan Sharma (Kamal Prasad): Communications and Publications Department, former *Janadesh* editor.
50. Krishna Prasad Sapkota (Deshbandhu): Agni Sapkota's younger brother, in charge of Dolakha-Sindhupalchowk.
51. Bamdev Chhetri (Vikalpa)
52. Jhaku Prasad Subedi: former District Development Committee chairman, Rolpa.
53. Purna Bahadur Gharti (Visham): former head of Rukum People's Government.
54. Tilak Pariyar: chairman of Dalit Liberation Front.
55. Amar Sharma (Pratap)
56. Shriram Dhakal (Prashant): Thawang-Nuwagaon road construction committee coordinator.
57. Bhakta Bahadur Shah: head of Jajarkot People's Government.
58. Lekhraj Bhatta (Rakesh): in charge of Seti-Mahakali and head of Seti-Mahakali Autonomous Regional People's Government.
59. Rekha Sharma: former chair of All-Nepal Women's Association (Revolutionary), currently under disciplinary action.
60. Krishnadhvaj Khadka: former chairman of ANNFSU(R), currently under disciplinary action.
61. Dinesh Sharma (Pramod)
62. Chandra Prasad Khanal (Baldev)
63. Sakuhang Kirati
64. Babulal Pun
65. Hemant Prakash Oli (H.P. Himali)
66. Ganga Bahadur Tamang (Dorje): general secretary of the Tamang National Liberation Front.

67. Man Bahadur Thapa Magar: leader of the then United People's Front.
68. "Apar": assigned to the eastern command.
69. "Barun": vice-commander of Mid Division.
70. "Uddhav": Ghorahi-Satbariya Second Brigade commissar.
71. "Vividh": vice-commander of Western Division.
72. "Saral"
73. "Athak"
74. Dipendra Pun (Sijal): Rolpa
75. Khim Bahadur Thapa (Sunil): Mangalsen First Brigade commissar.
76. Balaram Timilsina (Dinesh): Sindhuli district, position uncertain [?].
77. Manoj Jang Thapa
78. Ishwari Dahal (Asare Kaka/Budha)
79. Ganesh Man Gurung (Rashmi): deputy head of Magarat Autonomous Regional People's Government and Parivartan Memorial Ninth Brigade commissar.
80. Dilip Maharjan: Newa Khala chairman, currently in prison in Patna, India.
81. Tej Prakash Oli (Pratik): Bahubir Yoddha Eighth Brigade commissar.
82. Tanka Prasad Angwohang (Prabhav): deputy head of Kirat Autonomous Regional People's Government.
83. Dawa Tamang (Kshiti): alternate central committee member [?], head of Sindhupalchowk People's Government.
84. Mahendra Paswan: alternate central committee member, former student leader, chief secretary of the Madhesh Autonomous People's Government.
85. Lekhnath Neupane (Nirmal/Premudha): alternate central committee member, ANNFSU(R) chairman.
86. Dinanath Gautam (Puran): alternate central committee member.
87. Anil Sharma (Virahi): alternate central committee member, former student leader, currently in prison in Patna, India.
88. Pushpa Bikram Malla (Singh): alternate central committee member, formerly in charge of Dhading.
89. Ram Karki (a.k.a. Partha Chhetri): alternate central committee member, International Department.
90. Thaman Pariyar: alternate central committee member and head of Kaski People's Government.
91. Kumari Moktan (Samjhana): alternate central committee member, acting head of Tamang Autonomous Regional People's Government and head of Makwanpur People's Government.
92. Kali Bahadur Malla (Jitendra): alternate central committee member.

APPENDIX D

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MAOIST MOVEMENT

The Party	The Army	The United Front
Standing Committee	Divisions (3)	United People's Revolutionary Council, Nepal
Central Committee	Brigades (9)	Ethnic and regional "autonomous people's governments" (8)
Central Command (3)	Battalions (29)	United District People's Committees
Politburo	Companies	United Area People's Committees
Regional bureaus	Platoons	United Village People's Committees
Sub-regional bureaus	Squads	United Ward People's Committees
District committees	[The "people's militias" organised on a local basis are separate from other military units]	
Area committees		
Cell committees		

APPENDIX E

THE UPPER STRUCTURE OF THE "PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY"

General Headquarters

Supreme Commander
Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda)

Western Division

Commissar
Dev Gurung (Kanchha Bahadur)

Commander
Janardan Sharma (Prabhakar)

Vice Commander
[unknown]

Mid Division

Commissar
Post Bahadur Bogati (Diwakar)

Commander
Nanda Kishor Pun (Pasang)

Vice Commander
Barun

Eastern Division

Commissar
Ram Bahadur Thapa (Badal)

Commander
Barsha Man Pun (Ananta)

Vice Commander
Rajesh

Brigades

1. Ghorahi-Satbariya Second Brigade

Commissar
Uddhav

Commander
Jit (killed in action in Bardiya,
March 2005)

Brigades

1. Mangalsen First Brigade

Commissar
Kim Bahadur Thapa (Sunil)

Commander
Vivek

Brigades

1. Bethan Memorial Fifth Brigade

Commissar
Ganga Bahadur Karki (Vishva)

Commander
Hari Shrestha (Pramod)

2. Lisne-Gam Third Brigade

Commissar
Top Bahadur Rayamajhi (Jivan)

Commander
Sanjay

2. Basu Memorial Fourth Brigade

Commissar
Hitraj Pandey (Uttam)

Commander
Yam Bahadur Adhikari (Pratiksha)

2. Solu-Salleri Sixth Brigade

Commissar
Dhruva Parajuli (Santosh)

Commander
Pavel

3. Bahubir-Yoddha Eighth Brigade

Commissar
Tej Prakash Oli (Pratik)

Commander
Kuber

3. Parivartan Memorial Ninth Brigade

Commissar
Ganeshman Pun (Rashmi)

Commander
Madan

3. Mechi-Koshi Seventh Brigade

Commissar
Santu Darai (Parvana)

Commander
Sanjiv

APPENDIX F

THE 40-POINT DEMAND²²⁷

DEMANDS RELATED TO NATIONALISM

1. Regarding the 1950 Treaty between India and Nepal, all unequal stipulations and agreements should be removed.
2. HMG [His Majesty's Government] should admit that the anti-nationalist Tanakpur agreement was wrong, and the Mahakali Treaty, incorporating same, should be nullified.
3. The entire Nepal-Indian border should be controlled and systematised. Cars with Indian number plates, which are plying the roads of Nepal, should not be allowed.
4. Gurkha recruiting centers should be closed and decent jobs should be arranged for the recruits.
5. In several areas of Nepal, where foreign technicians are given precedence over Nepali technicians for certain local jobs, a system of work permits should be instituted for the foreigners.
6. The monopoly of foreign capital in Nepal's industry, trade and economic sector should be stopped.
7. Sufficient income should be generated from customs duties for the country's economic development.
8. The cultural pollution of imperialists and expansionists should be stopped. Hindi video, cinema, and all kinds of such newspapers and magazines should be completely stopped. Inside Nepal, import and distribution of vulgar Hindi films, video cassettes and magazines should be stopped.
9. Regarding NGOs and INGOs: Bribing by imperialists and expansionists in the name of NGOs and INGOs should be stopped.

DEMANDS RELATED TO THE PUBLIC AND ITS WELL-BEING

1. A new Constitution has to be drafted by the people's elected representatives.
2. All the special rights and privileges of the King and his family should be ended.
3. Army, police and administration should be under the people's control.
4. The Security Act and all other repressive acts should be abolished.
5. All the false charges against the people of Rukum, Rolpa, Jajarkot, Gorkha, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli, Dhanusha and Ramechhap should be withdrawn and all the people falsely charged should be released.
6. Armed police operations in the different districts should immediately be stopped.
7. Regarding Dilip Chaudhary, Bhuvan Thapa Magar, Prabhakar Subedi and other people who disappeared from police custody at different times, the government should constitute a special investigating committee to look into these crimes and the culprits should be punished and appropriate compensation given to their families.
8. People who died during the time of the movement should be declared as martyrs and their families and those who have been wounded and disabled should be given proper compensation. Strong action should be taken against the killers.
9. Nepal should be declared a secular state.
10. Girls should be given equal property rights to those of their brothers.
11. All kinds of exploitation and prejudice based on caste should be ended. In areas having a majority of one ethnic group, that group should have autonomy over that area.

²²⁷ Submitted to Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on 4 February 1996 by Dr Baburam Bhattarai on behalf of the United People's Front Nepal. Available at http://www.insof.org/politics/130299_40demands_Maoist.htm.

12. The status of dalits as untouchables should be ended and the system of untouchability should be ended once and for all.
13. All languages should be given equal status. Up until middle-high school level (uccha-madyamic) arrangements should be made for education to be given in the children's mother tongue.
14. There should be guarantee of free speech and free press. The communications media should be completely autonomous.
15. Intellectuals, historians, artists and academicians engaged in other cultural activities should be guaranteed intellectual freedom.
16. In both the tarai and hilly regions there is prejudice and misunderstanding in backward areas. This should be ended and the backward areas should be assisted. Good relations should be established between the villages and the city.
17. Decentralisation in real terms should be applied to local areas, which should have local rights, autonomy and control over their own resources.

DEMANDS RELATED TO THE PEOPLE'S LIVES

1. Those who cultivate the land should own it. (The tiller should have right to the soil he/she tills.) The land of rich landlords should be confiscated and distributed to the homeless and others who have no land.
2. Brokers and commission agents should have their property confiscated and that money should be invested in industry.
3. All should be guaranteed work and should be given a stipend until jobs are found for them.
4. HMG [His Majesty's Government] should pass strong laws ensuring that people involved in industry and agriculture should receive minimum wages.
5. The homeless should be given suitable accommodation. Until HMG [His Majesty's Government] can provide such accommodation they should not be removed from where they are squatting.
6. Poor farmers should be completely freed from debt. Loans from the Agricultural Development Bank by poor farmers should be completely written off. Small industries should be given loans.
7. Fertiliser and seeds should be easily and cheaply available, and the farmers should be given a proper market price for their production.
8. Flood and drought victims should be given all necessary help
9. All should be given free and scientific medical service and education and education for profit should be completely stopped.
10. Inflation should be controlled and labourers salaries should be raised in direct ratio with the rise in prices. Daily essential goods should be made cheap and easily available.
11. Arrangements should be made for drinking water, good roads, and electricity in the villages.
12. Cottage and other small industries should be granted special facilities and protection.
13. Corruption, black marketing, smuggling, bribing, the taking of commissions, etc. should all be stopped.
14. Orphans, the disabled, the elderly and children should be given help and protection.

APPENDIX G

THE CPN(M) 2003 NEGOTIATING AGENDA²²⁸

I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the negotiation between representatives of the old state and the new state are as follows:

1. To end the present state of conflict through a forward-looking political solution and establish a lasting peace in the country.
2. To solve the existing class, nationalities, regional, gender and other contradictions through political, economic and cultural changes. To solve the problems of nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood and to build a democratic and prosperous Nepal.
3. To establish a new, strong and democratic national unity and to defend national independence and sovereignty by upholding democracy and nationalism as indivisible, interdependent and interrelated ensembles.
4. To ensure the broad human and civic rights of all, particularly the underprivileged and oppressed groups, and to provide appropriate compensation and rehabilitation to the victims of the civil war.

II. THE AGENDA OF THE NEGOTIATION

Fundamental Political Agenda

Since the question of state power or the political question is key to all the other problems, the main agenda of the negotiation must be political, and all the focus has to be placed on this. For a political solution out of the present crisis, a forward-looking new state system and a new constitution conforming to it is necessary, and it is so also because the 1990 constitution remains practically dead in the present situation, and there is a constitutional vacuum in the country. Taking into consideration this ground reality, the procedure of new constitution formation and the minimum substance for the new constitution must be the main agenda of the negotiation.

Although the 1990 constitution has some democratic positive features (e.g. multi-party competition, periodic elections, rule of law, freedom of speech and press, etc.), it has a number of serious faults and inadequacies (e.g. the so-called "unchangeable" features, the contradiction between the sovereignty and state power, dissolution of "real democracy" of oppressed classes, nationalities, regions, gender and others in the Anglo-Saxon "formal democracy", etc.), which have been proved in the last twelve years.

Hence the process of formulation and content of the new constitution has to be definitely more progressive than this one. In the present context of new balance of political power created by the new consciousness of the twenty-first century and the seven-year-long intense civil war, the regressive idea to go back to the system of pre-1990 and the status quo idea of sticking to the 1990 achievements will not fulfill the new needs of the people and the country and solve the present crisis. Thus the process of formulation and the minimum content of the new constitution should be as follows:

(a) The Process or Procedure for the Formulation of a New Constitution

1. A broad round table conference should be organised with the consent of the revolutionary force and major political parties of the country so as to include all democratic, patriotic and leftist forces that are recognised among the masses through struggle.
2. The round table conference should formulate an interim constitution, which will not curtail the democratic rights guaranteed in the 1990 constitution and will reflect the new balance of political forces, and an interim government should be formed under the leadership of the revolutionary force.

²²⁸ Extracted from "An Executive Summary of the Proposal Put Forward by CPN (Maoist) for the Negotiations", 27 April 2003, Kathmandu. Available at http://www.insof.org/cpnm/id_cpnm/doc8.html.

3. Elections to a Constituent Assembly with proper representations for various classes, nationalities, regions, gender and communities should be held within six months under the leadership of the interim government and the Assembly should formulate and promulgate the new constitution.

(b) The Minimum Content of the New Constitution

1. The people should be fully sovereign, and state power must be solely in the hands of the people.
2. There shall be an elected people's representative assembly as the highest representative institution with proper representation of all classes, nationalities, dalits, women, linguistic and religious groups, regions and distinguished personalities. All the bodies of the state will be accountable to this people's representative assembly. The government will be formed accordingly with proper representation of all.
3. Any provision of the constitution may be amended with either a two-thirds majority in the people's representative assembly or through a referendum.
4. A unified national army should be created with appropriate structural changes in the Royal Nepalese Army and the People's Liberation Army, and the army should be placed under the command of the people's elected representatives.
5. Universal democratic and civic rights including multiparty competition, periodic elections, universal suffrage, rule of law, freedom of speech and press, fundamental and human rights, etc. should be guaranteed.
6. All the oppressed nationalities, Madhesis (i.e. plains people) and oppressed regions of the country should be guaranteed national and regional autonomy with the right of self-determination.
7. The country should be made fully secular.
8. Education, health and employment should be made fundamental rights of the people, and free and universal basic education and health services should be ensured to all.
9. New land relations should be created on the principle of "land to the tiller", and a judicious redistribution and advanced management of land should be carried out. A policy of self-reliant national industrialisation and protection to national capital and resources should be followed.
10. All the unequal treaties, including the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty, should be cancelled and an independent foreign policy on the basis of panchsheel (i.e. five principles of peaceful co-existence) and nonalignment should be followed. A two-thirds majority in the house of people's representatives should endorse all the treaties and agreements with foreign countries.

(c) It is our understanding that all the political forces desirous of finding a solution to the present crisis through a forward-looking political solution can and must have an agreement and understanding on the above minimum content of a new constitution. However, since an unconditional constituent assembly will formulate the new constitution, it won't be appropriate both theoretically and practically to determine all the features and provisions of that constitution right now. It is obvious that in addition to the above minimum content of the new constitution different political forces can go to the people with their own views on monarchy and other progressive issues and the final verdict of the people would be acceptable to everybody concerned.

III. NATIONAL AND ECONOMIC/SOCIAL QUESTIONS

1. All the agreements, military assistance, presence and activities of foreign armies etc., that are initiated in the pretext of containing terrorism but which will vitiate the environment for negotiation and which are against the interest of the nation, should be stopped.
2. Open borders between Nepal and India should be regulated and properly managed. All forms of intrusions, violations, etc. in the border areas should be contained. Work permit system should be introduced for foreign employees.
3. The Gurkha recruitment centre, which has remained a blot on the nation, should be abolished and employment should be provided to all the Nepalese within the country itself.

4. Foreign monopoly in the field of industry, commerce and finance should to be ended. National industries and indigenous entrepreneurs should be protected and promoted. The country should be totally freed from the vicious circle of foreign debt within a stipulated time frame.
5. Foreign infiltration and sabotage in the name of NGOs/INGOs should be stopped. Conditions imposed by the international financial institutions that are against the national interests should be invalidated.
6. An integrated national water resources policy should be formulated to harness the immense water resource potential of the country. While according priority to small and medium hydroelectric projects, the entire country should be electrified within a stipulated time frame.
7. The landless and poor peasants should be freed of all debts, and employment should be guaranteed to them.
8. All types of bonded labour system, including kamaiya, harwa, charwa, etc., should be abolished with a guarantee of employment and settlement. All homeless persons should be provided with proper housing.
9. There should be cheap and easy access to agricultural inputs like fertilizers, seeds, etc. and proper extension of irrigation facilities. Appropriate prices and markets should be provided for agricultural products.
10. Price hikes on petroleum products and other daily necessities should be controlled. There should be wage hikes of workers and civil servants in proportion to the price rise.
11. A proper mechanism should be built to award swift and harsh punishment to those indulging in corruption, smuggling, brokering and profiteering.
12. A national and scientific education system should be introduced. Education should be employment-oriented. The privatisation and commercialisation in education should be stopped forthwith.
13. Universal and free health services should be provided and extended especially in the rural areas.
14. Rights of the visually impaired, disabled, old, destitute and children should be guaranteed and special provisions made for their care.
15. All forms of exploitation of women should be ended, and women should be given equal rights in all fields including parental property. Trafficking of women should be strictly checked.
16. All types of exploitation and oppression on the dalits including untouchability should be eliminated, and they should be fully ensured equal rights to live like others.
17. For the workers, a working time of 40 hours a week and minimum wages should be fixed, and they should be strictly implemented.
18. For an all-round development of youths, concrete policies should be formulated and implemented in a planned manner.
19. Academic freedom and professional security of the writers, cultural activists, intellectuals, doctors, lawyers, media persons, engineers, teachers and others should be ensured in order to make them dedicated to the country and the people.
20. Import and distribution of vulgar cinemas, videos and printed matter within the country as a medium of regressive foreign cultural pollution and invasion should be prohibited.
21. Special plans for the development and extension of infrastructure like drinking water, bridges, electricity and others in the rural areas should be formulated and implemented speedily. A national plan for balanced development should be implemented to eliminate the existing imbalances between rural and urban areas and between different geographical regions.
22. The rights of the Nepalese working abroad should be protected.
23. Those killed in the course of the people's movement at different times and the People's War for the cause of the country and people's liberation, should to be declared martyrs, and the killers must be punished.
24. The just demands put forward by different strata of the people and different class and mass organisations should be fulfilled forthwith.

IV. THE ISSUES CONCERNING HUMAN RIGHTS AND IMMEDIATE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

1. A high level and authoritative commission, with representatives from human rights organisations, should be constituted to investigate the violation of human rights in the course of the civil war in an impartial manner, and all the violators must be duly punished.
2. The families of the martyrs should be provided with immediate relief and proper compensation.
3. All those wounded in the course of the civil war should be provided free treatment.
4. All the displaced families during the course of the civil war should be rehabilitated in their old place or other appropriate places.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

All the subject matters agreed between the two parties should be implemented within the stipulated time, and an impartial monitoring team should be formed to monitor the implementation of the agreements.

APPENDIX H

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with over 110 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a twelve-page monthly bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers are distributed widely by email and printed copy to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made available simultaneously on the website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board -- which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media -- is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by Lord Patten of Barnes, former European Commissioner for External Relations. President and Chief Executive since January 2000 is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.

Crisis Group's international headquarters are in Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC (where it is based as a legal entity), New York, London and Moscow. The organisation currently operates fifteen field offices (in Amman, Belgrade, Bishkek, Dakar, Dushanbe, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kabul, Nairobi, Pretoria, Pristina, Quito, Seoul, Skopje and Tbilisi), with analysts working in over 50 crisis-affected countries and territories across four continents. In Africa, this includes Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Rwanda, the Sahel region, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe; in Asia, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Kashmir, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; in Europe, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia; in the Middle East, the whole region from North Africa to Iran; and in Latin America, Colombia, the Andean region and Haiti.

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October 2005

APPENDIX I

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