

**Domestic Turmoil in Nepal: Implications for Nepalese and Indian Security**

**Nalini Kant Jha\***

*[\*Nalini Kant Jha is Professor and Dean, School of International Studies, Chairman, Department of Political Science, Central University, Pondicherry-605014, India].*

Several developing States in general and South Asian countries in particular are facing domestic turmoil and varying degrees. This has been so because the state in these societies is pitted against many sub-state actors competing for co-terminal power and influence and often demanding secession or radical transformation of internal political structure through redistribution of power. A keen observer of security of Third World States has argued that, in post-colonial States, “there are competing loci of authority, usually, weaker than the State in terms of coercive capacity, but equal to or stronger than the State in terms of legitimacy (or the right to rule) as far as the perceptions of substantial proportions of the States’ population are concerned.”[1]

It is this divergence between the “loci of authority and power,” which is at the root of the security problem of Third World States and this has aggravated the security scenario further in the post-Cold War years. Accordingly, the management of internal security problems has emerged as the major concern of most Third World States, including those in South Asia. Such threats in the form of militant demands for a radical redistribution of economic and political power within the State or in the form of ethno-centric nationalism, religious fundamentalism have as much significance for the maintenance of a State’s security as the threats from outside its boundaries.[2]

Viewed thus, even though Nepal has not faced any external aggression in the post colonial era, it cannot be regarded as more “secure” or that its citizen enjoy greater security of life and property as compared to counties who are facing serious external threats. If security can be measured in terms of vulnerabilities that threaten, or likely to threaten the territorial integrity of a State, the stability of its institutions, and the security of the individuals living within its boundaries, Nepal cannot be regarded as a secure nation today. For, it now faces a formidable challenge posed by the Maoists, driven by an ideology that can be explained as the product of continued political instability and socio-economic backwardness of the Nepalese polity and society.

The kingdom’s main challenge after the change in political system in 1991 was to stabilise democracy. But the inter-party as well as intra-party feuds failed to provide an effective system of governance, much to the disappointment of the common people, who had participated so enthusiastically in the movement for democracy. This prepared a fertile ground for the rise of Maoists, who found widespread popular support across the country, where people were tired of their socio-economic condition and desperately wanted some way out of their present condition.

The Maoist activity in Nepal has serious implications not only for security and stability of Nepal, but also for India in view of the long and open border which they share and close socio-cultural linkages between the two countries.

The present paper, seeks to examine the origin, evolution, objectives, strategies and magnitude of Maoist insurgency in Nepal and its implications for security and stability of Nepal and India.

## II

The origin of Maoist-led armed uprising in Nepal, which is now more than seven year old, can be traced to the emergence of the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) on the Nepalese political scene and its initiation of armed struggle, marking a radical break from the established Communist tradition in Nepal. The Communist Party of Nepal, which was founded in 1949— even though it was influenced by the Chinese revolution and the philosophy of Mao Zedong— opted for a parliamentary road to socialism.

There was, however, a long history of ideological infighting, splits and breakaway groups rebelling against the official party line. When the *Panchayat* system was introduced in Nepal after toppling of democracy in 1960, the Communists were divided on the course of political action. The radicals among them, who wanted an end to the *Panchayat* system, demanded the formation of an elected Constituent Assembly to draw up a new Constitution for Nepal.

In 1974, the group of radicals held a convention, known as the Fourth Convention. It, however, suffered a setback in 1983, when one of its founder members, Mohan Bikram, formed another party called the Communist Party of Nepal (Mashal). In 1990, various Communist factions came together to form the United Left Front. Yet in November, the same year, opponents of the mainstream Communist Party formed a new party called the Unity Centre. The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) was born out of the Unity Centre in 1994, when a split took place and the faction led by Pushpakamal Dahal (popularly known as Prachand) decided to boycott the mid-term polls in Nepal and opt for armed struggle.[3]

The CPN-M got a boost in 1996, when the United People Front of Nepal (UPFN), led by Baburam Bhattarai, a Ph.D from Jawaharlal Nehru University of India, who had captured nine seats in the 1991 general elections by participating in the mainstream politics as a political front of the Unity Centre formed by the coming together of four extreme Left groups, left mainstream politics and joined hands with the CPN-M. The UPFN, which considered itself the precursor of the revolutionary movement in Nepal, had participated in the election to “expose the deficiencies of the multi-party system.” However, it was soon disillusioned when the Left forces under Man Mohan Adhikari formed a Government in 1994, which, he said, had digressed from the Marxist goal of creating a classless society. The UPFN thus left mainstream politics and joined hand with CPN-M in 1996 to start a “people’s war.”[4]

The growth of Maoists in Nepal can of course be traced to mass poverty, social oppression and class cleavages, etc. The crisis of governance (especially virtual absence of governance in rural Nepal), indifferent Monarchy, subservient and self-serving Governments that refused to look beyond Kathmandu’s corridors of power, widespread corruption and lingering political instability also provided them leverage to discredit the established political order and offer themselves to the masses as the messengers of a new, just and equitable system. If the principal Communist Party Government led by Man Mohan Adhikari failed to deliver on the land reform front, the political instability syndrome manifested in coming and going of eleven Prime Ministers in Nepal within twelve years eroded any hope of implementation of any long-term policy for the amelioration of the weaker sections of the society.[5]

While the poorer section of the Nepali society felt alienated due to economic backwardness, political instability, and mis-governance, socio-political discrimination generated a sense of alienation among the ethnic minorities as well. The cohesive structure of Nepali society was shaken in 1990 when the new Constitution declared Nepal a Hindu State and Nepali the only official language. Minority groups like the Tibeto Burman community, questioned the propriety of declaring Nepal a Hindu State, as they do not consider themselves Hindus.

Moreover, the shift to democratic form of governance did not end the domination by select groups and castes in education, employment, etc., which continued even during the *Panchayat* regime. However, the commencement of democracy and the new Constitution brought the problem to the fore by guaranteeing freedom of expression and thereby giving voice to the people who were earlier silent spectators. This enabled different ethnic groups in Nepal to organize themselves against the prevalent socio-economic and political discrimination including the imposition of Sanskrit as compulsory subject in schools or Nepali as the country's lingua franca.

### III

As the Maoists were quick to feel the sense of deprivation among the vulnerable sections, they promised these people a better future. They claimed that they would remove the Monarchy and the servile Government and replace it with a Communist State, which would end the exploitation of poverty-stricken farmers and labourers in remote Nepal.[6] They further proclaimed that they would establish a 'people's Government' through a 'people's war' in line with the ideology of Peru's Shining Path group. To form a 'people's Government,' the CPN-M, which bases its ideals, aspirations and course of action on Mao's style of dictatorship of the proletariat, adopted the "strategy of surrounding the city from the countryside." [7]

At the same time, the Maoists began to use the ethnic cleavage to their advantage by promising self-rule and autonomy to ethnic minorities in areas where they were in majority. They also vowed to recognise the culture and language of the ethnic minorities. In a pamphlet distributed on February 13 1996, they declared: "To maintain the hegemony of one religion (Hinduism), language (Nepali), and nationality (Khas) the State has for centuries exercised discrimination, exploitation, and oppression against other religions, languages and nationalities' and has conspired to 'fragment the forces of national unity that is vital for proper development and security.' [8] The Maoists therefore appealed to these indigenous ethnic groups to join the people's war, which got favourable response from groups like the *Khamuan Mukti Morcha*.

To achieve its objectives, the Maoists declared in February 1996 the inevitability of bloody war. In the same month, they submitted a 40-point memorandum to the Government then led by Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, demanding the abolition of royal privileges, promulgation of a Republican Constitution, and abolition of the Mahakali Treaty with India, etc. When the Government did not pay heed to their demands, they carried out simultaneous attacks on Government institutions in different parts of Nepal on 13 February 1996. Since then, the guerrillas have attacked symbols of Nepalese state and government, indulged in loot and arson and killed local bureaucrats, village headmen and influential people especially in the western, central hill areas and the western Terai.

The Army, left untouched in the initial stages of what the Maoists call 'peoples war', became a target later on. They adopted methods like blowing conch shells to gather their supports. In Nepal, this has been the traditional means of communication across the mountains and valleys for centuries. Beginning with confiscation of land from the wealthy persons and its distribution among the peasants, the Maoists have in the course of time assumed

multifarious Governmental functions. They levied taxes, set up schools, run parallel administration and held kangaroo courts to settle dispute, much to the relief of the hapless populace.

Admittedly, the Maoists have touched the pulse of the people in the rural hinterland, especially in the western parts of the country, where Maoists leaders are treated with reverence. Beginning from six western districts—Rukum, Rolpa, Jajarkot, Salyan and Gorkha— to Sindhuli in the east in 1996, their influence has spread to 66 of Nepal's 75 districts, particularly in the poverty stricken, economically backward areas.

According to Government's own admission, 32 districts were the Maoist infested where guerrillas roamed freely and organised open mass meetings.[9] The championing of the cause of minorities and weaker sections has enabled the Maoists to gradually extend their traditional social support-base from the Brahmins, Kshthris and Newars combine to new groups such as Rais, Limbus, Burungs, Magars, Tamangs, etc.[10] This has forced the former Nepalese Prime Minister, Deuba, to acknowledge that the "Maoists are successful in attracting frustrated people." [11]

The number of Maoist guerrilla fighters was estimated to be around 2,500, backed by 10,000 or more militia in the end of the year 2001. Their strength is rapidly growing since the intra-palace regicide that took place in 2001. They are largely recruited from the rural poor though many criminals have also joined the Maoists on the promise that they will be protected from the Nepali police. Interestingly enough, one-third of the guerrilla squads are women. Every village has a revolutionary women organisation. There are usually two women in each unit of 35-40 men, and they are used to gather intelligence and act as carriers of messages.[12]

The main source of funding for Maoists has been through bank robberies, voluntary donation, extortion from rich businessmen and tax collection in areas under their control. According to reports, the Maoists have looted more than Rs250 million from banks and other institutions. They have collected around Rs5 billion in the form of 'donations' and 'taxes.' [13] Thus despite their manifest ideology, the Maoists have not desisted from crime to fill their coffers, before resorting to more lucrative option of "asking" businessmen, contractors, civil servants and professionals to pay token sum as contribution every month.

As regards their sources of arms, ammunitions and training, Maoists are said to have received arms from three sources, namely, raids on police stations, purchases from the illegal arms market, and locally made improvised explosive devices. The possibility of Nepalese Maoists getting arms and ammunitions from their fraternal comrades in India such as Maoist Coordination Centre (MCC) and People's War Group (PWG), who are operating in Indian provinces like Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, etc., cannot be ruled out. Coming to the source of training, the Nepalese Government sources suspect that the well-trained Gorkha soldiers, who have retired from the British and Indian Army and are residing in the Maoist infected area, as well as retirees and deserters from the Nepalese Army are involved in providing training and combat manpower to the Maoist guerrillas.[14]

#### IV

The Nepalese Government has used force as well as persuasion and negotiation to tackle the Maoist challenge to its security and integrity. But no strategy has proved effective so far. The police proved ineffective against the better-armed and better-organised Maoists. When, for instance, the insurgency began in 1996, the police launched "Operation Romeo," in which it arrested and tortured a large number of insurgents. Though the police managed to

contain the insurgency temporarily, the operation alienated a large segment of the rural population and thereby gave a new lease of life to the insurgents. The governmental efforts to initiate talks with the Maoists failed to make any headway due to several preconditions set by them, including release of all party activists from jails and withdrawal of police from the insurgency affected areas.[15]

In 1998, the Government launched another offensive in areas known to be rebel strongholds. The operation was carried out in as many as 18 districts. The Government, however, failed to re-establish its writ in areas under Maoist control.

This forced the Government to once again plead peace with the rebels by forming the Ganesh Man Singh Peace Campaign in July 1999. But this mechanism to persuade the guerrillas to give up arms did not make any breakthrough. A combination of 'carrot and stick' policy applied by G P Koirala Government too proved to be futile.[16] Given the magnitude of the Maoist revolt, the Nepali Army was not inclined to take charge of the counter-insurgency operations without declaration of an emergency. The Army's refusal to come to the aid of civil authority while the Maoists launched a major assault in Holeri, forced the then Prime Minister, G P Koirala, to resign in July 2001.[17]

Sher Bahadur Deuba, who was voted to power as Prime Minister in July 2001 following the shock of the royal assassinations made a serious attempt to buy peace. For, one of the factors that helped Deuba at the hustng was the widely articulated desire for peace and Deuba was expected to bring the Maoists to the negotiating table. Besides, the criminal activities of Maoists had put them in danger of being isolated and thus losing their 'Robin Hood' image. This not merely followed the widespread public outpouring of grief over the royal assassinations, but in the remote villages and outlying areas people were tired of the rebel's methods. There were reports of villagers confronting the Maoists and their demands. The killings of policemen even after their surrender to Maoists led to abhorrence among people.[18]

To take wind out of Maoists' sails, Deuba timed his offer of talks with a series of legislative measures pertaining to land reforms, untouchability and gender discrimination. These measures included: a ceiling on landholdings, allowing low caste people entry into places of worships, giving women rights of share in parental property, granting of land and housing to bonded labourers (*kamatiyas*) freed one year before, and promising a 25-year project for the uplift of ethnic groups of Mongoloid stock (*janjatis*). Further, some Marxist leaders were pardoned as a precursor to the talks. Deuba, however, categorically ruled out any possibility of acceding to the Maoist demands of the abolition of the Monarchy, and an interim Government and a new Constitution.[19]

With these fundamental differences, the chances of the talks succeeding were always slim and so the violence never really abated even as the talks were held. On the contrary, the invitation to the talks provided several Maoist leaders with the opportunity to make public appearances and hold well-attended rallies. One the eve of the third round of talks, the Maoists seemed to drop their demand for declaring the country a Republic, but they changed their tune soon after and announced the formation of a People's Liberation Army and said they were ready to launch an armed struggle.

Ending their four-month-old ceasefire, the Maoists attacked more than 35 districts in November 2001. The Army barracks were attacked for the first time. According to press reports some 1,000 Maoist guerrillas attacked the Lamahi barracks in Dang district, which along with Sangja district was the scene of bloodiest battles on the first night and looted 300 guns, and a huge quantity of ammunition. They also killed 14 Army personnel including a

Major. On November 25, they attacked a police office and a chief District Officer's residence at Salleri, and the nearby radio-tower. They also killed 11 Army-men and 13 policemen.[20] Moreover, the Maoists declared the formation of a 'Revolutionary Government' with its capital in Rolpa, in western Nepal, and set up a 37-member United Revolutionary People's Council to run it.[21]

This left the Deuba Government with no alternative, but to advise King Gyanendra to proclaim an emergency. Accordingly, the king declared emergency in November 2001 and gave a *carte blanche* to the Army to cope with the insurgency. The Nepalese Army, which was so far lukewarm to get involved in civil war, now swung into action using helicopter gun ships among other equipments. The declaration of emergency was followed by a clampdown on the Maoists and their sympathisers, in particular on the media close to them. Since the fundamental rights of the citizens were suspended, the emergency regulations empowered the Government to detain people without trial, though a day after the emergency was declared, Prime Minister, Deuba, assured that the civil rights of the citizens would not be curtailed. The Government made the emergency order more effective by the exhaustive conceptualisation of terrorism in a parallel exercise. The Terrorism and Disruptive Activities Control and Punishment Ordinance promulgated by the Government left little to the imagination or the interpretative skills of the authorities.[22]

Although the Army had some success in fighting back the guerrilla attacks, the inadequacy of its operation to contain the Maoist insurgency was brought to the fore on 16 February 2002, when thousands of Maoists attacked the Mangalsen Army barracks and Sanfebagar airport in the far-western district, killing 55 members of the 58-man army contingent, 71 policemen, and five civilians, including the Chief District Officer. It was the single most reverse suffered by the security forces since the Maoists began their armed campaign in 1996.

Critics said the incident exposed the hollowness of the Defence Ministry's claim that the Maoists were beleaguered and on the run, and led them to the unavoidable conclusion that "Nepal may have played its card of last resort—the Army—and failed to quell the Maoists militants." [23] While it the Government may get solace from the fact the Maoists are still at the "hit and run" stage, and nowhere close to raising a "people's Army" capable of occupying territory and holding it in the face of Army's counter attack, the Army too does not appear to be winning the war, as it has failed to establish the Government's writ in large parts of the country, where the Maoist guerrillas call the shots. They have so far killed more than 5,000 people, including 3,500 persons killed during emergency since November 2001. How long will the stalemate persist is hard to tell, but there is no end in sight to seven years of insurgency, which has virtually paralysed Nepal's State apparatus.[24]

## V

As the border between India and Nepal is even more open than that between the US and Canada and links between peoples on both sides of it are also strong, neither will stay unaffected by any upheaval in the other. This is especially true in the context of Nepal's Maoist rebels, who have an anti-India bias. The document adopted at the third plenum of the CPN (M) central committee in March 1995 declared that the armed struggle was specifically against "Indian imperialism." It also voiced opposition to the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers in the Indian Army. It is alleged that the Maoists are being trained by the ex-Gurkha servicemen in the Indian Army.

Moreover, the Maoists, masquerading under various names such the Peoples War Group and Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), are very active in Indian States, namely, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar respectively. The timing of the attacks by the PWG in Andhra Pradesh with end of the Maoists' ceasefire in Nepal is noteworthy. It is said that

The Maoists got electronic detonators and explosives from the PWG, while pistols, ammunition and high-quality detonators were provided by the MCC. Of late, they have established their foothold in West Bengal and Bangladesh also. As the Nepali Consul-General in Kolkata pointed out to the West Bengal Chief Minister, Maoists from not just India and Nepal but also from Bangladesh have been holding conclaves in places like Silliguri in the narrow 'neck' in the Indian territory that separates Bangladesh from Nepal. Besides, there are reports which indicate that Maoists are providing bases to insurgent groups such as the United Liberation Front for Assam (ULFA) in India's Northeast and getting arms and tactical training in return. The other side of the coin is that the Nepali Maoists, as and when they are under pressure from the Army, try to escape to adjacent Indian territories and seek sanctuary in the hideouts of their soul mates.[25]

Nepal, in fact, is emerging as the conduit for illegal arms brought from India, which are smuggled back again to India. By establishing its linkages within India, the Maoist in combination with the PWG and MCC are in a position to pose security threat to at least four Indian mainland States. They are in no way embarrassed by their cynical exploitation of the anti-Indian sentiment in the Himalayan kingdom that assumes outlandish proportions some times. The hijacking of IC-814 Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu in December 1999, anti-India demonstration in that country over an unproved and repeatedly refuted statement of an Indian film star and the assassination of the royal Nepalese family in the summer of 2001 clearly brought to the fore a realignment of political forces, which pose a serious challenge to India.[26]

The socio-political turmoil in Nepal has thus a spill-over effect in India. As instability knocks at the doors of Nepal, India has limited policy options to meet its security concerns. Pragmatism demands that India supports the royal dispensation in Nepal. With political turbulence rocking Nepal and political parties decaying, India has a clear interest in preserving the institution of Monarchy as stabilising force in the restive Himalayan State. The Nepalese Government's action of arresting the editor of a leading Nepali daily, with the apparent nod of the present king, for publishing a "seditious" article written by a top Maoist leader has signalled his inclination to check the Chinese influence in the Himalayan kingdom.

India's then Minister for External Affairs and Defence, Jaswant Singh, therefore, took a right decision to visit Nepal in August 2001 to establish personal rapport with the new King, Gyanendra. Besides, India rightly extended diplomatic support to declaration of emergency in Nepal in November 2001 and condemned violence by the Maoists.[27] More importantly, both the countries have not only reinvigorated the traditional system of joint management of border, but also when the Chief Staff of Nepal Army visited New Delhi in November 2001 and discussed with his counterpart, he went back with a message of India's fullest sympathy and support for whatever the Nepalese Government requires and asks from India.

When the then Nepalese Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, visited India in March 2002, New Delhi offered him help to face the ongoing insurgency in Nepal, but at the same time clearly expressed its desire to see him address its concerns about misuse of Nepalese territory and hospitality by some forces inimical to India's national interest. The Nepalese leader reportedly showed his sensitivity to India's concerns about the Himalayan kingdom's vulnerability to penetration by some anti India forces.[28]

Besides, India's fear of the Nepalese Maoists and Indian Left-wing extremists carving a corridor linking their movements all the way from the Dandkaranya to the Himalayas has led it to supply its INSAS rifles at heavy discount of nearly 70 per cent and trained officers and soldiers in various Army-run counter-insurgency schools. The Indian Deputy Prime Minister, L K Advani, warned that the Government of India has an integrated

programme to get rid of the trouble once and for all.[29] In response to Kathmandu's request, India has rounded up Nepali citizens who have allegedly been in cahoots with the terrorists and sent them back home.[30] Official India has thus shown no hesitation in endorsing the steps taken by the Nepalese Government to contain the Maoists.

New Delhi will, however, be well-advised to guard its own steps as it considers helping the Nepalese military forces in combating the kingdom's Maoists in their new identity as terrorists. As India's smaller neighbours, including Nepal, have been confronting the crisis of identity and suffering from the "big-neighbour-small-neighbour syndrome," it is all the more necessary for this country to be extra-cautious in extending a helping hand to Nepal lest it be misunderstood as interference in its internal affairs.[31] While moving close to the King, the Indian establishment must, however, simultaneously develop discrete contacts across Nepal's political spectrum. Even the Maoists need not be neglected.

India can take the cue from China, which has developed an across the board contact with the political class of Nepal. While realigning its stance in Nepal, Indian foreign policy establishment should also undertake initiatives to win the confidence of the Nepalese people directly. This can include low-cost options such as opening of primary schools, health care centres or other institutions for providing humanitarian relief, preferably with the help of non-governmental organisations. This will help Nepal to weaken the Maoist appeal and earn the good will the Nepalese people to India.

The aforesaid policy frame is advisable for India also because of the fact that India's geopolitical interest is to convert Nepal into a terror-free zone in every sense of the term. The reported links between Nepal's Communist extremists and the naxalite groups like People's War Group and other of their ilk in India, or for that matter with like-minded groups in Communist China, constitute only one facet of the many security worries that perplex the Himalayan kingdom and India. Even more significant concern for India is to prevent easy access of powers hostile to India to Nepal, who can indulge in anti-India terrorist activities such as the hijacking of the Indian plane in December 1999.

New Delhi must therefore encourage a process of reconciliation in Nepal which can bridge differences among the King, various political parties and the Maoists in Nepal. This is especially essential in view of the fact that the dismissal of the then Prime Minister, Deuba, by the King Gyanendra in October 2002 did deepen political divides in the Himalayan Kingdom and the worst nightmare for India would be a tri-cornered fight between Monarchy, political parties and the Maoist rebels. It is in Indian interests, therefore, to help the political parties and the Monarchy to go beyond their individual positions and reach a consensus for the larger good of the Nepalese people.

## VI

While India does have a justifiable need to take a deep interest in the domestic turmoil afflicting the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, it has to be remembered that the primary responsibility to resolve the internal political problems lies with the internal actors. India can only play the role of a facilitator nudging various forces through persuasion towards a healthy dialogue aiming at peace. The primary onus however lies with the competing political forces in Nepal to get their acts together and deal with the internal conflict in constructive ways. They must first be clear as to whether the Maoist insurgency is a terrorist problem, a political problem, or a socio-economic one. The

Nepalese Government has to assess its own strengths while dealing with the Maoists and then evolve its own negotiating strategy or seek external support or help.

While the dismissal of the caretaker Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, by the Nepalese King has generated widespread worry about the future of democracy in Nepal,[32] it is heartening to note that the certain factors have compelled the Nepalese Government and the Maoist rebels to announce ceasefire. Part of the reason for this welcome development is the change in public perception. Until a year ago, large sections of the elite from Kathmandu, disgusted with corrupt and ineffective politicians and bureaucrats, portrayed the Maoists in a favourable light. But today they are perceived as a bunch of criminals, who are hell-bent on dragging the kingdom back to 'hour zero.'

Secondly, in the changed context of the US war against terror since September 2001, international community has extended strong support to the Nepalese Government in its attempts to contain the Maoist menace. India apart, other significant countries such as the US, Britain, European Union and China, etc., have come forward to help Nepal. At the very start of the Nepalese King Gyanendra's visit to China last year, for instance, the Chinese leadership reiterated its utter contempt for the anti-State activities of these "revolutionaries" who have usurped the name of chairman Mao Zedong.

Equally significant, unlike in past, Beijing has not made a single adverse remark about the growing Indo-Nepal co-operation to combat the insurgents. The Maoists have thus been pushed to the corner and have been defensive. Thirdly, Nepal's 50,000 relatively well-trained and well-equipped Army as compared to rather lackadaisical police was able to give a good fight to the rebels.

But the rebels' capacity for mischief must not be underrated. They can exploit the divisions within the country's political establishment. It is therefore all the more essential for the King as well as the political parties to understand the need of the hour and work in unison for the success of dialogue with the Maoist rebels, which was scheduled to commence on 21 April 2001, but was postponed on the Maoists insistence on first framing a substantive agenda for talks.

A public debate is now on in Nepal discussing the prospects and consequences of Constituent Assembly. Indeed, even the political parties, who until recently were dismissive of the demand have toned down their opposition to constituting of a new Constituent Assembly. After a protracted internal conflict, and resultant military stalemate it has been realised that election to Constituent Assembly would provide a meeting ground between warring parties. It is however essential for both the sides to remain focussed on the main objectives without being distracted by marginal issues. Both the parties must realise that while goal of a negotiated settlement is distant and the route tortuous, the journey can be accomplished only if the signposts are clear and roadmap is adhered to.

### End Notes

1. Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Predicament of the Third World State: Reflection on State Making in a Comparative Perspective", in Brian L. Job, "The Insecurity Dilemma: National Regimes and State Securities in the Third World" in his, ed., *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States*, Boulder, London, 1992, p.66.
2. For an overview of theoretical debates concerning linkages between domestic turmoil and foreign and security policies of a State, see Nalini Kant Jha, *Domestic Imperatives in India's*

*Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2002), Chapter-I; and his, *Internal Crisis and Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy*, Janki Prakashan, New Delhi/Patna, 1985, Chapter-I.

3. Khalid Mahmud, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal," *Regional Studies* (Islamabad), vol.21, no. 1, Winter 2002-03, p.5.
4. Sangeeta Thapliyal, "Maoists in Nepal," *The Hindu* (Madras), 18 December 2001.
5. In a bizarre game of musical chairs, G.P. Koirala has held the post of Prime Minister three times, while K.P. Bhattarai and Deuba have had two tenures each.
6. Editorial, "Time to Quell," *Pioneer* (New Delhi), 27 November 2001.
7. Ibid.
8. Deepak Thapa, "Day of the Maoist," *Himal South Asia* (Kathmandu), vol 14, no.5, may 2001.
9. Chitra K. Tewari, "Nepal's Maoist Insurgency," *South Asian Monitor*, no.31, 1 March 2001.
10. Thapliyal, n.4.
11. *The Kathmandu Post*, 5 December 2001.
12. Rohan Gunaratne, "Nepal's Insurgents Balance Politics and Violence," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October 2001.
13. Thapa, n.8.
14. Tewari, n.9.
15. Smruti S. Pattanaik, "Maoist Insurgency in Nepal: Examining Socio-Economic Grievances and Political Implications," *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), vol.26, no.1, January-March 2002.
16. On the one hand the G P Koirala Government allocated US\$2.6 million as a developmental package (called the basket fund) for addressing developmental concerns of the poor, offered to the Maoists and announced amnesty of those guerrillas who would give up arms, on the other hand, it created a 15,000 strong armed force for the protection of district headquarter and allocated US\$4.72 million for purchase of arms to beef of security against the Maoists. See Pattanaik, *ibid*.
17. According to an Indian correspondent, it was the constitutional confusion over 'who controlled Army—the King, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, or the elected Government, which was exploited by the Army to avoid getting sucked into "civil war type confrontation." See Rita Manchanda, "The Himalayan Thunder," *Frontline* (Madras), 21 December 2001.
18. "Nepal: Not by Force Alone," *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai), vol.36, no48, 1-7 December 2001, pp.4437.
19. Ibid.
20. Manchanda, n.17.

21. Keshav Pradha's report from Kathmandu, *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 25 November 2001.
22. Editorial, "Politics and Terror in Nepal," *The Hindu*, 19 November 2001.
23. Rita Manchanda's dispatch from Kathmandu, "Emergency and the Crisis," *Frontline*, 2 March 2002.
24. Mahmud, n.3, p.13.
25. Inder Malhotra, "Focus Shifts to Nepal," *The Hindu*, 28 November 2002. Also, Farzand Ahmed's dispatch from Kathmandu, "Palace Coup," *India Today* (New Delhi), vol.27, no.42, 15-21 October 2002, p.41.
26. Nalini Kant Jha, "India's Security Concerns in a Turbulent World," in Nalini Kant Jha, et al. eds., *India in a Turbulent World: Perspectives on Foreign and Security Policies*, South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, 2003, pp.31-32.
27. Ibid.
28. Editorial, "Cross Border Bonhomie with Nepal," *The Hindu*, 20 March 2002.
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